Community Core District Survey Update
(Phase 1)
Ketchum, Idaho

Courtesy the City of Ketchum

Final Report

Prepared for

City of Ketchum Planning & Building Services Department

by

TAG Historical Research & Consulting
&
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Introduction

Ketchum is experiencing increased development activity threatening the loss of historic structures. The city currently has no local protections in place. Recently, the Ketchum City Council enacted a temporary pause on the demolition of structures within the Community Core (CC) District that may have historic or cultural significance. Accordingly, the City of Ketchum contracted with TAG Historical Research & Consulting (TAG) for Phase 1 of an intended multi-phase project intended to address this issue.

Objectives

Phase 1 had two objectives:

Objective 1: Update the 2005 *Archaeological and Historic Survey Report* (reconnaissance/windshield survey) prepared by Walsworth and Associates

Objective 2: Update the 2006 list of list recommended heritage sites within the CC District compiled by the now inactive Ketchum Historic Preservation Commission

Project Background

The CC District has undergone formal reconnaissance-level historic site surveys two times previously. The first survey was conducted in 1990 (Walsworth and Gillette), and the second in 2005 (Walsworth and Associates). The 2005 survey examined a total of 81 properties within the CC District finding most of them to be ineligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). However, conclusions and recommendations in the 2005 survey expressed stark warning that "threats to historic resources in Ketchum will be constant as long as the population increases and modern residential, commercial, and industrial developments occur." In addition to the two reconnaissance level surveys, a few individual buildings within the CC District were recorded in surveys conducted under the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA).

In 2006, the city's Historic Preservation Commission compiled a list of "recommended heritage sites" within the CC District. In short, criteria for inclusion on this list deemed that a historic property must be:

- Representative of traditional Ketchum residential and/or commercial architecture.
- Representative of Ketchum's community traditions and/or heritage.
- Associated with significant events and/or people of the past.

Methodology

Due to winter weather conditions and health and safety restrictions caused by COVID 19, field work was not feasible. Therefore, all work on this report was performed remotely. The City of Ketchum Planning & Building Services Department provided TAG with recent images of each resource.

A record search request was submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on November 8, 2020. Results of the record search revealed that records for 52 previously recorded IHSI Historic Sites within the CC District. All 52 site forms were received from SHPO. Additional research was conducted at the Idaho State Archives, and the online collections of the Ketchum Community Archives, Idaho Department of Transportation, Library of Congress, and several other repositories.

For clarity of analysis, information from the 2005 reconnaissance survey, the 2006 Ketchum Historic Preservation Commission list, and the 52 site forms were collated into a single spreadsheet.

Using the city-provided images to update the 2005 and 2006 survey data, TAG first determined which resources were:

- Still extant
- Retained sufficient historic integrity

To be considered eligible for inclusion in the NRHP a building or site must, at a minimum, be more than 50 years old. It must also not have been significantly altered to the degree that alteration destroys the building's historic integrity. Example: An addition does not match the massing or style of the original building. As per National Register Bulletin 15 (NRB-15), *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, NRHP criteria recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. These are:

- Location – where the historic property was constructed or where the historic event occurred.
- Design – the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
- Setting – the physical environment of a historic property.
- Materials – the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.
- Workmanship – the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture during any given period in history or prehistory.
- Feeling – a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period.
- Association – the direct link between an important historic event or person to the historic property.

Although careful consideration of all seven aspects of integrity is an important part of a more formal analysis, a site visit was neither possible nor necessary at this phase of the project. Instead, each extant resource underwent a cursory integrity analysis specifically, aimed at determining integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. This allowed TAG to determine which resources might be most practically considered for future planning efforts and updated inclusion on the city's list of recommended heritage sites.
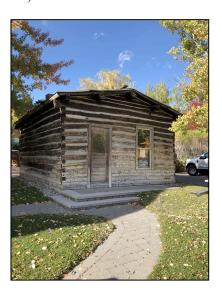
Results

In the fifteen years since the 2005 reconnaissance survey was completed, the CC District, and the city of Ketchum as a whole, has continued to lose valuable historic resources to development. Specifically, since the completion of the 2005 survey, a total of 15 of the 81 buildings recorded in that survey have been lost, a loss that is equal to almost 20 percent of previously recorded resources. These losses include one of two properties in Ketchum listed in the NRHP, the 1929 Bald Mountain Hot Springs Lodge and pool. Unfortunately, research revealed that an additional nine resources within the CC District not recorded in the 2005 report have also been demolished bringing the total number to 24.

On a more positive note, it was determined that currently there are an adequate quantity of extant resources that display sufficient historic integrity of design, materials, and workmanship to warrant further investigation and protection efforts at a local level (see Recommendations). Additionally, TAG has determined that several extant resources within the CC District appear to have sufficient historic integrity and to meet criteria for inclusion on the Historic Preservation Commission's list "recommended heritage sites." Several of these properties might also serve as a list of resources that exhibit the most promise for individual eligibility in the NRHP. (See Table 1)

Architectural Styles

A city or neighborhood's architectural heritage helps to convey its unique sense of place. Other styles of architecture are also represented in Ketchum's historic resources, but the following examples in Ketchum's CC District are particularly successful in conveying a sense of the city's historic character and significance. A building does not have to be grand or of high style to hold importance.

Although it has been moved to its current location, the Bonning Cabin, constructed of hand-hewn rough lumber, is a significant artifact of Ketchum's early buildings as are several log structures dating to the 1920s, 30s, and 40s.

Chalet-Style buildings are also found in the CC District. A notable example is the Ketchum Kamp Hotel. Beginning in the early 20th century, interest in the Chalet Style was spurred on by the publication of a variety of books and articles which provided architects as well as homeowners, inspiration and specific details on how to replicate the architecture of the Swiss Alps. The style, which was mainly applied to residential designs, was an adaptation of traditional versions. Whereas the Swiss models utilized heavy timber and log construction atop stone bases, American models utilized simple platform construction in combination with applied decorative elements. Low pitched front-facing gable roofs are hallmarks of the style and many have deep eaves supported by large decorative brackets. The ends of rafters are generally exposed.

The A-Frame became popular in the mid-twentieth century in the United States. Inexpensive, and easy to construct, these buildings were often sold as kits. A steeply pitched roof made this type of building particularly appealing for use as lodges and

cabins, especially in areas like Ketchum where snow load was a major concern. The 1969 Post Office building is a good example of this style.

All photos: City of Ketchum

Recommendations

Increased and ongoing residential, commercial, and industrial development activity in Ketchum's CC District is an imminent threat to historic structures. Since the CC District last underwent reconnaissance-level survey in 2005, 15 of the 81 buildings recorded in that survey have been lost as were an additional nine buildings of historic age that were

not recorded at that time. Several steps can be taken, which combined with community outreach and education, can help avoid more losses.

Reactivate Participation in the Certified Local Government Program

TAG contacted the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for information about the Certified Local Government (CLG) grant program, and Ketchum's status as a CLG. SHPO staff made clear that the most promising outcomes for the city's preservation efforts includes reinstatement of the city's Historic Preservation Commission. Although Ketchum retains its status as a Certified Local Government (CLG), it is currently considered "inactive." An active CLG and a close working relationship with SHPO is imperative to the longevity and protection of Ketchum's historic resources. For example, much of the work proposed in this report could be covered by grants available to CLGs.

Update the Reconnaissance Level Survey

Although the 2005 survey suggested that most resources within the CC District are not individually eligible for inclusion in the NRHP, the area maintains an adequate quantity of resources appearing to maintain sufficient historic integrity to warrant an updated reconnaissance survey. As of 2020, historic resources constructed in 1970 meet the age requirement for listing in the NRHP. Reconnaissance level surveys are valuable tools that help cities determine not only the number and quality of historic resources they possess, but they are also essential to preservation planning efforts at the community level.

Develop a Preservation Plan

TAG also recommends that following completion of the updated survey, the City of Ketchum put forth a request for qualified consultants to create a Preservation Plan for the City of Ketchum. Preservation planning is a practical way to provide for the protection of a community's historic resources and character. A community that includes a preservation component as part of long-range planning recognizes the importance of local heritage and the built environment.

Preservation is a dynamic process. The City of Ketchum is currently engaged in strong efforts to educate the public about the importance of the historic built environment and to include citizens in the preservation process.

Table 1. Historic Resources Retaining Historic Integrity
The resources listed were selected from an examination of photographs provided by the city. All meet the requirements outlined in the 2006 Heritage Sites Document for designation as local heritage sites. These resources and more that are not on the list may be eligible to the NRHP, which would be determined by updating the 2005 survey.

Name	Address	Date
Bonning Cabin	531 5th Street East	c.1882
Thornton House	560 East Avenue North	c.1912
E.B Williams House	520 East Avenue North	c.1884
Jack Frost Motel	591 4th Street East	1940
George Castle Cabin	431 ½ Walnut Avenue	1930s
Michel's Christiania Restaurant	303 Walnut Avenue	c. 1960
Brass Ranch House	571 2nd Street	c.1920s
McCoy/Gooding/Miller House	480 East 2nd Street	c.1884
Lon Price/Esther Fairman House	180 Leadville Avenue North	c.1929
St. Mary's Catholic Church	380 Leadville Avenue North	c.1880s
Fagan Property	411 Sun Valley Road	c.1940s
Comstock & Clark Mercantile	300 North Main Street	c.1887
Pioneer Saloon	308 North Main Street	c. 1945
Helm Property	340 North Main Street	c.1940s
Former Post Office	460 North Main Street	1969
Bert Cross Cabin	271 ½ Leadville Avenue North	c.1938
Ketchum Kamp Hotel	220 North Main Street	c. 1925
Lewis Bank	180 North Main Street	c.1930s
First Telephone Co.	340 North 2nd Street	c. 1930s
Dynamite Shed	271 Sun Valley Road	c. 1880
Battis house	431 Washington Avenue	c.1940s
McAtee House	380 1st Avenue	c.1930s
Forest Service Park	Between River and 1st Street	1933
Community Library/Gold Mine Thrift Shop	331 Walnut Avenue	1958
Greenhow & Rumsey Store (NRHP listed)	211 North Main Street	1884
Horace Lewis Home/Elephant's Perch	280 East Avenue North	c. 1880