

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section _____ Page ____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 06000333

Date Listed: 4/21/2006

Billings Townsite Historic District
(Boundary Increase)

Property Name

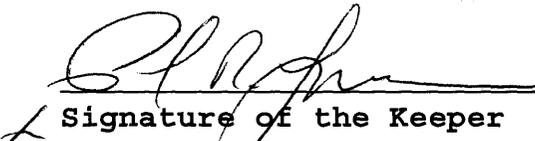
Yellowstone
County

MT
State

N/A

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

4/21/2006
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Certification:

This verifies that the boundary increase/nomination was submitted by the SHPO as *meeting* the National Register Criteria at the *local* level. [The SHPO inadvertently left the certification blocks unchecked. This has now been corrected on the nomination form.]

Period of Significance:

The period of significance for the boundary increase must match that of the original nomination: 1882-1920. [The period for the boundary increase area cannot be different than the original nomination, without incorporating those changing characteristics into the entire district through an Additional Documentation submission. It may be possible to justify a new period of significance for the enlarged district that extends up to the World War II era, but the current documentation is not sufficiently documented. The buildings in the boundary increase were all built within a narrow time span that falls within the original 1882-1920 time period.]

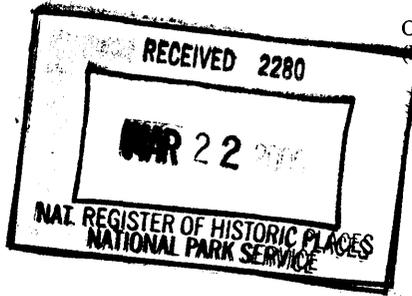
These clarifications were confirmed with the MT SHPO office.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Billings Townsite Historic District (Boundary Increase I)

Other names/site number

2. Location

Street & number 2600 (2528), 2604-2606, 2608, 2610-2614, and 2624 Montana Avenue

City or town Billings

State Montana **Code** 30 **County** Yellowstone **Code** 111 **Zip code** 59101

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

3/17/06
Date

State or federal agency or tribal government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/title

Date

State or federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

[Signature]

4/21/2006

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

[Handwritten mark]

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)			
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district			
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	Buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure			
	<input type="checkbox"/> object			
		<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing	Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
N/A	0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions	Current Functions
COMMERCE: warehouse / specialty store / business TRANSPORTATION: rail-related	COMMERCE: warehouse / specialty store / business DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling WORK IN PROGRESS: rehabilitation

7. Description

Architectural Classification

OTHER: Western Commercial

Materials

FOUNDATION: Concrete
WALLS: Brick, Concrete
OTHER: Metal, Sandstone, Glass

Narrative Description

See continuation sheets.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B Removed from its original location.
- C A birthplace or a grave.
- D A cemetery.
- E A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F A commemorative property.
- G Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

See continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

See continuation sheets.

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

Architecture; Commerce

Period of Significance

1915-1949

Significant Dates

1915, 1918, 1919, 1923

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown,

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Western Heritage Center, Billings, MT

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property The boundary expansion is approximately 1.5 acres, increasing the acreage of the Billings Townsite Historical District from 14.6 to 16.1 acres.

Legal Description SW ¼ of NW ¼ of NE ¼ of Sec. 3 T1S R26E

At one time, these properties on the railroad right-of-way were designated as Block A, Lots 1-14, and Block B, Lot 14, of the Malia Subdivision, a tract originally leased from the Northern Pacific Railroad. This description is no longer in use. Instead, they are now referred to solely by their Montana Rail Link lease numbers: #501059, #501105 and #245865. See attached map.

UTM References

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
#1	12	694216.4	5072697.5	#3	12	694137.3	5072585.3
#2	12	694244.1	5072661.7	#4	12	694111.0	5072623.3

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheets.

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheets.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title	Ann Kooistra-Manning, YHPB consultant			Date	March 6, 2006 (rev.)
Organization	Western Heritage Center, on behalf of the Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board and property owners			Telephone	(406) 256-5936
Street & number	2822 Montana Avenue			City or town	Billings
City or town	Billings	State	MT	Zip code	59101

Additional Documentation**Continuation Sheets****Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items**Property Owner**

Multiple (*See continuation sheets.*)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to Keeper, National Register of Historic Places, 1849 "C" Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section 7 Page 1

BILLINGS TOWNSITE HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE I)
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA

The city of Billings is located in south-central Montana. It is the county seat of Yellowstone County and is the largest city in the state. The city is nestled between sandstone rimrocks along the Yellowstone River, the major water source through the dry prairies of eastern Montana.

Billings emerged in 1882 as the Northern Pacific Railroad forged through the Yellowstone River Valley to establish a transcontinental line. The history of Billings is tied to railroad, not only for its namesake, railroad magnate Frederick Billings, but also because the railroad spurred the settlement by homesteaders of what was formerly considered a barren and uninhabitable landscape. Billings remains an important railroad hub in this region in the transport of large-scale manufactured items, coal mined from southeastern Montana, as well as stock and crops grown by local producers.

The Billings Townsite Historic District currently encompasses four city blocks and railroad right-of-way lands near the Union Depot on Montana Avenue. It is bounded by the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe railroad line on the south and First Avenue North, between 22nd and 26th streets. The original downtown Billings historic district contains 16 historic buildings built between 1899 and 1920. It included ten hotels and lodging, two storefronts, two warehouses,, a newspaper building, and a railway depot that was recently restored.

The proposed expansion of the historic district, Boundary Increase I, consists of a half-block area on the railroad right-of-way adjacent to the Billings Townsite Historic District. Within this area are five historic buildings, built between 1915 and 1919 that share the architectural character of the existing historic district as well as its historical associations with commerce and transportation. They also create a visual link between the existing historic district to the east and the older buildings lining Montana and Minnesota avenues to the west, the core commercial district when the original depot was located along the railroad tracks at 28th Street.

Two of the five buildings are brick warehouses. The other three are early 20th century western storefronts of brick construction, similar in design to a number of buildings near the depot, which originally housed retail and wholesale operations. These sturdy brick structures, all contributing elements, are representative of the last wave of construction to occur along Montana Avenue and Minnesota Avenue, flanking the railroad tracks that run through the heart of Billings' original townsite.

The street-facing elevations of these two and three-story buildings have remained virtually unchanged. Their secondary elevations fronting the tracks have suffered more alterations over the years, although efforts have been made in the past five years to restore the original architectural designs, such as window patterning, on the rear façades. The five brick buildings in the 2600 block of Montana Avenue have been absorbed into a progressive revitalization of historic downtown Billings.

	Historic Building Name	Address	Year Built	Architectural Style or Type	Contributing or Non-contributing
1	George L. Tracy	2600 (2528) Montana Avenue	1919	Industrial	Contributing
2	Billings Implement	2604-2606 Montana Avenue	ca. 1915	Western Commercial	Contributing
3	Mills Durant-Star	2608 Montana Avenue	1919	Western Commercial	Contributing
4	E.U. Logan Glass and Paint	2610-2614 Montana Avenue	ca. 1918	Western Commercial	Contributing
5	Stone-Ordean-Wells	2624 Montana Avenue	ca. 1915	Western Commercial	Contributing

The table above summarizes the basic information for each property within Boundary Increase I of the Billings Townsite Historic District. The following narrative provides a more detailed description, including a brief history, physical description and statement of significance, for each of the five buildings. The narrative is organized by address.

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BILLINGS TOWNSITE HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE I)
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA

George L. Tracy Building — 2600 (2528) Montana Avenue

Architectural Type: Industrial Warehouse
Built: 1919; 1923 addition
Architect: Possibly Chandler Cohagen
Original Use: Warehouse
Current Use: Work-in-progress / restaurant in addition

Contributing

The George L. Tracy Co., under the management of C. W. Gorham, moved into the newly constructed warehouse at 2600 Montana Avenue in 1919 as "manufacturer's agents." The company expanded the building eastward in about 1923 with a one-story brick addition and concrete loading dock for trucks. After the addition was built, the building's address was reassigned from 2600 to 2528 Montana Avenue. The Ryan Fruit Co., a wholesale fruit, produce and grocery business, began leasing the addition in 1925. During the early 1940s, the Ryan Fruit Co. shared the premises with the International Brokerage Co., a manufacturers' brokerage firm. The Gamble-Robinson Co., a wholesale grocer headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota, moved into the building in the mid-1940s, after the Ryan Fruit Co. closed its doors. The south side of the building still bears a black ghost sign reading: GAMBLE-ROBINSON CO./FRUIT AND GROCERIES in white and yellow. The building stood largely vacant from the mid-1980s until the late 1990s. The original building is currently being refurbished by Mike Schaer, who bought it in 2003. The one-story historic addition has been converted into a restaurant called the Eleven Café.

The George L. Tracy Building is a two-story, flat roof warehouse of heavy brick construction that stands between the railroad tracks and Montana Avenue. The concrete foundation is parged with textured concrete. The primary façade, which faces north onto Montana Avenue, is finished with brown brick and trimmed with sandstone. The symmetrical façade is divided into seven bays by raised brick pilasters trimmed at the caps with sandstone darts. The entrance is centrally located and is accentuated by a sandstone Gibbs surround, a lintel, a transom light, and a decorative cornice of white stone engraved with "Geo. L. Tracy Co." Original fenestration patterns are evident. The foundation originally had non-egress basement windows consistent with the bays of the façade. On the first floor, central, double-hung units were flanked by sidelights and divided transoms. Although the framework is intact, the windows have been replaced with fixed glass centers. The window of the east bay has been in-filled with brick to contain a tripartite of two casement windows flanking a five-over-five fixed window. The large center light of the west bay has been boarded in to support a small double-hung window. On the second floor, the original paired windows with 9-pane glazing remain. A band of brick dentils line the top of each bay, and a corbeled, denticulated brick coursing trims the raised parapet. The rear of the building is outfitted with a concrete loading dock that projects toward the railroad tracks to the south. The loading dock, which has been enclosed with corrugated sheet metal, contains three bays with sliding metal doors. On the second floor, brick masonry includes six arched window openings. Although some are boarded up or missing, four retain the pattern of paired 9-pane windows, consistent with the fenestration on the front. A square, metal clad elevator shed rises above the rear center and contains a three-over-three window. A one-story brick storage wing with a loading dock and doors was added to the east around 1923. Above the addition, the original windows remain visible.

The interior of the building has changed very little over time. It retains an open plan with exposed brick walls, support posts and beams. The original flooring — concrete on the main level and wood upstairs — and front staircase also remain. A new staircase has been added to the rear to meet fire and safety code requirements.

The George L. Tracy Building is among the best preserved brick warehouses in downtown Billings with most of its original design and detailing intact. This industrial building is representative of the brick warehouses built along the railroad

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BILLINGS TOWNSITE HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE I)
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA

tracks in downtown Billings during the early 20th century. Its dark brown brick construction with raised foundation, flat roof, brick pilasters and contrasting cream-colored stone accents are distinctive architectural elements shared with the Stone-Ordean-Wells Building (ca. 1915) at 2624 Montana Avenue as well as several other warehouses in downtown Billings. Although the George L. Tracy Building's architect is unknown, it does bear resemblance, in form, massing, and detail, to buildings designed between 1915 and 1923 by architect Chandler Cohagen. Most identifiably similar are the Marshall-Wells Building at 13 N. 23rd Street (1919), the Otis-Kiichli Candy Factory at 24 S. 29th Street (1919), the Wiggenhorn Bros. Warehouse at 3019-3033 Montana Avenue (1919) and the Western Newspaper Printing Supply and Paper Warehouse at 2019 Montana Avenue (1923).

The historical significance of the George L. Tracy Building is conveyed both by its historic function as a warehouse and its relationship to transportation corridors. At the time it was built, Billings had already established itself as a railroad shipping hub and large brick warehouses lined the tracks along Montana and Minnesota avenues. With the addition of street-side loading docks, the warehouse was outfitted for truck freighting as well.

For nearly thirty years, this warehouse served as distribution center for manufactured goods. The George L. Tracy Co. had this building constructed along the tracks in Billings to take advantage of the city's strategic junction of three major railroads. This brokerage firm, based in Helena, operated branches in most of the major cities throughout the western states. The International Brokerage Co., another manufacturers' agency that occupied the building, boasted a market base beyond national borders.

The George L. Tracy Building had a parallel history as a wholesale fruit and grocery warehouse, first housing the Ryan Fruit Co. and later the Gamble-Robinson Co. These two wholesale concerns, equipped with state-of-the-art refrigeration units, were instrumental in supplying fresh produce and name-brand groceries to local stores and retail outlets throughout southeastern Montana and northern Wyoming.

Billings Implement Building — 2604-2606 Montana Avenue

Architectural Style: Western Commercial
Built: c. 1915
Architect / builder: Unknown
Original Use: Farm implement store
Current Use: Retail store / residential loft apartments

Contributing

The Billings Implement Co. opened in this two-story brick building in 1915-1916, around the time the Stone-Ordean-Wells Co. moved into 2624 Montana Avenue. Subsequent businesses, including MacKay Farm Implements and the Mills Implement Co., marketed farm machinery from this location for decades. The south side of the building still bears a black ghost sign reading: EMERSON-BRANTINGHAM FARM MACHINERY. In 1935, J. J. Mills, owner of the Mills Implement Co., moved his wholesale grocery operation, the Billings Grocery Co., to 2606 and 2608 Montana Avenue. The Billings Grocery Co. remained here into the 1980s. The building later housed a pawn shop before it was abandoned. Urban Frontier Developers bought the building in 2002 and fully renovated it. The Wise Penny, a second-hand store, now occupies the first level. The second floor is divided into four loft apartments connected by a corridor to the two loft apartments on the second floor of the building at 2608 Montana Avenue. These apartments, named the SoPO Lofts by owner and developer Randy Hafer, are already occupied.

This two-story brick building, set on a concrete foundation, stands between the railroad tracks and Montana Avenue. The façade, which faces north onto Montana Avenue, is finished with tan brick and trimmed with dark brown brick. The façade

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BILLINGS TOWNSITE HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE I)
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA

is divided into two wooden framed storefronts with recessed entrances. These openings tie in across the heads to a decorative band of vertically laid brown brick. The large display windows are topped by fixed panels of translucent glass. Panels of translucent glass with wire meshing line the storefronts at the base. On the second floor are eight new double-hung windows, each trimmed with brown brick along the top and bottom. A brown cast iron cornice spans the façade, and the tan brick parapet, edging the flat roof, is capped with a band of brown brick. The rear of the building is outfitted with an open concrete loading dock that projects toward the railroad tracks to the south. A modern glass-panel garage door opens onto the loading dock. Four of six hopper windows remain, two having been in-filled with brick. On the second floor at the rear are eight new double-hung windows.

The interior of the first floor retail space retains its historic elements, such as the concrete floor, an open plan, original plaster-over-brick walls around the perimeter, high plaster ceiling, and heavy timber support columns and beams. The original window openings on the east wall, which were bricked in when the neighboring building was constructed, are also visible. The original storefront and glazing remain, although the original doors have been replaced. On the second floor, the interior has been modified to accommodate residential loft apartments, but the original ceiling and timbers, once damaged by fire and covered over, have been exposed to view once again. Other modifications include the removal of the elevator and the resurfacing of the damaged wood floors with concrete.

The Billings Implement Building is representative of Western Commercial architecture. The Western Commercial style, popular in Montana between the 1880s and 1920s, is the predominant architectural style of the commercial buildings along Montana and Minnesota avenues. Like many of the one to three-story wooden and brick buildings within Billings' historic downtown, the Billings Implement Building features a storefront with large display windows on the main floor, space for offices or apartments above, and a flat roof with a simple cornice or parapet. Located along the railroad tracks, however, it also incorporated a loading bay and dock at the rear.

The historical significance of the Billings Implement Building is conveyed both by its historic function as a wholesale and retail outlet and its relationship to transportation corridors. Established at the peak of the homesteading era, the Billings Implement Co., and later MacKay Farm Implements and the Mills Implement Co., were prominent among the farm machinery retailers that catered to the stockmen, dryland homesteaders and sugar beet farmers in the Yellowstone Valley. In 1935, the building's commercial function shifted into the wholesale grocery market when the Billings Grocery Co. moved in.

Mills Durant-Star Building — 2608 Montana Avenue

Architectural Style: Western Commercial
Built: 1919
Architect / builder: Unknown
Original Use: Wholesale cigar and tobacco warehouse
Current Use: Parking bays / residential loft apartments

Contributing

Louis Cohn, a national cigar and tobacco wholesale distributor, occupied this building from 1919 to 1922. In 1923, Harry Gullard opened an auto dealership at this location. Local entrepreneur J.J. Mills bought the building and opened a Durant-Star dealership in 1925. Over the next twenty years, Mills vastly expanded his commercial interests. In 1935, he moved his wholesale grocery operation, the Billings Grocery Co., into this building and the one to the east, which also housed the Mills Implement Co. In the 1940s, Mills established a wholesale dry goods company next door at 2610-2614 Montana Avenue. The Billings Grocery Co. occupied the buildings at 2606 and 2608 Montana into the 1980s. These neighboring buildings later

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BILLINGS TOWNSITE HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE I)
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA

housed a drive-through pawn shop before being abandoned. Urban Frontier Developers bought the building in 2002 and fully renovated it. On the first level is a parking garage. The second floor has been converted into two loft apartments connected by a corridor to the four loft apartments on the second floor of the building at 2604-2606 Montana Avenue.

The Mills Durant-Star Building is a two-story brick building, set upon a concrete foundation, between the railroad tracks and Montana Avenue. The façade, which faces north onto Montana Avenue, is finished with dark brown brick trimmed with red brick. A storefront in the east portion of the first floor is balanced by a newer roll-up garage door in a separate bay to the west, an element consistent with the historic design. These openings tie in across the heads to a decorative band of vertically laid red brick. The original storefront had been removed and in-filled after the close of the period of significance. Recently, it was replaced with metal-framed storefront that closely mimics the original design. On the second floor, red brick banding surrounds the window openings and above each, a decorative panel is outlined with red brick. Original glazing, again removed after the period of significance, has been replaced by new one-over-one double-hung windows that closely match the original's style. A stepped, raised-center parapet rises above the flat roof at the front. The rear of the building was originally outfitted with a loading dock off two wide bays spanned by a wooden lintel. The loading dock is no longer there. The bays are now in-filled with cinderblock and have an upper banding of glass block. At the west end, a newer garage door opening has been enclosed with corrugated metal with a standard metal door providing access. On the second story, the original design included four double-hung windows with brick sills and flat brick heads. At one time, the east unit had been expanded to accommodate a doorway. Recent renovation in-filled the doorway to recreate the original design and replaced the units with new double-hung windows.

The interior of the first floor, formerly an auto showroom, retains its historic elements, including the concrete floor and exposed brick walls. On the second floor, the original fenestration has been replicated and the original ceiling and timbers have been exposed to view once again. The space, however, has been modified to accommodate residential loft apartments. The damaged wood floors were also resurfaced with concrete.

The Mills Durant-Star Building is representative of Western Commercial architecture. Like the Billings Implement, its architectural style is Western Commercial. Unlike the Billings Implement Building which features a storefront with large display windows on the main floor, space for offices or apartments above, and a flat roof with a simple cornice or parapet, the Mills Durant-Star Building is unique in that it is one of the few brick in-fill structures still standing.

The historical significance of the Mills Durant-Star Building is conveyed both by its historic function as a retail and wholesale outlet and its relationship to transportation corridors. Early in its history, national tobacco wholesaler Louis Cohn supplied wholesale tobacco to and likely distributed locally manufactured cigars from this site. More than a dozen cigar factories were in operation in Billings between 1883 and 1922 before Prohibition undercut the tobacco industry, which greatly relied on tavern sales. By 1923, Harry Gullard's automobile dealership had replaced the cigar wholesaler. A year or so later, Gullard's dealership gave way to the Mills Durant-Star dealership, owned by J.J. Mills. The Mills Durant-Star marketed a new and short-lived brand of cars produced by William "Billy" Durant, former CEO of General Motors. The Mills Durant-Star showroom kept pace in the burgeoning automotive-related businesses of downtown Billings until 1935, when General Motors acquired the Durant factory and closed out the Durant line. Owner J.J. Mills switched gears and moved his Billings Grocery Co. into this building and the one to the east, redesigning the space into a regional supply center for name-brand groceries and other commodities.

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BILLINGS TOWNSITE HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE I)
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA

E.U. Logan Glass and Paint Building — 2610-2614 Montana Avenue

Architectural Style: Western Commercial
Built: c. 1918
Architect / builder: Unknown
Original Use: Wholesale glass and paint store
Current Use: Offices and kitchen

Contributing

In 1918, the E.U. Logan Glass and Paint Co. established its wholesale and retail operation in this newly built three-story building, next to the Stone-Ordean-Wells warehouse. The building housed the E.U. Logan Glass and Paint Co. through the 1930s. Montana Paint Manufacturing then occupied the building for a short time. Another wholesaler, Billings Dry Goods, opened here in the mid-1940s. The Sportsman Supply Co. occupied the building during the 1960s and 1970s. St. Vincent de Paul, a non-profit organization, purchased the building in 1972 and converted it into offices and, at one time, the entrance to its thrift store, now housed next door at the Stone-Ordean-Wells Building.

This three-story, flat roof commercial building of brick construction, set on a concrete foundation, stands between the railroad tracks and Montana Avenue. The façade, which faces north onto Montana Avenue, is finished with tan brick trimmed with dark red brick. The façade is arranged symmetrically into three bays. On the east and west, the bays extend to three panels in width; two at center. On the ground floor, storefront entrances are located to each side and a fixed display window is placed at center. Large banded windows are stacked above these openings. The original windows were replaced by new awning type windows with fixed panes above after a fire ravaged them c. 1978. Tan brick panels outlined with red brick visually separate the floors. Simple bands of red brick span the tops of window openings. The parapet is decorated with red brick diamonds and a simple, outlined panel. Red brick coping finishes the façade. The rear is outfitted on the west side with a concrete loading dock that projects south toward the railroad tracks. A one-story storage shed with metal roofing encloses the loading dock. At center is a ground-level double industrial door with a small window above. On the east side is a double-hung window next to a newer door. On the upper stories, large multi-pane windows with transoms are banded together to illuminate the interior. The east and west sides of the building rise above the immediate neighbors. The brickwork on the sides and at the rear has been parged with concrete.

The interior design has been modified to accommodate offices on the first and second floors with added walls and drop ceilings. The third floor, however, retains an open plan with exposed beams and columns.

Although the rear has been modified and the front windows have been replaced, much of its original design and detailing are intact. The E.U. Logan Glass and Paint Building is representative of Western Commercial architecture. The E.U. Logan Glass and Paint Building features a storefront with large display windows on the main floor, space for offices or apartments above, and a flat roof with a simple cornice or parapet. Located along the railroad tracks, however, it also incorporated a loading bay and dock at the rear.

The historical significance of the E. U. Logan Glass and Paint Building is conveyed both by its historic function as a wholesale and retail outlet and its relationship to transportation corridors. E. U. Logan Glass and Paint, a local company, manufactured mirrors and paints and distributed name-brand plate glass. Not only did the company supply the display windows for many local storefronts, it shipped its products by rail throughout the Yellowstone Valley. The wholesale tradition of this building continued when J. J. Mills opened a wholesale dry goods store here in the 1940s.

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Stone-Ordean-Wells Building — 2624 Montana Avenue

Architectural Type: Industrial Warehouse

Built: c. 1915

Architect: Unknown

Original Use: Wholesale grocery

Current Use: Thrift store

Contributing

The Stone-Ordean-Wells Co. was a large fruit and produce wholesaler based in Duluth, Minnesota. The company opened a branch in Billings at 502 North 27th Street during the early 1900s. The firm constructed this building, situated on the southeast corner of Montana Avenue and 27th Street, in about 1915. Stone-Ordean-Wells Co. remained here until 1933, when Nash-Finch Co., another large-scale wholesaler based in North Dakota, bought out the company. Shortly thereafter, Nash-Finch sold this large building to Ryan Grocery Co., a wholesale grocer headquartered in San Diego, California. For the past thirty years, the building has housed St. Vincent de Paul's thrift store.

This two-story commercial warehouse of heavy brick construction stands between the railroad tracks and Montana Avenue. The building's concrete foundation is parged with textured concrete and originally had non-egress basement windows, which are now in-filled. The primary façades, which face north onto Montana Avenue and west onto North 27th Street, are finished with brown brick and trimmed with tan stone. The façades are divided into multiple bays by raised brick pilasters trimmed at the caps with small tan stone blocks. An entrance is placed near the northwest corner and is accentuated by a decorative cornice of tan stone. Another entrance is located on the west side of the building. On the north and west, large storefront windows are divided by three vertical lights with hopper transoms in the tops. Several window openings and a secondary entrance at the east end of the façade have been in-filled with brick. On the second story, each bay has a narrow three-pane hopper window. The parapet is decorated with diamonds of tan stone set above each pilaster and a band of decorative brickwork. Tan stone coping finishes the façades. The roof is flat. At the rear, three of five original bays remain, loading out onto a raised wooden dock along the railroad tracks. The dock is partially covered by a metal awning. Extensive brick repair has been made at the rear. Two bays and a window are now in-filled with brick. On the upper floor, brickwork and fenestration are similar to those on the north.

The building's interior is much as it was as a warehouse, including its open plan, plaster-over-brick walls around the perimeter, and heavy timber beams and support posts and beams. The ceiling is the exposed underside of the wooden plank flooring above. The original elevator is still in use and, in the southwest corner of the main floor, a wood-trimmed wall of windows and doors from the original warehouse office remains.

The Stone-Ordean-Wells Building is among the best preserved brick warehouses in downtown Billings. Most original design and detailing are intact. This industrial building is representative of the brick warehouses built along the railroad tracks in downtown Billings during the early 20th century. Its dark brown brick construction with raised foundation, flat roof, brick pilasters and contrasting cream-colored stone accents are distinctive architectural elements shared with the George L. Tracy Building (1919) as well as several other warehouses in downtown Billings designed between 1915 and 1923 by the architect Chandler Cohagen. Most identifiably similar are the Marshall-Wells Building at 13 N. 23rd Street (1919), the Otis-Kiichli Candy Factory at 24 S. 29th Street (1919), the Wiggenhorn Bros. Warehouse at 3019-3033 Montana Avenue (1919) and the Western Newspaper Printing Supply and Paper Warehouse at 2019 Montana Avenue (1923).

The Stone-Ordean-Wells Building along with the other four buildings within this proposed boundary increase conveyed their historical significance both by its historic function as a wholesale warehouse and its relationship to transportation corridors.

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At the time it was built, Billings had already established itself as a railroad shipping hub and large brick warehouses lined the tracks along Montana and Minnesota avenues. Two nationally recognized wholesale companies used this Billings' warehouse as a distribution center for rail shipments of produce and groceries. Stone-Ordean-Wells Co., a Minnesota firm, shipped commodities in from the Great Lakes region, while Ryan Grocery Co. distributed its goods from its base in California. Both enterprises were instrumental in supplying fresh produce and name-brand groceries to local stores and retail outlets throughout southeastern Montana and beyond.

Integrity

Each of the five buildings in the boundary increase area retain a high degree of integrity, and effectively convey their associations with the history of commerce, and serve as significant representatives of the Western Commercial architectural style prevalent throughout the existing district. Integrity of setting, location, feeling, and association are intact. Compromises to the integrity of design, workmanship, and materials are limited to some window and door replacements and small-scale enclosures. These changes, on the whole, are sensitive and in keeping with the original design, and do not overly detract from the buildings' ability to convey their significance.

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Summary Statement of Significance

The buildings within Boundary Increase I of the Billings Townsite Historical District retain their integrity and are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. The period of significance for the original district area is 1882 to 1949, from the time the Minnesota Land Improvement Company platted the townsite of Billings to the time when the City of Billings began abandoning spur lines within the downtown area. For the purposes of this increase area, however, the period of significance is limited to 1915-1949, as that is the earliest building construction date.

Boundary Increase I is significant under National Register Criterion A for its strong association with the commercial and transportation history of Billings, Montana, during the early 20th Century. Like the resources within the original district boundary, the location of the contributing properties on the railroad right-of-way is as significant as the reliance of the businesses they housed on rail-transport for their commercial livelihood. They also played an integral role in the local economy by supplying goods produced elsewhere to Billings and surrounding communities.

Under National Register Criterion C, Boundary Increase I to the Billings Townsite Historic District is significant for its representation of the broad patterns of architectural evolution during the early 20th Century on the Northern Plains. The buildings within the boundary increase are architecturally consistent with those found in the existing Billings Townsite Historical District. They are also well-preserved examples of the brick warehouses and western commercial styles prevalent in western states around the turn of the century.

Historical Context

The city of Billings shares the heritage of many urbanized western towns that grew up along newly laid railroad lines through the west. After the Northern Pacific Railroad charted its transcontinental new line through the Yellowstone Valley, the Minnesota and Montana Land Improvement Company platted the townsite of Billings in March 1882. The townsite flanked the railroad right-of-way, with Montana Avenue, north of the tracks, and Minnesota Avenue to the south.

Billings' railroad ancestry is seen in its townsite configuration. Unlike mining towns of the region whose contours traced the haphazard routes of streambeds and ore bodies, railroad towns were orderly geometric affairs. Laid out on rectilinear grids, the rail lines formed the spine of the townsite, with streets for businesses and homes projecting away at right angles. Billings' layout copied those of Bismarck and Jamestown, ND. However, taking advantage of the unique way that Billings straddled two sections, Clark platted the town to include two main commercial streets, paralleling and fronting onto the rail line. These twin streets, named Montana and Minnesota for the mother company that gave them life, formed the commercial center of the new town.¹

The fledgling railroad town quickly grew into a bustling commercial center. Merchants, bankers and other entrepreneurs rushed in to set up shop as land-seeking homesteaders flooded into the valley. The population of Billings boomed. Whereas the U.S. Census reported only 836 residents in 1890, by 1900 the population of Billings had reached 3,221 and then tripled to 10,031 in 1910.

¹ Chere Jiusto, "Tales Spun Along the Tracks: A History of Downtown Billings," Downtown Billings Historic and Architectural Survey, Fall-Winter 1998, p. 2.

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The business district, concentrated near the Headquarters Hotel and early depot at 28th Street, flourished. The arrival of the Burlington Northern line (CB&Q) into downtown Billings in 1894 pulled commercial and residential development northward. James J. Hill, owner of the Great Northern Railroad, which had become the third major line running to Billings, gained a controlling interest in the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1909. Hill, citing a lack of space in downtown Billings, moved the freight yards and roundhouse shared by the three lines to neighboring Laurel, Montana, in 1906. The rail-based economy in the Yellowstone Valley mushroomed after 1909 when the Expanded Homestead Act launched a land rush. Billings quickly became the economic center for much of eastern Montana and northern Wyoming.²

In 1909, a new depot opened along the tracks to the east between 23rd and 24th streets. This event ushered in a time of transformation along the railroad corridor as the business core shifted eastward. The scene along this stretch of Montana Avenue quickly changed as older wooden buildings were replaced by more permanent brick commercial structures, primarily western storefronts and warehouses. New hotels, restaurants, saloons and shops, businesses that catered to railroad passengers and crews, sprang up near the new depot, an area that now comprises the Billings Townsite Historical District.

Billings, with connections to Chicago, Seattle, Denver, and Omaha, had established itself as regional railroad hub and distribution point for goods shipping into and out of the Yellowstone Valley. Over the next five years, corporate investors began taking an interest in Billings, buying out or displacing local establishments. In 1915, for example, California wholesaler Ryan Grocery Company bought out the wholesale grocery operation of Peter and Christian Yegen, two pioneering entrepreneurs who once owned businesses occupying two city blocks along Minnesota Avenue. Gamble-Robinson, Stone-Ordean-Wells, and Marshall-Wells Company soon joined the growing list of large-scale wholesalers with branches in Billings. Department stores, such as J.C. Penney's Golden Rule store, and distributors, like Emerson-Brantingham Implement Company, began appearing in the business district.

The move of the central railroad transfer point from Billings to Laurel in 1906 offered new opportunities for development along the tracks in downtown Billings. In 1910, tracts within the railroad right-of-way were opened to commercial leasing. During the years that followed, several warehouses and large-scale commercial buildings were constructed along the tracks in the heart of the downtown commercial district. A sugar factory and flour mill processed locally grown sugar beets and grain, which made its way to national markets, much like the dairy products, wool and meat from local producers. The warehouses and wholesalers of downtown Billings shipped in by rail everything from large-scale manufactured goods to automobiles, farm equipment, groceries, and dry goods to stock merchants' shelves in Billings as well as in outlying communities.

The block of Montana Avenue between North 26th and 27th Streets, which forms Boundary Increase I, was among the last tracts to be opened for development. These tracts along the rails were attractive sites for both national and local companies. Stone-Ordean-Wells was among the first to commission construction of a new warehouse in 1915 on the corner of Montana Avenue and North 27th Street. The rest of the block was built up during a short period between 1915 and 1919, occupied by the Billings Implement Company, the manufacturing brokerage firm of George L. Tracy, wholesalers Ryan Fruit Company, and E.U. Logan Glass and Paint, and the short-lived distribution house of tobacco wholesaler Louis Cohn. The businesses in this block bustled with incoming shipments of produce and groceries, farm equipment, and name-brand factory items as well as outgoing shipments of locally manufactured paints and cigars. In the 1920s, the Mills Durant-Star Auto Dealership opened where Louis Cohn once operated his warehouse; cars were replacing cigars at 2608 Montana Avenue

In the 1930s, Ryan Grocery Company bought the Stone-Ordean-Wells Warehouse, shifting point of origin shipments from the Great Lakes region to California. Local entrepreneur J.J. Mills bought the three middle buildings, establishing a farm machinery outlet and a Billings-based wholesale-retail grocery and dry goods operation. In the 1940s, Midwestern wholesaler Gamble-Robinson bought the George L. Tracy Warehouse.

² Ibid, p. 4.

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The warehouse and retail establishments along the tracks thrived during the homestead era and into the 1940s. The *Billings Gazette* reported in July of 1933 that the Billings' branches of Ryan Grocery Company and Nash-Finch Company provided the Yellowstone Valley with the full line of nationally advertised products, including Best Foods, Del Monte, Libby, and Proctor & Gamble brands. The same issue touted that quick service in the wholesale trade is provided through "unexcelled transportation facilities, which have made Billings famous as a distribution center."³

The regional impact of the Billings' wholesale and retail concerns continued to grow. In 1940, the *Billings Gazette* reported:

The center of a large and rapidly developing agricultural area, Billings has in recent years moved into second place among Montana and Wyoming cities as a distribution center, ranking second only to Butte. Serving as an area comprising thirteen Montana and seven Wyoming counties, Billings wholesale firms have a sales volume of nearly \$20,000,000 a year, and a combined pay roll of more than \$1,000,000 annually, according to United States Census figures. . . . J.B. Eastman, railroad coordinator, has estimated that the Billings sphere of trade influence covers 46,577 square miles. This area, nearly as large as the state of Pennsylvania, includes 65 per cent of the Yellowstone River watershed.⁴

The article goes on to enumerate the hundreds of grocery, auto, and farm equipment outlets in Montana and Wyoming served by local wholesalers. It attributes such success to the "network of railroads and improved highways radiating from the city in all directions."⁵

By the end of World War II, overland trucking and air transport had made major inroads into the once dominant rail freight market making many aspects of rail-based commerce obsolete. Shipments to and from downtown warehouses became more problematic with the increase of auto traffic along the congested streets of downtown Billings and only three railroad crossings. As the city grew, construction away from the rail lines and beyond the downtown commercial district became more attractive, both for local businesses and large corporations. Attitudes favoring modernity also took a toll on the older warehouses along the tracks as new warehouses sprang up on the outskirts of town closer to the Interstate highway. Finally in 1949, the City of Billings began authorizing the abandonment of spur lines through downtown.

The 1950s brought more change to Montana and Minnesota Avenues. In 1958, a shift from steam to diesel-powered railroad engines pulled the rug out from under many businesses that relied on the steady patronage of large railroad crews. Declining passenger travel by rail also inflicted economic hardship on hotels, restaurants, and shops along the tracks. Passenger service through the city discontinued with the closure of the depot in 1979. Fires and development took out a number of brick warehouses and storefronts in the railway corridor, and many historic buildings began to suffer neglect.

Wholesale trading in the 2600 block of Montana Avenue, however, continued into the 1960s because of national wholesale grocers Gamble-Robinson and Ryan Grocery, and continued into the 1980s because of locally owned Billings Grocery Company. Truck shipments paired with continued rail freighting service through downtown, despite the protests of inconveniencing drivers, prolonged the viability of the wholesalers along the tracks. In the end however, the buildings within Boundary Increase I suffered the same fate of urban decay, neglect, and for a few, abandonment by the mid-1980s.

Efforts by local preservationists to prevent the loss of historic buildings near the Depot resulted in the National Register designation of the Billings Townsite Historical District in 1979. Twenty-seven years later, the historic district is bustling with

³ "Ryan grocery fills needs of big area in wholesale lines" and "Nash-Finch branch here supplies many well-known brands," *Billings Gazette*, July 30, 1933.

⁴ "City is distributing center for 20 counties in Midland Empire," *Billings Gazette*, September 3, 1940.

⁵ Ibid.

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activity – the historic buildings transformed once again into viable business houses. The same renaissance is happening up and down Montana and Minnesota Avenues, including the block proposed for Boundary Increase I of the historic district.

Architectural Context

Billings, like most western towns that sprang up along the railroad lines, was transformed quite quickly from a collection of roughly built wooden structures to more substantial brick buildings around the turn of the twentieth century. This change in architecture followed community efforts to establish more permanency and style in the business district as the initial scramble for space gave way to a vision of long-term growth and development. A number of devastating fires and western architectural trends also contributed to this shift.

Since most buildings of this era were designed and built by local architects and contractors, vernacular designs predominate. Those built before 1910, however, tended to be more ornamental in design with Italianate and Renaissance Revival influences. After 1910, commercial architecture tended to adopt more basic and functional designs, relying primarily on brickwork patterning for ornamentation. The warehouses and large-scale commercial buildings in Boundary Increase I are representative of this movement.

The masonry buildings of the Billings Townsite Historical District and the rest of the original business district to the west are representative of the broader commercial architectural movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The architecture along Montana and Minnesota Avenues, dating from about 1893 to 1920, consists of early commercial brick structures in the Western Commercial style. These are usually one to three stories tall with flat roofs, simple cornices or parapets and, frequently, party walls shared with neighboring buildings. Stores, restaurants, and banks often occupied the ground level storefronts with professional offices, apartments and hotel rooms upstairs. The Billings Implement, Mills Durant-Star, and E.U. Logan buildings are representative of this style of architecture. Located along the railroad tracks, however, they also present a secondary façade at the rear that incorporated a loading bay and dock. These enduring elements serve as tangible links to the dependency of early Billings commerce on the railroad.

The George L. Tracy and the Stone-Ordean-Wells buildings are among the best-preserved brick warehouses in Billings. These buildings, with raised foundations, aligned window patterning, and flat roofs, are representative of the brick warehouses built along the railroad tracks in downtown Billings during the early 20th century. Unlike some of the other warehouses, however, their dark brown, heavy brick construction, brick pilasters, and contrasting cream-colored stone accents are distinctive architectural elements shared with few other warehouses in downtown Billings, most notably the Marshall-Wells Building at 13 N. 23rd Street (1919), the Otis-Kiichli Candy Factory at 24 S. 29th Street (1919), the Wiggenhorn Bros. Warehouse at 3019-3033 Montana Avenue (1919) and the Western Newspaper Printing Supply and Paper Warehouse at 2019 Montana Avenue (1923). These four warehouses were designed between 1915 and 1923 by Chandler Cohagen, a Billings architect who gained attention throughout the Great Plains for his designs.

The identification of specific architects and building contractors for these buildings is difficult. County records for the ownership and construction of the buildings on leased railroad right-of-ways are sketchier than those for properties where the buildings and land are mutually owned. Further complicating the process is the lack of building permit records maintained by the City of Billings prior to the 1970s. A search of the architectural collections at Montana State University – Bozeman and the Western Heritage Center's archives did not verify any of the architects who designed these five buildings. At the time they were constructed, however, two architectural firms were leading designers of commercial buildings in Billings and throughout Montana and Wyoming – one being the firm of Chandler Cohagen FAIA and the other that of Link and Haire. Given the prolific nature of these firms, their prominence in Billings, and the similarity in design between the buildings in the Boundary

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Increase area and others designed by Cohagen and Link & Haire, it is possible they are responsible for them. It is also possible that their designs were mimicked by other architects or builders.

Though their associations with the five buildings that make up the Billings Townsite Historic District (Boundary Increase I) are undocumented, architects Chandler C. Cohagen, Gustave Link, and Charles Haire did contribute significantly to the design of the buildings within the original district. Their biographies are provided here to underscore their influence in the architecture of downtown Billings and throughout Montana.

Architects

Chandler Carroll Cohagen (24 April 1889 – 9 Dec 1985) was born in Sioux City, Iowa to John and Mary Cohagen. In 1907, he moved to Billings with his family. He was accepted at University of Michigan's architecture program. As a student in 1914, Cohagen and Leo M Bauer founded the Alpha Rho Chi, a national architectural fraternity that continues today. Cohagen opened an office in Billings shortly after graduation in 1915 and later partnered with his University of Michigan classmate Angus Vaughn McIver of Great Falls (1915-1917). Cohagen was credited with pressing for an Architects' Registration Law that became law in 1917. Schools were a specialty of Cohagen's but he also designed commercial, public, and institutional buildings, residences, and churches. His commissions included: the Yellowstone County Courthouse in Billings, Toole County Courthouse in Shelby, Thermopolis Hotel and Wyoming Trust Company in Thermopolis, Big Horn Creamery in Hardin, U.S. Post Office in Powell, Rosebud County Deaconess Hospital in Forsyth, Sandahl Cigar Store in Great Falls, Fromberg High School in Fromberg, and the Masonic Lodge in Wolf Point, Roundup, Sydney, and Broadus. Near the end of his career, "one of Cohagen's greatest honors was being asked to design the new governor's mansion in Helena" that was constructed in 1959.⁶

John Gustave Link (13 May 1870 – 5 January 1954) was born in Hattnau, Germany to Kaspar and Josephine Link. He emigrated in 1887 and settled in the Denver office of Frank Kidder, who wrote *The Architect's and Builder's Pocketbook* in 1902, a book that was printed in its 18th edition in 1961. By 1893 Link established his own office in St. Louis, Missouri, and went into partnership with Mr. Franklin two years later. In 1896, he became associated with the Montana's architect, J.C. Paulson and, in 1904, designing the Montana Building for the St. Louis World's Fair. Link and Martha Willing, his wife of nine years, moved to Billings in 1904. In 1906, he partnered with Charles Haire to form the architectural firm of Link and Haire, one of the most prolific and versatile firms in Montana.

Charles Sydney Haire (4 June 1857 – 3 February 1925) was born in Hamilton County, Ohio. He began his architectural career in Ohio by drafting architectural plans between 1879 and 1886. The West called and over the next two years, Haire was draftsman with the Union Pacific Railroad in Pocatello, Idaho, and with the Great Northern Railway in Butte, Montana. Haire joined John Link in 1906.

Together, over the next 19 years, they established offices in Butte, Helena, Lewistown, Missoula, and Billings. They constructed schools, churches, courthouses, hospitals, clinics, and commercial and institutional buildings across Montana. With Link holding architectural licenses in Missouri, Kansas, Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, and North Dakota, the firm's architectural influence carried far beyond Montana's borders. File documentation reveals a list of 23 typed pages of architectural drawings during Link's long career, the bulk of which was completed during Link and Haire's partnership. The list is likely missing some commissions.

There is no confirmation that the five buildings in the Boundary Increase I were designed by Cohagen or Link and Haire. But there remains a strong possibility that these buildings can be attributed to these architects. While these architecture firms boasted several high-style buildings, much of their work was in the more subdued, Western Commercial style of the day.

⁶ Cohagen Bio by CTA Architects and Engineers, Billings. MT SHPO architects files, Helena, MT.

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Arched openings, corbelled cornices, and even fenestration patterns were common to their early twentieth century designs, and very appropriate to the buildings' function.

Industrial Architecture

Generally, industrial architecture has had a minor part in history of architecture tomes. Perhaps, this is because industrial architecture demands a certain type of analysis that includes the manufacturing process as well the building product. In her book *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States*, Betsy Hunter Bradley recognizes that factories led the way in innovative building design and technology in the period 1840-1940 and factories were very important in the development of Modern Architecture. Every aspect of the factory, from its form and structure to its loading platform, is related to the manufacturing process and the determination to discover these relationships. An understanding of industrial architecture is grounded not only in these functional factors but also in an appreciation for the aesthetic ideals of engineers and their emphasis on efficiency and processes.⁷

In the 1920's, the great pioneer of Modern architecture, Le Corbusier, identified the first fruits of the *Espirit Nouveau* in factories and silos. In *Vers une Architecture* he recognized the *Zeitgeist* of the machine age and the functional tradition, so inherent in the design of factories, silos, liners, aeroplanes and cars. Indeed, in American industrial factories we find the genus of today's contemporary 'high-tech'; i.e., an architectural style subject to the purification of the machine.⁸

American architect Albert Kahn embraced the challenge posed by the industrial expansion. His work with the automobile industry, particularly Ford and Packard, reflect in important design innovations at the turn of the Twentieth Century. Modernized incarnations of building materials such as steel and reinforced concrete allowed designers to open up interior spaces. A more flexible space made it possible to experiment with new ways to organize the production process and demonstrated that henceforth the architect would be more concerned with the interior function of the space than with a quest for an architectural style for the facades. The walls of these plants were characterized by enormous windows, occupying the large openings that were determined by the grid of the concrete frame. Multi-paned metal-framed windows were the dominant feature of the building's exterior.⁹

"Architecture is 90 percent business and 10 percent art," Albert Kahn was in the habit of saying. As for Henry Ford, he was not looking for an architectural marvel to celebrate the entrepreneur in the form of a new industrial aesthetic, but rather a design able to provide practical solutions to the specific needs of mass production.¹⁰ These principles were the driving force in industrial architecture during the first decades of the twentieth century, and are well documented by the George L. Tracy Building and the Stone-Ordean-Wells Building.

These two buildings are representative of load-bearing masonry industrial buildings common in the U.S. during the last half of the eighteenth century. The pilasters are typical of the age. Bradley explains:

Brick bearing walls were made skeletal in form, as much like a framed system as possible, through the concentration of loads on thick piers, or pilasters. Brick walls of pilasters and thinner panel walls are articulated in various ways.

⁷ Betsy Hunter Bradley, *The Works: Industrial Architecture of the United States*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁸ Rob Macdonald, "The works: the industrial architecture of the United States by Betsy Hunter Bradley. Oxford UP, 1999," book review.

⁹ Louis Bergeron and Maria Teresa Maiullari-Pontois, "The Factory Architecture of Albert Kahn," excerpted from *Industry, Architecture, and Engineering: American Ingenuity 1750-1950*, http://www.architectureweek.com/2000/1101/culture_1-1.html.

¹⁰ Ibid.

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When both vertical pilasters and horizontal spandrels and stringcourses were emphasized, facades appeared as articulated grids and often featured a lively interplay of elements... The gridded articulation of the facades of industrial loft buildings remained a dominant theme even as interior steel framing reduced the structural role of the brick exterior... Indeed, architects and engineers found it difficult to move away from façade schemes developed for the brick pilaster-articulated and gridded wall.¹¹

Designers of late nineteenth and early twentieth century industrial buildings, then, took advantage of practical structural elements for ornamentations.

Arched door and window openings in brick industrial buildings represented structural elements that added to aesthetic character. All window and door openings were capped by relieving arches that transferred the weight of the wall above the openings to the wall area between them. It was most expedient to extend those arches through the entire thickness of the wall and thereby avoid the use of wood lintel, a less durable and more flammable element.¹²

The George L. Tracy Building and the Stone-Ordean-Wells Building were among the last of the masonry generation in Billings because early in the twentieth century, the industrial aesthetic had shifted to framed structural systems. Framed buildings, particularly those that employed concrete and steel systems, were more economical to build, provided large, open, interior space, and allowed for curtain walls of steel framed windows to let in great amounts of natural light.

Conclusion

The Billings Townsite Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places on March 13, 1979, is significant for its associations with the early commercial development of Billings, as well as the cohesiveness of architectural styles within its boundaries. These styles include architect-designed Italianate and Renaissance Revival properties. The Beaux Arts Northern Pacific Depot, built in 1909, is the architectural highlight of the existing district. However, simple, Western Commercial buildings predominate the district's built environment. The five buildings included in Boundary Increase I share the Western Commercial and industrial nature of the buildings within the original district. Further, the buildings convey important associations with the commercial development of Billings' downtown, particularly with respect to the importance of the railroad as a conveyor of retail supplies, and the district's function as a receiver, shipper, and market for goods throughout Montana and Wyoming. For these reasons, the Billings Townsite Historic District (Boundary Increase I) is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C.

¹¹ Bradley, p. 230-231.

¹² Bradley, p. 234.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The original district boundary encompasses blocks 111 through 114 on the original plat of Billings, Montana, plus one-half block north of the railroad tracks between North 22nd and 26th streets. The Billings Townsite Historic District (Boundary Increase I) includes one-half block north of the railroad tracks along Montana Avenue between North 26th and 27th streets. The physical addresses of the buildings within the proposed boundary expansion are: 2600 (2528), 2604-2606, 2608, 2610-2614, and 2624 Montana Avenue.

In other words, the boundary expansion begins at the intersection of Montana Avenue and North 26th Street, continues southeasterly along the western boundary of the existing historic district to the railroad tracks, then continues southwesterly along the railroad tracks to the western right-of-way of North 27th Street, then continues northwesterly to the intersection of North 27th Street and Montana Avenue, and then continues northeasterly along the northern right-of-way of Montana Avenue to the beginning point at North 26th Street.

Boundary Justification

When the original boundaries of the existing historic district were drawn, local preservationists were reacting to an urgent need to protect the Union Depot and surrounding historic buildings from further decay after passenger service ended in 1979. Consequently, they chose to focus their nomination efforts on the railroad depot and four city blocks of historic buildings closest to the depot. Their exclusion of sixty or more historic buildings to the west and across the tracks to the south, including some of the oldest remaining structures in downtown Billings, does not preclude the architectural continuity nor the historical significance of the greater historic commercial district that thrived along the Northern Pacific railroad tracks in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

This boundary increase extends the western boundary of the existing historic district along Montana Avenue to North 27th Street and includes five historic buildings: 2600 (2528), 2604-2606, 2608, 2610-2614, and 2624 Montana Avenue. The boundary expansion is confined to the 2600 block on the south side of Montana Avenue to the railroad tracks because the buildings that once lined the north side of Montana Avenue's 2600 block have all been lost to fire and development. The absence of historic structures to the north makes the addition of these five buildings to the Billings Townsite Historical District all the more significant in that it is a visual and geographic link between the existing historic district to the east and the older buildings lining Montana and Minnesota avenues to the west, the core commercial district when the original depot was located along the railroad tracks at 28th Street.

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BILLINGS TOWNSITE HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE I)
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

BUILDINGS

	Building Name and Address	Building Owner's Name and Address
1	George L. Tracy Building 2600 Montana Avenue Billings, Montana	Computers Unlimited 2407 Montana Avenue Billings, MT 59101-2336
2	Billings Implement Building 2606 Montana Avenue Billings, Montana	Urban Frontier Development P.O. Box 2203 Billings, MT 59103-2203
3	Mills-Durant-Star Building 2608 Montana Avenue Billings, Montana	Urban Frontier Development P.O. Box 2203 Billings, MT 59103-2203
4	E.U. Logan Glass and Paint Building 2610-2614 Montana Avenue Billings, Montana	St. Vincent de Paul 2610 Montana Avenue Billings, MT 59101-2340
5	Stone-Ordean-Wells Building 2624 Montana Avenue Billings, Montana	St. Vincent de Paul 2610 Montana Avenue Billings, MT 59101-2340

LAND

These buildings are privately owned but stand on railroad land leased from Montana Rail Link, a unit of the Washington Group of Companies, headquartered in Missoula, Montana.

Montana Rail Link
c/o Washington Group
P.O. Box 16630
Missoula, MT 59808-6630

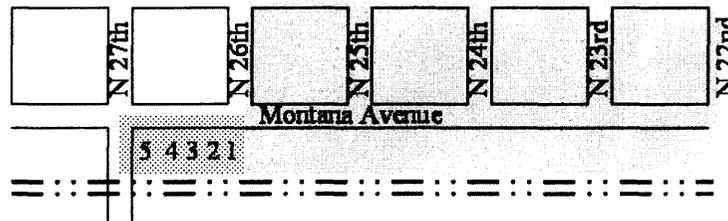
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Section Maps Page 20

BILLINGS TOWNSITE HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE I)
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA

**SKETCH MAP
Billings Townsite Historical District**



LEGEND

-  Existing Historic District
-  Proposed Expansion
- 1 George L. Tracy Building
- 2 Billings Implement Building
- 3 Mills-Durant-Star Building
- 4 E. U. Logan Glass & Paint Building
- 5 Stone-Ordean-Wells Building
-  Railroad Tracks



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BILLINGS TOWNSITE HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE I)
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA

The photographs accompanying this nomination are digital images. In accordance with the National Register of Historic Places March 2005 Photo Policy expansion, the photos are printed on glossy HP Premium Plus Photo Paper, using the Hewlett Packard Viverra Ink (97 tri-color cartridge). This combination of paper and ink is included on the NR's list of "Acceptable Ink and Paper Combinations for Digital Images." The images are also recorded as ".tif" files on a CD-R at 1200x1800 pixels, 300 dpi in "true color" 24-bit format.

The photographs of Billings Townsite Historic District (Boundary Increase I), Yellowstone County, MT, were taken by Janna Hafer, High Plains Architects, Billings, MT in March 2006.

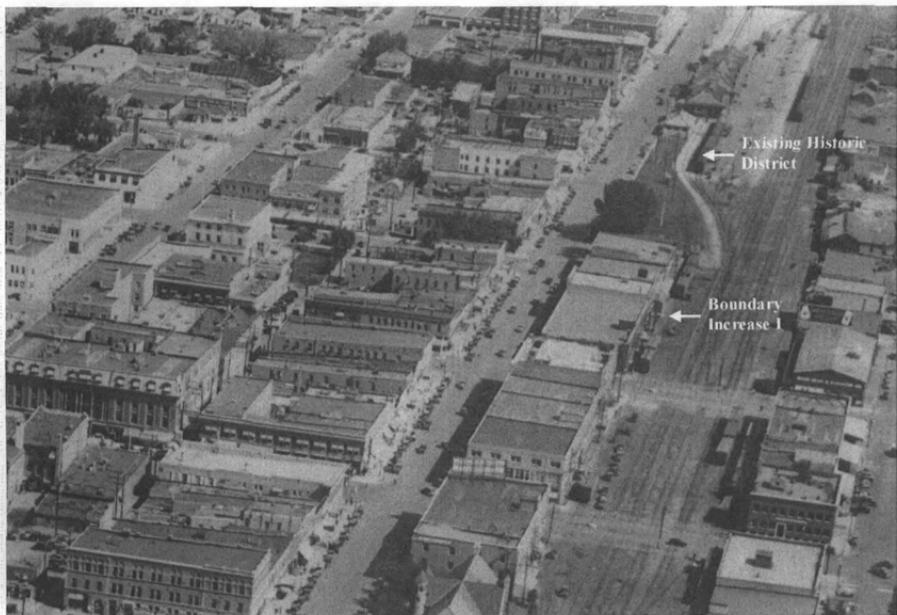
Digital images of historic photographs are also included. These pictures are printed with Epson UltraChrome pigmented ink on Epson Enhanced Matte Paper, in accordance with the list of "Acceptable Ink and Paper Combinations for Digital Images." The images are also recorded as ".tif" files on the CD-R at over 3000x2000 pixels, 300 dpi in "true color" 24-bit format.

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BILLINGS TOWNSITE HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE I)
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA



Aerial view (to the northeast) of Montana Avenue and railroad corridor, Billings, c. 1919.
Photographer unknown. Photo courtesy of Western Heritage Center – Photographic Archives, Billings, MT.
Unaccessioned photo, Don Miller Collection.

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BILLINGS TOWNSITE HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE I)
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA



Montana Avenue view to the east, c. 1932.

Photographer unknown. Photo courtesy of Western Heritage Center – Photograph Archives, Billings, MT.
Accession #98.23.189, Rogers Collection.