

9/5/87
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bon Ton Historic District

Section number 8 Page 25

Historic Name: **Bon Ton Historic District**

Common Name: S. Third - S. Grand - S. Willson Historic District

Location: 200-1000 blocks of S. Third Avenue, S. Grand Avenue and S. Willson Avenue, 100-500 blocks of W. Cleveland Street.
Bozeman, Montana (030)
Gallatin County (031)

Classification: Historic district
private ownership
public acquisition: n/a
occupied
restricted access
residential use

Ownership: multiple

Location of Legal Description: Gallatin County Courthouse, Main St., Bozeman, MT

Representation in Existing Surveys: Historic Resource Survey of Bozeman, Montana, 1982-1986, sponsored by the Bozeman City-County Planning Office.

Depository of Survey Records: Montana State Historic Preservation Office
102 Broadway, Helena, MT.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: **Bon Ton Historic District**
Contributing buildings: 190
Non-contributing buildings: 39

Bozeman's finest examples of historic residential architecture, spanning from the early 1800's to the mid-1930's, constitute the bulk of the 228 buildings in the Bon Ton Historic District. The brick and frame houses of the district line three long, north-south running streets, S. Third Avenue, S. Grand Avenue, and S. Willson Avenue, and the east-west running W. Cleveland Street at the southern end. The Italianate, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Bungalow, and other styles are well represented in the district. Many houses display towers, wrap-around porches, and elaborate ornamentation in brick and wood.

In 1935, elegant concrete lamp posts were installed lining both S. Willson Avenue, a major thoroughfare through town which is wider than the others, and W. Cleveland Street, the location of many fine Depression-period houses. These lamp posts help to establish the southern and eastern borders of the district. To the south of the district are several blocks of predominantly non-contributing, post-World War II houses, while to the east is the South Tracy - South Black Historic District. S. Fourth Avenue, an unpaved alley, forms a clear boundary between

9/8/87

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bon Ton Historic District

Section number 8 Page 26

this district and the Cooper Park Historic District to the west. North of the district is a cluster of churches, most of which are individually eligible for listing in the National Register and which represent many of Bozeman's denominations. North of the churches is the Main Street Historic District.

While the most pretentious houses in this district represent the closest manifestations of true high style design found in Bozeman, only one, the T. Byron Story House (811 S. Willson), ranks among the most elaborate historic houses in Montana. That house, along with the full block of open space upon which it stands, creates a focal point for the southern section of the district.

The buildings of highest architectural significance have generally remained very well preserved and predominate in the district. While the T. Byron Story House, its lot, and the fine houses that surround it form a focal point much like Cooper Park does in the Cooper Park Historic District, a group of four houses at the corners of the intersection of S. Grand Avenue and W. Story Street form another focal point by virtue of their sheer size and architectural significance. The smallest of the four, the brick, 1-story vernacular Queen Anne style Frank Alderson House (470 S. Grand), relates to the intersection with a cylindrical corner tower. The other three, the Martin House (419 S. Grand), the Lamme House (501 S. Grand), and the Kopp House (502 S. Grand), all combine elements of the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles, and are among the most notable examples of Bozeman architecture.

Other outstanding examples of styles related to both the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival that are comparable to these in size and degree of ornamentation include the Benepe House (201 S. Third), remodeled to the Queen Anne style in about 1898, the unique Tudor Revival style Tudor House (805 S. Third), the Queen Anne/Colonial Revival style Fisher House (209 S. Grand), the Queen Anne style Mendenhall House (521 S. Willson), the Queen Anne/Stick style Davidson House (604 S. Willson), and the Colonial Revival style King House (725 S. Willson), which is dominated by a dramatic wrap-around porch and balcony.

Few houses of comparable significance date from the period preceding these styles in the district. Two of them, the Armstrong House (319 S. Willson) and the Flanders House (219 S. Grand), are fine examples in brick of the Italianate style, and display the hallmark of the style - bracketed cornices.

A great diversity of houses were built in the early 20th century (up to the mid-1930's), following the complete demise of the influence of the Queen Anne style. The most notable are invariably the work of local architect Fred F. Willson. The Spanish Colonial Revival (Mission) style Burr Fisher House (712 S. Willson), is certainly one of the most unusual from this period, and includes hallmarks of the style such as white stucco walls, a recessed, arcaded porch cut from the wall surface, a flared hip roof, and a shaped headed bay. Equally unusual is the Graf House (504 W. Cleveland), based in concept on the great chateaux of Europe, but

9/8/87

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

Bon Ton Historic District

Section number 8 Page 27

lacking in grandeur. It incorporates a swimming pool in the back, hidden by solid garden walls that project from the house itself. The best example of the Georgian Revival style, a branch of the Colonial Revival style, is the lavish Blair House (415 S. Willson), while the Mendenhall House (520 S. Grand) is a fine representative of the several gambrel roofed forms of the Colonial Revival style found in the district. Of the numerous examples of the Bungalow style, the well-ornamented Cobleigh House (909 S. Third) is among the most notable. Two excellent examples of typical pattern book houses types which were built in large numbers throughout the country during this period are the "American Four Square" Armstrong House (509 S. Third) and the gable front Atkinson house (915 S. Third). The chaste, cubic masses of the international style Browning House (412 W. Cleveland) - the antithesis of the Colonial Revival, Bungalow, and eclectic styles that preceded it - is unique in the district.

While this district is most notable for the elaborate historic houses that predominate, it is also made up in large part of less elaborate examples of vernacular architecture. Many of these however, were built at greater expense than most of the comparable vernacular houses found in the other residential historic districts in the city. The M.P. Davidson House (809 S. Third), for example, a simple, vernacular Queen Anne/Colonial Revival style house, has corner pilasters defining all edges, while a similar house in the Cooper Park Historic District would more likely have unornamented corner boards. Other simple vernacular houses of above average significance due to ornament or unique characteristics of design are the Noble House (311 S. Third), a typical turn of the century pattern book house, the Colonial Revival style Williams House (309 S. Third), which has a brick first floor, gambrel roof and substantial ornament, and the Bungalow style Brown House (515 S. Grand), notable for its unique aesthetic qualities.

Because of this combination of both vernacular architecture, which is similar to that found elsewhere in the city, and high style architecture, which is found nowhere else in the city, the Bon Ton Historic District possesses a character that is unique, but that is nevertheless consistent with the character of the two bordering historic districts. The Bon Ton Historic District is therefore the centerpiece of a vast historic, residential area in Bozeman.

In general, alteration and, too a lesser degree, infill, have taken a toll on the historic integrity of the district. The 200, 400 and 700 blocks on S. Third Avenue, and the 800 block on S. Grand Avenue, contain a number of non-contributing buildings. The majority of the buildings judged to be non-contributing are historic structures that have suffered from replacement siding, windows, or porches. Gaps in the historic integrity along S. Willson Avenue are the result not of alteration but rather of few very large non-contributing buildings erected within the past 25 years. They are the Artemus Apartments (302 S. Willson), the Cory Apartments, (417-423 S. Willson), and the Sigma Chi Fraternity (722 S. Willson).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bon Ton Historic District

Section number 8 Page 28

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: **Bon Ton Historic District**

Period of Significance: 1880 - 1937

Areas of Significance: Architecture, Community planning, Settlement

The centerpiece of a vast historic residential area, the Bon Ton Historic District contains much of Bozeman's most significant residential architecture. Considered the prestigious area in which to live between the 1880's and the mid-1930's (the period of significance) and still one of them today, the district reflects the tastes and aspirations of the past economic movers of the city - the presidents and managers of most businesses, and many of the doctors, dentists, lawyers, and college faculty who formed an ever-expanding professional class.

William W. Alderson, one of Bozeman's original six settlers, was allotted much of the land south of what would become Main Street probably on August 9, 1864, at a meeting of the Upper East Gallatin Claim Association, for which he was elected secretary. Eight years later, during a brief period of prosperity and building in early Bozeman, Alderson optimistically platted Alderson's Addition - nine square blocks which encompass much of the northern part of the district. Construction in this addition, however, would have to await the more substantial economic boost brought on by the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1883.

Development previous to 1883 had primarily occurred east of Tracy Avenue, which is east of the Bon Ton Historic District, in scattered areas both north and south of Main Street. These houses of the city's pre-railroad period were quite modest, reflecting Bozeman's tenuous role in the 1860's and 1870's as a center of trade and supply for Gallatin Valley farmers and ranchers, western gold mines, and nearby military posts. In 1883 however, with the railroad promising unimpeded access to vast markets, ambitious construction began to shape South Central Avenue (today S. Willson Avenue), which was the first of the three primary streets in the district to develop.

Accompanying this new generation of construction came ambitious plats adjacent to Alderson's Addition. In 1883, the year of both the railroad arrival and city incorporation, Alderson added the Fairview Addition to the south of his previous addition. The Fairview Addition is composed of twelve square blocks, which include most of the present district not included in Alderson's Addition, down to College Street. To the west, Nelson Story, John S. Dickerson, and Walter Cooper platted Park Addition in the same year - a vast area which includes the west side of S. Third Avenue (included in the district) as far south as College Street.

Like Alderson's Addition of 1872, the Park Addition reflects the inflated optimism of early Bozeman founders. Significant development of that area did not get underway until the next period of economic expansion in Bozeman, which occurred after the turn of the century.

9/8/87

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bon Ton Historic District

Section number 8 Page 29

Alderson had made South Central Avenue, which traverses both of his additions, especially wide - eighty feet as specified on the original plats, which is twenty feet wider than the other streets - intending it to become the city's most fashionable residential street. This it did, and by 1907, a real estate advertisement is the Bozeman Chronicle referred to: "South Central, the swell residential street of Bozeman." ¹

In addition to new Bozeman immigrants who built on the street in the early 1880's, established, prominent citizens began to migrate from their previous residences that were north of Main Street to this newly fashionable area. The Weekly Courier in 1883 acknowledged the beginning of such a migration when it noted:

"Matt W. Alderson and Frank Armstrong are now nicely settled in their new residences on Central Ave. and can enjoy the luxury of contrasting their lots with the less fortunate mortals who have not yet moved." ²

Frank K. Armstrong, a lawyer, built a refined, spacious, hip roofed, Italianate style house of brick in 1883, which still stands at 319 S. Willson Avenue. Matt W. Alderson, William W. Alderson's son, erected the smaller but also impressive brick, Italianate style house at 307 S. Willson Avenue in the same year (later remodeled to the Colonial Revival style from the second floor up).

Although Alderson and Armstrong built two of the most notable of S. Willson Avenue's earliest houses, they were soon joined by others. Matt Alderson, in his 1883 walking tour of Bozeman, noted that on South Central Ave. there were "several residences in the course of construction." ³ Of the numerous houses on S. Willson today that were built within five years of the arrival of the railroad (1883-1888), several, including Matt Alderson's, remain among the most significant historic houses in the city. They must have made an especially strong impression at the time they were built, since Bozeman was then merely a sparsely built up, newly incorporated, and quite isolated city.

Since the burgeoning city had no architects of its own, the Butte firm of Vreeland & Kemna was called upon to design several prominent brick buildings in the city during the early 1880's, the High Victorian Gothic style Palace Saloon (133 East Main) being the only one remaining today. In 1884, Fred A. Fielding took advantage of the firm's presence and had Byron Vreeland design an unusual,

¹ Bozeman Chronicle, June 6, 1906

² Weekly Courier, November 1, 1883, p. 3

³ Matt W. Alderson, Bozeman: A Guide to Its Places of Recreation, 1883, p.3

9/8/87

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

Bon Ton Historic District

Section number 8 Page 30

two-story, wood frame, Colonial Revival style house for him on South Central Ave. (420 S. Willson) - possibly the first architect-designed house, and the first example of the style, in the city. The adjacent house was built two years later by General Lester S. Willson, Fielding's partner in the Willson Co. mercantile firm (see 101 East Main), and appears to be the work of the same architect. The Willson House is a more typical example of the Colonial Revival style than Fielding's and may have been a tribute to the architecture of his native New York.

Another of the more pretentious houses from this period is the one built in 1886 by John S. Mendenhall, a partner in the A. Lamme Co. mercantile firm. The exuberant, frame, Queen Anne style house (521 S. Willson) was built according to specifications furnished by D.S. Hopkins, an architect located in Grand Rapids, Michigan, who provided mail-order plans. The smaller but no less ornate, brick, Queen Anne style cottage built for dentist William A. Tudor (613 S. Willson) is also very likely the work of a local builder, and was possibly influenced by a pattern book design.

Of the numerous more modest houses on S. Willson Avenue built in 1883, the most significant are 201, 311, 316, and 401 South Willson - a diverse array of Italianate and Queen Anne style residences built predominantly by merchants of various sorts. Of these, the Italianate style 401 S. Willson is an excellent example of the sidehall plan house type.

Reflecting the preferential development of this street, the Avant Courier noted as early as 1884 that "Central Avenue is developing into a Bon Ton residential street in Bozeman."⁴ This period expression, which refers to "the finest," is an appropriate title for the historic district as a whole, since by the turn of the century residential development of the highest caliber found in Bozeman had extended to S. Grand and S. Third Avenues as well. Indeed, the fine brick, Italianate style house erected by George Flanders in 1888 at 219 S. Grand Avenue, and the more formal, Italianate "Palazzo" built in 1883 by Frank L. Benepe at 201 S. Third Avenue (remodeled about 1898 to the Queen Anne style) were two precursors for the prestigious neighborhood's future expansion. The latter was probably the first structure built in the Park Addition.

Following the initial surge of economic growth in the early 1880's, construction throughout the city subsided, and few new houses went up in the district until the turn of the century. The two notable exceptions however, the brick Martin House (419 S. Grand) and the frame Lamme House (501 S. Grand), coincide with the construction of several monumental brick buildings elsewhere in the city, which were probably associated with Bozeman's lobbying effort in the early 1890's to win the designation of state capital.

⁴ Avant Courier, April 24, 1884, p. 3

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bon Ton Historic District

Section number 8 Page 31

The Capital Hill Addition, aptly named, was platted in 1890 in connection with this effort to gain state capital status for the city. This addition now encompasses the southern portion of the district. The addition included several streets named after U.S. presidents, such as Harrison and Cleveland Streets, and a broad boulevard, today S. Eighth Avenue, which ascends a slight hill and was intended to terminate with the capitol dome. It was hoped that this addition, along with the new monumental buildings, would make the city appear ready to accept the capitol complex, and would impress Montana voters enough to win the special election on the issue in 1892.

Although Bozeman lost its capital bid, it gained, in 1893, the Montana State College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, an institution that would later have a significant impact on the development of the district, as faculty members constructed new houses there.

Similar to Vreeland and Kemna a decade earlier, architect George Hancock of Fargo, North Dakota, established a temporary branch office in Bozeman, primarily to design and oversee construction of some of the city's ambitious masonry buildings of the first three years of the 1890's. The most notable of these are the original Longfellow School (demolished), St. James Episcopal Church (9 W. Olive), and the Hotel Bozeman (321 E. Main).

James E. Martin, and very likely Edwin B. Lamme as well, seized upon the convenient opportunity to secure prestigious house designs from Hancock, and on adjacent corner lots on S. Grand Avenue constructed two generally similar Queen Anne/Colonial Revival style houses. Those houses, the Martin House (419 S. Grand) with its unique, sculpted frieze and the Lamme House (501 S. Grand), are surpassed in grandeur in Bozeman only by the T. Byron Story Mansion (811 S. Willson).

This brief, three-year spurt of building in the city was virtually halted by an economic depression, the Panic of 1893, which lasted through the rest of the decade. (Ironically, Martin took a substantial loss just one year after building his locally famous house in 1892, when the Gallatin Valley National Bank, of which he was cashier, collapsed.)

Soon after the turn of the century, Bozeman emerged from the depression the undisputed economic and cultural center of the rural Gallatin Valley, which is dotted by other communities, and embarked upon a period of steady growth that subsided only during the Depression and war years of the 1930's and 1940's. A newly swelled class of successful businessmen and professionals revived the residential migration to the area of South Central (S. Willson), S. Grand and S. Third Avenues from other parts of the city. As they did, those streets, and other residential areas south of Main Street, grew at the expense of those to the north, and Bozeman took on its present configuration - an east-west running Main

9/8/87

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bon Ton Historic District

Section number 8 Page 32

Street commercial district buffered by a vast grid of middle to upper class residential streets to the south and southwest, and scattered lower to middle class residential streets to the north.

In 1907, an editorial in the Republican Courier lamented this lop-sided development, and the fact that municipal improvement such as cement walks were conspicuously weighed toward those areas south of Main Street. The newspaper noted that:

"For several years the large proportion of improvements have been made on the south...side of the city. Nothing has been done...on the north side. The consequence is property on the south side of Bozeman is vastly more valuable than that on the north side, and many who formerly lived north of Main have moved across the line." ⁵

Even today, many of the streets north of Main Street remain unpaved.

A large proportion of the development south of Main Street, mentioned above, occurred in the Bon Ton Historic District. This development included both expensive, custom built houses, which invariably set the tone for the district, as well as more modest vernacular houses. Collectively the turn of the century houses in the district reflect a recovery from the depression of the late 1890's at all levels of the economy.

The Avant Courier noted in 1900 that Fairview Addition was "...being improved quite rapidly. The water mains have been extended to all the blocks in the Fairview Addition, the streets have been graded, and substantial plank sidewalks are being constructed as rapidly as the lots are improved by either brick or frame residences." ⁶

The newspaper mentioned some of the modestly ornamented, brick or frame structures that were built both speculatively and on commission by two local builders, A.J. Svorkmoe and A.J. Moe. Many of the houses attributed to these builders appear to have been based on "House Design No. 1061" in Fred T. Hodgson's mail order house pattern book, Practical Bungalows and Cottages for Town and Country. These houses are cubic, two-story, hip-roofed blocks, each with a gabled, two-story projecting bays in one-half of the facades, and full front porches. Two examples of this design by Svorkmoe are 621 S. Grand Avenue (c.1910) and the smaller 608 S. Grand Avenue (c.1899), while one by Moe is 612 S. Grand (c.1904). The later building has recently been remodeled. Bozeman's postmaster, Ira L. Kirk, who bought 703 S. Grand Avenue, built by Moe, and

⁵ Republican Courier, September 3, 1907, p. 2

⁶ Avant Courier, September 1, 1900, p. 5

9/8/87

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bon Ton Historic District

Section number 8 Page 33

rancher Alex H. Black, who bought 612 S. Grand Avenue, also by Moe, are two typical buyers of these speculatively-built, vernacular, pattern book houses.

A.J. Svorkmoe also built at least one more elaborate example of this pattern book design, probably for physician Joseph A. Delaney. The Queen Anne style house, 609 S. Third Avenue (c.1906), is similar to the others, although elaborated upon by the addition of a projecting canted bay, rather than a rectangular one, topped by a gable with ornate stick work infill.

Although out-of-town architects continued to be hired for the most elaborate residences in the city as late as 1910, when Fred F. Willson began his local practice, builders such as Svorkmoe were also called upon for the design and construction of some of the city's most pretentious early 20th century houses. The brick, Queen Anne style house built in 1900 for druggist A.C. Roecher (319 S. Third Avenue), for example, appears to have been built by A.J. Svorkmoe, while the impressive, Queen Anne/Colonial Revival style E.W. King House (725 S. Willson Avenue) was built in 1907 by contractor J.R. Scahill. Plans for the King House came from a pattern book put out by Keith & Co. Architects of Minneapolis, and were labeled as design #1094. The ornate Kopp House (502 S. Grand) also appears to be the work of a builder rather than an architect. These three examples are distinguished from comparable architect-designed residences by their simplicity of form. The houses consist merely of rectangular or cubic main blocks typical of vernacular architecture of the period, to which were added towers and the full vocabulary of ornamentation in the repertoire of the builder.

During this period of renewed, early 20th century prosperity, architect C.S. Haire of Helena designed at least one major public building in Bozeman, the Carnegie Library in 1902, and at least two of the most significant historic houses in the city, before his apprentice Fred F. Willson set up his own virtually monopolistic practice in town. One of Haire's houses is that built for the president of the Gallatin State Bank, Wells S. Davidson in 1907 (604 S. Willson Avenue) - a modified example of the Stick Style. Another, the T. Byron Story House, was built in 1910 at 811 S. Willson for the son of cattle baron, millionaire, and Bozeman pioneer Nelson Story, and is comparable to the numerous mansions in Haire's home city of Helena.

The work of architect Fred F. Willson, which left behind the Queen Anne style influences that are evident in the work of the elder C.S. Haire, is distinguished by its self-conscious participation in the national architectural milieu of the early 20th century. The Waite House for example, 901 S. Willson Avenue, a typical Bungalow that might just as well have been executed by one of the several early 20th century house carpenters in the city, is unique in Bozeman because of the Prairie School style stained glass incorporated into the design.

Willson, educated in New York and Europe, employed virtually all the styles and associated diversity of materials available to him. His work in the district includes examples of the Colonial Revival, Bungalow, Tudor Revival, and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bon Ton Historic District

Section number 8 Page 34

International styles. A true 20th Century architect, Willson was keenly sensitive to the wishes of his clients, which in Bozeman tended toward conservatism in design. Louis Spain Sr., once a client of Willson's, recalls the architect's patience, and willingness to return with revised plans until one was agreed upon.⁷

Perhaps in part as a result of this flexibility, much of Willson's work is virtually indistinct from the typical vernacular architecture of his period throughout the country. The A.F. McCune House (401 S. Third), built c. 1919, a typical eaves front bungalow, is in fact surpassed in originality and architectural significance by some of the bungalows built by local carpenter Elmer L. Bartholomew, such as the one at 519 W. Babcock Street.

What Bartholomew and other builders apparently did not offer, however, was the diversity of current styles to choose from, the possibility for a completely personalized design, and the process of selecting a design that Willson could provide. Bozeman had come of age as a modern city at the heart of a rich agricultural region by the time Willson began his career, and provided a steady demand for an architect of its own.

Among the diverse middle to upper middle class designs by Willson is the house built in 1912 for Dr. James F. Blair (415 S. Willson), a conservative, opulent example of the Georgian Revival style. By the 1930's, when houses similar to this, such as 426 W. Cleveland Street, were still being constructed, Willson designed a small Tudor Revival cottage at 509 W. Cleveland Street for Harry Healy, manager of the Sweet Company, and a simple International style house at 412 W. Cleveland for Fred Browning, assistant manager of the Oaks Cigar Store. Eugene Graf, owner of Bozeman's Bon Ton Flour Mill and Bakery (both designed by Willson), had Willson design for him a unique house (504 W. Cleveland Street) based on photographs he had brought home from Europe.⁸

Willson's clients invariably built in the Bon Ton Historic District and, with the exception of a few houses surrounding Cooper Park, all of Willson's known residential designs are consequently located in it. The consciousness of architectural style possessed by these clients, therefore, in large part shaped

⁷ Louis Spain, Sr., interview with Matt Cohen, August, 1985.

⁸ One notable contemporary of Willson in Bozeman is architect W.R. Plew, a professor at Montana State College. Though Plew had a very limited practice in Bozeman, two houses attributed to him, the Bungalow style 1004 South Willson Avenue, and the seemingly Scandinavian-inspired 120 West Cleveland Street, display considerable originality - more, in fact, than anything Willson designed. Plew also designed the Beall Park Community Center in 1927 at 409 N. Bozeman Avenue.

9/8/87

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

Bon Ton Historic District

Section number 8 Page 35

the present appearance of the district.

Indeed, several past residents of the district built more than once, continually keeping pace with current architectural preferences. Frank L. Benepe, one of the earliest prominent businessmen in Bozeman, updated his Italianate "Palazzo" at 201 S. Third Avenue, which when built was noted as being one of Bozeman's finest residences, to the Queen Anne style in about 1898. W.A. Tudor, a dentist, in 1904 moved from his brick, Queen Anne cottage at 613 S. Willson Avenue to the then more modern Tudor Revival style 805 S. Third Avenue. Similarly, Burr Fisher, one of the founders of the Chambers-Fisher Department Store on Main Street, built a fine Colonial Revival style house (209 S. Grand Avenue) in 1900 which was noted in several articles in the Avant Courier. Just nine years later, Fisher moved into 712 S. Willson Avenue - the city's first, and still finest by far, example of the Spanish Colonial Revival (Mission) style, which was designed by the architectural firm of Link and Haire.

On a more modest scale, Joseph N. Brown, a brick layer who had a brick yard in the district at the corner of S. Willson Avenue and W. Cleveland Street, built a fine, brick, Queen Anne style house at 511 S. Grand Avenue, in 1889, and, in 1912 erected a unique, new Bungalow style house next to it at 515 S. Grand Avenue, which was designed by Fred Willson. Similarly, rancher Benjamin Bisel demolished his family homestead at 222 S. Willson Avenue during the late 1880's in order to make room for the present two-story, frame, Queen Anne style house.

Unlike the numerous modest houses in the Cooper Park Historic District, most of which were built speculatively and changed hands frequently from the time they were constructed, the houses in the Bon Ton Historic District were in general occupied by the same individuals and their families for long periods of time, in some cases for generations. Not surprisingly, a random sampling of the original, or longest, occupants of these houses reveals owners rather than renters, employers rather than employees, and professionals rather than laborers. Jarvis M. Flint, for example, long time resident of 420 S. Third Avenue previous to the 1920's, was president/manager of the Flint-Lynn Lumber Co. H.D. Bath, who built the impressive house at 405 W. Cleveland Street, was a lawyer. Similarly Postmaster Ira L. Kirk, who lived at 703 S. Grand Avenue, and Ernest J. Parkin, principal of the Gallatin County High School who lived at 414 S. Third Avenue, are representative of the several governmental supervisors who lived in the district.

As Bozeman's middle and upper middle class swelled during the first three decades of this century, the growth of the district paralleled the substantial growth and remodeling of the Main Street commercial district. New houses filled in the empty lots on the long streets in the Bon Ton Historic District, and by the 1930's W. Cleveland Street, which linked the south end of S. Willson Avenue with Montana State College, had become the new location for the city's most impressive residential construction.

9/8/87

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

Bon Ton Historic District

Section number 8 Page 36

The presence of a large university in the city of Bozeman helped to offset the adverse economic impact of the national depression of the 1930's. The greater prosperity of Bozeman relative to other Montana communities is illustrated by the sizable number of housing starts in the community during the depression era. In addition to the trade and employment opportunities provided by the university, Bozeman's economy also was bolstered by the continuing productivity of the surrounding Gallatin County farmers and ranchers. Gallatin County is one of the richest and best watered agricultural areas in Montana and the wave of farm foreclosures that swept the State during the 1930's only touched the higher, drier, marginal bench lands of Gallatin County.

In 1935, the city erected elegant concrete lamp posts along what were then the two most fashionable streets: S. Willson Avenue and W. Cleveland Street.⁹ The posts, which have tapered, octagonal shafts and translucent, urn-shaped lenses, are the only historically significant lamp posts remaining in Bozeman today, with the exception of two isolated iron posts just off Main Street on N. Bozeman Avenue.

S. Willson Avenue was renamed from South Central Avenue in 1920 in honor of General L.S. Willson, a Bozeman pioneer, prominent merchant, father of architect Fred Willson, and himself a resident of the street (504 S. Willson), who had died that year.

While most of the district as it appears today was built prior to the mid-1930's, scattered infill, such as the typical Ranch style house at 922 S. Willson Avenue, which was designed by Fred Willson and built in 1950, occurred into the 1960's. More prominent are the large, multiple-unit developments that went up during the past twenty-five years, such as the Sigma Chi Fraternity (722 S. Willson Avenue) in 1961, and the Artemus Apartments (302 S. Willson Avenue) in 1965.

This development, combined with the commercial development creeping south along S. Willson Avenue from Main Street and the increasingly heavy traffic, sparked the organization of the South Willson Protective Association (South Willson Improvement Society). The group successfully worked to change the street zoning from multi-family to single-family residential, and to encourage preservation along the street in general. In 1978 the group sponsored the nomination of most of S. Willson Avenue to the National Register of Historic Places, which will now be incorporated into the larger Bon Ton Historic District.

Rehabilitation of the Armstrong House (319 S. Willson) using funds provided under the Emergency Jobs Bill of 1983 and the D.D. Smith House (320 S. Willson) in 1984 in connection with the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 established a precedent for preservation work that may be repeated in the future.

⁹ Les Ammondson, telephone interview with Matt Cohen, December 23, 1985.

9/8/07

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bon Ton Historic District

Section number 8 Page 37

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DeHaas, John N., Jr., South Central Avenue Historic District, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1978.
Republican Courier, September 3, 1907.
Spain, Louis Sr., in an interview with Matthew Cohen, August, 1985.
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Plat Maps

- "Alderson's Addition to Bozeman: W.W. Alderson's Addition to the town of Bozeman, surveyed by W.Y. Smith, Deputy U.S. Surveyor, Sept., 1982, filed for record Oct., 1873;" copy of the original plat by James W. Drennan, Co. Clerk, 1889, on file at the Bozeman City-County Planning Office, 35 N. Bozeman Avenue, Bozeman, MT.
- "Capital Hill Addition," 1890, on file at the Bozeman City-County Planning Office, 35 N. Bozeman Avenue, Bozeman, MT.
- "Fairview Addition to Bozeman," submitted by W.W. Alderson, 1883, original plat map, on file at the Bozeman City-County Planning Office, 35 N. Bozeman Avenue, Bozeman, MT.
- "Park Addition: Plat of Park Addition to Bozeman, Gallatin County, Montana," submitted by Nelson Story, John S. Dickerson and Walter Cooper, May 1883, copied February 21, 1923 from blue print (sic.) of the original [plat] by L.S. Thorpe, city engineer, on file at the Bozeman City-County Planning Office, 35 N. Bozeman Avenue, Bozeman, MT.

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION:

The L-shaped Bon Ton Historic District includes 26 facing blocks along S. Willson Avenue, S. Grand Avenue, S. Third Avenue and Cleveland Street. Characterized by a very high concentration of large, stylistically sophisticated residences, the Bon Ton Historic District is separated from the two historic districts of more middle class character by the unpaved S. Fourth Avenue to the west (the border for the Cooper Park Historic District) and the alley between S. Willson and S. Tracy Avenues to the east (the border for the South Tracy - South Black Historic District). Thus, the Bon Ton Historic District is the centerpiece of the very large residential historic districts in the southern section of the community.

9/8/87

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Bon Ton Historic District

Section number 8 Page 38

The northeastern corner of the historic district boundary is located one lot south of the intersection of Olive Street and the alley between S. Willson and S. Tracy Avenues; then, south on this alley to one lot south of Cleveland Street; then, west to the alley between S. Grand and S. Willson Avenues; then, south one lot; then, west to S. Grand Avenue; then, south one more lot; then, west to the alley between S. Third and S. Grand Avenues; then, north two lots; then, west to S. Fifth Avenue; then, south to Arthur Street; then, west to the alley between S. Sixth Avenue and Arthur Street; then, north to the alley between Cleveland and Arthur Streets; then, west on this alley to S. Sixth Avenue; then, north to the alley between Harrison and Cleveland Streets; then, east to S. Fourth Avenue; then, north to Olive Street; then, east to S. Willson Avenue; then, south one lot; then, east to the point of beginning.

UTM REFERENCES:

ACREAGE: approximately 80 acres

E: 12/497050/5058800
F: 12/497050/5058000
G: 12/496050/5058000
H: 12/496550/5057100

9/8/87

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 39

Bon Ton Historic District

Bon Ton Historic District

Address	Name	Style	Date	Status
201 S. Grand	Henry C. Cockhill House	Vernacular	1890	contributing
202 S. Grand	Hope Lutheran Church	"Space Age" Ecclesiastical	1950	non contributing
209 S. Grand	Burr Fischer House	Queen Anne/ Colonial Revival	1900	primary
215 S. Grand	Warren Goodman House	Colonial Revival	c.1914	contributing
216 S. Grand	Gifford/Fowler House	Vernacular	1900	contributing
219 S. Grand	Flanders House	Italianate	1888	primary
301 S. Grand	Gardner House	Vernacular/ Queen Anne	c.1898	contributing
302 S. Grand	Work House	Vernacular	c.1890	contributing
307 S. Grand	Hanks House	Ranch	1951	non contributing
310 S. Grand	Matthew R. Wilson House	Vernacular	1904	contributing
311 S. Grand	A.J. Hemphill House	Vernacular/ Queen Anne	c.1892	contributing
314 S. Grand	E.B. Gifford House	Vernacular/ Queen Anne	c.1890	contributing
319 S. Grand	Lafferty House	Vernacular	c.1882	contributing
320 S. Grand	Chisholm House	Remodeled	c.1903	non contributing
324 S. Grand	Chisholm House	Queen Anne	c.1904	primary
401 S. Grand		Vernacular	c.1895	contributing
402 S. Grand	McKinsey House	Vernacular	c.1889	contributing
409 S. Grand	C.M. Thorpe House	Remodeled	1902	contributing
410 S. Grand		Vernacular	c.1900	contributing
414 S. Grand	Brooks House	Colonial Revival	1898	contributing
419 S. Grand	James E. Martin House	Queen Anne/ Colonial Revival	1892	primary
420 S. Grand	Frank Alderson House	Queen Anne Cottage	1900	primary
501 S. Grand	Lamme/Armstrong House	Queen Anne/ Colonial Revival	1893	primary
502 S. Grand	John Kopp House	Queen Anne/ Colonial Revival	c.1904	primary
510 S. Grand	Arnold B. Taylor House	Ranch	1962	non contributing
511 S. Grand	Brown House	Queen Anne	c.1889	primary
515 S. Grand	Brown House	Bungalow	1912	primary
516 S. Grand		Vernacular	c.1903	contributing
520 S. Grand	Roy E. Martin House	Colonial Revival	c.1900	primary
521 S. Grand		Remodeled	1888	non contributing
601 S. Grand	Nelson Story, Jr. House	Shingle Style	c.1905	contributing
602 S. Grand	Frank Alderson House	Vernacular	1900	primary
608 S. Grand	Wells S. Davidson House	Vernacular	1898	contributing

9/8/87

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 40

Bon Ton Historic District

609 S. Grand	Kate Calvin House	Colonial Revival	c.1901	contributing
612 S. Grand	O.J. Moe House	Vernacular	c.1900	contributing
613-615 S. Grand	Kate Calvin House	Remodeled	1901	contributing
616 S. Grand	Clark Apartments	Craftsman	1914	primary
621 S. Grand	A.J. Svorkmoe House	Vernacular	c.1908	primary
622 S. Grand	Svorkmoe/Baker House	Vernacular	1900	contributing
702 S. Grand	Svorkmoe/Willson House	Vernacular	1900	contributing
703 S. Grand	Moe/Kirk House	Remodeled	1900	contributing
707 S. Grand		Remodeled	1900	non contributing
708 S. Grand	Ogden/Waite House	Vernacular/ Queen Anne	c.1901	contributing
711 S. Grand		Remodeled	1901	non contributing
715 S. Grand	Svorkmoe/Crest House	Queen Anne	c.1902	primary
716 S. Grand		Vernacular	1900	contributing
721 S. Grand	Svorkmoe House	Vernacular	1904	contributing
722 S. Grand		Altered	1899	non contributing
725 S. Grand	Ferguson House	Bungalow	1906	contributing
801 S. Grand	Niebel House	Remodeled	c.1930	non contributing
807 S. Grand	Holmquist House	Bungalow	1930	contributing
811 S. Grand	Krause House	Remodeled	1926	non contributing
819 S. Grand		Remodeled	1928	non contributing
825 S. Grand	J.A. Bartholomew House	Bungalow	1928	contributing
903 S. Grand		Queen Anne	c.1905	contributing
904 S. Grand		Queen Anne	c.1905	contributing
905 S. Grand	Carter House	Contemporary	c.1971	non contributing
908 S. Grand	Crenshaw House	Mission	c.1935	contributing
909 S. Grand	Grove House	Bungalow	c.1927	contributing
913 S. Grand	Hines House	Bungalow	c.1929	contributing
914 S. Grand	Herschberger House	Bungalow	c.1930	contributing
1001 S. Grand	Sweet House	Bungalow	c.1917	primary
1007 S. Grand	Davis House	Bungalow	c.1938	primary
1010 S. Grand	Anderson House	Colonial Revival	c.1916	contributing
1011 S. Grand		Bungalow	c.1915	primary
1016 S. Grand	Katherine Story House	Bungalow	c.1935	contributing
201 S. Third	F.L. Benepe House	Queen Anne	1883/c.1898	primary
204 S. Third	Squire C. Kenyon House	Queen Anne	1900	primary
208 S. Third		Vernacular/ Remodeled	c.1900	noncontributing
209 S. Third	Byron T. Stanton House	Vernacular	c.1891	contributing
212 S. Third		Greek Revival	c.1890	contributing
213 S. Third	Eschenbacher House	Vernacular	c.1900	contributing
215 S. Third	Frederick Bull House	Colonial Revival	c.1907	primary
217 S. Third	Hollowing/Burke House	Queen Anne	c.1892	contributing
221 S. Third		Queen Anne	c.1885	contributing
222 S. Third		Remodeled	1890	noncontributing

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 41

Bon Ton Historic District

303 S. Third		Bungalow	c.1910	contributing
304 S. Third	Edsall House	Queen Anne/Colonial Revival	c.1905	primary
309 S. Third	Wilbur F. Williams House	Colonial Revival	1905	primary
310 S. Third	John Parks/Frank Machemer House	Vernacular/Queen Anne	c.1892	contributing
311 S. Third	Thomas Noble House	Vernacular	c.1903	contributing
316 S. Third	Thomas Noble House	Vernacular	c.1892	contributing
319 S. Third	Roecher House	Queen Anne/Colonial Revival	c.1900	primary
401 S. Third	A.F. McCune House	Bungalow	c.1919	contributing
402 S. Third	Safley House	Colonial Revival	c.1905	contributing
407 S. Third		Remodeled	c.1900	contributing
410 S. Third		Vernacular	c.1898	contributing
411 S. Third	Stiff House	Queen Anne	c.1900	contributing
414 S. Third	Bartz/Parkin House	Vernacular	c.1898	contributing
415 S. Third	Sears House	Vernacular	c.1898	contributing
419 S. Third		Queen Anne	c.1904	contributing
420 S. Third	Flint House	Vernacular	c.1904	contributing
501 S. Third		International	c.1898/c.1955	noncontributing
509 S. Third	F.K. Armstrong House	Colonial Revival	c.1905	primary
510 S. Third	F.K. Armstrong House	Vernacular	c.1914	contributing
513 S. Third	C.A. Henderson House	Queen Anne	c.1902	contributing
514 S. Third		Remodeled	c.1900/c.1960	noncontributing
517 S. Third	W.C. Holloway House	Colonial Revival	1906	contributing
518 S. Third	W.F. William House	Queen Anne	1906	contributing
521 S. Third	Wimmer House	Vernacular	1940	noncontributing
522 S. Third	Brenemen House	Vernacular	c.1900	contributing
602 S. Third		Bungalow	1915	contributing
603 S. Third	Callaghan House	Colonial Revival	c.1900	contributing
609 S. Third	Delaney House	Queen Anne	c.1906	primary
610 S. Third		Remodeled	c.1900	noncontributing
614 S. Third	Taber House	Bungalow	c.1915	contributing
615 S. Third	Henry Gay House	Vernacular	1948	noncontributing
616 S. Third	Taber House	Remodeled	1902	noncontributing
623 S. Third	Selway House	Bungalow	1914	contributing
624 S. Third	A.E. Pike House	Queen Anne	1902	contributing
702-706 S. Third	Pierce House	Vernacular	c.1902	contributing
703 S. Third	Sievert House	Bungalow	c.1948	noncontributing
709 S. Third	Spain House	Ranch	1951	noncontributing
710 S. Third	Taylor House	Ranch	1955	noncontributing
714 S. Third	Gossack House	Vernacular	1940	noncontributing
715 S. Third	Cooper House	Queen Anne	c.1902	contributing
719 S. Third	Gill Linfield House	Colonial Revival	c.1902	primary
720 S. Third	Brewer House	Colonial Revival	c.1902	contributing
725 S. Third	Hinds House	Queen Anne	c.1905	contributing

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 42

Bon Ton Historic District

726 S. Third	Tallman House	Colonial Revival	c.1902	contributing
800 S. Third	Gould House	Bungalow	c.1911	contributing
805 S. Third	W.A. Tudor House	Tudor Revival	1904	primary
808 S. Third	A.J. Svorkmoe House	Vernacular	c.1904	contributing
809 S. Third	Davidson House	Queen Anne	1907	contributing
811 S. Third	Cady House	Bungalow	c.1930	contributing
812 S. Third	Hall House	Vernacular	1910	contributing
817 S. Third	Miller House	Bungalow	c.1919	contributing
818 S. Third	Brown House	Vernacular	c.1908	primary
819 S. Third	Elmer L. Bartholomew House	Bungalow	c.1930	contributing
820 S. Third	Taylor House	Ranch	1955	noncontributing
823 S. Third	Pattee House	Vernacular	c.1900	contributing
826 S. Third	Sheppard House	Bungalow	c.1922	contributing
901 S. Third	Thalen House	Bungalow	1910	contributing
902 S. Third		Bungalow	c.1912	contributing
905 S. Third	Sternhagen House	Bungalow	1939	contributing
909 S. Third	Colbeigh House	Bungalow	1012	primary
912 S. Third	Wilton House	Bungalow	1911	contributing
915 S. Third	Atkinson House	Vernacular	c.1915	primary
916 S. Third	Marsh House	Tudor Revival	1937	contributing
921 S. Third	Law House	Bungalow	1915	contributing
922 S. Third	McKay House	Vernacular	1912	contributing
1002 S. Third	Blir House	Bungalow	1915	contributing
201 S. Willson	Sperling House	Vernacular	c.1880	contributing
209 S. Willson		Bungalow	1912	contributing
212 S. Willson	Safley House	Bungalow	1924	contributing
213 S. Willson		Vernacular	c.1882/ c.1925	contributing
214 S. Willson	Shearer House	Queen Anne	c.1892	contributing
218 S. Willson		Vernacular/Queen Anne	1890	contributing
219 S. Willson	Yerkes House	Vernacular	c.1890	contributing
222 S. Willson	Bisel House	Queen Anne	c.1899	contributing
301 S. Willson	Owenhouse House	Vernacular/Remodeled	1888	noncontributing
302 S. Willson	Artemus Apartments	1960's Apartments	1965	noncontributing
307 S. Willson	Phillips House	Colonial Revival	1883	contributing
311 S. Willson	Lewis House	Vernacular/Queen Anne	1883	contributing
316 S. Willson		Vernacular	c.1882	contributing
319 S. Willson	Armstrong House	Italianate	1883	primary
320 S. Willson	D.D. Smith House	Vernacular/Queen Anne	1892	contributing
401 S. Willson	Hartman House	Vernacular/Queen Anne	1883	Primary
404 S. Willson	(listed as 402 in NR)	Queen Anne/Cottage	1883	Contributing
408 S. Willson		Vernacular	1883	Contributing
412 S. Willson	Herron House	Colonial Revival	1902	Contributing
415 S. Willson	Fisher House/Blair House	Georgian Revival	1912	Primary

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 43

Bon Ton Historic District

417-423 S. Willson		Modern Apartments	1962	Noncontributing
420 S. Willson	Fielding House	Colonial Revival	1884	Contributing
503 S. Willson	Poore House	Picturesque Revival: Tudor	1937	Contributing
504 S. Willson	Willson House	Colonial Revival	1886	Primary
511 S. Willson	Monforton House	Georgian Revival	1936-38	Contributing
516 S. Willson		Queen Anne/Colonial Revival	1902	Contributing
520 S. Willson	Pease/Strand House	Queen Anne/Colonial Revival	1900	Contributing
521 S. Willson	Mendenhall House	Queen Anne	1886	Primary
603 S. Willson		Vernacular	1929	Contributing
604 S. Willson	Davidson House	Stick Style	1907	Primary
607 S. Willson	Rose House	Vernacular	1905	Contributing
610 S. Willson	Foster House	Colonial Revival	1904	Contributing
613 S. Willson	Tudor/Robinson House	Queen Anne Cottage	1883	Contributing
619 S. Willson	Hartman House	Colonial Revival	1886	Primary
624 S. Willson	Story House	Vernacular	1942	Noncontributing
701 S. Willson	Baker House	Colonial Revival	1904	Contributing
704 S. Willson	Anceney House	Tudor Revival	1929	Contributing
709 S. Willson	Patten House	Vernacular	1907	Contributing
712 S. Willson	Burr Fisher House	Spanish Colonial Revival	1909	Primary
713 S. Willson	Gardener House	Vernacular	1907	Contributing
722 S. Willson	Sigma Chi Fraternity	Modern Apartments	1961	Noncontributing
725 S. Willson	E.W. King House	Queen Anne/Col.Revival	1907	Primary
804 S. Willson	Stewart House	Craftsman Style	1911	Primary
810 S. Willson	Cooley House	Vernacular	1904	Contributing
811 S. Willson	T. Byron Story House	Queen Anne	1910	Primary
814 S. Willson	Martin House	Craftsman Style	1909	Contributing
822 S. Willson	Hauseman House	Vernacular	1936	Contributing
901 S. Willson	Waite House	Craftsman Style	1911	Primary
902 S. Willson	Walker House	Colonial Revival	1904	Contributing
908 S. Willson	Seitz House	Four Square	1916	Contributing
911 S. Willson	Scherer House	French Provincial	1936	Primary
912 S. Willson	Stiff House	Vernacular	c.1892	Contributing
916 S. Willson	Richardson House	Craftsman Vernacular	1926	Contributing
921 S. Willson		Craftsman Style	c.1910	Primary
922 S. Willson		Ranch	1950	Noncontributing
1004 S. Willson	Plew House	Craftsman Bungalow	1915	Contributing
1005 S. Willson		Vernacular	c.1896	Contributing
216 W. Alderson		Ranch	1954	noncontributing
214 W. Curtiss		Vernacular/Queen Anne	c.1900	contributing
115 W. Story	Sievert House	Ranch	1954	noncontributing
310 W. Dickerson	Barton House	Ranch	1960	noncontributing
301 W. Story		Modern Apartments	1961/1981	noncontributing

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

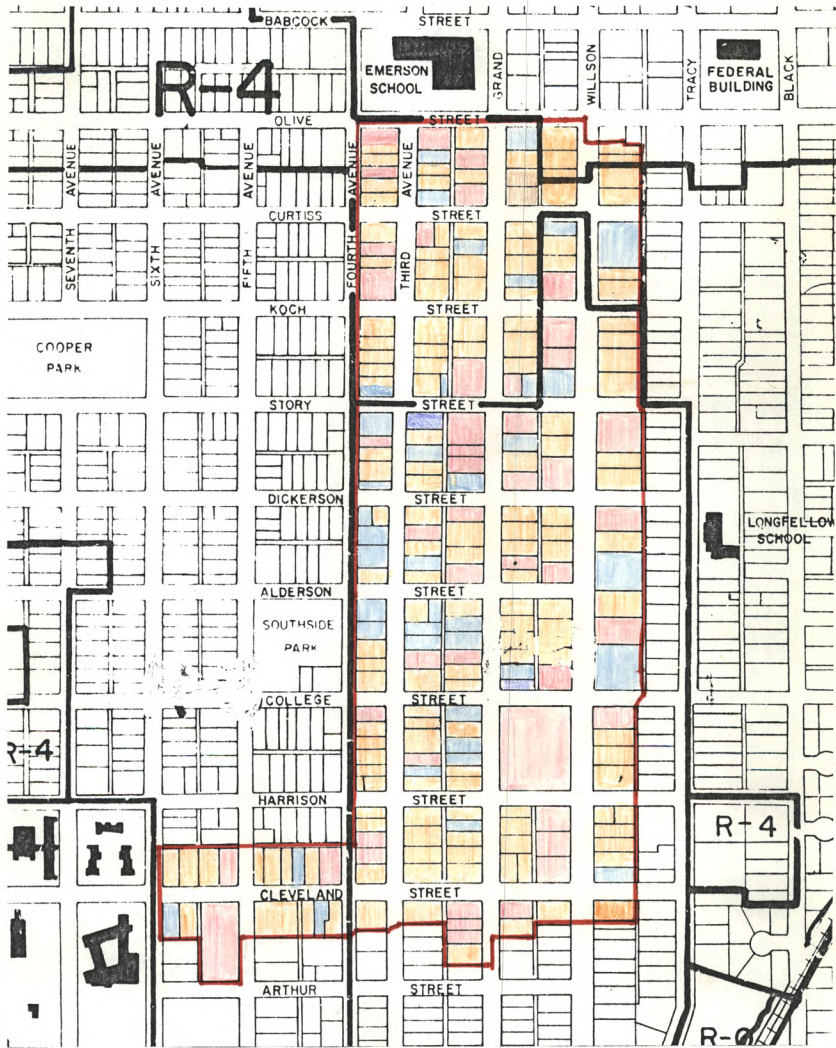
Section number 8 Page 44

Bon Ton Historic District

310 W. Olive		Tri-gable (moved)	c.1900	contributing
309 W. Harrison	Scott House	Bungalow	c.1922	contributing
310 East Koch		Tri-gable	c.1918	noncontributing
115 Cleveland Ave.	Good House	Tudor Revival	c.1934	contributing
119 Cleveland Ave.	R.A. Cooley House/ MSC Home Management	Colonial Revival	c.1922	contributing
120 Cleveland Ave.	W.R. Plew House	Eclectic	c.1925	primary
205 Cleveland Ave.	Cook House	Colonial Revival	c.1925	contributing
304 Cleveland Ave.	Brotherton House	Colonial Revival	1916	contributing
402 Cleveland Ave.	McCay House	Vernacular	1930	contributing
405 Cleveland Ave.	H.D. Bath House	Mediterranean Revival	1927	primary
408 Cleveland Ave.	Saunders House	Vernacular	c.1941	noncontributing
411 Cleveland Ave.	Farrington House	Tudor Revival	1936	contributing
412 Cleveland Ave.	Browning House	International	1936	contributing
415 Cleveland Ave.	Stein House	Remodeled	1937	noncontributing
419 Cleveland Ave.	Long House	Bungalow	1926	contributing
421 Cleveland Ave.	Menard House	Bungalow	c.1933	contributing
425 Cleveland Ave.	Sullivan House	Colonial Revival	c.1938	contributing
426 Cleveland Ave.	Heetderks House	Colonial Revival	c.1930	contributing
503 Cleveland Ave.	F.S. Cooley House	Colonial Revival/ Craftsman	1915	primary
504 Cleveland Ave.	Graf House	Chateausque	1933-34	primary
509 Cleveland Ave.	Healy House	Tudor Revival	c.1935	contributing
515 Cleveland Ave.	Van Winkle House	Tudor Revival	1936	contributing
516 Cleveland Ave.	Swingle House	Neo Gothic Revival	c.1931	contributing
520 Cleveland Ave.	McKinley House	Ranch	1955	noncontributing
521 Cleveland Ave.	Chaffin House	Tudor Revival	1936	contributing

BON TON HISTORIC DISTRICT

Bozeman, MT



Red: Primary
Green: Park

Orange: Contributing
Blue: Non-contributing