



STAFF REPORT
KETCHUM HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING OF June 2, 2026

PROJECT: 491 E Sun Valley Rd

APPLICATION TYPES: Designation of a Historic Building/Site (Application No. P26-022)

PROPERTY OWNER: City of Ketchum

REPRESENTATIVE: Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)

REQUEST: To add the structure at 491 E Sun Valley Rd to the City Historic Building List

LOCATION: 491 E Sun Valley Rd., Ketchum Lot 5A Block 24

ZONING: Community Core (CC-1 Zone)

REVIEWER: Allison Kennedy – Senior Planner

NOTICE: A public hearing notice for the project was mailed to all owners of property within 300 feet of the project site and all political subdivisions on May 13, 2026. The public hearing notice was published in the Idaho Mountain Express on May 13, 2026. A notice was posted on the project site and the city's website on May 13, 2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On May 8, 2026 the HPC submitted an application to the City of Ketchum Planning and Zoning Staff dated March 31, 2026. Title 16.07 Administration and Procedures; 16.07.060.F: Designation of a Historic Building/Site; 1.b.; *The HPC shall have the authority to add or remove structures from the historic building/site list using the criteria below to determine if a structure should be added or removed from the historic building/site list.*

HPC has submitted an application and will review the criteria in Section 16.07.060.F at a public meeting before making a recommendation to City Council at its next available meeting. The recommendation is to add the City-owned structure, which is currently leased to Starbucks, to the City of Ketchum Historic Building List. The building was identified as a strong candidate in the most recent Post-WWII Reconnaissance Survey because of its architectural integrity, alpine design, and association with prominent Idaho architect Neil Smull of Boise.



Figure 1: Subject Property Aerial Map

CRITERIA

The Commission will review the Criteria required to be met for listing. Code sections are in bold italic. Applicants (HPC) Comments are inserted within each criteria. Staff Comments are inserted following each applicant response.

16.07.060.F.c. Review Criteria *In reviewing a request for designation of a historic building/site, the HPC shall determine if the application complies with the following:*

(1) General Criteria

(A) Historic buildings must be at least 50 years old. A historic building may be exempt from the age standard if it is found to be exceptionally important in other significant criteria.

Applicant Response: The Ketchum - Sun Valley Branch of the Bank of Idaho was constructed in 1966 at 491 E. Sun Valley Road (Attachment I; Figure 26). Architect Neil Smull of the architectural firm of Wayland, Cline and Smull from Boise designed the building and utilized glass, native Idaho stone, dark wood beams, and a cedar shake roof to blend into Ketchum's "alpine locale." (111) The general contractor was Jacobsen Construction Company, headed by Ted Jacobsen, and the interior design firm was R. Alan Brown and Associates of Spokane, Washington. The design for the interior was inspired by the "alpine setting of the Sun Valley area," and featured coats of arms and crests from countries famous for winter sports and skiing. (112) Later, local Architect Susan Desko designed alterations for this bank.

111 "Idaho Bank Plans Office in Ketchum," Idaho Statesman, 6/25/66.

112 "New Bank Building is being built in Ketchum," Times-News, 6/23/66.

(Source : Post-World War II Properties in Ketchum Reconnaissance Survey, by Loggia Preservation, 2025.)

Staff Response: Meets criteria of 50 years or older built in 1966.

(B) All buildings and sites must retain their physical integrity as determined by the following criteria. However, a site need not meet all of the following criteria:

- i. Shows character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of Ketchum, the region, state, or nation;***
- ii. Retains a significant amount of the original design features, materials, character or feeling of the past;***
- iii. Is in the original location or same historic context after having been moved;***
- iv. Has been accurately reconstructed or restored based on documentation.***

Applicant Response: The Bank of Idaho (1966) is a custom-designed building that reflects a site specific architectural response to Ketchum, ID. Its design embodies a regional architectural approach prevalent during that era, emphasizing community identity through alpine architecture characteristics, including steeply pitched roofs, dormers, and a natural material palette. Today the architectural language contributes to both the historic and contemporary identity of Ketchum as a small mountain town.

The building was designed by the distinguished architect Neil H. Smull of Boise, ID. Smull served as Principal Architect at CSHQA for 25 years, leading projects across the United States. He was a registered architect through the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) and also held licensure as a landscape architect with the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) in Idaho. In recognition of his contributions to the profession, Smull was elevated to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects (FAIA) in 1993 and was awarded the AIA Idaho Gold Medal in Architecture in 2001 during the Chapter's 50th anniversary.

More recently, the building represents a successful example of adaptive reuse through a renovation led by Ketchum-based architect Susan Desko. In 2011, Desko led a local design-build team in transforming the former bank into a vibrant community space, incorporating a visitor center and coffee shop. The project introduced new programmatic life while maintaining the original alpine architectural concept established by Smull. The redesign received national recognition with a Chicago Athenaeum Award in 2012. Architect Susan Desko is also a well prominent architect in the state of Idaho, who was the 2025 Silver Medal recipient through the AIA College of Fellows Western Mountain Region.

Staff Response::

- The reconnaissance study identifies the structure as a good example of intact Contemporary architecture that is eligible for historic preservation.
- The building remains in its original location.
- It retains materials that reflect Ketchum's 1960s alpine character, including Idaho stone, a cedar shake roof, dark wood, and glass.

For additional support, see page 70 of Attachment II, the Loggia Preservation Survey.

(2) Additional Criteria In addition to a. above, historic buildings or sites shall meet one or more of the following criteria, (A), (B) or (C):

(A) Architectural

- i. Exemplifies specific elements of a recognized architectural style or period or a style particularly associated with Ketchum neighborhoods;*
- ii. Example of the work of an architect or builder who is recognized for expertise nationally, state-wide, regionally, or locally;*
- iii. Demonstrates superior craftsmanship or high artistic value;*
- iv. Represents an innovation in construction, materials, or design;*
- v. Pattern or grouping of elements that enhance the identity of the community;*
- vi. Significant historic remodel contributing to Ketchum's identity.*

Applicant Response :

The Bank of Idaho (1966) is a custom-designed building that reflects a site specific architectural response to Ketchum, ID. Its design embodies a regional architectural approach prevalent during that era, emphasizing community identity through alpine architecture characteristics, including steeply pitched roofs, dormers, and a natural material palette. Today the architectural language contributes to both the historic and contemporary identity of Ketchum as a small mountain town.

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Staff Response::

The building meets the architectural Criteria A through its design, its association with notable architects, and its continued contribution to Ketchum's identity.

- Its cedar shakes, dark wood, glass, and pronounced roof forms reflect mid-1960s design and intentionally selected to complement Ketchum's alpine character.
- The original building was designed by Neil Smull, a regionally and nationally recognized architect. Later redesigns were completed by Susan Desko, a prominent local architect with regional and national recognition.
- The multiple roof configurations and custom design distinguish both the original building and the later renovations, and the remodel has helped anchor Ketchum Town Square.

(B) Social/Historic

i. Site of historic event; Chapter 16.07 Administration and Procedures 16.07.070 : Ordinance Amendments | 16.07.070.A : Code Amendment Cohesive Ketchum Code Update 263 Final Draft – October 2025

ii. Exemplifies cultural, political, ethnic, economic, or social heritage of the community through the built environment or with people associated with an era of history;

iii. Associated with a notable person or the work of a notable person;

iv. Is valued by the Ketchum community as an established or familiar visual or cultural feature due to its architectural history, siting, massing, scale, cultural characteristics, or heritage such that its removal would be irreparable loss to the setting.

Applicant Response:

The Bank of Idaho (1966) is a recognizable building within Ketchum, ID, that functions as a visual and cultural landmark. Its current use as a Visitor Center and Starbucks coffee shop establishes the property as an active community / cultural hub, for both residents and visitors. This programmatic evolution was intentional per Architect Susan Desko's (2011) design concept and reinforces the buildings key role within Ketchum's Community Core. From a land use and urban design perspective, the building's massing, scale, and architectural character (designed by architect Neil H. Smull) are distinctive and not replicated within recent development trends in Ketchum. These characteristics contribute meaningfully to the established 'small mountain town' streetscape and the broader character of the area. Given these considerations, removal of the building would constitute an irreversible loss to Ketchum's built environment, diminishing both visual and cultural identity of the Community Core.

Staff Response

The structure also appears to meet Social/Historic Criteria B because it reflects mid-1960s mountain-town architecture, retains a historic building scale, and is located beside the City Town Square, an important community gathering place.

(C) Geographic/Natural Features i. Enhances sense of identity of the community; ii. Is an established and familiar natural setting or visual feature of the community

Applicants Response:

The Bank of Idaho (1966) is located at the prominent intersection of Sun Valley Road and East Avenue. The building shares its block with the active Ketchum Town Square, establishing a strong connection to the surrounding community. Its placement and design within Ketchum's Community Core contribute to a highly recognizable and iconic perspective, particularly in relation to the Baldy Mountain backdrop, which is frequently captured to represent the identity of the City of Ketchum.

Staff Response:

Criteria C also appears to be met. The structure occupies a prominent downtown location, and its scale and materials contribute to the character of the main square. Together, these features make it an iconic and historic wayfinding landmark for residents and visitors.

Suggested Motion

- "I move to recommend approval to the City Council to review and approve the City of Ketchum's 491 E Sun Valley Rd structure to be added to the City Historic Building List."

ATTACHMENTS:

I. Application

II. Link to Loggia Post WWII Study

BANK OF IDAHO 1966
(SUN VALLEY VISITOR CENTER)

Year of Construction : 1966 (60 Years)

Address : 491 Sun Valley Rd E, Ketchum, ID 83340

Current Owner : City of Ketchum

Architect : Neil H. Smull, FAIA, of Wayland, Cline and Smull (CSHQA)

Builder: Jacobsen Construction Company



Criteria 1 : Historic buildings must be at least 50 years old. A historic building may be exempt from the age standard if it is found to be exceptionally important in other significant criteria.

Applicant Response :

The Ketchum - Sun Valley Branch of the Bank of Idaho was constructed in 1966 at 491 E. Sun Valley Road (Figure 26). Architect Neil Smull of the architectural firm of Wayland, Cline and Smull from Boise designed the building and utilized glass, native Idaho stone, dark wood beams, and a cedar shake roof to blend into Ketchum's "alpine locale." (111) The general contractor was Jacobsen Construction Company, headed by Ted Jacobsen, and the interior design firm was R. Alan Brown and Associates of Spokane, Washington. The design for the interior was inspired by the "alpine setting of the Sun Valley area," and featured coats of arms and crests from countries famous for winter sports and skiing. (112) Later, local Architect Susan Desko designed alterations for this bank.

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(Source : Post-World War II Properties in Ketchum Reconnaissance Survey, by Loggia Preservation, 2025.)

Criteria 2 : All buildings and sites must retain their physical integrity as determined by the following criteria. However, a site need not meet all of the following criteria:

- a. Shows character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of Ketchum, the region, state, or nation;
- b. Retains a significant amount of the original design features, materials, character or feeling of the past;
- c. Is in the original location or same historic context after having been moved;
- d. Has been accurately reconstructed or restored based on documentation.

Applicant Response :

The Bank of Idaho 1966 has not moved of it's original location, being at the prominent intersection of Sun Valley Rd and East Ave. The historic architectural design was site specific to Ketchum, ID in regards to 'alpine design'. The prominently steep cedar shake roof, with dormers, defines this style and has been well preserved over time. The roof was most recently replaced, with matching shakes, in January 2025. Although not historic, the adaptive-reuse uses locally sourced pine wood and re-enforces the local alpine aesthetic, true to Ketchum, ID. Most of the exterior renovation is considered additive and does not interfere with the historic nature of the building.

Criteria 3 :

Architectural Criteria

a. Architectural criteria.

- i. Exemplifies specific elements of a recognized architectural style or period or a style particularly associated with Ketchum neighborhoods;
- ii. Example of the work of an architect or builder who is recognized for expertise nationally, state-wide, regionally, or locally;
- iii. Demonstrates superior craftsmanship or high artistic value;
- iv. Represents an innovation in construction, materials or design;
- v. Pattern or grouping of elements that enhance the identity of the community;
- vi. Significant historic remodel contributing to Ketchum's identity.

Applicant Response :

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Social / Historic Criteria :

b. Social/historic criteria.

- i. Site of historic event;
- ii. Exemplifies cultural, political, ethnic, economic, or social heritage of the community through the built environment or with people associated with an era of history;
- iii. Associated with a notable person or the work of a notable person;
- iv. Is valued by the Ketchum community as an established or familiar visual or cultural feature due to its architectural history, siting, massing, scale, cultural characteristics, or heritage such that its removal would be irreparable loss to the setting.

Applicant Response :

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From a land use and urban design perspective, the building's massing, scale, and architectural character (designed by architect Neil H. Smull) are distinctive and not replicated within recent development trends in Ketchum. These characteristics contribute meaningfully to the established 'small mountain town' streetscape and the broader character of the area. Given these considerations, removal of the building would constitute an irreversible loss to Ketchum's built environment, diminishing both visual and cultural identity of the Community Core.

Geographic / Natural Features Criteria :

- i. Enhances sense of identity of the community;
- ii. Is an established and familiar natural setting or visual feature of the community

Response :

The Bank of Idaho (1966) is located at the prominent intersection of Sun Valley Road and East Avenue. The building shares its block with the active Ketchum Town Square, establishing a strong connection to the surrounding community. Its placement and design within Ketchum's Community Core contribute to a highly recognizable and iconic perspective, particularly in relation to the Baldy Mountain backdrop, which is frequently captured to represent the identity of the City of Ketchum.

Exterior Elevations . March 2026

South Elevation :



North Elevation :



East Elevation :



West Elevation :



Additional Images :





General Maintenance Images, Displays Stone (Historic) and Log Cuts (Adaptive Re-Use) on January 06, 2025 :



Pre-2011 Exterior Elevations :

Perspective :



South Elevation :



Perspective :



East Elevation :



Stone Detail :



Attachment II

Final Draft Ketchum Post WWII Reconnaissance
Survey Loggia Préservation

Please view survey online:

<https://www.ketchumidaho.org/bc-hpc>

New Business

2. Review GIS Historic Structure Layer

