

MONTANA HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY

Historic Name: Helena Club Bar Site No. 24LC1820

Common Name: Corner Bar

Legal Description: Hotel Park Addition, Block 27, Lot 8

Address: 3212 Euclid Avenue

USGS Quad: Helena, Montana (1985)

Township/Range: NW¼ SE¼ SE¼ of Section 22, T10N, R4W

UTM: Zone: 12 Easting: 416820 Northing: 5161480

Private: X

Public:

Owner: Peggy Rost
Address: 1007 Williams Street
Helena, MT 59602

Date of Construction: 1937 Estimated X Documented

Architect: Unknown

Builder: Unknown

Original Owner: Raymond Ehlers

Original Use: Bar

Present Use: Bar

Resource Sources: Title abstract X City directories X Plat records/maps X
Sewer/water permits Tax Records Newspapers X
Building permits X Biographies X Census Records
Sanborn Maps, dates

Architectural Description: The Corner Bar consists of a single-story vernacular commercial building located at the intersection of Williams Street and Euclid Avenue (U.S. Highway 12) and faces south onto Euclid.

A hipped roof covers the vaguely rectangular plan of the building; the roof is sheathed in asphalt shingles. The walls are clad in stucco siding with corner boards. Most of the façade is covered in vertical tongue-in-

groove veneer. The building rests on a slightly plinthead concrete foundation that is also covered in stucco. All of the windows have glass block lites. The recessed entry is left-of-center on the façade. It is currently farmed-in by the vertical tongue-in-groove siding that provides an arched appearance. The entry is recessed and reached through a tapering walkway flanked by vertical board-and-batten siding. The entry has a wood door. Two horizontal window openings are located to the right of the entry and one vertical opening is situated to the left of the entry. A vintage circa 1953 lighted sign reading "CORNER BAR" is attached to the roof above the entry.

The east elevation has three horizontal and a square window opening – each filled with glass block lites. Two exterior air conditioning units are supported by timber trestle-type supports and partially in-fill two of the window openings. A rear addition to the building has a shed roof with parapet walls and exposed rafters with no window openings. The roof is sheathed in corrugated metal. A flat roof addition is attached at an angle to the west elevation of the building. It has extended eaves and the walls are clad in stucco siding with vertical tongue-in-groove veneer on the south-facing façade. An entry is located on the left of the west elevation. It is reached by a wood ramp. It has heavy lug posts and a lintel. The entry has a modern door with an aluminum screen addition. A window opening is located on the right of the west wall; it has glass block lites.

Historical Information: In August, 1878, Dwight Goodell filed on a 320-acre homestead in the SE¼ SE¼ of Section 22. Born in New York in 1819, Goodell followed the gold rush to Idaho in 1863 and then migrated over the Rockies to Helena in 1866. He and his wife, Mrs. Goodell, first grew produce at the junction of Oro Fino and Grizzly gulches (at what would later be known as the Chinese Gardens) before relocating to the Ten Mile in 1878. Dwight obtained the title to the property in December, 1882. Dwight operated a stock ranch and truck farm on the banks of the creek until his death in December, 1898. Dwight's daughter, Phoebe, was married to famed early Helena photographer Edgar H. Train. The Hotel Park Addition was platted in June, 1890 by George A. Child. The cashier at the Second National Bank, Child acted as the agent for Helena bookseller and stationary merchant Tlighman Clewell. U.S. Highway 12 at that time was a county road known as Hot Spring Avenue (Montana Land Tract Books; Paladin 1987: 146; Leeson 1885: 1214; *Montana Record-Herald*; Helena City Directories).

Delphine Mayronne, a school teacher at St. Peter's School, acquired Lot 8 in Block 27 of the Hotel Park Addition #2 about 1891. At the same time, she also acquired a lot in the adjacent Seymer Park Addition. Delphine left Helena for Butte in 1896 and returned to Helena in 1900 and then promptly disappeared from history. She was not paying taxes on Lot 8 by 1916. Consequently, Lewis and Clark County seized the property for the \$4.38 tax bill in 1917. The County tried to sell it at Sheriff's Auction, but there were no buyers for the property. There is no evidence indicating that a building was located on the lot in 1917. Finally, in April, 1926, the County was able to sell the lot to Abraham McCrary, a professional waiter who had lived in Helena since 1911. He purchased the lot for \$13.32 – the amount of taxes owing on the property (Deed Book 84: 595-597; Helena City Directories; Grantor Books, Book 3).

Abraham McCrary died in November, 1927 and left the property to his son, Howard. Because he was a minor, he was represented in court by his stepfather and remarried mother, Burton and Grace Sumner when the lot was sold in July, 1933. Grace was a maid at the Placer Hotel and lived in nearby Central

Park. Helena area rancher and car salesman James Weaver purchased the lot in 1933. He sold it to Raymond Ehlers in October, 1936. Raymond was the manager of the Sun Produce Company in Helena. He built a roadhouse bar, called the Pepperbox, on the lot in 1937 and leased it to Maud Brannon from 1937 to 1940. Maud worked as a confectioner until 1935 when she ran the Red Rooster Beer Parlor on North Jackson Street. In 1941, Walter Harris took over the operation of the Pepperbox. By 1944, Clarence Streets had taken over the bar and renamed it the City Club. When he purchased it from Ehlers in May, 1947, Clarence renamed it the Helena Club. He continued to operate the bar until June, 1956 when he sold it to Joe and Jennie Slinger (*Helena Independent*: 16 November 1927; City Directories; Deed Book 109: 181; Ibid 114:473; Ibid 141:3-4; Ibid 216: 622).

Long-time residents of Helena, the Slinger's bought a bar, called The Corner, on Last Chance Gulch at the intersection of Lawrence Street about 1953. When the existing Wells Fargo Bank was constructed in 1958, the Slingers sold the downtown property and concentrated on the Helena Club, which they continued to operate under that name until 1958. When the tavern was renamed the Corner Club in 1958, the sign from the old bar downtown was installed on the roof of this building. Many of the furnishings from the old Corner bar were also utilized in this establishment. The Slingers ran the bar from 1957 until 1974, when it acquired by Earl and Patricia Warfield. Patricia was Joe and Jennie's daughter. In 1990, the establishment was purchased by the current owner, Peggy Rost (City Directories; Peggy Rost Interviews; Bob Morgan Interview).

Integrity: Alterations to the building since its construction in 1937 include the west addition, the enclosure of the porch in the 1950s or early 1960s after being damaged by a drunk driver, and the addition of the wood veneer siding on the façade. The building, however, retains much of its original configuration and architectural and ornamental detailing, including the glass block windows, recessed entry, and original lighted sign. It was designed as a simple roadside tavern and it retains that appearance and function. The interior, moreover, is still representative of a 1930s-1940s era bar.

Historical and/or Architectural Significance: The Helena Club Bar has been a familiar sight on Helena's west side for nearly 70 years. Located at the turn-off from U.S. Highway 12 to Fort Harrison, it saw more than its fair share of military activity from the First Special Service force in the early 1940s. It has also functioned as a neighborhood gathering place and the last stop for many heading out on the road to Missoula. It is associated with the post-Prohibition boom in drinking establishments and retains the 1930s atmosphere inside. The addition on the west side of the building and the addition of the wood veneer siding do not significantly detract from the overall integrity of the building. It retains its historic function and most of its historic appearance. The Helena Club Bar is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C.

Bibliography and Informants:

"A. D. McCrary Dead." *Helena Independent*, 16 November 1927.

Deed Records. Clerk & Records Office. City-County Building. Helena, Montana.

Grantor Books. Clerk & Records Office. City-County Building. Helena, Montana.

Helena City Directories, 1888 – 1980. Montana Historical Society, Helena.

Interview with Robert F. Morgan by Jon Axline, 1 July 2003.

Interview with Peggy Rost by Jon Axline, 25 June and 7 July 2003.

"Last Journey Made: Mrs. D. T. Goodell, Helena Pioneer, Passes Away." *Montana Record-Herald*, 15 October 1901.

Leeson, M. A. *History of Montana, 1739 – 1885*. (Chicago: Warner, Beers & Company, 1885).

Montana Land Tract Books. Montana Historical Society, Helena.

Paladin, Vivian, Ed. *Valleys of the Prickly Pear*. (Helena: Little Red Schoolhouse, Inc., 1988).

Plat Records. Clerk and Records Office. Lewis and Clark County Courthouse. Helena, Montana.

Form Prepared By:

Name: Jon Axline **Date:** 7 July 2003

Project: BR 9025(39)

Name: Ten Mile Creek – West of Helena

Report:

Updated:

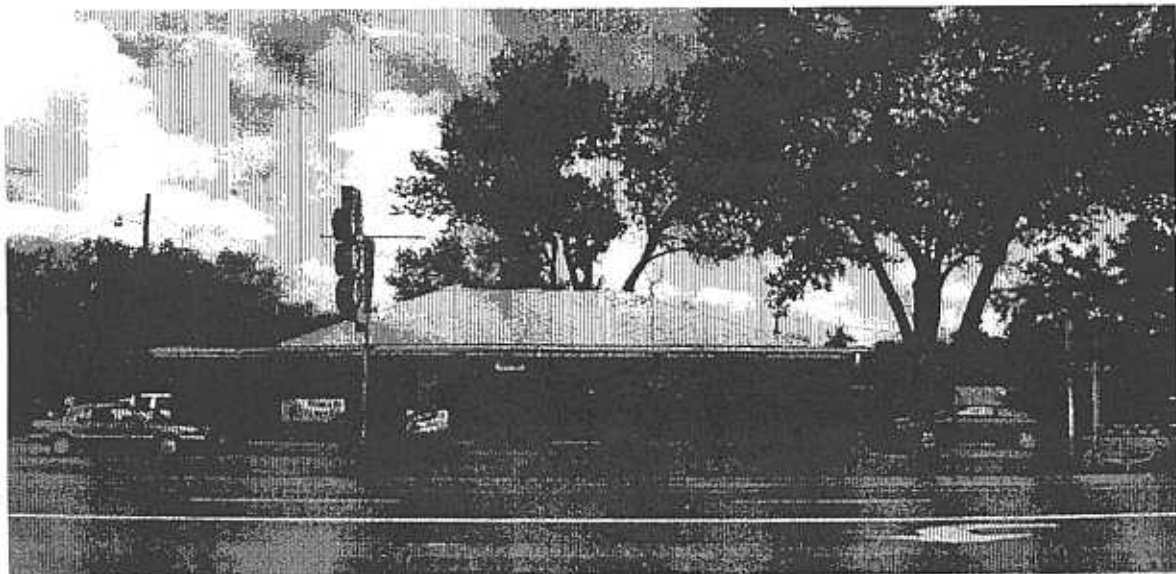
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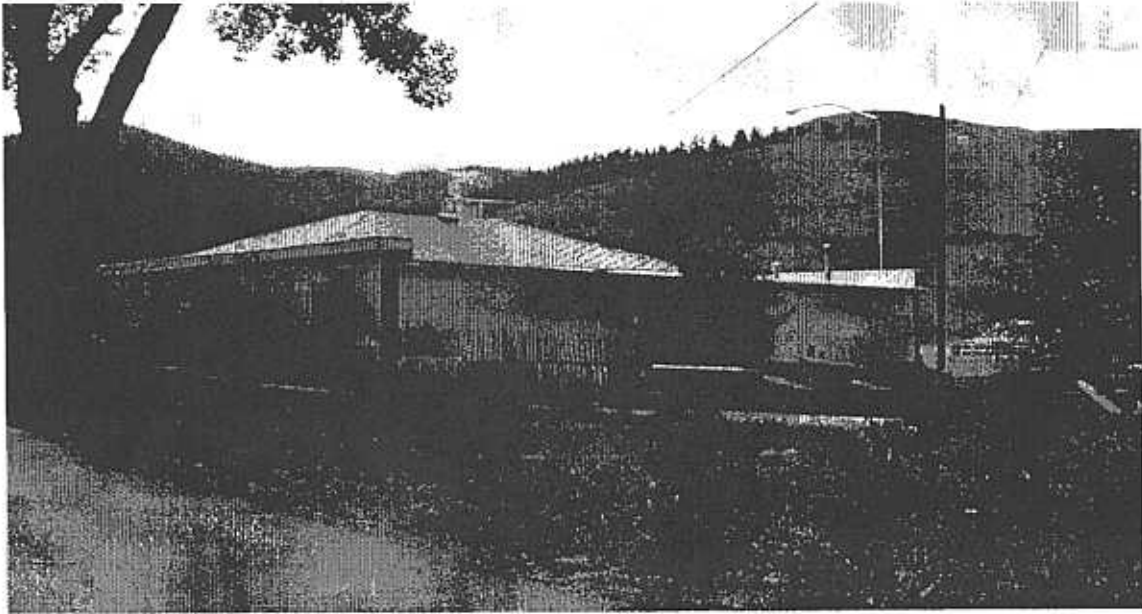
Frames Shown:



The Helena Club Bar (24LC1820). View to the northeast.



Façade of the Helena Club Bar. View to the north.



East elevation and rear façade of the Helena Club Bar (24LC1820). View to the south.



East Façade of the Helena Club Bar. View to the west.



Detail of The Corner Club Bar sign.

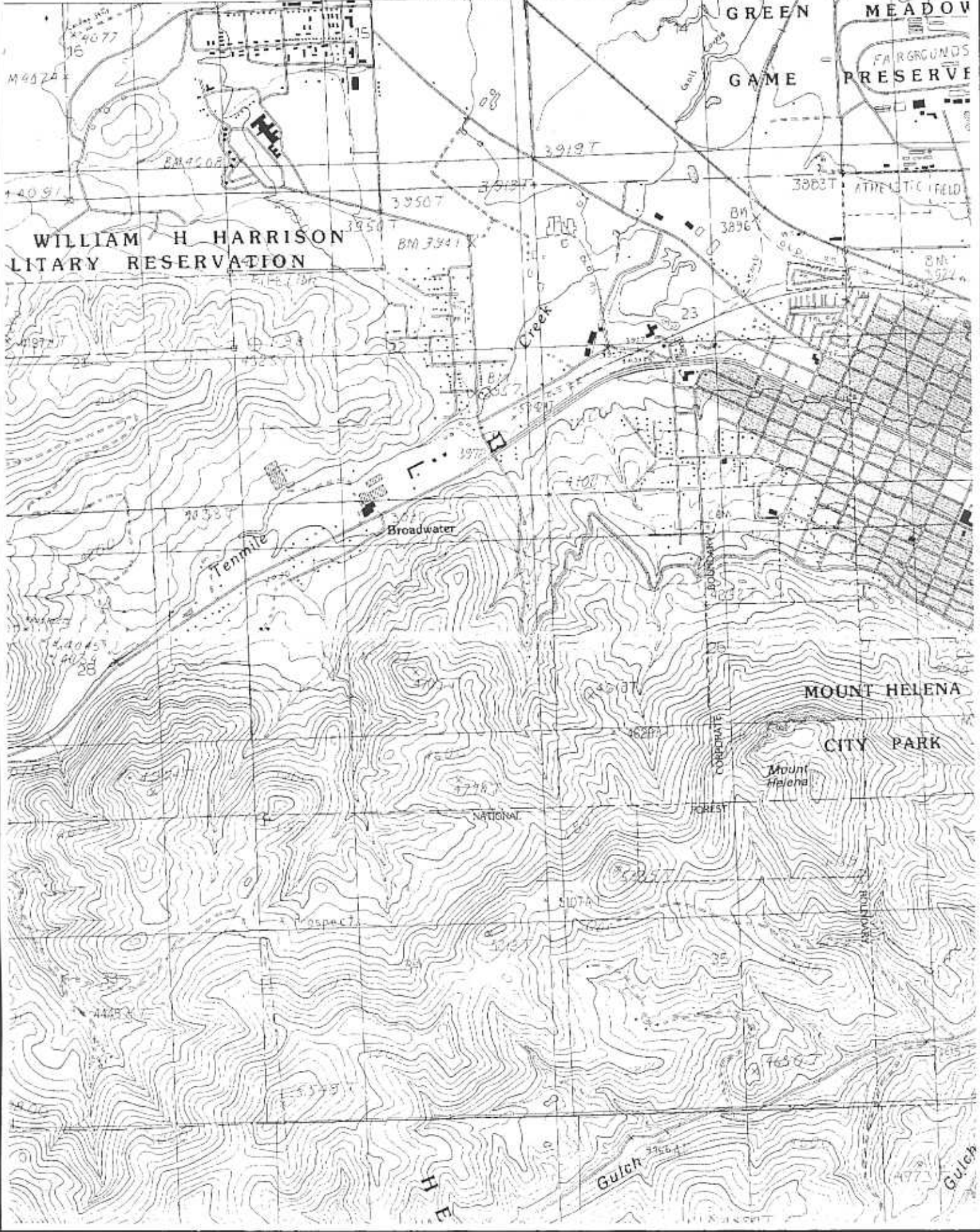
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GAME PRESERVE

WILLIAM H HARRISON
MILITARY RESERVATION

MOUNT HELENA
CITY PARK

NATIONAL FOREST

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