

# MONTANA HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY

Site # 6

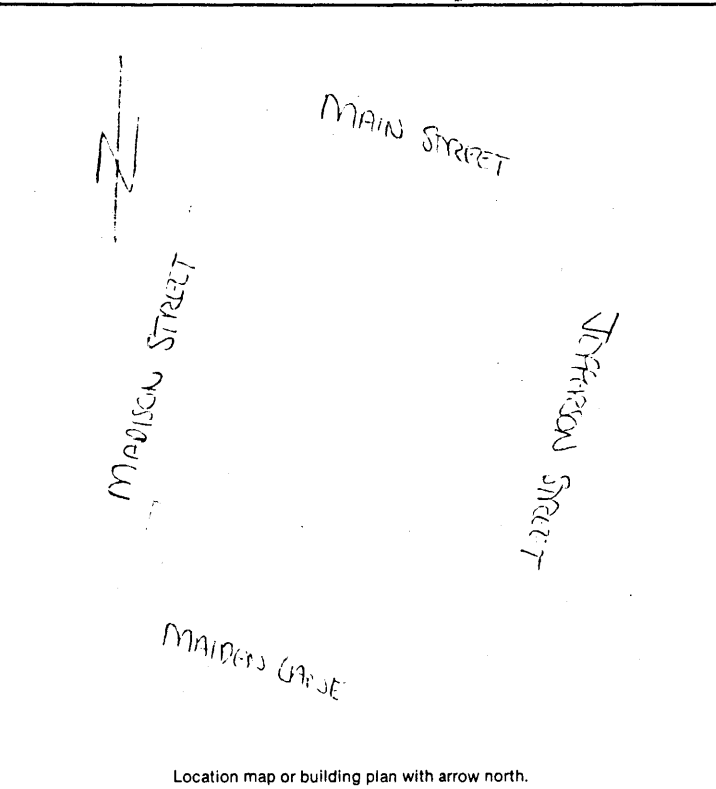


Legal Description: Donlan's Addition #1, block 1

Address: Corner S. Madison and Maiden Lane

Ownership: name: Sanders County

private  public address: Box 247, Thompson Falls, MT 59873



Historic Name: Sanders County Jail

Common Name: T. Falls Historical Society

Date of Construction: 1907-1908  estimated  documented

Architect: N/A

Builder: Christian & Gobelet

Original Owner: Sanders County

Original Use: jail/sheriff's living quarters

Present Use: rented to Sanders County Historical Society

Research Sources:

<input type="checkbox"/> abstract of title	<input type="checkbox"/> city directories
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> plat records/maps	<input type="checkbox"/> sewer/water permits
<input type="checkbox"/> tax cards	<input type="checkbox"/> obituaries
<input type="checkbox"/> building permit	<input type="checkbox"/> biographies
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sanborn maps — dates: <u>1910, 1914, 1922, 1927</u>	

Bibliography:

Deedbook 4, p. 460  
Sanders County Ledger: 7/26/07;  
2/7/08

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** Describe present appearance of structure/site, then contrast and compare that with it's original appearance, noting additions, alterations, and changes in materials. Discuss significant architectural features.

The Sanders County Jail is a two story, square brick building constructed on a stone and mortar foundation with an asphalt-shingled, shallow hip roof. The west elevation has a slightly off-center door, which is flanked to the north by a 2/1 double hung window with a concrete sill and brick jack arch. To the south of the entrance are two 1/1 double hung windows with concrete sills and brick jack arches. The second story has an identical fenestration, but the windows have 2/2 sash configurations and flat brick lintels. All of the windows and the door are covered by iron bars. The cornice features decorative brick corbeling which extends around the entire structure. A wooden sign for the Thompson Falls Historical Society is attached to the wall adjacent to the door.

The rear (east) elevation is identical to the front facade. The south elevation has two casement windows (1979) on the first floor with a 1/1 double hung window on the second story.

The former main entrance on the north side has a central door with transom and brick jack arch placed within a two story projecting pavilion. The entrance is flanked on each side by a 2/2 double hung window with a concrete sill and brick jack arch. Above the entrance on the second story is a 1/1 double hung window with concrete sill and brick jack arch flanked by a 1/1 double hung window with concrete sill and flat brick lintel. All of the windows on the north facade are covered by iron bars. Above the cornice, the pavilion has a corbeled, recessed brick panel and stepped parapet. A wood frame shed was added to the south wall of the jail in 1907, but removed in 1927.

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:** Justify how the persons, important events, and/or historical patterns associated with the structure/site and surrounding area lend the property significance.

The Sanders County Jail is significant as the oldest extant county building in Thompson Falls, and because of its association with the designation of the community as the county seat for Sanders County. Edward Donlan, who was instrumental in securing the county seat designation in Thompson Falls, owned vast amounts of property in town which he eventually sold to Sanders County and the Thompson Falls Light and Power Company. After the community was named county seat, Donlan donated parcels of his land on the west side of town for the construction of a courthouse and jail.

Built in 1907 at a cost of \$5,000 by the contractors Christian and Gobelet, the jail had cells installed by the Pully Jail Company of St. Louis. It originally had living quarters on the first floor with the sheriff's office and jail cells on the second story. The jail is located southwest of the former courthouse, which was built in 1908. The two story, wood frame, courthouse featured a low hipped roof, double hung windows and a large central pavilion capped by an octagonal turret.

Sources: Sanders County Ledger: 3/16/06; 7/26/07; 8/2/07; 11/22/07; 2/7/08.  
Sanders County Signal: 3/26/08.  
Sanders County Commissioners' Minutes: 3/13/06; 1/7/07; 6/5/07; 6/7/07; 7/6/07; 9/4/07; 12/3/07; 2/4/08; 3/5/08; 6/4/08; 9/10/09.  
Interview with Joyce Bybee by John Lazuk  
Interview with Sterling Larson by John Lazuk  
Sanborn maps: 1910, 1914, 1922, 1927

**INTEGRITY:** Assess the degree to which the structure/site, and surrounding area accurately convey the historical associations of the property.

The casement style windows on the south side of the building date from 1979. Bars on the first floor windows were added in 1982. Interior remodelings have occurred but cannot be dated with certainty.

**INFORMATION VALUE:** Explain how the extant structure/site may demonstrate or yield information about its historic use or construction.

The oldest county building existing today, its significance to the community should easily qualify it under criteria A. A fine example of jails built in that period for smaller communities, exterior changes haven't seriously compromised its historical associations and integrity.

**FORM PREPARED BY:**

Name: John Lazuk

Address: Box 2971, Missoula, MT

Date: December 1, 1984

**GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:**

Acreage: Less than one acre.

USGS Quad: Thompson Falls, MT

UTM's: 11/624050/5272400

Significance (cont.)

The Sanders County Jail was constructed at a time when Thompson Falls witnessed rapid growth and change in both its business and residential districts. Solidly constructed of brick, the jail represents the sense of stability and permanence that Thompson Falls was experiencing in during the first decade of the 20th century. Despite very minor alterations, the Sanders County Jail is one of the most substantial buildings remaining within the downtown commercial district.