

HISTORIC NAME: Bozeman YMCA
ADDRESS: 6 W. Babcock
LEGAL BOUNDARY: Alderson's Blk A
Lots 1-4
OWNER'S NAME: Bob, Beverly and
Blayde Johnson
OWNER ADDRESS: 472 1/2 Durham Ave.
Billings, MT
SPECIFIC DATE: 1914-1915
ARCHITECT: Fred F. Willson
BUILDER: Levesque, Felsheim
& Beverly
ORIGINAL OWNER: Bozeman YMCA
ORIGINAL USE: Bozeman YMCA
PRESENT USE: Boulevard Apts.
UTM REFERENCE: 12/497100/5058080
ACREAGE: less than one
U.S.G.S. QUAD: Bozeman, 1953



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Applicable Criteria: A and C

Areas of Significance: social history, architecture

Number of Contributing Properties: 1

The Bozeman YMCA building is significant as a community-sponsored, community-oriented facility designed by local architect Fred F. Willson. Since its completion in 1915 until the building was converted into apartments in recent years, the Bozeman YMCA provided reasonably priced accommodations and organized physical fitness programs for the Protestant young men of the city. The building displays brickwork and a shaped headed entry porch typical of the 1910's. The design demonstrates the flexibility and diversity of the work of Fred F. Willson. During his practice between 1910 and 1956, Willson obtained virtually every contract for the design of large buildings in the city, ranging from residences and commercial blocks to specialized structures such as this.

Sir George Williams founded the YMCA in London in 1844. It was not until 1913 however, that local Bozeman businessmen and residents explored the possibility of starting one in this city. Billings, Miles City, and Kalispell each already had a YMCA of their own. Charles Puehler, secretary of Montana's YMCA's recognized the interest, and arranged for the state YMCA convention to be held in Bozeman. During that meeting, a local committee was organized to raise money for the building.

On November 5, 1913, the Bozeman YMCA was formally organized. Ground breaking for the building was on September 3, 1914, with Levesque, Flesheim and Beverly the contractors. By 1915 the building was completed. Nelson and Byron Story donated an additional \$1500 to equip and furnish the building. The new facility boasted one of the largest gymnasiums in the state (49 x 74 feet) with a banked running tract, a white tile pool, and an impressive Mission style lobby.

A three-story brick addition was built onto the west wall of the original building (date unknown), and is compatible with the original building in terms of materials and detailing.

Recent alterations, such as construction of a penthouse flush with the east wall, and the installation of a canopy set on wooden columns over the entrance, however, have diminished the architectural quality of the building to a modest degree. The primary integrity of the exterior of the building has been retained on the two street facades. The building is presently used as apartments, and is known as "Boulevard Arms."

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

This detached, three-story multi-family residence with a full day-light basement has an irregular plan with an enclosed projecting front entry, and concrete steps. The five-bay facade is symmetrical and consists of a central 6-paned, wooden front door and six-over-six wooden double-hung windows. A three story wing is attached to the southwest corner. The brick construction is finished in running bond pattern and rests on a concrete foundation. The flat roof is covered with built-up roofing and features a brick parapet with concrete coping and one offset brick chimney.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

"Boulevard Arms", typescript, no date or author.

Bozeman Weekly Chronicle: 2/2/13; 3/20/13; 4/10/13; 9/25/13; 10/23/13; 11/6/13; 5/21/14; 12/10/14; 7/1/15; 8/19/15; 9/2/15; 9/9/15; 9/16/15.

Bozeman Daily Chronicle: 6/4/14; 6/13/14; 8/5/14; 9/1/14; 9/2/14; 9/3/14; 9/8/14; 9/13/14; 10/3/14; 10/4/14; 10/6/14; 10/25/14; 10/27/14.

Fred Willson Job List, 1914, Job #1414, "Y.M.C.A."

FORM PREPARED BY: James R. McDonald, P.C. (1983-84); Matthew Cohen (1985-86 revision); Patricia Bick (1987 revision), State Historic Preservation Office, 225 No. Roberts, Helena, Montana 59620 (406) 444-7715

