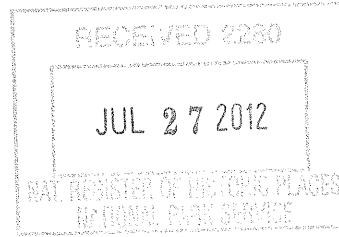


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



784

# 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 Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office  
other names/site number Little Western Life Insurance Company, 24LC2195

## 2. Location

street & number 600 N. Park Ave.

N/A	not for publication
N/A	vicinity

  
city or town Helena  
state Montana code MT county Lewis and Clark code 049 zip code 59601

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Mark F. Baumer / SMPO 7/24/2012  
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:)

Joe Edson Sr. Beall 9.10.12  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

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

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

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		<b>Total</b>

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

GOVERNMENT/government office

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

foundation: CONCRETE

BRICK; STONE; Granite veneer; METAL:

walls: Aluminum; GLASS

roof: ASPHALT

other: CERAMIC TILE; CONCRETE

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### 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

The Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office, built by the Western Life Insurance Company in 1962, is a one-and-two-story building with a T-shaped footprint and a flat roof. It is located in the north corner of a wedge-shaped urban block in Helena bounded by N. Park Avenue/Gilbert Street on the north; N. Park Avenue on the east; W. Placer Avenue on the south; and N. Benton Avenue on the west. The building faces east onto N. Park Avenue and Hill Park beyond. To the north are Yund Park and the Helena Civic Center building, and to the south is the (former) main Western Life Insurance Company building, completed in 1956.

The well-designed building is a concrete masonry and curtain wall structure with a combination of finishing materials, including brick veneer, ceramic tile, metal panels, polished granite veneer, and concrete screen block. Designed by Morrison-Maierle & Associates in the Modern style, the building rests on a concrete foundation and is covered by a built-up roof.

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### Narrative Description

**Landscaping and site features.** The building lot slopes slightly up toward N. Benton Avenue, but access to the east and west side of the building occurs at about the same grade as the N. Park Avenue entrance. An asphalt and concrete drive and parking area extends from the southeast corner of the site and wraps around the site from the south to the west. The westerly portion serves as an outdoor eating area. The southerly portion is used for a parking lot. Landscaping on the east and north sides consists primarily of lawn. Mature street trees grow along Gilbert Street to the west.

**Massing and design.** The building massing consists of a one-story, rectangular form that abuts a two-story rectangular form near the center point of its long face. The primary entry to the building is on the east façade, where the one-story south wing joins the two-story north wing at a 90-degree angle. The entrance is at grade, accessed via a concrete walkway extending from the sidewalk at N. Park Avenue. A small entry vestibule of aluminum and glass leads to the original entry, which features an aluminum door with full height glass with a broad transom and sidelight to the right (north). This original entry occurs on the same plane as the metal and glass curtain wall that characterizes the rest of the east façade on this wing. Deep eaves with a sloped soffit shelter this curtain wall. An aluminum fascia with gravel stops finishes the roofline.

This curtain wall is repeated on the west side of this wing. The south end wall of the wing is concrete masonry with a brick veneer. It extends slightly above the adjacent fascia and is finished with a simple metal coping.

The two-story wing of the building is centered at the north endwall of the one-story wing. This portion of the structure is clad in a polished pink granite veneer that wraps around the building, encasing roughly the easterly third of the wing on the south facade from grade to the metal coping at the top. The westerly portion of the wing is clad in brick veneer on the south, west and north faces. This brick veneer also enframes a two-story curtain wall on the east half of the north façade. This curtain wall is further pronounced by a panel frame of black and white granite. A narrow metal coping finishes this wing. All finish materials extend from building grade to the coping, with the exception of this north façade, where the slightly raised, concrete foundation is visible. A concrete screen wall on the south façade of this wing at the second level encloses a secondary entry.

Secondary entrances to the building occur in several locations. A concrete stair leads down from the sidewalk along Benton Avenue to a single aluminum-frame door with full-height glass in the north end of the one-story wing on the west facade. At the west end of the south elevation of the two-story wing is an ensemble consisting of an aluminum-frame, full-height glass door with a full-height fixed light flanked by narrow, one-over-one-light windows at the first floor; the small lower awning windows are operable. Perpendicular to this window wall is a flush metal door leading to a storage or mechanical area under the stairs.

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Another secondary entry occurs in the west portion of the second floor of the south elevation of the north wing. This entry is accessed by another concrete stair and a concrete walkway with aluminum metal rail, leading to a flush metal door within the concrete screen wall entry vestibule. A three-part window on the south façade along the walkway consists of a central fixed light flanked by two one-over-one-light windows, with a fixed upper portion and small operable awning-style window below. This ensemble is in vertical alignment with the entry below.

A fourth entry, accessed from the sidewalk on N. Benton Avenue, consists of a single, aluminum-frame door flanked by full-height, fixed light windows surmounted by a broad transom. This door opens to an interior stair leading to the second level.

**Materials and finishes.** Interesting features of this building include the various finishes with their patterns, textures and colors. The curtain wall on the one-story wing has three bays with a 4-5-4 vertical fenestration pattern. The horizontal pattern consists of a central ribbon window with a slightly blue tint, and a row of turquoise insulated metal panels above and below. The vertical panels in this window wall are separated by 3-inch deep aluminum mullions, with the bays separated by wider mullions.

Specifications describe the brick veneer as a "Norman face brick". It is set in a third running bond pattern and displays an irregular color pattern of orange and yellow bricks with a smooth finish. Contrasting with the brick is the polished surface of the granite veneer, which occurs in large panels and is primarily pink and black in color.

The curtain wall on the north façade of the building is arranged in three bays of glass and metal panels separated and flanked by four vertical panels of small, ceramic tiles, for a vertical width rhythm of 1-3-2-3-2-3-1. Three window walls occur on each floor. Window walls on the first and second floors are separated by turquoise metal spandrel panels. Each window wall is made up of a full-height, central fixed light flanked by a narrow, two-light window with a small, operable light below. The ceramic tiles are arranged in a random color pattern of beige, dark gray and light gray, with light gray dominating the field. This entire ensemble is enframed within a band of polished gray granite that measures 5 inches wide and 6 inches deep. The brick veneer enframing this ensemble and comprising the rest of this façade is arranged in a random color pattern of yellow and orange.

**Interior.** The interior of the building consists of the first floor reception area with offices on the north and south, and the second floor offices. The first floor is centered around a central reception area with bathrooms and a mechanical room. The north wing contains a conference room, two cubicles, and a larger office with a bathroom and storage room in the northwest corner. The south wing contains several cubicles along the east and west walls, and two storage rooms at the far south end of the wing. Distinctive details and finishes of the first floor reception area include the quarry tile flooring, book matched birch veneer covering the walls, hinged and sliding birch doors, birch valances above the windows, square brass door knobs, cherry paneling in the conference room, and colorful structural glazed wall tile set in a stacked bond in the bathrooms.

The second floor is entered from an exterior stairway on the west side of the building. There is no interior door on the first floor providing access the second floor. File cabinets fill the room just inside the entry door and a long hall leads to offices along the left (north side) of the building. The offices are divided by floor to ceiling sheetrock walls with oak doors and trim, and oak trimmed daylights. To the right of the long hallway is a smaller hallway leading to an emergency exit door. Men's and women's bathrooms are located at the east end of the long hall, behind a partition wall.

**Details.** The building retains a number of details that offer subtle counterpoints to the larger-scaled design elements. The design of the brushed aluminum stair rail on the concrete stair to the rear of the building embodies both function and style. Manufactured by Blumcraft of Pittsburgh the streamlined railing features a thin double rail with rounded smooth edges fastened to narrow rectangular posts. In contrast to the smooth rails, the top post cap and lower post bracket are cast with a grid pattern. Blumcraft of Pittsburgh, was established by Hyman Blum in 1908, providing wrought iron railings, gates, lighting fixtures, and ornamental hardware. His sons joined the business in the late 1920s and helped pioneer the use of aluminum in architectural applications. After World War II when metals could again be used for decorative purposes, Blumcraft developed a fresh concept - combining beauty with adjustability - revolutionizing the installation of railing systems. Later wood and glass were combined with aluminum, bronze, brass and stainless steel, enhancing the appearance of decorative railings and helping to establish new trends in architecture.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, a colored ceramic plaque with the Western Life Insurance Company logo is located within the granite wall to the right of the main entry. The 12-inch square plaque depicts a relief image of a mountain view. Relief lettering around

<sup>1</sup> Blumcraft of Pittsburgh website, <http://www.blumcraft.com>. Accessed 3/12/2012.

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the image reads "WESTERN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY," and below the image, also in relief lettering is "ENDURING AS THE MOUNTAINS." It is not known who designed the logo, although the blueprints indicate that it was provided by the owner.

**Changes over time.** Relatively few changes have occurred to the exterior of the building, based on building permit files and visual inspection. When occupied by Western Life Insurance Company, the building displayed signs in free-standing letters spelling "Western Life" on the upper left hand corner of the N. Park Avenue façade and the upper right hand corner of the Gilbert Street façade. Additionally, the entry on the N. Benton Avenue façade displayed the sign "Western Life Pow Wow Room," as this entry led to the building's conference room. The sign on the N. Park Avenue façade has been replaced with "600 N. Park" resulting in damage to the pink granite veneer in this location.

Tenant improvements occurred in 1983 when James Burrington, who operated his insurance company from this building, made changes to accommodate his business. A small entry vestibule appears to have been added at the main entry. A three-part, aluminum-frame window was added on the second floor of the south elevation, just to the left of the screen block vestibule. Also, the gravel on the built-up roof was removed in 2001 and a new coating applied. Interior changes include removal of the agent offices on the first floor south wing. The walls were replaced with contemporary cubicle wall panels. In addition, the shower stall in the northwest corner bathroom was removed and the toilet moved from the south wall to the east wall. On the second floor, the former open plan "Pow Wow" conference room was infilled with four small offices along the north wall. The second floor bathrooms appear to be unaltered.

Mr. Burrington leased the building to the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks in 1999. In January 2007, Mike & Colleen Casey of Tri-Mac Group purchased the building. The Casey's replaced the heating/air conditioning system in 2010 and replaced the roof with a Fibertight single membrane roof, which was mechanically and fully adhered in 2012. Under the Casey's ownership, no other major changes to the character of the building have occurred.

### **Integrity**

The building retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. While some minor aspects of the setting have been altered, the major buildings and open spaces that characterize this urban setting remain intact. Its continued use as an office building further strengthens the feeling and association as it relates to the original Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office. Changes to the interior and exterior of the building have not in any way obscured its original design, materials, or workmanship. In its 50<sup>th</sup> year, the building's character is clearly identifiable as a mid-century Modern office building.

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**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.)

- 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.
- 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1962

**Significant Dates**

1962

**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.

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Morrison-Maierle Associates, Helena, MT

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance is 1962, when the building was completed and opened for business.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

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

The Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office is significant at the local level for its architectural design, for embodying the distinctive characteristics of a period and method of construction, and as a building that possesses high artistic values. This multi-textured building is a good example of curtain wall construction, specifically the stylistic qualities of curtain wall construction that characterized mid-century commercial and institutional design. Additional stylistic aspects of the small scale building that typify the era include asymmetrical, two-dimensional composition of individual facades and planar components, and the use of varied finish materials for decoration. The use of colored metal panels, Norman brick, small ceramic tiles, concrete screen block, and polished granite add depth and character to the building while complementing the aluminum-frame glass curtain walls. While this variety might ordinarily lead to visual confusion, the harmonious presentation and flow of both structural and finish elements at the Western Life branch office exemplify mid-century Modern design ideals. For these reasons, the building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C.

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

### Overview of Modern Design

*(The following discussion of Modern architecture in Montana is excerpted from "Montana Post-World War II Architectural Survey and Inventory" by Diana Painter, Spokane, WA, December 2010.)*

The term "Modernism" refers to several architectural trends that took place in the mid-twentieth century, sometimes in combination, that embraced functionalism and rationalism, a new aesthetic sense that did not rely on historical precedent, and new materials and building methods. What we now call Modern architecture was introduced on the west coast of the United States through the work of architects Rudolf Schindler and Richard Neutra in Los Angeles in the early 1920s and the work of California architect William W. Wurster in the San Francisco Bay Area in the late 1920s. In the Pacific Northwest, Seattle architect Paul Thiry, originally from Alaska, is often credited with introducing modernism to the Puget Sound area in the mid-1930s. During this period, Pietro Belluschi, an Italian, and John Yeon, from an established Portland family, experimented in the Portland area with what is now identified as the Northwest Regional Style. These architects focused largely on residential design.

What is widely considered the first modern skyscraper, the PSFS Building by Howe & Lescaze, was constructed in Philadelphia from 1929 to 1932.<sup>2</sup> The new Museum of Modern Art's 1932 show, the *International Exhibition of Modern Architecture*, curated by Henry-Russell Hitchcock Jr. and Philip Johnson, introduced the American public to Modernism. In addition to publishing a catalogue and a related book entitled *The International Style*, the museum sent traveling exhibits from the show throughout the United States, where it was staged in galleries, at universities, and most importantly, in department stores.

Modern architecture had its genesis in Europe between the world wars, as countries whose housing stock had been decimated sought to rebuild in ways that addressed contemporary needs. Architects and planners from the continent looked to England, as that country had renewed its building stock to house workmen earlier in the century in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. At the same time, new standards were sought for industry that rejected outmoded historicist styles and decorative detailing. These influences came together in the teachings of the Bauhaus school in Germany, established in 1919. The Bauhaus School became a widely recognized center for modern architecture, planning and design as its underlying philosophies were disseminated throughout Europe and the United States.

European architects began to immigrate to the United States in the early part of the century. Several architects came to the United States to work for Frank Lloyd Wright after his work was introduced in Europe in 1910 and 1911. These designers included the Austrian architects Rudolf Schindler and Richard Neutra and Czechoslovakian architect Antonin Raymond, who introduced Paul Thiry to many of the European modernists in the early 1930s.<sup>3</sup> Between the world wars the immigration continued, reaching a peak during the political difficulties that lead to the outbreak of World War II in Europe in 1939. This was presaged by the closure of the

<sup>2</sup> Note that Pietro Belluschi's ground-breaking Equitable Building Portland, OR was constructed in 1944-1948, the first post-war curtain wall structure.

<sup>3</sup> Kurt G.F. Helfrich and William Whitaker, eds., *Crafting a Modern World: The Architecture of and Design of Antonin and Noemi Raymond*, (Princeton Architectural Press, 2006), 270.

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progressive Bauhaus school in Germany in 1933, in response to Nazi pressure. Modernism's influence in the United States grew as European leaders in the Modern Movement took important positions in some of this country's most influential architecture schools, museums, and other institutions.

European immigration distinctly influenced American Modernism. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Director of the Bauhaus from 1930 to 1933 came to the United States in 1937, taking a teaching position at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) (then the Armour Institute). He served as the director of the architecture program from 1938 to 1958.<sup>4</sup> Museum of Modern Art held a retrospective of his work in 1947, which featured an accompanying book by Philip Johnson. Mies van der Rohe's 1939 commission to design the campus and buildings at IIT and its buildings transformed modern campus design in the United States. To this day, buildings that display walls of glass articulated with a regular rhythm of an expressed structure are referred to as "Miesian." The influence of this campus design can be seen in Montana's University of Great Falls campus.

Walter Gropius, director of the Bauhaus from 1919 to 1928, took a position at Harvard in 1937, serving under Dean Joseph Hudnut. He was named the head of the architecture department in 1938.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, he established a partnership with Marcel Breuer, who studied and taught at the Bauhaus under his direction. The partnership constituted the first of three influential practices with which Gropius associated in Cambridge. In addition to his built works, Gropius' writings about the Bauhaus school and its philosophies, including *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus* (1955) and *The Scope of Total Architecture* (1956), were highly influential.

The Swiss architect Le Corbusier is generally considered the third member of the European triumvirate that had a defining influence on modern architecture in the twentieth century. While he never lived in the United States and had no significant commissions in this country, nonetheless he was highly influential through his writings, lectures, entries to architectural competitions, and published works. Among his most well-known writings, widely available to American architects, was *Towards a New Architecture*, first published in English in 1931.<sup>6</sup>

The influence of Modernism in the post-war period broadened through the media, including professional periodicals, the popular press, newspapers and books. Exhibits, including museum, university, and department store exhibits, and their accompanying catalogues also exposed professionals and the public to Modernism. Model homes were a very popular way of introducing modern ideas and modern architecture to the public. Lectures and symposiums, aimed at professionals and/or the public, also spread the word. Even the new medium of television got into the act when architect Frank Lloyd Wright appeared on the television program "What's My Line?"

Modern architecture gained hold and became the primary architectural style and expression in Montana after World War II, as it did throughout the country. Periodicals, lectures and symposia made ideas about Modern architecture accessible to Montana architects who were interested in exploring the new ideas, materials and construction methods. Some structures built after the war, such as John G. Link's 1953 Petroleum Building on the Montana Tech campus, continued in pre-war styles. For the most part, though, Modern architecture prevailed, and buildings such as Link's 1950 International Style Central Girls High School in Butte were as ground-breaking in appearance as any modern building constructed in the West at this time. This era is as important as any other in the preservation of Montana's architectural legacy.

### Montana Architectural Context

*(The following discussion of Modern architecture is excerpted from "Montana Post-World War II Architectural Survey and Inventory" by Diana Painter, Spokane, WA, December 2010.)*

After World War II, many Montana cities experienced the growth characteristic of this era throughout the country. Nationwide, the post-war era saw rapid expansion of suburban neighborhoods, commercial centers, churches, schools, universities, medical clinics, and commercial office buildings; in short, all the facilities needed to serve a growing population. Montana in particular had an infrastructure deficit as well as a need to replace outmoded building stock. Following on twenty-five years of economic stagnation, Montana's communities required an infusion of new construction to alleviate pent-up demand and to respond to a new economic era.

<sup>4</sup> Magdalena Droste, *Bauhaus*, (Koln, Germany: Taschen, 2006), 248.

<sup>5</sup> Droste, 245.

<sup>6</sup> The English translation was first published by John Rodker of London, based on the thirteenth French edition.



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In Montana, many sectors provided opportunity, including the development of schools, university buildings, government buildings, and buildings catering to new suburban locations. Government functioned as a particularly strong growth sector, apparent in the expansion of the university system statewide, the government campus in Helena, as well as individual buildings such as the Yellowstone County Courthouse and the United States Courthouse in Billings. Montana State University, which hosts the only accredited professional architecture degree program in the state, is the site of some very innovative buildings and complexes of the post-war era. Elementary schools constructed throughout the state at the time incorporated the latest concepts in education facility planning and design. In short, the work of Montana's architects reflect national trends, in that most cities saw population growth and a demand for new buildings to serve growing populations, replace outmoded building stock, and/or to meet new standards for development.

Montana's architects practicing in the post-war era experienced many of the opportunities enjoyed by their counterparts elsewhere, as the post-war economy grew and demand increased for new, modern facilities. They eagerly sought opportunities to experiment with the new modern forms and expressions, materials and construction methods. Among architects in general there was often a desire to reflect new social values in architectural form. The way buildings met the ground plane, related to the outdoors, their internal organization, all reflected post-war ideas about how people and buildings should interact. The most common building types of post-war buildings also reflected the values and needs of post-war communities and organizations. This is no less the case in Montana than elsewhere.

Growth and opportunity coincided with the dominance of Modern architecture and planning in the post-war era to change the face of Montana's cities, as it did throughout the country. Clients and commissions allowed Montana's most talented native and émigré architects to showcase their skills in the new Modern styles. In Montana cities and towns, as in any urban environment, buildings that make up the majority of streetscapes tend to be more utilitarian in presentation, while others stand out as unique in any number of ways. Some architects' talents are readily adaptable to almost any building style or type they undertake, some are associated with a particular style or expression, and some produce the serviceable, background buildings of our cities and towns.

Modern architectural styles and building types in Montana reflect those prevalent in the western states and, for that matter, the entire country at that time. In Montana, some designs that more closely characterize pre-war styles continued to be built after the war, but this is not uncommon. Styles like the Streamline Moderne and PWA Moderne continued to be seen through the 1950s. Typically, however, the common buildings consisted of curtain wall structures that were relatively interchangeable with post-war curtain wall structures elsewhere, although brick veneer, in conjunction with expanses of window walls, is very common in Montana. Examples of structures where the curtain wall dominates include the handsome Union Bank and Trust by Orr Pickering and Associates and the Western Life Insurance Building by Berg and Jacobson Architects (since altered), both in Helena. Examples where brick cladding is the primary finish material include the classroom buildings and residence halls at MSU-Billings and MSU-Bozeman.

Several buildings and complexes represent Montana's version of innovative forms and expressions that architects also experimented with elsewhere. Two examples are the Hedges High Rise Complex and Miller Dining Hall at Montana State University at Bozeman, a megastructure complex designed by Sigvald Berg. Another example is the Armory Gymnasium on the Montana State University – Northern campus, a hyperbolic paraboloid building designed by Oswald Berg Jr. The Walt Sullivan Department of Labor & Industry Building (originally the Unemployment Compensation Commission building), by the young firm of Evans, LaMont & Cole, is worth mentioning as an early (1961) example of a building that integrated energy efficiency measures with its design.

Montana's most talented architects left a legacy of extraordinary buildings that are singular in expression and uniquely reflect their times and circumstances. Examples include Johannes and A. A. van Teylingen's Receiving Hospital at Warm Springs and the Kennedy School in Butte by John G. Link & Co. Interestingly, a number of Montana architects who established practices before World War II developed some of the most interesting and striking modern buildings after the war, including John G. Link, George Shanley, and Johannes van Teylingen.

Where regional variations occurred in Montana, it appears they were due more to the vision of individual architects or opportunity, rather than a response to regional expressions or trends. For example, curtain wall structures were very popular, despite their lack of suitability to the Montana climate. But individuals such as Sigvald Berg and A. A. van Teylingen composed their interpretation of contemporary architectural ideas in very unique buildings. Further, clients such as the University of Great Falls provided the opportunity for Montana

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architects Page & Werner to design and construct an entire campus, which remains one of the best examples of mid-century institutional development in Montana to this day.

In summary, many of the circumstances under which Modern architecture and planning thrived in the post-war era in the United States also existed in Montana, and like other places, these opportunities left a lasting legacy in Montana worthy of recognition and preservation.

*Excerpted from Montana Historic Property Record Form for 600 N. Park Ave. by Diana J. Painter, Nov. 2009. Edited by Christine W. Brown, January 2012.*

### **History of the Western Life Insurance Company and the Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office**

The Western Life Insurance Company was founded in Helena on June 20, 1910 under the name "Montana Life Insurance Company." At that time it had two employees and operated out of two rented rooms. By 1923, the flourishing company moved to its third home at Fuller and W. Lawrence, a majestic three-story classical revival-style building clad in gleaming white terra cotta tile. The new building was considered "one of the most imposing [buildings] in the Capital city." The company changed its name to Western Life Insurance Company on February 7, 1938. In 1950, as noted on the occasion of its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the company operated in Montana, Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, Washington, Oregon, California and North Dakota and employed 300 men (no mention was made of the number of women it employed).<sup>7</sup>

Western Life was again bursting at the seams by the early 1950s. Construction began on the company's new modern headquarters building at 560 N. Park Avenue in 1954 (it is occupied by Montana Blue Cross Blue Shield today). The building, like its 1923 predecessor, was impressive and eye-catching. Designed by Helena architect Sigvald Berg and structural engineers Morrison-Maierle Associates, the four-story building exemplified the latest curtain wall construction methods and bold new styling. Materials such as the blue metal panels below the windows and a wide central bay and foundation wall clad with polished pink granite, set the building apart and established a high standard for newly constructed commercial buildings in Helena.<sup>8</sup>

At the dedication ceremony on July 14, 1956, company president R. B. Richardson announced, "We at Western Life, by the erection of what we believe to be one of the most modern office buildings in the country, are further exemplifying our faith in the future of our great state and of the west in general." Nonetheless, the company announced in 1959 that it would be moving its headquarters to St. Paul and constructing a new head office with St. Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Company, an affiliate since 1957. After joining with the St. Paul Company, Western Life offered a broader array of products in 40 states, and felt it needed to operate from a more central location than Montana. About 120 of the company's 200 employees moved to St. Paul with their families in 1960-61.<sup>9</sup> To accommodate what was now a branch office in Helena, the company constructed in 1962 what it described as a "small but attractive" branch office building at 600 N. Park Avenue.<sup>10</sup>

Given that Sigvald Berg was retired by 1961, R.B. Richardson selected Morrison-Maierle and Associates, engineers of the 1956 building, to design the company's new smaller office. The building permit for 600 N. Park Avenue building was issued on November 1, 1961 to Waddell Construction Company. The overall dimensions of the T-shaped building were to be 24 feet wide by 40 feet long, with a total square footage of 3,330 square feet.<sup>11</sup> The first floor included separate offices for the President, Vice President, and secretary, as well as a small studio/guest apartment with a full bathroom and a mechanical equipment room. To the south of the executive offices were bathrooms, three small offices for agents, an office for a superintendent, and a supply room. The

<sup>7</sup> Donald A. Bartech, "Western Life Insurance Company Notes 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary," The Independent Record, (June 4, 1950), 1.

<sup>8</sup> "Western Life Opens New Home Office Building" The Independent Record (July 8, 1958).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> "Western Life Will Not Disappear from Helena," The Independent Record (August 13, 1961), 17.

<sup>11</sup> City of Helena building permit records. On file, Helena Building Department.

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second floor plan accommodated "The Pow Wow Room," a long narrow meeting room with a kitchen and bathrooms at the east end.<sup>12</sup> The building was completed in the spring of 1962.<sup>13</sup>

### The Architect

Morrison-Maierle and Associates began as Morrison Engineering Company in the basement of John Morrison's home in 1945, when he worked as chief of design in the bridge department of the Montana Highway Department. A year later, Morrison teamed up with former co-worker and designer, Joe Maierle and renamed the company Morrison-Maierle, Inc. In 1955, the firm designed a restrained Modern-style National Guard training center on Euclid Avenue in Helena and also consulted on the expansion and remodeling of the State Capitol building. Additionally, the firm prepared structural plans and specifications for the Anaconda Hospital addition, Men's Dormitory at Montana State College (Montana State University, Bozeman), and the Western Life Insurance Company headquarters building in Helena.<sup>14</sup> In 1958, Morrison-Maierle and Associates was formed to recognize its growing staff of licensed architects, including Grant Crossman, who would go on to design major buildings and structures, such as the Libby Reservoir Bridge, Van Evans Plant, Missoula and the St. Mary's Church, Helena.<sup>15</sup> Today, Morrison-Maierle operates in eight locations in Montana, Arizona and Wyoming and is still run by family members of both John Morrison and Joe Maierle.<sup>16</sup>

Grant Crossman, one of Morrison-Maierle's younger architects, was the lead architect for the Western Life branch office project. Crossman joined Morrison-Maierle in 1958 and spent the next 10 years working on a wide variety of commercial and government buildings. In 1969, Crossman and two partners, Wayne Whitney and Richard Griffin, split from Morrison-Maierle to form a new architectural firm named Crossman-Whitney-Griffin Architects. Crossman's architectural works throughout his career include many Modern style school, church, commercial and government buildings in Helena, including the Manning Building at the Montana Department of Transportation complex, Four Georgians School, St. Mary's Church, O'Connell Hall and the PE Center at Carroll College, to name only a few. Crossman also oversaw design and construction of all CenturyLink (formerly US West and Qwest) buildings, as well as American Federal and Mountain West banks statewide. His best known and most striking Modern style building is the St. Labre Mission Church, built in 1971 on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation (with Morrison-Maierle structural engineers). The conical church resembles a large teepee clad with random pattern granite. A huge cross takes the place of the center lodgepole.<sup>17</sup>

Crossman retired in 1984 and passed away in 2007 in Salem, Oregon. The Helena firm he started with Wayne Whitney and Richard Griffin is one of Helena's oldest architectural firms, and still operates in the same location under the name CWG Architects.<sup>18</sup>

### Architectural Significance of the Western Life Insurance Company Branch Office

The Western Life Insurance Company branch office is a fine example of a mid-twentieth century Modern office building in Montana. The building displays a number of features that identify it with Modern architecture, particularly its glass curtain wall structural system, asymmetrical form and two-dimensional composition of each facade, and the use of pattern, texture, color and light as decorative finish materials.

Curtain wall construction is easily recognizable and readily associated with commercial and institutional building types at mid-century. In addition to being identified with its typical stylistic treatment, curtain wall construction refers to the material itself, its manufacture, installation, and the construction methods with which it is associated.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Morrison-Maierle Engineers, blueprints for Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office. Provided by CWG Architects, Helena, MT.

<sup>13</sup> Kennon Baird, Helena As She Was website, accessed at [http://www.helenahistory.org/western\\_life.htm](http://www.helenahistory.org/western_life.htm), (January 12, 2012).

<sup>14</sup> Morrison-Maierle, Inc. Consulting Engineering & Architectural Services Brochure, 1958

<sup>15</sup> Morrison-Maierle, Inc. / Morrison-Maierle & Associates, 1969

<sup>16</sup> Hilary Hoffman, Morrison-Maierle and Associates, Founder's Day poster, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Jim Brown, January 3, 2012. Brown was an associate at Crossman, Whitney, Griffin Architects for more than 30 years.

<sup>18</sup> Grant Crossman, Obituary posted on December 2, 2007 at <http://www.helenair.com>.

<sup>19</sup> Theodore H.M. Prudon, *Preservation of Modern Architecture*. (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 2008), 107.

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Separating the structural system of a building from its window wall was attractive to building designers and owners because it created more light on building interiors and allowed for more flexibility in the use of interior spaces. The larger glazed areas in curtain wall construction, which allowed for natural light in interior work spaces, was made possible by new methods of manufacturing glass and made practical by widespread use of air conditioning after World War II. Improvements in sealants and insulation materials also made this form of design and construction practical.

The metal most commonly associated with mid-century curtain wall construction is aluminum, which replaced steel in the post-war era as the material of choice for this application. Aluminum framing for curtain wall construction is extruded and can, as a result, take on any cross sectional shape.<sup>20</sup> Aluminum was readily available and inexpensive after World War II, as the output of the nation's aluminum plants was adapted to civilian purposes.

The use of exterior curtain walls also rationalized the construction process, leading to greater efficiencies in building production. Whether the curtain wall was fabricated primarily on site or prefabricated in large panels, the metal components were produced at the factory, leading to labor savings on site. The material is also lighter than traditional masonry, allowing for easier handling and reduced shipping costs. A number of materials were used for the spandrel panels under the windows, but the most popular were metal or glass. Glass panels were manufactured under the names Spandrelite and Vitrolux, and came in eight and sixteen colors, respectively. Porcelain enamel on steel, as seen on both Western Life buildings, was manufactured in numerous colors as well.

Also contributing to the significance of the Western Life office is the three-dimensional arrangement of forms as part of the architectural expression of the building. While this is a relatively simple building, the juxtaposition of a one-story and two-story volume, and the additional emphasis at the joint of these forms in the form of the second story entry feature on the south façade, forms a three-dimensional composition that is representative of the more sculptural interpretations of modern design.

Another idea prevalent at the time was the importance of the two dimensional composition on any one surface as a design feature. This composition was typically asymmetrical and did not, as in traditional architecture, serve mainly to emphasize the building form. Rather, it was another design feature that might express the interior functions of the building. As an aesthetic device, it might also facilitate a three-dimensional "reading" of the building form. The asymmetrical composition and three-dimensional "reading" of the Western Life branch office is best illustrated on the north elevation, where the western portion of the wall is clad with an expanse of yellow and orange Norman brick on the west, and on the east the curtain wall is set off with a speckled granite frame, and brown, beige, and pale gray mosaic tiles.

A third "modern" idea particularly pronounced in this building is that the pattern, texture, color, reflectivity, and other visual aspects of the building materials are also decorative features. As in many modern structures, they take the place of traditional architectural detailing in embellishing the building. The juxtaposition of polished granite and dull, smooth brick, the repetition of simple metal frames and pattern of small ceramic tiles, and the tinted glass and colored metal panels are the decoration. They express or represent the building's function, its structure and its aesthetic appearance, and speak to new possibilities in materials and construction in the post-war era.

While several Modernist buildings remain in Helena, many have been altered to a degree prohibiting their eligibility in the National Register. The Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office retains a very high degree of integrity providing an excellent local example of this style of building in Helena.

<sup>20</sup> Bruce S. Kaskel, "The Metal and Glass Curtain Wall," *Cultural Resource Management, Preserving the Recent Past*, Volume 18, No. 8, 1995, 24.

Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office  
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Lewis and Clark, MT  
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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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"Western Life Opens New Home Office Building," *The Independent Record*, July 8, 1956:1.

"Western Life Will Move Offices in 1961," *The Independent Record*, April 9, 1959:1.

"Western Life Will Not Disappear from Helena," *The Independent Record*, August 13, 1961:17.

**Interviews**

Brown, Jim. Personal interview with Christine Brown, Helena, MT. January 3, 2012.

Casey, Mike. Personal interview with Diana Painter, Helena, MT, November 12, 2009.

**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:**

- 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** Less than one  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**Legal Location**

Township: **10N** Range: **3W**  
**NW ¼ NW ¼ SW ¼ of Section: 30**

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1  
12      420322      5160304  
 Zone      Easting      Northing

2  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone      Easting      Northing

3  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone      Easting      Northing

4  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone      Easting      Northing

Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office

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

THOMPSON PLACER, S30, T10 N, R03 W, PM2 N136' LT 5

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This is the legal boundary description of the property. The boundaries of the property are the dimensions that have retained their original property lines since the building was built.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Diana Painter/Christine Brown

organization Painter Preservation and Planning  
Montana Preservation Alliance

date January 15, 2012

street & number 3518 North C Street, Spokane, WA  
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state MT

zip code 59601

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christine@preservemontana.org

Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office

Lewis and Clark, MT

Name of Property

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**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 Mike & Colleen Casey, Tri-Mac Group

street & number PO Box 1067

telephone

city or town Helena

state MT

zip code 59624

**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.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Additional Documentation—Maps

Western Life Insurance Company

Helena Branch Office

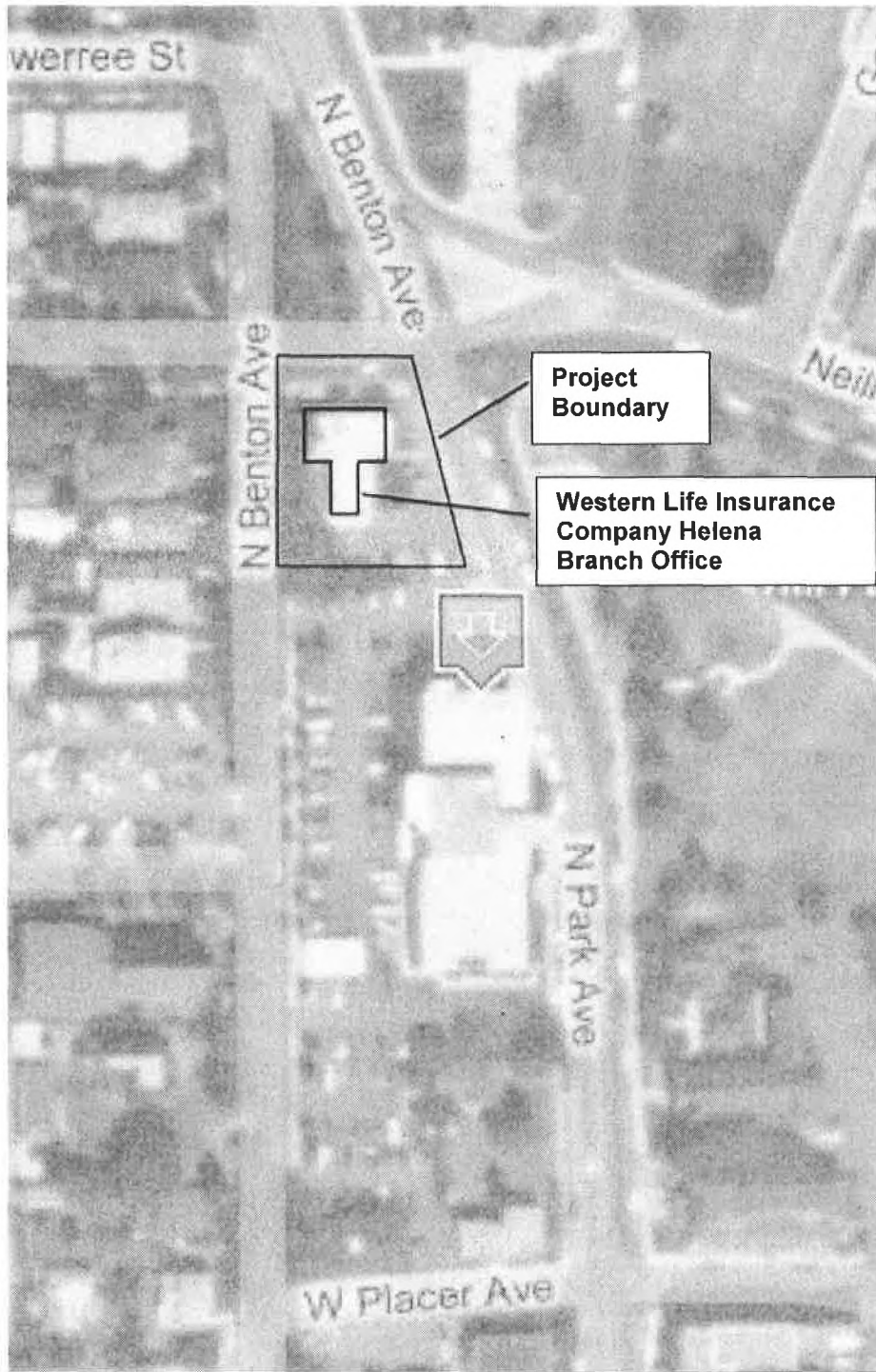
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**Site Map**



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National Park Service

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Name of Property

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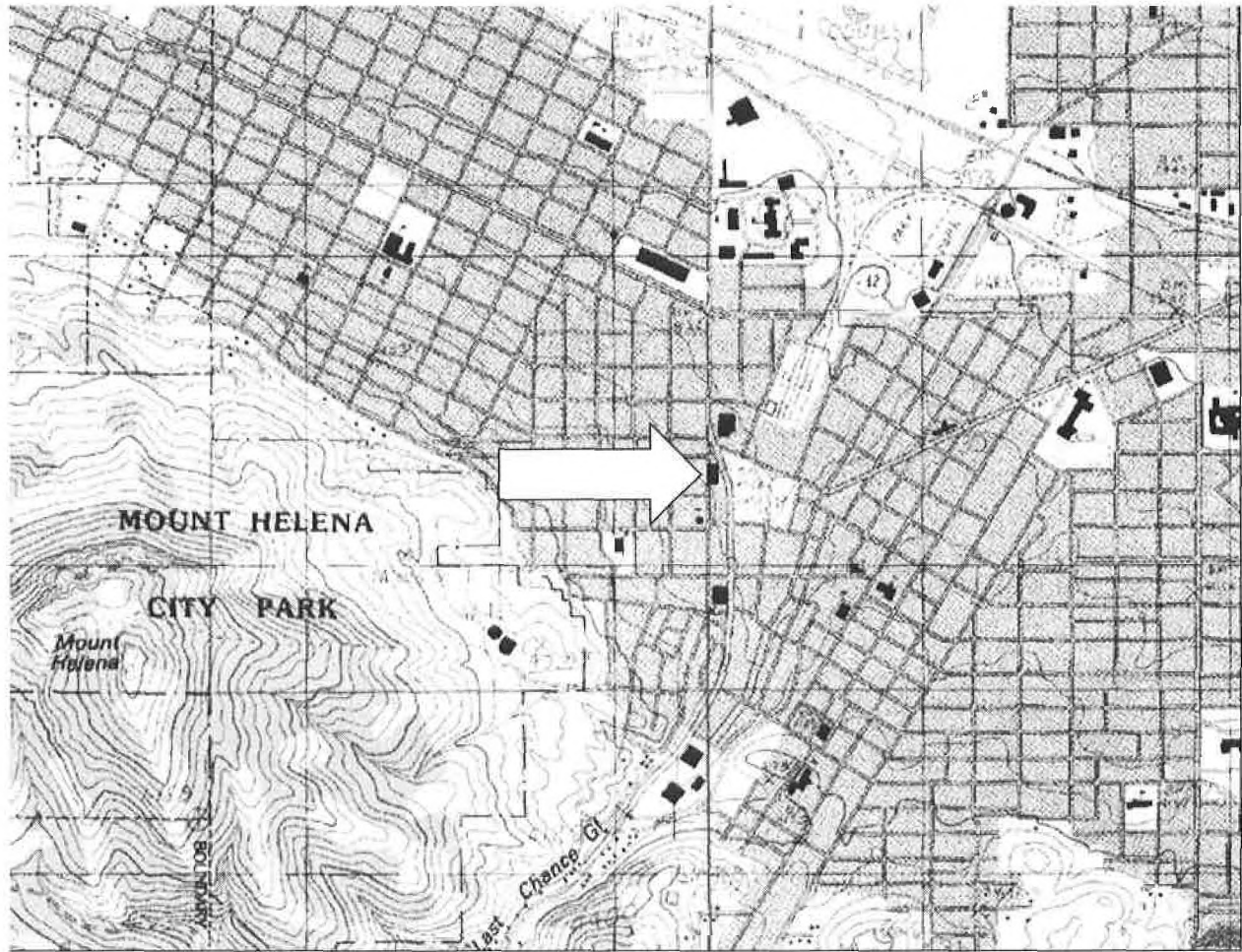
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional Documentation—Maps

## USGS Topographical Map



Location of the Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office. Found on the Helena, Montana, Provisional Edition 1985, 7.5 minute series topographic map.

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National Park Service

Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
Branch Office

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

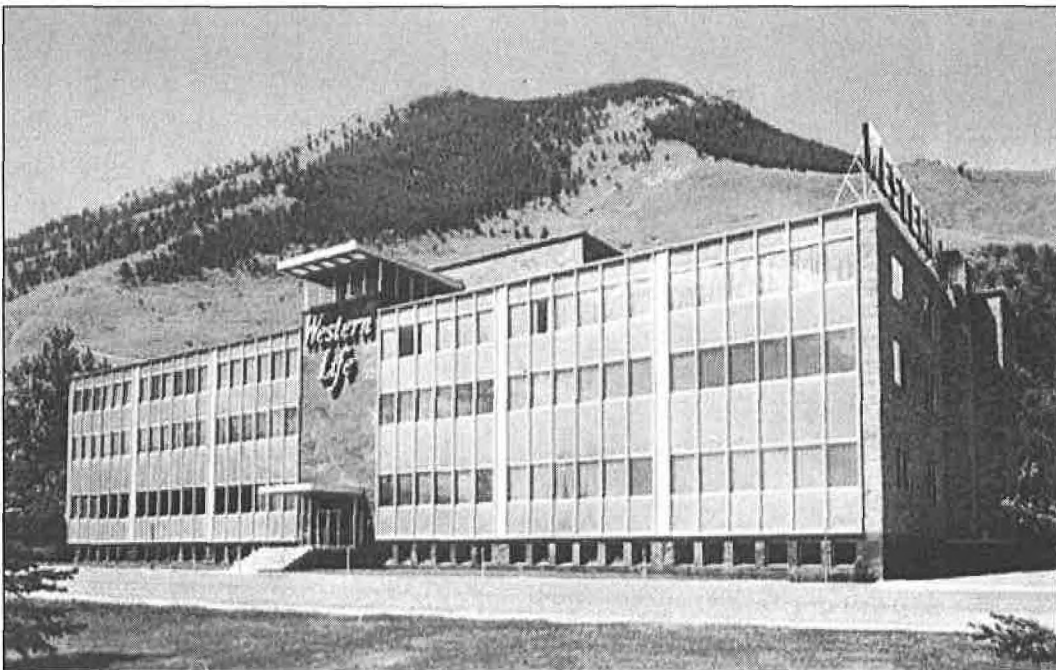
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional Documentation—Historic Photographs

## Historic Photos



The 1923 Montana Life Insurance Company building at corner of Fuller and Lawrence avenues. The company later became Western Life Insurance in 1937.



The 1956 Western Life Insurance building on Park Ave. was designed by Sigvald Berg with Morrison-Maierle Engineers. The building is now home to Blue Cross Blue Shield.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Additional Documentation—Historic Photographs

Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
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Morrison-Maierle's rendering of the new Western Life branch office appeared in the Helena Independent Record when it opened in the Spring of 1962. The exterior has changed very little since its construction.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Additional Documentation—Blueprints and Floor Plans

Blueprints-East and North Elevations

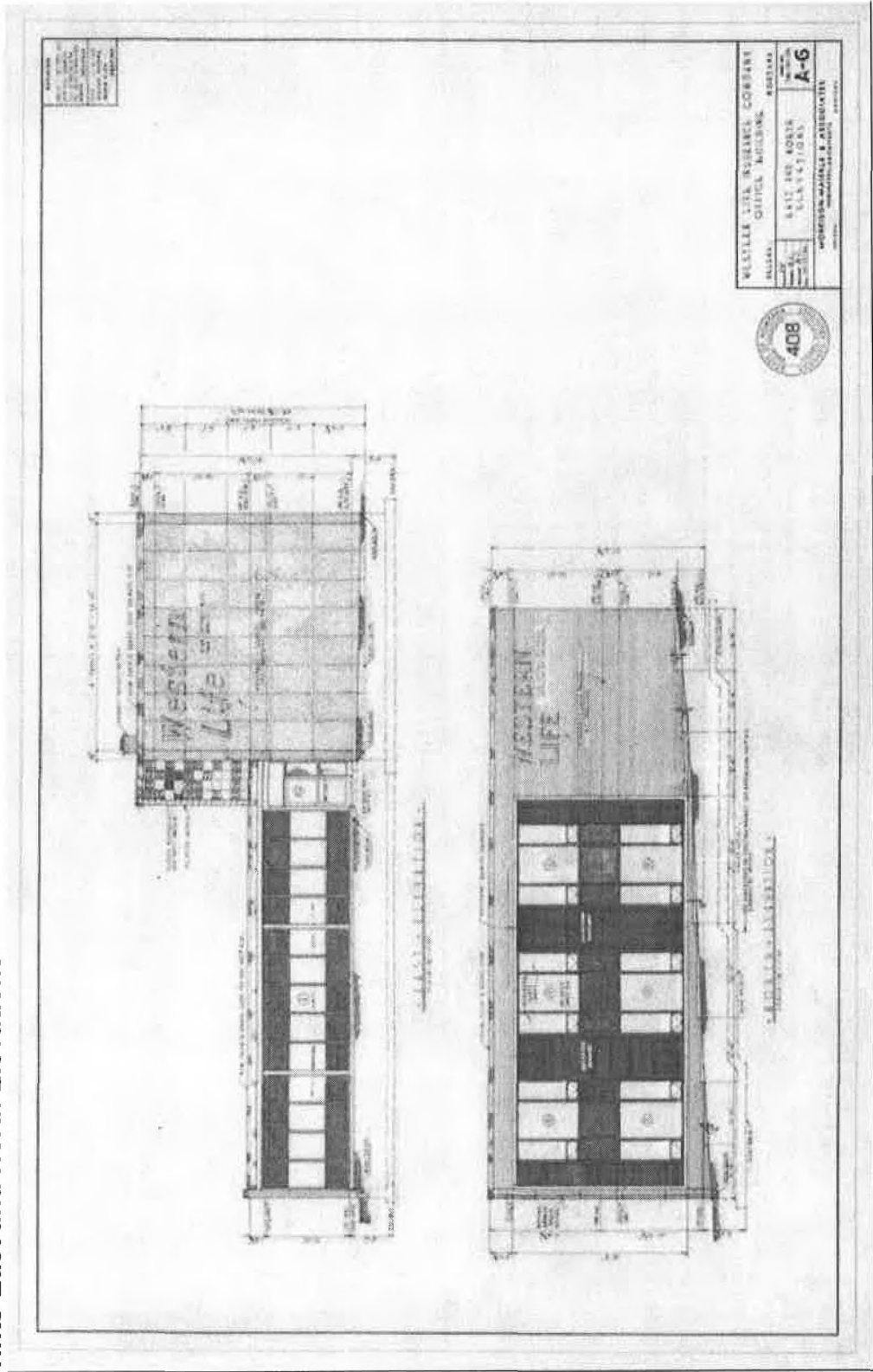
Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office

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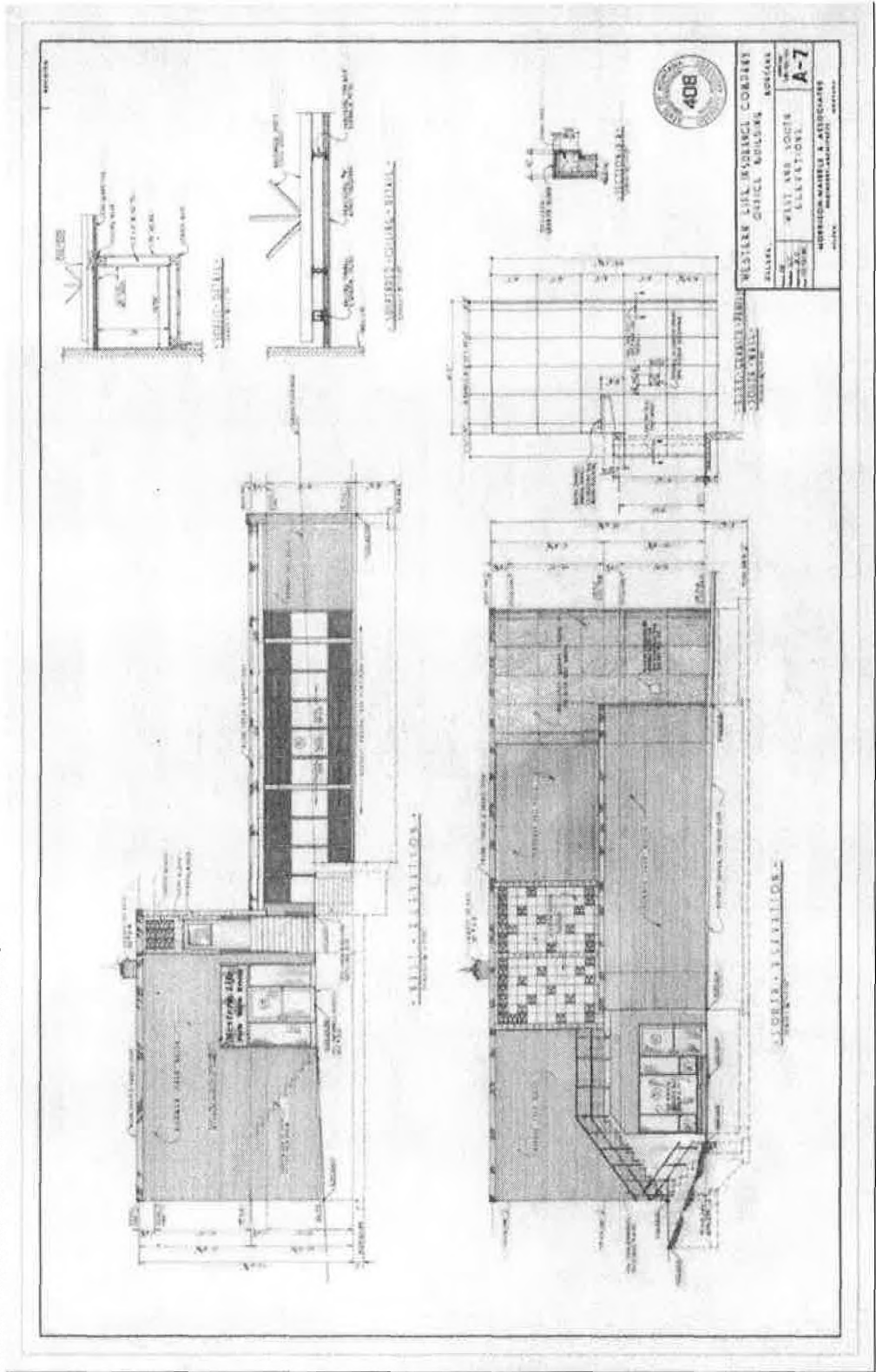
Additional Documentation—Blueprints and Floor Plans

Blueprints-South and West Elevations

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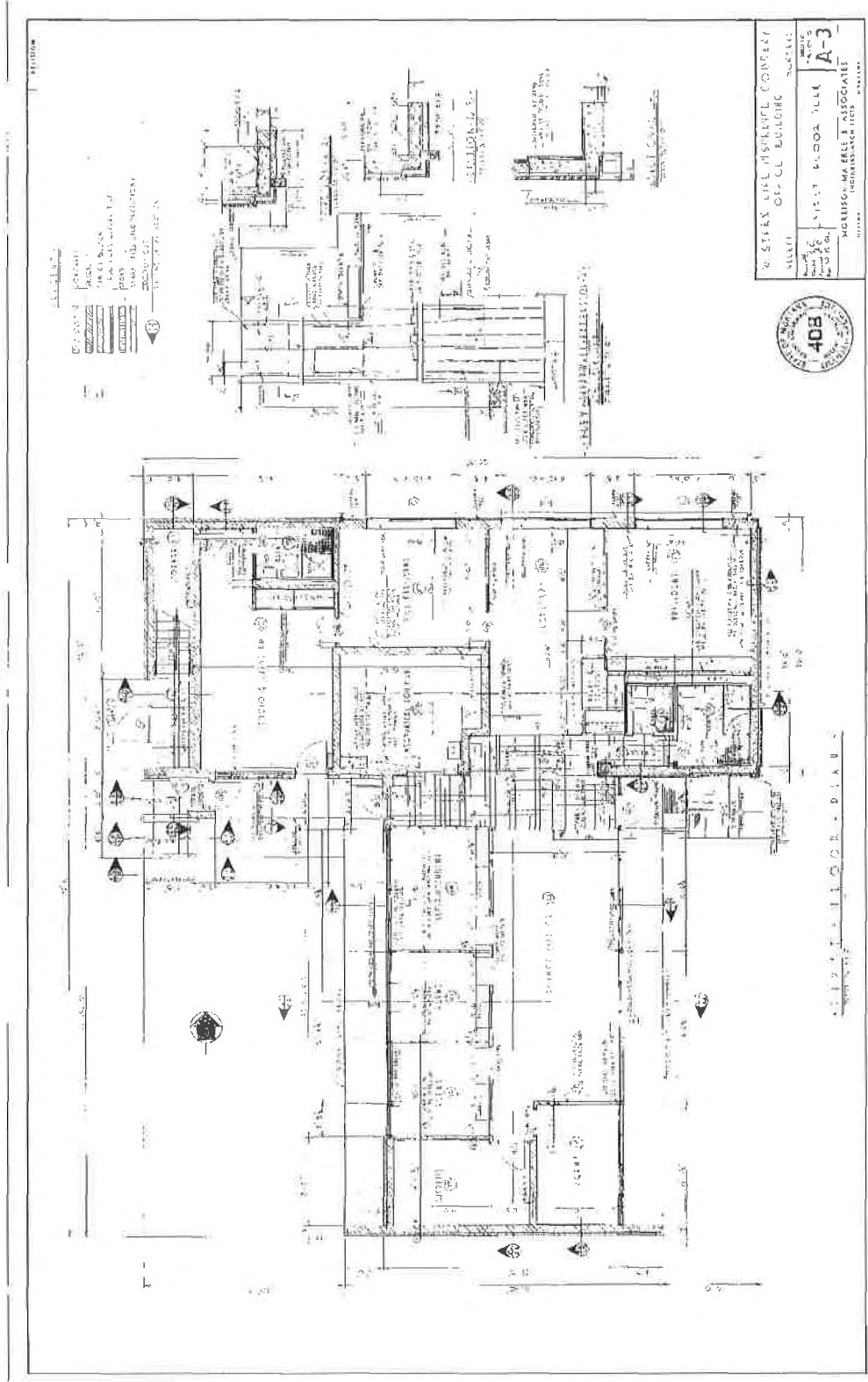
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Additional Documentation—Blueprints and Floor Plans

First Floor Plan



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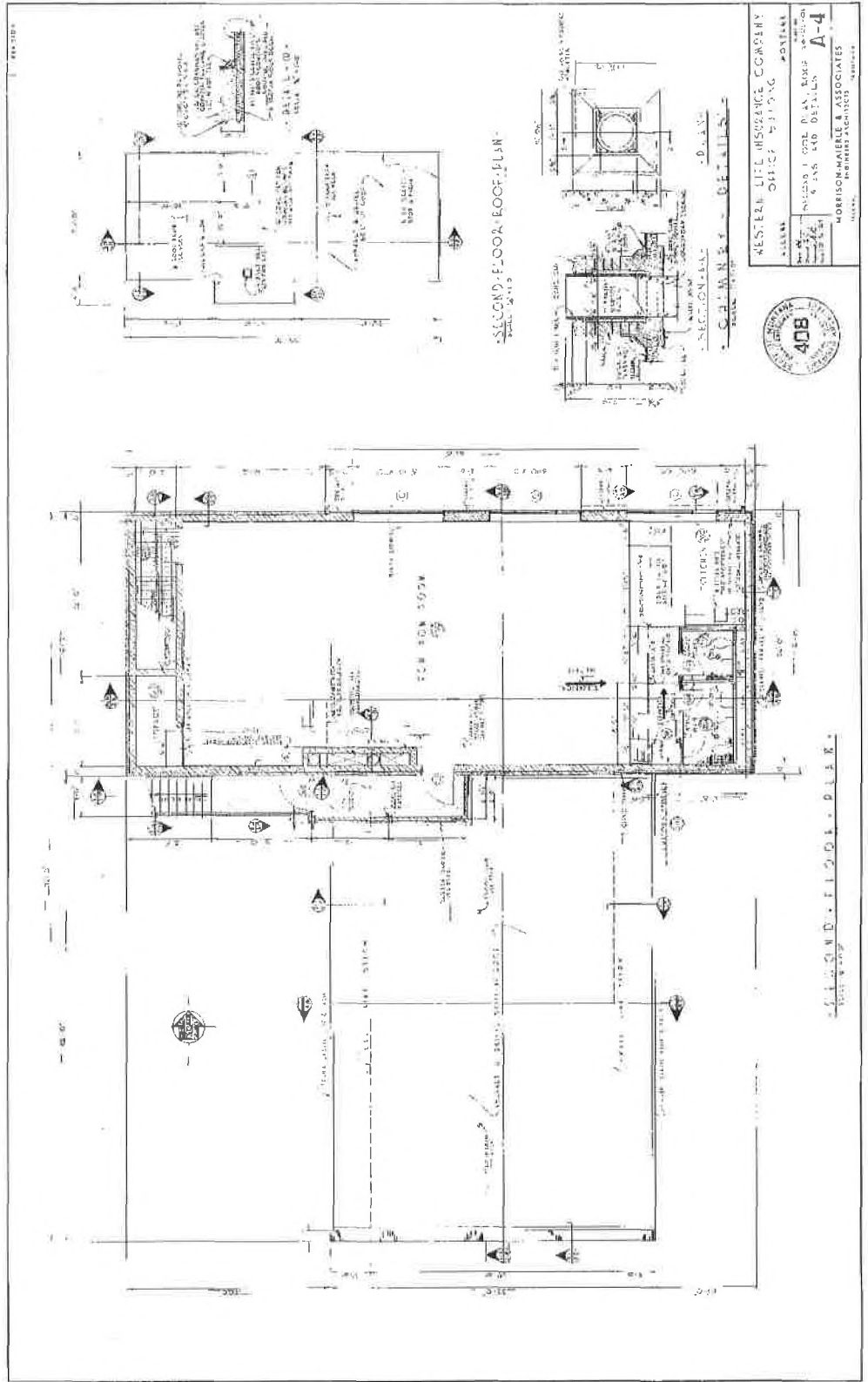
Additional Documentation—Blueprints and Floor Plans

Second Floor Plan

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Additional Documentation—Interior Photographs

Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
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First floor, view of main lobby/reception area with birch paneling.

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**National Park Service**

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**Continuation Sheet**

Additional Documentation—Interior Photographs

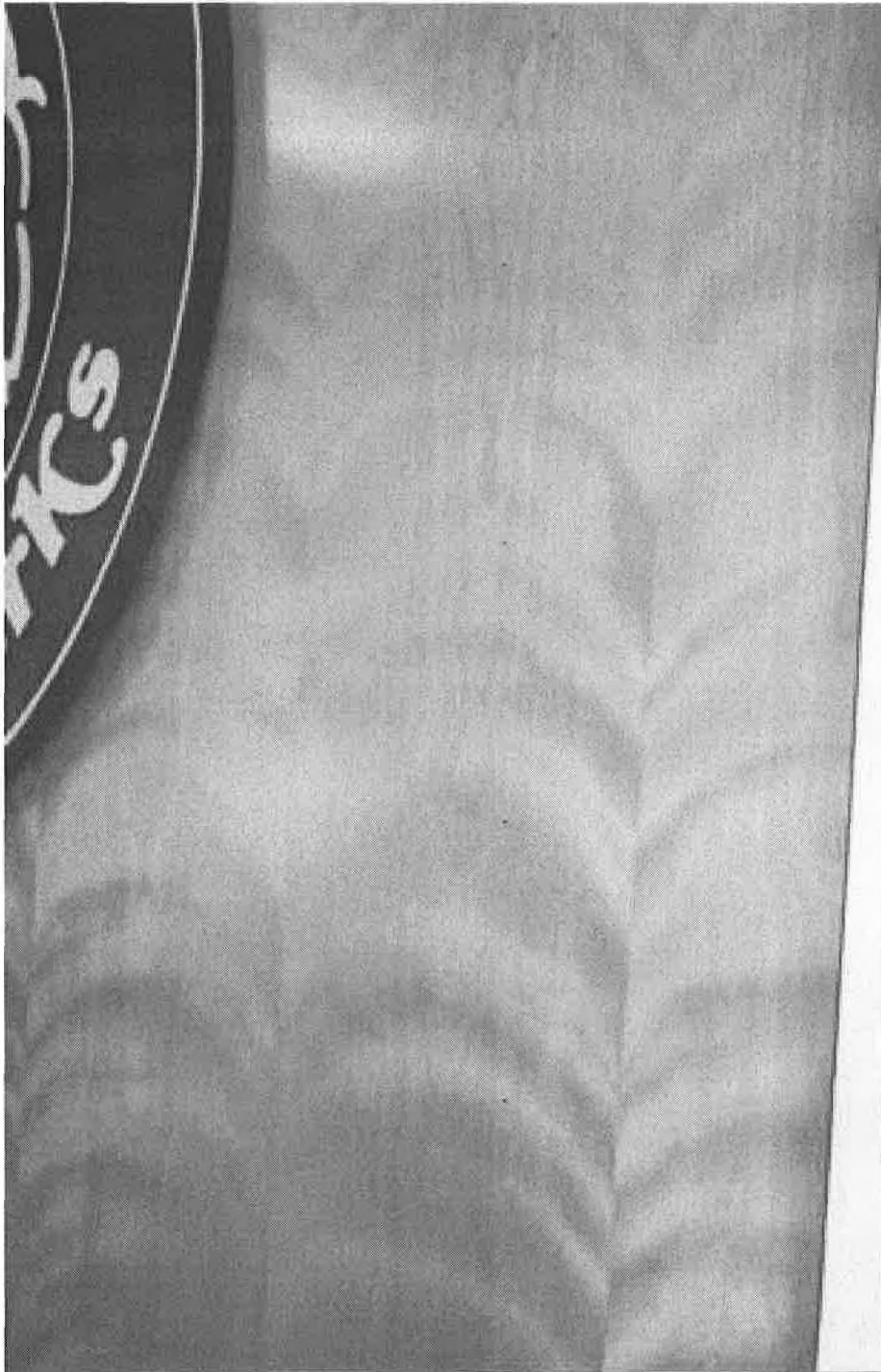
Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
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Detail view of bookmatched birch veneer paneling in lobby.

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**Additional Documentation—Interior Photographs**

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**First floor, view of lobby hall with quarry tile floor and rear exit.**

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National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional Documentation—Interior Photographs

Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
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**First floor, view of south wing. This wing formerly contained offices for two agents and a superintendent on the west wall, and on the east wall was a large waiting area, another agent office, and a supply room.**

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Additional Documentation—Interior Photographs

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First floor, mechanical room, detail of birch veneer door and square brass knob.

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Additional Documentation—Interior Photographs

Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office
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**First floor coat closet with birch veneer sliding closet doors with inscribed brass pull plate.**

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional Documentation—Interior Photographs



First floor, north wing, view of birch veneer paneling on Vice Presidents office wall.

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Additional Documentation—Interior Photographs

Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
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**First floor, women's bathroom, view of birch veneer door with "Ladies" name plate and red structural glazed tile.**



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**National Register of Historic Places  
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Additional Documentation—Interior Photographs

Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
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First floor, studio/guest room bathroom, view of peach and red structural glazed tile.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
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Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
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**Additional Documentation—National Register Photographs**

**National Register 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.

**National Register Photo Log**

Name of Property: Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office

City or Vicinity: Helena

County: Lewis and Clark County State: MT

Date of Photograph: November 2009

Location of Original negative or digital image: Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena

Photographer: Diana J. Painter

Description and view of camera: South and east facades, facing northwest.

Photograph Number: 0001

Name of Property: Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office

City or Vicinity: Helena

County: Lewis and Clark County State: MT

Date of Photograph: November 2009

Location of Original negative or digital image: Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena

Photographer: Diana J. Painter

Description and view of camera: West and south facades, facing northeast.

Photograph Number: 0002

Name of Property: Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office

City or Vicinity: Helena

County: Lewis and Clark County State: MT

Date of Photograph: November 2009

Location of Original negative or digital image: Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena

Photographer: Diana J. Painter

Description and view of camera: North façade, facing south.

Photograph Number: 0003

Name of Property: Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office

City or Vicinity: Helena

County: Lewis and Clark County State: MT

Date of Photograph: November 2009

Location of Original negative or digital image: Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena

Photographer: Diana J. Painter

Description and view of camera: North and west (north end) facades; facing southeast.

Photograph Number: 0004

Name of Property: Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office

City or Vicinity: Helena

County: Lewis and Clark County State: MT

Date of Photograph: November 2009

Location of Original negative or digital image: Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena

Photographer: Diana J. Painter

Description and view of camera: South façade showing lower office entrance and upstairs entrance behind screen block.

Photograph Number: 0005

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**Additional Documentation—National Register Photographs**

Name of Property: Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office  
City or Vicinity: Helena  
County: Lewis and Clark County State: MT  
Date of Photograph: November 2009  
Location of Original negative or digital image: Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena  
Photographer: Diana J. Painter  
Description and view of camera: East elevation main entrance door, view looking northwest.  
Photograph Number: 0006

Name of Property: Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office  
City or Vicinity: Helena  
County: Lewis and Clark County State: MT  
Date of Photograph: November 2009  
Location of Original negative or digital image: Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena  
Photographer: Diana J. Painter  
Description and view of camera: Detail of pink granite veneer and Western Life Insurance Company Logo. Inset ceramic tile with relief lettering "ENDURING AS THE MOUNTAINS".  
Photograph Number: 0007

Name of Property: Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office  
City or Vicinity: Helena  
County: Lewis and Clark County State: MT  
Date of Photograph: November 2009  
Location of Original negative or digital image: Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena  
Photographer: Diana J. Painter  
Description and view of camera: Materials detail on north façade, lower left corner. Pink granite on main façade (at left), Norman brick at bottom, black and white granite panel frame, light gray, dark gray, and beige mosaic tile, and aluminum window frames.  
Photograph Number: 0008

Name of Property: Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office  
City or Vicinity: Helena  
County: Lewis and Clark County State: MT  
Date of Photograph: November 2009  
Location of Original negative or digital image: Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena  
Photographer: Diana J. Painter  
Description and view of camera: Curtain wall detail, north façade near center.  
Photograph Number: 0009

Name of Property: Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office  
City or Vicinity: Helena  
County: Lewis and Clark County State: MT  
Date of Photograph: November 2009  
Location of Original negative or digital image: Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena  
Photographer: Diana J. Painter  
Description and view of camera: East façade, pink granite detail, showing some damage where "Western Life" lettering was removed.  
Photograph Number: 0010

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
Branch Office

Name of Property

Lewis & Clark County, MT

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Additional Documentation—National Register Photographs**

Name of Property: Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office  
City or Vicinity: Helena  
County: Lewis and Clark County State: MT  
Date of Photograph: November 2009  
Location of Original negative or digital image: Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena  
Photographer: Diana J. Painter  
Description and view of camera: Stair railing detail, west façade.  
Photograph Number: 0011

Name of Property: Western Life Insurance Company Helena Branch Office  
City or Vicinity: Helena  
County: Lewis and Clark County State: MT  
Date of Photograph: November 2009  
Location of Original negative or digital image: Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena  
Photographer: Diana J. Painter  
Description and view of camera: Stair railing detail, west façade.  
Photograph Number: 0012

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
Branch Office

Name of Property

Lewis & Clark County, MT

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

## Additional Documentation—National Register Photographs

Name of Property: Western Life Insurance Branch Office

City or Vicinity: Helena

County: Lewis & Clark County

State: MT

Photographer: All exterior photographs by Diana J. Painter, Nov. 2009

All interior photographs by Christine W. Brown, Jan. 2012



Photo 0001: South and east facades, facing northwest.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
Branch Office

Name of Property

Lewis & Clark County, MT

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional Documentation—National Register Photographs



Photo 0002: West and south facades, facing northeast.



Photo 0003: North façade, facing south.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
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Additional Documentation—National Register Photographs

Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
Branch Office

Name of Property

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**Photo0004: North and west (north end) facades; facing southeast.**

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
Branch Office

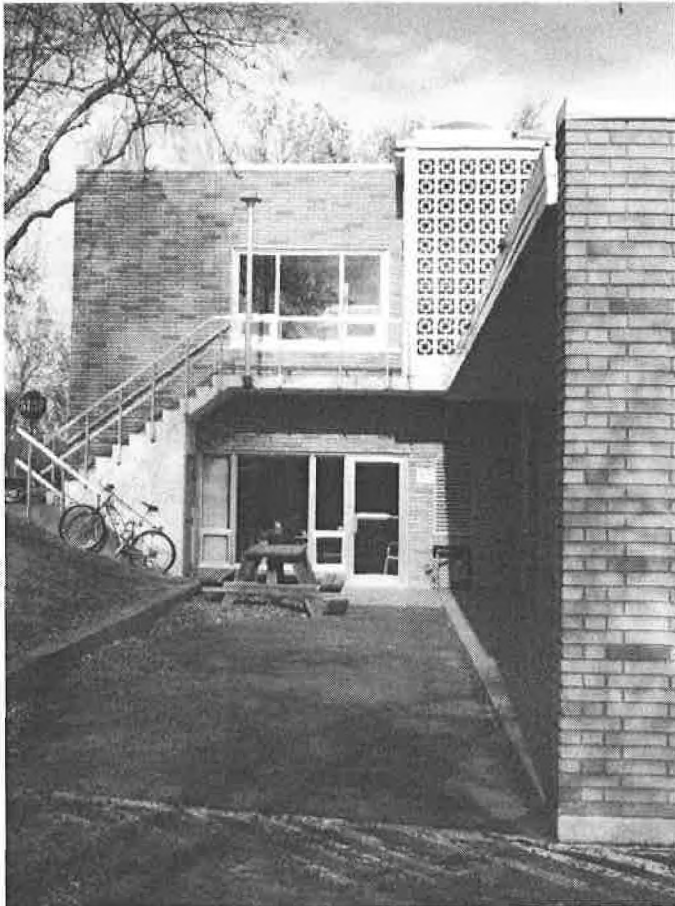
Name of Property

Lewis & Clark County, MT

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Additional Documentation—National Register Photographs



**Photo 0005: South façade showing lower office entrance and upstairs entrance behind screen block.**



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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
Branch Office

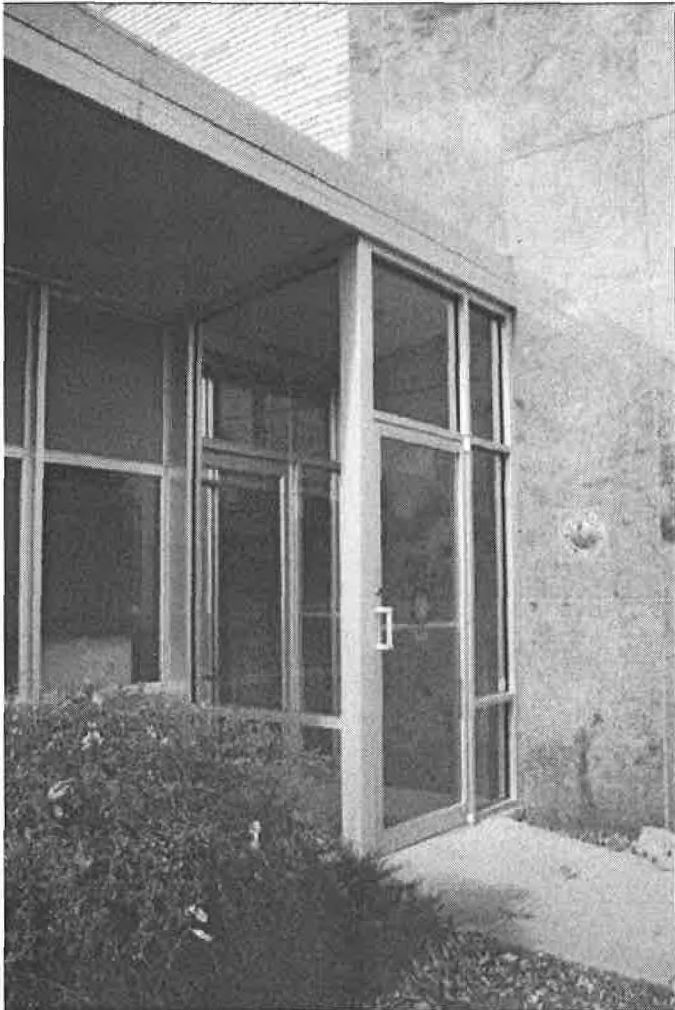
Name of Property

Lewis & Clark County, MT

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Additional Documentation—National Register Photographs**



**Photo 0006: East elevation main entrance door, view looking northwest.**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional Documentation—National Register Photographs

Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
Branch Office

Name of Property

Lewis & Clark County, MT

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



Photo 0007: Detail of pink granite veneer and Western Life Insurance Company Logo. Inset ceramic tile with relief lettering "ENDURING AS THE MOUNTAINS".

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
Branch Office

Name of Property

Lewis & Clark County, MT

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional Documentation—National Register Photographs

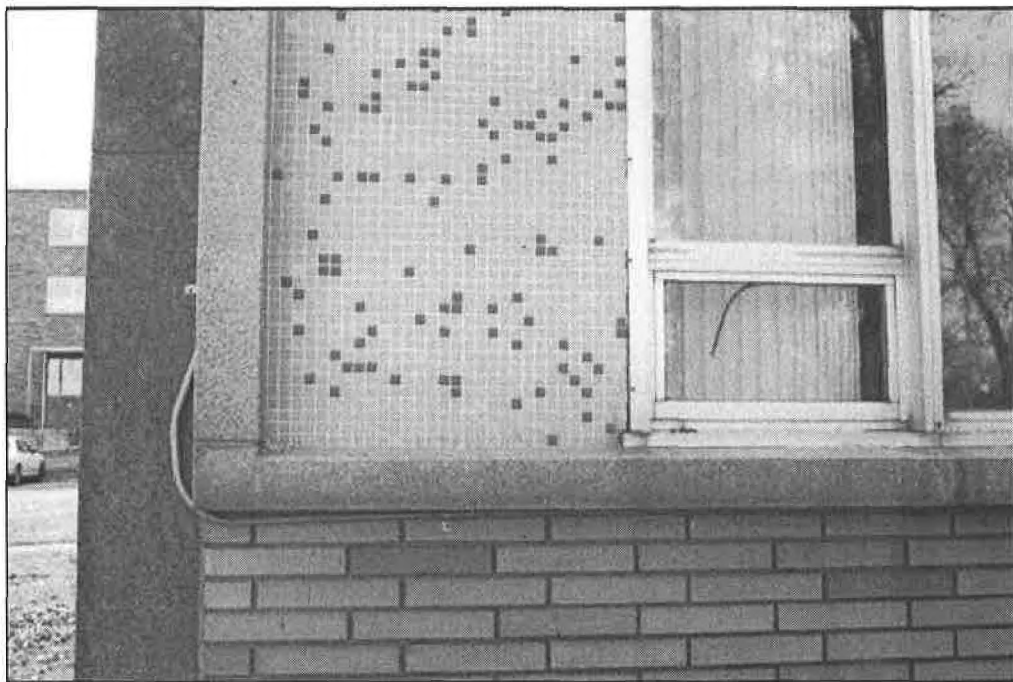


Photo 0008: Materials detail on north façade, lower left corner. Pink granite on main façade (at left), Norman brick at bottom, black and white granite panel frame, light gray, dark gray, and beige mosaic tile, and aluminum window frames.



Photo 0009: Curtain wall detail, north façade near center.

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National Park Service**

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Continuation Sheet**

Additional Documentation—National Register Photographs

Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
Branch Office

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Name of Property

Lewis & Clark County, MT

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County and State

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



**Photo 0010: East façade, pink granite detail, showing some damage where “Western Life” lettering was removed.**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional Documentation—National Register Photographs

Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
Branch Office

Name of Property

Lewis & Clark County, MT

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



Photo 0011: Stair railing detail, west façade.

**United States Department of the Interior  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Western Life Insurance Company Helena  
Branch Office

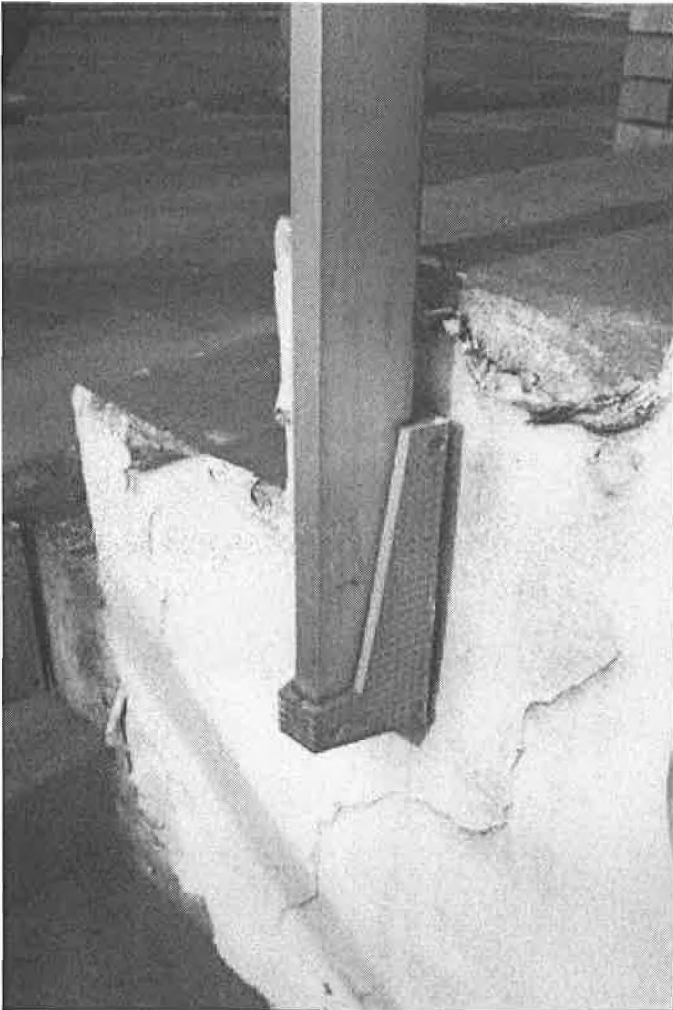
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Name of Property

Lewis & Clark County, MT

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County and State

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Additional Documentation—National Register Photographs



**Photo 0012: Stair railing detail, west façade.**