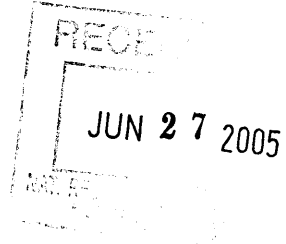


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property

historic name Gilpatrick / Root House

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 604 Dearborn Avenue

city or town Helena

state Montana code MT county Lewis and Clark code 049 zip code 59601

not for publication: n/a
vicinity: n/a

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mark F. Janner
Signature of certifying official

6/21/2005
Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that this property is:
- entered in the National Register see continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register see continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register see continuation sheet
- removed from the National Register see continuation sheet
- other (explain):

Carson K. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action
8/10/05

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- X private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows: buildings (2, 0), sites (0, 0), structures (0, 0), objects (0, 0), Total (2, 0)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- X building(s)
district
site
structure
object

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing n/a

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

- DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure

Current Functions

- DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/ Tudor Revival/Cotswald Cottage

Materials

foundation: Stone
roof: wood shingle
walls: Brick/Stucco

Narrative Description

The Gilpatrick Root house is nestled into a wide corner lot in Helena's West Side. It faces east onto Dearborn Street, at the east side of the neighborhood, just four blocks from downtown. The Cottage-style, stuccoed home is a one and one-half story brick building on a rubble stone foundation. The irregularly-shaped house displays a front gable portion to the north, and a side-gabled south bay. A single story shed-roofed porch within the ell shelters the entrance. A kitchen bay, located at the west (rear) side of the house and part of the original construction, boasts a hipped roofline. Asphalt shingles cover the steep slopes of the roof, and wide, boxed eaves add drama to the building.

Built by the prominent pioneering Gilpatrick family in 1875, this building retains its basic form but was materially altered in terms of cosmetics in 1931, within the period of significance. What began and stood for nearly fifty years as a brick, understated Late Victorian style building, with ornamental spindle work, was transformed in 1931 to a Cotswold Cottage Style, stuccoed home.

The building's footprint, as pictured on the 1888 Sanborn map, is very similar to that of today. Sanborn Insurance Company maps indicate that the interior was changed over time by the segregation of a south living room from the main interior space beneath the north gable. Once accessed by wide doors, this opening was sealed in favor of a hallway opening off the porch. This and other alterations took place during the 1931 remodel.

Windows on the house were originally set into the wall, were tall and somewhat narrow with plain stone lintels and sills. Older window units were double hung and separated in narrow vertical panes. Most of these were replaced in 1931 with similar units, the upper sash of which display four diamonds (squares on edge) in the center surrounded with triangular panes. Most notably, the first floor gable end windows became a triple unit feature with sashes of that description.

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8. Statement of Significance
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Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Areas of Significance: Community Development; Architecture

Criteria Considerations: n/a

Period of Significance: 1875 – 1955

Significant Person n/a

Significant Dates: 1875, 1931

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

The residence at 604 Dearborn Avenue in Helena, Montana is a lovely, modest building nestled into the fabric of the historic West Side neighborhood. Constructed in 1875, the building was one of the first to be built in the fashionable side of town, though less grand than its contemporaries. For fifty-six years, it was the home of Stephen and Luella Gilpatrick, two early settlers and influential residents of the area. For an additional decade, it was home to John Root, another pioneer of the area. Mr. Root's wife, Jennie, remained here for another twenty years after his death. These families represented the earliest periods of settlement in and around Helena. The masonry building transformed from a Victorian, single family residence in the late 19th century to a stuccoed cottage in the 1930s, and eventually, as was the trend in the neighborhood, was divided into apartments. As an excellent representative of these important patterns of development in Helena, particularly the West Side Neighborhood, it is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. As an excellent representative of a Victorian home transformed into a Cotswold Cottage style home, it gains additional significance under Criterion C.

Helena Established

The town of Helena was born on a warm July evening in 1864, when four prospectors discovered gold along the banks of a rippling mountain stream they named "Last Chance." By the following summer, the strike was legend. Gold miners flocked to the diggings from all over the land. . . .

In addition to the miners, who dreamed of digging their fortunes out of the ground, came others hoping to make their fortunes off the miners. The clang of the blacksmith's anvil, bang of the carpenter's hammer, and cries of auctioneers and shopkeepers soon rang throughout the gulch. By 1870 there were hundreds of businesses in Helena, and the burgeoning downtown, which sprouted at the foot of what is now State Street, soon stretched for blocks in all directions.

Early businesses were located in log cabins, and soon sawmills were milling lumber to add false fronts to the early shops. But these clustered wooden buildings were vulnerable to fire, and several major blazes ravaged Helena during its first decade. Shopowners began to use brick and stone for most remodeling and new construction, transforming Helena from a ramshackle mining camp to a dapper young town. Although early buildings were often rather modest and functional, most builders found ways to add decorative touches and give them more charm and appeal.

Helena lies near the heart of Montana's goldfields, and the town became a point of exchange for goods coming by steamboat through Fort Benton on the Missouri River, and silver and gold being hauled out of the mountains. Helena's importance rose as other Montana mines played out, and in 1875, the territorial capitol was moved from Virginia City to this thriving commercial center. By 1880, the settled population of Helena grew to over 3,000 residents. The Northern Pacific Railroad's first train pulled into town in 1883, strengthening the connections between the territorial capitol and the outside world. The railroad's long-awaited arrival was a tremendous boon to Helena, and within a few short years, the town's population quadrupled.

Helena's economy skyrocketed, and merchants, delirious with success, erected lavish business blocks, often named in their honor. A number of talented architects worked in Helena during this period. As the profile of tall buildings cut into the skyline, and modern conveniences like electricity, telephones and trolley cars became commonplace, the "Queen City of the Rockies" came of age.

This prosperous atmosphere was short-lived however, for Helena's "golden years" ground to a halt with the Panic of 1893. Sparked by federal curtailment of annual silver purchases, the ensuing depression sent Helena and other mining communities across the West into a tailspin. The town never regained the momentum it once had, and in time the freewheeling profit of the goldfields gave way to a more stable economy that revolved around the affairs of state government.

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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See Continuation Sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: Montana State Historical Society Library,
Helena, MT

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property: Less than 1 acre

UTM References: Zone 12, E 420160, N 5160241, Montana Prime Meridian (NAD27)

Legal Location: NE ¼ NE ¼ SE ¼ of Section 25, Township 10 North, Range 4 West

Verbal Boundary Description: STOREY ADDN BLK 19 LT 1, S2 OF LT 2

Boundary Justification: The boundary is drawn, according to legally recorded lines, to include the property historically associated with the residence.

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11. Form Prepared By –
=====

name/title: Paul M. Putz Helena/Lewis and Clark County Historic Preservation Officer

organization: Helena/Lewis and Clark County Historic Preservation Commission date: May 2004

street & number: 316 N. Park Ave telephone: (406) 447-8357

city or town: Helena state MT zip code: 59624

=====
Property Owner
=====

name: Edwin A. Smith

street & number: 604 Dearborn Ave. telephone: (406) 442-9691

city or town: Helena state: MT zip code: 59601
=====

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The house was stuccoed in 1931. The application has a smooth finish worked in a broad stipple. Windows and doors remain inset and now, with the exception of sills, present no surrounds. Otherwise, roof overhangs with their narrow, boxed rafters and thin outer molding are, if not the same, similar to pre-1931 features. Where the porch had been open and supported with square columns and scrollwork at the capitals, it is now treated with a stuccoed half-wall with square wooden posts lightly trimmed at the base and upper termination. Where the porch returns to the southeast house corner one of these supports is engaged in the wall. Surrounding the entire house is a wide, smooth stucco drip molding.

This 1931 porch is a striking change as is the removal of a second front door that provided access to the north gable end's south side. This opening was filled in and replaced by the above-mentioned triple window. Also removed was a concrete stoop and steps of an early vintage. This was flanked by a low, solid wall topped by a molded handrail.

After 1931, the existing porch sheltered the main entry that, in turn, opened into a brief hallway through which the south sitting room and remainder of the first floor to the north were accessed by respective openings. Just past the northern access is the stairway to the second floor. This configuration remains in place today.

John Root's revision of the "little old fashioned house" the Gilpatricks occupied for so many decades is intact and with it a continuum of significance consistent with Helena development. Root's alteration clearly states what was expected of a home in the emerging modernization and culture of the time, just as the Gilpatricks had contributed to the image of domestic permanence as Helena struggled for its future in the 1870s. These two statements vividly merge together in the house today.

Elevation Descriptions:

East elevation: The façade of the Gilpatrick-Root house is divided into two bays: the south, side gable bay sheltered by the half-wall porch; and the front-gabled north bay. In the south bay, diamond-light sidelights flank the paneled wood entry door just off-center to the north. A ribbon of three double-hung windows, each with diamond lights above a one-light sash, grace the first story of the north bay. Above, a single window of the same style is centered in the gable end.

South elevation: The south side of the building faces Power Street, and features a front-gable bay to the east, and the hipped bay of the kitchen to the west. Within the east bay are two, evenly-spaced double-hung windows across the first story, and a single window in the gable end. All of these windows are diamond-light over one-light double-hung style. A shed-roofed extension protrudes from the center of the west bay. This extension serves as a breakfast nook, and features a large, single, fixed, six-light window on each side.

North elevation: The north elevation features a two, small, diamond-light windows evenly spaced across the east half of the building. A pair of double-hung windows is off-center to the west. Another, single window is located on the north wall of an enclosed, hipped, back entry porch. A gabled dormer protrudes from the roof slope, and features a small, two-light sliding window on its north side.

West (rear) elevation: The hipped back entry porch is located on the north end of the west elevation. Within it, a single, centered door provides access to the rear of the house. South of the porch, at the center of the elevation, is a single diamond-over-one-light window. Another window, smaller and three-over-one double-hung style, is located south of the centered window.

Garage:

A historic garage, constructed between 1892 and 1930, is located at the west end of the property, beside the rear alley. The rectangular, asphalt-shingled gable-roofed building rests on a concrete foundation. Like the residence, the garage was stuccoed in 1931. The building faces south toward Power Street, and its west elevation is aligned with the alley. The façade features a pair of

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side-hinged, eight-light over four-panel doors at its east side. Painted wood shingles fill the gable end, and a three-light, wood frame rectangular window is centered high, near the peak. Fenestration on the west and east elevations are limited to a single, centered window opening. These openings have been boarded over. The north elevation contains no features.

Integrity:

The Gilpatrick-Root House retains a high level of integrity. The design, materials, and workmanship of the house are reflective of the historic-era remodel, and retain elements of the original design of the house. These 1870s-era features include the roofline, footprint, porch size and location, and most of the window and door openings. The exterior finishes and window styles date to the 1931 Cotswold Cottage style remodel. Its setting, feeling, location, and association are intact.

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With Helena's economy and population in decline after 1893, building construction was sporadic. By the time the Depression of the 1930s hit, those that stayed often could not afford to maintain their extravagant homes. Many of the older mansions were divided in to multiple-family dwellings to help pay the bills. There was nearly imperceptible metamorphosis of Helena from the transportation-commercial center of Montana to that of a government city. New Deal legislation of the mid to late-1930s, characterized by government centralization both at the federal and state level, initiated this change. Public works projects and relief programs were administered from Helena. Highway and bridge construction became important as Montana began to build its first system of paved highways.

Helena's population finally reached its former size of 1890 in 1940, and the town began to build again, mostly homes in the residential areas to the east and west of the downtown business district, adjacent to the older more established neighborhoods. The effects of World War II mobilization programs greatly aided Helena's economy. Lead was a critical material; consequently East Helena's smelter operated at full capacity. As rail transportation increased, more train crews and maintenance personnel were hired. Men employed by both the smelter and the railroads were considered as part of the strategic labor force, and, therefore were exempt from the draft. Fort Harrison, at Helena's west end, became an Army training camp for the First Special Forces, a combined American and Canadian paratroop regiment. The return of World War II veterans spurred another building boom in Helena. Hundreds of homes were built in both the eastside and Westside areas of the city.

Development of Helena's West Side Neighborhood

In the early 1880's, Samuel T. Hauser, Helena's leading banker, followed his friends Stephen and Luella Gilpatrick and built an elegant mansion on Helena's west side, in the first addition to the city, Maudlin addition established in 1879. Hauser's presence initiated a trend that was to establish this neighborhood as the most desirable residential district in Helena. Quickly, other successful businessmen, miners, ranchers and professional men chose this area as the location for their ostentatious residences. As Helena became the commercial and banking center of the territory, as well as the political capital, tremendous wealth was concentrated there. Many of the enormously successful businessmen had common belongings, possessing little more than the clothes on their backs, when they migrated to the territory in search of gold, along with the drive and the ambition to succeed financially as opportunities were presented. Their newly gained status was, more often than not, flamboyantly displayed in palatial mansions erected on Helena's West Side, mansions replete with landscaped yards, flower gardens and gardeners, third floor bathrooms, servant quarters, carriage houses, and matched teams of horses.

The humble origins of some of Helena's leading citizens were published in the *Boulder Sentinel*, in 1887, attributed to Colonel Daniel Searles:

Twenty years ago, Sam Hauser was a modest banker on a small scale, and occasionally dabbled in politics. He was bashful and diffident then. C. A. Broadwater, a slim, energetic youth, stuck the bottom of his pants in his boots, and whooped up the great trains of the Diamond R Company. Tommy Cruse was an unknown prospector, frying his flapjacks in a dirt-roofed cabin, little dreaming of the fortune in store for him. Charley Cannon had a little bakery about where the Herald Building now stands, and sold pies and peanuts at 500% profit, all on account of "the freight, you know". Dick Lockey was his clerk and did up the goods of the plain little establishment with the grace and politeness of a Chesterfield. A. J. Davison had a little store on Main Street...and didn't know half as much about a horse as he does now. Colonel Wilbur F. Sanders was a busy, hard working lawyer, with a large practice, a healthy political ambition and with less money and experience than he now possesses. Twenty years ago, the Fisk brothers ran a small evening paper...and James Blake kept a little butcher shop on Rodney Street. The Holter Brothers owned a small hardware store on Main Street, and ran a sawmill on Ten Mile Creek. Charley Reynolds chopped wood by the cord at the head of Dry Gulch. Frank Pope kept an unpretentious drug store on Main Street, and Bob Hale and Parchen & D'Acheul each ran modest little stores of like character. Don Floweree kept the Bank Exchange and coined money from those who delighted in "fighting the tiger." Sam Word was a lawyer in Virginia City, and not the owner of the finest residence in all the territory. Uncle Billy Ewing was a granger with the hay seed in his hair.

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Regardless of their backgrounds, they followed Hauser to the west side. In no other town of the frontier west was so much elegance crowded into so little space.

The Northern Pacific railroad's arrival in Helena allowed a wider selection of building materials. Architects and builders could now obtain hardwoods, doors, cut stone, iron, steel, sheet metal, stained glass, hard burned brick and other materials much more cheaply than when they were hauled into the area with ox teams and wagons.

Many of the early settlers were getting rich in gold and silver hardrock mining, cattle, lumber and retail-wholesale trade, and wished to express themselves by building extravagant mansions. It was a time when the style of architecture in the United States was also flamboyant, as expressed by Queen Anne and Eastlake designs. Some also chose the Richardson Romanesque. Second Empire, Victorian, or Italianate, and often used a mixture of these.

Architects and building tradesmen crowded into Helena until by 1890 there were twenty-one architects and no one knows how many tradesmen. These halcyon times came to an end in 1893 with the collapse of the silver market and subsequent financial panic. Not much was built until after 1900 when the new bungalow style was becoming popular. These were for middle class people as is demonstrated by the smaller size, less decoration, one and one-half story plan and no-nonsense design. In additions, the development of the automobile and mass transit allowed people to move about more easily and a home became less a showpiece. Garages replaced the carriage houses. Trade unions were becoming more effective in the mining and lumbering industries, providing workers with more income. Building and loan associations were being better established and more middle class people were historic individuals who lived there.

The Gilpatricks

Stephen Gilpatrick was born on June 5th, 1838 in Augusta, Maine. In the spring of 1863 he, his uncle and Gilpatrick's young nephew boarded a steamboat for Montana Territory to seek whatever fortune the goldfields might offer. After prospecting intently and for several years, Gilpatrick settled in Helena, which, when he first arrived in 1865, was a raw mining town located adjacent to the Last Chance Gulch placer diggings. Finding mining unprofitable and at the end of his "stake", he entered business with a Mr. Bryant, the Helena stringer for the newspaper at Virginia City. Purchasing a wheelbarrow full of books, stationary, pens and pencils these two launched a successful general merchandise outlet purveying any stock of goods coming down the trail from Fort Benton and other locations. Of particular note in his later reminiscences was the resale of newspapers and news magazines ordered from around the United States. These the pair sold locally and to area mining camps.

In January 1867 Gilpatrick married Luella Fergus, daughter of James Fergus who was instrumental in the founding of Fergus Falls, Minnesota and for whom Fergus County Montana was later named. This marriage was to last sixty five years. During most of those years the couple lived at 604 Dearborn in Helena.

The Gilpatricks established a reputation of solid character and responsible civil service enhanced only by their remarkable status as aged pioneers by the time of their 50th wedding anniversary in 1923. Fortunately for Montana history, they prepared written reminiscences on that occasion dedicated to their four sons. Luella's story begins with her birth in November of 1848 in Moline Illinois and follows her family in its westward migrations. Finally settling in Montana in 1864 by way of the Bozeman Trail, the family first lived in Virginia City then moved to Helena for a summer and afterward purchased a ranch on the Little Prickly Pear Creek in 1866.¹

In about 1864, James Fergus had hired Stephen Gilpatrick to work a gold claim. Gilpatrick's only luck in this mining venture was to meet his future bride. They were married at the ranch on Prickly Pear Creek, the first such ceremony recorded in the county, and

¹ Malcolm Clarke owned the ranch prior to the Fergus family, but was murdered there by his brother-in-law. Today, the property is the home place of the famous Sieben Ranch.

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took up residence in Helena at a miner's cabin on Clore Street, a cabin that still survives on what is now Helena's South Park Avenue. In about 1873 or 1874 the couple inhabited an old toll house in the area near James Fergus's old ranch but in 1875, returned to Helena to occupy their newly built home at 604 Dearborn.

The well-built house was one of the first in the soon-to-be fashionable West Side neighborhood. In fact, friends of the Gilpatrick's protested the move, indicating that they were "moving to the country...(at that time most of that portion of Helena lying west of Main Street was given over to gardens and small fruit.)"² Though modest in size compared to the mansions that eventually filed the neighborhood, the Gilpatrick's comfortable house did display the trimmings and spindlework associated with fanciful Late Victorian architecture. Indeed, the house was one of the buildings constructed in Helena during the 1870s with an eye toward permanence and prosperity.

Once firmly established in town, Stephen Gilpatrick continued the varied career path typical of settlers in the area. In 1880 - 1881 he served as a Commissioner in the process to formally incorporate the City of Helena. In 1883-1884 he served as Sheriff of Lewis and Clark County. He also held the posts of local deputy assessor and of assessor. For a time he was the public administrator and served on the local school board. Both Mr. and Mrs. Gilpatrick were active in organizations whose aim was to preserve the early history of Montana. Stephen served as a trustee for the Montana Historical Library and Luella was credited for her years of service with the Montana Society of Pioneers.

Luella Fergus Gilpatrick died in February 1931. Stephen then moved to Seattle to live with one of the couple's sons. He died there in 1934. They had been married sixty-five years. In 1931, following the death of Mrs. Gilpatrick, the house at 604 Dearborn was sold. Its new owner was also a Montana Pioneer and as the Gilpatricks represented the early placer years of mining development, Mr. John Root arrived in the service of English mining capitalists, heralding the onset of large-scale operations that followed on the heels of successful placer prospectors.

The Roots

Root was a young Swede, only 17, when entrusted with the oversight of mining operations and arrived in Helena after traveling on foot across the open plains from Minot, North Dakota with a companion and a hired Native American guide. For the next decade, Root worked in the mining industry but in about 1891 (an auspicious time, the Panic of 1893 was just around the corner) he transferred his interests to retail and opened a confectionary store on Helena's State Street. This he operated until 1905 when he sold out and began an extensive "Grand Tour" of Europe.³ Whether prearranged or a product of serendipity, Root's travels netted him a Swedish bride, Jennie, who accompanied him back to Helena. The couple set up housekeeping above a new store at 60 South Main where the directories list his business as fruits & confectionaries (oddly, the Polk City Directory does not recognize Jennie's presence until years later). In 1915, Root moved his store and residence to 42 South Main Street.

John Root evidently succeeded in business. In 1931 he launched a new enterprise, a men's furnishings store next door to the confectionary, and bought a house at 604 Dearborn. The fact that these steps were undertaken in the teeth of the Great Depression underscores Root's apparent financial strength. As for the house on Dearborn, it underwent modernization commensurate with design tastes of the era. Evidently, friends of the Gilpatricks considered this long in coming. Luella's eulogy refers to the family home as a "little old-fashioned home on Dearborn Avenue". Root obliged with an extensive renovation that upgraded the early home while retaining much of its "old-fashioned" character.

There followed a long period of stability until age influenced Root's affairs and he sold the clothing business and the confectionary in 1939. John Root died in April 1941 at the age of 76. Jennie outlived him by more than twenty years, most of them spent at 604

² "Celebrate Their Golden Wedding," *Independent Record*, January 1, 1917.

³ Later information leads one to conclude that Root was married prior to 1905 and his sudden departure may have been prompted by the loss of his wife. Some ten years later his residence is occupied by, at first, an Alice and then a Thomas Root, both students and bearing the same names as his children.

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Dearborn. Like the Gilpatricks, Root revered the heritage of area pioneers as his obituary mentions:

Mr. Root, because he was familiar with Montana in the early days, had a deep love for the pioneers and the old west as it used to be. More than one prospector toiling for gold in the mountains around Helena depended upon John Root for his "grubstake" year after year.⁴

The home at 604 Dearborn is an apt representative of two families, both pioneers of Helena and both forged in the experience of area gold mining. Each of these families departed from their mining ventures to pursue more stable ventures but each recalled the exciting heritage on which that stability was built. The house, a product of two stages of development, remains part of a continuum in the heritage of Helena.

The Development of Helena and the Gilpatrick/Root House

Construction of 604 Dearborn in 1875 established a solid consistency in the lives of the Gilpatricks. By the early 1870s, Helena found genuine root as a permanent community, not a guaranteed fate for western mining towns. People like the Gilpatricks, spawned of generations adept at wandering and keen on staking out the next advantage, exemplified ambitions typical of late nineteenth century America. Once in Montana, their ambulatory experience patterned out with most of their kind but at one point or another these meanderings confronted a resolution to settle and to stay. The community of Helena was uniquely positioned to assume permanency, perhaps not because of its locale, though that was supremely taken advantage of later, but because of the timing of its establishment in conjunction with the maturity of its population. The Gilpatricks moved in alignment with a host of gold-field pioneers who arrived in the early to mid 1860s. Intervening years saw this group at Bannack, Virginia City and other areas involved in a sorting-out process that identified their individual skills, their selection of enterprise and the success of each at developing foundations of investment and wealth.

By the late 1860s, an experienced, capable and interdependent group of businesspeople recognized the need for a permanent commercial base in order to succeed. They had to make a choice to stay in Montana, or take what they had and knew to the United States or places like San Francisco where commercial networks were well established. Helena, though raw and remote, would either quickly wither with the exhaustion of its placers like Bannack or Virginia City or would eventually flourish as a true city given the boosting of its inhabitants. Helena chose to survive. Thus, when the Gilpatricks built 604 Dearborn it was as much an act of faith and determination as the construction of a house. Alongside them, other families built houses and in the gulch below commercial ventures of great risk were founded. That the dreams of this group of founders were realized is a testament to their capabilities.

The second iteration of the property at 604 Dearborn occurred early in the Depression Era but, rather than exhibiting the economic downturn of that time, the improvement and long-standing survival of the house reflects an inherent economic resilience present in the area. Although struck hard by the Depression, mining gold and other valuable metals provided Helena with something to hang on to financially. Root's early success allowed him to survive. In this way, he represents the continuation of pioneer fortunes, though his was not a large one, into the twentieth century and the continuance of faith in Helena as a place to invest. Furthermore, Root's revision of the house was directly compatible with the tendency identified in the nearby historic district to upgrade older properties to modern styles.

Within a decade of Roots' remodel, the area immediate to 604 Dearborn sprouted new and remodeled homes, many of them stuccoed and stylish, which picked up on the emerging domestic tastes. They included 627 Harrison, a Spanish style home built before 1937, the Mission Revival house at 515 Gilbert built in 1935, and, notably, the brick Suburban English Cottage at 325 Holter, built in 1931 (the same year as 604's redefinition). On Dearborn, the house at 409 underwent a treatment genuinely parallel to that of 604. A few years later, 521, 527 and 531 Dearborn were erected, continuing the aforementioned theme.

⁴ John Root, One of Helena's Early Business Men, Taken by Death" Helena Independent Record, 4-10-41.

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Architectural Significance:

Architectural Historian Jackie Craven explains the history of features of the Cotswold Cottage style of architecture:

The small, fanciful Cotswold Cottage is a popular subtype of the Tudor Revival house style. This quaint English country style is based on the cottages built since medieval times in the Cotswold region of southwestern England. A fascination for medieval styles inspired American architects to create modern versions of the rustic homes. The Cotswold Cottage style became especially popular in the United States during the 1920s and 1930s.⁵

Architectural Historian Tom Stermitz adds insight to this phenomenon:

While the craftsman style of the Ragtime Era emphasizes the rustic and earthy, World War I put an abrupt end to that idealistic/naturalistic turn. Symbolically, Elbert Hubbard (of the Roycroft community) went down with the *Lusitania*, Gustav Stickley overextended his business plans and went bankrupt, and the public taste turned toward lighter, airier houses.⁶

The picturesque Cotswold Cottage is usually asymmetrical with a steep, complex roofline. The floor plan tends to include small, irregularly-shaped rooms, and the upper rooms have sloping walls with dormers. The home may have a sloping slate or cedar roof that mimics the look of thatch. A massive chimney often dominates either the front or one side of the house. The Gilpatrick/Root house is an excellent local example of the cottage style, with its steeply pitched roof, diamond-light windows, and stuccoed exterior. It is also representative of a larger design trend in the community, that of updating older buildings, particularly with a modern stucco finish.

Between 1928 and 1948, Helena witnessed a movement to remodel many of the Victorian-era buildings, both commercial and residential, in more contemporary architectural styles. Stucco was one of the most popular methods for "updating" the look of a building. Stucco has been used for exterior finishing since ancient times, but its widespread use in the United States coincides with the publication of *The Architecture of Country Houses* by Andrew Jackson Downing in 1850. Downing advocated stucco as opposed 'to plain brick or stone because it was cheaper, warmer and drier, and could be 'agreeably' tinted.'⁷ Anne Grimer explains in her article on "The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stucco":

The introduction of the many revival styles of architecture around the turn of the twentieth century, combined with the improvement and increased availability of portland cement resulted in a "craze" for stucco as a building material in the United States...beginning about 1890 and gaining momentum into the 1930s and 1940s...⁸

Its cost and relative ease of application made it particularly popular in Helena. At the same time, design tastes began to favor plainer surfaces. Styles such as Art Deco, Spanish and Moderne, and of course the cottage style, became vogue. This was certainly the case Helena's West Side neighborhood, as several Victorian homes, as well as those constructed during the late 1920s and 1930s, display these finishes. The Gilpatrick/Root house is, among these examples, the best representation of trend to update older homes, particularly in the Cottage Style.

⁵ Jackie Craven, "House Styles," <http://architecture.about.com/library/bl-cotswoldcottage.htm>.

⁶ Tom Stermitz, "Cottage Styles of the 1920s and 1930s," http://www.ragtime.org/arch/Arch_Cott.html.

⁷ Anne Grimmer, *Preservation Brief 22: The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stucco* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, 1990), p. 2.

⁸ Ibid.

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Clearly, Root erased the "old fashioned" texture of 604 Dearborn, transforming a structure dating from 1875 so it could take its position in the modern scene. In doing so, he joined with his neighbors and his community in revising the architectural patterns of Helena despite difficult times.

Summary:

As a representative of the earliest settlement of Helena's West Side neighborhood and the continued pattern of development and remodeling through the mid-twentieth century, the Gilpatrick-Root House is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A. The building gains additional significance for its association with trends in architecture, particularly as an excellent example of the Cotswold Cottage style.

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Gilpatrick-Root House c. 1880s.



Gilpatrick-Root House, c. 1890s.

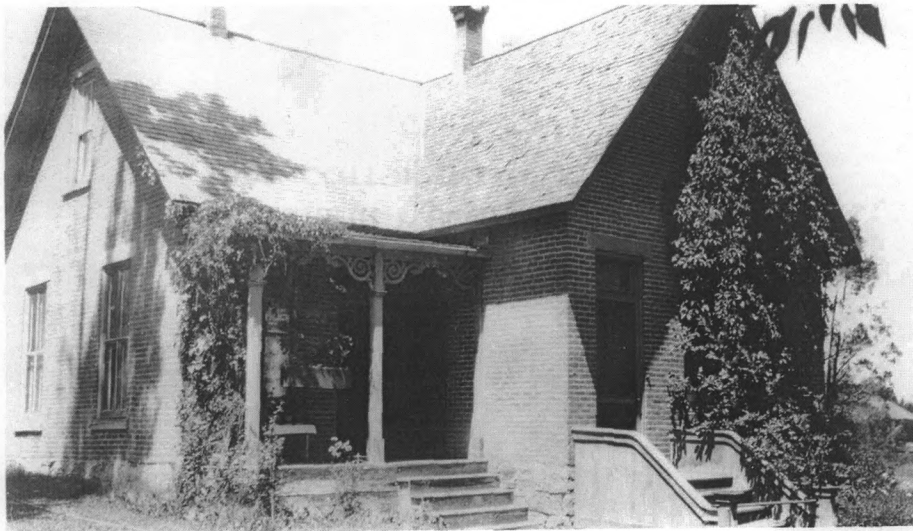
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Gilpatrick-Root House, c. 1890s.

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Aerial Photograph, April 26, 2004.