

Legal Description: Site:

Address:

Current Owner:

Private: Current Owner Address:

NAD 83 NAD 27

Historic Name:

Zone: Easting: Northing:

Common Name:

Moved? Estimated Documented

Date of Construction: Estimated:

Date of Move:

Documented:

Quad Name:

Building Changes:

Footprint:



Architect:

Builder:

Original Owner:

Original Use:

Present Use:

Foundation:

Exterior Walls:

Roof:

Other Materials:

Bibliography: Tax Records, Hill County Courthouse; Sewer and Water Permits, Public Works, Havre
Havre Hill County Library;
Grits, Guts, and Gusto. A History of Hill County.
Polk Directories and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.
Havre Daily News, various years.; The Plaindealer, various years.; The Promoter, various years.; The Havre Daily Promoter, various years.

Physical Description: The Mountain Bell Building is arguably the most significant modern structure in the region. Situated on the southwest corner of the busy intersection of Fifth Avenue and Second Street, the structure of reinforced concrete with brick and stone facing gives primary attention to the east facing Fifth Avenue elevation. The two-story building uses running bond honey and brown brick for the field color of the building, and uses stack bond red brick in two bands at the main level and upper level windows to accentuate the clean modern lines. The main entrance is recessed into the northeast corner of the building with limestone veneer and a narrow aluminum canopy that give the entrance additional material acuity. The windows on both levels are aluminum industrial sash with an in-swing hopper window below picture glass split vertically by a single, centered mullion. The lower level windows also include a horizontal picture glass that matches the dimensions of the operable lower unit. Windows on both levels are paired and stack vertically. The Mountain Bell logo is centered over the entry canopy on both the east and north elevations with an understated, circular aluminum medallion with the familiar bell image stamped into the material. The parapet cap around building is an aluminum gravel stop with an equal width, extruded form which shadows the lower band and gives the building a strong visual terminus. The north façade is two stories at the east half and one story to the west, with the center, lighter color brick band continuing west and a mechanical grill replacing the typical paired window pattern on the west side of the elevation.

Historical Significance: Local phone service began in 1903 with the Havre Electric Company which was originally located in the alley between First and Second Streets. In 1914, Montana Power Company assumed control until the Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph was established in 1918. The phone service system remained in the Montana Power Building at 321 Second Street until they relocated in the building next door at 319.

This 87-foot by 83-foot building and basement was constructed in 1959 to house the modernizing era of communications systems for Havre and the Hi-line. The interior was treated with glazed tile and scored plaster. The first floor contained the dial equipment room and offices and the heating, ventilating, power equipment, and emergency power plant were located in the basement. The operator's switchboard lounge and locker room were on the second floor. The August 4th, 1959 Havre Daily News stated the plans for the building included expansion to thirteen switchboard positions. By 1960, the phone switchboard system was replaced by the direct dial phones.

The company eventually became known as Pacific Northwest Bell and later Qwest. The building is currently used to store equipment.

Integrity: The building retains a high degree of integrity as it remains unaltered from the historic era.

Statement of Significance: This building is significant because it represents the thrust of the community into the modern age of communications. It reveals how quickly the technology changed, for example, from a switchboard system to a direct dial system. Architecturally, the building is an excellent example of late 1950's architecture that has not undergone any modifications to the exterior. The "Ma Bell" logos are still located over the main, recessed glass entrance.

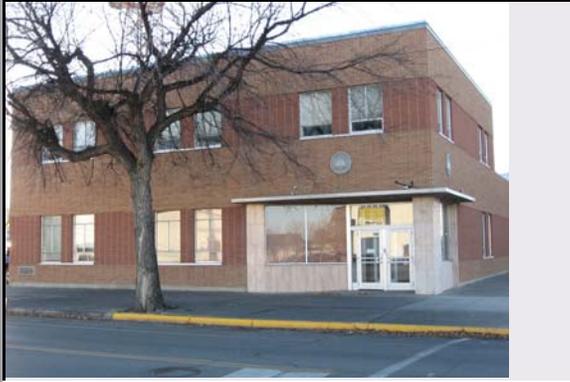
Form Prepared By

Wade Bitz, Gary Wilson, Candi Zion

Preparer Address

Date Entered

Picture:



Topo Map

