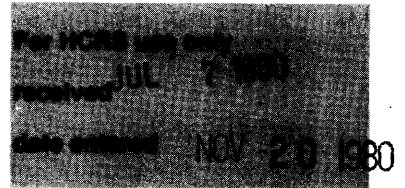


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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



1. Name

historic Fort Benton Engine House

and/or common Old City Hall

2. Location

street & number Front and 15th Streets (St. John) not for publication

city, town Fort Benton vicinity of congressional district 2

state Montana code 30 county Chouteau code 015

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: public meeting room; summer art gallery

4. Owner of Property

name City of Fort Benton

street & number 1204 Front Street

city, town Fort Benton vicinity of state Montana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Chouteau County Court House

street & number 1308 Franklin Street

city, town Fort Benton state Montana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

State Inventory
title Historic District of Fort Benton has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1968 and 1972 federal state county local

depository for survey records Montana Historical Society

225 North Roberts

city, town Helena state Montana

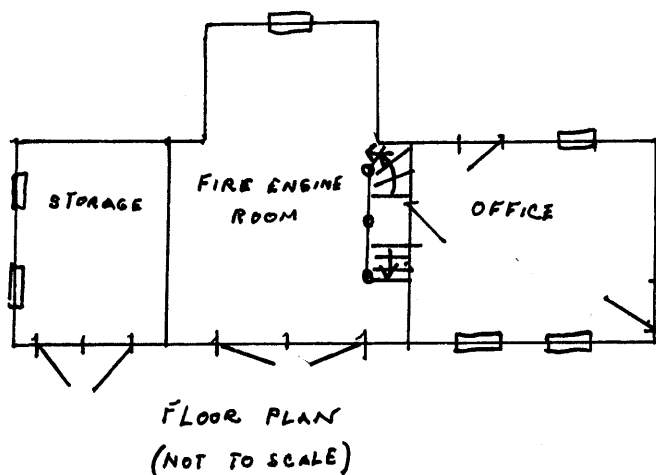
7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>November 8, 1979</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Old Engine House is a one-and-one-half story rectangular building of local soft brick construction located on Front and 15th Streets on the Fort Benton levee. 22 feet wide and 60 feet long, it has two double-door openings with two windows having straight wooden lintels and sills. The north end has two windows with a small window under the eaves in the half-story. The south end has a three-foot door to the left side and a small window under the eaves in the half-story. The rear has two windows and one 2-1/2-foot door. The roof is gabled with a ridge, but the ends have been truncated like a jerkin-head. The roof is covered with metal and has two chimneys on the east side. On the ridge line is a bell tower extending eleven feet above the ridge and is five feet square with a gabled top. On the front over the center of ten-foot doors is a gabled extension of the roof with a truncated front and a small window in the gable. That gable and the two end gables are board and batten with the batten strips rounded and a circular cutout at the bottom which extends down over the brick surface. On the rear a 10 ft. x 12 ft. addition was built to extend the first stall in front of the center door. It has a flat roof slightly sloped to the rear and two two-foot side parapets which extend up above the eave line of the main building. The rear wall of the addition contains one window. The north half of the building has a basement under it, the south half only a crawl space.

The original building was rectangular without the rear addition or the front gable. It had two large doors at the north end to allow removal of the fire engines. These are now closed by masonry and two windows are now on this surface. Both double doors have been added, the one on the left since 1950. The addition on the back was built in the 1920's when the purchase of a new fire engine necessitated the larger space. Two toilets were added to the rear after 1900 but have been removed in the restoration; the door which had been cut for them was replaced by the original window, both lintel and sill were still in the construction. Restoration of the exterior and a portion of the interior is now being accomplished with a Historic Preservation Grant.



8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1883 - 1979 **Builder/Architect** John Wilton

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Old Engine House built in 1883 is significant for its historic associations with the government of the city of Fort Benton. Originally built as a firehouse by the city, it also in its early years served as a jail and as the City Hall. It also was built during the period of rapid expansion in Fort Benton in the 1880's, and was the center of many social activities as well as fire-fighting activities of the 35-member volunteer department which was organized into three brigades. As the City Hall, it served Fort Benton as the seat of government for over seventy-five years, and now is used as a public meeting hall for service organizations. It is also significant as one of the early brick buildings constructed in Fort Benton during the city's settlement and building period.

In August 1883 with the first establishment of incorporated government, a fire department was organized and a contract let for \$1710 to build the brick engine house. It was completed in the fall of that year but the fire equipment destined for it did not arrive until the next spring when it was hauled in ox freight wagon from Cow Island where it had been left by a steamboat that fall during low water. Three companies of fire fighters had been organized, then regular drilling and fire fighting could take place. The original fire bell of the city was moved from a tower outside to the belfry on the roof. Later in 1899 it was remodeled so that one end became the city jail; new doors were made for the fire equipment as well as quarters for the city marshal. Until 1966 it was the center of city government and still served its original purpose as a fire house. The building stands on the historic levee and it and the Grand Union Hotel are the only two structures remaining to remind one of the historic steamboat days in Fort Benton.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Letters from Molly Culbertson Sedgwick, born in Fort Benton in 1885 and spent early years here
 History of Montana 1739-1885 - Warner-Beers
 Records of City of Fort Benton, 1883; "River Press" 1883

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property Less than 1/4 acre

Quadrangle name Fort Benton

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

A

1	2	5	2	5	4	1	0	5	2	9	5	8	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing							

C

Zone		Easting				Northing							

D

Zone		Easting				Northing							

E

Zone		Easting				Northing							

F

Zone		Easting				Northing							

G

Zone		Easting				Northing							

H

Zone		Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

No formal survey of levee; building sits on southeast side of the levee between Missouri River and Front Street on the corner of St. John, now 15th Street

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

state None code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John G. Lepley, Curator

organization Fort Benton Museum

date November 8, 1979

street & number 817 Main Street

telephone 622-3278

city or town Fort Benton

state Montana

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Marcella Sherry

title Deputy SHPO

date 6-26-80 *original signed 2-21-80*

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for activity Cecil D. Shull date 11-20-80
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: [Signature] date 11/7/80
 Chief of Registration