

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JUL 3 1984

date entered AUG 16 1984

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Oliver H. Hovda House

and/or common Hovda House

2. Location

street & number North Woodward Street n/a not for publication

city, town Absarokee n/a vicinity of

state Montana code 030 county Stillwater code 015

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<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 type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Herbert H. Jillson

street & number Drawer 629

city, town Absarokee n/a vicinity of state Montana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Stillwater County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Columbus state Montana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____ N/A _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Oliver H. Hovda House is a large, two story frame house of patternbook design, featuring detailing typical of the Neo-Colonial Revival style in the use of Doric column porch supports, a small roof pediment to mark the corner entry, and a small fanlight in the southern gable end. Basically square in shape, the house has a cross axial, gable roof with a one story projection on the rear for the kitchen. Located on North Woodward Street within the unincorporated town of Absarokee, Montana, the Hovda House is the only remaining early residence in the community that has not undergone substantial alteration in design over the years.

The balloon framing of the Hovda House is of rough-cut, 2"x4" lumber covered with 1/2"x6" cedar beveled siding with 4" exposed to the weather. All soffits and fascia are original. Return eaves and corner boards add interest to the exterior wall surfaces. The house was originally painted a soft yellow with white trim. The exterior has been covered with a painted asbestos hardboard. The original cedar shingle roofing has been covered with asphalt shingle. An interior chimney protrudes from the center of the roof ridgeline. The foundation is of uncoursed, native granite.

A wide porch with simple, Doric columns wraps around the western and a portion of the southern facades. Three entries to the building are provided: one on the western facade, another at the southwest corner, and a kitchen door at the rear. Wide wooden steps and a small roof pediment with a relief garland decoration in the tympanum marks the corner entry.

All operable windows of the Hovda House are 1/1 double hung sash. Two large paned, fixed windows flank the western entry. A tri-part window is set in the western gable end with a small, half-circle window placed above.

The interior of the Hovda House is plastered throughout with oak trim on the first floor and the painted fir trim upstairs. All flooring is maple on the first floor hall, parlor, and dining room and clear fir elsewhere. The exterior doors are original and paneled oak; the interior doors are paneled fir except the pocket doors which are oak.

The present owners plan to restore the original clapboard siding and re-roof the building with cedar shingles.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** ca. 1900      **Builder/Architect** Oliver H. Hovda assisted by Jacob K.

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)** Wagner, Contractor

The Oliver H. Hovda House was built within a decade of the opening of the Crow Indian Reservation for white settlement and the founding of the town of Absarokee in 1893. As the only building in the community that remains in its original form from the period of early townsite development, Hovda House is significant due to its association with Oliver H. Hovda, a man of considerable local economic importance in the history of Stillwater County.

Hovda, together with his uncle, Sever Simonson, and his cousin, Lee Simonson, founded the town of Absarokee and together constructed the primary buildings that established Absarokee as a permanent commercial center for the area between the railhead at Columbus and the Absaroka Mountains to the south. This outpost consisted of a trading post, saloon, livery stable, hotel, and blacksmith's shop. Hovda became Absarokee's first postmaster in 1893. The original trading post evolved into the Absarokee Co-operative Trading Company, managed by Oliver Hovda. Hovda was a rancher, livestock broker, businessman, and financier who lived in Absarokee for 23 years. In addition to managing an extensive sheep raising operation, he established the community's first bank and opened a second bank and store at Bearcreek, a coal mining town near his summer sheep range in Carbon County. Hovda's financial interests extended to investments in mine development and ownership of the Carlin Hotel in Billings.

The Oliver H. Hovda House is a good example of an unpretentious residence of "pattern book" design that was built by a local contractor. The building retains a high degree of historic architectural integrity.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Book 7 of Deeds, Page 477, Carbon County, Montana, before 1910

Billings Gazette, 4 October 1958.

They Gazed on the Beartooths, Reporter Printing & Supply, Billings, Montana Page 251, 252, Jan Annin, 1964

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property .48

Quadrangle name Absarokee

Quadrangle scale 1 in 24,000

UTM References

UTM References Unavailable

A 

Zone	Easting			Northing					

B 

Zone	Easting			Northing					

C 

Zone	Easting			Northing					

D 

Zone	Easting			Northing					

E 

Zone	Easting			Northing					

F 

Zone	Easting			Northing					

G 

Zone	Easting			Northing					

H 

Zone	Easting			Northing					

### Verbal boundary description and justification

North 1/3 of Block 3, Original Townsite

NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Township 4S Range 18E of unincorporated town of Absarokee, MT

Latitude: 109° 26' 23" Longitude: 45° 31' 19"

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
n/a			

state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John P. Rogers/Architect

organization Design Innovation

date 4/4/84

street & number P.O. Box 748, 663 S. Millward

telephone (307) 733-7675

city or town Jackson

state Wyoming

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

*Marcella Shoff*

title SHPO

date 6-28-84

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 8/16/84

for *Alfred Byers*  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration