

NPS Form 10-900  
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OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printers in 12 pitch. Use only 25% or greater cotton content bond paper.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name: N/A

other names/site number: Monte Vista Downtown Historic District

**2. Location**

street & number: See Continuation Sheet (N/A)not for publication

city, town: Monte Vista (N/A)vicinity

state: Colorado code: CO county: Rio Grande code:l05 zip code:81144

**3. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
(x) private	( ) building(s)		
( ) public-local	(x) district	<u>9</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
( ) public-State	( ) site	_____	_____ sites
( ) public-Federal	( ) structure	_____	_____ structures
	( ) object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>9</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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Monte Vista Downtown Historic District

#2 LOCATION

CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

800 First Avenue  
803 First Avenue  
806 First Avenue  
809 First Avenue  
810 First Avenue  
813/815 First Avenue  
819 First Avenue  
747 First Avenue  
15 Washington Street

NONCONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

37 - 39 Washington Street  
823 First Avenue

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  
( ) See continuation sheet.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official

7/19/91  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Colorado Historical Society  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ( ) meets ( ) does not meet the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

**Entered in the  
National Register**

- (x) entered in the National Register.  
( ) See continuation sheet
- ( ) determined eligible for the National Register. ( ) See continuation sheet
- ( ) determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ( ) removed from the National Register.
- ( ) other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

11/1/91  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**6. Functions or Use**

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**Historic Functions****(enter categories from instructions)**Commerce/Trade:Financial institution, business,Professional, department storeGovernment: state armory, city hallIndustry/Processing: printing plant**Current Functions****(enter categories from instructions)**Commerce/Trade:Business, professional, specialtystore, restaurant

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**7. Description**

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**Architectural Classification****(enter categories from instructions)**Late 19th and Early 20th CenturyLate Victorian/Romanesque RevivalAmerican Movements/Commercial Style**Materials****(enter categories from instructions)**foundations concretewalls stone, brickroof asphaltother \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

Monte Vista is a rural agricultural community 220 miles southwest of Denver, Colorado in the San Luis Valley, the largest, highest alpine valley in the world with an elevation of 7,600 to 13,190 feet above sea level and the largest body of cultivated land (916 square miles) in the southern Rocky Mountains. The San Luis Valley of Colorado has been occupied by successive groups of people from Native Americans to the present inhabitants of whites and hispanics, either building on previous achievements or displacing them. Monte Vista is located in the central part of the San Luis Valley.

The buildings in the Monte Vista Downtown Historic District are located on First Avenue (U. S. Highway 160 and 285) and Washington Street one block west of the main commercial intersection in downtown Monte Vista. The proposed historic district encompasses a total of eleven commercial buildings (nine contributing and two noncontributing) in a contiguous line on the southwest half of block 11 and the northwest half of block 12 facing First Avenue both bounded to the west by Washington Street, north of First Avenue; and lines crossing First Avenue and Washington Street where applicable. The district location is in the central part of the city, with residential areas to the west and south; industry to the north; commerce/industry and residential areas to the east.

In 1884, the first commercial ventures in the town were developed close to the early railroad depot two blocks to the east of the proposed district. With a rapidly growing newly incorporated and platted town, businesses mushroomed,

(x) See Continuation Sheet

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locating in available spaces going west down First Avenue. Although the main intersection, First Avenue and Adams Street was developed with stone buildings soon after the town's 1884 incorporation and set the architectural design used for structures in the district, many have been modernized or altered so have foregone their historic character. The proposed Downtown Historic District is located in this prime area at the west edge of the initial permanent building period. The buildings in the district are a product of the permanence felt in the development of the town and of the close availability in great abundance of volcanic stone of superior quality for use in their structural design. The wooden storefront buildings were replaced by a more fireproof, solid and architecturally significant style typical of this period of building between 1889 and 1921 which is seen in the proposed district. Of the nine contributing buildings, eight are in the Late 19th and early 20th Century Commercial style category and the other, the Armory, which is considered to be individually eligible, is of Late Victorian/Romanesque Revival Style. The two non-contributing buildings have lost their historical character through alterations even though they were originally architecturally and commercially important to the area. The commercial structures in other areas of downtown have also been drastically altered or replaced.

The grouping of these buildings within the proposed district are distinctive to the properties' appearance because of their common materials of locally quarried volcanic tuff. This volcanic stone was used not only for 10 of these 11 buildings but many others around the town, a few of which remain. The eleventh building was made of brick from a local kiln, the same brick as is used on the sides and back walls of the stone buildings in the district. Coinciding with the discovery of the building stone was the presence of many expert contract builders and stonemasons who had located in the new town, however, research has not identified their specific accomplishments.

The present condition of the buildings is good to excellent, altered on the exterior only by upgrading entrances and windows against extreme temperatures or extending the building toward the rear. The interior alterations with one exception, are major and show no likeness to the original design. The proposed Downtown Historic District significantly represents this stone construction period at the turn of the century. The stone buildings reflect a period of stabilization, careful planning, growth, and a commitment to permanent settlement by the townspeople of Monte Vista.

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The following is a description, historic name and construction date of each of the eleven buildings contained within the proposed district:

**NINE CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS**

Building #1, 810 First Avenue - "Legal Office" 1892

This one story, 782 square foot rectangular building has a plain, business-like appearance, and forms the southeast edge of the district. The building, designed in restrained Commercial Style is built with a stone facade and brick sides and rear and it has a flat roof and a stone parapet cap. The storefront is asymmetrical with two rectangular windows with fixed panes in the center. A door with a transom is on the left of the facade and a narrow rectangular opening with a double hung wood sash is on the right (photo 1). The bottom stone course projects slightly. This building has the only intact interior in the district. It features four rooms with original wainscoting and transomed doorways (photo 4). The original fireplace (photo 3) and pressed tin ceiling (photo 2) are still intact, otherwise, nominal modernization has occurred. No alterations have been made to the exterior, which is austere and dignified.

Building #2 806 First Avenue - "Utility Office" 1892

Original owners: Robert B. and John T. Wallace

This one story, rectangular, 2200 square foot building is one course of stones taller than its neighbor to the east (building #1) and is more ornamental, elegant and symmetrical (photo 1). An unadorned roofline with two full courses plus one partial course of stone blocks top the segmented arched stone heads that surmount the windows on either side of the center entrance. There is a clerestory over the two stone silled display windows. An arched transom surmounts the modern, paneled entry door which is elevated two steps from street level. The original opening has been made smaller by wood infill (photo 2). The east rear of the building is brick. In 1972 a concrete block, 40' addition was added to the back of the building. The exterior consists of minor alterations: a new front door and rear addition. The interior has had nominal modernization. The original ceiling remains above the newer suspended ceiling. The building remains in good condition.

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Building #3, 800 First Avenue "State Bank" 1890

This two story, rectangular building with 3800 square foot has a primary street elevation facing north with the northwest corner's 45 degree angle serving as the main entrance. It is the oldest building in the historic district designed in an elegant 19th century Commercial Style. The east side elevation was constructed of brick with the north, south and west facades constructed of coursed ashlar rhyolite stone, the same as its neighbors (#1 and #2) (photos 2, 4). The roofline is topped by a slightly projecting stone cap with larger stone dentils below the fascia. This replaces the original projecting bracketed cornice. The first and second stories are delineated by a stone belt course. The second story windows were originally long and narrow, with double hung wood sash and segmented arched stone heads. These were replaced with standard casements in the 1930s which are about one half as tall as the original opening. In 1908, the original structure was extended 25' south (photos 2, 4). Extreme care was taken to match the original stonework and decorative detail. No major structural changes have taken place since that time. The west facing first story windows were later replaced with two large square bays necessitating the removal of the original middle entrance but the end entrance remains (photo 5). The 1908 addition included a segmented arched stone headed entrance flanked by two arched bays, mirroring the north street facade effect. Aside from window pane upgrades, this portion remains unchanged as does the first story north facade. The owner has expressed interest in restoring the 2nd story windows to the original design along with other restoration work. Around 1937 a 10' garage of stuccoed cinder block was extended to the rear, which forms the south edge of the district with the west facade edging the district on Washington Street. Little of the original interior remains since the modernization for use as office space, however, the bank's vault still exists. The building remains in excellent condition.

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Building #4, 747 First Avenue, "Hunter Mercantile Company" 1906

Original owners: Edgar R. Hunter, Henry Seth and Thomas C. Jones  
This 20th century Commercial Style one story building, with 7000 square foot of space, occupied an important corner across from two banks and a hotel. The stone building to the north was a newspaper office. The storefront faces south on the main street with the corner entrance on the southeast (photo 1) and the service entrance faces the east. This rectangular building features large, metal frame display windows on the south and east elevations with a solid, straightforward and businesslike appearance. The south and east facades are constructed of rhyolite stone, the north and west of brick. The west elevation faces an open space between buildings making it the west edge of the district fronting on First Avenue. On the east segmented arched stone heads surmount the door and windows which have stone sills. A corner support pillar of metal anchors the southeast corner of the building where a diagonal entrance welcomes the public. In 1930, J. C. Penny Company moved the entry to the center of the south facing facade and the windows were adjusted accordingly, but in 1964 the present owner returned the entry to its original southeast position and storefront windows were replaced with signs placed over the original clerestory windows. Brick was added below the windows and a canopy above. The interior changes have included the placement and subsequent removal of a center wall and remodeling commensurate with use for a variety of retail enterprises. It retains its original tin ceiling. The building remains in excellent condition.

Building #6: 15 Washington Street "Monte Vista Armory", 1921 - 1922

Original Owner: State of Colorado

Architect: Mountjoy & Frewen, Denver, Colorado

Builder/Contractor: Wellington Worth

This two story, 9000 square foot building forms a massive rectangle with the street facade displaying an exuberant Medieval character while the side and rear elevations are more simply designed. The rusticated exterior stonework of the street facade does not have the finished restrained look of the other stone buildings and has a rougher finish. The intent was to create a fortress effect for the town's new armory. True to the Romanesque Revival/fortress style, the street facade is asymmetrical (photo 1, 2). The south half of the street facade is roughly square consisting of three two story bays of equal vertical width. The center bay includes a massive stone portal with the second floor above being slightly recessed and a parapet centered above. The center bay is flanked by a slightly taller three sided bay to the south and an even taller square bay with a



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battlemented parapet to the north. The second floors of the south and north bays each have tall narrow openings at the centers. The window centered on the first floor of the north bay matches the window sizes on the north half of the street facade. The north half of the street facade is also roughly square but one story and slightly recessed from the south half with three tall evenly placed windows. The roofline is decorated with a crenelated battlement. The pronounced partially exposed basement is delineated by a strong stone course which is repeated above the second floor of the south half and above the first floor of the north half. The grand main portal has a mild Richardsonian flavor with a round arch opening crowned with massive stone voussoirs. Two large iron sconces flank the entrance and the recessed double doors are complete with heavy hammered ironwork surmounted by a glass paned transom. All of the exterior is original and changed only by the business sign above the portal. The side and rear elevations are composed of pre-cast concrete with a vertical rib pattern (photo 3). The interior was changed in 1943 for the housing of World War II German prisoners of war and their guards, and since then there has been extensive modernization on the east end. Parts of the original stairway and third story rooms still remain, as does the stage and ceiling on the west end which are original but dilapidated (photo 4). The condition of the building is good and it is considered to be individually eligible for the National Register.

Building #7, 803 First Avenue "Monte Vista Bank and Trust (Bank Block)" 1918-1919

Original owner: Lillian L. Fassett

This building faces south with side entrances on the west. This 20th century Commercial Style, one story rhyolite stone building has 3000 square feet of space and is in excellent condition. It is a rectangular building with five small openings just below the bracketed cornices on the front (photo 2). The south and west stone bearing walls convey a sense of solidity, permanence and dependability befitting the original use as a bank. The corner location anchors the block with the clean, understated appearance as the last stone building erected in block 12. The "1919" and "Bank Block" are carved below the cornice on the front of the structure. Stone window heads surmount the recessed ground level entrance and large display windows. Two original stone columns flank the non-original pedimented glass and metal entryway. There is an eighteen pane transom over the entry. The rear of the building is of coursed rubble stone and the east side is a common brick wall adjoining building #8. The exterior

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remains largely original with the exception of holes in the stone where signs have been placed. Both the south facing door and the two display windows were renovated around 1960, as were the four west windows. At the same time, a complete renovation of the interior was made to convert the space to office units.

Building #8, 809 First Avenue - "Jewelry Store" - 1902

Original owners: Lillian L. Fassett and Charles Fassett

This 20th century Commercial Style, one story, rectangular building has 1419 square feet of space and is in excellent condition. The south stone facade has a straightforward, businesslike character and was the first stone building to be built on the north side of the main street in the west half of the block (photos 1, 2). The roofline is lower than the adjoining building to the west and has a stone cap. The recessed center entrance is flanked by two single glazed storefront windows. The clerestory windows have been covered by three large light colored panels. A wooden transom surmounts the entrance. The angled double entrance doors are flanked by two sidelights and feature single glazed glass with a common jamb in the center (photo 2). The north rear facade has a brick bearing wall with a 2nd story wood storm windows covering four six-light windows (photo 3). The center rear entrance is flanked by segmental arched windows. The east and west walls are common walls between the adjacent structures, buildings #7 and #9. Research shows nothing to indicate major alterations on the exterior and the entry doors appear to be original. There has been minimal remodeling in the window area to facilitate energy efficient heating. The interior had a walled partition down the center providing space for two businesses when the address was known as 809-811 First Avenue. Through remodeling, the dividing wall has been removed and the interior retains no original features. The small balcony area once used for business or living quarters in the east rear has been removed.

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Building #9, 813 - 815 First Avenue - "Roughton Sheet Metal" - 1903

As with the building to the west (#8), it is a single story, rectangular shaped, 20th Century Commercial Style structure with 2150 square feet, however, the greater expanse of stone on the south facing facade gives the store a slightly more ornamented and graceful character (photo 1). From plain parapet to segmented arched stone window and entrance heads, the coursed ashlar stone buildings are quite similar in appearance, having been built one year apart. Arched clerestories surmount the display windows flanking the entrance. The door and latches are believed to be original. The two angled entrance doors are two steps up from street level. The kick plates below the windows are dressed stone. The north elevation, covered by stucco, was probably of the local brick. Today, the rear entrance features identifying signs for the businesses in the building (photo 2). The exterior shows only window modernization. The entryway has not been altered. The interior, divided lengthwise down the center in the 1920s, still separates the businesses housed there. The interior bears no resemblance to its original state.

Building #10, 819 First Avenue - "Correll-Dunker Candy Kitchen" - 1905

Original owners: Lillian L. Fassett and Charles S. Fassett  
This structure has two stories with 2250 square footage, a rectangular shape of 20th Century Commercial Style and is considered to be in good condition. The taller stone facade gives the building a more imposing and notable character than its neighbor to the west, which was constructed two years earlier. The south facade was of rough hewn stone blocks while the west facing second story and common walls were of brick. The roof has a plain parapet with a stone cap. There are two blocked off windows on the second floor surmounted by segmented arched stone heads and feature stone sills. Immediately beneath the second story sills is a segmented arched stone entrance head flanked by matching segmented arched stone window heads. Diagonally placed redwood strips now flank the first story windows and entrance. The windows have been made smaller by the moss rock facing extending below the windows to the single row of stones that meets the sidewalk. These alterations were completed in the 1980s (photo 1). The rear addition of a kitchen/storeroom ca. 1950 is the only major addition (photo 2). The interior has been remodeled with regard to seating arrangements many times over the years while projecting signage has been added to the front facade. In spite of the alterations, most of which are reversible, the building retains much of its architectural design, feeling and association. It is recognizable as one of the important stone commercial buildings.

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NONCONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

Building #5, 37 - 39 Washington Street - "Monte Vista Journal" - 1908-1910

It is a one story, rectangular building of 20th Century Commercial Style. In 1980, after an auto accident to the stone front facade, it was covered with full brick veneer (photo 1). The interior has been modernized. It is located between buildings #4 and #6 and bears no resemblance to its original appearance. Since it retains no architectural integrity, it is considered to be a noncontributing building.

Building #11, 823 First Avenue - "Town Hall" - 1903

Original owner: The Town of Monte Vista

Architect: W. J. Clark

Builder/Contractors: W. B. Peacock & Son, Whitehead & Wake, 1903

It is a large two story, rectangular building. It was built of pressed and natural bricks and was used as the combination town hall, fire department and police/jail facilities (photo 1). The appearance was enhanced by the round tower occupying the second story southeast corner, lending a Romanesque flavor to the overall feel of the structure. A massive portal surmounted by a decorative arched brick design carried through above the main street entrance and second story windows. A long narrow double hung sash window echoed the main entrance while the large double window balanced the portal beneath. It remained virtually unchanged until 1962. Between that time and 1976 the exterior was altered by removing the majority of the second story windows, the large street portal and the southeast corner tower (photo 2). Of the interior only the jail remains. The second story was transformed into restaurant space and connected with the second story of Building #10. Because of its shared wall with #10 this building becomes the east boundary to the district. With so much of the original architecture changed, building #11 is considered to be noncontributing to the downtown historic district.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:      ( ) nationally      ( ) statewide      (x) locally

Applicable National Register Criteria      (x) A      ( ) B      (x) C      ( ) D  
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)      ( ) A      ( ) B      ( ) C      ( ) D      ( ) E      ( ) F      ( ) G

**Areas of Significance**

(enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development

Architecture

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1889 - 1921

1889

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1889

1889

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

See Continuation Sheet

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.**

The Monte Vista Downtown Historic District meets criterion A because of its historical development and close association with the growth of the business district along the main street in downtown Monte Vista. The district contains the oldest remaining commercial stone building in Monte Vista, the 1890 State Bank. The district meets criterion C as a significant and distinguishable group of buildings constructed of local stone and which are largely unaltered from their original exterior appearance. They feature 20th Century Commercial Styles and one Romanesque Revival Style structure, all erected between 1889 and 1921.

Of major architectural significance is the fact that the buildings in the Monte Vista Downtown Historic District were constructed of locally quarried stone. The stonemason firm of Campbell and Edwards came to Monte Vista prior to 1889. By that time people were looking for building materials more durable than wood. The brick made from San Luis Valley clay was not strictly first-class and not satisfactory to builders. The stonemasons located a volcanic stone of superior quality for building seven miles south of town. The stone is light and soft when quarried but hardens on exposure to the air and is ornamental and fireproof. 1889 marked the beginning of Monte Vista's stone construction with the discovery of a seemingly endless supply of superior building stone southwest of Monte Vista.

The location of the stone as quarried is part of the Carpenter ridge volcanic tuff in the San Juan range of mountains in Rio Grande County. The tuff belongs to the Potosi volcanic series of Miocene age and are in general of Treasure

(x) See Continuation sheet

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Statement of significance

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#8 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Architect/Builder Building #6 - Architect: Mountjoy & Frewen. Builder:  
Wellington Worth

Building #11 - Architect: W. J. Clark. Builder: W. B. Peacock & Son and  
Whitehead & Wake.

Buildings #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 - unknown

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Mountain latite, with some of Alboroto quartz latite. This stone, described as crystal-poor rhyolite high in silica, neither sandstone nor limestone, is soft and light in color when quarried and weathers to a hard, grey stone which is both attractive and durable. It is easily quarried and makes a fairly strong building stone. It was regularly quarried, shipped and used elsewhere in Colorado and in other parts of the United States. These stone blocks, approximately 8"x12"x30" were used in the construction of each building in the downtown historic district, as well as in buildings at many other sites in Monte Vista constructed between 1889 and 1921.

The stone buildings reflect a period of stabilization, careful planning, growth, and a commitment to permanent settlement. Later, construction methods changed and quarrying began to fade. The 1889 Bank of Monte Vista building was the first stone building, followed by stores, churches, cottages, the State Bank and finally the State Soldier's Home.

The district has commercial and community planning significance because of the pattern of events which evolved historically from the town's beginning to the present day. Spanish, then American explorers opened the way for the first settlements in the San Luis Valley in the mid 1860s. Lucero Plaza, five miles northwest of Monte Vista along the Rio Grande River, was settled permanently in 1865. In the early 1880s, extensive canal systems were built using water from the Rio Grande River, enabling agriculture to move away from river bottoms. Annual rainfall of seven to eight inches necessitated such farming practices. Gold and silver strikes in the area, the Homestead Act of 1862 and excursions provided by land promoters drew additional population, as did Post-Civil War relocation and European immigration. The advent of the railroad passing through the San Luis Valley from 1878 to 1881 resulted in a siding called Lariat on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, 17 miles west of Alamosa and 13 miles east of Del Norte. The presence of the Lariat railroad siding in 1881 aided commercial agriculture and the mining industry to the south and west by bringing in supplies and taking out products.

At the Lariat siding there was a section house, a water tank and windmill, and the Fassett Department Store. It was built by a widowed school teacher, Lillian L. Taylor (Fassett) to accommodate ranchers settling along the river and in the foothills. In early 1884, T. C. Henry, president of the Colorado Loan and Trust Company, began to develop and promote land schemes and an extensive water canal system to open the area for agriculture. By February 1884, the canal operations

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were under way and Henry induced Illinois excursionists coming by train to settle the new town, Henry, which was incorporated on May 1, 1884. The original settlement grew to the west near the railroad depot. Within the month there was a newspaper, two hotels, another mercantile company, a canal company office, hardware store, drugstore, livery stables and several attorneys. Jefferson Street, a north/south street roughly facing the water tank was the first business district, comprising a handful of wooden storefront buildings. In 1885, Fassett's Department Store relocated from the railroad depot area to the southeast corner of First Avenue and Adams Street which is the present main commercial intersection in Monte Vista. T. C. Henry's dreams outgrew his resources, and he was unable to repay borrowed development money to Traveler's Insurance Company which took over the land interests, had the town renamed and created a new plat which extended the town to the west. Monte Vista, Spanish for "mountain view", was incorporated in July, 1886.

After 1886 the commercial buildings moved west along the main street and the town began to mushroom. A flour mill was erected, along with more hotels, businesses and even an opera house. Colonies grew to the north in the agricultural area, gold and silver strikes took place to the west and south of town and businesses began to thrive. The buildings began to change from the wooden fronts to the stone structures, showing stability and permanence.

The commercial buildings in the district were erected at the time of the greatest period of downtown development beginning in 1889. They remain essentially the same on the exterior as when they were built. Other buildings outside the district have either been destroyed by fire or changed drastically.

Coinciding with the discovery of the quarried stone close to Monte Vista, was the presence of numerous expert contractor/builders and stonemasons who had located in the new town. Research indicates that most of these contractors were also the architects who planned a business-like yet attractive and sturdy appearance for the new buildings in the downtown area. The architectural designs well represent the 20th Century Commercial Style, with the one Romanesque Revival Style building that is unique in the district. The choice of volcanic stone for construction is their common feature.



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Tragically, and yet typically, fire took its toll on structures fringing the historic district, including the large hotel to the west and businesses to the east. The buildings in the historic district, however, have not felt destruction by fire and continue active today in the business life of downtown Monte Vista. They significantly represent the period of stone construction in the community, which ceased, possibly due to the fading popularity of quarried stone, absence of expert stonemasons, unoccupied downtown building lots, locally depressed economy and the availability of cheaper materials. Monte Vista, whose population has remained constant, is a solid, progressive community in a successful agricultural area. Historic designation would assist in the preservation of the buildings as an important part of the commercial history of Monte Vista.

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Monte Vista Downtown Historic District

CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

810 First Avenue - Building #1 - Legal Office

This building, built in 1892, is one of the three oldest in the historic district. The architectural significance represents a type and period of construction using the rhyolite stone. It is located at the southeast edge of the district, with a vacant lot to the east. It is believed that this structure was owned by the Wallace Brothers, bankers who played a significant part in developing the young town. It has been used primarily as an attorney's office. First, Jesse Stephenson, one of the local pioneer lawyers and County Superintendent of schools; the City Attorney, Herbert Martin; and attorney M. T. Hancock. Part of the office was, at one time, also used by a local physician. It has never been vacant and is presently home to an accounting service.

806 First Avenue - Building #2 - Utility Office

Constructed in 1892, this building is the same age as building #1 and represents the period of construction using the rhyolite stone. The original owners, Robert B. and John T. Wallace were banking pioneers in Monte Vista and it is believed that they had the #1 and #2 buildings constructed as an investment in the future of the town. The architectural design of this building was more elaborate than the one next door. A relative of the Wallace Brothers, DeWitt Wallace, founder of The Readers Digest, lived in town and worked in their bank for a while. The building was used as the office for the Electric and Gas Light Company under the management of Robert Wallace. The ownership was changed in 1899 and became known as the "Chase Building." It then housed a variety of business enterprises including: the Monte Vista Realty Company of R. L. Dowdell and C. Baum; the Monte Vista Light, Heat and Power Company; City Attorney, Harry Howard; a new and used furniture store and, since 1973, the office of an investment broker for Dain Bosworth.

800 First Avenue - Building #3 - State Bank

Built in 1890, this structure is the oldest remaining stone building in the downtown district. It not only represents the early use of the local stone, but the belief in the future of the commercial area. This building is considered the keystone of the proposed Monte Vista Downtown Historic District and may be individually eligible. Although the State Bank eventually closed, another bank,

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the First National Bank, occupied this building until it, too, was closed during the Great Depression. The second floor and south addition became the offices of several law firms. Since the depression, the building has been occupied by a tire shop, an office supply store and, today, a law firm and an antique shop. The upper story is occupied as living quarters. There is a strong interest in the restoration of this property to its original appearance.

747 First Avenue - Building #4 - Hunter Mercantile Company

Built in 1906, the architectural and historical significance of this building represents the qualities and pattern of stone construction in the district. Originally occupied by Hunter Mercantile Company, there were nearly two thousand square feet of French plate glass used for the original display windows. A number of mercantile businesses occupied the building and supplied dry goods, groceries, fresh meat and fish to its customers until 1930. In 1911 Hunter became the Monte Vista Mercantile Corporation; in 1913 the General Mercantile Company; in 1913-14, the Stow Mercantile Company ("The Great Strictly Cash Store-buy where you can buy the cheapest-we do"); 1919, Stow-Wood Company, then leased by the J. C. Penney Company from 1930 to 1959. In 1959, the building was given by its owner George and Ethel Keeler to the Shriner's Hospital for Crippled Children. Since 1959 the present owner has occupied the building, using it for retail sales of appliances and home furnishings. It has maintained its significance and commercial use.

15 Washington Street - Building #6 - Monte Vista Armory (State Armory)

This fortress-like building was erected in 1921-1922. Stone construction was a tried and true method so the strong, durable and attractive material recommended itself to the planners of this building, which stands out in architectural design. It appears significant that the blocks of stone were hewn in a less finished manner than for the earlier constructed business buildings. The architects, Mountjoy & Frewen of Denver designed the following prominent buildings: St. Ignatius of Loyola, Denver; Parkhill Elementary School, Denver; the Governor John C. Vivian home, Golden; Central School, Brush; and Bloedorn home, Fort Morgan. The local contractor, Wellington Worth, also was responsible for the construction of the largest church in town. The Romanesque Revival Style displays an exuberant medieval character. The location, at the north end of the block from the center of the proposed historic district, was carefully chosen by Governor Shoup of Colorado in 1920 so as to be near water and quarters

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for the Cavalry horses. The town patriotically supported the National Guard and welcomed the new State Armory. Businessmen encouraged one employee each to join the Guard, with no loss of pay, then many businessmen and professionals applied as well. Monte Vista was the first town in the state to fill its quota for the National Guard, Colorado Cavalry. It was intended from the outset as a community building as well as a military facility and was available for public functions and events such as: minstrel shows, meetings and banquets, product shows, sports, dances, statewide conventions for the Grand Army of the Republic, the P.E.O. Sisterhood and school functions. This facility was important during World War II when, from 1943 to 1946, it became the home for some 250 German prisoners of war. These young men, ages 18 to 24 years of age, were brought here to help with the local crop harvest in the absence of local farmers to the war effort. Monte Vistans welcomed these foreign prisoners and lifelong friendships were forged. Other occupants of the buildings were: Monte Vista Head Start, a restaurant and, presently, a tavern and dance hall. Of note is that a local arts and theatre group are negotiating the purchase of this building with plans for restoration and use as a dinner theatre. This building remains the same on the exterior as when built and is considered to be individually eligible for listing in the National Register.

803 First Avenue, Building #7 - Monte Vista Bank and Trust (Bank Block)

The architectural significance of this building, erected in 1918-19, is that it represents the permanence and solidity of the stone construction period in downtown Monte Vista. The lots chosen had been occupied by wooden storefronts which were replaced by this solid stone structure to house the third of three banks to operate in Monte Vista in 1919. This may have been a reflection of the improvement in agricultural conditions and outlook of the area. The building, owned by Lillian L. Fassett, who was known for being an outstanding businesswoman, was leased to various businesses through the years. The site was deeded to her in 1886 and remained in the family until 1969 when sold to attorney Gordon H. Rowe, Jr. The bank failed in 1933 but was replaced by another financial operation, the Monte Vista Savings & Loan, now known as the Rio Grande Savings & Loan. Prominent Monte Vista pioneer, George Boutwell had a corner office in the building. It is now occupied by insurance companies and the office of the Revenue Department of Drivers License for the State of Colorado. This building located on the important intersection at the center of the proposed historic district, exemplifies an important commercial period in the history of the community.

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809 First Avenue, Building #8 - Jewelry Store

Built in 1902, this building is typical of the stone construction in the proposed historic district. This property, along with all the lots in this half block, was owned by Lillian L. Fassett who replaced the two story frame restaurant and oyster parlor with the permanent stone structure. It was first occupied by J. M. Ditto, jeweler and optician, and later the Hutchinson Haberdashery and Dunker Barber Shop. The east side remained the barber and beauty shop of D. F. Woodruff and the west side became Pollard's Plumbing & Heating. In 1958, the store was purchased from the Fassett Properties, Inc. by Warren Jones who used the building for many years as the Jones Shoe & Repair Store. Then in 1973 the building was owned and occupied by the Slout Real Estate Company. Today, it is owned by Sid L. Kleckler for his Rio Grande Realty Office.

813/815 First Avenue, Building #9 - Roughton Sheet Metal

This building, constructed in 1903, is compatible with its neighbor to the west in style and method of stone construction. The lot appears to have been in the ownership of the Henry Town & Land Company until 1886 when the Colorado Valley Land Company with John MacArthur as superintendent, took possession. Then, as with the neighboring lots, it became the property of Lillian L. Fassett who erected the stone structure. A hardware and sheet metal business, owned by Tom H. Roughton, was established at this address and when his son, Curtis Roughton, joined the business in 1918, the installation of heating was added so it became Roughton and Son Heating and Sheet Metal. A listing of the businesses to occupy this building indicated the vigor and variety of the downtown--C.C. Kerr and Company, Real Estate; Salina Produce, and in 1952 the building still housed the Sheet Metal business along with Haller-Howard Plumbing & Heating, Toney's Beauty Shop, Harmon's Style Shop and Jones Shoe Store. Others were the A. R. Baird's Men's Clothing and Margaret Green Ladies Wear. In recent years, the entire building was used for Mansion Antique sales and refinishing and owned by Paul and Donna Hall. It is again sectioned off, the east side used by Daylight Donuts and the west side occupied by the Monte Vista Haircutting Company. This building contributes to the proposed historic district as a mirror of its stone neighbors depicting permanence in a lasting and successful community.

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819 First Avenue, Building #10 - Correll-Dunker Candy Kitchen

Erected in 1905, this building also represents the type and method of stone construction of the period. The Fassetts built this building which housed the Correll-Dunker Candy Kitchen. The Fassetts had owned this lot since 1886 and replaced the wooden structure then standing on the lot with a distinctive stone structure. In 1913 the business name changed to the Diamond Candy Kitchen, J. F. Correll, Prop., manufacturer of high grade candies and ice cream. From 1928 to the early 1940s it was known as Correll's Candy Kitchen and became one of the most popular places in town for sodas and meeting friends. By all accounts and recollections, it has ever been a place of good food. Around 1950 it became Ma's Hash House and then the High Country Steak House under the present owner Clifford D. Hill. The second floor was originally used as office space for the many real estate agents and attorneys in town, but became a special eating area, when interior stairs were added to the building. It is a contributing building to the proposed historic district because of its site in the contiguous line of buildings built to secure trade in the commercial district of the community.

NONCONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

37/39 Washington Street, Building #5 - Monte Vista Journal

Built in 1908-1910, the same period as the other stone buildings in the historic district, this building filled an unoccupied lot in the district. It was the home of the Monte Vista Journal newspaper. After many years as a newspaper office, the building housed a photo lab and then stood empty for a short while when, in 1961, the north side became the optometry office of the present owner, Dr. C. Wendell Hinkley. The south side has been occupied by the Colorado State Employment Office until recently when it was sold to Herbert K. Skeff, who uses it as an appliance showroom and for storage. It had a stone front facade until a few years ago, when an automobile ran into the front and did extensive damage. Repair was made using a full brick veneer that bears no resemblance to the original stone appearance. The building no longer retains architectural integrity and is non-contributing to the district.

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823 First Avenue, Building #11 - Town Hall

Built in 1903, the Town Hall has an illustrious history for the townspeople of Monte Vista. From 1903 to 1962, the second story served as the Town Council meeting place, and the ground floor served as the fire station, storing the horse drawn fire engine or up-dated trucks, the police force and the jail cell which still exists. The architect was W. J. Clark and the contractor W. B. Peacock & Son, who were known to build other structures in town. After 1962 the building housed a liquor store and today it is a video rental store. The exterior was altered between 1962 and 1976 by stuccoing over the original pressed brick facade, the majority of the second story windows were removed and the massive street portal was replaced by a large single pane bay window. The southeast corner tower was removed to form an angled street entrance to the building, however, the "Town Hall" sign remains firmly affixed on top of the street facade. This building is the only one in the proposed historic district that was not constructed of the lava stone quarried near Monte Vista, but because of its shared wall with the original Dunker-Correll Candy Kitchen to the west, it must be included within the confines of the district designation, forming the east boundary. With so much of the original architecture altered, the Town Hall is considered a non-contributing building.





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Note: The following Monte Vista Historical Society members gathered information and researched materials: Peggy Barr, Peg Schall, Dorothy Brink, Webb and Vivian Allison, Wendell and Dorothy Hinkley, Wilma Hettinger, Mike and Sarah Rierson, Marjorie Clare and Byron Syring (photos).

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Boundary Description

A tract of land located in downtown Monte Vista, Colorado described as follows: Beginning at a point which is the center of the intersection of First Avenue and Washington Street. Thence 40 feet South and 113 feet East to the true Point of Beginning. Thence South 34 feet; Thence West 23 feet; Thence South 56 feet; Thence West 25 feet; Thence South 10 1/2 feet; Thence West 25 feet to a point on the East side of Washington Street. Thence North 180.6 feet to a point which is the Northeast corner of the First Avenue and Washington Street intersection; Thence West 130 feet crossing Washington Street to a point; Thence North 151 feet; Thence West 14 feet; Thence North 25 feet; Thence West 86 feet; Thence North 60 feet; Thence East 150 feet to a point on the West side of Washington Street; Thence South 174 feet; Thence East crossing Washington Street 130 feet; Thence North 5 feet; Thence East 25 feet; Thence North 21 feet; Thence East 25 feet; Thence North 4 feet; Thence East 25 feet; Thence South 36 feet; Thence East 25 feet; Thence South 54 feet to a point on the North side of First Avenue; Thence West 75 feet; Thence 80 feet South across First Avenue to the True Point of Beginning.

The justification for the boundaries of this district is as follows:

The Monte Vista Historic District boundaries were drawn to include a contiguous group of the most intact stone commercial buildings constructed during the period of significance. The boundaries exclude vacant lots, buildings constructed outside the period of significance or that are radically different in style and materials. For the most part the boundary follows the property lines between buildings and along the alleys at the rear elevations and along curb lines at the street.

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Monte Vista Downtown Historic District

This information is the same for all photos listed below.

1. Monte Vista Downtown Historic District
2. Monte Vista, Rio Grande County, Colorado
3. Byron Syring
4. see below
5. Monte Vista Historical Society

Building #1 - Legal Office

- Photo #1. N facade, view S
- Photo #2. Interior detail, tin ceiling
- Photo #3. Interior detail, fireplace
- Photo #4. Interior detail, doorway

Building #2 - Utility Office

- Photo #1. N facade, view S
- Photo #2. N facade, view S

Building #3 - State Bank

- Photo #1. Historic photo ca. 1890s, N facade, view S
- Photo #2. Historic photo, early 1900s, W side and N facade, view SE
- Photo #3. Historic photo, ca. 1940s, N facade, view S
- Photo #4. W side and N facade, view SE
- Photo #5. W side, view E

Building #4 - Hunter Mercantile

- Photo #1. S facade and E side, view NW
- Photo #2. Historic photo, ca. 1918, S facade, view N
- Photo #3. Historic photo, ca. 1930s, S facade, view N

Building #5 - Monte Vista Journal

- Photo #1. E facade, view W

Building #6 - Monte Vista Armory

- Photo #1. Historic photo ca. 1922, E facade, view W
- Photo #2. E facade, view W
- Photo #3. W rear and S side, view NE
- Photo #4. Interior stair

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Photos continued

Building #7 - Monte Vista Bank and Trust

Photo #1. W side and S facade, view NE

Photo #2. S facade, view N

Photo #3. Historic photo, ca. 1920, W side and S facade, view NE

Building #8 - Jewelry Store

Photo #1. Jewelry Store (L) and Roughton Sheet Metal (R), S facades, view N

Photo #2. S facade, view N

Photo #3. N rear, view S

Building #9 - Roughton Sheet Metal

Photo #1. S facade, view N

Photo #2. N rear, view S

Building #10 - Correll-Dunker Candy Kitchen

Photo #1. S facade, view N

Photo #2. N rear, view S

Building #11 - Town Hall

Photo #1. Historic photo, ca. 1905, S facade, view N

Photo #2. S facade, view N

Street Scenes

A. Intersection of First Avenue and Washington Street, N side

View NE along First Avenue

B. Historic photo, ca. 1920, same location and view as A.

C. First Avenue, N side of street, view NW

D. Intersection of First Avenue and Washington Street, view NW



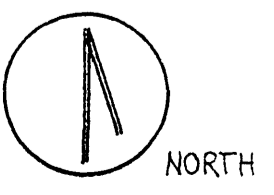
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WASHINGTON S

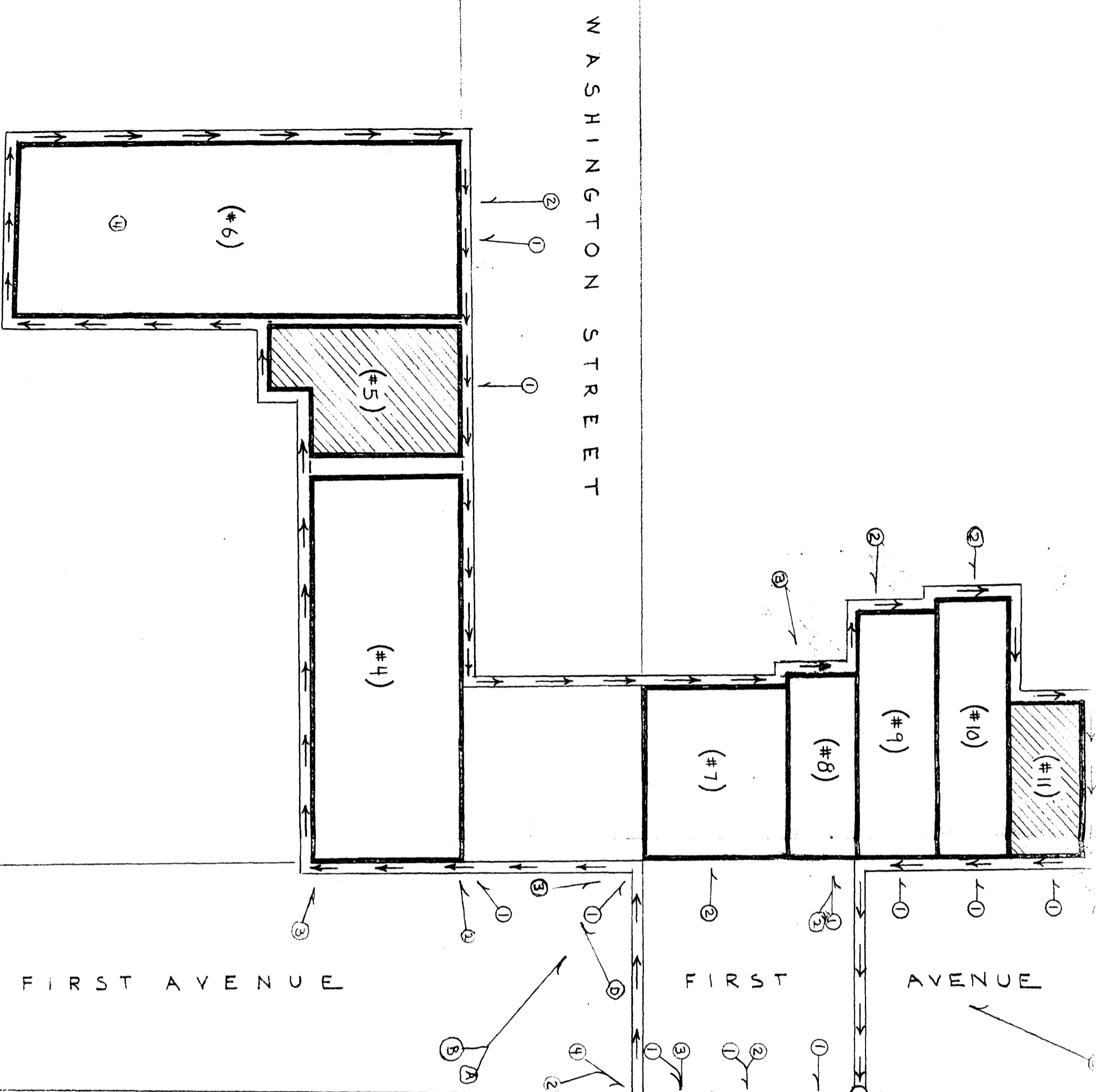
← FIRST AVE  
LOOKING EAST

MONTE VISTA DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT  
AERIAL PHOTO C. 1930





START DISTRICT HERE



# MONTE VISTA DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

NOT TO SCALE MAP #1 12/5/90

CONTRIBUTING     NON CONTRIBUTING

BUILDING NO.	HISTORIC NAME
(#1)	LEGAL OFFICE
(#2)	UTILITY OFFICE
(#3)	STATE BANK
(#4)	HUNTER MERCANTILE CO.
(#5)	MONTE VISTA JOURNAL
(#6)	MONTE VISTA ARMORY
(#7)	MONTE VISTA BANK AND TRUST
(#8)	JEWELRY STORE
(#9)	ROUGHTON SHEET METAL
(#10)	CORRELL - DUNKER CANDY
(#11)	TOWN HALL

DISTRICT BOUNDARY