

SEP 11 1986

INVENTORY SHEET FOR GROUP NOMINATIONS: IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, BOISE, IDAHO

NOMINATION: Historic Resources of Potlatch

SITE NAME: Commercial Historic District

SITE NUMBER: 1

LOCATION: Pine Street between Seventh and Fifth

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Multiple; see attached list

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Potlatch

ACREAGE: Approx. 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: The Commercial Historic District includes the described properties and the land on which they sit, tax parcel 1919 in block 14, tax parcel 1686 of lot 12 and the north 32.2 feet of lot 13 in block 30, tax parcel 1841 adjacent to block 27, all in the Potlatch townsite; and portion of the Burlington Northern railroad right of way bounded by the middle of Sixth Street on the west, the Washington, Idaho, and Montana Railway main line on the south, the west edge of vacated Fifth Street on the east, and the south edge of Fir Street on the north; see enclosed sketch map.

UTM(S): 11/507600/5196250

DATE OR PERIOD: 1906-1917

ARCHITECT OR BUILDER: C. Ferris White;
A. M. Homes

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Industry, architecture, community planning

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

CONDITION: Fair to good, altered, original site

DESCRIPTION:

The Commercial Historic District includes seven buildings. This compact district is located in a three-block area. The western boundary is marked by the cluster of four buildings (sites 1-4) at the intersection of Sixth Street and the former mill entrance. Site 6 marks the eastern boundary, while sites 5 and 7--directly across Sixth Street from one another--are between. All of the buildings are in fair or good condition. The district is bordered on the west by the open meadow where the mill was formerly located; on the southwest by open space; on the southeast by a steep incline leading to the lower Nob Hill residential area; and on the north and east by commercial buildings. The district also includes Washington, Idaho and Montana Railway engine number 1, resting between site 1 and Sixth Street; and a large boulder monument to William Deary between site 5 and Sixth Street.

INVENTORY:

1. Storage Building (Contributory): This is a two-and-one-half-story building with a concrete foundation and a gable overhang metal roof with exposed rafters. The frame building faces west and is sided with painted clapboard. There are two doors on the east and four on the west. Its numerous windows are single sash with 16 lights each. Several windows have been broken and some are boarded over. The metal roof is probably an alteration. Other than that, the building is much intact.

2. Produce Cellar (Contributory): The produce cellar was built in either 1910 or 1911. It does not appear on the Sanborn Fire Insurance map for 1910, but is mentioned in a July 1911 newspaper article. It is built into a bank with a brick and concrete foundation and a gambrel metal roof with overhanging eaves and exposed rafters. The building faces west and has double wooden sliding doors on the west. Historically there were also doors on the east. The walls are brick with vertical board-and-batten siding on the west. There is one single sash window on the west with four lights, and two double-hung sash windows on the east, each with one over one lights. The metal roof and vertical siding on the west are probably alterations. The building served as a produce cellar for the Potlatch Mercantile Company, serving both Potlatch residents and company employees in logging camps. The following description is from the July 21, 1911, Palouse (Washington) Republic: "The vegetable cellar . . . is 40 x 60 feet, built into the side of the hill . . . The walls are solid brick 14 inches thick, and extend downward 14 feet to a cement foundation. Wagons are unloaded at the upper or east end. Near the entrance are the large scales, and chutes upon which to slide or roll the vegetables into the pits below. There are ten bins, five on each side of a central passage, each 12 x 17 feet and seven feet high. The capacity of the cellar is 25 [railroad] carloads . . . Each bin is constructed separately, and in a manner to admit a circulation of air under the floor and along the sides."

3. Creamery (Contributory): This small, frame, one-story building has a concrete foundation and a hipped overhanging metal roof with exposed rafters that some informants remember as being a creamery. It was probably built in 1906 and probably designed by C. Ferris White. It faces west, bordering the Washington, Idaho and Montana Railway depot lying just south of that building. It is sided with painted clapboard. There are doors on the east and west and seven single sash windows with four lights each. Additions include the metal roof; new single doors replacing former double doors; and a shed-roofed lean-to on the west.

4. Washington, Idaho and Montana Railway Depot (Contributory): This two-story frame building was constructed in 1906, the first major building completed in Potlatch by architect C. Ferris White. It has a concrete foundation and a hipped overhanging shake roof with exposed rafters. The building faces west, with four doors on that side and four on the east. It is sided with painted clapboards on the main level and painted wood shingles on the upper. The depot has numerous single and double-hung sash windows. Its exterior is essentially unchanged from the time of construction. The W. I. & M. Railway is a short-line railroad that runs from Palouse, Washington, to Bovill, Idaho. It was constructed as a logging railroad by the Potlatch Lumber Company, but also carried passengers, mail, and freight. In addition to serving as the town's passenger and freight depot, this building also housed the first administrative offices of the lumber company and at one time had apartments on the second floor.

5. Gymnasium (Contributory): This two-story frame building, designed by architect A. M. Holmes in 1916, is the largest in Potlatch. It has a gambrel overhang shake roof with exposed rafters. The gym faces south with one door on the south, three on the north, and one on the west. It is sided with painted clapboards and has a stoop porch on the west with a shed-roof overhang. There is also a stoop on the north second level. There is a balustrated open porch that runs the entire length of the south facade and wraps around to the east and

west sides. It is supported with 16 Doric columns. The building's numerous windows are single and double-hung sash, many with multiple lights. There is also a decorative circular window on the upper floor on the south. Alterations include a new door on the south; a window replacement on the west; and a partial enclosure of the main porch on the east. The town's original gymnasium burned in 1915 and this replacement opened in 1916. It was the center of most indoor social and athletic activities in the communities. It is described in two articles from the Palouse (Washington) Republic: "It will [have] . . . hardwood floors and all the equipment that could be desired. The main gym floor will be 60 x 65 feet, and in addition to this there will be four club rooms. The building will be of frame construction and is built as a home for the Potlatch Amateur Athletic Club and will afford sport and recreation for many of the young men of the town." (23 June 1916) "The building was erected by the Potlatch Lumber Company at an expense of \$15,000... In addition to [the main gymnasium] there are a ball room, lounging and club rooms, office, . . . showers and locker room. The building is constructed of clear cedar. The flooring throughout is of rock maple." (8 December 1916) In front of the building is a large monument erected in 1921. It is made of two large boulders with a bronze plaque and is dedicated to the memory of William Deary, first general manager of the company, who died in 1913.

6. Implement Store (Contributory): This two-story frame building has a concrete foundation and a gambrel wood shake overhang roof with exposed rafters. It faces north with a door on the north and three on the west. There is a frame ramp on the south leading to two large double doors, formerly used by horse and wagon teams. The building is sided with painted shiplap and vertical siding on the west. Its numerous windows are single- and double-hung sash. Alterations include two casement windows on the west and vertical siding on the west. The lumber company's Townsite Department was responsible for maintenance on all community buildings, streets and grounds, and this building served as the storage warehouse for the department.

7. Administrative Office (Contributory): This two-and-one-half-story frame building was constructed in 1917 as the main administrative office building for the company. When the town was incorporated in the 1950s it became city hall. It has a concrete and brick foundation with a gable with return wood shake roof with overhanging enclosed eaves. There are dormers with eaves returns on the north and south sides. The building faces north with two glass doors on the north, two doors to the basement on the west, and five doors on the south. It is sided with painted clapboards. The open post porch on the south has six Doric columns, and a balustrade running the length of the facade with the southwest corner enclosed. The northern pedimented portico is centered, supported by two doric columns and has a balustrade. Its numerous windows are mostly double-hung sash of one light over one. The only alterations are the addition of two metal blowers on the roof.

SIGNIFICANCE:

This district contains some of the most historically significant buildings in Potlatch. The lumber company's administrative office (site 7) was the administrative headquarters of the entire company operations, including townsite administration. When the company sold its town, this became the city hall. The gymnasium was the site of most town social events, ranging from athletic contests to card parties to dances. The W. I. & M. Depot was one of the most active locations in the community, with several trains stopping there each day.

The Commercial Historic District contains Potlatch's seven best-preserved commercial structures, all located in a compact, three-block area. Two of the buildings were constructed in 1906, one in 1910-1911, one in 1916, and one in 1917. Construction dates for the two other buildings are unknown. C. Ferris White was the architect of the railroad depot (site 4) and probably the architect of the creamery (site 3). A. M. Holmes was the architect of the gymnasium (site 5). Architects of the other structures are unknown. In addition to the seven buildings, the commercial district includes a boulder monument near the gymnasium, erected in 1921 in memory of William Deary, first general manager of the Potlatch Lumber Company. Also included in the district is Washington, Idaho and Montana Railway Engine Number 1, on public display in front of the storage building (site 1). The significance of the Commercial Historic District is in its portrayal of the administrative, commercial, and recreational center of a company town.

There are currently no preservation or restoration activities taking place within the district. From time to time town residents discuss the possibility of restoring the W. I. & M. Depot, but no action has been taken yet. The owners of the gymnasium have expressed an interest in possibly renovating their building, utilizing the tax credits available if the building is placed on the National Register, an incentive which could also spur action on the depot. The city hall has been very well maintained over the years, and in fact all of the buildings are preservable.

All structures in the commercial historic district are in their original locations. Like all Potlatch buildings, these are not structures of exquisite architectural design. They are all frame buildings, and were all built for function. In that sense they are typical of lumber company town architecture, and the historical value of the district lies in this typicality. The vast Potlatch Lumber Company business operations were conducted from this district, which was the headquarters for both the lumber company and the railroad. The district had a tremendous impact not only on the development of the town of Potlatch, but on the entire Palouse region. Most of the prominent individuals associated with the Potlatch Lumber Company had offices in the administrative building, and like all town residents, regularly used the gymnasium and the depot.

There are no intrusions within the district. The district is bordered on the west and southwest by open space, the former site of the Potlatch Lumber Company mill; on the north and east by commercial buildings, most of which are of recent constructions; and on the southeast by the lower Nob Hill residential district. Therefore, the district represents the only remaining concentration of largely unaltered, historic commercial buildings in Potlatch.

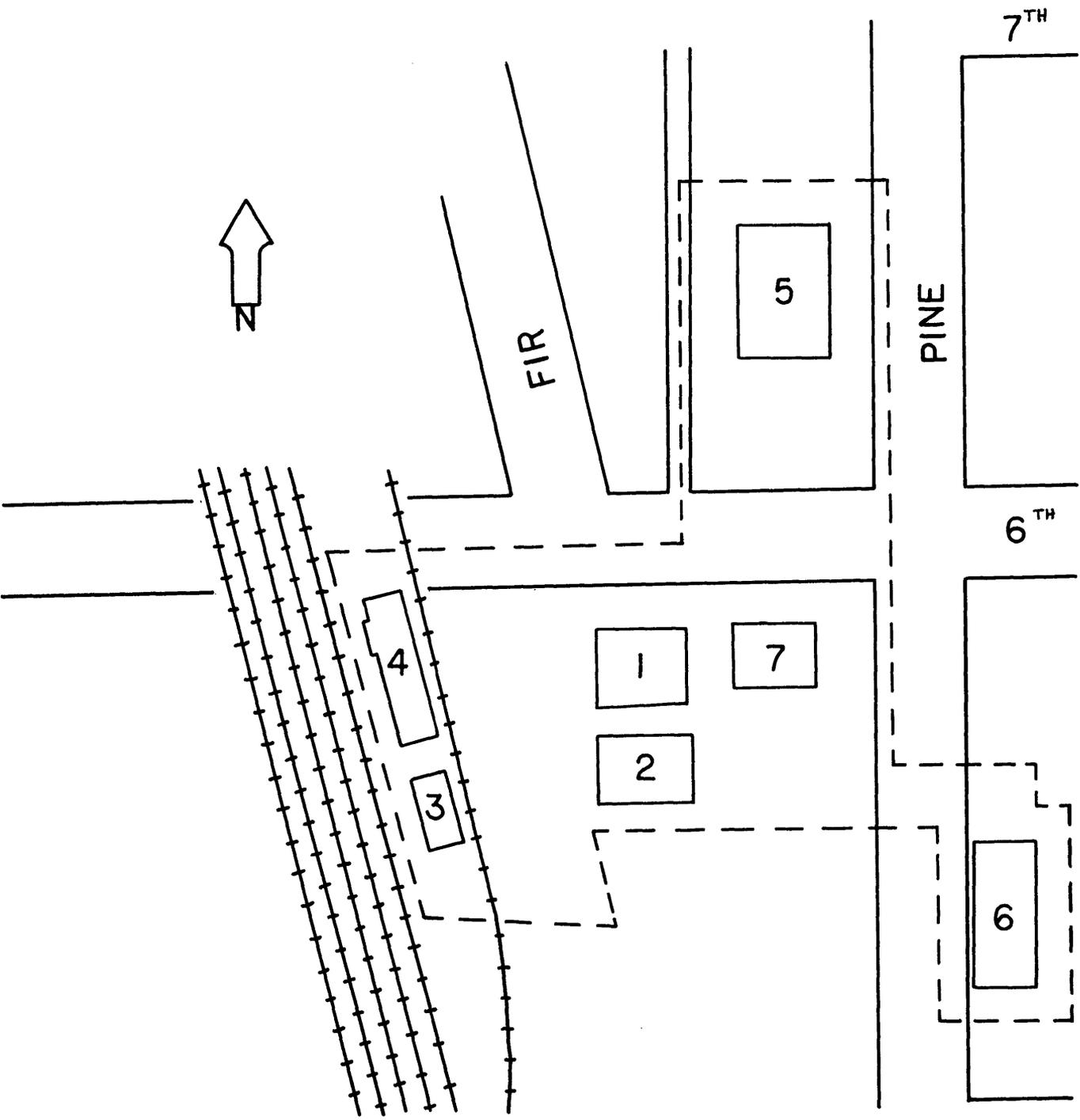
The district is quite distinct from commercial districts in nearby communities in that all of the buildings are of wood frame construction, whereas in most neighboring communities such districts are largely of brick construction. Potlatch had only two brick structures in its commercial district. One was the Mercantile, built in 1906 and destroyed by fire in the 1960s. The other was the automobile garage, constructed in 1916. This building still stands, but there are several intrusions between it and the commercial district, and the surveyors did not deem it individually eligible for the National Register.

Historic Resources of Potlatch: Commercial Historic District

ITEM 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY:

COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT OWNERS LIST (SITE 1)

Storage Building (Site 1) Across from W. I & M. Depot	City of Potlatch Potlatch, ID 83855
Produce Cellar (Site 2) Across from W. I. & M. Depot	City of Potlatch Potlatch, ID 83855
Creamery (Site 3) South of and adjacent to W. I. & M. Depot	Burlington Northern Railroad Local Address: Potlatch, ID 83855
W. I. & M. Depot (Site 4)	Burlington Northern Railroad Local Address: Potlatch, ID 83855
Gymnasium (Site 5)	Kermit Spence Box 487 Potlatch, ID 83855
Implement Store (Site 6) South of shopping center on Pine	Harold Pike Box 537 Potlatch, ID 83855
Administrative Office (Site 7) Southwest corner Sixth and Pine	City of Potlatch Potlatch, ID 83855



COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
POTLATCH MRA SITE *1