

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED APR 8 1975
DATE ENTERED JUN 5 1975

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Spearfish Historic Commercial District

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 544, 545, 603-645, 701 Main, 114-136 West Illinois, 701-703 Fifth Street ^{St.}

CITY, TOWN

Spearfish

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

No. 2

STATE

South Dakota

VICINITY OF

CODE

046

COUNTY

Lawrence

CODE

081

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple Ownership

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Spearfish

VICINITY OF

STATE

South Dakota

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Lawrence County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Deadwood

STATE

South Dakota

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

South Dakota Historic Sites Survey

DATE

April 1974

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Historical Preservation Center, USD Alumni House

CITY, TOWN

Vermillion

STATE

South Dakota

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

At the edge of the northern Black Hills in Lawrence County is Spearfish, South Dakota. From the mouth of nearby scenic Spearfish Canyon flows Spearfish Creek, that cuts through the town and upon whose banks pioneers founded the city. The town is nicknamed the Queen City, because the hills surrounding three sides simulate a crown. These geological points are: Lookout Peak to the east; Crow Peak to the west; and Spearfish Mountain to the south. Amidst this natural splendor is the Spearfish Historic Commercial District.

The district consists of twenty-four separate structures in the downtown core. It includes both sides of the 600 block and the corner lots on the 500 block of Main Street, both sides of the 100 block of West Illinois, and two lots of the southwest corner of the 700 block on Fifth Street. The district layout resembles an inverted "L" in which all buildings face unusually wide streets--a traditional characteristic of Spearfish.

The Spearfish Commercial District reflects a turn of the century business area. Sixteen of the twenty-four buildings were constructed prior to 1911, and only four since 1930. The physical scale is equally divided between one and two story structures, a majority of which are adjoining. The facades are covered with a variety of materials including brick, stucco, clapboard, and sandstone. The latter material is the most interesting, since it was quarried from the Spearfish formation located in the surrounding hills. Colorfully called Sundance Sandstone, this indigenous product adds an important visual element to the district.

Some of the important buildings are:

612-630 Main (1900): The two story, Mathew's Opera House Block, is the largest building in the district, stretching about half the length of the block. Its facing consists of gray colored brick and masonry materials. At the southern end of the structure, just above the flat roofline, a peaked roof appears that houses the opera house. A stamp metal cornice features brackets and dentils, and below this, lapped and indented brick embellishments are seen. Three types of surrounds adorn the window heads: flat, round arched, and arch stepped. String course, with interruptions by pilasters at intervals, forms the window sills. The majority of second story windows are rectangular in shape and about four feet high and two feet wide. Although not pure in style, the structure design suggests an Italian Renaissance building.

701 Fifth Street (1893): The Lown Building is the best period structure in the district because it remains unspoiled by modern additions and also because of its creative use of the native sandstone. A main feature of the building is an engaged second story rectangular tower with stone balustrade with an Egyptian column as supporting device from the ground. The flat roofline features cresting that resembles chimney stacks. Round edged stone acting as dentils adorn the cornice line and intricate designed stone work used on the front facade. Radiating voussoirs and flat surrounds of cut stone form the window surrounds along with lugsills. The store front displays paneled wood below the windows, stained glass, double door with sidelights and light above. Pilasters of rough and smooth stone divides the rectangular windows of the structure.

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544 Main (1895): The John Wolzmut Building is a two story cut sandstone structures. It is not of any particular style but the use of the sandstone and various embellishments creates an attractive appearance. This flat roofed building features a corbel table below the eaves along with rectangular shaped cresting spaced at various intervals. A small portion of the front has had some modernization. Offset to the right is a small period door leading to the upstairs. On the left side, two round arched entries appear with radiating sandstone. The other openings have flat and lugsills for surrounds.

Other principle buildings include:

604-608 Main (1900): The Lown Building is a two story cut sandstone structure. It remains a good period structure with a few alterations on the first floor. Some of its architectural features are corbeling, cresting, lugsills, and pilasters.

605 Main (1900): This two story Italianate structure uses a light colored brick as its facing. A bracketed-dentilated stamp metal cornice appears along with brick designs. The building also displays quoins, pilasters, and string course.

629 and 631 Main: These identical buildings are one story with native sandstone used for their facing. The cornice design is grooved sandstone along with brackets at the corners of the building that are extensions of pilasters.

122 West Illinois (1894): The Odd Fellows building is a two story cut sandstone structure. The building features a dentilated and bracketed cornice along with segmental surrounds and keystones.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input 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

1876

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Spearfish, South Dakota, like many Black Hills' communities, had its origins in the 1876 gold rush. Alfred Gay and J.E. Smith, townsite speculators, founded and platted a town on March 29 along the banks of Spearfish Creek. Their site was surrounded by mountains on three sides and appeared to be an ideal place for commercial and community development.

Yet many problems deterred the growth of the city for the next twenty years. Indians threatened its existence in the early months as the Sioux made their last major assault on white encroachment of the Paha Sapa. In 1878 the federal government reduced the geographical size of the town from 640 to 320 acres because of insufficient population. By 1890 fewer than 700 people resided in Spearfish but extension of the Burlington Railroad from Deadwood encouraged optimism. Local officials hoped to establish a gold processing center in Spearfish but the boom period for that industry was in decline and nothing came of it. Furthermore, the Burlington tracks washed out and were never rebuilt. Despite these failures and disappointments, Spearfish failed to die--a testimony to its endurance as other towns succumbed to lesser threats than these.

The natural setting played a prominent role in Spearfish's success. The unpolluted and swift flowing creek attracted a federal fish hatchery in 1899. The Homestake Mining Company constructed a hydroelectric plant in 1911. The unspoiled area also held tourist appeal which local promoters exploited. Tourism received a major impetus in 1938 when Joseph Meir, "world famous Christus portrayer," selected Spearfish as the site for his PASSION PLAY. By 1960 around five million people had attended the show. At the same time, excellent nearby grasslands attracted ranchers who used Spearfish as their supply center.

The increased tempo in business activity around the turn of the century is evident in the construction dates of the buildings. Thirteen structures were built between 1899-1910 with nine of these in 1899 or 1900. Six are outstanding period structures that reflect the significant commercial development of the city. Therefore, the area manifests a sense of time and place so important to the quality of a district.

The commercial architecture constitutes a vital aspect of the Spearfish district. Window surrounds, cornices, parapets, and building materials are characteristically from the Victorian Period. The use of sundance sandstone is the most important element in the district and provides a unique flavor to the town. The most impressive single structure, however, is the Matthews Opera House Block which is faced with gray brick. Its imposing facade combines with other stone structures to create a homogeneous streetscape. There is no doubt that these buildings and elements create an excellent example of an early twentieth century commercial area in South Dakota.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Jelbert, James D. "Spearfish," LAWRENCE COUNTY. ed. Mildred Fielder. Lead, South Dakota: Seaton Publishing Company, 1960. PP. 59-68.

Szalay, Rev. Eugene, personal interview with Scott Gerloff, April 1974.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 14

JTM OK
HL

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,3 | 59,088,0 | 4,92,67,6,0

B 1,3 | 59,088,0 | 4,92,65,4,0

ZONE EASTING NORTHING
c 1,3 | 59,060,0 | 4,92,65,4,0

ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D 1,3 | 59,060,0 | 4,92,67,6,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The southern boundary of Spearfish Commercial District starts at the junction of Hudson and Main Streets and includes the buildings on the southwest and southeast corners. From this point it runs north along the 600 block of Main Street and includes all buildings that face the street. (603-645 Main and 604-644 Main) At the junction of West Illinois Street and Main, the line turns west along Illinois. This includes 701 Main which front opening sets at an angle to the junction. The line then proceeds west including all the structures facing Illinois until it intersects

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Scott Gerloff, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Historical Preservation Center

DATE

January 1975

STREET & NUMBER

USD Alumni House

TELEPHONE

605-677-5314

CITY OR TOWN

Vermillion

STATE

South Dakota

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.

SIGNATURE

[Handwritten Signature]

4-3-1975

TITLE

Cultural Preservation District / SHPO

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

6/5/75

ATTEST:

DATE

JUN 4 1975

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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with Fifth Street. At this point it runs north along the Lown building (701 5th) property line and adjacent building (703 5th). Thus, the district resembles an inverted "L".