

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

For NPS use only

received **AUG 23 1985**

date entered **SEP 19 1985**

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

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

**1. Name**

historic Grand Hotel

and or common Grand Hotel

**2. Location**

street & number 139 McLeod Street N/A not for publication

city, town Big Timber N/A vicinity of

state Montana code 030 county Sweetgrass code 097

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mrs. Penelope P. Wilson

street & number Rd. 3, Box 73

city, town Malvern N/A vicinity of state PA 19355

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Courthouse - Sweetgrass County

street & number

city, town Big Timber state Montana

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The two story, masonry Grand Hotel is prominently located at the corner of 2nd Avenue and McLeod Street in the center of Big Timber's commercial district. Built in 1890, the rectangular-shaped building exhibits elements typical of late 19th century commercial architecture found in railroad towns in many Western states. Uncoursed sandstone foundation walls extend to the second floor level of the original portion of the structure along 2nd Avenue, part of the rear of the building, and along the north wall. Brick is used for the primary facade, the entire second story, and the rear additions. The symmetrically arranged facade is pierced at regular intervals on the second floor by 1/1 double hung sash windows with flat stone lintels and sills. Originally the main entrance to the hotel dining room and office was set in the clipped corner at a 45 degree angle while the entrance to the main stairway to the second floor hotel rooms was located at the center of the primary facade on McLeod St. The right half of the first floor has been modified so that the former McLeod St. entrance was replaced by a centrally-located doorway flanked by two large plate glass picture windows and the former office entrance at the southeast corner of the building was permanently closed at an undetermined date. Recessed brick panels are found between the first and second floors, and above each second story window on the main facade. Parapet corbeling provides a visually appealing pattern at the cornice. A number of painted signs are visible on the building, the most prominent being the "Grand Hotel" at the top of the north wall's west corner. Below this, a "Levi Strauss" advertisement is still visible beneath more recent advertising additions.

The Grand Hotel has undergone a number of minor alterations since its construction. Originally built in a rectangular form with a small "L"-shaped rear addition for the kitchen, the building was enlarged between 1896 and 1907 when the rear ell was infilled. Two cast iron columns were added between 1907-1914 to the north half of the McLeod Street facade to create an open storefront for the tavern and billiard room. The rear kitchen, also completed to its present form between 1907-1914, is of brick construction with little detail for the full two story height.

The overall interior function and room arrangement of the Grand Hotel have changed only slightly over time. Between 1907 and 1914 the central stairway to the second floor was relocated. The present lobby staircase, with large wooden newels and turned wood balusters, is located adjacent to the original central staircase. Remodeling on the first floor has eliminated some of the other original interior details. A limited number of doors and windows still retain original wood frames and original wall finishes are visible in one small lower level room. All hotel doors on the back portion of the second level still have original trim, transoms, and hardware, but do not match details in the front of the hotel.

Although the first floor McLeod Street facade has been changed, the Grand Hotel possesses sufficient integrity of design, materials and detailing to successfully evoke the historic period of the building's construction.

## 8. Significance

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

Specific dates	Builder/Architect
1890–91	Jacob Halverson, Builder Architect, Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Built in 1890, the Grand Hotel is of local historical significance because for ninety-five years this building has served as an important center for social and commercial activity in Big Timber, Montana. The building pays tribute to a time when its owner and the community envisioned Big Timber's rapid growth and development. The Northern Pacific Railway established a depot at Big Timber in 1883 and within ten years the community became the "natural business center for a large scope of country, [drawing] trade from great distances"<sup>1</sup>. Only four years prior to the construction of the Grand Hotel, Big Timber still had the appearance of a frontier town, with sod-roofed log structures and a few false-fronted frame buildings built along its rocky main street fronting the rail line. During the late 1880's and early 1890's Big Timber's stock and trade as a shipping point for the rapidly expanding wool industry and an outfitting center for the Boulder River drainage mining fields occasioned a rapid increase in population and new, masonry construction to replace the earlier, less permanent buildings. The Livingston Enterprise reported in December, 1891 that "[D]uring the past year closing the growth of Big Timber has been marvelous, fully \$150,000 having been spent during that time in the way of buildings and improvements"<sup>2</sup>. McLeod St., which runs perpendicular to the rail line, became the primary commercial street during this expansion. The Grand Hotel was one of the many new, masonry buildings constructed between 1890–1893 along McLeod and one of the very few early commercial structures to survive the extensive fire of 1908. Built to serve as one of the most comfortable and best equipped hotels, the Grand provided overnight accommodations, a place to meet, socialize, and discuss business for the sheep ranchers bringing their wagon trains of raw wool to the rail head from up to fifty miles away during the summer months, for the area miners scattered in the Sweet Grass hills and the Crazy Mountain camps, and for the expanding in-town population. The Grand Hotel is an early landmark in the community, located on a prominent corner in the center of the business district, and has served as an essential place to gather, hear news, and do business in this small Montana trade center for almost 100 years.

The opening of the Grand Hotel was a major event, signifying prosperity and a greater degree of permanence for the community of approximately 265 residents. At the dedication of the building in 1891, the residents of Big Timber expressed their gratitude to Jacob Halverson, the Sweet Grass County sheep rancher who financed the hotel's construction, by giving him a gold watch with the inscription, "From your friends in Big Timber." Built at a cost of \$20,000, the hotel originally contained a spacious bar and billiards room, barber shop, baggage room, dining room with 60 seat capacity, and "Chinese laundry" in the basement. In 1897, the building was remodeled to "more conveniently arrange every department." Guest rooms "have all been recarpeted and repapered and each of them looks as fresh and inviting as one could desire. New carpets also adorn the halls and there is an air of cleanliness and comfort about the 40 sleeping apartments the house affords, which is most alluring. The rates at the Grand are \$2 and \$2.50 per day and no house in the state furnishes better returns for the money."<sup>3</sup> Although not enjoying a monopoly on the trade, the Grand claimed a position as the premier hotel in Big Timber.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Big Timber Express (Montana), Holiday Edition, 1897; and Fire Edition, 1908.  
Illustrated History of the Yellowstone Valley. Spokane: Western Historical Pub. Co., 1907  
The Pioneer Society of Sweet Grass County Montana. Pioneer Memories. Big Timber, MT:  
Pioneer Publishing Company, 1960.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Big Timber, MT

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	2	5	8	1	2	5	7	5	0	7	5	9	7	3
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

C 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

D 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

E 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

F 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

G 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

H 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 11 & 12 Block 14, Original Townsite  
Sweetgrass County, Big Timber, Montana

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael F. O'Leary, AIA; Christopher M. Schiltz, AIA

organization Schiltz & O'Leary Architects date March 20, 1985

street & number 2906 1st Avenue N, Suite 302 telephone (406) 245-5199

city or town Billings state MT

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Fabina Buck

title Deputy SHPO / Survey & Registration date August 14, 1985

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

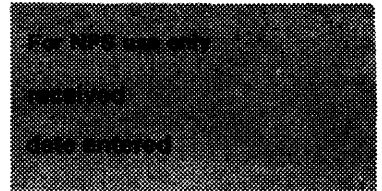
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation sheet

Item number 8

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By the time of the construction of the Grand Hotel, Big Timber had become recognized as a significant wool exporting community along the Northern Pacific railroad line. A new hospital, 100-barrel roller mill, bank, three hotels and a court house built in 1897 contributed to a sense of permanency in Big Timber. In 1900, 4,500,000 pounds of wool were shipped to Midwestern markets from Big Timber and a local wool processing mill was established in 1902. In 1908, however, a fire swept through the community destroying over one third of the residential and commercial buildings resulting in more than \$400,000 in damages.<sup>4</sup> While nearly all of the businesses along McLeod Street were completely destroyed in the blaze, the Grand Hotel survived intact.

1. Illustrated History of the Yellowstone Valley, Spokane, Wa.: Western Historical Publishing Company, 1908, p. 218.
2. Ibid., p. 220
3. Big Timber Express, Holiday Edition, 1897, n.p.
4. Big Timber Pioneer, 13 March 1908, p. 1.