NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 (Expires 5/31/2012)

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

369

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Northern Hotel

other names/site number 24YL1849

2. Location

street & number 19 North Broadway [ ] not for publication

city or town Billings [ ] vicinity

state Montana code MT County Yellowstone code 111 zip code 59101

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ **national** ___ **statewide** _x_ **local**

Mark F. Baumler / SHPO 4/23/2013

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

MONTANA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

Joy Edson Beall 6.12.13

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Northern Hotel
Name of Property

Yellowstone County, MT
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [X] private
- [ ] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- [X] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	**Total**

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC-hotel
COMMERCE/TRADE-business; specialty store; professional association; restaurant
SOCIAL-clubhouse

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC-hotel

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/simplistic

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: BRICK; GLASS; STONE
roof: SYNTHETICS-membrane
other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

For most of the twentieth century, the Northern Hotel was the only first-class lodging in Billings, Montana. The ten-story Northern Hotel fronts on North Broadway to the west and First Avenue North to the north and is located in the heart of downtown Billings, Montana. The east and south facades face onto alleys. The urban setting is generally unchanged since the 1942 opening date of the hotel. The hotel has a square footprint composed of a two-story base surmounted by an L-shaped eight-story tower rising from the northwest corner of the building and the two-story flat-roofed base situated within the L. The upper eight stories consist of guest rooms. The ground floor has large fixed storefront windows set in polished rainbow granite veneer walls. The two primary entrances on North Broadway and First Avenue North are distinguished by large flat-roofed steel frame marquis. The upper stories are all composed of brick in a Flemish bond with projecting bands of Indiana limestone on the second floor only. The fenestration on all walls is symmetrical and all window openings are filled with new glass. Mechanical penthouses stand on the flat roof. The Northern Hotel is the single contributing resource for this nomination. This nomination recognizes the iconic place of the Northern in Billings' history.

Narrative Description

The Northern Hotel is located in downtown Billings, Montana at the southeast corner of the intersection of North Broadway Street and First Avenue North. The hotel is located within an urban setting with business blocks on the other three quadrants of the intersection. Billings is the largest city in Montana with a population of over 100,000 and serves as the commercial, industrial and medical center for eastern Montana, northern Wyoming and western North Dakota.

More generally, the site is located in the Yellowstone River valley of south central Montana. Eagle sandstone rimrocks delineate the valley to the north. The sandstone formed in a shallow marine depositional environment about 75 million years ago when the area was part of a barrier island on the Interior Cretaceous Seaway. As the waters of the inland sea retreated to the east, it left behind depositional material that eventually became the sandstone that dominates the Billings area landscape today, serving as a very strong visual reminder of the area's ancient history.[1]

The area was well known to Native Americans for thousands of years. Alkali Creek, about two miles east of the property, was frequented by Montana's aboriginal residents and functioned both as a bison procurement area (because of the high cliffs bordering the creek's valley) and as a travel corridor to the bench lands north of Billings and into the Musselshell River Valley beyond. There are several archaeological sites in the vicinity of the property with occupations dating back at least 4,000 years.

Originally established in 1904, the Northern Hotel was the city's most elegant hotel and served as a meeting place for the city's residents. After a catastrophic fire destroyed the hotel in 1940, a new one was immediately built to take its place. The newly constructed Northern Hotel continued to function in its original capacity as a hostelry and significant gathering place. The current Northern Hotel is a ten-story Modern style building. It has a two-story square footprint with an L-shaped eight story tower situated at the northwest corner of the building facing onto North Broadway and First Avenue North. The building is situated with 133 feet along North Broadway and 133 feet along First Avenue North. The hotel is approximately 129 feet in height, including the two mechanical penthouses. The Northern Hotel stands on a full poured concrete foundation and has a full basement. The building is constructed of reinforced concrete and brick laid in a Flemish bond with clay tile walls on the interior. The existing footprint of the building occupies the same footprint as the 1904 hotel.

The Northern Hotel was constructed in three phases. The original ten-story 1942 hotel rises from the southeast corner of First Avenue North and North Broadway. The second construction phase occurred in 1950 with the construction of nine stories above the North Broadway original one-story wing. The third construction phase in 1960 expanded the original two-story portion inside the L and completes the footprint of the Northern Hotel today.[2]

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[1] David Alt and Donald W. Hyndman, *Roadside Geology of Montana*, (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing, 1986), 187.

[2] The architectural firm of Holabird and Root served as architects for both the first and second phase.

The lower facades of the Northern faces First Avenue North to the north and North Broadway to the west. A reinforced concrete column defines the corner of the Northern at First Avenue North and North Broadway. This corner has a canted entry that holds an aluminum frame glass door. Above the entry where the walls meet is a new 40' blade LED sign that reads NORTHERN HOTEL.[3] All exterior lower facade walls are covered with "rainbow granite" from the Cold Springs Granite Company, Cold Springs, Minnesota.[4] Both facades exhibit new storefront aluminum frame thermal windows in original openings that reflect the historic profile and mullion layout.[5] The primary entrances on each facade are in their original recessed openings approached by tile flooring and accented by newly introduced glass blocks. Both entrances hold stainless steel double doors with wheat stalk panels topped by a transom filled with glass blocks and displaying the Northern logo.[6]

On First Avenue North, the facade retains some original window openings along its length. The windows across the wall are spaced in accordance with interior steel reinforced concrete columns. The first floor exhibits three new storefront aluminum frame thermal windows within original openings with historic profiles and mullion layout. A wide header board with brow detail spans the wall above all openings. The original header supported the awning boxes that extended over shop doors and windows. The original steel framing for the flat-roofed "marquis" (canopy) above the primary entrance is intact. The marquis is wrapped in stainless steel. A secondary entrance that accesses the hotel restaurant is situated left of the primary entrance and mirrors the larger primary entrances but with a small flat projection over the door.[7] Five storefront windows flank this door (two to the right and three to the left). These new aluminum frame thermal windows display multiple panes (12 each) and reflect original 1942 multi-pane windows.

The Broadway lower facade is similar to the First Avenue North lower façade. It has the primary entrance nearly centered on the wall of the original portion of the hotel. A steel frame flat-roofed "marquis" identical to the First Avenue North entrance extends over the primary entrance. Four storefront windows are situated left (north) of the entrance. To the right (south) of the entry are six storefront windows. All storefront windows hold new aluminum frame thermal units within original openings that reflect the historic profile and mullion layout. The only exception is a smaller storefront window that replaces a small entry.

The symmetrical fenestration on the upper facades along North Broadway and First Avenue North begins at the second floor. There are eight window openings on each floor of the north façade and eleven on each floor of the west facade. The window openings measure 5' 4" high X 4' wide and the original frames are filled with new thermal fixed single-lite units.[8] A block of blond brick coursing visually connects the windows. The window pattern on the north façade is 1-6-1 and the window pattern on the west façade is 1-6-3-1. The second story is distinctive with projecting bands of Indiana limestone that frame the row of six windows centered on the walls.

The L-shaped guest rooms section of the hotel rises eight stories from the northwest corner of the building, paralleling North Broadway and First Avenue North. These eight stories continue the same fenestration pattern begun at the second story minus the projecting limestone bands of the second story. All windows are filled with new single-lite fixed thermal units found elsewhere in the hotel. The L-shaped section is flat-roofed and surmounted by brick mechanical penthouses on the east and west. The roof displays stone coping.

The south end of the L-shaped section along North Broadway was added to the hotel in 1950 and visually and materially matches the exterior of the 1942 hotel building. An exterior metal fire escape dominates the wall. The fire escape is flanked by single windows vertically oriented on each floor. The windows are all thermal fixed single-lite units within original frames.

The fire escape is metal with eight landings. It is reached by openings at the end of each interior hallway. There is a landing on each floor and metal staircases running diagonally between the floors. The fire escape terminates on the second floor at a retractable metal staircase.

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[3] A 1930 historic photograph of the original hotel shows a Northern Hotel sign also once stood at the same location.

[4] The Cold Springs Granite Company is still in operation and the few new panels required for the renovation came from the same quarry.

[5] Both lower facades previously exhibited replacement fixed windows installed in the early 1980s during a major renovation.

[6] The Northern Hotel logo is the letter "N" within a circle defined by a ornamental motif.

[7] Originally this entrance was approximately 20 feet to the east.

[8] Replacement windows installed in the early 1980s during a major renovation were all single-lite fixed thermopane units.

The east end of the L-shaped section along First Avenue North has three columns of windows arranged vertically. The northern corner column of windows is the same as the front façade with openings measuring 5' 4" X 4' and filled with single-lite fixed thermal windows. The second column displays small square openings whose windows have been removed during the present renovation and the third column exhibits fixed single-lite vertical rectangular shaped windows, all filled with new thermal fixed-lite windows in original openings.

The rear façade of the L-shaped section also displays symmetrical fenestration. Each of the eight floors of the L-shaped section exhibits eleven windows on the east elevation and six windows on the south elevation. The primary windows on the rear facades are the same dimensions as the front facades, measuring 5'4" high X 4' wide. The rear facades also exhibit narrower windows of the same height. All display new single-lite fixed thermal windows like the north and west elevations. There is no blond brick between windows on the rear walls.

The roof is surmounted by brick mechanical penthouses. The structure on the west wing of the guest rooms is larger than that on the north wing. Both have flat roof and mechanical openings on walls. The façade (west wall) of the west penthouse has "NORTHERN" in four-foot high LED letters.[9] There is an entry with a metal door and single fixed lite on the north elevation of the penthouse and a fixed six-lite round window centrally located on the elevation. On the east façade is an exterior metal ladder reaching to the roof. There are three four-lite fixed windows on the east façade and an entry on the south elevation. The east mechanical penthouse is smaller than the structure on the west. Entries are on the north and south elevations. The west façade has an exterior metal ladder reaching to the roof. There are four fixed four-lite casement windows on the rear façade. At the top of the east wall of the east penthouse is the Northern logo, a LED lit sign made of aluminum housing with a lexan face.

The portion of the two-story base of the hotel not surmounted by the eight-story L-shaped section fills the inside of the "L." This flat-roofed portion encompasses the original 1940s banquet area plus the 1960s addition. Stone coping finishes the top of all walls. The south wall faces the east/west alley and is primarily an uninterrupted wall. It has no windows, a few vents and two recessed entrances at either end of the 1960s addition.

The east wall faces the north/south alley. The east wall consists of the original two-story east wing at its north end, the 1960s two-story addition at its south end, and a combination two-story and three-story section in the center portion of the wall that serves the back-of-the-house functions. Both the east wing portion and the 1960s addition have no openings. Mechanical vents pierce the south portion of the east wall.

The center portion of the east wall contains numerous original openings, all of which hold new single-lite fixed thermal windows. A small rectangular mechanical penthouse occupies the third floor and holds several small two-over-two wood frame windows. The second-story also holds several small two-over-two and three-over-three wood frame windows of varying sizes plus some filled-in openings. At ground level, two large 16-lite metal frame original windows have been in-filled with brick. Openings on the remainder of the wall also appear original and consist of a large metal double doors, a newer metal door, and several two-over-two wood frame window openings.

Integrity

The Northern Hotel retains integrity on its exterior and stands in its original footprint. The urban setting of the Northern Hotel is basically the same since its construction in 1942 and the building continues to dominate the busy intersection at North Broadway and First Avenue North.

Original materials like brick walls, rainbow granite and stone coping used in the construction of the Northern Hotel are intact and remain important components of the hotel. The minimal architectural detailing and ornamentation on the Northern Hotel reflects its original design and character. The highly polished rainbow granite veneer on the ground floor, the projecting limestone band on the second floor and alternate blond brick set between window openings at the upper stories are the only subtle hints of ornamentation on the exterior of the building. On the west wall of the west mechanical penthouse, new aluminum LED letters read "NORTHERN" and serve as a decorative element. Although not original to the hotel, it is stylistically very similar to the original sign, which read "NORTHERN HOTEL." The Northern logo sign is situated at the top of the east wall of the east penthouse and replaces the original NORTHERN HOTEL sign that was removed in the 1980s.

In 1950 (within the period of significance), the Northern Hotel expanded and added nine floors on the top of the original one-story south wing, making the addition the same height as the 1942 hotel. Designed by the same architectural firm of Holabird and Root that designed the original 1942 hotel, the 1950 addition stylistically matches the original 1942 hotel with the same color brick and fenestration.

[9] When first installed, the sign read NORTHERN HOTEL in neon letters but changed to just NORTHERN in the 1980s.

In 1960 (also within the period of significance), a two-story addition expanded the hotel within the "L" of the building and contributes to the overall integrity of the building. This addition continues the same Flemish bond brick pattern as the rest of the building and is fairly non-descript and non-intrusive to the overall integrity of the Northern Hotel.

The lower street facades along North Broadway and First Avenue North have experienced alterations over the years, primarily to their display window openings and entrances. A major renovation in the early 1980s introduced aluminum sash replacement windows and reconfigured entrances. Regardless of these changes, the original entrances are in the same location covered by the original flat-roofed steel frame marquis and a few original display window openings are intact. Today, new windows fill original openings and exhibit storefront aluminum framing with thermal windows that reflect the original profile and mullion layout.

On the upper stories, the dimensions of original window openings, numbers, and the locations are intact. The most notable change to the exterior of the building occurred during the early 1980s renovation when all original three divided lite windows were replaced with fixed single-lite thermopanes. The windows today are all in the original openings and exhibit new fixed single-lite thermal units.

On St. Patrick's Day 2013, the Northern Hotel celebrated its grand opening after four years of renovation. The overall exterior of the Northern Hotel reflects the original appearance and character of the 1942 building and 1950 addition designed by the architectural firm of Holabird and Root. Commercial buildings designed by the firm in the 1930s and 1940s were generally devoid of exterior ornamentation and displayed rather simple and stark architectural features.

The Northern Hotel's interior lacks integrity and no longer reflects its original historic appearance and character. In the early 1980s, the Northern Hotel experienced a complete renovation. The architect's original design intent of the lobby, restaurant and saloon has been lost. This renovation reduced the number of guest rooms from 212 to 160 although retaining original hallways. The second floor retains the original banquet halls from the 1942 and 1960 construction where many important events occurred in Eastern Montana. The original elevators still operate.

Northern Hotel
Name of Property

Yellowstone County, MT
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [x] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [x] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1942-1960

Significant Dates
1942; 1950; 1960

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Holabird and Root/Architect
Tom Regent and Joe Gates
J.C. Boespflug Construction Co.

Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance encompasses the hotel's construction in 1942 through the historic period in 1960. The 1950 and 1960 dates reflect the years of the two additions. The Northern Hotel was in use until 2006. The building has been renovated and is once again open for business.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Northern Hotel is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C at the local level of significance. The period of significance for the Northern Hotel is from 1942 to 1960. The Northern Hotel is significant under Criterion A for its historic association with the commercial development and social history of downtown Billings, Montana. The first Northern Hotel, erected in 1904, burned in 1940 but was quickly rebuilt and reopened in July 1942 just after the United States' entry into World War II. The 1942 Northern Hotel rose from the ashes of the 1904 hotel as the city's most elegant hotel and occupies the same footprint as the original hotel. The Northern, as it is generally called, continued the tradition previously established as an important center of economic, commercial and social events of Billings and the surrounding region.

The Northern Hotel is also eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as representative of the Simplistic Modern architectural style of pre-World War II. Designed by the Chicago architectural firm of Holabird and Root, the Northern Hotel represents the firm's philosophy of austere hotel design at that time, where form follows function, with strong horizontal emphasis on the lower and upper floors.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Northern Hotel is significant under Criterion A as the prominent landmark and major social center of downtown Billings beginning in 1942. Political, economic and social events important to the City of Billings and the region occurred at the Northern Hotel. Originally established in 1904, the Northern Hotel was the city's most elegant hotel and served as a meeting place for the city's residents. After a catastrophic fire destroyed the hotel in 1940, a new hotel was built to take its place that continued to function in its original capacity as a hostelry and significant gathering place.

A cursory examination of the *Billings Gazette* for the years 1950 through 1953 illustrates the Northern's Hotel essential contribution to the City of Billings as the most prominent center of community events.[10] Most, if not all, of service club organizations in Billings held their weekly meetings at the Northern Hotel, including the Optimists, Rotarians, Kiwanis, Lions, Jaycees, Exchange, Zonta, Soroptimists and Toastmaster's. The Billings Chamber of Commerce and Billings Commercial Club held luncheons and conferences at the hotel. Other groups like the Billings Pan Hellenic Council, Alcoholic Anonymous and the Billings Traffic Club also met here. Fraternal organizations such as the Masons, Shriners and Rebekahs met at the hotel. Most of these groups strove to improve the quality of life in Billings.

In the 1950s, the Northern Hotel served as the gathering place for oil men (organized as the Petroleum Club in 1954) during the years that Billings emerged as the oil capital of the region. Ken Feyhl, one of the charter members of the Petroleum Club, remembers the Northern was "the place" where you "had" to go for business and pleasure. Decisions pertaining to the oil industry and important to the economic prosperity of Billings and the region happened at the hotel. The Rocky Mountain Oil Scouts also met regularly in the hotel.[11]

The Northern as constructed provided ample space for local, state and national meetings and conferences. Conferences ranged from the Montana Stock Growers Association to the Billings Branch of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. The commission that developed the Yellowstone River Compact ratified in 1950 that allocated water between Montana, Wyoming and North Dakota met at the Northern. Other conferences held included medicine, realty, banking, dude ranching and many others. In 1959, the hotel even hosted a demonstration of stereophonic sound equipment. Between 1952 and 1959, the Northern Hotel was also the scene of regular awards banquets and meetings of the Ground Observer Corps, a United States Air Force program that enlisted civilians to watch the skies for a Soviet sneak attack.

The Northern Hotel was the socio-political center for Billings and its surrounding region. Political breakfasts, luncheons, dinners, rallies, meetings and celebrations were held at the hotel. The Northern served as the regular meeting place of the Yellowstone Republican Committee. Candidates running for state office stayed at the Northern. Candidates running

[10] An investigation into the Northern Hotel at www.newspaperarchives.com resulted in well over 3400 "hits' between 1950 and 1953 and forms the basis for this discussion.

[11] Ken Feyhl, interview with Joan L. Brownell, 15 November 2010, Billings, MT. By 1960, the Petroleum Club maintained an office and social club in the basement of the Northern.

for national office stayed here, like Democratic presidential contender Adlai Stephenson in 1952 and Vice President and Republican presidential nominee Richard Nixon in 1960.

The social life of the people of Billings and the surrounding region greatly benefited with the presence of the Northern Hotel. Celebrations of all kinds from wedding receptions, anniversaries, birthday parties to bar mitzvahs were held at the Northern Hotel. The Northern Hotel was where you went for special occasions, like your wedding night or meeting your future mother-in-law for the first time.[12] The Northern hosted bridge clubs and fashion shows. The Northern was the scene of larger gatherings, such as formal dances and the annual Governor's Banquet and Ball. Billings and area residents also were drawn to the Northern Hotel by its first-class musical entertainment in its lounge, which drew acts from all over the United States.

The Northern Hotel's prominent place in Billings' commercial district and its reputation as a high class establishment made it a natural meeting and gathering place for local and area residents, service clubs, associations and conventions. The hotel's design incorporated space to hold these functions. The hotel operated in the way it was intended by its owners to provide meeting and conference space for its patrons. For many Montanans, the Northern Hotel was *the* place to attend meetings, social functions, and political events.

The Northern Hotel is significant under Criterion C for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The hotel is an excellent example of the Simplistic Modern architectural style and the best and most prominent example in Billings and Montana. Designed by the renowned Chicago-based architectural firm of Holabird and Root, the hotel emphasizes an over-all symmetrical design and strong horizontal emphasis. The Northern Hotel best reflects the austere architectural philosophy for commercial and hotel buildings at the end of the Great Depression and is the most prominent building in the state of Montana designed by Holabird and Root.

The Northern Hotel was also the last major building constructed in Billings before the United States' entry into World War II and before the post-war oil boom changed the character and appearance of Billings. At ten stories, the hotel as built in 1942, was the tallest building in Billings and dominated the city's downtown business district. The hotel's owner, the Billings Investment Company, intended it to be both fireproof and earthquake resistant, resulting in one of the first seismically fitted buildings built in Billings.[13]

The Northern Hotel retains integrity on its exterior. Although surpassed by the taller Wells Fargo, Interstate Bank, and Crowne Plaza buildings within the last thirty years, the Northern Hotel is still one of the most imposing buildings in downtown Billings.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Yellowstone River Valley

The Billings area was well-known to Native Americans for thousands of years and has an unusually high density of pre-contact archaeological sites. Nearby Alkali Creek provided a natural travel corridor between the Yellowstone River and the bench lands leading to the Musselshell and Missouri rivers. As early as 4,000 years ago, the area's aboriginal inhabitants ran bison off the sandstone cliffs bordering the Alkali Creek valley and processed the animals on the creek bottom. During the historic period, both the Blackfeet and the Crow Indians frequented the area. This region, however, is generally recognized as being within Crow territory.[14]

The first recorded Euro-American description of the Billings area is generally credited to William Clark of the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-1806. In July 1806, Clark and eleven others, including Sacajawea and her newborn son, Pomp,

[12] Former State Historic Preservation Review Board Members Donna Coate and Robert Valach shared their special occasions with the authors on September 25, 2010 at Choteau, MT.

[13] Architect John Holabird described that the "quake proofing" included a reinforced concrete foundation placed on spread footings, but described only one other element in providing structural strength in case of an earthquake: "...further precaution is provided in the form of vertical rods which extend through the enclosing brick walls and prevent the possibility of the walls falling away from the building." "Hotel Architect Tells of Project" in Northern Hotel Section, *The Billings Gazette*, 7 July 1942.

[14] Personal communication with Steve Aaberg, 19 October 2006.

undertook to explore the Gallatin and Yellowstone Valleys. On July 24, 1806, the party passed through the area now occupied by Billings. Clark was clearly awed by the abundant wildlife living along the Yellowstone River.

> Saw emenc [sic] number of deer, elk and buffalow on the banks. Some beaver . . . . [For] me to mention or give an estimate of the different Spcies [sic] of wild animals on this river particularly Buffalow, Elk, Antelopes and wolves would be increditable.

Clark also noted the presence of a recently abandoned Crow Sun Dance lodge on a large island in the Yellowstone. The captain detailed Nathaniel Pryor, George Shannon, Richard Windsor, and Hugh Hall to drive the company's horses overland on the south side of the Yellowstone, while the rest of the party proceeded downriver in cottonwood canoes to rendezvous with Meriwether Lewis at the mouth of the Yellowstone.[15]

Even before the Lewis and Clark Expedition returned to St. Louis in September 1806, it met men ascending the Missouri River with the intention of trapping beaver in Yellowstone River Country. East of Billings, Missouri Fur Company factor Manuel Lisa established a small trading post on the Yellowstone at the mouth of the Big Horn River in 1807. Although abandoned in 1810 because of Indian opposition to the fort, a succession of trading posts followed between 1821 and 1876. The Yellowstone River near the mouth of Alkali Creek was well-known to fur trappers and traders from 1807 onward. In 1822, Blackfeet Indians ambushed and killed Missouri Fur Company trappers Robert Jones and Michael Immel along with five others near the mouth of Alkali Creek.[16]

In late 1837, smallpox felled a band of Crow Indians near the existing MetraPark in Billings about two miles east of the Northern Hotel. According to Crow legend, two young warriors found their village stricken by the terrible disease when they returned from a war expedition. Despondent and frustrated because they could do nothing to alter the course of the disease, they dressed in their finest clothing and mounted a snow-white horse. Riding double and singing their death-songs, they rode the blindfolded horse over a cliff [Kelly Mountain] and landed at what is now the eastern end of the Yellowstone County Fairgrounds. The location then became known as "The Place Where the White Horse Went Down."[17]

The US Army's successful campaign against the Lakota, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho during the winter of 1877 made the Yellowstone Valley in this area attractive for settlers and entrepreneurs. In 1877, Perry W. McAdow, his brother William, Henry Frith, and former trapper Henry Keiser established a small settlement on the eastern edge of the Clark's Fork Bottom of the Yellowstone and named it Coulson after the owners of a steamboat line they hoped to attract to the area. The McAdow brothers established a store, sawmill, and hotel at the site. Eventually the community boasted a brewery, school, newspaper, post office, and Chicago Jane's notorious brothel. The settlement flourished as a river port and stagecoach station until about 1882, when replaced in popularity by the newly created town of Billings. Coulson was a tough town as evidenced by Boot Hill Cemetery (24YL755) (situated where Alkali Creek emerges into the Yellowstone Valley), which contains the remains of at least forty individuals who died violent deaths in the settlement in the 1870s.[18]

The City of Billings

As the Northern Pacific Railway (NPRR) pushed its way up the Yellowstone in 1881, railroad land speculators scouted in advance for suitable sites for towns to serve the line. In the summer of 1882, the NPRR's Minnesota & Montana Land & Improvement Company (MMLI) platted a city on an alkali flat about two miles north of Coulson. The company christened the city Billings after former NPRR president Frederick Billings. The Northern Pacific reached Billings in August 1882.

The MMLI platted the new town of Billings in the classic Northern Pacific railroad townsite design, with the railroad corridor at the center, flanked by two parallel streets fronting the railroad and a systematic grid pattern of streets both north and south of the railroad tracks running perpendicular and parallel. Billings became known as the "Magic City" due to its

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[15] Gary E. Moulton, Ed., *The Definitive Journals of Lewis & Clark: Over the Rockies to St. Louis*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 217-219.

[16] Merrill G. Burlingame, *The Montana Frontier*, (Helena: State Publishing, 1942), 47, 48; Mark H. Brown, *The Plainsmen of the Yellowstone*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1961), 86-88.

[17] Jon Axline, comp. *Montana's Historical Highway Markers*, (Helena: Montana Historical Society, 2008), 172-173.

[18] Brown, *Plainsmen of the Yellowstone*, 61-63, 220, 356; Don Spritzer, *Roadside History of Montana*, (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing, 1999), 356, 357; Myrtle E. Cooper, *From Tent Town to City: A Chronological History of Billings, Montana, 1882-1935*, (Billings: The Author, 1981), 2, 12, 15, 19.

surprisingly rapid growth in a relatively short period of time. The primary business district developed on the north side of the tracks, first along Montana Avenue that parallels the railway and gradually further northward.

The new city, however, was not without its difficulties. Railroad officials accused MMLI agent Heman Clark of gouging potential settlers who wanted to settle on the company's land, driving them away to cheaper land. The city was also plagued by streets that turned into quagmires during rains or after spring thaw and complaints about the pervasive bad smell emanating from the city dump northeast of town. Wannabe vigilantes didn't help things much when in 1891 they strung up a man on a lamppost next to the NPRR tracks after he murdered a popular bartender.

Despite the drawbacks, Billings steadily grew through the late nineteenth century, becoming the economic hub for the surrounding region. By the end of 1882, it boasted a population of 1,000 people. By 1900, its population had grown threefold to 3,221 people.

Billings was fortunate in being located at the right place at the right time. The city boomed during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The fertile river bottoms made the Yellowstone Valley around Billings a paradise for farmers, especially after the completion of the Big Ditch (24YL0664) in 1883 and the Billings Bench Water Association Canal (24YL0161) in 1904. In 1905, the US Reclamation Service (USRS) established the Huntley Irrigation Project about fifteen miles northeast of Billings. The project was among the first and most successful of the USRS's early western projects.

Billings quickly became an important trading and transportation center, especially after the arrival of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad in 1894 and the Great Northern Railway's line from Great Falls in 1908. In 1909, the federal government enacted the Enlarged Homestead Act. This act, which provided 320 acres to any person willing to improve and farm it, attracted thousands of dry land farmers to south central and eastern Montana between 1909 and 1918. With this influx of homesteaders, Billings prospered as a trade center and transportation hub with access to three transcontinental railroads. Billings also profited by the presence of a Great Western Sugar refinery in the city that processed sugar beets harvested in the surrounding area.[19]

Although hard hit by the collapse of the Homestead Boom by 1919 due to drought and the resulting economic depression during the early 1920s, Billings survived because of its status as a transportation hub on the northern Great Plains. Not only was it served by three railroads, but it also depended on interstate highways US Highway 10 and US Highway 87 to provide better access to markets throughout the region. The depression years of the 1930s affected Billings, like the rest of Montana. While everything slowed during the depression, Billings businesses began to recover by 1935.

Oil and gas developments in the surrounding region helped maintain Billings' economy during hard times. In 1929, the Yale Oil Company constructed a refinery at Billings and manufactured gasoline, which was sold throughout the region. The discovery of rich oil fields in southern Montana and northern Wyoming also provided a steady source of revenue to the area, especially after Carter Oil and Conoco built refineries in the "Magic City" in the 1940s. The discovery and exploitation of oil in the Williston Basin in North Dakota and Elk Basin in Wyoming in the 1950s had a profound effect on Billings as it became a significant refining and pipeline center.[20]

The entrance of the United States into World War II curtailed activity in Billings. However, it appears that Billings benefited in its position as the transportation network and trade center of the region during the war years. The post-World War II economic boom in Billings saw the city's population grow over 30% from 23,261 people in 1940 to 31,724 residents in 1950. Billings became the oil and gas capital of the region by the early 1950s. Along with the three oil refineries, the five oil companies had division offices in Billings, and 43 oil companies maintained district offices in the "Magic City." The per capita and family annual average income in the Billings trade area was above the national average. The boom caused by the oil industry fueled the expansion of Logan International Airport and the city's medical facilities, and contributed to a significant increase in retail sales in the area. The city claimed a population of 65,000 in 1957.[21]

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[19] Spritzer, *Roadside History*, 359, 368; Cooper, *Tent Town to City*, 29, 42; Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries*, revised ed. (Seattle: University of Washington, 1991), 238.

[20] Carroll Van West, "Good Times, Bad Times," in *Stories from an Open Country*, ed. William L. Lang (Billings, MT: Western Heritage Center, 1995), 123-126.

[21] Spritzer, *Roadside History*, 359; Stevens and Redman, *Billings A to Z*, (Billings: Friends of the Library, 2000), 88, 92; Anneke-Jan Boden, *Billings: The First 100 Years*, (Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Press, 1982), 139-140; "Montana, Its Growing Says the Census," *Montana Treasure Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (August 1950), 2; "Billings, The Magic City," *Montana Treasure Magazine*,

The continued expansion of the oil facilities in the 1960s and 1970s and the city's proximity to Interstates 90 and 94 made it an even larger transportation hub with a trade port and many other distribution and trans-loading facilities. The city also benefited from the presence of two major hospitals, a significant commercial business district on the west side of town, and proximity to eastern Montana and northern Wyoming. In 1996, historian Michael Malone wrote:

> The new Billings economy continues to rest upon traditional energy, agricultural marketing, and tourist travel bases; for instance, the city's three refineries now process well over five million barrels of crude oil daily and have an annual payroll of over $165 million. [22]

The diverse economy and its strategic location have combined to provide Billings a relatively steady rate of growth, and its evolving significance as Montana's largest metro area has confirmed the dreams of the city's founders.

Hotels in Billings

The construction of hotels in Billings closely followed the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railway. Indeed, the railroad constructed the first building, the Headquarters Hotel, on the Billings townsite in May 1882 to house its engineering staff. The Northern Pacific moved the hotel to the north side of the railroad tracks at the end of North 28th Street (which became North Broadway) and opened it to the general public in December of that year. It served as the focal point of Billings until it burned in 1891.

A host of other hostelries followed the Headquarters Hotel within just a few years. By the time the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company published its first map of Billings in 1884, there were three hotels in Billings. Two years later, in 1886, there were four hotels in the city, including the Headquarters, the International, the Park and the Grand. All were located within a couple blocks of the NPRR passenger depot.[23]

Besides the sprawling Headquarters Hotel, the other significant hotel in Billings was the Grand, located at the intersection of 27th Street North and First Avenue North. Construction of the three-story hotel began in October 1885 and was completed in 1886. It quickly became the social center of the new city. In 1896, brother and sister "Uncle George" and "Aunt Julia" Berninghoff bought the hotel for $12,000. The Grand was famous for the hospitality of the owners and the comfort of its rooms. The business also included a billiards room, bar and restaurant in addition to its guest rooms. The Grand set the standard for hotels in Billings until the Northern Hotel opened in 1904. The Grand Hotel was the chief competitor for the nearby Northern Hotel. In 1908, the Berninghoffs added a substantial addition to the building on the north. The Grand was the first hotel in the region with private baths. At the time the Northern Hotel was constructed, there were eight other hotels in the Magic City.[24]

The Original Northern Hotel (1904-1940)

The Northern Hotel stands on six lots (Lots 13 through 18) in the northwest corner of Block 109 within the Original Billings Townsite. Albert Owens purchased the north portion (Lots 16, 17 and 18) in 1886 from the MMLI. His wife Anna A. Owens received the property from her husband in 1889. Mattie Rumley purchased the other three lots (Lots 13, 14 and 15) from the MMLI in 1885. These three lots passed to Kittie Rumley (possible alias or daughter) in 1886; she held them until her death in December 1892. Anna Owens served as the executor of Kittie Rumley's estate. Her husband Albert purchased the lots from the estate and in turn sold the lots to Anna Owens in 1894.[25]

Vol. 2, No. 1 (August 1950), 6; Sue Hart, *Billings: Montana's Trailhead*, (Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Press, 2009), 79-80, 82; "Dynamic Billings: New Oil Center of the Northwest," *Out West Magazine*, Vol. 15, No. 7 (August 1954), 16-17, 22-23;

[22] Michael P. Malone, *Montana: A Contemporary Profile*, (Helena: Montana Magazine, 1996), 47.

[23] Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1884, 1886.

[24] In 1921, the Berninghoffs razed the original hotel building and built a new 4-story hotel on the site. The following year, they sold the building. "First Building on Billings Townsite was Headquarters Hotel, Erected in '82," "Headquarters, Cottage, and Grand Were First Billings Hostelries," "Benninghoff Hospitality at Grand was Famous From 1896 to 1922" in Northern Hotel Section, *The Billings Gazette*, 7 July 1942; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1884, 1886, 1888, 1896; Cooper, *Tent Town to City*, 3, 8, 20, 25; R.L. Polk, Billings City Directories, 1904.

[25] Deed Records, Office of Clerk and Recorder, Yellowstone County, Yellowstone County Courthouse, Billings, MT.

The lots had been the site of a "female boarding house," commonly known as a house of prostitution, since at least 1888. Located in a prime location down the street from the Headquarters Hotel at the end of North 28th Street (now North Broadway), the "boarding house" appears to have operated at this location into the 1890s.[26]

Anna A. Owens sold Lots 13 to 18, Block 109 to Preston D. Moss on July 31, 1901 for $10,000. P.D. Moss immediately turned the property over to the Billings Investment Company. The Billings Investment Company incorporated in November 6, 1901 with H.W. Rowley, P.B. Moss and M.A. Arnold as principal partners. They formed the Billings Investment Company to develop the Billings townsite.[27]

Colonel Henry W. Rowley arrived in Montana Territory as a civil engineer for the Northern Pacific Railway in 1880. Two years later, he hired on with the MMLI Company, which had recently purchased 30,000 acres from the Northern Pacific in the Yellowstone Valley for development. Rowley was one of Billings' early capitalists and a man of many talents and investments.

> From the early days . . . Mr. Rowley became the leader and directing force in the construction of community improvements and public utility projects which include the Big Ditch irrigation canal and the first city water and electric power system. He was instrumental in the building of a number of business blocks, including the Northern hotel, and he was active in the banking field, both in Billings and Seattle.[28]

Preston B. Moss arrived in the Magic City in 1892 and invested his money in the First National Bank of Billings. Within a decade he had become the president of the bank. Along with Rowley he had interests in many Billings businesses and was also president of the Billings Utility Company, organizer of the Mutual Telephone Company and opened the first packing plant in the city.[29]

In 1902, the Billings Investment Company financed the construction of a new upscale hotel at the corner of North Broadway and First Avenue North and would manage the property until 1971.[30] Construction of the hotel began in 1902 and was completed in February 1904. A photograph taken of the building shortly after it opened for business shows a three story Italian Renaissance-style building with Greek Ionic columns flanking the entry on North Broadway Street and the recessed portico on the façade of the second and third floors. The hotel had 69 guest rooms, but no lobby. Stores, a tavern, and offices occupied the ground floor of the building with entrances opening onto North Broadway and First Avenue North.[31]

Promoted as "the most modern hotel in Montana," the Northern Hotel quickly became one of the city's social centers and, perhaps just as quickly, realized hefty profits for the Billings Investment Company. Consequently, the company began a series of improvements and expansions of the building in 1907. In 1912, the company added a wing to the building containing a tearoom that completed the footprint of the building. Two years later, in 1914, it installed a marble-lined

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[26] Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps: Billings, Montana, 1888, 1891, 1896, 1903. Until the Headquarters Hotel burned in 1891, North 28th Street ended at the railroad tracks. The City of Billings later renamed North 28th Street to North Broadway and extended the street across the tracks to the south.

[27] Articles of Incorporations, "Billings Investment Company," No. 132, Office of Clerk and Recorder, Yellowstone County, Yellowstone County Courthouse, Billings, MT. The Billings Investment Company held the property until 1971.

[28] Helen Fitzgerald Sanders, *History of Montana*, Vol. II (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1913), 119-120; Stevens and Redman, *Billings A to Z*, 93, "H.W. Rowley Dies After Long Illness," *The Billings Gazette*, 26 June 1931.

[29] Stevens and Redman, *Billings A to Z*, 76; "Early Billings Businessman Dies," *The Billings Gazette*, 2 February 1947; *Progressive Men of the State of Montana*, (Chicago: A. W. Bowen, 1902), 331-332.

[30] Through its long history, the Billings Investment Company owned the land upon which the hotel is located. The company owned the hotel as well until 1950 when it sold the building to Lester Carter. The company retained ownership of the land until 1971.

[31] "Hotel Property Bought in 1901" and "Original Hotel Had 69 Rooms" in Northern Hotel Section, *The Billings Gazette*, 7 July 1942; Joaquin Miller, *An Illustrated History of the State of Montana*, Vol. I (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1894), 225; Myrtle E. Cooper, *From Tent Town to City*, 39; "Northern Hotel is Virtually Destroyed by Fire," *The Billings Gazette*, 12 September 1940; Albert L. Babcock, *An Illustrated History of the Yellowstone Valley*, (Spokane: Western Historical Publishing Co., 1907), 302, 303, 490; Tom Stout, *Montana: Its Story and Biography*, Vol. II (Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1921), 218-219.

lobby and atrium in the hotel. Finally, in 1916, the Billings Investment Company added a fourth story to the hotel. The level consisted of a mansard roof with pedimented dormers.[32]

As business improved and the hotel truly became *the* place to stay in Billings, the company sought additional space for accommodations. Sometime between 1914 and 1923, it constructed an "overpass hallway" across the alley to the south to the second story of the adjacent Belknap Building on Montana Avenue south of the hotel. Rowley owned the building and maintained offices there.[33]

By 1940, the total cost of the building and its expansions surpassed $600,000. The Northern Hotel was "rated as one of the finest hostelries in the West" and boasted 200 guest rooms. Theodore Roosevelt stayed at the hotel in 1918 and President Woodrow Wilson was a guest there in 1919. By 1940, in addition to the hotel rooms, the Northern included the Buy For Less Drug Store, a jewelry store, beauty and barber shop, the Jane Drake Dress Shop, a millinery, Helmer's Oak Tavern, the Northern Grill, a billiard parlor, and the offices of the Northern Pacific and Burlington railways, the Dude Ranchers' Association, and Northwest Airlines. Prospects for the hotel remained bright.[34]

At about 4:40 p.m., on September 11, 1940, Mary Stoetling, the proprietor of a newsstand in the lobby of the Northern Hotel, saw smoke and flames coming from a floor register near her establishment. Shortly after yelling "Fire!", the staff evacuated the hotel's 75 guests, some of whom were wearing only the clothes on their backs. The cause of the fire is not known, but it likely began in the basement of the Jane Drake Dress Shop, one of the eight businesses located on the ground floor of the Northern. The fire spread rapidly and enveloped the mezzanine within ninety minutes. Less than an hour after that, the conflagration fully engulfed the building. *The Billings Gazette* reported that a "heavy brown smoke billowed from the hotel's First Avenue entrance after the fire was discovered, appearing like a massive locomotive."[35]

The city's entire fire department responded to the fire. They were aided by local industrial plant managers, who sent trucks and hoses to the scene to help combat the flames. Meanwhile, thousands of spectators flocked to the area to witness the disaster. The city police, sheriff's office, and Montana Highway Patrol officers had a difficult time keeping the crowd back and out of the way. The glow from the fire could be seen for fifty miles and the newspaper compared the scene to the London Blitz. The fire was not completely dowsed until the next day. But the damage had been done. In addition to the destruction of the hotel, eight businesses and four offices were destroyed in the conflagration. It was the worst fire in Billings since the nearby Babcock Theater burned in 1935.[36]

The now elderly Preston Moss, president of the Billings Investment Company, watched the firefighters' efforts to control the blaze from inside the fire lines. Many stories, most apocryphal, involved Moss and his opinion about the loss of his hotel. All the stories involved the construction of a new hotel on the site, funded by the considerable amount of insurance money the company received after the blaze. The most dubious went like this:

> P. B. Moss . . . stood inside the fire lines gazing at the structure in ruins late Wednesday night.
> "This is a sad day for you," a friend said.
> "On the contrary," replied the pioneer businessman. "I am envisioning a modern fireproof structure that will replace this one – a building of which Billings will be proud."[37]

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[32] *Billings, Montana: The Sugar City of the Northwest*, (Butte: Dawson Publishing Co., 1908); Billings Sanborn Maps, 1912, 1923; "Original Hotel Had 69 Rooms" in Northern Hotel Section, *The Billings Gazette*, 7 July 1942; Cooper, *From Tent Town to City*, 39.

[33] The Belknap Building was razed in 1957 to make way for a parking garage; a new parking garage is currently under construction in the same location.

[34] Polk, Billings City Directories 1940.

[35] "Northern Hotel is Virtually Destroyed by Fire," "Set Northern Hotel Damage at $750,000 Total," "Northern Hotel Fire, Sept. 11, 1940, Was City's Worst Conflagration," and "Hotel Loss Was Greatest" in Northern Hotel Section," *The Billings Gazette*, 7 July 1942.

[36] Stevens and Redman, *Billings A to Z*, 54; "Northern Hotel is Virtually Destroyed by Fire," "Set Northern Hotel Damage at $750,000 Total," "Northern Hotel Fire, Sept. 11, 1940, Was City's Worst Conflagration," and "Hotel Loss Was Greatest" in Northern Hotel Section, *The Billings Gazette*, 7 July 1942; Hart, *Billings: Montana's Trailhead*, 70-73; Boden, *Billings: The First 100 Years*, 142-143.

[37] "Construction Work on New Hotel Was Launched on April 23, 1941," in Northern Hotel Section, *The Billings Gazette*, 7 July 1942; Carroll Van West, *Images of Billings: A Photographic History,* (Billings: Western Heritage Press, 1990), 46.

Billings contractor Barry O'Leary tore down the remaining walls two days after the fire destroyed the building. Moss began planning for a new and more imposing hotel to occupy the site.[38]

The Current Northern Hotel (1941- present)

Within weeks of the fire, the Billings Investment Company hired the venerable Chicago architectural firm of Holabird and Root to design the new ten-story Northern Hotel building. Holabird later wrote that the design of the hotel was challenging in that while the new facility would be located in a community of "comparatively small population," it would need to provide "the highest type of hotel accommodations in a manner both profitable to the owner and gratifying to the guests." To that end, the architect confined the service sections and public spaces to the basement and first and second floors. In that way, he believed, "individual distinction is given the shops, hotel entrances, coffee shops, and cocktail lounge." Guest rooms would be confined to the upper floors of the planned L-shaped building.[39]

Like many of the firm's other creations in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the Northern Hotel's exterior would be rather plain, emphasizing the horizontal on the lower and upper floors. Exterior ornamentation was confined to the first and second floors. The design included bronze window frames on the first floor with the windows at the restaurant and cocktail lounge having bronze mullions with bronze ornamental panels below the windows. The entries sported painted steel frame marquis. The exterior on the ground floor had rainbow granite veneer obtained from quarries near Cold Springs, Minnesota. Projecting bands of stone enclosing windows on the second floor north and west sides were comprised of Indiana limestone as was the coping surmounting the brick walls. Holabird utilized two shades of reddish-brown brick, light and dark, set in a Fleming bond on the hotel.[40]

The Northern Hotel, moreover, was probably the only commercial building in Billings that incorporated provisions for seismic activity into the design: the reinforced concrete frame of the hotel was set on spread foundations with vertical rods extending through the brick to "prevent walls from falling away from the structure." The reinforced concrete and brick construction of the hotel made it a fire proof structure that would, Holabird contended, contain all of the amenities of a modern hostelry.[41]

Shortly after the Barry O'Leary Company finished tearing down the remaining standing walls of the burned-out hotel, the Lohof Brothers Company of Billings began clearing the debris from the site in April 1941. By mid-May, the company had completed the clean-up of the site and began excavation for the foundation of the new hotel. It began pouring concrete for the foundation in June.[42]

The Billings Investment Company hired the Miles City-based Jerome C. "J.C." Boespflug Construction Company as the general contractor for the building. The bulk of the structural construction had been completed by the time the United States declared war on Nazi Germany and imperial Japan in December 1941. Consequently, Boespflug still had access to materials that would be scarce the following year: steel and concrete. Indeed, the bulk of the hotel construction would consist of steel and concrete. Twenty railroad freight cars were needed to haul in the 820,000 pounds of steel for the reinforcing. Approximately 35,000 sacks of cement were also needed for the building.[43]

Boespflug worked out an efficient method to construct the hotel, so work on it progressed rapidly for just over a year. The contractor prefabricated the concrete forms and hoisted them into place beginning in June 1941. By September, Boespflug had framed-in seven floors of the building. During its peak of construction, one floor could be formed in a day and a half and be ready to receive the concrete. Boespflug constructed a 125-foot tower for the distribution of the concrete and other materials from a centralized point. Concrete was elevated up the tower in one cubic yard buckets and

[38] "Set Northern Hotel Damage at $750,000 Total," and "Clean Up Starts at Hotel," *The Billings Gazette*, 14 September 1940.

[39] "Hotel Architect Tells of Project" in Northern Hotel Section, *The Billings Gazette*, 7 July 1942.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] "Construction Work on New Hotel Was Launched on April 23, 1941" and "We Moved A Mountain," in Northern Hotel Section, *The Billings Gazette*, 7 July 1942.

[43] "Construction Work on New Hotel was Launched on April 23, 1941" and "J.C. Boespflug, Hotel Contractor, Rose Rapidly in Building World" in Northern Hotel Section, *The Billings Gazette*, 7 July 1942.

then dumped into hoists that distributed them to various floors. At floor level, workers dumped the concrete into a hopper, which then dumped the material into the forms. Over a million board feet of lumber was used to construct the forms.[44]

The bricklayers began their work when the concrete frame had reached the fourth floor in October 1941. Boespflug constructed a second hoist to haul bricks up to the men setting them. The contractor estimated that they used 900,000 bricks to construct the exterior walls of the hotel. They used 25,000 clay tiles as fire proofing in the building's interior. At the peak of construction in 1941, Boespflug employed 100 men with a payroll of $125,000. Over 200,000 man-hours were needed for the project.[45]

After the brick work had been completed in December, Boespflug and a host of sub-contractors, mostly from Billings, began work on the interior finishing of the hotel. The Christensen Plumbing and Heating Company installed seven miles of pipe in the building, including two 10,000 gallon steel water tanks on machinery penthouses on the roof. The company installed five different water circulating systems that provided hot and cold water to the guest rooms, kitchen, laundry, and the fire lines. The Empire Heating and Cooling Company installed the ductwork for the gas forced-air heating and air conditioning systems, as well as the ventilation systems for the guest rooms and kitchen. With its completion in early July 1942, the Northern Hotel opened as the most modern hotel in Billings and, perhaps, Montana.[46]

When completed, the ten-story hotel was the tallest building in Montana at 129' 3" in height. It contained 163 guest rooms. Each floor provided rooms with only lavatories, rooms with shower/baths and other rooms with just bathtubs. Provisions were made for one and two bedroom suites on the eighth through tenth floors. Rooms on the tenth floor, moreover, had been decorated specifically to appeal to female guests. In addition to shops and the lobby on the first floor, the hotel contained a dining room, kitchen, coffee shop, and cocktail lounge called the Frontier Bar. The basement held the boiler room and physical plant, along with a barber shop, offices, and employee locker rooms. The ballroom, a meeting room, some guest rooms, and offices were located on the second floor. The second floor was reached by a large open stairway with precast art marble risers and treads and ornate bronze and walnut hand railings.[47]

The Billings Investment Company hired the Chicago-based Marshall Field & Company to do the interior decoration of the hotel. The work was done by seven "artists" supervised by Franklin D. Paul. Paul worked closely with the Holabird and Root architectural firm in the design of the hotel's interior. Although now removed, noteworthy interior features included terrazzo floors inlaid with brass on the basement and first floors, pastel colored walls, exposed columns, travertine marble walls in the entry vestibules, and a mural in the cocktail lounge painted by famed mural artist Catherine O'Brien of Chicago. Paintings and sculptures by famed cowboy artist Charles M. Russell decorated the walls and alcoves of the lobby and second floor of the building.[48]

Northern Hotel manager Lester W. Carter touted the hostelry the most modern in Billings and the northwest. Large 1,600 watt neon lights on the west and east sides of the machinery penthouses on the roof advertised the hotel to potential guests from a great distance; the letters were the largest in the state in 1942.[49]

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid; P.D. Moss, along with former hotel manager Glenn McKay and new manager Lester Carter, set the cornerstone of the new Northern Hotel in 1941. The cornerstone, uncovered during the 1980s renovation, contained newspaper articles on WWII, a history of the hotel and information on P.D. Moss and R.W. Rowley, *The Billings Gazette*, 10 June 1984;.

[46] "Construction Work on New Hotel," "Hotel Rooms are Ventilated," "Heating System is Modern One," "Plumbing, Heating Handled Locally," "Hotel Plumbing is Said Feat," "Bathrooms in Billings' Newest Hostelry Boast Ice Water Faucet" in Northern Hotel Section, *The Billings Gazette*, 7 July 1942.

[47] The 9-story Hotel Finlen in Butte was the tallest building in the state until surpassed by the Northern Hotel in 1942. The Northern was the tallest building on the Northern Pacific Railroad line between Minneapolis and Portland, Oregon. "Hotel is Over 129 Feet High," "Frontier Bar is Colorful," "Each Floor Has 25 Bedrooms," "Northern Hotel Lobby Has Walls of Walnut Flexwood, Leather Panels" in Northern Hotel Section, *The Billings Gazette*, 7 July 1942.

[48] "Northern Hotel Lobby Has Walls of Walnut Flexwood, Leather Panels," "Woman Artist Was in Charge of Cocktail Lounge Decorations in Northern Hotel," "Cowboy Artist's Works Displayed in Northern," in Northern Hotel Section, *The Billings Gazette*, 7 July 1942. In December 1952, the McKay Collection of Russell art was crated and shipped to its new home at the Montana Historical Society, where it currently resides, "Russell's "Bronc for Breakfast" Packed for Shipment," *The Billings Gazette*, 28 December 1952.

[49] "Sign Letters are Four Feet High," in Northern Hotel Section, *The Billings Gazette*, 7 July 1942.

Manager Lester Carter opened the doors to the hotel on July 7, 1942 for an open house attended by over 3,000 Billings residents, who toured the new building. Visitors, according to the *Billings Gazette*, concentrated on the hotel lobby, the cocktail lounge, coffee shop, and art foyer where Russell's paintings were on display. During the course of the open house, the hotel's first guest, St. Louis salesman T.G. "Jimmy" Caldwell, checked into the hotel. The formal grand opening festivities the following week consisted of a three-day party culminating in an event open to the general public. Manager Carter brought in four professional entertaining troupes: Kenny Jagger, who could "play the Hammond organ and piano simultaneously," the Three Ambassadors musical trio, a professional dance company from South America called Serranos, and Beverly Morrell and Company, a novelty roller skating act from Hollywood. Morrell had recently performed with Sonia Henie and Glenn Miller in the film *Sun Valley Serenade* and had a small part in Shirley Temple's 1940 picture, *The Bluebird*. Carter boasted that the acts booked for the grand opening marked "the greatest assemblage of high-class talent to be brought together in Billings in some time."[50]

The first two nights of the festivities were confined to invited guests only. On July 13th, "hotel men from over the Midland Empire" were guests of Carter and his wife, Edith. Along with a buffet supper and the entertainment, they were treated to a tour of the hotel. The following night, representatives of the Northern Pacific, Great Northern, Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, Montana, Wyoming & Southern, and Canadian National Railway along with the Greyhound Bus Lines, and Northwest Airlines, were treated to the same entertainment program. The grand opening celebration culminated on July 15th when 300 people attended an evening of entertainment, emceed by the Billings Junior Chamber of Commerce, in the second floor ballroom.[51]

Soon after the Northern Hotel opened, it played a role in the war effort on the home front. For several months, the third floor housed 100 soldiers for special training. The Northern also opened a "service man's club" during the war years and promoted dances and other entertainment. The third and fourth floors of the Northern were not finished until 1945 primarily due to World War II. Manager Lester Carter appeared in front of the war production board to present the "acute need" for the 50 additional rooms. The architectural firm of Holabird and Root designed the two floors and J.C. Boespflug again served as general contractor. The Northern Hotel offered an estimated total of 213 guest rooms with the additional rooms.[52]

Lester Carter, the manager of the new Northern Hotel, remained associated with the Northern for the rest of his life. Born in Washington in 1896, Lester Carter moved to the Big Horn Basin, Wyoming with his parents in 1897. His parents purchased a hotel in Thermopolis, Wyoming in 1911. After school and during the summers, Carter worked as a bellhop at the hotel. After a stint in the US military during World War I, he graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1921. He began his professional career in the hotel business in 1925 when he obtained a job as a night clerk at the Henning Hotel in Casper, Wyoming. Carter eventually became the general manager of the hotel and then began expanding his business empire. He worked as the general manager of the Plains Hotel in Cheyenne for five years, formed the Plains Hotel Company and then purchased the hotel. He used it as a base to acquire other hotels in Wyoming. In 1938, he purchased the Grand Hotel in Billings from Carrie Cruse.[53]

The Billings Investment Company hired Carter to manage its new Northern Hotel in 1941. Carter leased the hotel from the Billings Investment Company in 1942. At that time, he also managed the Rainbow Hotel in Great Falls, the Carter Hotel in Hastings, Nebraska, and the Pioneer Hotel in Cheyenne. In October 1950, he formed the Northern Hotel Company and purchased the hostelry from the Billings Investment Company. In addition to his duties at the Northern, Carter also purchased the Rainbow Hotel in Great Falls, the Pioneer and LaBonte hotels in Wyoming, and the Carter

[50] "3,000 Inspect Northern Hotel," *The Billings Gazette*, 8 July 1942; "Northern Slates Grand Opening Wednesday; Programs Arranged," *The Billings Gazette*, 13 July 1942; "Hotel Guests at Northern Party," *The Billings Gazette*, 14 July 1942; "Northern Fetes Travel People," *The Billings Gazette*, 15 July 1942; "Dance Features Northern Opening," *The Billings Gazette*, 16 July 1942.

[51] Ibid.

[52] "Northern Hotel Was 'War Baby," *Front!* Western Hotel, Inc. Magazine, Vol. IV., No. 1 (January-February 1960); "Northern Hotel Contract Awarded," *The Billings Gazette*, 7 January 1945. The exact total of available guest rooms is unknown.

[53] Merrill G. Burlingame and K. Ross Toole, *A History of Montana*, vol. 3 (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1957), 11; "Carter Heads Four Hotels" in Northern Hotel Section, *The Billings Gazette*, 7 July 1942; "L. W. Carter, Billings Hotel Operator, Dies," *The Billings Gazette*, 17 January 1960; "Billings Man's Services Held," *The Billings Gazette*, 21 January 1960.

Hotel in Nebraska. He also served as president of the American Hotel Association, the Rocky Mountain Hotel Association, and the Billings Mustangs Pioneer Baseball League. Carter died in Billings in January 1960.[54]

As early as 1945, the owners of the Northern Hotel contemplated enlarging the hotel. Manager Les Carter traveled to Chicago to confer with the architectural firm Holabird and Root, who designed the original 1942 hotel, on the design for the addition. However, plans for an addition did not come to fruition until the late 1940s. Finally, in May 1950, the City of Billings approved the building permit for a new addition on the Northern at a cost of $224,000. J.C. Boespflug of Miles City once again served as the general contractor. This addition, constructed on top of the one-story west wing along North Broadway, rises nine stories and added 32 new guest rooms. When completed, the Northern Hotel consisted of an estimated 245 guest rooms.[55]

In addition to the hotel facilities, the Northern, like its predecessor, also included shops and other amenities for its guests. Seven businesses located in the building in 1947 included a newsstand, beauty shop, drug store, jeweler, florist, barber shop, and massage parlor. Western Airlines, the Northern Pacific Railway and a real estate firm had offices in the hotel. The facility also housed a restaurant, coffee shop, and cocktail lounge. The number of businesses and offices in the hotel remained constant during the 1940s and 1950s. In 1959, however, Carter and his secretary, Joseph Callihan, spent between $70,000 to $80,000 remodeling the restaurant and cocktail lounge into a larger themed combination restaurant and bar.[56]

On September 12, 1959, the famed Golden Belle restaurant opened its doors in the Northern Hotel. Carter and Callihan dispensed with the Old West theme of the previous establishments for something just as old: the Gay Nineties. The burgundy colored walls and carpeting were accented with fixtures and decorations harkening back to the 1890s. Indeed, the men even acquired a vintage Nickelodeon to play music for the customers and commissioned local artist Ken Ralston to paint a large picture of Billings in the late nineteenth century. Even the servers and bartenders got into the act "garbed in the habiliments of the '90s. Waitresses look like Mae West fresh off the set of 'My Little Chickadee" and the bartenders are authentic from long-handled moustaches to paunches protruding from open vests."[57]

Carter and Callihan promoted the Golden Belle as a high end alternative to many of the other eateries in downtown Billings and to the plethora of drive-in restaurants that opened on the city's outskirts the previous years. In regular advertisements in the *Billings Gazette*, the Golden Belle was tied to important events of the day. The restaurant's first advertisement promoted it as a "monument to the capitalistic system" and invited Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev

> To sit still in a corner of the Golden Belle and listen to us tell him about taxation by representatives, Little League baseball, Montana when the leaves turn gold, the Presidential election, auto license plate colors, Matt Dillon, and the unutterable foolishness of Marxist dialectic. It will only be a matter of moments before he releases the captive satellite nations, authorizes a Democratic convention in Leningrad, a smoke-filled Republican gathering in the People's Motor Pool in Smolensk or become a political refugee himself seeking asylum.[58]

Although Khrushchev never took the management up on its invitation, the Golden Belle remained a popular dining spot in Billings until closing its doors in 2006.

Less than a year after the opening of the Golden Belle, the Billings Petroleum Club opened in the newly completed annex of the Northern Hotel in June 1960. The Billings Petroleum Club, loosely organized in the early 1950s, incorporated in March 1954 during the early boom years of the oil industry in Montana and Wyoming and originally limited membership to

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[54] Ibid.

[55] "Northern Hotel Plans Addition of 100 Rooms," *The Billings Gazette*, October 28, 1945; City of Billings Building Permits, Permit No. 3301, May 6, 1950, on file, City of Billings Building Division, Billings, MT. The exact number of rooms after the 1950s addition is unknown but presumably guest rooms were also reconfigured at the same time to provide all with modern conveniences like private baths. This trend continued and the early 1980s renovation reduced guest rooms from 212 to 160; Jim Tarr, phone interview with Joan L. Brownell, 16 November 2010, Billings, MT; "Northern Hotel 1904-1984," section on file, City of Billings vertical file, Parmly Billings Library, Billings, MT.

[56] Polk, Billings City Directories, 1942-1960; "Golden Belle Plies Wiles on Midland Empire Trade," *The Billings Gazette*, 12 September 1959.

[57] "Golden Belle Plies Wiles on Midland Empire Trade," *The Billings Gazette*, 12 September 1959.

[58] Advertisement, *The Billings Gazette*, 12 September 1959.

the oil industry. According to the club's history, the Northern's lounge became "the meeting place where oil and gas leases were brought and sold, farmouts negotiated and drilling deals consummated."[59]

In November 1959, an agreement between the Petroleum Club and the Northern Hotel stipulated that the hotel would build a two-story annex and the club acquire a fifteen-year lease on the basement and first floor of the annex. Designed by two local architects, Tom Regent and Joe Gates, the fairly non-descript two-story addition is situated in the "L" of the Northern. The basement held a lunch and dinner club used for meetings and social events and larger parties and banquets were held in the Carter Room on the first floor. The Petroleum Club remained at the Northern for twenty years as a meeting place and social club for its members.[60]

Recently, the current owners of the Northern Hotel completed a major renovation to return the hotel to its prominent place as the preeminent hotel in Billings and Montana. At the completion of the renovation in 2013, the Northern once again opened its doors to all Montanans and visitors from around the world to enjoy hospitality and comfort at its finest.

Northern Hotel Architecture

Within the City of Billings, the architecture of the Northern Hotel is unique. The Simple Modern architectural style of the Northern Hotel is characterized by the uniformity of the unadorned elevations, with a strong horizontal emphasis. The Modern architectural style concentrates on the functional efficiency of the building design where the simple utilitarian form eliminates the need for any "unnecessary detail." The architectural firm of Holabird and Root was representative of the Chicago School of Architecture. The "school" represented a "loose movement of Chicago architects in the 1880s and 1890s who turned their backs on the Eastern and European precedents to create a new, ahistorical, unornamented, and structurally national style that prefigured post-World War II modern architecture."[61]

The design of the Northern Hotel follows this philosophy. The Northern Hotel exterior design is clean and simple and mostly unadorned. It incorporates only a few decorative elements like the polished granite veneer of the ground floor, and the projecting limestone bands framing the windows on the north and west of the second floor exterior. The projected window banding is a hallmark of commercial and institutional buildings designed and constructed during the 1940s-1950s period. The decorative element on the upper floors is the blond brick coursing between the guest room windows at the street facades.

The Northern Hotel was one of six hotels designed by the company between 1927 and 1942, the most well-known being the Hotel Statler in Washington DC. Like the Northern, construction on the Statler began in April 1941, but it was not completed until January 1943. The Statler also included a coffee shop, cocktail lounge, drug store, and dining room. Other similarities included large windows on the ground floor, the largest rooms and suites on the upper floors, polished granite veneer on exterior walls and decorative terrazzo floors on the interior of the ground floor. Other famous buildings designed by Holabird and Root between 1927 and 1942 are the Chicago Board of Trade building, Jefferson County Courthouse in Birmingham, Alabama, and the North Dakota State Capitol.[62]

The Northern Hotel is the only building of its type in Billings. Numerous other hotels stand in downtown Billings, but do not exhibit the same architectural design. Constructed during the World War II years, the Northern Hotel is also singular in that it is the only hotel constructed in downtown Billings at that time and represents the transition to the plainer, modern architecture of the post-World War II years.

Holabird and Root Architects

John Holabird and John W. Root were the scions of architects. William Holabird and Martin Roche founded the architectural firm of Holabird and Roche in Chicago in 1880. The company designed commercial buildings in Chicago for over four decades until 1927, when John Holabird and John W. Root took over the company and reorganized it as Holabird and Root. The partners oversaw the company through its golden age, when it designed everything from office

[59] F. Gordon Kirby, "Early History of Billings Petroleum Club," on file, Billings Petroleum Club, Billings, MT, 14.

[60] Ibid, 14-15; Dwayne Smith, interview with Joan L. Brownell, 24 June 2010, Billings, MT.

[61] Robert Bruegmann, *Holabird & Roche/Holabird & Root: An Illustrated Catalog of Works, 1880-1940*, Volume 1, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1991), 3; see also Carl W. Condi, *The Chicago School of Architecture*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

[62] Ibid, 344-350, 353.

buildings, hotels, institutional buildings, and gas stations, making it the quintessential commercial architectural firm of the twentieth century. Holabird and Root was also the largest architectural firm in Chicago from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century.

Born in Chicago in 1886, John Holabird graduated from West Point in 1907, served in the US Army for two years and then went to Paris where he attended the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. While there, he met John W. Root. Root's father was a co-founder of the architectural firm Burnham and Root in Chicago. John Root was born in Chicago in 1887 and attended Cornell University before going to Paris, where he also attended the prestigious Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Holabird and Root returned to the United States at the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and France in 1914. They both worked in the office of Holabird and Roche, honing their skills with engineers and architects. In 1919, they took over much of the responsibility of running the company. William Holabird died in 1923. Shortly after Martin Roche's death in 1927, John Holabird and John Root reorganized the company as Holabird and Root in 1928. The "change came just as the firm was entering the most brilliant period in its history."[63]

A true representative of twentieth century industry, the staff of Holabird and Root followed a systematic process for the production of architectural designs from concept to final product. After Holabird had made the initial client contact, the project then went first to the company's design department. R.M. Cabeen "would analyze the site, the program and the building regulations and roughly lay out the building plan and section." Draftsman Gilbert Hall would then determine the architectural character of the proposed building. From there, the plan would be refined in consultation with structural and mechanical engineers. They then sent the design to the drawing room "where it would be translated into working drawings." That department then turned their work over to the specification writers, the contracts office, and then to the construction supervisor. In some cases, the firm also did the interior design plans, but it often sub-contracted that portion of the project to companies like Marshall Field.[64]

The well-honed procedure enabled the company to dominate an intensely competitive field during the boom years of the 1920s. Although Holabird and Root may have been quick to adopt new technical innovations and advances in construction, it was far from an avant-garde architectural firm (although some of its designs during the 1930s could be considered ahead of their time). Because it was conservative, the firm enjoyed a close relationship with its clients, which enabled it to prosper. Their success, however, waned in 1930 along with the country's economy. Like many companies during the Great Depression, Holabird and Root were forced to cut back, severely shrinking the size of the company. Even as the national economy began to turn around at the end of the 1930s, Holabird and Root was unable to recapture the business it enjoyed during the boom years of the Twenties. The company survived World War II but had a difficult time gearing "up for [the] new demands and a greatly changed architectural climate" in the post-war years."[65]

Company partner John Augur Holabird died in 1945. His nephew, Bill Holabird, then became a partner in the firm along with John Wellborn Root, Jr. The men transitioned the company to the plainer and more space aged architecture of the 1950s and 1960s. Root died in 1963 and John Augur Holabird, Jr. took over the management of the company in 1970. By 1987, however, there were no Holabirds or Roots associated with the company, which still operates from its headquarters in the Marquette Building in downtown Chicago.[66]

[63] Ibid, xii-xiii.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid, xiii-xiv.

[66] Ibid; Encyclopedia of Chicago viewed at www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____ previously listed in the National Register
____ previously determined eligible by the National Register
____ designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #_____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #_____

Primary location of additional data:

x State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

NAD27

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	12	693986	5072648	3			
2				4			

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Northern Hotel is located in the SE ¼ NE1 ¼ NW ¼ of Section 3, T1S, R26E. It occupies Lots 13-18 of Block 109 of the Billings Original Townsite. The hotel is located on the southeast corner of North Broadway Street and First Avenue North in downtown Billings.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of the site encompasses the six city lots of Block 109 of the Original Billings Townsite upon which the footprint of the Northern Hotel rests. The boundary includes only the Northern Hotel building.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jon Axline and Joan L. Brownell/ consultants

organization Northern Hotel date February 2013

street & number 19 North Broadway telephone (406) 867-6767

city or town Billings state MT zip code 59101

e-mail

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

  A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Northern Hotel

street & number 19 North Broadway telephone (406) 867-6767

city or town Billings state MT zip code 59101

Other contact information

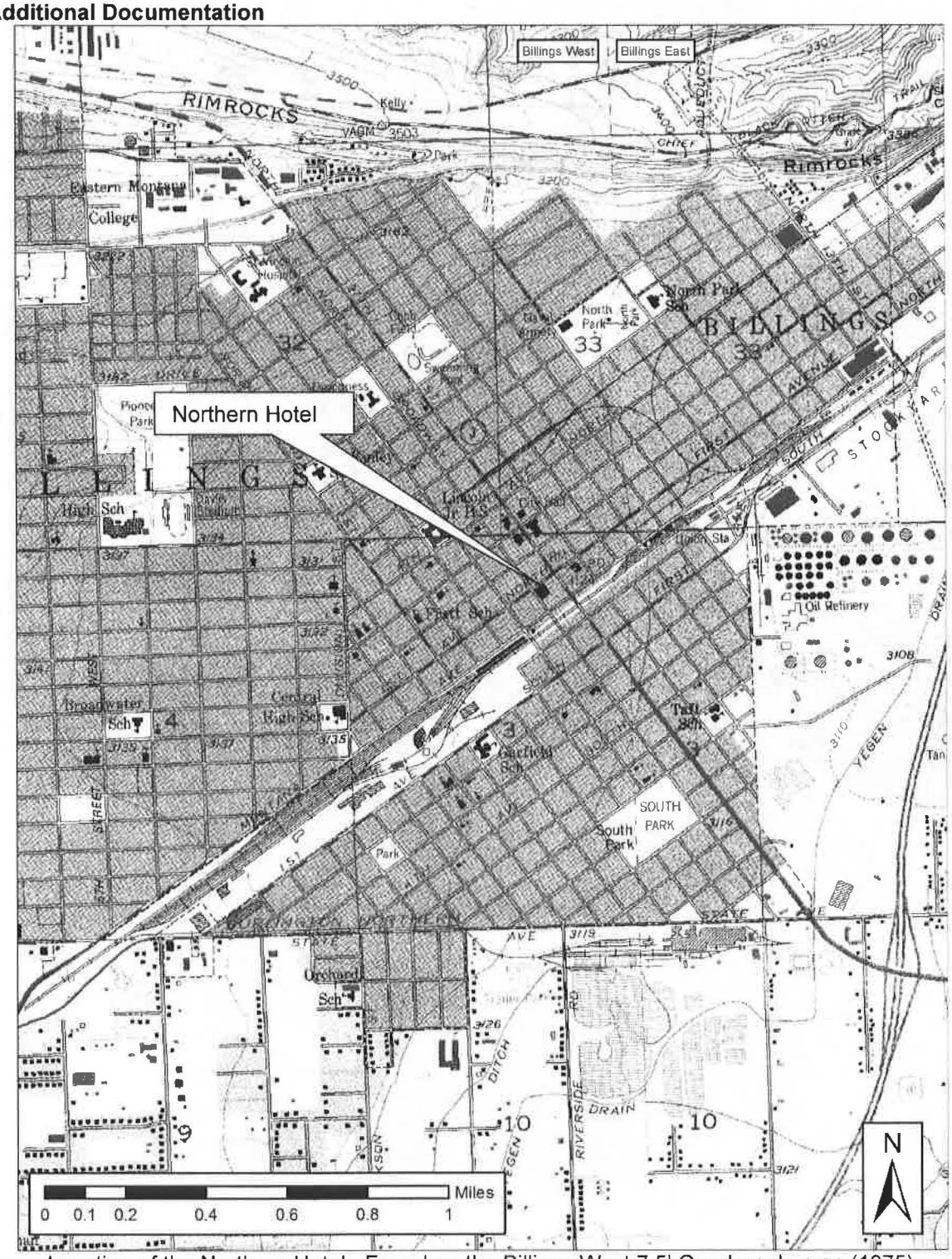
name Zootist Hospitality, L.L.C.

street & number 555 Zoot Enterprise Lane telephone

city or town Bozeman state MT zip code 59718-8128

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

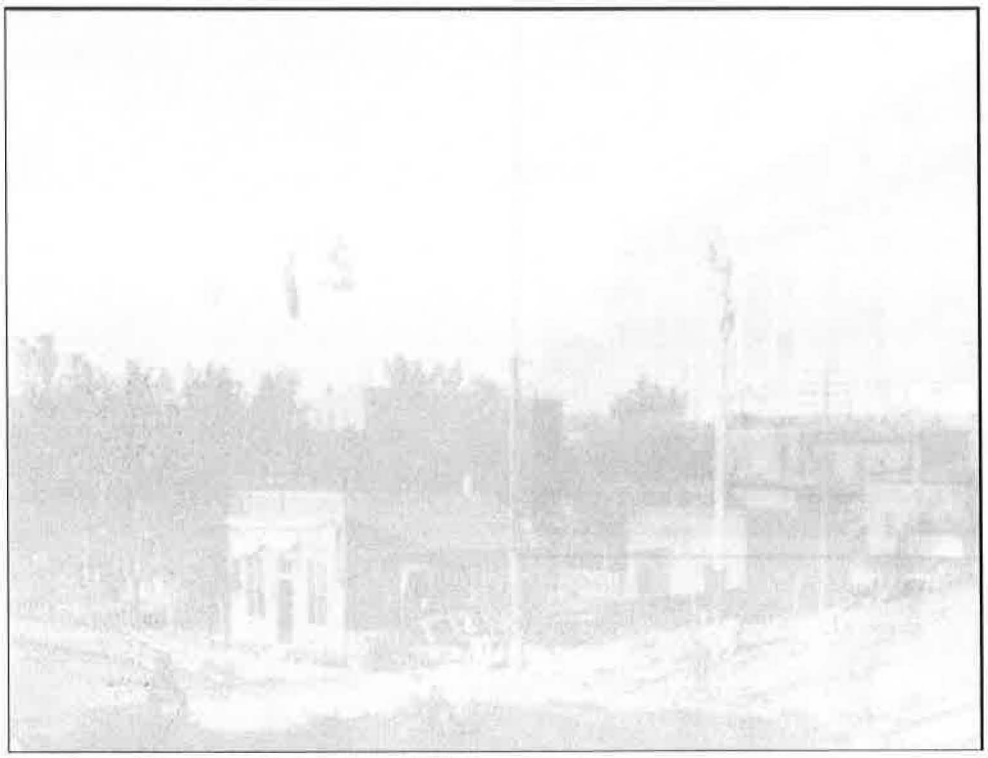
Maps and Additional Documentation



Location of the Northern Hotel. Found on the Billings West 7.5' Quadrangle map (1975).

Arial view of location of the Northern Hotel

All historic photographs courtesy of Jim Reich from his private collection



Location of Northern Hotel circa 1900

Northern Hotel 1904

Northern Hotel 1916

Northern Hotel circa 1942

Northern Hotel circa 1950

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Northern Hotel

City or Vicinity: Billings

County: Yellowstone State: MT

Photographer: Joan L. Brownell

Date Photographed: March 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

0001 of 0010. West and South sides, view to north

0002 of 0010. North and West sides, view to southeast

0003 of 0010. South and West sides, view to north

0004 of 0010. South and East sides, view to northwest

0005 of 0010. North and East sides, view to southwest

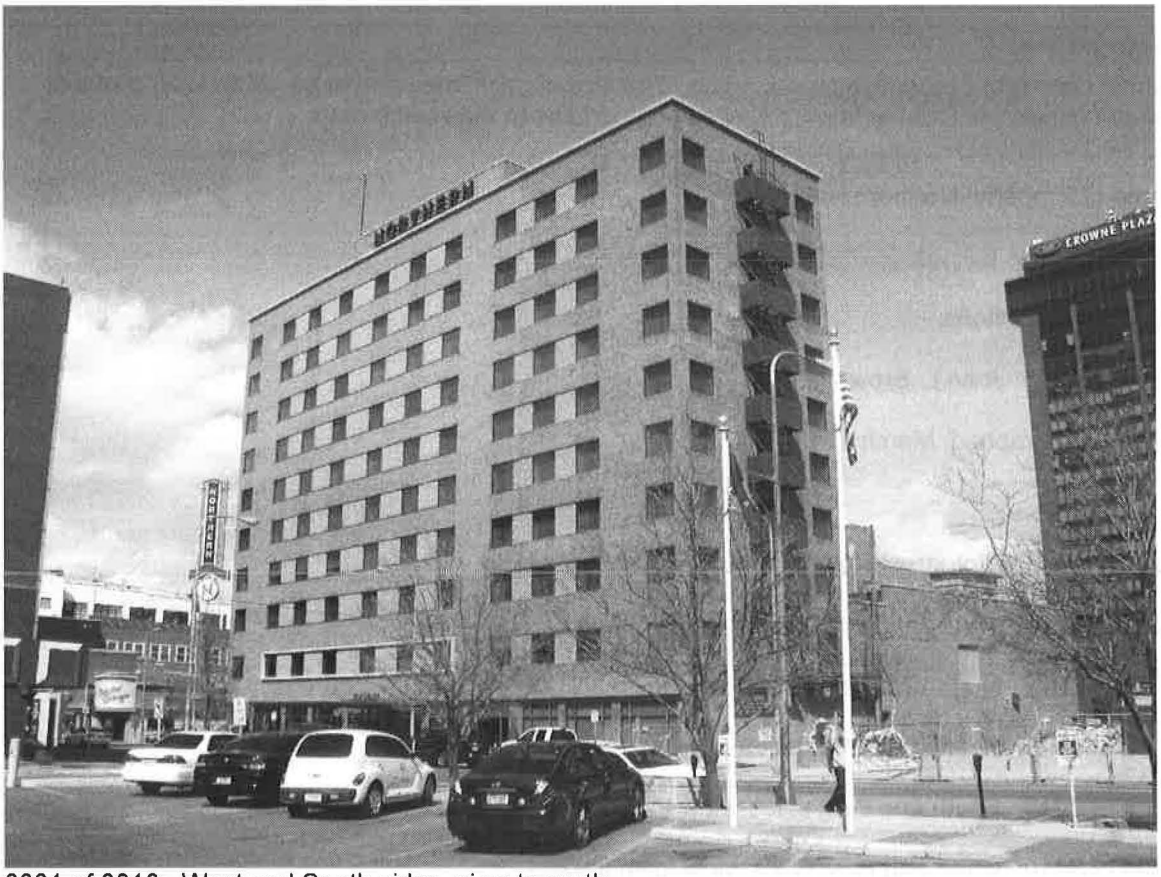
0006 of 0010. East and south sides, view to west

0007 of 0010. North Broadway Streetscape, view to southeast, Northern Hotel in upper left

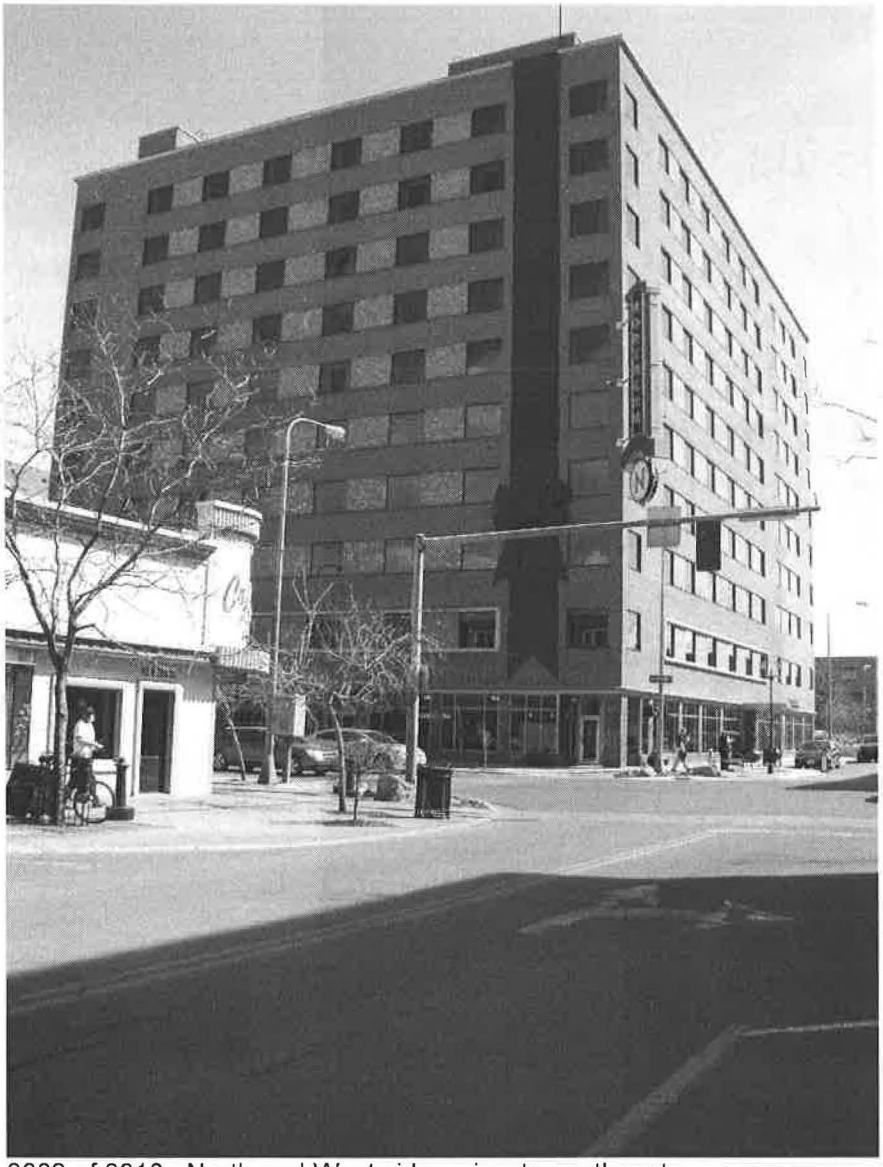
0008 of 0010. Facade North Broadway view to north

0009 of 0010. Facade 1st Ave North, view to east

0010 of 0010. Facade North Broadway, view to south

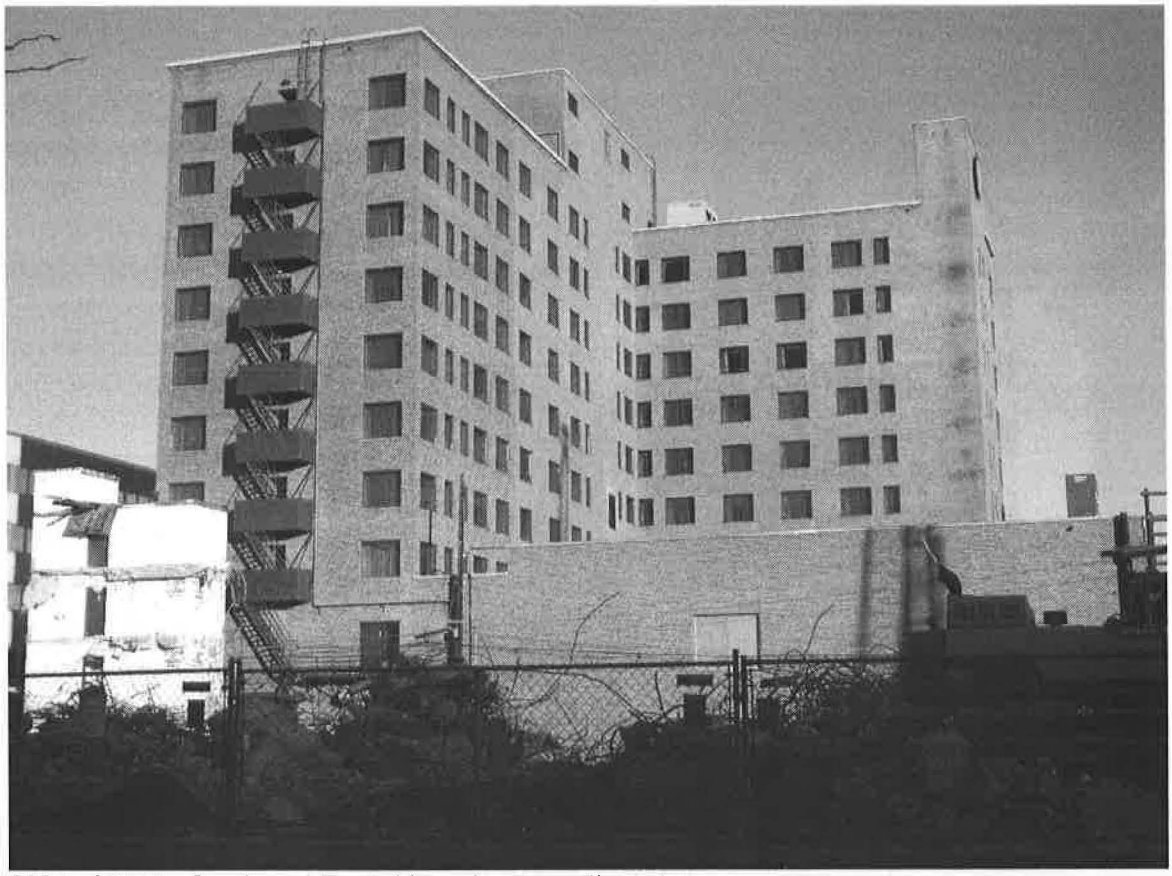


0001 of 0010. West and South sides, view to north

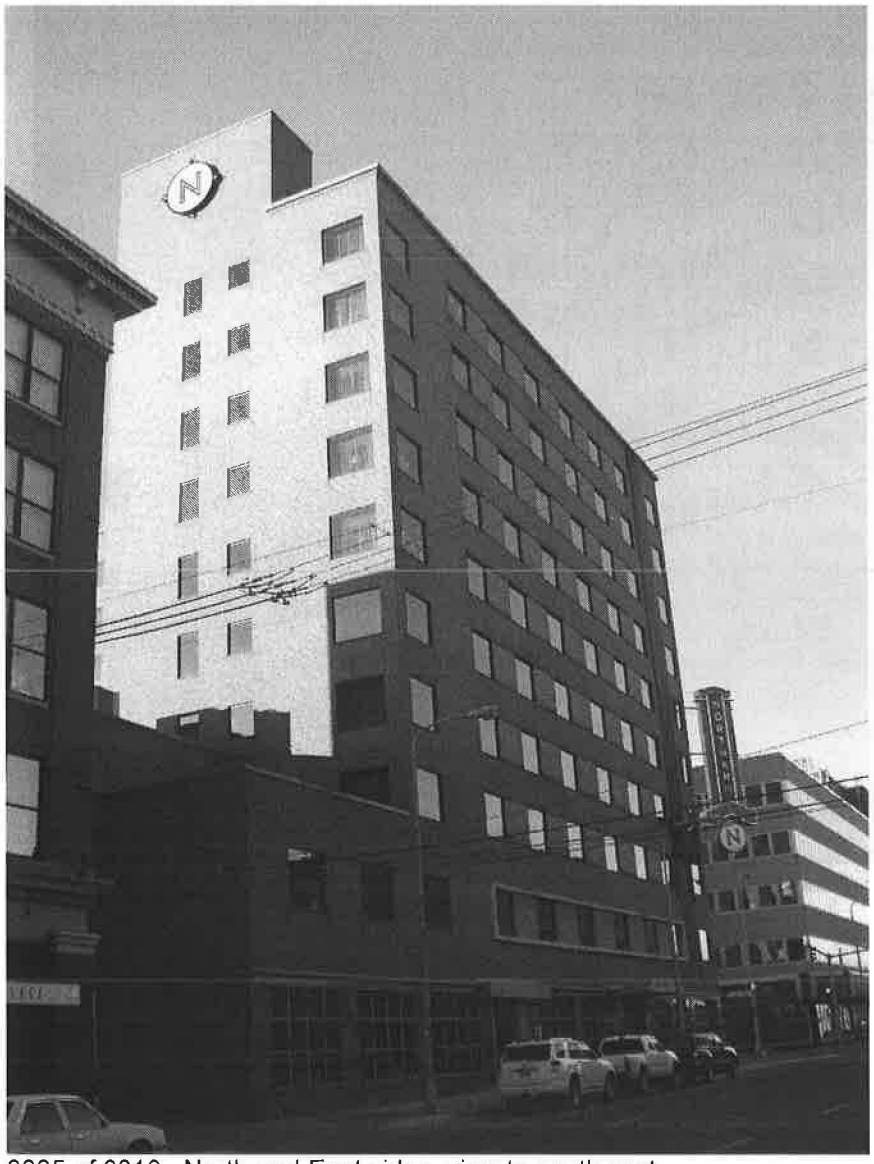


0002 of 0010. North and West sides, view to southeast

0003 of 0010. South and West sides, view to north



0004 of 0010. South and East sides, view to northwest



0005 of 0010. North and East sides, view to southwest

0006 of 0010. East and south sides, view to west

0007 of 0010. North Broadway Streetscape, view to southeast, Northern Hotel in upper left

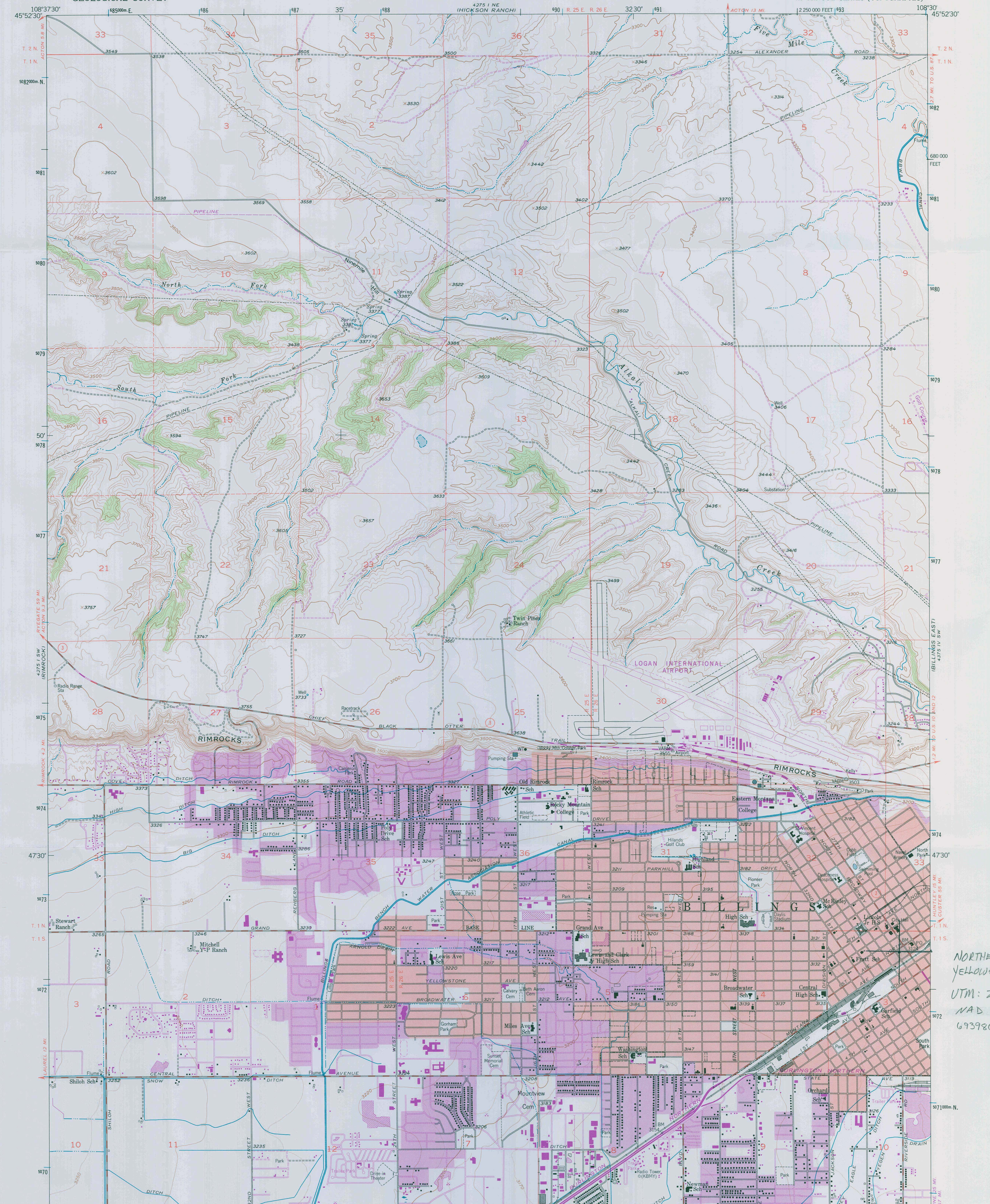
0008 of 0010. Facade North Broadway, view to north

0009 of 0010. Facade 1st Ave North, view to east

0010 of 0010. Facade North Broadway, view to south

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

BILLINGS WEST QUADRANGLE
MONTANA-YELLOWSTONE CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey as part of the Department of the Interior program for the development of the Missouri River Basin

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography from aerial photographs by multiplex methods and by planetable surveys 1957. Aerial photographs taken 1951

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Montana coordinate system, south zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 12, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

Dashed land lines indicate approximate locations

GN MN
1°45' 31 MILS
16° 284 MILS
UTM GRID AND 1975 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000
1 ½ 0 1 MILE
1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 .5 0 1 KILOMETER

CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 10-FOOT CONTOURS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty — Light-duty
Medium-duty — Unimproved dirt
Interstate Route — U.S. Route — State Route

MONTANA
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1969 and 1975. This information not field checked

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

BILLINGS WEST, MONT.
N4545—W10830/7.5

1957
PHOTOREVISED 1969 AND 1975
AMS 4275 I SE—SERIES V894

MONTANA OUTDOOR SPORTS
708 N. MAIN
HELENA, MONTANA 59601
(406) 443-4119

NORTHERN HOTEL
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA
UTM: ZONE 12
NAD 27
693986 E 5072648N

TMT0198

NORTHERN
NORTHERN
CROWNE PLAZ

NORTHERN

NORTHERN
FARGO

NORTHERN

N

ACME
APRIL 5-7
Jeep
3-52085A

NO PARKING
PASSENGER
LOADING AND
UNLOADING

Bernie's
DINER
Bernie's

Bernie's
DINER
VALET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Northern Hotel

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MONTANA, Yellowstone

DATE RECEIVED: 4/26/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/20/13
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/04/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/12/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000369

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL:	N	DATA PROBLEM:	N	LANDSCAPE:	N	LESS THAN 50 YEARS:	N
OTHER:	N	PDIL:	N	PERIOD:	N	PROGRAM UNAPPROVED:	N
REQUEST:	N	SAMPLE:	N	SLR DRAFT:	N	NATIONAL:	N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

✓ ACCEPT ___ RETURN ___ REJECT 6·12·13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA_____

REVIEWER_____ DISCIPLINE_____

TELEPHONE_____ DATE_____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

Big Sky. Big Land. Big History.
Montana
Historical Society

RECEIVED 2280
APR 26 2013
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Historic Preservation
Museum
Outreach & Interpretation
Publications
Research Center

April 23, 2013

Carol Shull, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1201 Eye St. NW
8th Floor (MS 2280)
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Shull,

Enclosed please find the following nomination for your consideration for listing in the National Register of Historic Places:

The Northern Hotel, Billings, Yellowstone County, Montana

Please be advised that I submit the enclosed nomination under your revised procedures. I notified the owners and public officials in excess of 30 days prior to the Preservation Review Board meeting and received no notarized objections to the nomination from the property owners of record. The Review Board unanimously recommended that this property be nominated and I concur with its recommendation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Baumler, PhD
State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosure

225 North Roberts Street
P.O. Box 201201
Helena, MT 59620-1201
(406) 444-2694
(406) 444-2696 FAX
montanahistoricalsociety.org