

MONTANA HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY

JUN 20 1987

Site # PE#52



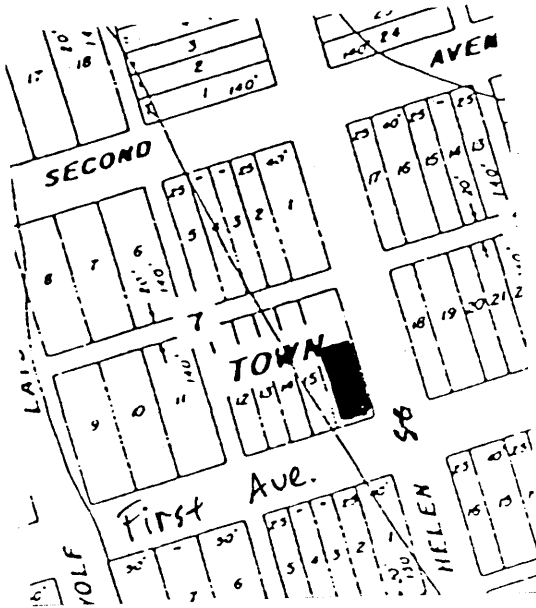
Legal Description: Original Town, Block 7, Lot 16

Address: First Ave., Lodge Grass, MT

Ownership: Name: Ronald and Hjordis Johnson

private address: Hardin, MT 59034

Roll # 3 Frame # 18



Location map or building plan with arrow north

Historic Name: Lodge Grass Merchandise Co. Store

Common Name: Federated Store (Ping Store)

Date of Construction: 1920 estimated documented

Architect: N/A

Builder: Lodge Grass Merchandise Co.

Original Owner: Lodge Grass Merchandise Co.

Original Use: Hardware store

Present Use: Clothing store

RESEARCH SOURCES: Note all records consulted to determine dates of construction, original owners, builders, uses, etc.

Title Search: _____ Tax Records: yes

Bldg. Permit: _____ Census Records: yes

Sewer/Water: _____ Sanborn Maps: _____

Directories: yes Newspapers: yes

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

(see Footnotes)

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: Describe present appearance of structure/site, then contrast and compare that with its original appearance, noting additions, alterations, and changes in materials. Discuss significant architectural features.

A rectangular brick commercial structure. Brick work is down with stretcher course. Has a flat roof and parapet walls. On the south facade is a recessed doorway in the center, with large single pane windows on either side. A wood frame, tin covered awning extends in front of the south entry. Above the porch roof are two long, narrow small square multipane skylight windows. In the center between the windows, above the door, is a signboard which reads "Federated." The bottom front windows on the south facade have been covered by metal mesh to prevent vandalism. The east elevation has two arched windows and one display window, which are boarded up. The northern, rear portion of the building has a cinder block addition with a shed roof.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION: Describe the persons, important events, and/or historical patterns associated with the structure/site and surrounding area.

This land was originally owned by George Pease, with no improvements. In 1920 lots 14-16 were purchased by the Lodge Grass Merchandise Company, and \$6500 worth of improvements on the property were made. ¹ This represents the construction of ² this building. The building was used, at first, as a hardware store. ³ J.J. Ping acquired this store in 1930. James Jackson Ping was born in Kentucky in 1881. In 1911 he moved to Missouri and married Ruth Blevan, and they later had a daughter named Margaret. The Ping family moved to Hardin in 1916 where J.J. ⁴ opened a store. The store in Lodge Grass was later acquired as a branch. ⁵ It was a clothing a mercantile operation. Ping owned the Lodge Grass store until 1954 when it was acquired by Howard and Barbara Mason.

¹"Town Ownership Books," County Assessor's Office, Big Horn County Courthouse, Hardin, MT (Microfiche).

²Interview with Joe Medicine Crow, Lodge Grass, Montana, 8 October 1985.

³"Town Ownership Books."

Footnote Sources:

⁴Bicentennial Committee of the Big Horn County Historical Society, Lookin' Back: Big Horn County (Hardin: Big Horn County Historical Society, 1976), pp.187-188.

⁵"Town Ownership Books."

INTEGRITY: Assess the degree to which the structure/site, and surrounding area accurately convey the historical associations of the property.

The site has excellent integrity. It is still in its original location, and looks much as it originally did. The building can convey, through its physical appearance, the strong impression of its historical associations. It has been operated as a store since its creation in 1920.

HISTORICAL and/or ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE: Justify how the persons, important events, or historical patterns associated with structure/site lend the property significance and/or describe the ways in which the structure embodies the distinctive characteristics of a particular period, building type, or style.

This building is associated with the lives of people who played a role in the history of Lodge Grass, and with the broad patterns of the historical development of the town. It was one of the first brick commercial structures built in Lodge Grass, of which only three still exist. Lodge Grass was proud of these buildings, bragging in a 1925 newspaper article that it "boasts of more substantial brick buildings than any town of its size in this part of the country" (The Searchlight (Hardin) 15 April 1925, p.1). This building is representative of a period (early Lodge Grass 1911-1921) and type (brick commercial structure) of which few others still stand in such good condition. J.J. Ping, who owned this store for almost 30 years, was a well known Big Horn County merchant.

This site appears to be both architecturally and historically significant within the context of the Lodge Grass development.

FORM PREPARED BY:

Name: P. Friedman, Powers Elevation

Address: P.O. Box 2612, Denver, CO 80201

Date: 1-7-1986

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:

Acreage: Less than one acre

USGS Quad: Lodge Grass, 7.5, 1967

UTM's: 13 | 314630 | 5020490