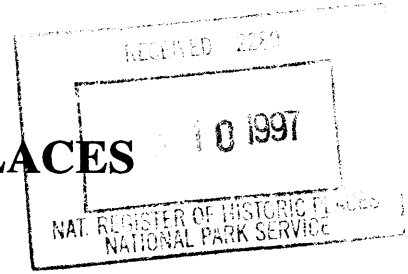


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

## 1. Name of Property

historic name: Wolf Creek Hotel

other name/site number:

## 2. Location

street & number: Main Street at Bissonnett Street

not for publication: n/a  
vicinity: n/a

city/town: Wolf Creek

state: Montana      code: MT      county: Lewis & Clark      code: 049      zip code: 59405

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally.

  
Signature of certifying official/Title

10-2-97  
Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency or bureau (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

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

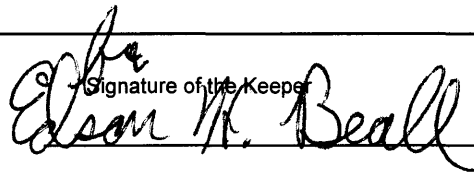
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
     see continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register  
     see continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register  
     see continuation sheet
- removed from the National Register  
     see continuation sheet
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

  
Signature of the Keeper      Date of Action 11/7/97

---

### 5. Classification

---

<b>Ownership of Property:</b> Private	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
<b>Category of Property:</b> Building	<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Noncontributing</b>
<b>Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:</b> 0	<u>  3  </u>	<u>    </u> building(s)
<b>Name of related multiple property listing:</b> n/a	<u>  1  </u>	<u>    </u> sites
	<u>    </u>	<u>  2  </u> structures
	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> objects
	<u>  4  </u>	<u>  2  </u> TOTAL

---

### 6. Function or Use

---

<b>Historic Functions:</b>	<b>Current Functions:</b>
Domestic: Hotel	Vacant/ Not in Use

---

### 7. Description

---

<b>Architectural Classification:</b>	<b>Materials:</b>
	foundation: wood
	walls: wood
	roof: wood, asphalt shingle
	other: n/a

---

### Narrative Description

---

The Wolf Creek Hotel is a prominent building in the Wolf Creek Canyon, located thirty miles north of Helena. A substantial building which has anchored the Wolf Creek community for a century, the hotel and its outbuildings sit on six lots abeam the Interstate 15 exit on the north side of town.

#### Hotel (contributing)

The original building on this site was constructed of logs, and was a 1 or 1½ story building that served as the first hotel in the community. The hotel changed hands ca. 1890, when Charles Forman purchased the property. It appears that within a couple of years, most of the log hotel was removed, and a more spacious two story, wood frame hotel was built in its place. Only a small log house to which the new hotel was attached remains of the earlier log building. The log house has a front-facing gable roof with a full-length porch supported on square wood posts. The hewn logs are covered with drop siding. Windows set into the front wall are double hung 2-over-2. The front door is paneled. Windows flanking the door are 2-over-2, double hung sash. A similar window is placed centrally in the front gable.

The interior of the log house appears to retain its original room divisions, with a front and rear room on the first story, and a single bedroom on the second story. The log walls were originally exposed on the interior and whitewashed. The log walls were later covered with fiberboard paneling, and ca. 1970, with wood veneer paneling. The flooring remains the original 6" wide tongue and groove boards. Light fixtures appear to date to the 1910s. Shortly after indoor plumbing was added to the hotel in 1946, a bathroom was added to the rear, southeast corner of the house.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places

## Continuation Sheet

Section number 7

Wolf Creek Hotel  
Lewis & Clark County, Montana

Page 1

The newer Wolf Creek Hotel is 2 ½ stories high, rectangular in massing, with a high, hipped roof. The building is clad with wide, clapboards, trimmed with cornerboards and terminating in a plain cornice at the eaves. Both wood and asphalt shingles cover various parts of the roof. The hotel rests on wooden stringers placed on the ground. Windows have 1-over-1 and 2-over-2 sash on the primary facade; most other windows are 1-over-1 sash.

A shallow, hipped roof porch spans the full width of the front facade. Its roof is supported on turned wood posts. The porch floor is of concrete, poured at ground level; it replaced an earlier board floor. Two doorways open onto the porch: one at the center which accesses a central stairwell and entry hall; the other offset to the east, and accessing the hotel lobby. Both doorways have paneled, wood doors with upper glazing and transoms. Windows are framed with wood, with simple lug sills; windowheads on the second story tie into the cornice. Two hipped roof dormers project from the frontal plane of the roof. Each dormer contains a single 1-over-1 window. Reportedly, a cupola once crowned the hotel, but it was lost during a high windstorm.

A shed roofed porch spans the east of the building. Originally an open veranda, this porch was later screened and then enclosed with T-111 paneling.

On the interior, the first floor of the hotel was designed to include a central entryway, lobby, dining room, living room, kitchen, parlor, and bedroom. The second story has eight rooms organized around a central hallway, and a stairwell that leads to two rooms on the third floor.

The interior walls and 10 foot high ceilings are finished with beaded fir which was painted. Later fiberboard and wood veneer paneling is being removed by the current owners to expose the original finish. Floors appear to be fir tongue and groove boards, except for the dining room which is finished with maple flooring. Interior woodwork includes unadorned wood window frames, 6-inch high baseboards, and beaded wainscoting which trims the lobby walls. The original cupboards and drainboard sink remain in the kitchen.

In 1946, indoor plumbing was added to the building, with the conversion of one bedroom on the second floor into two bathrooms. At the same time, the parlor and kitchen on the east end of the building were converted into an apartment. The screened porch on the hotel's east end was rented to guests at times, but it was eventually enclosed for storage. (According to Mrs. Floberg, a past owner of the hotel, a cupola which once surmounted the hotel blew off in a high wind and landed in the road, and a skylight which once helped illuminate the present kitchen was covered over after having been broken by icicles).

Old photographs show that a small white picket fence once enclosed the front yard of the log portion of the hotel. Since then, the entire front lawn has been converted to a black-top parking area, narrowly separating the hotel from one of Wolf Creek's two main streets, each running parallel along opposite sides of the Prickly Pear Creek. Completion of Interstate Highway 15 sliced the town in two, and caused the Prickly Pear Creek to be redirected from its natural route. The Wolf Creek Hotel and the other buildings along Wolf Creek streets mark an earlier period in the community's history prior to the impact of interstate highway construction.

### Laundry/Coal/Generator Shed (contributing)

This building appears on the 1920 Sanborn Insurance map of Wolf Creek; its date of construction is probably contemporaneous with the hotel. It is of wood frame construction clad with board and batten. The building has a gable roof, covered with rolled asphalt roofing. A paneled wooden door is located on the east side; four and six light fixed windows are in the walls. On the inside, the building has an earthen floor, and in the north end, a doorway opens into a stone root cellar.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places

## Continuation Sheet

Section number 7

Wolf Creek Hotel  
Lewis & Clark County, Montana

Page 2

### Root Cellar (contributing)

This structure appears on the 1920 Sanborn Insurance map of Wolf Creek; its date of construction is probably contemporaneous with the hotel. The fieldstone root cellar is built into the hill behind the hotel. A rock wall reinforces the hill and railroad ties frame the outside doorway which opens to the south. The cellar also may be entered through a doorway from the washhouse.

### Ice House (contributing)

This building appears on the 1920 Sanborn Insurance map of Wolf Creek; its date of construction is probably contemporaneous with the hotel. The ice house stands behind the hotel in the northeast corner of the property. It was originally a square building with a gable roof. The exterior was finished with beveled clapboard to match the hotel. The building was converted to a house in 1925. A shed addition was made at that time, adding a kitchen and bathroom. A concrete stoop provides entry into the building; it is covered by a projecting gable roof supported by knee brackets, and wrought iron posts which are a later addition. A second entrance is located in the east wall. It has a paneled wood door with an upper window, and a multi-paned storm door. A window on the south facade is double-hung, while those on the west wall in the shed addition are small casement or fixed units. The building rests on a concrete foundation. The roof has exposed rafter tails and is covered with T-lock shingles.

### Pump House (non-contributing)

A pump house was built to the west of the hotel, apparently during the 1970s. This newer structure is of frame construction, with a shallow gable roof. The building is clad with T-111 siding. A single door in the east wall provides access to this structure.

### Storage Shed (non-contributing)

A square, single-story storage shed stands behind the hotel, to the south. This shed is of frame construction, and appears to have been built during the 1970s. It has a door in the north wall, small fixed windows, and is sided with T-111 siding. The shed is covered by a gable roof with asphalt shingles.

### Integrity

The Wolf Creek Hotel is in an excellent state of preservation, retaining most all aspects of the original design on both the exterior and interior. The building is in need of some repair, as floors have become uneven as the building has settled, and the plaster walls have deteriorated in some areas. However, the original materials and design elements including trim and detailing such as beaded fir walls and ceilings, windows, doors, and flooring are all original to the building's early 1890s construction, and highly representative of its historic past. The surrounding property retains a complement of historic outbuildings, and although two newer sheds now occupy part of the yard, the setting and feeling of the historic hotel and relationships to the outbuildings are still apparent. The town of Wolf Creek has sustained major environmental and cultural impacts from the effects of the elevated interstate highway which bisects the community, and it is the Wolf Creek Hotel and nearby cottages and small shops which today give testimony to the history of this community, and the period before the highway was constructed.

---

## 8. Statement of Significance

---

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Areas of Significance: Architecture, Transportation,  
Settlement

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Period(s) of Significance: 1887-1946

Significant Person(s): n/a

Significant Dates: 1887, 1890

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: unknown

## Narrative Statement of Significance

---

The Wolf Creek Hotel is one of the oldest and most important historic properties in the railroad town of Wolf Creek, Montana. Begun in 1887 and completed during the early 1890s, the hotel is a substantial building with long ties to the commerce, transportation, recreation and social fabric of this town and its rural surroundings. In addition, it is an exceptionally well preserved 1890s period railroad-era hotel, highly representative of the unadorned, functional buildings which served people traveling through outlying areas of Montana during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For these important associations, the Wolf Creek Hotel is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places according to Criteria A and C.

### Background History and Historical Significance

Following discovery of gold in Last Chance Gulch and the subsequent founding of the town of Helena, settlers coming to the area spread out into the nearby valley and along travel routes adjacent to the nascent town. Farmsteads and traveler's stopping places were among the earliest outlying habitations. North of Helena, where the Prickly Pear Creek wound its way through a steep canyon toward the Missouri River, a stage and wagon stop was established ca. 1863-67 along the route of the Mullan Trail, as it left the Missouri River country and headed toward the west. The stopping place was sited at an early sawmill near the confluence of Prickly Pear and Wolf Creeks, and was named Cartersville, presumably after James Carter, owner of the mill and one of the earliest settlers in the vicinity. According to local history, the name Wolf Creek derives from the Indian name, Creek Where the Wolf Jumped To (or Creek That the Wolf Jumped In).<sup>1</sup>

The town of Cartersville was officially recorded in 1881, when it received a post office. Cartersville grew to include the Kisselpaugh Hotel, a saloon, grocery store, sawmill, brickworks, schoolhouse, blacksmith shop, several homes and a cemetery. For decades, the area continued to be referenced as the Cartersville precinct for purposes of voting and census records.

In the winter of 1885-86, the Montana Central Railroad surveyed a route through the Prickly Pear Canyon and along the Missouri River. Designed to connect the mines in Butte and the copper-producing Anaconda smelter with James J. Hill's St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railroad at Great Falls, the 249-mile Montana Central line was laid out via Helena. As the Manitoba built westward across the Montana plains at record speed, the Montana Central line was laid northward from Helena at a breakneck pace. The Montana Central arrived in Great Falls in November 1887, just a month behind the Manitoba. In 1889, construction of the Montana Central from Helena on to Butte secured a connection to Montana industry for Hill's Manitoba, renamed the Great Northern Railway that same year.

Soon after construction of the Montana Central Railroad through Prickly Pear Canyon, a depot was built on the south side of Prickly Pear Creek, almost a mile east of Cartersville. The railroad had by-passed Cartersville in part because routing it through the town would have required two additional bridges. Soon homes and businesses were drawn away from Cartersville, nearer to

---

<sup>1</sup>Cheney, Roberta Carkeek Names on the Face of Montana p. 283.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places

## Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Wolf Creek Hotel  
Lewis & Clark County, Montana

Page 1

the tracks and depot. The brick kiln in Cartersville was used to manufacture many of the bricks for building construction in the new town of Wolf Creek. In 1890, the settlement of Cartersville burned and today, only the remains of a house and the historic cemetery mark its location.

The town of Wolf Creek was platted by the Wolf Creek Townsite Company, on land originally granted to the Northern Pacific Railroad by the U.S. Congress in 1864. As originally planned, the town was oriented to face the Prickly Pear Creek and the Railroad tracks across the creek. Main Street paralleled the creek and the tracks, and was intersected by Bisonette Street, named for Mr. O.C. Bisonette, the townsite company president.

In 1887, one of the first businesses to be established in the new town was the Wolf Creek Hotel. The original hotel on the property was a single story log building erected by James Carter. Just two or three years later, Carter (who established most of the early businesses in Wolf Creek) sold the hotel to Charles Forman, a young Englishman who came to America and Montana with his twin brother George and younger brother Joseph during the late 1800s. Of the three, only Charles remained in Montana. George settled in the Seattle area and made a summer visit each year to Montana, and Joseph went to Alaska, where he died some time later.

Described as a "robust, friendly and hard-working" man, Forman settled in Wolf Creek by 1892, purchasing the hotel from Carter and following his chosen trade, as a butcher. City directories for Wolf Creek during the 1890s list both Forman Brothers Meats and the hotel. Sometime shortly after purchasing the property, Forman built a large 2 ½ story hotel on the site of the earlier hotel. It was attached to the log house that served as the hotel manager's quarters. Charles Forman operated the Wolf Creek Hotel with his wife, Alice Tacey Forman, who reportedly evacuated the hotel during a spring flood in 1892 through an upstairs window. Forman also owned a large livery barn and corrals across the street from the hotel and a blacksmith shop. When automobiles became popular, he built a brick garage just west of the barn. Forman also built a bungalow next to the hotel, which was occupied by Peter Lehaye, who managed the garage.

Through the early years of this century, the Wolf Creek Hotel served as a stage stop on the routes between Augusta and Helena, and Fort Benton and Helena, as well as for the Mullan Trail.<sup>2</sup> The Missouri River country near Wolf Creek was also a favorite recreational spot for people from the nearby city of Helena, just 34 miles away. Wolf Creek was the first town to the north of Helena, just over the North Hills. Situated on Prickly Pear Creek, just off the Missouri River, the area was a natural getaway for hunting and fishing parties, or for people making a day-long excursion from the capital city. An undated Helena newspaper article reported that "so great is the throng of outing parties in Prickly Pear Canyon, that the hotel in Wolf Creek is said to be crowded all the time, and it is difficult to secure accommodations."<sup>3</sup> Besides tourists and travelers, the Hotel provided housing and meals for the surveyors, employers and laborers of the stage lines, railroad, telegraph and telephone companies, a later gas pipeline, the Holter Dam project during the 1910s, and mining and logging interests. The Hotel also provided a popular dining facility in the region.

Alice Forman died in 1901, and was buried in the cemetery at the old site of Cartersville. Following the death of his wife, Forman wrote to a relative in England asking for someone to come to Montana and help him run his hotel. Alice's niece, Florence, responded, and she and Charlie were subsequently married in 1906, and their two daughters were born in the hotel. Florence Forman did all the hotel cooking during the winter, but hired a cook during the busier summer months.

---

<sup>2</sup>Interview with Joyce Sterling Blackman, a fourth generation cattle rancher in the area, by R & H Greenlee.

<sup>3</sup>As quoted in Campbell, William, From the Quarries of Last Chance Gulch, vol. II, p. 128.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places

## Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Wolf Creek Hotel  
Lewis & Clark County, Montana

Page 2

The Forman family returned to England after the Hotel was sold in 1927. The sales price was \$12,000, which "may have included the bungalow, garage and livery stable across the street." The daughters remain in England today, and have provided much of what is known about this period in the hotel's history.

The telephone line between Butte and Great Falls was completed in 1895, and the Wolf Creek Hotel had the only telephone in the area until 1903. The nearby Holter Dam was completed in 1918 to provide electrical power to the recently electrified Butte, Anaconda and Pacific Railway and a portion of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway's mainline, but until 1927 when power finally came to Wolf Creek, electricity was provided by a small generator. There was no central heat (until 1994), and the entire hotel was heated with several space heaters placed in various areas of the first floor. The renters could keep warm if they left their bedroom doors open, even as late as 1985.

The hotel was supplied with water piped from natural springs located on the hill to the rear of the building. Several outbuildings were constructed on the property along with the hotel and served the needs of the facility. They included an ice/meat house which was chilled with ice cut from the Missouri River and packed in sawdust. Ice tongs from the period remain in the hotel. The ice house adjoined a root cellar built of rock against the back hill where vegetables and provisions were stored. Forman supplied meats to the hotel, and kept three dairy cows for milk supplies. Prior to 1946, there was a "free standing water closet" in the rear.

The Formans sold the Wolf Creek Hotel to Leo and Pearle Leedy Rhein, who owned it from 1927 until 1946. They operated the business and served meals there until 1938, after which time, they apparently hired others to run it for them. Mrs. Rhein described the Hotel as "good in the summer, often renting all of the 10 rooms." They had a lovely dining room, well-equipped kitchen, coal cook range, outside toilet, coal heat, electricity from the old 'Delco', and running water provided from a small reservoir above the schoolhouse.<sup>4</sup>

The Hotel was purchased by Robert and Gertrude Funk in 1946. Mr. and Mrs. Funk, who first came to Wolf Creek in 1935 to teach school, became active members of the community, leaders in education and prominent business people, owning the grocery store and a bar in addition to the Hotel. Mr. Funk began the Wolf Creek volunteer fire department, was a boy scout leader and led the local "Harmonica Band." During the early 1960s, the dining area was converted to offices for the State Highway Department, as it began construction on the new Interstate Highway.

In June 1964, John and Dorothy Floberg purchased the Hotel from the Funks. The Flobergs rented rooms at \$5.00 per night, and sold hunting and fishing licenses and bait. Mrs. Floberg remembered that during nearby construction periods, the rooms were sometimes rented twice each day for one or two dollars, as the workers changed shifts.<sup>5</sup> Ill health forced John to retire in 1985, and following the death of her husband, Mrs. Floberg remained in her private residence in the hotel until 1994, when she moved to Great Falls and sold the building to Rick and Helen Greenlee.

### Architectural Significance

The Wolf Creek Hotel is a representative example of Montana's railroad-era vernacular hotel architectural design. As the railroads laid their tracks across Montana, small towns sprang up almost overnight. In towns platted by the railroads, the importance of a local hostelry is evidenced by the different railroad companies sometimes constructing their own building to lease out or offering town lots at a reduced price to anyone willing to construct an appropriate sized hotel. A distinctive vernacular "hotel style"

---

<sup>4</sup> Oral History interview with Pearle Leedy Rhein

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Dorothy Floberg, remembering facts about the hotel, its people and the local color during thirty years of hotel ownership, as told to R & H Greenlee.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places

## Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Wolf Creek Hotel  
Lewis & Clark County, Montana

Page 3

developed . The most visible and common feature of these woodframe buildings was a full-length front porch, sometimes with a balcony. This permanent wooden feature readily set the building apart from the myriad of other woodframe buildings on any given main street. Usually of two or two and one-half stories, the rectangular buildings were often built with their long sides facing the street. Functionally, this allowed all rooms to have windows and provided outside access to a typical hotel's separate services -- lobby, dining room, and associated businesses -- but also when combined with most hotels' free-standing and corner locations, it provided the appearance of a much larger building. Another common feature of railroad-era hotels was hipped roofs with multiple dormers. On a practical side, the hotel gained overflow rooms in the attic for a minimum investment, but again, it architecturally defined the building, distinguishing its function from other businesses. The readily visible roof, not hidden behind a false-front, added a scale and sense of presence to the buildings. The Wolf Creek Hotel embodies all the features found in this vernacular style.

Through interviews and other research, area residents have described the Wolf Creek Hotel as "spotless," "one of the best!," "a very nice place, with a really good, very large dining room." It was not designed or built with style or elegance, but was plain, functional, and served a necessary need. The current owners, Rick and Helen Greenlee, plan to retain the character of the building with elbow grease, paint, and some restoration to re-create its early 20th century appearance.



---

### 9. Major Bibliographic References

---

See continuation sheet

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

---

### 10. Geographical Data

---

Acreage of Property: less than one

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	12	418720	5206200

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): Section 35, T15N, R4W

---

### Verbal Boundary Description

The Wolf Creek Hotel stands on lots 1 - 6 in block 3 in the Wolf Creek Townsite, Montana.

---

### Boundary Justification

These are the lots associated with the building since its construction.

---

### 11. Form Prepared By

---

name/title: Rick & Helen Greenlee  
organization:            date: Spring 1997  
street & number: 3204 20th Ave South            telephone: 406-761-4859  
city or town: Great Falls            state: MT            zip code: 59648

---

### Property Owner

---

name/title: (same as above)  
street & number:            telephone:  
city or town:            state: MT            zip code:

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places

## Continuation Sheet

Section number 9

Wolf Creek Hotel  
Lewis & Clark County, Montana

Page 1

### Bibliography

Campbell, William. From the Quarries of Last Chance Gulch. Vol. II. Helena: Helena Independent Record Publishing Co., 1964.

Cheney, Roberta Carkeek. Names on the Face of Montana. Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Co., 1983.

Dearborn Country: A History of the Dearborn, Wolf Creek and Craig Areas. Fairfield, MT: The Fairfield Times, 1976.

Helena Abstract & Title Company. "Abstract of Title to Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 in Block 1 of Original Townsite of Wolf Creek, in Lewis and Clark County, State of Montana."

Hidy, Ralph W., Muriel E. Hidy, and Roy V. Scott. The Great Northern Railway. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1988.

Rhein, Pearle Leedy. Montana Historical Society Oral History No. 622, 1980.

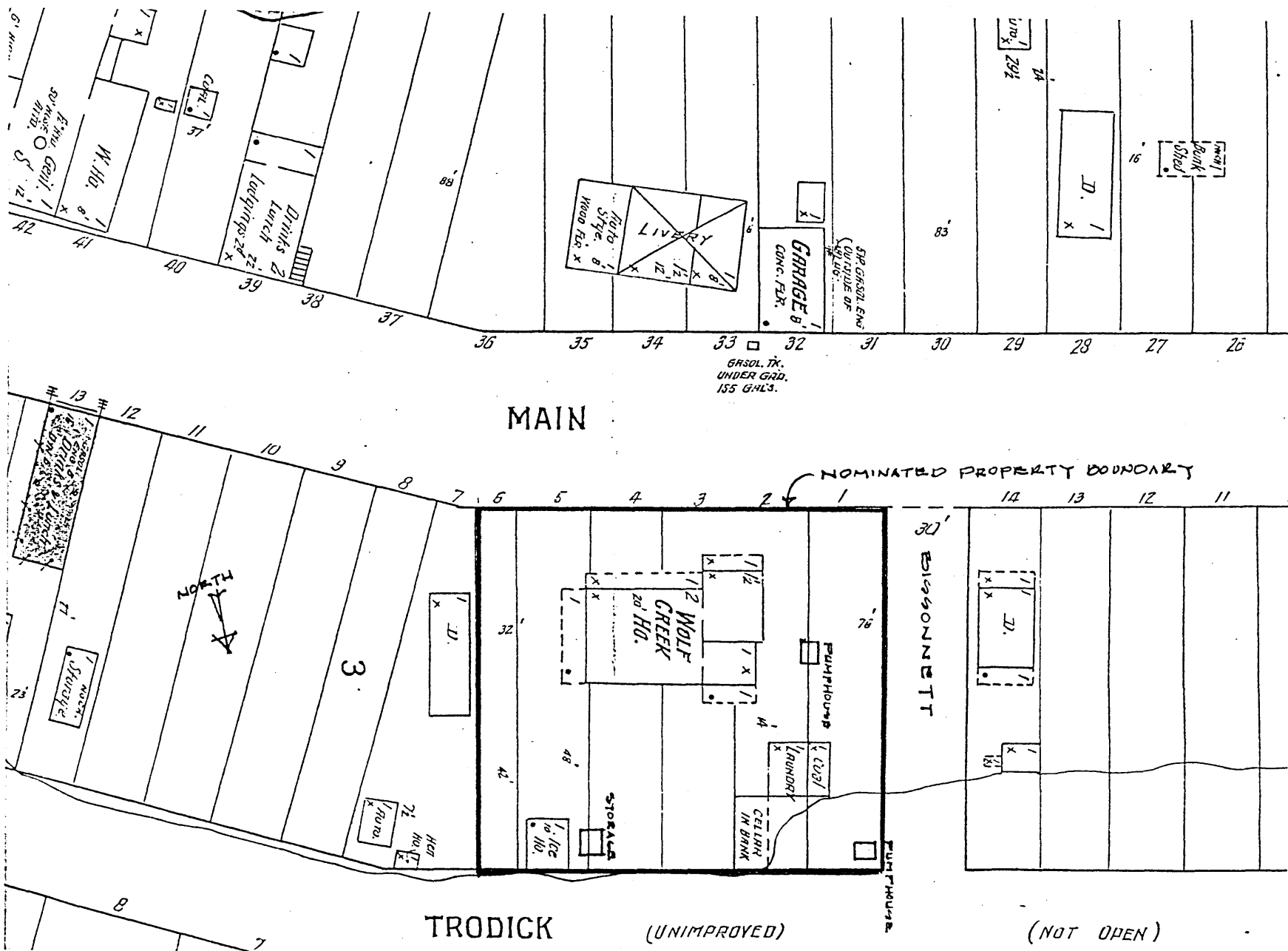
Interviews by, and correspondence to, Richard and/or Helen Greenlee:

Dorothy Floberg, former hotel owner, 22 January 1995.

Eugene Taconette, lifelong Wolf Creek resident, 23 January 1995.

Joyce Sterling Blackman, fourth generation area rancher.

Jennifer and Anthony Lonsdale, granddaughter of Charles Forman, 7 April 1995.



1920 SANDORN INSURANCE MAP  
W/ NOMINATED PROPERTY  
UPDATED TO 1997

WOLF CREEK HOTEL  
WOLF CREEK LEWIS & CLARK CO MT