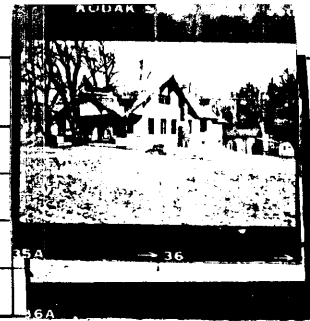


MONTANA HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY

Site # 7

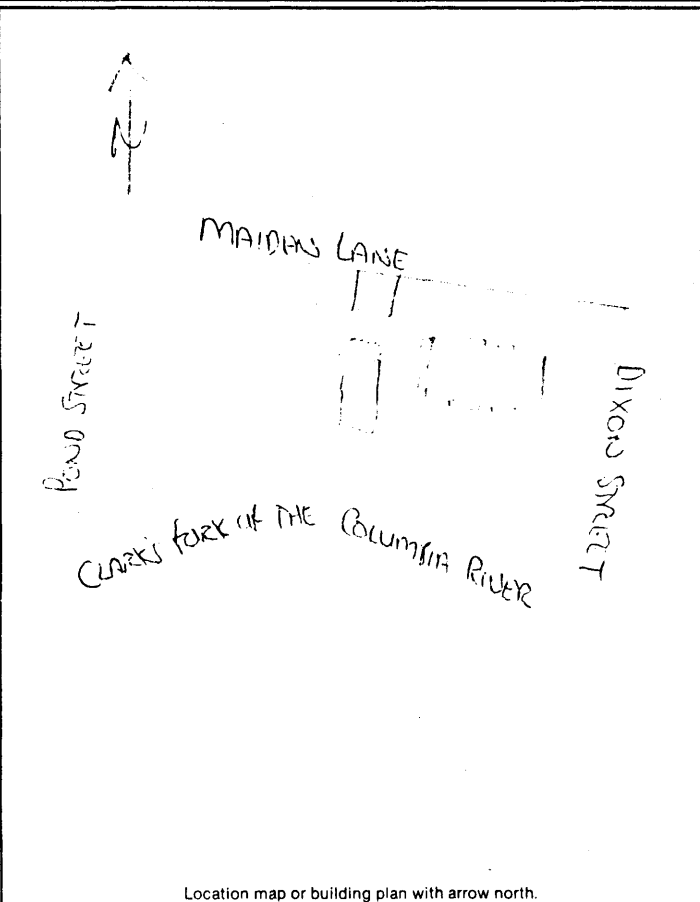


Legal Description: Donlan's Addition #2, block 5, lots 1-5

Address: 911 Maiden Lane

Ownership: Name: John C. and Jeri L. Fisher

address: 1285 Lena Lane Missoula, MT 59801



Location map or building plan with arrow north.

Historic Name: Ainsworth House

Common Name: Fisher house

Date of Construction: 1910 estimated documented

Architect: N/A

Builder: Unknown

Original Owner: A. S. Ainsworth

Original Use: residence

Present Use: residence

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

Abstract of Title: Deedbook 17, p. 84.

Plat Records: Donlan Addition #2

Tax Records: 1911 Assessment Book

Building Permits: _____

Sewer/Water Permits: _____

City Directories: Polk, 1907, p. 595.

Sanborn Maps: _____

Newspapers: Sanders County Ledger: 6/24/08

Other: Montana Power Co. photograph: A-39

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: Describe present appearance of structure/site, then contrast and compare that with it's original appearance, noting additions, alterations, and changes in materials. Discuss significant architectural features.

This 1 1/2 story rectangular-shaped, Bungalow-inspired house has an intersecting gable roof with a projecting gable-fronted bracketed porch. Supported by two square, paired wooden columns, the porch spans the entire width of the house and is open except for stuccoed side walls. The main facade has an entrance which features an oak wood door with four-light beveled glass, flanked by two double hung windows. The south elevation on the first floor is pierced by two casement windows, a bay window with quadrupled double hung windows, and one double hung window. The upper floor has one double hung window. The west (rear) facade has a basement entrance and a full width screened porch covering a door and one double hung window. The north elevation features four 12/12 double hung windows and a three-light casement on the first floor, and two, paired double hung windows on the second level. Large, over-scaled wooden brackets support the wide, overhanging eaves. There is a slight flair at the base of the house, just above the stone and mortar foundation. Two brick chimneys pierce the wood shingled roof on the south facade and toward the center of the house, and a brick and rubble stone chimney added in the 1970s is located against the north wall.

(cont.)

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

Auburn S. Ainsworth moved to Thompson Falls from Webster City, Iowa in October, 1905. A practicing attorney, he had received his law degree from Iowa State University in 1900. Ainsworth set a practice in town that also included selling insurance and real estate. He was appointed a United States Commissioner for the region by 1907. At first he and his wife rented a home from Mrs. W. B. Russell on block 22, but fire destroyed the residence in January 1908. Finding new lodgings, the Ainsworths prospered in Thompson Falls. A life-long, active member of the Republican Party, Ainsworth ran for State Representative that fall, but was one of only a few Republican candidates to lose in the local election that year. He became town attorney and served in that post almost continuously till his death. His associations with influential citizens locally and statewide allowed him to profit from such projects as St. Luke's Hospital and the Thompson Falls Power Company dam, as well as his law, insurance, and real estate business. By 1910, this prosperity allowed him to construct this 7 room and bath residence which at one time had a fountain outside on the lawn. Mrs. Ainsworth also became prominent in local social circles. She is best remembered as an eccentric lady who sponsored Christian Scientist meetings in her home for many years. As for her husband, Ainsworth's prosperity (cont.)

Footnote Sources:

Sanders County Ledger: 10/6/05; 11/16/06; 1/31/08; 10/16/08;
6/24/10; 9/22/16; 10/13/16; 12/8/16; 12/15/16; 10/31/32;
9/25/38.

Sanders County Signal: 10/18/06; 8/6/08; 9/5/08.

(cont.)

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

While no photographs or Sanborn maps could be found to show the house when it was built, it appears that it has gone through few changes. Only the north wall one-and-a-half chimney stack and the screen enclosure on the rear porch can be documented as not original. A view of the south side of the house appears in the background of a Montana Power Company photograph. It shows that side has remained unchanged.

HISTORICAL and/or ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE: Justify how the persons, important events, or historical patterns associated with structure/site lend the property significance and/or describe the ways in which the structure embodies the distinctive characteristics of a particular period, building type, or style.

Built in 1910, the Ainsworth House is significant as a well-preserved example of a Bungalow style residence, and for its association with Auburn S. Ainsworth, its original owner who was a prominent Thompson Falls attorney. Rather large in scale, the Ainsworth House utilizes numerous Bungalow features including wide, overhanging eaves supported by large brackets and a full width front porch with paired columns. The style continues inside the house with built-in leaded glass cabinets flanking the fireplace.

From 1910-1912 approximately 30 buildings were constructed in Thompson Falls, with most residences located in the rapidly-expanding area west and north of Main Street on Capitol Hill. Larger carpenter-built dwellings including the Ainsworth House and Bedard House (1912) became more common and clearly reflected a certain amount of wealth and sense of stability in the community. Craftsman and Bungalow style houses were also built during this period due, in part, to the influence of the builder/contractor

FORM PREPARED BY:

Name: John Lazuk

Address: 350 Strand, Missoula, MT

Date: October 20, 1984

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:

Acreage: Less than one acre.

USGS Quad: Thompson Falls, MT

UTM's: 11/623650/5272400

INVENTORY #54-- old Ainsworth house.

Physical Description: (cont.)

The interior has only been slightly altered. Wood beams have been added to subdivide lath and plaster wall areas in the living room. An original white quartz fireplace mantle is flanked by glassed, built-in cabinets, and a ca. 1970 fireplace has a similar mantle. A music room adjacent to the living room has stained and leaded glass cabinets built into columns which separate the two rooms. Window seats are placed in bay windows along the south wall. An original window in the bathroom has been permanently closed. A staircase with wooden balustade leads to the upper floor bedrooms which remain essentially unaltered.

A rolled asphalt, gable roofed carriage house sheathed with horizontal planks is located west of the residence. Two doors and two windows pierce both the east and west facades. The south gable end has a door and one window, and the north gable end features a window in the loft and a recent lean-to addition. Northwest of the house is a ca. 1949 rolled asphalt, shed roofed stuccoed garage. A large metal door is located on the north side with one small door on the south facade. One window is located on both the east and west elevations.

Historical Information: (cont.)

did not translate into popularity with many townspeople. Despite his active local civic career which included several stints as mayor, he is best remembered as shrewd and calculating. This may stem partly from the Edith Colby case in 1916. Miss Colby was a client of Ainsworth who one day left his office and gunned down Mr. A. C. Thomas, a well-known citizen of the town, on Main Street. Ainsworth was implicated in the killing, but the charge was later dismissed. Miss Colby was found guilty and sentenced to ten years. His calculating mind is also remembered in a later murder case in which he reportedly had his client, another woman, pretend she was a horse and rode her outside on the lawn in front of the old County Building in town. The ruse worked, and she was declared insane. Ainsworth again ran for state office, this time the senate, in 1938. He lost the election by two votes. He became well-known throughout the western Montana region and is the most prominent lawyer in the town's history. After his death, attempts to write a biography of his career were blocked by his wife and family. Rumor has it that many of his personal papers were destroyed by his wife.

Sources: (cont.)

Town Council Minute Books
Polk Register, Missoula County: 1907, p. 495; 1917-18, p. 552.
Interviews with Thompson Falls residents by John Lazuk

Significance (cont.)

Charles Doenges. The Ainsworth House is a good example of a "pattern book" Bungalow style house which flourished throughout the United States during the first two decades of the 20th century. Despite many variations the Bungalow had certain basic characteristics. Its lines were low and simple with wide projecting eaves. It had at most two stories, and large overhanging gabled porches. The Bungalow was so popular after 1905 that it became the first style to be built in quantity by the contractor and builder.

Auburn S. Ainsworth arrived in Thompson Falls in 1905 and immediately established his own law firm, selling insurance and real estate at the same time. By 1907 Ainsworth he was appointed a United States Commissioner for the region, and in 1908 he unsuccessfully ran for State Representative as a Republican. He became the town's attorney, a position he held almost continuously until his death, and he also served several terms as mayor for Thompson Falls. Ainsworth was an unsuccessful candidate for the State Senate in 1938, a bid he lost by two votes. The wealth that Ainsworth obtained through his law practice is clearly reflected in his stylish, seven room dwelling that at one time had an attractive fountain on the front lawn.