

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

## 1. Name of Property

historic name: Helena Railroad Depot Historic District

other name/site number: Sixth Ward Commercial District; Depot District

## 2. Location

street & number:

not for publication: n/a

Roughly bounded by Railroad/Helena Avenues; Gallatin Street; North Sanders Street; and North Harris Street

city/town: Helena

vicinity: n/a

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 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. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency or bureau

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:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- 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): \_\_\_\_\_

*[Handwritten Signature]*

*12/15/04*

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Multiple/Private/Local Government

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing Noncontributing

Category of Property: District

19 4 building(s)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: n/a

1 sites

1 structures

2 objects

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

23 4 TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC/hotel, multiple dwelling, single dwelling, secondary structure

COMMERCE/TRADE/business, warehouse, restaurant, specialty store

RELIGION/church school, religious facility

EDUCATION/school

LANDSCAPE/park

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related; road-related (vehicular)

Current Functions:

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling, single dwelling, secondary structure

COMMERCE/TRADE/ business, warehouse, restaurant, specialty store

EDUCATION/school

LANDSCAPE/park

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related; road-related (vehicular)

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS

Colonial Revival, Classical Revival

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/

Bungalow/Craftsman

OTHER/False-Front Commercial; Western Commercial

Materials:

foundation: STONE, CONCRETE

walls: WOOD, BRICK, STUCCO, ASPHALT, STONE

roof: ASPHALT

other: n/a

Narrative Description

The Helena Railroad Depot Historic District consists of twenty-three buildings, one site (park), one structure (brick street) and three objects (a park bench, granite marker, and a 1902 steam locomotive) constructed between 1884 and 1956. The Northern Pacific Railway Depot, historically called "Union Station", functions as the visual and physical center or hub of the district. Other primary elements include an architect-designed Colonial Revival style church, the Larson Block at 1401-1437 Helena Avenue, and a segment of brick street with embedded trolley tracks. The street was graded by the City of Helena in 1883 in anticipation of the railroad's arrival; the brick paving was laid in 1915.<sup>1</sup> Four commercial buildings in the district retain their original false-front design, the only examples of 1880s false front urban buildings in Helena to retain that unique form. These demonstrate the stagnation of the district and lack of financial resources to remodel and rebuild. Although the false fronts exhibit various degrees of alteration, the form remains wholly intact on each example. They are the footprints of the first 1880s buildings, constructed to serve the Northern Pacific Railroad, and today are relatively unlovely examples of an urban area whose heyday has long passed. The district also includes three residences (a gable front with Craftsman style elements, a side gable vernacular, and a Craftsman Bungalow), a masonry commercial warehouse, and outbuildings that contribute to the historic character of the district. The simple buildings included within the district boundaries and the changes that occurred in them over time during the historic period visually document the rise and decline of railway travel and the working class neighborhood that the district served. Only one minor building garage does not contribute to the historic district.

<sup>1</sup> Helena Daily Herald, June 12, 1888; Montana Record Herald, July 12, 1939.

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Union Station is the *raison d'être* for the district itself. Constructed in 1904 and designed by architect Charles A. Reed, it replaced the original depot constructed here in 1883. The existing depot is a two-story building with Renaissance Revival style elements. It is the only remaining depot in Helena associated with this pivotal era. Union Station is also significant as documentation of the devastating earthquakes that rocked the Helena valley in 1935. Mismatched replacement brick can easily be found on the building's upper story as a result of extensive repairs following this disaster. They serve as direct physical evidence of the event.

St. Mary's Church and School at 1425 North Roberts is a two and one-half story Colonial Revival style frame building with brick veneer located adjacent to the rectory. It is an imposing structure in the district that aptly reflects the importance of the church to the primarily working-class neighborhood. Although it is of a surprisingly very simple design, particularly for a Catholic Church, its stark façade was well-suited to the working class character of the neighborhood and suggests that the architect carefully considered its surroundings. Affiliation with renowned architect Albert O. Von Herbulis, designer of the St. Helena Cathedral (listed in the National Register 4/30/1980), lends added significance, particularly because its design is so different from the other monumental landmarks he designed in Helena, such as the ornate St. Charles Hall, centerpiece of Carroll College campus, and St. Helena School, adjacent to the Cathedral. Changes to the building during the period of significance, such as the stuccoed exterior, reflect the cataclysmic earthquakes in 1935 and a fire that destroyed much of the interior in 1937.



*The Cathedral of St. Helena (right) and its associated school (left) are two examples of Albert O. Von Herbulis' work in Helena. He also designed St. Charles Hall on the campus of Carroll College, as well as St. Mary's Church and School in the Helena Railroad Historic District.*

The Larson Block is a primary expression of the architectural changes that occurred in the district. Mixed period elements include the canted cast entry, arched second story windows and glass block transoms, and 1940s storefronts. Consolidated into one block in 1948, remodeling included the removal of a portion of the second floor and the fusion of individual ground floor businesses to present a unified appearance. The evolution of the building visually chronicles the changes prompted by 1935 earthquake damage and cosmetic changes as the neighborhood attempted to modernize in the 1940s. The block represents early Western Commercial buildings common to the district during the late 1800s, remnant buildings incorporated into a cohesive whole after the disastrous earthquakes of 1935, and remodeled during the brief economic resurgence of the 1940s. The sleek, stuccoed design of the east two-thirds of the is particularly reminiscent of the need to repair and remodel, while the brick exterior of the western third of the building is more in keeping with the original Western Commercial style.

Because of the transient nature of those traveling through Helena on the Northern Pacific and the need for boarding and rooming houses for railroad employees, five of the buildings in the district (1437 Helena Avenue, 1501, 1503, 1509 and 1511 Railroad Avenue) originally functioned as hotels and boarding/rooming houses. All display the simple designs (false front, brick front and gable-front) typical of modest utilitarian buildings. They are wood frame with brick veneer or plain wood frame structures with little or no decorative architectural detailing. Typically, all functioned as hotels or boarding/rooming houses on the second floor while the ground floors were devoted to groceries, meat markets, saloons and restaurants. During the historic period, the storefronts consisted of recessed entries, plate glass windows, transoms and kick plates. Only 1503 Railroad Avenue retains those basic design

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components. The altered storefronts of 1437 Helena Avenue, and 1501, 1509, and 1511 Railroad Avenue, date to the 1940s and 1950s, a significant period within the district and a stage of optimistic economic resurgence.

The false front buildings at 1509 and 1511, although altered with siding and window replacements, retain the striking nineteenth century rooflines that are the hallmark of early settlements across the West. These two classic false front buildings especially represent the simple utilitarian functions of many of the commercial buildings in the district. Both were constructed shortly after the arrival of the Northern Pacific in 1883. They reflect the stability and optimism of the new commercial district. Both were also typical of the commercial development in the district: businesses on the ground floor with rooms for rent on the second floor. A third false front at 1503 Railroad Avenue functioned as a boarding house and the fourth, the Denver Hotel at 1501 Railroad Avenue, was one of the first depot area hostelrys. These buildings contribute to the historic character of the district as representatives of the earliest vernacular commercial development. Alterations occurred to the facades of 1511 and 1509 both during and after the historic period, but the false front on each building, and exterior siding added later within the historic period, are important defining features that contribute to the setting and feeling of the district. These and other changes in the district visually reflect important phases of its evolution. False-fronted commercial buildings dominated the Helena landscape in the business district along Last Chance Gulch and State Street beginning in 1864. Because of several devastating fires in the downtown business district, property owners turned to masonry buildings instead, replacing the original Helena commercial landscape. The false-front commercial buildings in the Helena Railroad Depot Historic District are the last examples of this once prevalent architectural style in Helena.

The Morgan Grocery at 1529-1531 Railroad Avenue originally functioned as a grocery/meat market with rooms to let on the second floor. Like the other commercial buildings in the district, this, too, is a purely utilitarian structure with no decorative components. Other buildings in the district consist of simply-styled commercial establishments at 1401-1437 Helena Avenue, the brick front bars at 1505 and 1507 Helena Avenue, and the gable-front Morgan Grocery at 1529-1531 Railroad Avenue). The two buildings at 1505 and 1507 Railroad Avenue were constructed in 1920 and 1911 respectively and were strictly commercial. Both are simple brick front buildings with virtually no ornamental detailing. On 1507, however, there is a decorative tin cornice defining the roofline. Both buildings have off-center entries.

There are also three residences located within the district. 1515 Railroad Avenue is a gable-front residence with Craftsman style elements added later, the simple residence at 1516 Gallatin Street is a small side-gable house, and St. Mary's Rectory at 1430 North Sanders is an example of a Craftsman Bungalow. Two (1515 and 1516) were constructed within a year of the arrival of the railroad and served as investment properties for their owners. The first (1515) is a small, simple residence that functioned as a communal washhouse for its first four years of existence. Thereafter, it served a single-family residence. 1516 Gallatin Street originally functioned as a rental unit. The dwelling has functioned as a rental unit since its construction in 1884. Both of these small residences are wood frame with brick veneer, a construction practice common to the buildings fronting Helena and Railroad Avenue. Veneer covering and the use of false fronts were intentional symbols that lent an air of stability and permanence to the district immediately surrounding the NP depot.

The third residence was constructed of frame with brick veneer as a rectory for the parish priest of St. Mary's. The residence is the only example of a Craftsman Bungalow located within the historic district. Although added onto within the last 25 years, the residence still retains much of its original configuration, fenestration and architectural detailing common to the style.

As would be expected in a district associated with the railroad, there were once a number of railroad-related buildings between the tracks to the east and along the southern edges. These buildings included a large brick roundhouse with a machine shop and numerous stalls. Also scattered between the tracks were a compressor room, coal bins, a change house, an office, a stockroom and other various smaller structures related to the operation of the railroad. Along the southern edge of the tracks was a large brick freight house with offices, an icehouse and other smaller structures. These buildings, according to the 1930 Sanborn maps, were still in use at that time and were located just outside the district's boundaries. The last of these buildings was removed within the last twenty-five years.

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Historically, the Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance maps indicate that eight of fourteen contributing properties in the historic district had small vernacular or Craftsman-style outbuildings associated with their primary buildings. These outbuildings served as stables for horses possessed by the property owners (1503 and 1511 Railroad Avenue) or were utilized for storage or some other function. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, most of the outbuildings had been removed and replaced by garages (1509, 1515, and 1529-1531 Railroad Avenue). Like their predecessors, four of the garages were simple and unadorned with architectural detail or style, while the fifth was Craftsman-style to reflect the architecture of the primary building on the property. One property (1511 Railroad Avenue) retains a livery barn that was moved to this location before 1930. The barn is consistent with the historic function of the property. The outbuildings and garages were functional in design and usage with virtually no decorative elements that would enhance the appearance of the properties. They reflect the working class nature of the neighborhood because of their simplicity of design and utilitarian nature. They are also indicative of the transformation of the district's primary mode of transportation, the horse, to the automobile.

There were also a number of warehouses located adjacent to the tracks. One of these warehouses is located within the district (1439 N. Harris). It is a simple commercial building with rubblestone walls and a modern wrap-around loading dock on the west, north, and east sides. The warehouse is the sole survivor of an extensive complex associated with the operation of the business once located there.

Beattie Park, created by the City of Helena in 1929-1930, lies to the west of Union Station and serves to extend the depot area. This triangular block, which borders the railroad tracks, historically offered railroad passengers a "favorable first impression" of Helena and continues to provide well-shaded respite for neighborhood residents. A retired steam locomotive, installed in the park in 1956, is on permanent display.

Finally, the district includes the last remaining brick roadway in Helena. The brick-paved street with a section of trolley tracks embedded in it delineates the railroad's right-of-way and is a primary component to the district.

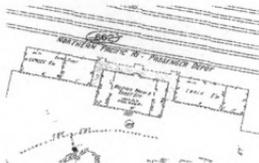
## Individual Resources

**Union Station, north side of Railroad Avenue (one contributing building)**

Constructed in 1904, the railroad depot is one massive brick building with three freestanding rectangular bays, connected by a continuous roofline across the first story of the north (front) elevation, and partially enclosed breezeways supported by granite lintels. The central bay is two-story, the east and west bays are one-story. This unusual building displays architectural elements reminiscent of the Romanesque, Renaissance Revival, and even Prairie styles. The low-pitched hip rooflines have flared eaves and are sheathed in asphalt shingles. There is an ornate, spired, Italian Renaissance Revival style clock tower, composed of pressed tin over a wood frame, centrally located on the hip roof of the central bay.

The depot rests on plinthed concrete foundation walls. The corners of the building are quoined with granite blocks, as are the window and door opening posts and lintels. The walls are blond brick, and flare towards the bottom. The brick on the upper two-thirds of the central bay's west (side) elevation date to 1935. That year, earthquakes significantly damaged the building, forcing the replacement of some of the bricks on the west elevation. Steel plates, moreover, are located on the front and rear elevation corners of the central bay. They accommodate the rods that now tie the building together to compensate for earthquake damage.

*North elevation.* The depot's primary elevation faces north, onto the railroad tracks. The east and west bays are not as deep, north to south, as the central part of the building, but are flush across the north side, including the colonnade that graces the central bay façade. Indeed the wide, hipped roof of the side wings is continuous across the colonnade. Square, flared, granite columns support the roof across the center bay. Within the modern period, the two center sections of the colonnade have been enclosed. The entries to this enclosure are centered on its



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east and west elevations, and flanked by casement windows. Two additional casements are located across the enclosure's north side. The first story of the central bay facade features modern casement windows and four entries with fixed single light wood doors. The second story of the building's north (front) elevation rises above the central bay's colonnade. It has five windows with a continuous granite sill, lintels and decorative quoined posts. There is a continuous granite belt course cornice. The grillwork windows are fixed Renaissance Revival style with translucent colored glass.

The east bay originally functioned as "the Beanery" or restaurant. Its north (front) elevation features seven evenly spaced openings. They contain, from east to west, a six-over-one light double hung window, a wooden, one-light pedestrian door, a four-light casement, a one-light casement, and three six-over-one double hungs. The west bay functioned as the baggage and freight area, and its north elevation features four six-over-one light double-hung windows separated by three large wooden overhead doors. The bay has a corbeled granite belt course, a continuous sill and all windows have granite lintels and quoined posts.

*South elevation.* Union Station's south elevation fronts Railroad Avenue. The more substantial, two-story central bay of the building extends closer to Railroad Avenue than the Beanery and baggage wings. Its south elevation has a semi-arcaded, Romanesque appearance. There are five rounded brick arches centered on the façade, and two modern, two-light casement windows on either side. The arches have continuous granite voussoirs with decorative keystones, while the bricks within the arches are arranged in a "sunburst" pattern, which is highly recessed within each arch. Windows within the west and east arches are modern two-light casements with rounded transoms that have been in-filled. The west-of-center and center arches have fixed and casement windows with large fanlights. The east-of-center arch includes the entry. The entry is sheltered by a bright blue fabric awning with "Montana Rail Link" printed in white letters. The doorway is modern aluminum-frame fixed glass with sidelights and a transom. A continuous granite sill runs around the building and incorporates the windows.

There are five windows across the south elevation's second story. A continuous granite sill runs around the building and defines the second and first stories. The windows have quoined granite posts and granite lintels. There is a continuous corniced granite belt course. The grillwork windows are fixed Renaissance Revival style with translucent colored glass like those across the north elevation.

The Beanery's south elevation contains a single six-over-one double-hung window to the west, a pedestrian door opening with a modern, one-light door and in-filled transom, another six-over-one window, an eight-over-one window that appears to replace a pedestrian entry, a pair of six-over-ones, another wood pedestrian entry, and a one-over-one double-hung. The west bay's south elevation features three large door openings, including a central pair of wood-paneled doors, and a wooden roll-up door to either side. The elevation also contains three six-over-one light double-hung windows; one just west of each of the large door openings. Finally, there is a pedestrian door at the east end of the elevation. The door is one-light wood style, and its transom has been filled with brick.

*East elevation.* The east elevation of the central bay features three original window openings evenly-spaced across the first story. These openings are filled with two-light casements. Above, at the second story, there are two grillwork windows identical to those on the south and north elevations. The east elevation of the east bay contains two six-over-one light double hungs, one to each side. High on the wall, between the windows is a wooden sign, painted black with white lettering that reads "HELENA." The east elevation of the west bay is located within the west breezeway. It contains two, two-light casement windows.

*West elevation.* The west elevation mirrors the east, with three casements across the first story of the central bay, and two grillwork windows on the second story. The west elevation of the west (baggage area) bay contains two six-over-one light double-hungs to each side. The east bay's west elevation features two original window openings containing modern, two-light casements.

Despite the modern windows within the non-primary elevations, and a few fill-in openings, Union Station retains a high degree of integrity. The changes have been minimal, and the character-defining architectural features, such as the footprint, low-slung hipped roofline, quoined corners and openings, fancy grillwork windows, and clock tower remain intact.

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**The Larson Block, 1401-1437 Helena Avenue (one contributing building)**

The Larson Block is a commercial block bounded on the north by Helena Avenue, the east by North Sanders Street, the south by Gallatin Avenue and the west by North Roberts Street. Originally a series of individually owned and constructed storefronts and businesses, the Larson Block has been considered a single entity since 1948. That year, extensive remodeling resulted in a largely unified appearance. Ownership, function and appearance overlap over three distinct sections of the building. The western one-third of the building is two stories while the remainder is one story. The west end of the block, two stories in height, functions as a single unit at the second story, and houses ten apartments. The walls are all brick and brick veneer. Stucco covers the east, one-story end of the building and the east half of the two-story section. The Larson Block houses approximately thirteen businesses, in the same configuration as displayed on the 1950 Sanborn Map. The building rests on a concrete foundation, has a flat roof sheathed in asphalt and is roughly triangular in shape. The front elevation of the building faces north.

*Westernmost section.* The westernmost portion of the building is not stuccoed, and retains much of its pre-earthquake character, and original Western Commercial style elements. A row of soldier-coursed brick functions as its cornice. There are three decorative terra cotta garland panels located just below the roofline on the façade (north elevation). A centered, arched pedestrian door provides access to the building from the north elevation. This original opening contains a vintage aluminum-framed, two-light door and decorative fanlight transom. Two diamond-shaped terra cotta panels above and stone blocks on either side of the doorframe at the sidewalk further define the entry. Single, six-over-one

light double hung windows flank the entry, and feature arched fanlight transoms above. To the east, a large original storefront has been infilled with contrasting blond brick and two large plate glass windows. A five light transom is located across the original opening space, and its easternmost light has been filled. To the west of the entry are two, evenly-spaced, six-over-one light double hung windows. Eight windows within original openings span the second story. Four feature arched lintels filled with original decorative brickwork. From east to west the window styles are: a one-light casement, a one-light casement with an arched lintel, a one-over-one double-hung with and arched lintel, three one-over-one light double-hungs, and two one-light casements with arched lintels.

The west elevation of the Larson Block features a ribbon of three modern one-light fixed windows centered within the first story and shaded by a metal awning. North of these windows, brick fills an original entry. South of the windows is a hand painted wood panel sign reading "HANK'S BARBER SHOP." The second story contains two, evenly-spaced one-light casements within original, arched window openings, similar to those on the façade. Between the windows is a large stucco panel bordered with brick. The panel reads "LARSON COMMERCIAL CENTER 1400 HELENA AVENUE" in raised lettering. Additional signage includes a lighted sign, mounted perpendicular to the north side of the wall that reads "HANK'S BARBER SHOP," with a lighted, spinning barber pole beneath.

The south (rear) elevation of the westernmost portion of the Larson Block features four entries, two at both the west and east sides. The two west entries have modern two-light glass doors and transoms above. The easternmost door is paneled wood with four lights. There is no transom space above. The door immediately to the west contains a modern, wood-framed door with a single, full-length light and an infilled transom. A ribbon of three original, wood-frame, one-over-one light double hung windows is centered within the first story. Another single double-hung is located east of center. Across the second story are seven original one-over-one light double hung windows of alternating size.

*Central, two-story, stuccoed section.* The east side of the two-story portion of the Larson Block functions as a storefront at the first story and apartments above. The apartments are part of a larger apartment complex that includes all of the Larson Block's second story. At the first story, the north elevation is equally divided into three bays by pilasters. The two west bays each contain large display windows within original openings. The east bay contains a centered, recessed glass door entry flanked by plate-glass display windows. Glass block fills the

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clerestory space above each of these storefronts. A smooth, concrete belt course, painted off-white in contrast to the tan stucco above, separates the two stories. Decorative concrete also caps each of the pilasters. The course and caps continue across the east two-thirds of the Larson Block, and serve as a unifying architectural feature for the building as a whole. The stuccoed second story contains seven evenly spaced windows: alternating one-light casements and one-over-one light double hungs.

The south (rear elevation) of the stuccoed two-story portion of the building features three entries. The two west entries are each flanked by stone-silled window openings. These windows and doors are boarded over. The east entry is glass and flanked by a plate glass display window. A partially in-filled window is located at the east end of the elevation. It has glass blocks on the lower zone, while the upper zone is boarded-over.

*One-story, east portion.* The east side of the Larson Block is one-story, and displays the same architectural features described above. This portion of the building houses a series of storefronts, each with a central, recessed entry flanked by plate glass display windows, and glass block clerestories. The concrete belt course continues across the elevation above the storefronts. The space above the course is stucco, painted tan. The entries all have modern doors with fixed, full-length fixed windows. The storefronts are delineated on the east by rough-faced stone pilasters that are remnants of the old Grand Pacific Hotel. The canted entry from the old hotel still functions as an entry on the northeast corner of the building. It is recessed, flanked by the stone pilasters and has sidelights, a glass-block transom and a modern door with a fixed, full-length window. The east elevation (facing North Sanders) has seven window openings all with glass blocks and decorative terra cotta lintels. An entry is located slightly right-of-center on the elevation; it has a steel door.

Finally, on the Gallatin Street side of the building (south, rear elevation) that is single story, the walls are comprised of brick, of which much of it is covered in stucco. All of the window openings have glass blocks, while two still have casement window units incorporated into the window openings. There are also three entries in the section. All have steel doors and are sheltered by awnings.

**St. Mary's Church and School, 1421-1425 North Roberts Street (one contributing building)**

St. Mary's Church and School at 1425 North Roberts is a two-and-one-half-story Colonial Revival style building with a combination hip and gable roof sheathed in asphalt shingles, a concrete over granite foundation, and a stone water table. The brick veneer is clad in stucco, and the building faces west. The eaves are cornice around the entire building. The central portion of the building extends forward, forming a simple tripartite façade.

On the façade (west elevation) there is a pedimented gable with a porthole attic vent. The second floor has three sets of fixed, one-over-one double-hung windows with transoms. Some of the transoms have been boarded over. The primary entry is centered on the façade and reached by concrete steps and a stoop flanked by an iron railing. The entry has sidelights and transom sidelights that have been partially in-filled. The wood door has a single-light fixed and rounded window. A gable roofed hood with exposed brackets and rafters shelters the entryway. The entry is flanked by two paired one-over-one double-hung windows facing west. The façade of the main building has a one-over-one double-hung window on each side. To each side of the extended front section there are two one-over-one double-hung windows, one on the first floor and one on the second.

The north elevation has a hip-roofed dormer with soffits and decorative cornice. The dormer walls are wood shingled, and there is a centered pair of one-over-one double-hung windows. There are two groups of windows on both the second and first floors. The windows are one-over-one double-hung with transoms, and each group consists of a single window flanked by a pair. The five-window grouping thus occurs on both stories and gives a total of twenty windows on the combined floors. Some of the windows and transoms have been in-filled, but the configuration of the windows is still apparent.

The south elevation exhibits the same window pattern as the north façade and has an identical dormer. There is an entry central to the façade accessed by a wheelchair ramp. A shed-roofed vestibule of stuccoed wood frame with exposed rafters opens toward the east. There is a coal chute to the right of the entry, under the ramp. Some of the windows and transoms have been in-filled, but the configuration of the windows is still apparent.

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The rear (east) elevation has a flat-roofed addition that rests on a raised concrete foundation. On the second floor are four two-light casement windows. The ground floor has an entry south of center and a wood door with a single fixed window. The entry is reached by concrete steps and a stoop flanked by steel railing. There is another metal door at the south corner of the addition.



**St. Mary's Church Rectory, 1430 North Sanders Street (one contributing building)**

The rectory is a one-and-a-half-story Craftsman style bungalow that faces east. It has a gable roof, a plinthead concrete foundation, stuccoed walls and wide shingle siding on the gable ends. Large shed-roofed dormers extend out from both the north and south slopes of the roof. Each of these dormers feature shingled walls and three three-over-one double hung windows (a pair and a single). A wide, five-step concrete stoop leads to the enclosed porch across the front (east elevation). The hip-roofed porch has shallow gabled dormer above the entry, two double-hung windows to the south, and a plate-glass window flanked by single double-hungs to the north. Both the north and south sides of the porch contain a pair of double-hungs. The façade also features a pair of three-over-one double hungs centered in the gable end.

The north elevation's main story contains four windows evenly spaced across the plane. The easternmost is a six-light fixed window, and the others are six-over-one double hung. The north elevation's daylight basement contains three windows. Two are three-light awnings and one is boarded over. The south elevation features four single, six-over-one light double hung windows: one at the east side, and three evenly-spaced across the western two-thirds of the plane. A wooden pedestrian door, sheltered by a modern aluminum storm, is located east of center. The daylight basement contains three, three-light awning windows.

The rear (west) elevation of the original rectory building is obscured by a post-1958, gable-roofed addition. Like the original building, the addition has stuccoed walls. There is a cutaway porch on the northeast corner reached by concrete steps and a stoop. The entry has a wood door and a wood storm door. A two-light casement window is next to the entry, to the east. The addition's south elevation also contains a three-light fixed picture window. Board and batten surrounds the one-over-one double hung windows in the addition's west gable end. Though constructed after the period of significance, the addition to the rectory is at the rear of the building, and is similar to the original portion in materials, roof pitch, and scale. The addition does not detract to the overall significance of the rectory, or its ability to contribute to the Helena Railroad Depot Historic District.



**Railroad Avenue (one contributing structure)**

Railroad Avenue consists of a brick paved street that runs between North Sanders and North Lamborn Avenues. The street is 46.6 feet wide and 1,310 feet long. The street is bounded on the north by a deteriorated concrete curb and on the south by recent curbing or no curbing at all. The brick displays regular coursing and no mortar. The coursing is perpendicular to the curbing. The brick, moreover, has buckled in places causing large bumps in the structure toward the eastern end of the roadway. Other, small portions have been patched with asphalt. At the eastern terminus of the street near the intersection with North Lamborn, the street has settled.

A segment of railroad siding runs parallel to the southern side of the street between North Harris and North Oakes Streets. The segment is 660 feet long and provided access to the Benson-Carpenter Warehouse. The parallel tracks are 4'10" across (the standard gauge is 4'8" suggesting that non-maintenance of the siding has caused it to separate). A 100-foot segment of trolley track is located between 1509 Railroad Avenue (historically the Phoenix Hotel/Park Cafe) and the intersection of North Sanders. Portions of the track are obscured by later asphalt overlays. The parallel trolley tracks are 5.3 feet apart.

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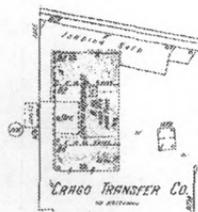
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**Beattie Memorial Park, steam locomotive, and park bench; northwest corner of Railroad Avenue and Sanders Street (one contributing site, two contributing objects)**  
The park is a triangular city block bordered by North Roberts Street on the west, Helena Avenue on the south, and the depot on the east. The northern border of the block historically was Railroad Avenue. Beattie Park incorporated the street and the Northern Pacific Park, or right-of-way, which bordered the railroad tracks. Thus the tracks serve as the park's north border.

A **steam locomotive** is permanently on display behind a chain link fence forming an invisible boundary between what was the Northern Pacific Park and the adjoining Beattie Park. The engine bears the numbers 1382 and the date June, 1902. An asphalt sidewalk transects the park. A granite bench with its back to Helena Avenue, inscribed with the date 1931 and "Chapter N. 3 American War Mothers," faces the park. Near the bench are remains of a circular concrete foundation. The grassy park is landscaped with mature trees and shrubs. A **stone park bench**, original to the landscape design of Beattie Park, is located south of the locomotive, and contributes to the historic district.

**Benson-Carpenter Company Building, 1439 North Harris Street (one contributing building)**

This warehouse, constructed c. 1896, is the last standing warehouse in the district. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were many such warehouses in the area. The building is located at the east end of the district, at 1439-1445 North Harris. It is a massive, one-and-one-half story, irregularly-shaped stone warehouse with a large, one-story, original, wood-frame loading shed across its north elevation. The loading shed wraps around the north half of the west (front) elevation, and the north third of the east (rear) elevation. The shed is sheathed with metal siding and board and batten, and its doors and windows have been altered through the years. Large overhead door openings at the northeast corner belie its original use, as a loading and storage building for a freighting company. There is a narrow frame addition across the south half of the west façade, and a large pole-framed, metal clad, modern addition attached to the south side of the east (rear) elevation. This

modern addition has a shallow-pitched gable roof, and another shed addition extends off its south side. The main part of the building has rubblestone random coursed walls, and is divided in three sections: a raised-gable center section, and gable wings to the north and south. These roofs are covered in corrugated metal sheeting.

The front (west) facade has a gabled wall dormer with partially returned eaves. The dormer's gable end has clapboard siding and a one-over-three double-hung window. There is an interior/exterior brick chimney with a sheet metal cap. The ground floor features the pent roof enclosure across its south side. The enclosure's roof is covered with wood shingles, and the siding is vertical tongue-and-groove. Concrete steps and a stoop and wheelchair ramp reach an entry south of center. The entry has a modern wood door with a diamond-shaped fixed window. On the north side of the west façade, the loading shed extends around the northwest corner of the building. An interior chimney pierces its roof. On its west elevation, the shed features a single-light fixed window, board-and-batten siding, a belt course and water table. There is a bay entry with sliding doors. The pedestrian entry on the addition is slightly north of center. It has a wooden door reached by wood steps and a stoop opening on the south.

On the north elevation the loading shed continues the length of the wall and wraps around toward the northwest corner of the building. The walls are metal, covered board-and-batten, and it has a shed roof covered in corrugated metal. There are two bay entries that have been boarded over. Another bay entry is partly in-filled to accommodate a door. To the right of the door are paired fixed-light windows with heavy surrounds. Above, the gable end of the stone warehouse is covered in sheet metal pressed to look like brick, and iron bars cover a one-light window.

On the south elevation there is a two-over-two double-hung window in the gable end, which is sheathed with pressed metal. There are two windows across the stone wall of the first story. The window on the east side is three-over-three double-hung style with a semi-elliptical brick arch and a granite sill. The west window appears to have been identical to the one just described, but it has

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been partially in-filled with concrete blocks. The south elevation of the pole addition contains two metal overhead garage doors, a metal pedestrian door, and fixed windows. Shed roofs supported by milled lumber poles shade the south side of the pole addition from view.

The random coursed rubblestone walls of the main building are visible on the east (rear) elevation. The loading shed at the north side of the elevation has been extended to the south, and features a combination gable and shed roof. The shed and its extension rest on a concrete foundation and are covered in board-and-batten siding. There are a total of eight bay entries across the elevation. To the south there is a sub-level entry single bay entry with a roll-top metal door. A driveway is flanked by high concrete retaining walls. The bay to the north of the sub-level entry has a roll-up door with eight lights. The remaining doors are all of the lift-up type.



**Reeder Rental & Garage, 1516 Gallatin Street (two contributing buildings)**

The Reeder Rental is a one-story L-shaped National style residence oriented east and west and faces south. The gable roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles. The walls are clad in stucco siding. The dwelling rests on a concrete foundation. The primary entry is centrally located on the facade and is reached by concrete steps. It has a wood paneled door with a single light fixed window. A shed roof hood shelters the entry; it is supported by wood brackets. The entry is flanked by single two-over-two double-hung windows. The gable ell at the rear of the residence has a two-over-two double-hung window. A shed roof addition at the rear has two two-over-two double-hung windows and a secondary entry.

An addition on the east elevation has a saltbox roof sheathed in asphalt shingles; the walls are clad in stucco. The roof also has exposed rafters. Paired six-light casement windows are located on the facade of the addition. An entry is located on the east elevation. It has a lighted wood paneled door. A three-light fixed window is located on the west elevation. There is a wood tongue-in-groove attic access under the west elevation gable peak.

A small rectangular garage is located behind (north of) the house. The gable-roofed building is covered with board and batten siding, and features exposed rafter ends. Asphalt shingles cover the roof. The garage retains a high degree of integrity, and contributes to the district.



**The Morgan Grocery & Boarding House & Garages, 1529-1531 Railroad Avenue (four contributing buildings)**

The Grocery and Boarding House is a one-and-one-half story gable-front duplex that faces north. The gable/shed roof is sheathed in asphalt shingles and the exterior is clad in stucco over novelty siding with corner boards. On the north facade is a two-light casement window on the second story. The two main ground floor entryways have wood paneled doors with single fixed plate glass windows and are accessed by concrete stoops. On either side of each door is a two-over-two double-hung window. The entries are sheltered by gable-roofed hoods supported by brackets.

The east (side elevation) features a shed-roof wall dormer, corner boards and heavy window surrounds. Within the dormer, on the north side, is a pair of two-light casement windows. To the south side, the dormer has a single two-light casement window. The east elevation also contains two windows at its south side at the first story: a one-over-one double-hung window and a smaller one-over-one double-hung window. At the ground level is a boarded-over coal chute.

On the rear (south) elevation is a modern wood exterior stairway with wooden railing and a second-story porch. The second floor's entry has the original multi-light wood paneled door with wooden screen. On the ground floor at the rear are two secondary entries with wooden doors accessed by concrete steps. To the left of each door is a two-over-two double-hung window. Remnants of a brick chimney can be seen at the peak of the roof. The west elevation contains two windows, a three-light casement window and a 1/1 double-hung window. A brick chimney pierces the shed roof.

There are three wood-frame garages at the rear of the lot. The west garage's gable roof is covered with rolled asphalt, and narrow fascia

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covers the rafter ends. Unpainted tongue and groove boards cover the exterior of the building, and milled lumber serves as corner boards. Within the south (front) elevation, there is a pair of braced, large double doors.

The middle garage has a west-sloping shed roof covered with rolled asphalt. The rafter ends are exposed. The garage also features tongue and groove siding and corner boards. A pair of vertical tongue and groove doors dominates the front (south) elevation. The east elevation contains a centered wood pedestrian door.

The east garage has a gable roof with rolled asphalt roofing, and narrow fascia covers the rafter ends. Wood shingles fill the gable ends. The walls are covered with vertical tongue and groove. A pair of tongue and groove side-hinged garage doors fills the south (front) elevation.



**Reeder-Valentine Rental & Garage, 1515 Railroad Avenue (two contributing buildings)**

The Reeder-Valentine Rental is a gable-front style dwelling with Craftsman details. It has a gable roof clad in asphalt shingles and walls clad in stucco. Exposed rafters are boxed in and the windows all have heavy wood surrounds. Wood paneling covers the lower zone of the front, north-facing facade. Two concrete steps lead to the central entry. The door is wood paneled with three fixed lights and a fixed-light transom above. Two single-light fixed windows flank the entry; the window on the west has an etched image. A pergola-style, flat roof hood supported by decorative exposed brackets shelters the entryway. There is a louvered attic vent under the facade gable peak.

On the west elevation there is a secondary entry to the north, accessed by concrete steps and a stoop. The entry door is wood paneled with multi-lights. Another pergola with a semi-elliptical roof supported by decorative exposed brackets and square posts shelters the entry. To the south of the entry is a single fixed one-light window. To the south of that is a pair of four-over-one windows. Toward the rear of the building is a historic shed-roofed addition with an entry facing west. The door is wood paneled with multi-lights. A brick wall clad in stucco runs perpendicular to the west elevation at approximately the midpoint.

On the east elevation at the right is a 4/1 double-hung window, an eight-light casement window and a narrow 1/1 double-hung window. There is also a casement window with a two-light fixed transom on the east elevation.

A single-bay gable-roofed Craftsman style garage faces south onto Gallatin Street. The roof is sheathed in wood shingles and the walls are clad in stucco siding. The garage has a pair of double-hinged wood paneled doors with eight-light fixed windows. The garage rests on a concrete foundation.



**James & Hannah German Residence & Livery Barn, 1511 Railroad Avenue (two contributing buildings)**

The German Residence is a two-story false-front duplex with a gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. The exterior walls are clad in stucco. The building has a plinthed concrete foundation. The main facade faces north. The second story of the facade has three, one-over-one double-hung windows with stone or brick sills. At the first story, there are two entries reached by concrete steps. The west entry has a three-light wood door and a lighted wood storm door. The doorway has a modern metal canopy and recessed transom with two fixed lights. To the east of the door is a single-light fixed plate glass window with a two-light transom that has been boarded over. The east entry has a solid wood door with a wood storm door and a two-light transom that still function. To the east of that is a single-light fixed window with a three-light transom that is boarded over.

On the ground level of the east (side) elevation is a single plate glass fixed window. There is a hipped roof, rectangular bay window extension which contains with two fixed windows and a casement window. The bay has a rolled asphalt roof. At the rear (south side) of the east elevation is a historic shed-roofed kitchen addition with a two-light casement window. The second story, fenestration on the east elevation is limited to a two-light casement window centered high in the wall, just below the eaveline.

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The south elevation features the kitchen addition across the first story. Its shed roof has rolled asphalt. Within the extension, there are two casement windows and an entry door. At the second story, three fixed, one-light windows are spaced across the south elevation. A metal awning shelters them. There is a shed roofed, post-and-beam covered patio at the southeast corner, enclosed by a cinder block wall.

A gable-roofed barn faces south. It is covered with asphalt shingling. The walls are covered with tongue-and-groove siding. A bay entry is to the left of center on the south facade. It has double-hinged wood doors. To the right is a boarded-over window. There is a secondary entry on the east elevation.



**The Phoenix Hotel /Park Café, 1509 Railroad Avenue (one noncontributing building)**

Though the building has been extensively modified the building is one of only four false-front buildings in Helena. (The other three are also located within the Helena Railroad Historic District.) The original materials of the building have been obscured, yet the design of this important architectural form is intact. Despite its significance, the building does not retain sufficient integrity to contribute to the district. The Phoenix Hotel/Park Café is a north-facing false-front storefront and apartment building. It has asbestos siding covering the walls. On the second floor are two, two-light casement windows. The ground floor facade has an entry slightly right of center. It has a wood door with a porthole window. The ground floor facade windows have been in-filled with glass blocks. Two fixed windows flank the entry. The storefront, off-center to the west, is slightly recessed. The west elevation wall is shared with the adjoining building, except at the second story, which contains a single, fixed window. The west elevation walls also extends beyond the plane of the adjoining building at the south end, and there displays another one-light fixed window.

The back of the building faces south and has a separate address: 1508 Gallatin. The ground floor rear entry on the west side has a modern door. To the east of that is a combination modern fixed and casement window sheltered by a gabled roof. Brackets enclosed by shingle siding support the roof. At the second story is a two-light casement window.

A low concrete wall with the words "Stoner Concrete Forming, Helena, MT." encloses the rear of the lot.



**The Rocky Mountain Bar, 1507 Railroad Avenue (one noncontributing building)**

The Rocky Mountain Bar is a commercial building with a stucco and glass block storefront and a decorative tin cornice. The north-facing facade has a central entry with a metal door and a single fixed light. In a design similar to the Phoenix Hotel (1509 Railroad), two fixed, one-light windows in aluminum frames are surrounded by glass block and flank the entry. The changes, however, date to 1976. On the south (rear) elevation there is a central entry with a transom. It has a wood door with an aluminum storm. Two one-over-one double-hung windows flank the entry. The window on the east is a partially in-filled. A shed roof supported by wood brackets overhangs the back of the building. Though

compatible in design, scale and materials, the Rocky Mountain Bar does not retain sufficient integrity to contribute to the historic district.



**William Schrock Beer Parlor (Haps Bar), 1505 Railroad Avenue (one contributing building)**

This unassuming establishment has a stuccoed brick, north-facing storefront. There is a parapet on the east wall and clay tiling on the cornice. The single entry is to the west on the facade and sheltered by a metal Art Deco style flat-roofed hood. East of the entrance are two, two-light casements. Above the entry and perpendicular to the wall is a neon sign that reads "Hap's Bar." The building has a shed roof that extends out at the rear (south) elevation. Beneath the shed, there are two entries. The east entry has a wood door and boarded-over transom. The west entry has decorative brick over the lintel. To the east of the west entry is a window of glass blocks with a brick sill. A window at the east side of the elevation is partially bricked over.

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**Drake Hotel II (Kurth Brothers Meat/Pizer Saloon), 1503 Railroad Avenue (one contributing building)**

The Drake Hotel II is a two-story commercial storefront with upstairs living space. It has an asphalt-shingled gable roof, a wood false front covered in drop-lap siding, and a decorative wood cornice. The second floor north facade has two wood-frame window openings, both filled with plywood. Drop-lap siding covers another opening at the center. There is a wide wood belt course that defines the first and second story zones. Beneath this, a clerestory with a decorative tin topper has been boarded over. The first floor is brick clad in stucco. The building has a stone foundation and a brick stoop that has been covered in concrete. There are three recessed entries. Two storefront entries flank a central entry to the upstairs rooms. The west entry has the original lighted door. A display window to the west is boarded over. The center entry opens to an interior wood stairway leading to the upstairs living space. It has a lighted wood paneled door with its window boarded over. The east entry is identical to that on the west. The east side of the storefront contains two fixed plate glass windows. There is an air conditioner above the window's far side. A single-light transom is above each door. The east and center transoms are boarded over, but the west transom still functions.

The east, west, and rear elevations have been clad in vinyl siding since the mid-1990s. The vinyl covers the original droplap. The vinyl also obscures all of the window and door openings with the exception of the ground floor entry at the rear of the building and a window opening on the north side of the second floor east elevation.



**The Denver House/Depot Corner Store & Confectionery, 1501 Railroad Avenue (one contributing building)**

The north elevation of this two-and-one-half story brick front corner business block has a false front with stucco over the brick exterior and a gable roof. There is an interior brick chimney. The north facade, second floor, has two casement windows. There are three fixed-light windows across the first story. The primary entrance is canted toward the northwest. Tongue-and-groove siding covers what little can be seen of the east elevation. The west elevation faces North Sanders Street. Its first story contains a single, secondary entry with a modern metal door reached by a concrete step. To the south of that entry is a three-light fixed window. Across the second story, there is a one-light fixed window and five one-over-one double-hung windows. The south, one and one-half story portion of the building contains a pair of one-over-one light double hungs and another single one-over-one double hung across its west elevation.

The rear (south) elevation contains a two-light casement window in the gable end of the second story and an entry with a wood door. The one-and one-half story portion has a flat roof, a stepped parapet and decorative tin cornice. The first story of the south elevation has a central entry with a wood door and a one-over-one light double hung window to the west.

**Integrity**

While individual resources within the Helena Railroad Depot historic district have experienced changes and decline from the late nineteenth century and through the twentieth century, the overall integrity of the district remains high. The largely unaltered 1904 Northern Pacific Union Station, continues to be the focal point. The Larson Block conglomerate, St. Mary's Church, a segment of brick street, four prominent nineteenth century false front rooflines, rental residences, outbuildings, and other properties effectively convey the evolution of this working class community from the arrival of the railroad in 1883 through the 1950s. Though heavily modified, the false-front buildings in the district are the only remaining example of that important property type left in Helena.

The Renaissance Revival-inspired Union Station, the heart of the district, remains virtually unchanged in appearance and configuration. Its wings, cupola and clock tower, and rail-side setting remain as they were in 1904. The exception is the telltale replacement bricks, steel plates, and rods that compensate for the earthquake damage sustained in 1935 that serves as a record of an event that devastated the community. The depot's location adjacent to the railroad tracks and its general appearance make its original function as a passenger depot obvious. Although it no longer functions as a passenger depot, it does remain closely associated with railroading operations as offices for Montana Rail Link.

The Larson Block evolved from individual buildings of the 1880s, 1890s and early twentieth century. These form the core of the present

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Larson Block that began to evolve when H. Walter Larson consolidated his property beginning in 1921. Loss of upper stories at the east end in the Drake Hotel due to the 1935 earthquakes brought a second phase, and the third and final phase occurred during consolidation of the remaining buildings in 1948. Primary architectural features include the 1880s canted doorway at the east end; brick arched second-story windows and glass block transoms circa 1921; and 1940s storefronts. With the exception of the recent stuccowork on the east elevation, the Larson block retains its 1948 appearance.

Railroad Avenue is a rare example of an intact brick-paved street. Except where repairs were accomplished with asphalt overlays, the street retains a high degree of integrity and association with the district.

At 1515 Railroad Avenue, the Reeder Rental retains considerable integrity. The building was constructed as a simple residence in 1884. It retains its basic configuration and fenestration pattern. In the early 1930s, the building was "modernized" and now resembles a Craftsman-style residence. The alterations included the addition of the Japanese-style pergola porches on the facade and west elevation and the windows throughout the structure. The stucco was shown on the 1884 Sanborn map. It was re-stuccoed in 1934 and again in 1936 because of the 1935 earthquakes. There do not appear to have been any additional modifications made to the building and it retains its circa 1936 appearance. The original one-over-one double-hung windows flanking the entry on the facade were replaced sometime between 1995 and 2002. They do not, however, detract from the overall integrity of the building.

Although the German Residence was constructed as a rooming house/saloon in 1888, it has functioned as a family dwelling since about 1910. The building, however, retains its false-front commercial appearance. It contains elements of its function as a residence. The porch added in 1937 has since been removed, while the windows and casings have long since become a part of the historic fabric of the building. The patio attached to the rear of the building is a recent addition.

The Park Café/Phoenix Hotel retains the basic configuration of a late 19th century false-front commercial building although alterations to the building in 1973 have impacted original fabric and detailing. Incompatible synthetic siding now covers the walls. The ground floor facade windows have been partially in-filled with glass block windows and fixed plate glass windows. The former recessed entry is now flush with the exterior and there is a modern wood door. All the second windows on the east and west elevations, second floor facade and rear facade have been replaced with casement, fixed or combination windows. The rear has been altered and no longer resembles the original rear facade of the building. The restaurant in 1507 Railroad Avenue has been extended into this building. Despite all these changes, the Park Café/Phoenix Hotel is a very significant building. It is one of only four false-front buildings in Helena. (The other three are also located within the Helena Railroad Historic District.) Though the original materials of the building have been obscured, the design of this architectural form, so vital to the architectural development of Helena, is intact. However, the integrity of materials and workmanship are so compromised that the building does not contribute to the district.

The Drake Hotel II has been little altered since its construction in 1888. It retains the basic configuration common to false front commercial buildings constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Minor alterations were made to the facade in 1936 to repair earthquake damage. The vinyl siding on the rear facade and east and west elevations was added sometime since 1995. Although it obscures the architectural details that were visible in 1995, they are still intact under the new siding. The facade was not altered and is still intact.

The brick facade of the Denver House was modified in 1952. It is not known when the stucco was added, but it was probably before 1927. Despite the changes, however, the building displays its original configuration and many of its original design details. The Denver House/Depot Corner Store & Confectionery is a good example of the commercial buildings common to this area of Helena. It is associated with the initial development of the Northern Pacific Railway depot area immediately after the arrival of the railroad in early 1883. It functioned first as a hotel/saloon and then as a general store through most of its history. Modifications made to the building in 1952, consistent with other attempts to modernize the district, altered the original appearance of the structure. However, these changes speak to the significance of the district in the mid-twentieth century, it retains sufficient integrity of design, materials and setting. It is the district's only remaining brick false front.

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The basic plan of St. Mary's church is unaltered with the exception of the front porch treatment. Despite exterior stucco applied following the 1935 earthquakes, St. Mary's simple appearance is little changed since 1910, retaining its original symmetrically placed windows (although a few are boarded over), central front entry and corniced eaves. These features characterize the Colonial Revival style of architecture. Since 1995, some of the windows on the north and south elevations have been in-filled. The modification was accomplished so that the original configuration of the windows and transoms are still apparent.

The St. Mary's Rectory is a good example of a Craftsman bungalow style residence. It retains the basic configuration and features associated with the style. The brick veneer walls, covered in stucco in 1936 and again in 1949, reflect the remodeling in the district that occurred after 1935. At the time of repairs, the porch was enclosed. These changes occurred within the period of significance. A large addition was added to the rear of the residence sometime during the last 25 years. Though not of the Craftsman style, the addition is to the rear of the building, and does not overly detract from the integrity of the rectory. Its stuccoed appearance, gable pitch and massing are compatible with the original building.

The Benson-Carpenter Company Building is a good example of a commercial warehouse. The rubblestone wall construction visually dominates the structure, and the loading shed, which wraps around the building at the north side, though partially covered with modern metal siding, belies its function. Additions to non-primary elevations, while distracting, do not overwhelm the building. This warehouse is the only one of its type left in the railroad depot area, and retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance. The building is an important contributor to the Helena Railroad Depot Historic District.

Beattie Memorial Park initially had a children's wading pool and a memorial that included benches and a drinking fountain. These were removed in later years. The drinking fountain with its attendant benches had been vandalized and vagrants off the trains frequently used the area behind it as a latrine. It had become an eyesore and was removed by the city. The wading pool was removed more recently, presumably for the same reason. With the removal of these troublesome items, the park again is a "beauty spot" and enjoyed by area residents as originally intended. The park's mature landscaping remains intact. A new bronze tablet naming the Beattie family as park benefactors was installed in the southwest corner. With the exception of the pool and original memorial, the park remains as it was planned for the enjoyment of Sixth Ward residents.

Morgan's Grocery and Boarding House retains a high degree of architectural integrity. It retains its basic vernacular-style with few alterations (other than the installation of several new casement windows and removal of an exterior staircase). The building's original function as a grocery and boarding house is still evident. The garages at the rear of the property were added in 1930 and 1952. The third was moved onto the property after 1954. The coal shed was moved onto the property in 1952; it is likely of historic age and does not detract from the overall integrity of the site.

The William Schrock Beer Parlor building retains a high degree of architectural integrity associated with its construction in the 1940s. The facade was extensively modified in 1945; two small windows have replaced the original windows. The recessed entry has been enclosed and replaced with a solid wood door. The rear of the building was altered within the historic period.

The Rocky Mountain Bar, built in 1911, was significantly altered in 1976 and therefore does not contribute to the district. Little of its historic appearance or fabric remains. The decorative metal cornice, however, is an unusual feature that does much to convey a feeling of the historic appearance of the building.

Other than an addition at the rear built some time between 1892 and 1930, the 1884 Reeder Rental retains all the features, fabric and materials indicative of small vernacular residences constructed in the late 19th century.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria: A and C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE; COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT; COMMERCE; TRANSPORTATION

Period(s) of Significance: 1883-1953

Significant Dates: 1883, 1884, 1904, 1910, 1935, 1936, 1945, 1948

Architect/Builder: Charles A. Reed, John Lamy; Louis Reeder; Charles A. Reed; Albert O. Von Herbulis; Charles T. Gunn

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

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### Summary

The Helena Railroad Depot Historic District is eligible under Criterion A at the local level for its association with the development of Helena and the area immediately surrounding the Northern Pacific Railway Depot, a neighborhood commonly called the Sixth Ward. The resources within the district accurately convey the initial commercial development of the area, and how the patterns of growth and recession, dependence on the railroad, isolation from mainstream downtown Helena, and even a natural disaster affected the vibrancy of this working class area. The district is also eligible for listing under Criterion C, boasting not only two buildings designed by nationally-renowned architects, but also for its representation of territorial period and turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial architecture. Alterations to the buildings through the 1950s are excellent examples of low-cost popular material improvements and sharply contrast with the high style remodeling efforts of Helena's downtown. The buildings within the district associated with St. Mary's Catholic parish, including the church and school building, rectory, and garage, derive their significance from their association with the development of the community, as well as their architecture, and therefore meet the requirements outlined in Criteria Consideration A.

### Historic Overview

The arrival of the railroad in June 1883 sparked an economic boom in Helena by providing markets through the Midwest and Western United States. The era is characterized by the expansion of the business district on Last Chance Gulch, a drastic increase in the city's population, and a boom in mining and agriculture in the rural areas surrounding Helena. The depot served as the hub of the district, funneling all passengers through it to the commercial area south of the tracks. Businesses established in the depot area revolved around visitors to the capital city, travelers awaiting the next trains, and small business owners and residents who either kept the shops in the district or worked for the railroad. The buildings reflect the economic base upon which the railroad's success depended. Speculation and rapid development of the depot district and Sixth Ward was based on the prosperity engendered by the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad.<sup>2</sup> The first builders included Louis Reeder, a bricklayer from Pennsylvania, who constructed one of the first residences for rental purposes, John Lamy who spent \$6,000 on the construction of his Denver Hotel, and Alexander Beattie who built the Grand Pacific Hotel for \$3,000.

The depot was an important facility not only because of the numbers passing through it, but also because it offered visitors the first impression of the territorial capital city. The site selected for the depot was then a mile and a half out of town. Helena Avenue had been surveyed and graded, beginning at the upper end of Main Street. Passengers arriving at the depot would be able to look straight ahead to Last Chance Gulch. Soon after the arrival of the first train, a wood-frame depot that included a telegraph office and a baggage room had been completed. By 1888, this building, originally located at the site of the present depot, had been moved a short distance to the west in anticipation of the construction of a more substantial building. Presumably the Panic of 1893 affected these plans. It wasn't until after the turn of the century that the Northern Pacific went ahead with its plans to construct a new depot for Helena. Just after the turn of the twentieth century, the original wooden depot, one of three designed for the Northern Pacific by the later famous architect Cass Gilbert, was moved to Lyndale Avenue where it stands today as an apartment building. The present Union Station, designed by renowned railroad architect Charles A. Reed, still functions as the center of the district.

The number of businesses located in the district remained fairly constant through the economic depression of the 1890s. Helena became known as the Queen City of the Rockies for its high style architecture as the railroad made possible the importation of new building materials and larger storefront display windows. The old false front first generation buildings that had survived the major conflagrations from the 1860s and 1870s along the gulch downtown were extensively remodeled in the 1880s and early 1890s. The

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<sup>2</sup> *Northwest Magazine*, "Helena." September 1887.

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remodeling effort and building boom that came on the heels of the railroad largely bypassed the Northern Pacific depot neighborhood. Beattie's Grand Pacific Hotel benefited from extensive remodeling while most other depot area businesses, built with plain materials and simple vernacular lines, remained nearly untouched.

The depot district's buildings represented the blue collar workers and shopkeepers who frequented local Helena and Railroad avenue businesses. The hotels and rooming houses likewise catered to a transient or traveling clientele. These small businesses could hardly afford to remodel their buildings in a style as grand as the shopkeepers along Helena's Main Street. Indeed, the Sixth Ward remained isolated from Last Chance Gulch because of the distance between the two commercial areas. Although linked by horse-drawn trolleys and taxis and later by automobiles, the depot area retained its own distinctive character as it does today. The one district exception was the Grand Pacific Hotel (later the Drake Hotel), remodeled in the early 1890s to compete with the better hotels in downtown Helena. The hotel catered especially to first class passengers awaiting connecting trains and offered a first-class dining room available twenty-four-hours daily. The hotel's grand canted entrance remains intact as the east end of the present Larson Block, but even this hotel had taken on a working class character by the turn of the twentieth century.

Because of its working population and isolation from the bustling downtown area, the depot district buildings are primarily vernacular expressions of western commercial architecture remodeled in haphazard fashion a little at a time during the ensuing decades. These "piecemeal" changes were never extensive enough to erase the earliest layer and thus most buildings retain their original outlines. The four false fronts especially, all remodeled with novelty siding, stucco, or asphalt—inexpensive, popular materials—are modest attempts to modernize, yet the "modernization" was not extensive enough to eradicate their original footprints. Similarly, inexpensive Craftsman style elements added to the district's simple rental homes followed the tastes of the early twentieth century and were not radical enough to obscure or erase the original building layer.

By the 1910s, the Catholic population had increased enough to warrant the construction of St. Mary's Church and School that served the Sixth Ward for more than fifty years. The simple yet imposing St. Mary's Church reveals Albert O. Von Herbulis, architect of the St. Helena Cathedral, to be skillful in adapting a design appropriate to its working class congregation. The rather austere and plain Colonial Revival style church stands in striking contrast to the architectural complexities of St. Charles Hall on the Carroll College campus and the St. Helena Cathedral, also designed by Von Herbulis circa 1906. Changes to the church in the historic period were the result of 1935 earthquake damage and a fire in 1937 and serve as a legacy of two events that impacted the community.

The boom years of the 1910s and depression again in the 1920s and into the 1930s saw the declining depot district still supporting many of the same businesses. These continued to cater primarily to the working class population class that comprised the Sixth Ward. The creation of Beattie Park in 1930 had a profound effect on the overall appearance of the district, which had by this time become run down and unsightly. The park opened what had once been a crowded commercial block. In 1935, earthquakes that struck Helena also had a significant impact on the district. Nearly all the buildings sustained at least minor damage as a result of the disaster. Union Station survived with fairly minor damage although visible repairs to the outer brick walls remain as testimony to the natural disaster. The earthquakes contributed to changes in the appearance of the district as some buildings were razed and others simply repaired to maintain their original functions.

The Larson Block, along with Union Station and St. Mary's, is an integral part of the railroad commercial district. Mixed period elements include the canted east entry; arched second story windows and glass block transoms; and 1940s storefronts. Consolidated into one block in 1948, remodeling included the removal of a portion of the second floor and the fusion of individual ground floor businesses to present a unified appearance. The evolution of the building visually chronicles the changes in the district as the neighborhood attempted to modernize in the 1940s. The block is an excellent representative of later western commercial vernacular architecture employed to incorporate remnant buildings of earlier periods into a cohesive whole. H. Walter Larson and his family were major property owners and business owners in the depot district from 1908 until the Montana Meat Market, headquartered in a portion of the Larson Block, closed in 1973. The Larson Block and the Larson family are integral to the history of the district. The building well illustrates the changes that occurred in the area after the earthquakes of 1935.

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The growing importance of the automobile, trucking, and highway system further contributed to the decline in the fortunes of the district after World War II. The reduction in railroad passenger services and the switch to long-haul trucking caused an economic downturn in the once vibrant district. Many of the old businesses closed and maintenance of the buildings was deferred. The value of the district to the prosperity of the greater Helena slowly diminished through the first half of the twentieth century as the importance of the railroad dwindled. The resources present within the district are a testament to these trends.

The Helena Railroad Depot Historic District's period of significance is from 1883 to 1953. The district developed as a direct result of the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad in June 1883 and most of the buildings (about 52%) were constructed within five years of the railroad's construction. The existing depot, constructed in 1904, reflects the city's importance to the railroad's Montana operations and continues to serve as a railroad hub although not for passengers. The Catholic community built St. Mary's Church and School in 1910 to provide spiritual support and guidance to the large population living in the neighborhoods surrounding the railroad depot. Beattie Park provided the district a much-needed facelift in 1930. The 1935 earthquakes had a profound impact on the district necessitating the demolition of the Capital Hotel (1519 Railroad Avenue) and the eventual consolidation of the Larson Block into its existing appearance. Only one building (1519 Railroad Avenue) in the district was constructed after 1953 and does not contribute to the historic district. This small, cohesive commercial area today presents a uniquely layered evolution, blending old and new vernacular forms that well represent not only the earliest community, but also the changes and adaptations of the encroaching modern era.

**Historic Context**

Helena, Montana originated as a gold camp in 1864. A major strike brought miners to stake their claims along the gulch that had been dubbed Last Chance. Most mining boomtowns like Bannack, Diamond City, Nevada City and Virginia City faded as the placer gold dwindled, but Helena was a significant transportation and trading center and lucky to be located on the projected route of the Northern Pacific Railroad. Partly because of this fact, the territorial capital moved from Virginia City to Helena in 1875 and Helena also was chosen as the site for a federal assay office. Placing this important landmark in Helena, and its designation as a stopping point along the Northern Pacific, helped guarantee the town's future.<sup>3</sup>

The arrival of a national railroad marked a significant turning point in the history and development of towns throughout the nation. Railroad historian Sarah H. Gordon explains:

The arrival of a railroad and construction of a station marked the transformation of towns once identified by local or regional self-sufficiency. In their place developed towns dependent on the national economy. Also gone were the towns where all the members of the community knew one another. In their place came any number of strangers and crowds, whose numbers became one important measure of the economic vitality of the town.<sup>4</sup>

Helena was not much more than a fledgling gold camp when an act of Congress granted the Northern Pacific Railroad the quarter-section of land that would one day be known as the "Railroad Addition." In 1881, the Northern Pacific opened headquarters in the Brown Block in Helena in preparation for the coming service.<sup>5</sup> Then in May 1883, nearly twenty years after the land grant and just one month prior to the long-awaited event, after some discussion among city fathers as to which side of town would be most accommodating, the depot area was decided upon. A few days before the great event, the newspaper reported:

A thoroughfare surveyed and staked to connect the business center of the city with the depot has, in accordance with the suggestion of Commissioner Lamborn, been named Helena Avenue. It will be properly an extension of Main Street, curving to the eastward....<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ellen Baumbler, "Gold Worth a King's Ransom," *More from the Quarries of Last Chance Gulch, Volume II* (Helena: Independent Record, 1996) pp. 164-167.

<sup>4</sup> Sarah Gordon, *Passage to Union: How the Railroads Transformed American Life, 1829-1929* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996), pp. 201-2.

<sup>5</sup> William C. Campbell, *From the Quarries of Last Chance Gulch* (Helena: Independent Record, 1951) 101.

<sup>6</sup> *Helena Herald*, June 7, 1883.

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It was an exciting time in Helena. In preparation, Helena Avenue had been surveyed and graded beginning at the upper end of Main Street; it was a straight shot from the makeshift depot to town. The papers reported that throngs of residents would climb Mount Helena on the day the iron horse was to arrive, eyes fixed in the direction of Winston, watching for the first telltale signs of smoke that would signal its arrival. When the first locomotive steamed into the depot, a reporter wrote of the celebration:

The first whistle from a locomotive that ever awakened the echoes in the canyons of Last Chance and Grizzly Gulches, and cheered the hopes of the people of Helena, sounded at precisely 11 o'clock this morning as the construction train of Winston Bros. pulled into place where the depot will soon be erected. A great concourse of people on foot, on horseback, and in all sorts of vehicles, was at the depot to welcome and cheer the iron horse. ...The morning was delightful, the weather warm and inviting, and no lovelier day ever dawned upon a mightier work than the completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad thus far in into the Rocky Mountains. ...The tracklaying was participated in by ...Mrs. D. Eckles, who wielded a great sledge hammer until she drove home a large spike....<sup>7</sup>

Very shortly thereafter, Northern Pacific trustees George Cumming and John Bullitt began to sell the unused lots that now comprise the district. Typical of other towns along the national railroad lines, residents showed their faith in the venture by immediately moving businesses and warehouses to the area then a mile and a half out of town. The construction of commercial enterprises near railroad depots served a number of purposes. First, the business owners could serve the need of numerous weary travelers by offering food, drink, rooms, and other services. Churches provided spiritual and social outlets for passengers. Sarah Gordon continues: "These services not only aided the passengers, but also gave them every reason to tarry, so that they might spend money in the town."<sup>8</sup> Workers for both the railroad and the service industries could also live in the surrounding community and patronize the shops, parks, and religious institutions for their daily needs. Commercial districts such as the Helena Railroad Depot historic district benefited from and depended on the railroad to provide customers as well as the materials and goods required for construction and to furnish and stock their establishments. The railroads brought mail and newspapers as well.<sup>9</sup>

In January of 1884, the *Helena Weekly Herald* reported that a great deal of capital had been expended in the Northern Pacific Addition. Theodore Welcome's Elite Saloon and barbershop was one of the first brick buildings, constructed for \$3,000. Alexander H. Beattie's \$3,000 Grand Pacific Hotel (1437 Helena Avenue) and John Lamy's \$6,000 Denver Hotel (1501 Railroad Avenue) stood across from each other at the end of Sanders Street. A few doors down, there was a public washhouse with a backyard well (1515 Railroad Avenue). C.C. Stubbs store (\$800), E.D. Faust's store and dwelling (\$2,000), Joseph Belleville's meat market (\$800), and Hugh Kirkendall's warehouse (\$1,000) were some of the businesses mentioned by the *Herald* built in the early Railroad Addition.<sup>10</sup> In 1887, the September edition of the *Northwest Magazine* reported "A population has sprung up around the Northern Pacific station." Hannah and Nellie Larson ran their boarding house at 1509 Railroad Avenue. The Northern Pacific Hotel at the extreme end of the 1500 block accommodated railroad workers. Theodore Welcome did a brisk business in his saloon next to the depot. The Denver House and the Grand Pacific Hotel, two Chinese laundries, several boot and shoe shops, numerous saloons and restaurants, groceries and meat markets along the 1400 and 1500 blocks of Railroad/Helena Avenues were just a step from the depot to accommodate those passing through. These businesses, by now well established, also served the many railroad workers and service-providers who lived and worked in the immediate area.

In May of 1887, Northern Pacific officials came to Helena to discuss moving their depot from the north end of Helena Avenue to the northeast corner of Cleveland Avenue (now Fuller) and Lawrence. A second depot closer to downtown, that of the Great Northern Railway, was at the foot of Fuller Avenue near Last Chance Gulch, and the Montana Central Railway had also settled on that site.

<sup>7</sup> Campbell, p. 120 and *Helena Daily Herald*, "Arrival of the Locomotive." June 12, 1883.

<sup>8</sup> Gordon, p. 203.

<sup>9</sup> Gordon, p. 205.

<sup>10</sup> *Helena Weekly Herald*, "Helena's New Houses," January 3, 1884.

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The Northern Pacific wanted to "go them one better" by building a new depot even closer to downtown.<sup>11</sup> This idea never came to fruition, however, and the depot remained in the Sixth Ward.<sup>12</sup>

The district and train travel continued to thrive through the late nineteenth century. In June of 1890, the Northern Pacific added two more passenger trains to its schedule giving Helena two eastbound and two westbound passenger trains daily.<sup>13</sup> The silver panic of 1893 put a damper on construction, but business continued and economic fortunes in the district rose again by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This was largely due to the fact that the city of Helena evolved from a mining town susceptible to rapid fluctuation in prosperity to a more stable political center. Through the 1890s, Helena remained a hub of trade and travel but was increasingly geared toward service industries that supported mining and agricultural towns throughout central Montana. Indicative of these stabilizing trends, the Northern Pacific made plans to build a new depot. In 1902 in a letter to railroad president C.S. Mellen, investor/speculator Richard Lockey recommended that the new depot be located where the old one was, so that the new State Capitol could be in clear view of all arrivals. Lockey predicted that with its proximity to the capitol, Helena Avenue would become the "principal thoroughfare of the town."<sup>14</sup> A new depot, designed by railroad architect Charles A. Reed of the firm of Reed and Stem was completed in 1904.

The decision to build a new depot was also influenced by the policy of many national railroads at the time to unify the designs of their depots. In the West, the earliest railroad stations were diverse in style and reflected the economic and social status of the community at the time of their construction. The modest 1883 wood-frame building that served as the first Northern Pacific Depot was, by 1900, dilapidated, small, unwelcoming, and did not express the growing prosperity of the city. Like his designs of railroad stations in Butte and Livingston, Reed's Helena depot with its classic style and sturdy construction, offered travelers a comfortable and inviting atmosphere more in tune with the capital city's fortune.

Other buildings in the district represent the population growth in the depot area around the turn of the century as well. By 1905, the residential area surrounding the new depot in the Sixth Ward and the Helena Valley combined had enough Catholic residents to warrant establishing a new parish. The Catholic influence in the Sixth Ward was strong and the Sisters of Charity especially were a familiar presence there. The first sisters arrived in Helena in 1869. The institutions they founded in Helena, the first of many in Montana, included St. John's Hospital, St. Vincent's Academy for Girls, and St. Joseph's Orphanage. The orphanage moved from Catholic Hill on Ewing Street to the Helena valley north of town in 1893 extending the sisters' presence into the wider community. This eventually brought them into the Northern Pacific Depot area.<sup>15</sup>

The roots of St. Mary's Church and School (1421-25 North Roberts) go back to 1905 when the parish was formally established to serve the Northern Pacific Railroad Addition (Sixth Ward), the Helena valley, and other portions of Helena. The Sisters of Charity played a key role because of their association with St. Joseph's, which was part of the new parish. The orphanage was known as "the cradle of the parish."<sup>16</sup> The sisters subsequently organized and assumed the duties of running St. Mary's School. The congregation and school first located in several depot area storefronts, and priests from the Cathedral of the Sacred Hearts on Catholic Hill in south-central Helena officiated at the services. The parish got its own pastor, Reverend John McMullen, appointed by Bishop Carroll in 1908. The pastor also served as chaplain at St. Joseph's Orphanage where he kept his residence. Land was purchased in 1910 from former Northern Pacific trustee Judson Wickes of St. Paul, Minnesota. Under Father McMullen's direction St. Mary's Church and School at 1425 North Roberts was built with plans drawn by Albert O. Von Herbulis, architect of the St. Helena Cathedral, and the Cathedral school (replacing early institutions on Catholic Hill), and St. Charles Hall on the Mount St. Charles College (now Carroll College) campus. These buildings were all designed at the same time, around 1907-08 although the Cathedral was not in use until 1914. His design for the Colonial Revival style St. Mary's is very simple yet the

<sup>11</sup> Campbell, 186.

<sup>12</sup> The Great Northern Depot, much closer to Helena's commercial center, saw mainly freight traffic and never supported a residential neighborhood. It was razed in the mid 1980s to make way for the construction of the branch office of the Federal Reserve Bank.

<sup>13</sup> William Campbell, *From the Quarries of Last Chance Gulch Volume II* (Helena: Bell Arm Corporation, 1964), p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Letter from Richard Lockey to C.S. Mellen, dated 1902, housed under "Richard Lockey" in the MHS library vertical files, Helena, MT.

<sup>15</sup> Campbell, II, p. 85.

<sup>16</sup> *Montana Daily Record*, October 19, 1910.

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building is imposing and has a strong presence in the district. The church and school (grades one through eight) moved into the new building in 1910.<sup>17</sup> A rectory at 1430 North Sanders was later built in 1922. The church and school serves to anchor the district not only architecturally, but also as a symbol of permanence, stability and social outreach. Its prominence testifies to the expanding population and development of the depot area at the turn of the century.

Into the twentieth century, hotels and boarding houses in the 1400 and 1500 blocks of Railroad and Helena Avenues continued to house many railroad workers, small business owners and service providers. There were also a few single-family residences in the immediate vicinity of the depot, such as 1516 Gallatin Street and 1515 Railroad Avenue. In 1910 the railroad imported some forty male workers of Japanese descent who were housed in railroad "warehouses," according to the U.S. Census, along the NP tracks. Local residents maintain that some of these workers continued to live at the extreme east end of the district, even planting large gardens, hauling water from a spring (on the current site of Helena High School), and selling their produce locally until the onset of World War II.<sup>18</sup>

The Larson family had a significant impact on the district. H. Walter Larson emigrated from Gothenburg, Sweden with his brother in 1902. The pair traveled to New York City via the ship *Saonia* along with 1700 other immigrants. They paid for their passage with money earned working in the mines in Sweden. The Larsons spoke no English. Larson's aunt and uncle, Hannah and Albert Nordstrom, lived in the depot district and took the brothers in. Walter Larson worked a number of jobs, saved his money, and opened the Northern Pacific Meat Market in 1906 at 1406 Helena Avenue. He moved across the street to 1413 Helena Avenue in 1912 and the business incorporated as the Montana Meat Market in 1913.<sup>19</sup> Larson was from that point heavily involved in the commercial life of the block. In 1917, his operation again moved to 1419 Gallatin Avenue on the south side of the block. In 1921, Larson began consolidating some of the individual commercial buildings into what would become the Larson Block. By 1950 when the Montana Meat Market moved its operation to the Helena valley, the Larsons owned the entire block and had consolidated the individual storefronts into one major building complex.

At about the same time that Larson moved to the south side of the block, Bud Ferrat, former fireman and depot district pool hall proprietor, established a confectionery at 1401 Helena Avenue in 1916. After Prohibition in 1933, his ice cream parlor became Ferrat's Dance and Dine at 1409 Helena Avenue where, in 1935, he established Helena's first curb service.

Despite high expectations for the Railroad Addition, Helena Avenue never quite became a major thoroughfare. The prosperity of the early 1900s was stalled when drought and a national economic downturn curtailed the homestead boom of the 1910s. Despite a resurgence in the national economy through the 1920s, the depot district saw little expansion or development. Instead, the depot commercial area remained clustered in the 1400 and 1500 blocks of Helena and Railroad Avenues, and continued to serve railroad passengers, workers, and residents of the Sixth Ward. By 1929 many of the original owners or their children were still running businesses in the depot area. Florence Smading, the daughter of James and Hannah German, continued to own property, live and work in the 1500 block of Railroad Avenue. She ran the Park Cafe at 1509 Railroad Avenue from the 1930s to the mid 1960s. Robert German married Frances Drake, the daughter of neighborhood hotel proprietors Maude and Frank Drake. A second daughter, Mary Drake, ran a restaurant at 1503 Railroad Avenue. She and her sister Frances managed the Drake Apartments in the old boarding house at that address until the building's upper story was condemned in the 1970s.

The block that is now Beattie Park became particularly dilapidated by the late 1920s. In fact, it was said that Helena had the worst looking depot area on the entire NP line. It was opportune when, in 1929, with money left in trust by the Beattie family, the city was able to raze the remaining businesses in that block and create thereafter a "beauty spot" for the enjoyment of travelers and Sixth Ward residents.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> "A Brief Outline of the History of St. Mary Parish," housed in the Diocese of Helena Archives, Helena, Montana; *Montana Daily Record*, October 24, 1910.

<sup>18</sup> Author interviews with J. Einar Larson, February 1995.

<sup>19</sup> H. Walter Larson, unpublished personal reminiscence, February 27, 1959, MHS library vertical file, Helena, MT.

<sup>20</sup> *Helena Independent*, November 11, 1929.

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Throughout the country the Great Depression took its toll on communities, including the depot area, where growth stagnated. Compounding the impact of the floundering economy, a series of earthquakes struck the city of Helena in October 1935. Starting with a small tremor on October 3, the city suffered through a devastating series of several hundred earthquake shocks in the month of October 1935 including three damaging earthquakes on October 12th, 18th, and the 31st. The first tremors caused relatively little collateral damage to the city, and no injuries were reported. On October 12, the *Helena Independent* reported more extensive damage to buildings, but continued to convey lighthearted stories about its effects on the city.

Roadhouses and the like are not particularly opposed to earthquakes. When the first tremors started at 12:40 a.m., Saturday, many Helena residents who otherwise would have enjoyed a quiet night's sleep, got up, and fearful of returning to bed visited several of the city's night haunts. The fear continued throughout the day and far into the night. "I haven't taken a drink for nine months," one said, "but here's a go."<sup>21</sup>

By the 18<sup>th</sup> of October, when a second major shockwave and aftershocks devastated parts of the city, the newspapers accounts were much more serious, noting the deaths of several people and the devastation to many parts of the city, including the Northern Pacific Depot area:

Widespread damage occurred in the Sixth ward and it was one of the hardest-hit sections of the city. Buildings crumbled to the ground and in one place three houses in a row were leveled, according to a report of the city engineer. There were several persons injured in the ward but as far as could be determined at a late hour last night, there were no fatalities there. One woman received a broken shoulder while one or two others were badly bruised. Some collapsed from the shock and were taken to the hospital as soon as assistance could be found.<sup>22</sup>

Helena's Sixth ward received the brunt of last night's quake, many homes in that section being completely demolished, and many of the store buildings being badly shattered. Only a few people received even minor bruises. The National Biscuit company's warehouse on Boulder avenue had the rear wall shaken out and the roof settled down, crashing through the structure in many places. Nearly every plate glass window is broken out of the buildings on Helena avenue. Those suffering the worst damage are Brackman grocery, Gordon Mercantile, Depot drug store, Larson apartments, Curt's grocery store, Montana Meat company....On Railroad avenue the front fell off the Capitol hotel and the walls were badly shattered, all of the glass is out of the Depot Corner store. An apartment house at 1601 Lyndale had one whole side torn off. All of the occupants escaped injury. Two brick houses belonging to Anne Warland were completely shaken down. Both ends of the Bryant school crumbled and the walls were barely hanging together. The old Northern Pacific land office suffered heavily, the roof and two walls being shaken down. The Nash Finch wholesale grocery company's office had the rear end torn out. The Christie Transfer company's warehouse was badly shattered, and practically demolished.<sup>23</sup>

The Drake Hotel, formerly the Grand Pacific (1435-137 Helena Avenue) lost its two upper stories, the old Capital Hotel (1517, 1519 Railroad Avenue) collapsed, and St. Mary's Church and School lost its brick veneer. St. Mary's pastor Rev. Peter Marnane initially thought the building "a total loss," and thought it would have to be "abandoned and rebuilt."<sup>24</sup> Fortunately, the building was repaired according to the new building codes outlined by the city in reaction to the quakes.

The depot itself suffered relatively little damage, evidenced by stabilizing rods and repairs to the depot's brick on the west elevation. Other Northern Pacific buildings in the vicinity were much harder hit:

<sup>21</sup> *Helena Independent*; October 13, 1935.

<sup>22</sup> "One Killed, Score Hurt, By Tremors While Property Loss May Be Over Million, Many Are Left Without Shelter And City Is For Time Demoralized; East Helena Also Suffers Severe Damage; East Side And Sixth Ward Are Worst Sufferers In Helena," *Helena Independent*, October 19, 1935.

<sup>23</sup> "Heavy Damage in Sixth Ward from Violent Tremor, Homes Demolished And Business Houses Suffer," *Helena Independent*, October 19, 1935.

<sup>24</sup> *Independent Record*, October 20, 1935.

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Friday night's quake caused hundreds of thousands of dollars damage in the Northern Pacific yards, according to C. A. Mattmiller, roundhouse foreman. Every brick building in the yards was twisted and sprung, and about half of the huge chimney fell to the ground. The boiler room suffered considerable damage as the roller twisted and flopped the pipes and flues around. In the railroad repair shops, machinery was tipped over, rails were bent out of shape and benches lay scattered in confusion over the room. Most of the roof of the Christie Transfer and Storage liquor house, west of the Northern Pacific depot, fell in and pushed the walls out. One of the walls fell on a freight car loaded with whisky, which was being unloaded into the warehouse and nearly struck Ray Howe, employee, who was doing some office work. A considerable amount of whisky was lost.<sup>25</sup>

Despite its own losses, the Northern Pacific Railroad made an effort to help others in Helena with the earthquake damage. President Charles Donnelly, then in Creston, Iowa sent a telegram stating: "On behalf of Northern Pacific Railway company please express our sympathy to the people of Helena on account of the great catastrophe which has befallen them, and assure them of our readiness to transport free all Red Cross supplies."<sup>26</sup>

A third major quake on October 31 caused even more damage, especially to those buildings affected by the earlier events. The 1935 earthquakes caused major damage to the depot area, and the buildings within the Helena Railroad Depot Historic District are stark physical reminders of those events.

In the years immediately following the earthquakes, the district sought to rebuild and stabilize the community. Few new construction projects were begun, mostly due to the economic depression that continued to plague the nation. Adding to the depression in this community so dependent on the railroad was the increase in trucking operations that severely diminished the railroad's freight business. The onset of World War II signaled a change in the social and economic demeanor of the community, and the end of the war witnessed a revitalized nation. The agricultural market rebounded, and a new sense of optimism swept the nation. Again, evidence of this is visible in the built environment of the district. Several of the commercial businesses, including 1505 and 1509 Railroad Avenue, and the storefront that now comprise the Larson Block. From the mid 1940s through the early 1950s, remodeling updated the look of many of the facades.

The optimism of the post war era was short lived in the district area, however, and the bottom dropped out of the area's economic base when passenger service to Helena was suspended in 1971. After that, the railroad-associated buildings located along and between the tracks just outside the district's eastern and northern boundaries were removed. As a result, little has changed in the district since the middle of the twentieth century. Today, the little commercial neighborhood with the depot and Helena's last brick street at its center is a microcosm of working class commercial development in Helena from 1883 through the first half of the twentieth century. While most of the buildings cannot be described as high style, they are indeed representative of how a majority of business owners reacted to changes in the economy, the dependence on the railroad, and the effect of natural disaster on the built environment.

### Architectural Significance

#### Commercial Design

The Helena Railroad Depot Historic District is significant architecturally as the last commercial area in Helena that boasts false-front architecture. While the majority of the buildings in the district do not exhibit detailing indicative of any distinct style, the false fronts are extremely important local representations of early commercial architecture. The fronts masked the diminutive nature of the overall building, giving an impression of relative grandeur, permanence and stability. Architectural Historian Kingston Heath explains that "The linear progression of tightly packed false-front buildings that were hurriedly constructed...was at once the pretense and reality of 'city'."<sup>27</sup> While false front construction is indeed false on a number of pretenses, including materials,

<sup>25</sup> *Independent Record*, October 20, 1935.

<sup>26</sup> *Independent Record*, October 23, 1935.

<sup>27</sup> Kingston Heath, "False-Front Architecture on Montana's Urban Frontier," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, III*, edited by Thomas

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structure, and formality, but they did succeed in giving the impression of a mature commercial area. "What *was* real," Heath continues, "was the striving for legitimacy and permanence through architectural expression."<sup>28</sup> While the city of Helena was, during the 1880s, a vibrant community that boasted masonry and high-style buildings, the depot area was more than one mile from the thriving Last Chance Gulch downtown area. Businessmen and investors in the depot area attempted to provide an impression of the stability and success of the Helena area to passengers disembarking from the Northern Pacific's trains. Using architectural forms common to other mining communities in the Montana frontier, these entrepreneurs followed the classic pattern of architectural development in the West. Heath explains:

Basically, the psychic and social conditions...differed from other entrepreneurial ventures of nineteenth century town life in the degree of intensity with they are experienced. Hence, while many of the building forms that appear in the (mining) camp are similar to those found elsewhere in urban American environments during the same period, their appearance on the mining frontier and their role in signaling social, economic, and technological change give them added significance. The sooner a young mining camp grappled with the sudden urban realities and provided the facilities necessary to manage or exploit the moment, the better were its chances for survival. The wooden commercial front, then, reflects the first attempt at stability on the western frontier.<sup>29</sup>

Of course, Heath's analysis is tailored more toward the false-front in the earliest mining camps in Montana, but the motivations behind the use of the false front in the district are the same, and are the only representations of that early era of Helena settlement left intact. Examples of wooden false-front buildings in the district are clustered together and include 1501, 1503, 1509, and 1511 Railroad Avenue. Each of these buildings follows the classic false-front design of a two-story gabled building with a rectangular façade built to give the impression of a full three-story height.

The architectural evolution of the district from the 1880s through the late 1920s includes masonry commercial buildings, or wood-frame buildings with brick veneer that furthered the impression of stability and permanence. Brick or stone construction is inherently more expensive and requires laborers skilled in their craft. Despite their small stature, brick veneer commercial buildings in the railroad district, like the false-fronts, invited railroad passengers to patronize their business and consider staying in the community. The brick storefronts included in the district boundary are 1505 and 1507 Railroad Avenue and the Larson Block, a series of brick buildings with common walls between. The Larson Block houses thirteen businesses plus second floor apartments. Earlier incarnations of the block are clearly visible despite the 1948 remodel of the block that unified the storefronts. For example, rough-faced stone pilasters that were original to the old Grand Pacific Hotel delineate the storefronts at the east side of the block. The canted entry to the hotel still functions as an entry at the northeast corner of the block, and the decorative terra cotta lintels across east elevation of the building belie its grand past. From 1884 through the 1890s, numerous one and two-story commercial businesses stood in the lots that comprise the 1400 block of Helena Avenue. In 1911, most of the Grand Pacific Hotel was razed and Hotel Drake took its place. The building was expanded to three stories in height, and offered rooms above the brick storefronts constructed on the lots immediately east. In 1921, business owner H. Walter Larson began buying up the property on either side of his meat market at 1419 Gallatin Avenue on the south side of the block. By 1930, Larson's substantial brick storefronts with common walls filled the streetscape of the block.

In addition to the wood-frame false fronts, brick, and brick veneer commercial buildings, another exterior finish is present throughout the district. Stucco is prevalent, and appears on St. Mary's Church, the frame Morgan Grocery and Boarding House at 1529-31 Railroad Avenue, the Reeder Rental at 1516 Gallatin Street, the Reeder-Valentine Rental at 1515 Railroad Avenue, the German Residence at 1511 Railroad Avenue, the Denver Hotel at 1901 Railroad Avenue, as well as the east, one-story end of the Larson Block. Stucco has been used for exterior finishing since ancient times, but its widespread use in the United States coincides with the publication of *The Architecture of Country Houses* by Andrew Jackson Downing in 1850. Downing advocated stucco as

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Carter and Bernard Herman for the Vernacular Architecture Forum (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1989), p. 199.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

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opposed 'to plain brick or stone because it was cheaper, warmer and drier, and could be 'agreeably' tinted.'"<sup>30</sup> Anne Grimer explains in her article on "The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stucco":

The introduction of the many revival styles of architecture around the turn of the twentieth century, combined with the improvement and increased availability of portland cement resulted in a "craze" for stucco as a building material in the United States...beginning about 1890 and gaining momentum into the 1930s and 1940s...<sup>31</sup>

In October 1935, a series of earthquakes devastated much of Helena's built environment, including the railroad district. Indeed nearly every building in the district shows evidence of that disaster. The Larson Block displays the most obvious results of the earthquake, which destroyed the top two stories of the Hotel Drake and caused cosmetic damage to many of the brick buildings. Over the next fourteen years, Larson eventually acquired all the lots on the block and hired John Morrison Sr. to consolidate the buildings into a unified storefront, giving the block its present appearance. Stucco veneer on some of the buildings, such as St. Mary's Church and portions of the Larson Block, are also evidence of the earthquake. Indeed buildings throughout Helena were stuccoed at that time to conceal damage to the buildings. Even the massive depot itself suffered damage, evidenced by repairs to the brick on the west elevation and metal plates at the corners that accommodate rods that support much of the structure.

Over time, some storefronts along Railroad and Helena Avenues have experienced changes to the display windows and entrances. The owners of these properties worked to update the buildings in keeping with national design trends. A good example of this is the William Schrock Beer Parlor (Hap's Bar) at 1505 Railroad Avenue. In 1945, new owner George Purcell applied for a building permit to install a modern "glass block and formica front" at the cost of \$1750. The remodel resulted in the removal of the original windows and enclosure of the recessed entry, giving the building a much more modern appearance. It is interesting that the remodel took place in 1945, at the end of World War II, when a new sense of optimism swept the country. Purcell chose the newly available Formica brand for the update, perhaps due to advertisements for the product:

No wonder people dreamed of marble halls and marble dresser tops in the pre-plastic age. Marble was enduring, non-warping, and took a beautiful polish. But today man-made Formica laminated plastic adds luxury qualities no natural material from quarry, mine or forest ever had. Formica will not buckle, crack or chip. It resists wear, moisture and chemicals. It can be given a wide range of colors. It takes a high polish...If the hall of your dreams is a sandwich bar, school or factory restaurant, hotel, theatre, store, bank or public building requiring table, counter or furniture tops, interior paneling or outside decoration you'll find Formica the material of your dreams.<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, glass block reached the height of popularity in the mid 1930s through the 1950s. While prismatic glass and solid glass block were available in the United States as early as the nineteenth century, improved manufacturing techniques, the development of hollow blocks, better sealants, mass production, and modern architectural trends increased its popularity considerably. "By 1938 *Architectural Forum* declared...that the glass age had finally arrived." By 1940, the same publication reported "never had 'a new building product caught on so quickly.'"<sup>33</sup> Glass block infill from the 1940s era is also displayed in the window openings and transoms across the east end of the Larson Block. Though part of a more modern remodel (1970s) the glass block incorporated into the storefronts at 1509 and 1507 Railroad Avenue does not detract from the overall integrity of the district. Indeed it serves to tie the buildings together with vintage-looking materials.

1509 Railroad Avenue displays another siding material that gained popularity during the World War II era. Decorative asbestos shingle siding was quite popular from the late 1930s through the 1950s for a number of reasons. It was fire resistant and an

<sup>30</sup> Anne Grimmer, *Preservation Brief 22: The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stucco* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, 1990), p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Formica Advertisement, reprinted from *Architectural Record*, August 1943 in *Twentieth Century Building Materials: History and Conservation*, Thomas C. Jester, ed. National Park Service (McGraw-Hill Companies, 1995), p. 126.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Jester, *Twentieth Century Building Materials*, p. 197.

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excellent insulator of both heat and acoustics. It was also available in a number of widths and heights, with novelty edging such as scallops. Thomas Jester, in his book *Twentieth Century Build Materials* notes that property owners in the United States were the "largest consumers of asbestos." He goes on: "During the war, however, the use of cement-asbestos siding and roofing rose to new levels, primarily as a result of the need to enclose munitions supplies with and easily assembled, inexpensive fireproof material...however, rising health concerns about the material in the early 1960s curbed its use."

While a nearly all of the buildings in the district have undergone changes in appearance since their construction, these alterations for the most part date to the historic period and add to their significance under Criterion C. Exterior cladding, infilled openings, and changes in massing are related to and representative of natural events and national design trends through the first half of the twentieth century.

The Northern Pacific Railroad Depot (Union Station), Helena, MT

Two buildings in the district exhibit high-style elements and gain significance as representative works of prominent, nationally known architects: the depot and St. Mary's Church. The Northern Pacific Railroad Depot, known historically as Union Station and constructed in 1904-5, is a fine example of an impressive public building with an eclectic mix of Classical Revival style elements. These elements include the overall symmetry of the building and its window and door openings, its monumental size, the arcaded windows of Roman influence, and unadorned roofline. Typical of railroad depots of this era, the second story windows are small compared to those at the first story level, and display ornate iron clathri, or a lattice of bars to create triangular patterns. The hipped roofline is punctuated at the center by an ornate copula style clock tower topped with Italianate bracketing, louvered panels, and a spire. The center two story bay of the depot is flanked by one-story wings to the east and west that serve as the loading area and beanery, respectively. These wings mirror the elements of the central portion and accentuate the symmetry of the building. While the Helena depot is not as ornate as some of his other designs, such as the Northern Pacific depot in Livingston, Montana, Charles A. Reed's design of this building does use the elements noted above to create an important and inviting edifice.

Charles Reed was born near Scarsdale, New York, and graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a degree in architecture. He subsequently worked as a railroad architect for a number of lines, including the Chicago Great Western, Northern Pacific, Norfolk & Western, New Haven, New York Central, and Michigan Central. He joined Allen Stem in practice in 1891 to form one of the most successful architectural firms in St. Paul. In 1901, Reed went to New York City to supervise design work on Grand Central Station after his firm won the commission for this project, and became an executive architect with their associates, Warren & Wetmore. He died of a heart attack in New York on November 11, 1911, and was buried in Rochester.

The firm of Reed & Stem prospered because of its ability to capture large commissions and because of Reed's relationship by marriage with a vice-president of the New York Central Railroad. Through this connection, they received the commission for Grand Central Station in New York City and numerous other stations and structures for that railroad company, including the NYCRR Power Station, Port Morris, New York, and the Union Station at Troy, New York (1892). They were also responsible for the designs of the Detroit (Michigan) Union Station; depots for the Great Northern and Northern Pacific Railroads at Devils Lake and Bismarck, North Dakota, respectively; the Lewis & Clark County Court House, Helena, Montana; the West Publishing Company building, Civic Auditorium, Hotel St. Paul, St. Paul Athletic Club, and the Reed and Stem double residence, all in St. Paul; the Denver (Colorado) Auditorium; Wulling Hall, University of Minnesota (Minneapolis); and the White Bear Lake Yacht Club (1913), White Bear Lake, Minnesota.<sup>34</sup>

St. Mary's Catholic Church and School

The simple yet imposing building at 1421-25 North Roberts within the Helena Railroad Depot Historic District is the St. Mary's Catholic Church and School, now the Rocky Mountain Christian High School. Albert O. Von Herbulis designed the Colonial Revival building circa 1908, but construction was not begun until 1910. Charles T. Gunn, a Butte contractor, was commissioned to

<sup>34</sup> "Reed and Stem Papers Finding Aid," Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota, <http://special.lib.umn.edu/findaid/html/mss/nwaa0087.html>

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build the church.<sup>35</sup> The Colonial Revival style dates to 1876, when the Philadelphia Centennial celebration reawakened an interest in American colonial architecture. The earliest interpretations of the style were only rarely exact replicas of colonial era buildings, but rather exhibited details based in colonial precedent. By the late 1890s, however, designers of Colonial Revival buildings strove for accuracy in proportion, form and detail. Publications such as *The American Architect and Building News* (1898) and *The White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs* (1915) underscored the importance of and provided models for historically accurate reproductions.<sup>36</sup>

St. Mary's Church is a good representative example of the relatively rare centered-gable form of the Colonial Revival Style. This form is reminiscent of Georgian or Adam style prototypes, and identified by a centered front gable added to either a "hipped or side-gabled roof."<sup>37</sup> Elements of the style evident on the building include the pedimented front gable, boxed cornice, and relatively narrow overhang. The overall symmetry of the building, with its centered entrance and evenly spaced fenestration, as well as its boxy, two and a half story massing also belie its adherence to the Colonial Revival style. The unadorned building is an unusually plain Von Herbulis design, and sits in stark contrast to the other Von Herbulis designed church in Helena, the Gothic, highly detailed and ornate, Cathedral of St. Helena. St. Mary's does however, reflect the proud working class character of its parishioners and suggests that the architect was sensitive to the congregation for which he designed the church.

Albert O. Von Herbulis was born in Budapest, Austria (now Hungary) April 23, 1860. He graduated from the Military Academy of Vienna then trained as an architect at the Polyclinic University in Vienna. He and his wife Amilia Rittera immigrated to the United States in 1880, settling in Pittston, Pennsylvania. He worked there as a mining engineer for ten years, then moved to the Washington, D.C. area and worked as an architect. Over his career, Von Herbulis designed numerous schools, churches and other public buildings. Much of his work was for Catholic institutions and universities, including involvement in the remodeling of St. Peter's Church on Barclay Street in New York City, primary architect for Tabaret Hall at the University of Ottawa, Blessed Sacrament Academy in Birmingham, Alabama, Pensacola Hospital in Pensacola Florida, and the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. In Helena, Von Herbulis also designed the Neoclassical Cathedral of St. Helena School, and St. Charles Hall on the campus of Carroll College. In 1924, the Virginia Historical Society noted that the "Roman Catholic Church has in him a loyal son."<sup>38</sup>

Behind St. Mary's Church is the rectory, a one and one-half story residence constructed in 1922. While not architect-designed, it is patterned from the very popular Bungalow Style. In the United States, the Bungalow style is attributed to two California brothers, Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene, who popularized the design from the Pasadena architectural firm. Influenced by the English and American Arts and Crafts Movements, interest in oriental wooden architecture, and "their early training in the manual arts – appear to have led the Greenes to design these intricately detailed buildings."<sup>39</sup> The bungalow quickly became one of the most popular smaller house designs in the country and during the 1910s and 1920s, pattern books and kits were available nationwide. St. Mary's Rectory exhibits the essential design elements of the style, including the familiar front-gable and hipped porch form, gable end returns, wide, overhanging open eaves, and double-hung windows with multi-light over one-light detailing.

The Helena Railroad Depot Historic District contains examples of various commercial and residential architecture that span from the 1880s through the 1950s. From the wooden false fronts to the unadorned brick commercial buildings, to the varied exterior finishes and the two architect designed buildings, the district accurately conveys the architectural evolution of this working class commercial area. Clearly, it is significant and eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its architecture representative of late nineteenth and early twentieth century styles.

<sup>35</sup> Gunn was primarily known as a bridge builder, and contracted with various Montana counties constructing bridges in various Montana counties

<sup>36</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), p. 326.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 322.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in JoAnne B. Ries, "An Architectural Study of the Cathedral of St. Helena, Helena, Montana," Master's Thesis, Department of Art, Brigham Young University, 1989, p. 18.

<sup>39</sup> McAlester and McAlester, p. 454.

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**Building List**

| Address               | Name                        | Style/Form         | Date of Construction | Eligibility     |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1400 Helena Avenue    | Beattie Park                | N/A                | 1930                 | contributing    |
| 1400 Helena Avenue    | Park Bench                  | N/A                | 1930                 | contributing    |
| 1400 Helena Avenue    | Locomotive                  | N/A                | 1902                 | contributing    |
| Railroad Avenue       | Brick street/Trolley tracks | N/A                | c.1915               | contributing    |
| 1401-1445 Helena Ave. | Larson Block                | Western Commercial | 1884/1948            | primary         |
| 1500 Railroad Ave.    | NP Depot                    | Classical Revival  | 1904                 | primary         |
| 1501 Railroad Ave.    | Denver House                | Falsefront         | 1884                 | contributing    |
| 1503 Railroad Ave.    | Drake Hotel II              | Falsefront         | 1888                 | contributing    |
| 1505 Railroad Ave.    | Hap's Bar                   | Brick front        | 1927                 | contributing    |
| 1507 Railroad Ave.    | Rocky Mountain Bar          | Brick front        | 1927                 | noncontributing |
| 1509 Railroad Ave.    | Park Cafe                   | Falsefront         | 1884                 | noncontributing |
| 1511 Railroad Ave.    | German Restaurant           | Falsefront         | 1884                 | contributing    |
|                       | garage                      | Gable front        | 1884                 | contributing    |
| 1515 Railroad Ave.    | Reeder Rental               | Gable front        | 1884                 | contributing    |
|                       | garage                      | Craftsman          | c.1927               | contributing    |
| 1519 Railroad Ave.    | Car Care                    | Eclectic           | 1956                 | noncontributing |
| 1529-31 Railroad Ave. | Morgan Grocery              | Commercial         | 1884                 | contributing    |
|                       | garage                      | Gable front        | 1930                 | contributing    |
|                       | garage                      | Gable front        | c.1930               | contributing    |
|                       | garage                      | Gable front        | c.1950               | contributing    |
| 1516 Gallatin St.     | Reeder Rental               | Side-Gable         | 1884                 | contributing    |
|                       | garage                      | Gable front        | c.1930               | contributing    |
| 1439 N. Harris        | Benson-Carp. Warehouse      | Commercial         | c.1896               | contributing    |
| 1430 N. Sanders       | St Mary's Rectory           | Craftsman          | 1922                 | contributing    |
|                       | garage                      | Craftsman          | 1951                 | contributing    |
|                       | shed                        |                    | c.1980               | noncontributing |
| 1425 North Roberts    | St. Mary's Church           | Colonial Revival   | 1910                 | primary         |

Helena Railroad Depot Historic District  
Name of Property

Lewis and Clark, Montana  
County and State

## 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

Acres of Property: approximately 14.3 acres

| UTM References: | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|-----------------|------|---------|----------|
| A               | 12   | 422180  | 5161060  |
| B               | 12   | 422535  | 5160985  |
| C               | 12   | 422535  | 5160900  |
| D               | 12   | 422465  | 5160900  |
| E               | 12   | 422465  | 5160920  |
| F               | 12   | 422320  | 5160920  |
| G               | 12   | 422320  | 5160870  |
| H               | 12   | 422180  | 5160870  |

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): N½ NW¼ of Section 29, T10N, R3W, MPM

### Verbal Boundary Description

From the northwest corner of Beattie Park, at the south edge of the Montana Rail Link Railroad (formerly the Northern Pacific Railway) tracks and the centerline of North Roberts Street (UTM Point A), the boundary line for the Helena Railroad Historic District follows the south edge of the tracks in an east-southeasterly direction to UTM Point B. From there, it turns south and continues approximately eighty-five meters to UTM Point C, then turns west and continues to the centerline of North Harris Street (UTM Point D). The boundary then turns north to the intersection of the centerlines of North Harris and Gallatin Streets (UTM Point E), then continues in a westerly direction to the intersection of the centerlines of Gallatin and North Sanders Streets (UTM Point F). From there, the boundary turns south and continues to the intersection of the centerlines of North Sanders Street and Lewis Street (UTM Point G). The boundary extends to the west to the intersection of the centerlines of Lewis and North Roberts Streets (UTM Point H), then turns north to the point of the beginning (UTM Point A).

### Boundary Justification

The Helena Railroad Depot Historic contains the first buildings constructed in Helena to accommodate the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1883. The buildings include residences, commercial establishments, a warehouse, a church/school, and a railroad depot. Residences, businesses, and warehouses in the area immediately surrounding the historic district postdate the initial flurry of activity that followed the arrival of the railroad.

## 11. Form Prepared By

|                        |                             |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| name/title: Jon Axline | Ellen Baumler               |
| 448 Parriman           | 729 11 <sup>th</sup> Avenue |
| Helena, MT 59601       | Helena, MT 59601            |
| 406-442-3959           | 406-449-3062                |

Property Owner: Multiple

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 11

Helena Railroad Depot Historic District  
Lewis and Clark County, MT

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**Owners List**

| Address               | Property Name               | Owners Name                                       | Owners Mailing Address                               |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|
| 1400 Helena Avenue    | Beattie Park                | City of Helena                                    | 316 North Park Avenue<br>Helena, Montana 59623       |
| 1400 Helena Avenue    | Park Bench                  | City of Helena                                    | 316 North Park Avenue<br>Helena, Montana 59623       |
| 1400 Helena Avenue    | Locomotive                  | City of Helena                                    | 316 North Park Avenue<br>Helena, Montana 59623       |
| Railroad Avenue       | Brick street/Trolley tracks | Montana Rail Link<br>Burlington Northern Railroad | 77 Main Street<br>Fort Worth, Texas 76102            |
| 1401-1445 Helena Ave. | Larson Block                | D&S Rentals                                       | 1429 Helena Avenue<br>Helena, Montana 59601          |
| 1500 Railroad Ave.    | NP Depot                    | Montana Rail Link<br>Burlington Northern Railroad | 77 Main Street<br>Fort Worth, Texas 76102            |
| 1501 Railroad Ave.    | Denver House                | Kirk & Kelly Powell Reisbeck                      | 1501 Railroad Avenue<br>Helena, Montana 59601        |
| 1503 Railroad Ave.    | Drake Hotel II              | Donald J. & Terry M. Lytle                        | 618 Madison<br>Helena, Montana 59601                 |
| 1505 Railroad Ave.    | Hap's Bar                   | Donald J. & Terry M. Lytle                        | 618 Madison<br>Helena, Montana 59601                 |
| 1507 Railroad Ave.    | Rocky Mountain Bar          | Donald J. & Terry M. Lytle                        | 618 Madison<br>Helena, Montana 59601                 |
| 1509 Railroad Ave.    | Park Cafe                   | Kimberley L. Clark                                | 1322 Bridgecourt Way<br>Missoula, Montana 59801      |
| 1511 Railroad Ave.    | German Restaurant           | James Beckstrom                                   | P.O. Box 72<br>Elliston, Montana 59728               |
| 1515 Railroad Ave.    | Reeder Rental               | Michael & Mary Chaet                              | 540 South California Street<br>Helena, Montana 59601 |
| 1519 Railroad Ave.    | Car Care                    | Rowena A. Meehan                                  | 532 Custer Avenue #3<br>Billings, Montana 59101      |
| 1529 Railroad Ave.    | Morgan Grocery              | Neil J. Connole                                   | 513 State Street<br>Helena, Montana 59601            |
| 1531 Railroad Avenue  | Vacant Lot                  | Nelson L. Seeley                                  | 563 Diehl Drive<br>Helena, Montana 59601             |
| 1516 Gallatin St.     | Reeder Rental               | Michael & Mary Chaet                              | 540 South California Street<br>Helena, Montana 59601 |
| 1439 N. Harris        | Benson-Carp.                | PMF Partnership                                   | 555 Absaraka Way<br>Sheridan, Wyoming 82801          |
| 1430 N. Sanders       | St Mary's Rectory           | Friendship Center of Helena                       | 1503 Gallatin Avenue<br>Helena, Montana 59601        |
| 1425 North Roberts    | St. Mary's Church           | Hannaford Street Baptist Church                   | 830 North Hannaford Street<br>Helena, Montana 59601  |

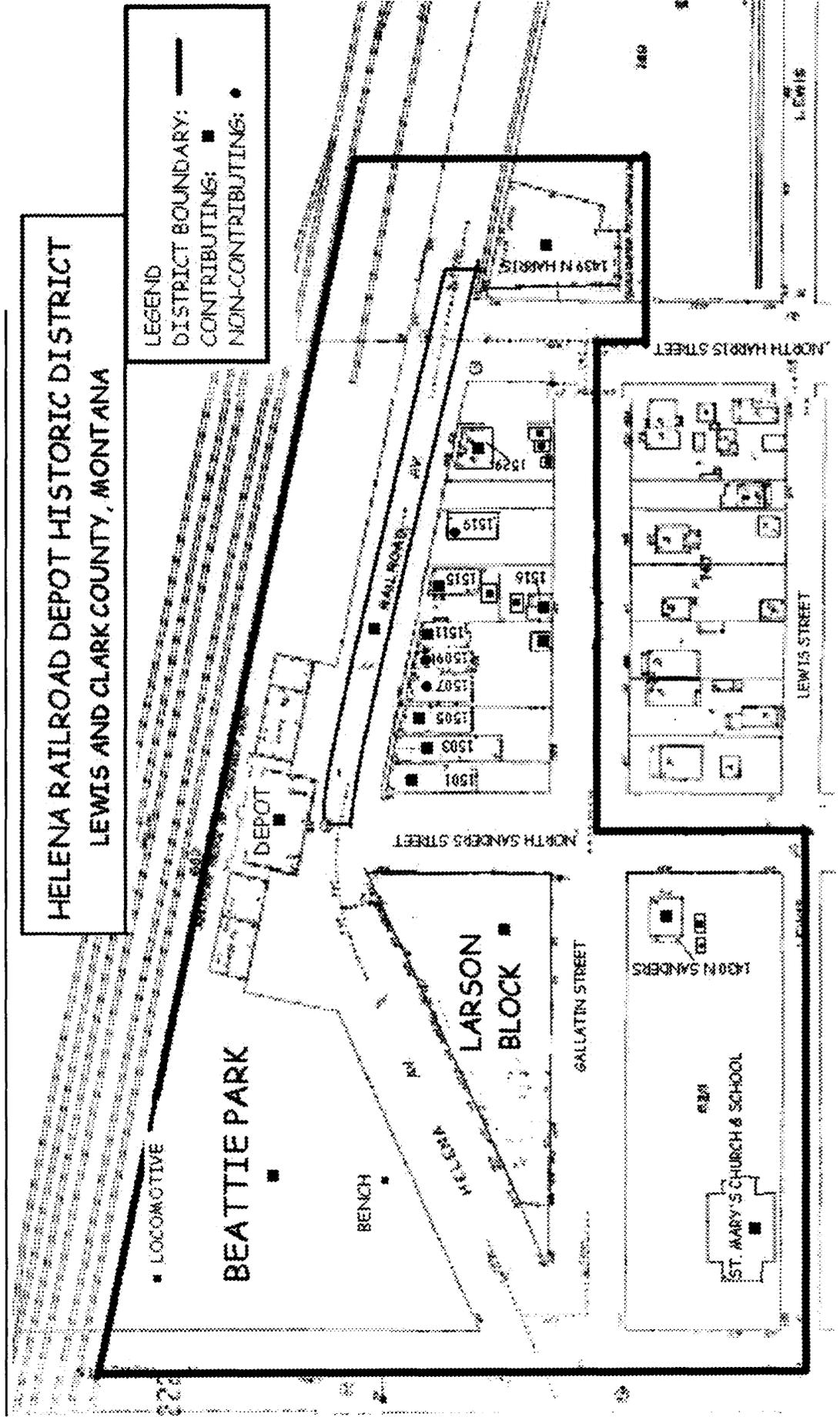
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Site Map

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Alexander Beattie, one of the first depot district developers, built the Grand Pacific Hotel (the building with the many chimneys) for \$3000 in 1883. The earthquakes of 1935 destroyed the top floors of the hotel building, but the first floor is still extant and part of the Larson Block. Famed architect Cass Gilbert designed the first Northern Pacific Railroad Depot in 1882-3. The building, pictured above, was moved twenty years later to make room for the new brick depot constructed in 1904. After its removal to an area a few blocks outside the Helena Railroad Depot Historic District, it was used as a church and is currently contains offices and storage areas. (Haynes Foundation Collection H-1570)

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The Ferrat family poses in front of their confectionery on Helena Avenue, c. 1920. The building was later incorporated into the Larson Block. (Montana Historical Society PAC 94-75f6) After 1933, the ice cream parlor became Ferrat's Dance and Dine, home of the first curb service in Helena. Patrons lined up around the block, and tied up traffic to the point that Ferrat had to discontinue the experiment. This photo was taken between 1933 and 1935. Note the storefronts along the 1400 Block of Railroad Avenue that would be incorporated into the Larson Block, and the Railroad Depot in the distance. (Montana Historical Society PAC 94-75.f6)

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By 1929, the Sixth Ward had developed a reputation as the worst looking depot area on the entire Northern Pacific route. The City of Helena created Beattie Park in 1930 with a trust bequeathed by Anna and Mary Beattie of Rockford, Illinois, as a memorial to their brothers, Thomas, Alexander, and George. The park replaced dilapidated buildings that dated to the 1880s. Although the wading pool is no longer extant, the park still serves its purpose as a green space and "beauty spot" for the community. (Montana Historical Society PAC 94-75.t2)

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View of Railroad Avenue between 1906 and 1915. Pictured from right to left are the Phoenix Hotel/Park Café (1509 Railroad Ave.), the German Residence (1511 Railroad Ave.), and the Reeder-Valentine Rental (1515 Railroad Avenue). The Capitol Hotel to the left of the Reeder-Valentine Rental was destroyed as a result of the earthquakes of 1935. (Montana Historical Society PAC 94-75f11)

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Historic Photographs

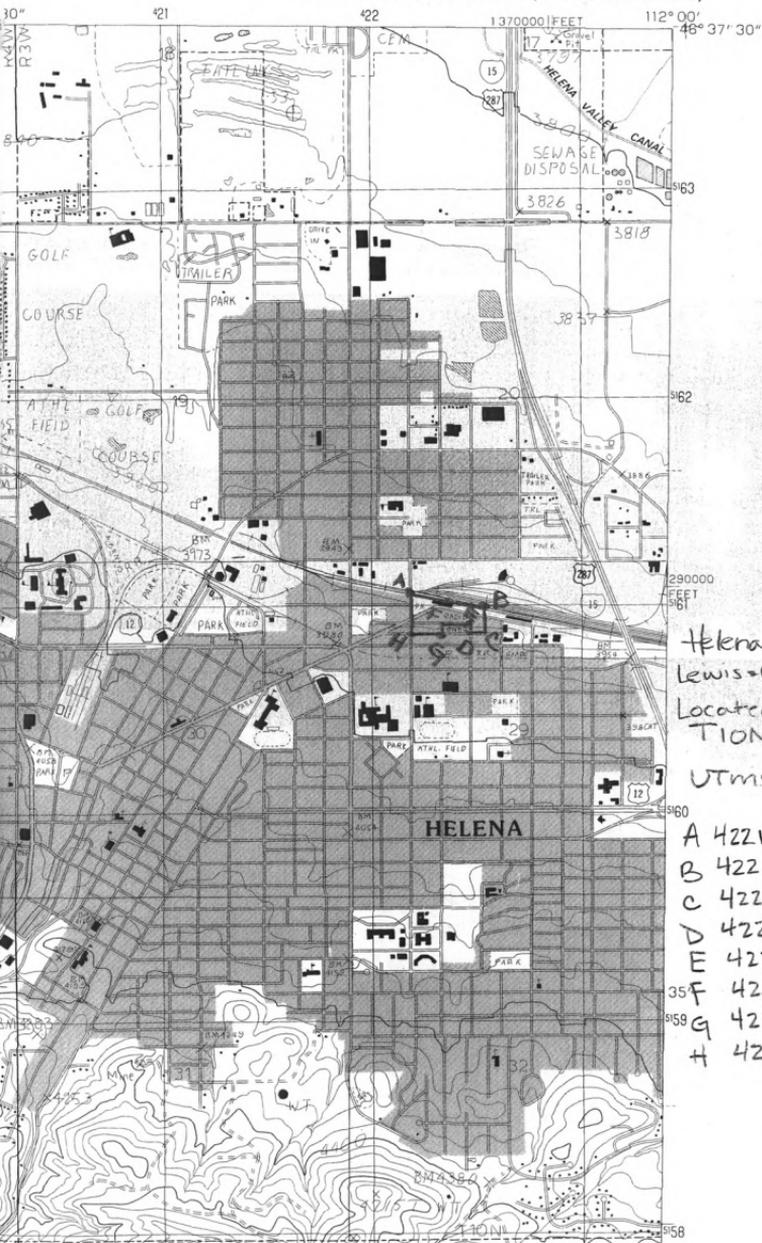
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Bishop John Patrick Carroll and Monsignor Victor Day follow the processional at the dedication of St. Mary's Catholic Church and School (1421 North Roberts) in 1910. Note that the building was originally brick veneer. The brick was replaced with stucco following the earthquakes of 1935. (Montana Historical Society PAc 74-104.313)

HELENA QUADRANGLE  
MONTANA  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Helena Railroad Depot H.D.  
Lewis-Clark Co, MT  
Located in the N2NW4 sec 2  
T10N, R3W mpm  
UTMs Zone 12

- A 422180 E 5161060 N
- B 422535 E 5160985 N
- C 422535 E 5160900 N
- D 422465 E 5160900 N
- E 422465 E 5160920 N
- F 422320 E 5160920 N
- G 422320 E 5160870 N
- H 422180 E 5160870 N