United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name The Coram Hotel

other names/site number Hotel Libby

2. Location

street & number 302 California Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Libby N/A vicinity

state Montana code MT county Lincoln code 053 zip code 59923

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this _x_ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property _x_ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ **national** ___ **statewide** _x_ **local**

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Hotel Libby
Name of Property

Lincoln, Montana
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [x] private
- [ ] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- [x] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	**Total**

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: hotel
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store, restaurant, financial institution
SOCIAL: meeting hall

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE, CONCRETE
walls: ASBESTOS, WOOD
roof: WOOD: shingle, ASPHALT
other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Coram Hotel is located Libby, in the extreme northwest corner of Montana. Libby sits between the Purcell Mountains to the north and the Cabinet Mountains to the south, and the majority of the incorporated portion of the town is located immediately south of the Kootenai River. The Coram Hotel is a three story, with basement, Western Commercial wooden building built between 1898 and 1910. It is located on the corner of 300 California Avenue and 3rd Street, the intersection of two principle thoroughfares in Libby, Montana. California Avenue in particular historically served as an important arterial of the downtown business corridor. The hotel is one of two structures dating from Libby's first building phase and is a reflection of the optimistic spirit of growth and stability. With its main façade (east) facing California Avenue, the Coram Hotel, later renamed Hotel Libby, remains an anchor building in one of the earliest sections of the town. The building retains its original design, including elements that date to its construction. Though some alterations have occurred, such as later asbestos-cement cladding, the hotel displays excellent integrity of location, setting, materials, design, workmanship, association and feeling. It occupies a corner block and is one of the most substantial historic buildings in downtown Libby.

Narrative Description

Libby, the "City of Eagles", sits in northwest Montana, 35 miles east of Idaho and 70 miles south of British Columbia. Libby serves as the county seat of Lincoln County with the majority of the incorporated portion of the town lying south of the Kootenai River. Approximately 12,000 people live within a 10 mile radius of the town. U.S. Highway 2 bisects the community east west and Highway 37 crosses the Kootenai River, heading north to Eureka. Within Libby is the Coram Hotel. Located on the corner of California Avenue and 3rd Street, the Coram Hotel remains one of the most substantial historic buildings in downtown Libby.

The Coram Hotel (one contributing building)

The original portion of the Coram Hotel displaying an "L" configuration is topped by a cross-hipped roof protected with wood and asphalt shingles. The east roof slope covering the east-west running mass and the north roof slope over the north-south mass display three centered dormers; an arched dormer flanked by hipped dormers. The hipped dormers originally contained six-light fixed windows. Only the two hipped dormers on the east roof slope and the easternmost hipped dormer on the north roof slope presently contain windows; the westernmost hipped dormer on the north roof slope is covered with plywood. The arched dormers contain openings for a lower rectangular window with semicircular window opening above. The rectangular window opening of the arched dormer on the east roof slope and both semicircular window openings are covered with plywood. The lower half of the rectangular window opening of the arched dormer on the north roof slope contains one fixed six-light window which doesn't fill the entire opening; the upper half of the window opening is covered with plywood.

Horizontal asbestos siding clads the two upper stories of the east facade while vertical tongue-and-groove wood siding covers the ground floor portion of the elevation. The east elevation contains six rectangular one-over-one double hung windows displaying wood framing in both the third and second floors. Ingress to the building is through a recessed single light aluminum door with side lights. North of the door are two fixed one-light windows, while a small one-by-one horizontally sliding window and a fixed two-light window are south of the door. A neon *Libby Hotel* sign rests above the door entrance.

The north elevation of the original mass displays horizontal asbestos cladding over the two upper stories and the west half of the ground story and vertical tongue-and-groove wood siding over the east half of the ground story. The elevation contains nine rectangular one-over-one double-hung windows in the third story and nine rectangular window openings covered with plywood that were originally one-over-one double-hung windows in the second story. The ground floor contains two one-light fixed windows and four rectangular (though smaller than those in the above floors) one-over-one double-hung windows; the four double-hung windows are located east of a 15-light wood door and separated from the two single light windows by a 20-light wood door. A neon *Libby Hotel* sign sits above the easternmost fixed light window. Low concrete stoops provide access to the two doors.

The most southern section of the south elevation immediately perpendicular to California Avenue is clad with horizontal asbestos siding and contains two rectangular one-over-one double hung windows with wood framing; one each in the third and second stories. A metal fire escape ladder positioned immediately east of the third and second story windows stretches from the third floor window to about five feet above the ground surface.

The northern segment of the south elevation that partially defines the interior courtyard, displays horizontal asbestos cladding. Both the third and second stories contain four windows. The far east window of each floor is an arched 9-light window set in a wood frame; the location of these windows indicate the location of the interior grand staircase. The remaining windows on both floors are rectangular one-over-one double-hungs. The ground floor contains four rectangular one-over-one double-hung windows and a single two-light wood door; a low stone stoop original to the building provides access to the door.

The west elevation that separates the two disconnected south elevations and partially defines the interior courtyard displays horizontal asbestos cladding. Both the third and second stories contain four rectangular one-over-one double-hung windows; the most-northern window on each floor however, is smaller than the other windows. A wood door covered by a steel storm door topped by a small gable porch provides ingress into the hotel on the ground floor; a low stone stoop original to the building provides access to the door. Two rectangular one-over-one double-hung windows are located north of the door and another is immediately east of the door.

Additions

Projecting off the west elevation of the original building is a two-story addition capped with a half-hipped roof topped with asphalt shingles. Projecting from the west roof slope is a gable dormer and an interior brick chimney (immediately south of the dormer). The dormer is also protected with asphalt shingles. The walls are clad with the same horizontal asbestos siding found on the original portion of the building. The north elevation contains two rectangular boarded-over window openings in both the second and first floors. The west elevation contains two boarded-over window openings and one rectangular one-over-one double-hung window in the second story, and two rectangular boarded-over windows in the ground floor. The south elevation contains no windows, and one door. The south elevation contains paired two-panel wood doors.

Projecting west and wrapping around the south elevation of the original two-story addition is a single story half-hipped addition topped with wood shingles. Similar to the rest of the building, this single story addition is clad with horizontal asbestos siding. The north, west and east elevations contain no windows; the south elevation contains paired wood doors. A five-panel wood door provides ingress through the west elevation.

A detached sample room[1] built southwest of the main hotel between 1910 and 1916 no longer exists. By 1927, the sample room become attached to the greater hotel complex. It is unknown when the sample room was removed, but the 1927-1942 Sanborn map indicate its presence.

Interior

The interior of the hotel displays a functional layout utilizing a central circulation pattern around the main desks and lobby. The main focal feature is the grand staircase made from oak with square newel post and three identical balusters per riser. The general layout of the ground floor remained the same throughout the hotel's existence; the northeast corner of the building facing California and 3rd street served as the lobby and office for the hotel while other portions of the ground floor catered to various businesses[2]. The dining room was located on the first floor in the northwest portion of the Coram facing 3rd street; the two story addition housed the kitchen and storage.[3] The interior features three large landscape murals by Roy Porter, a prominent local artist, painted in the 1950s. The murals remain in very good condition.

Garage (one noncontributing building)

A wood frame garage constructed in 2000 is located southwest of the hotel on the location of the original sample room. The garage measures 30 ft by 40 ft and is topped by a gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. The walls are clad with vinyl siding. The east elevation contains a double pane one-light window and a steel man-door. The south elevation contains a 32-panel aluminum garage door. The foundation is concrete.

Integrity

Historic photographs of the hotel indicate that when originally constructed, simple-drop wood siding clad the upper portion of the building. The ground floor of the east façade displayed six bays separated by large square wood columns topped by a simple Tuscan order. The end and one of the center bays appeared to contain fixed nine-light windows framed with pine, with two recessed entrances. Local Libby residents indicate the six original bays were enclosed in the late 1940s to early 1950s.[4] Two large fixed one-light windows, a small one-by-one horizontally sliding window and a large fixed two-light window were installed at the time. Although the bays were framed in and covered, the bays, columns and many architectural details remain intact beneath the cladding; the original second bay from the south end of the building enclosed by the two-light fixed window still retains the original glass panel door sporting the original hardware, though the door now provides access to the enclosed bay, used for display purposes.

East façade third and second story fenestration arrangement remains as originally designed, suggesting fenestration in the other elevations, not including the ground floor of the north façade, remain as originally constructed, though no historic photographs of any elevation other than the east façade have yet been found to

[1] "a room in which samples are displayed; *esp* : a hotel room in which salesmen display merchandise for the inspection of buyers for retail stores". Definition from the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, found at: http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sample%20room.

[2] The Sanborn Map Company, 1910 map of Libby.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Personal communication to Gail Burger by private citizen on June 26, 2010. The citizen related when they arrived in Libby in 1959, the building front had already been altered for several years.

corroborate this. While the window arrangement remains the same, the lintels which appear in early photographs of the east façade no longer remain.[5]

Although some changes have occurred to the hotel, the changes occurred within the period of significance. The building retains sound integrity in most respects. It stands in its original location. The setting is generally unchanged though recent construction has occurred north of the building. Several historic buildings constructed after the Coram Hotel still stand to the east and south along California Avenue.

The Coram Hotel is an architecturally designed building that retains many design, material, and workmanship aspects, especially in the interior of the building. Many of its historic interior and exterior features remain intact, and those exterior changes that have occurred, did so within the period of significance. Though lower façade changes have also occurred, such changes are somewhat common in historic buildings as tenants and owners molded commercial space to fit their needs. The building still easily presents as an historic hotel and as a building that served as an anchor to the downtown area. Window alterations in the upper floors are limited to the removal of the lintels in the late 1940's or early 1950's when the asbestos–cement siding was likely installed by J. Neils Lumber Company. The Coram Hotel conveys its original design intent and retains integrity as both a historically significant property.

[5] Cindy Tibbs, *Montana Historic Architectural Inventory Form for the Coram Hotel, Libby Montana*. On file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, (Helena, MT. September 1982).

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [x] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [ ] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1910-1972

Significant Dates

1910

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Started by Liebbe, Nourse and Rasmussen of DeMoines, Iowa. Completed by Guy Manning of Portland Maine

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for the Coram Hotel is 1910 to 1972, representing the completion of the hotel to the time when the hotel ceased serving the town of Libby in a major capacity.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Coram Hotel is recommended eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at a local level of significance as an early twentieth century commercial building constructed in the town of Libby, Montana. The Coram Hotel, later named the Hotel Libby, continuously served the residents of Lincoln County by providing lodging, goods and services since it opened its doors in 1910 until the mid-1970s. Throughout its history, the Coram Hotel served as an important gathering place of the small town. Though construction began much earlier than its 1910 completion, its opening at a time of burgeoning population growth and community maturation reflected the prosperity and stability of this mining and logging region in northwestern Montana.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Coram Hotel is significant under Criteria A for the role that it played in the local history and the community development of Libby, and as a prominent landmark and major social center beginning in 1910. Designed to be the finest hotel in town, it incorporated many features intended to offer every comfort available to guests. The Coram Hotel is historically significant for its long association with the community of Libby and its civic development. Constructed at the height of the regional post-railroad boom as logging and mining communities in the area grew, the hotel reflected the town's growing importance and permanence in the area. Political, economic and social events important to the city of Libby and the state occurred at the Coram Hotel. It served as a focal point for the town and as a local meeting place for residents and people from out of town. Though not completed by the time of the 1906 fire, the hotel is one of three structures that pre-date the disaster and hence represents the first building phase of Libby. The Coram Hotel was the first "show hotel" of its kind in the town; it also served as home to the first bank in Libby, Fish and Wild Life office, and numerous small businesses.

The Settling of Libby

Libby sits in a valley carved by the Kootenai River and bound by the Cabinet Mountains to the west in the northwest corner of Montana. Thirty-five miles to the west is the Idaho panhandle while the Canadian border lies 70 miles to the north.

Prior to the arrival of Europeans, the area served as the homeland of the Kootenai Indian Nation who lived along the upper and lower stretches of the Kootenai River. The resources of the area, including the river, which provided food and transport, were central to their lifeways. The river provided resources obtained with weirs, traps and poles, and the surrounding area supplied big game such as elk, caribou, moose and deer. Seasonal trips to the Columbia River to spear salmon and later, with the introduction of the horse, forays into the plains to hunt bison supplemented their provisions. The Kootenai oral traditions place them here as long ago as anyone can remember.[6]

The first non-native party to explore the Kootenai River country was the Northwest Fur Company, lead by David Thompson. Between 1807 and 1811, Thompson travelled the Columbia from its source to its mouth and followed many important tributaries. In 1808, Finan McDonald, a Thompson assistant, established a storage facility and trade outpost near the present town of Libby, though its exact location remains unknown. Thompson himself followed the Kootenai River in 1808, passing by the future site of Libby on his way into

[6] Donald Spritzer and the Montana Historical Society. *Interpretive Plan: Libby Dam, Kootenai River, Montana*. Chapter I, U.S. Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army Engineer District, 1973.

Idaho.[7] Thompson's mission to scout the area for its fur trading potential eventually led to the founding of eleven posts along the Kootenai River, in Montana, Idaho and British Columbia over the next 50 years. Trade with the Kootenai occurred and was actively pursued into the 1860s.[8]

Because of the rugged nature of the area, farming and ranching was limited in scope, though the abundance of mineral and forest assets allowed exploitation of these resources. Beginning in 1863 with the discovery of placer gold in the upper Kootenai River drainage by the son of Jaco Finlay, a Thompson aide, miners flocked to the region. In 1867, a prospecting party consisting of John S. "Jack" Fisher and 12 miners struck gold on Libby Creek, naming the creek after the daughter of group member George Davis.[9] With the establishment of a mining camp at Wild Horse and the flood of miners following the river from Idaho and Montana, the Montana Post reported the same year a convergence of 500 to 600 miners in the Libby Creek mining district.

The same year a Kootenai hunting party surprised a small prospecting party returning with supplies from Spokane Bridge in the Washington Territory near the confluence of Libby Creek and the Kootenai River. One miner survived; three Kootenai were tried and executed for the attack.[10] The remoteness combined with the incident slowed the number of prospectors coming to the area. The population dropped to only 100 miners within the year and by 1876, only Jack Fisher remained.[11]

Neglect of the area for prospecting purposes was short lived however, as 1885 witnessed Thomas Shearer, B.F. Howard, Oliver Woodcoe and others staking claims in a second gold rush that targeted Libby, Poorman and Bear Creeks. The resultant strikes on Libby Creek and the Vermillion River brought hundreds of miners once again to the area. The mining camp of "Lake City" or "Oldtown" grew rapidly boasting a number of stores, two brickyards and 14 saloons. Signaling more serious intents, heavy machinery arrived to work the hard-pan of the creek bed. The second mining boom also brought a Chinese contingent; however, in 1890, accusations of a Chinese miner robbing sluice boxes arose, resulting in the departure of all the Chinese from the district.[12]

Two of the early miners in the area, Alfred and Benjamin Howard, namesakes of Howard Creek and Howard Lake, remained in the area for decades and were some of the earliest settlers.[13] Benjamin and his son Harry homesteaded on the Kootenai River, building the first house on the future site of Libby.[14]

As Libby continued to grow, anticipation of a railroad spurred construction. Lots claimed prior to a government survey of the area were soon discovered to be located on land reserved for the Great Northern Railway. The government survey spurred A.B. Johnston, a local shop owner, to plat a second townsite, "South Libby" on homestead land he held adjoining the Libby townsite. Originally separated by a half mile of timber, the towns were joined at the time of incorporation in 1909 and boasted graded streets and a ditch system delivering fresh water. Named for Abraham Lincoln, the creation of Lincoln County from parts of Flathead County resulted in a

---

[7] Katherine McKay. *Cultural Resource Inventory and Evaluation, BN Overpass and Kootenai River Bridge, Montana State Highway 37, Libby, Montana, Lincoln County,* 1997, p.11.

[8] *Nuggets to Timber: Pioneer Days at Libby, Montana* (Libby: Libby Pioneer Society and the Libby Woman's Club, 1970), no page numbers.

[9] Roberta Carkeek Cheney. *Names on the Face of Montana* (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, sixth printing, 1996), p. 166.

[10] USFS, Kootenai National Forest Informational brochure "Libby Creek Recreational Gold Panning Area" 1998; Libby Dam Interpretive Plan, Chapter IV.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] USFS Libby Creek Recreational Gold Panning Area." The reference notes, B.K. Howard mined his claims until his death at age 80 in 1915 while A.V. pursued the industry into the 1920s.

[14] *Nuggets to Timber*.

temporary designation of Libby as the county seat the same year.[15] Desiring the permanent designation as county seat spurred investors and locals to strengthen their cause; a flurry of development, including the completion of the Coram Hotel, and the construction of the Richards Hotel and the First National Bank, ensued. Other improvements included pouring cement sidewalks, and installing water systems and electricity throughout the town. The efforts of the previous year proved fruitful as in 1910, Libby was officially named the county seat receiving more votes than Eureka.[16] County offices were lodged in the town's Masonic Building until a county courthouse was completed in 1913, the same year telephone service came to Libby. With the creation of Lincoln County, the ferry crossing the Kootenai River could no longer charge a toll, except on Sundays.

Great Northern Railway in Libby

After the launch of the Great Northern Railway survey for a line through the area, the Howards sold their forested property to a group of investors who quickly set about surveying 40 acres for town site lots. The land was cleared and town lots sold. The line reached Libby in April 1892, and the first train arrived in May ushering the age of railroading into the town. Libby became a major rail stop between Kalispell and Idaho, and rapid expansion of the community ensued that lasted into the 1920s.

Unlike many towns found along rail lines, Libby's origins were not dependent on the arrival of the railroad as the town already existed due to mining interests; however, the railroad proved hugely important in terms of its viability as a commercial center. The first train, hauling passengers and freight, arrived in Libby on May 3, 1892. The railroad allowed the easy, economical access required for people to immigrate to the area to live and work. The same year the railroad arrived marked the publication of the first newspaper in town, the Libby Miner. A visit by Louis W. Hill, president of the Great Northern, resulted in a visit to the Coram Hotel.[17] Though the type of relationship between James Hill and J.A Coram, the builder of the Coram Hotel, is not known, Coram's contact information is included in James Hill's files documenting the operation and management of Hill's railroads and relating to daily operational procedures and problems.[18]. It would not be uncommon for persons of importance passing through or stopping in Libby, to stay at the hotel, as it was billed as the finest Hotel from Spokane to the Dakotas.

Timber Industry in Libby

With the growth of Libby, it was only a matter of time before the emergence of the forest industry in the area. In 1906, the construction of a sawmill by the Dawson Lumber Company brought workers and their families to the town in greater numbers. Finding the town and the area attractive, many built homes and decided to make Libby their permanent home. In 1911, J. Neils bought the Dawson Lumber Company and about ten thousand acres of timberlands in surrounding area later renaming it the Libby Lumber Company. J. Neils lost control of the Libby Mill and associated timber lands in 1915 but reacquired the assets again in 1919.[19] Knowledgeable of forestry practices, the new owners realized the necessity of reforestation as an essential part of the industry, implementing an active tree-planting program through the company. The prosperity of the J. Neils Lumber Company spread to the town itself, with as many as 1,000 people employed in Libby in the early 1900s.

---

[15] Ibid.

[16] *Montana Place Names* - Montana History Wiki.

[17] *President Louis W. Hill Visits Libby*, The Western News, January 20, 1910.

[18] Minnesota Historical Library, http://www.mnhs.org/library/findaids/00790.xml

[19] Northwest Digital Archives. *Guide to the J. Neils Lumber Company Records, 1924-1966.* Found at: http://nwda-db.wsulibs.wsu.edu/findaid/ark:/80444/xv90292

Lumber company railroad tracks brought logs to the mill. The original tracks ran from the lumber mill south along Libby Creek and eventually up Swamp Creek. Railroad logging along some 14 miles of main track continued from 1906 to 1925 along the south side of the Kootenai River into the Libby Creek drainage; however, by the mid-1930s, truck based logging replaced railroad logging. A 1957 merger of the J. Neils Lumber Company with St. Regis Paper Company resulted in the construction of a stud mill at Libby in 1958, and a plywood plant began operations in 1960. Stimson Lumber and Plum Creek Timber Company purchased the Libby assets in 1993. The Libby mill closed in 2002.[20]

The 1920s witnessed the heaviest forestry activities with the county supporting three sawmill, at Libby, Warland and Troy. However, by 1930, logging declined and the Libby Mill emerged as the sole mill processing local timber. Despite the decline in timber, Libby remained an important hub for the forestry industry. Libby, Troy and Eureka served as the two trade centers in the county, though only Libby enjoyed a growing population through the 1930s and 1940s. The presence of the Libby Mill accounted for much of the growth, which for decades employed hundreds of workers. The growth of vermiculite mining in the area also contributed to the population growth.[21]

In the mid-1940s, Harold F. and Lois C. Kaufman conducted a county-wide economic study on Lincoln County and its Forest Community sponsored by the University of Montana and the U.S. Forest Service. Their study measured the county at approximately 3,750 square miles with 97 percent forest cover, placed Lincoln County as the foremost forest county with the highest timber volume and three quarters of that timber growing on National Forest land in Montana.[22] The study corroborated the importance of the timber industry to the area as a mainstay in the region.

Vermiculite Mining and Libby

E.N. Alley discovered the Libby vermiculite deposit in 1916, in what is referred to as “Vermiculite Mountain”, seven miles northeast of town. Commercial production began in 1921. Marketed under the name “Zonolite”, Alley soon drew interest from other investors including the Vermiculite & Asbestos Company in 1927. As Alley and others in the industry developed commercial uses and expanded the mine and processing facilities, markets for the mineral expanded and in the Zonolite Company built a new shipping facility to transfer large volumes of vermiculite to a railroad loading facility.[23]

Through the 1950s, Libby reigned as the world’s largest producer of vermiculite, and in 1963 the company sold to W.R. Grace. In 1973, the company built a new mill, for concentrating the vermiculite ore. Unfortunately, little was known in terms of the effects of vermiculite on health. Issues relating to the mining of vermiculite began to mount, due to the carcinogenic nature of the tremolite asbestos, which naturally occurred in conjunction with the vermiculite deposits. Health professionals noted the effects of dust exposure on workers at Zonolite and later W.R. Grace beginning in the 1940s, and by the 1970s, Libby’s Dr. Richard Irons recorded widespread lung damage in the community and its workers. In 1980, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health initiated a study of asbestos-related health problems at Libby along with the company’s own data, which led W.R. Grace to close its mine in 1990 and begin a reclamation process.

Over the years, vermiculite and mine tailings were extensively used throughout Libby for everything from a garden supplement in people’s back yards, to fill at baseball diamond and school tracks. As a consequence

[20] Ibid.

[21] Harold F and Lois C. Kaufman, *Toward the Stabilization and Enrichment of a Forest Community*, (Missoula: The Montana Study, University of Montana), p. 43.

[22] Ibid. p. 5-6.

[23] Frederic L. Quivik, *Background on the Vermiculite Mine for the Oral History Project in Libby, Montana*, 2002.

this ubiquitous presence of asbestos in town led to community-wide environmental contamination and widespread asbestos-related disease such as asbestosis and mesothelioma, a terminal form of lung cancer caused by exposure to asbestos. This led to the community being designated a Superfund Site with the Environmental Protection Program. For the past several years, remediation has been underway and a Clinic for Asbestos-Related Disease now operates in the town treating the many member of the community who are sick and dying of asbestos-related illnesses.[24]

Today, most of Libby's incorporated area lies south of the Kootenai River; it is the largest urbanized area and most densely developed city in Lincoln County. U.S. Highway 2 bisects the community running east to west and Highway 37 crosses the Kootenai River, following it north to Eureka. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe runs along the Kootenai River through Libby. Construction of Libby Dam 17 miles north of town from 1966 to 1972 employed 2000 workers during the peak construction periods, many which temporarily lived in Libby, finding short-term accommodations in places like the Coram Hotel.[25] Through boom and bust cycles, Libby continues to serve a variety functions, ranging from a beautiful location to live to providing array of outdoor recreational opportunities.[26]

The Coram Hotel

Located on lots 1-6 in Block 12 of the Libby Original Townsite, J.A. Coram and Frank Leonard broke ground in 1898 to begin what turned out to be the very long construction of what was to become a luxury hotel. J.A. Coram, the namesake of the hotel, was a Boston capitalist with interests in Montana including the Butte City Water Company, the Kalispell Water and Light Company, the Libby Townsite and Lumber Company, and Montana Coal and Coke Company. Leonard served as an agent for Coram on the ground in Libby and his involvement led to Coram's purchase of the townsite in 1892; he served as the secretary of the Libby Townsite and Lumber Company. A third investor, J.A. Maltman was a Chicago-based capitalist who went in with Coram on the hotel venture.[27]

The Des Moines, Iowa firm of Liebbe, Nourse and Rasmussen prepared the original hotel plans which called for 46 bedrooms on the second and third floors, shared bathrooms, a dining room, billiards, room, and bar; steam heat would warm the hotel. Total cost was estimated to be $15,000.[28]

Although construction actually began in September of 1899, a dip in the mining industry curtailed further development. With the hotel's frame and roof finished, further work ceased. The hotel remained in this condition for nearly a decade, standing unfinished yet surviving not only the harsh elements of the area, but also a devastating fire that swept through the town in 1906. Reports from local residents of the time indicate the unfinished hotel served as a shelter for cattle; a favorite pastime of the local boys was spooking the cattle

[24] Ibid.

[25] *Libby, MT.com—Libby Dam* Found at: http://www.libbymt.com/areaattractions/libbydam.htm.

[26] *City of Libby Growth Policy, A Revision to the 1972 Comprehensive Plan,* Adopted November 1, 2010. City of Libby, Montana.

[27] *Progressive Men of the State of Montana.* (Chicago: A.W. Bowen and Company, public domain), p.1331. "EPA, Owners Discuss Possible 2010 Cleanup On Historic Hotel Libby" *The Western News*, December 1, 2009. Found at: http://www.thewesternnews.com/news/article_1126096b-ff4a-5d92-97bc-057286748ef3.html?mode=print; Coram passed away in September 1926 in Kalispell, and Leonard died in 1939, *Montana Death Records*, found at: http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mtmsgs/death_records.htm

[28] "EPA, Owners Discuss Possible 2010 Cleanup On Historic Hotel Libby" *The Western News*, December 1, 2009. Found at: http://www.thewesternnews.com/news/article_1126096b-ff4a-5d92-97bc-057286748ef3.html?mode=print.

then watching them scramble out the window openings. Local businessmen reportedly would clean the interior out to use it for town meetings.[29]

In 1909, C.E. Lukens, who eventually became president of the Lukens-Hazel Mining Company of Libby[30] and John H. Town purchased the building. The timing of the purchased proved advantageous as the mining industry was beginning to recover from its recession.

The 1910 Federal Census indicates C.E. Lukens was born in Virginia in 1871; both his parents were also from Virginia. An unmarried man at the time of the census, his address was listed as Cutbank School District, Tenton, Montana.[31] In 1911, Mr. Lukens served as President of First National Bank of Libby.[32]

John Town (John Toron) was born in England in March of 1863 and immigrated to the U.S. in 1856. The 1900 Federal census listed the home of the unmarried Town as Great Falls, Montana.[33] By 1910, he married Hazel E. Town and resided in Libby School District, Lincoln, Montana. According to census records, Hazel is 26 years old to John's 45 years; also residing with them is Gilmore Town, 14 years of age.[34]

With renewed interest from investors, construction resumed with the company of Guy C. Manning hired to take the lead.[35] Guy C Manning was born April of 1874 in Illinois to John and Carrie Manning, both of Illinois. Nineteen-hundred census records indicate he resided with his parents in Landusky, Montana and was unmarried.[36] On October 7, 1901, Mr. Manning married Rilla Bostwick in Missouri[37] and by 1910, the Manning family resided in the Libby School District, Lincoln, Montana. Guy and Rilla had three children at the time of the 1910 census; eight year old Velma, six year old Geraldine, and one year old Emmer.[38] A 1909 advertisement paid for by Mr. Manning describes himself as an architect, draughtsman, superintendant and a contractor with plans and specifications furnished in Libby, Montana.[39] By 1920, the Manning family moved to Portland, Oregon with an additional child, eight year old John G Manning.[40]

---

[29] Ibid.

[30] *Mining and Scientific Press, An Independent Paper Owned, Edited and Managed by Engineers.* (San Francisco: Dewey Publishing Company, July 19, 1919). p. 102.

[31] Ancestry.com 1910 U.S Federal Census Collection.

[32] R.L. Polk Lincoln County Directory 1911.

[33] Ancestry.com 1900 U.S. Federal Census Collection.

[34] Ancestry.com 1910 U.S. Federal Census Collection.

[35] Western News, August 5, 1909.

[36] Ancestry.com 1900 U.S. Federal Census Collection.

[37] Ancestry.com Birth, Marriage & Death Records—Missouri Marriage Record 1805-2002

[38] Ancestry.com 1910 U.S. Federal Census Collection.

[39] R. L. Polk Kalispell City and Flathead and Lincoln County Directory 1909-1910 advertisement.

[40] Ancestry.com 1920 U.S. Federal Census Collection.

The elapsed time from the start to the resumption of construction escalated the anticipated cost of the project from $40,000 and $50,000. The anticipated opening created a stir in the town:

> **The Coram, Libby's $50,000 Hotel**
>
> Work has started, contracts for material let and the hotel is to be in operation inside of 90 days – First class in every respect – It will be the best hotel along the Great Northern from the Dakotas to Spokane – New hotel owned by Mr. Town and Lukens.
>
> Work on Libby's big hotel has been started. It began on Saturday last and will be prosecuted continuously until completed, and from an interview with Mr. John H. Town, one of the owners of the building, it will be ready for the public inside of 90 days.
>
> The work is under the supervision of Guy C. Manning, a well known architect and builder of Portland, Oregon. Mr. Manning was in Libby last week and after looking over the building made his estimates and at once started men to work. The first work done was on the foundation, which is faulty in a place or two. Some rockwork will be necessary and the kitchen annex will be placed upon a concrete foundation entirely, in place of the stonework, which is now there.
>
> Shingles have been hauled to the ground and the roof will be put on at once, so that work on the inside will not be delayed on account of weather. The contract for the lumber has been let to the Dawson Lumber Company of Libby. Only the very best material will be put into the building and when completed it will be a credit to Libby and will be without question the best hotel along the Great Northern from the Dakotas to Spokane.
>
> The building is three stories high. There are 40 guest rooms in addition to commodious servants' quarters and while not a very large hotel it is so conveniently arranged that nothing could be added to make it more complete as to comfortable detail. The building will be wired and plumbing will be added and the heating plant will be one of the best that money can buy. In fact, everything about this hotel will be only of the best.
>
> The cost of the building, including the land upon which it stands, will be between $40,000 and $50,000, according to the value of the ground. The building itself will cost, when completed, about $25,000. It will take in the neighborhood of $10,000 to properly furnish it and the value of the ground will make of it a splendid hotel. It is owned by C.Ed Lukens, of Cut Bank and John H. Town of Libby. The new hotel is to be named "The Coram," in honor of J.A.Coram, the original owner of the Libby townsite.[41]

The local newspaper continued to provide updates regarding the progress of the hotel:

[41] "The Coram, Libby's $50,000 Hotel," *The Western News.* August 5, 1909.

> The New Coram Hotel will soon be completed and ready for occupancy. The two upper floors of the structure have been entirely competed, and the carpenters are now finishing the lower story…[42]

With a new focus and new money, the Coram Hotel opened its doors for the first time on March 24, 1910, one of the few architect designed buildings in the town at the time. While the anticipated opening of the hotel created much excitement, the opening itself yielded little in terms of actual newspaper fanfare.[43] A advertisement in the 1910 R.L. Polk & Company directory highlighted the Coram as having electric lighting, steam heat and telephone connections—"Modern and Up to Date in Every Respect".[44] In 1910, the hotel was leased to a man named Vaughan who served as the proprietor when it opened. Little is known regarding Mr. Vaughan except it was he who purchased all the furnishings for the hotel. Four months after the Coram opened, and roughly the same time the building changed its name to the Hotel Libby, Mr. Vaughan ceases to be mentioned in the news releases of the *Western News*.

Not one to stand on the merits of the existing building, the owners requested Manning design plans for an addition that included a store room, refrigeration room, fuel room, an auxiliary heating plant to furnish hot water for baths and laundry, a laundry and sample room. The 1916 Sanborn Map indicates the sample room was detached from the rest of the hotel. The addition was projected to cost $2500.[45] The addition of a sample room served as another indicator of the Coram Hotel striving to be the finest hotel in Libby and the surrounding area. Because sample rooms were less expensive than renting a meeting room and superior to display wares than a guest's room, they became very popular with salesmen of the time. Virtually every good hotel offered such rooms.[46]

The prestigious hotel was referred to a "show hotel" for years. In addition to accommodations, the hotel boasted a fine dining room replete with tablecloths and napkins.[47]

> Joseph Stoneman, proprietor of the Hotel Libby, has received a couple of car loads of new furniture for that hotel. Included in the shipment is a complete set of bar fixtures. Mr. Stoneman will have a bar in one of the rooms putting off of the main lobby and as soon as the new First National Bank brick building is completed the bar will be moved into the quarters now occupied by the forestry offices. Mr. Stoneman is one of the best hotel men in the northwest and with such a splendid hotel as the Libby will make of it one of the talked-of hotels in the northwest.[48]

By May of 1911, business was booming; most rooms were occupied every night and prospective lodgers frequently were turned away. Mining, lumber, and city improvement work greatly contributed to the high

---

[42] The Western News, December 16, 1909.

[43] One small one paragraph article appeared in the March 31, 1910 edition of the Western News.

[44] R.L. Polk & Company 1910 Directory, p. 469.

[45] "$2500 Addition to Hotel Libby", *Western News*, August 11, 1910.

[46] "Sample Rooms". Found at: http://www.forgottendetroit.com/statler/sample.html.

[47] The Western News, August 11, 1910.

[48] Ibid.

occupancy rate of the hotel.[49] As Libby gained population, the Libby Hotel began to serve as social and political center of the community:[50]

> The lobbies of the hotels the past week resembled those of the capital city during a session of the Montana legislature, very largely. On Sunday afternoon last there were seen in one group in the Libby Hotel Senator Chas. Muffly of Broadwater County, Senator Fred Whiteside of Flathead County and Senator Leary of Lincoln County. With these members of the upper house sat Representative Alley of Silver Bow County and here and there through the lobby were seen John R. Toole, of Missoula, an ex-member of the house and at present head of the timber holdings of the Amalgamated timber department and Chas. Swartz, tax agent of the same company. The two railroads were represented by J.C. Fairchild, tax agent for the Northern Pacific, and W.L. Schottler, tax agent for the Great Northern. Hon. J.M. Kennedy, the Cincinnatus of the Kootenai, tall and stately, his distinguished appearance noticeable in any gathering, a leader in the big Heinze-Amalgamated fight, Hon. E.S. Booth formerly a representative from Silver Bow County, and probably one of the best known and most capable politicians in Montana, Bill Edwards, an ex-member of the house from Deer Lodge County, Hon. S.F. Ralston, ex-Senator from Teton County, Hon. John H. Geiger, ex-senator from Flathead County, and Hon. L.H. Faust, (founder of The Western News) formerly a member from Flathead County, represented in part the third house, and had Bill Brennan come over from his Big Fork apple orchard, there would have been a quorum present. From Kalispell came Hon. Sidney M. Logan, one of the county attorneys from Lincoln County, Hon. D.F. Smith, formerly judge of the 11th Judicial District, and Hon. Chas. Foot, who represented large corporate interests and some of his personal clients as well. Bonners Ferry sent Mr. DeWolf, who represents the Bonners Ferry Lumber Company in the timber department, who was accompanied by an attorney of that place. From Eureka came the warhorses and battle scarred veterans of the many county division and county seat scraps, and in the van of these were Chas. A. Haman, Ike Busey, Chas. A. Weil, head of the Eureka Lumber Company, Greeley Pomeroy, dean of the legal fraternity in the Tobacco Plains valley, Hon. P. N. Bernard, official booster for the peerless Tobacco valley and F.P. Garey who in part has charge of the financial affairs of the county by reason of being a member of the board of county commissioners.

The impact of the Coram Hotel wasn't limited solely to the functions of a hotel. Many businesses throughout the years also called the hotel home. The first bank in town, the First National Bank of Libby, to open its doors did so on the ground floor of the Coram Hotel prior to moving into its own building.[51] An early historic photograph of the hotel reveals a barber pole attached to the south end of the east façade. The 1927 and 1927-1942 Sanborn maps show an unnamed office occupying the southeast corner of the building and a

[49] The Western News, May 14, 1911.

[50] The Western News, August 10, 1911.

[51] Western News, February 17, 2010 and September 29, 1910.

telephone office immediately to the north.[52] The library was located in rented rooms in the Hotel Libby from 1929 to 1936. [53]

By 1927, the Sample Room, which was originally constructed as a detached element of the hotel, merged with the rest of the hotel through the construction of a garage north of the Sample Room. The 1927 and 1927-1942 Sanborn maps cease referring to the Sample Room as such, indicating the area was used as a dwelling and garage.

Through the 1930s and into the 1970s, the hotel, continued to serve the local community. A photograph from the mid-to late 1930s provides some insight regarding the hotel and the immediate area around the building. By this time, the sidewalks around the hotel are paved, though the road is not. The hotel sports a new sign atop the roof and rain gutters and drainpipes funnel water off the building. The hotel also displays a coat of white paint distinctively different from the natural wood exterior presented earlier. Interior window coverings appear to have been converted from pull-down blinds to cloth curtains. Signs advertising businesses located in the lobby of the hotel hang from interior bays.

The slow but continuous increase in the Libby population from the founding of the town through the 1970s resulted in steady business. An advertisement in the January 18th, 1940 edition of the Western News describes the hotel as “spacious” with “modern rooms” and “reasonable rates”.[54] Business continued to be strong enough that several rooms were added in 1949, a result of the strong local economy. The rooms were built in the space formerly occupied by the dining room. The newspaper described the new rooms as “… strictly modern and up to the minute in every detail.”[55] The conversion of the dining room into additional lodging space would not have been an easy decision as the restaurant was a hallmark of the hotel in its early years. The additional rooms indicate an increased demand for lodging, which apparently provided better income than a restaurant. Recladding of the exterior of the hotel with horizontal asbestos siding and infilling of the east façade likely occurred at the same time. Though an exact date of these changes is not known, an undated photograph from the Western News archives of a Labor Day parade down California Avenue with the hotel in the background appears to display the present asbestos horizontal cladding. Automobiles in the picture indicate the photograph was taken no later than the early 1950s. The siding was likely supplied by the J. Neils Lumber Company in Libby who advertised in the Western News. A J. Neils Lumber Company advertisement from 1950 for Carey “asbestos-cement and ceramo” siding depicts similar siding to that which clads the Coram Hotel.[56] The neon signs presently affixed to the building appear to have been mounted not long after this time.

One resident who was nine years old in 1954 fondly recalled purchasing candy from the front counter of the display case in the lobby of the hotel: "As a small child we would stop by the hotel on our walk home from church and if we had been good my mother would buy us candy from the front counter. We would all be trying to look in the glass window at once to pick out our candy."[57]

Further indicators of a robust business through the 1950s is the presence of three large landscape oil paintings in the hotel lobby painted by the late Roy Porter in the late 1950s to early 1960s.[58] These oil paintings, which

[52] The Sanborn Map Company, 1927 and 1927-1942 maps of Libby.

[53] The Lincoln Country Public Library, http://www.lincolncountylibraries.com/about_us/history.html

[54] “Libby Hotel” advertisement, *The Western News*, January 18, 1940.

[55] The Western News, Libby, June 23, 1949.

[56] Carey “Asbestos-Cement and Ceramo Siding advertisement. *The Western News*, Libby, 1950.

[57] Personal Communication to Gale Burger.

[58] Roy Porter was a well-known late 20th century local artist, known for his western landscapes in the styles of realism, representation and realist, painted in oils. Mr.

are still in very good condition, signal the importance of the hotel and its role providing deluxe accommodations to visitors to the area. Two of the paintings measure 5 ft. by 6 ft. in size; one adorns the north interior wall of the lobby and the other is painted on a south interior wall. The largest mural measures 5 ft. by 12 ft. and is located on an interior east wall.

Construction of the Libby Dam north of the town beginning in 1966 resulted in a massive influx of workers to the town. Three contracts alone in 1966 resulted in the addition of 600 workers, only ¼ of the estimated number of workers anticipated by the Corps of Engineers for the actual dam construction itself. This sudden rise in the population of the town impacted not only schools, "but also the ability of the community to house the newcomers…".[59] While accommodations for workers sprang up around the town, the established motels and hotels of the area provided shelter for many of the workers. With its large number of rooms, the Coram provided this vital service to the ever expanding population of the town. While long-term workers on the dam sought more stabile permanent accommodations, workers contracted for short-term projects would have found the accommodations at the Coram and other hotels and motels in town perfect for their needs. The completion of the Libby Dam and the resultant exodus of workers out of the area proved a huge blow to not only the town of Libby, but undoubtedly to the operational success of many businesses in town, including the Coram Hotel. The hotel continues to show up in the local phone books of the area through the 1970s, however, after 1980, the Coram no longer advertised in the phone book, marking a long protracted downturn of a once grand hotel.

In the 1960s, locals briefly referred to the Coram as the "Hot L" as the "E" in one of the neon signs burned out. Playing up the unsolicited notoriety, a sign was actually constructed using the catchy nickname. Use of the reference likely derived from the 1973 off-Broadway play, *the Hot L* by Lanford Wilson subsequently adapted into a short-lived television series in the mid-1970s.

The longest stretch of ownership of the hotel by one party occurred from 1949-1977 by Don and Edna Rice. The Rice's were the last owners to operate the hotel for business purposes. Both of the Rice's have passed away. In 1977, Ron and Candy Johnson purchased the Hotel continuing ownership to the present.

Architects

Liebbe, Nourse & Rasmussen was an architectural firm based in Iowa. They designed buildings throughout the western United States. The company organized in 1899 and was derived from the firm Foster & Liebbe. H.F. Liebbe, Clinton Nourse and E.F. Rasmussen designed and oversaw the construction of a variety of buildings including libraries, schools, residences, stores, mausoleums, banks, churches, office buildings, theatres, apartment buildings, and hotels, including the Coram.[60] Several buildings designed by Liebbe, Nourse & Rasmussen are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Little is known regarding the professional activities of Guy Manning, the architect charged with the completion of the Coram Hotel. Though apparently based in Portland, Oregon, no mention of him occurs in the *American Architects Directory*.[61]

Porter's paintings can still be found occasionally at auction. Mr. Porter was a resident of Libby and a very popular artist at that time in Montana. Porter painted about five murals in town, three in the lobby of Hotel Libby. Mr. Porter passed away June 11, 1971 at the age of 69 and is buried in the Eureka cemetery outside of Libby.

[59] "Libby Townspeople Working to Handle Influx of Dam Workers". The Great Falls Tribune, Great Falls, June 11, 1967.

[60] "A Trio of Architects." *The Midwestern*. Volume 1, Number 2 (Des Moines: Greater Des Moines Publishing Company, October 1906). P. 72.

[61] George S Koyl (editor). *The American Architects Directory*, First Edition (New York: R.R Bowker Company, 1955)

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

A Trio of Architects. The Midwestern. Volume 1, Number 2. Greater Des Moines Publishing Company, Des Moines (October 1906).

Ancestry.com U.S. Federal Census Collection 1900-1940.

Ancestry.com Birth, Marriage & Death records. *Missouri Marriage Records 1805-2002*.

Carey "Asbestos-Cement and Ceramo Siding advertisement. The Western News, Libby, 1950.

City of Libby Growth Policy, A Revision to the 1972 Comprehensive Plan, Adopted November 1, 2010. City of Libby, Montana.

Eureka Cemetery, Lincoln County, Montana Cemetery Records: Found at: http://files.usgwarchives.net/mt/lincoln/cemeteries/eurekanz.txt

Gohack Libby website. Found at: http://toolserver.org/~geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Libby,_Montana&params=48_23_17_N_115_33_13_W_city.

Johnson Family archives of Hotel Libby.

Kaufman, Harold F. and Lois C., *Toward the Stabilization and Enrichment of a Forest Community* (Missoula: The Montana Study, University of Montana, 1946).

Koyl, George S. (editor). *The American Architects Directory*, First Edition. R.R Bowker Company, New York, 1955.

Libby Pioneer Society and the Libbys' Woman's Club. *Nuggets to Timber: Pioneer Days at Libby, Montana.* Libby, MT 1970.

The Libby Herald Archives Libby Montana.

Libby Telephone Directories; 1930, 1968, 1971, 1977, 1980.

Lincoln County Public Library, Libby, Montana.

Lincoln County clerk's office.

Lincoln County tax records.

Mining and Scientific Press, An Independent Paper Owned, Edited and Managed by Engineers (San Francisco: Dewey Publishing Company, July 19, 1919).

Minnesota Historical Society. *Great Northern Railway Company. President: An Inventory of James J. Hill Correspondence at the Minnesota Historical Society*. Found at: http://www.mnhs.org/library/findaids/00790.xml

Tibbs, Cindy. Montana Historic Architectural Inventory Form for the Coram Hotel. On file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, Montana.

Northwest Digital Archives. *Guide to the J. Neils Lumber Company Records, 1924-1966*. Found at: http://nwda-db.wsulibs.wsu.edu/findaid/ark:/80444/xv90292

Quivik, Frederic L., *Background on the Vermiculite Mine for the Oral History Project in Libby, Montana*, 2002.

R.L. Polk's Montana Gazetteer and Business Directories, 1896-1916.

Roy D Porter (20th Century). Found at:
http://www.askart.com/AskART/artists/biography.aspx?artist=11140854

Sanborn Map Company, 1910, 1916, 1927, and 1927-1942 maps.

Spritzer, Donald, and the Montana Historical Society. *Interpretive Plan: Libby Dam, Kootenai River, Montana*. U.S. Army Engineer District, 1973.

The Western News archives, Libby, MT.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

_x_State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	50	392926	5360451	3			
2	11	607081	5360443 revised	4			

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

LIBBY ORIGINAL TOWNSITE, S03, T30 N, R31 W, BLOCK 012, Lot 1 - 6, *4771*

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
The property boundary is based on the legal land description.

Hotel Libby
Name of Property

Lincoln, Montana
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gail Burger, Hotel Libby

organization

date March 2012

street & number P.O. Box 670654

telephone 907-229-2443

city or town Chugiak

state

zip code

e-mail Gail1@mtaonline.net

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

  A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property:
City or Vicinity:
County: State:
Photographer:
Date Photographed:
Description of Photograph(s) and number:

See Continuation sheets

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Ronald and Candace Johnson

street & number 17619 SE 288TH PL

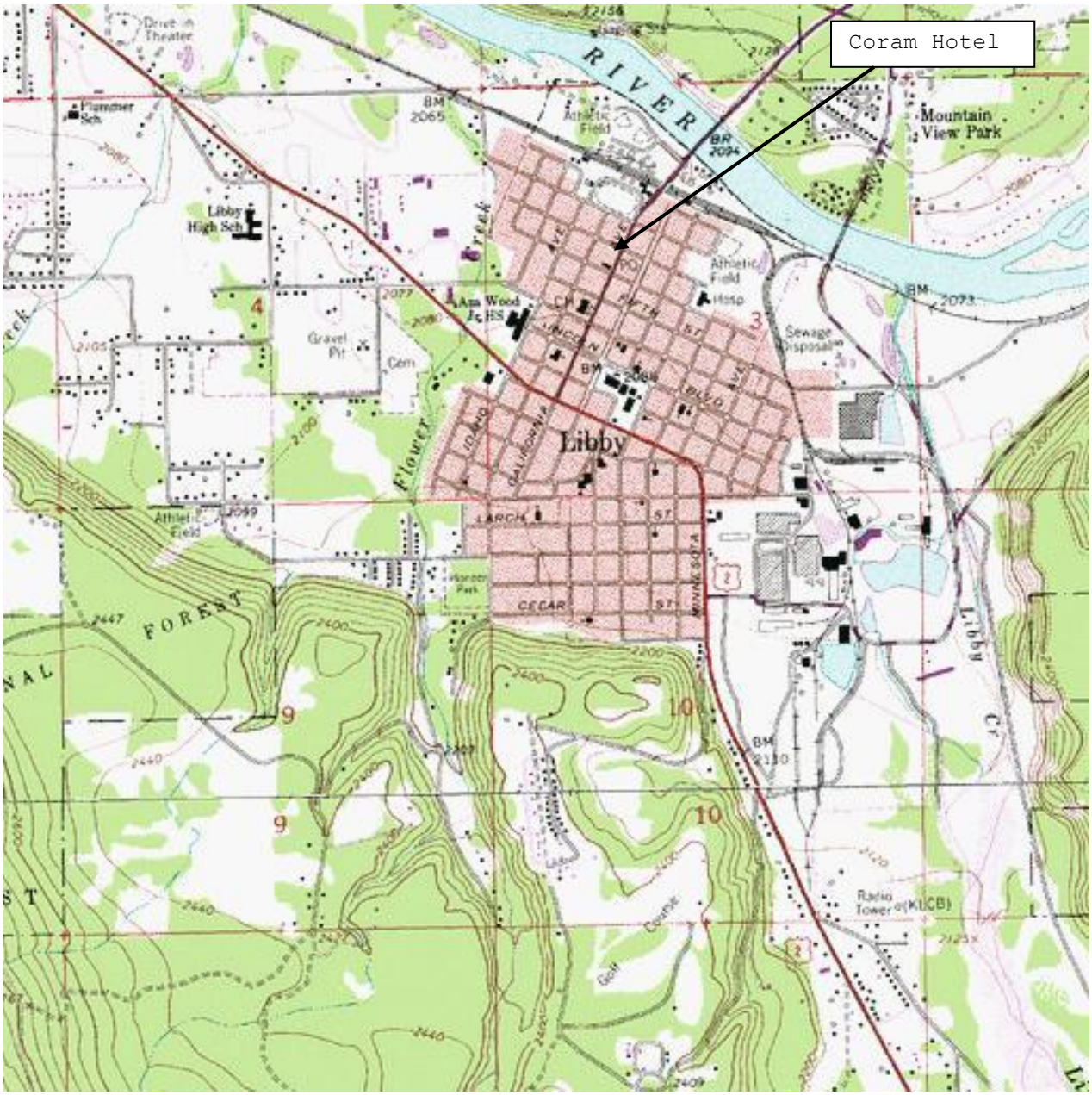
telephone

city or town Kent

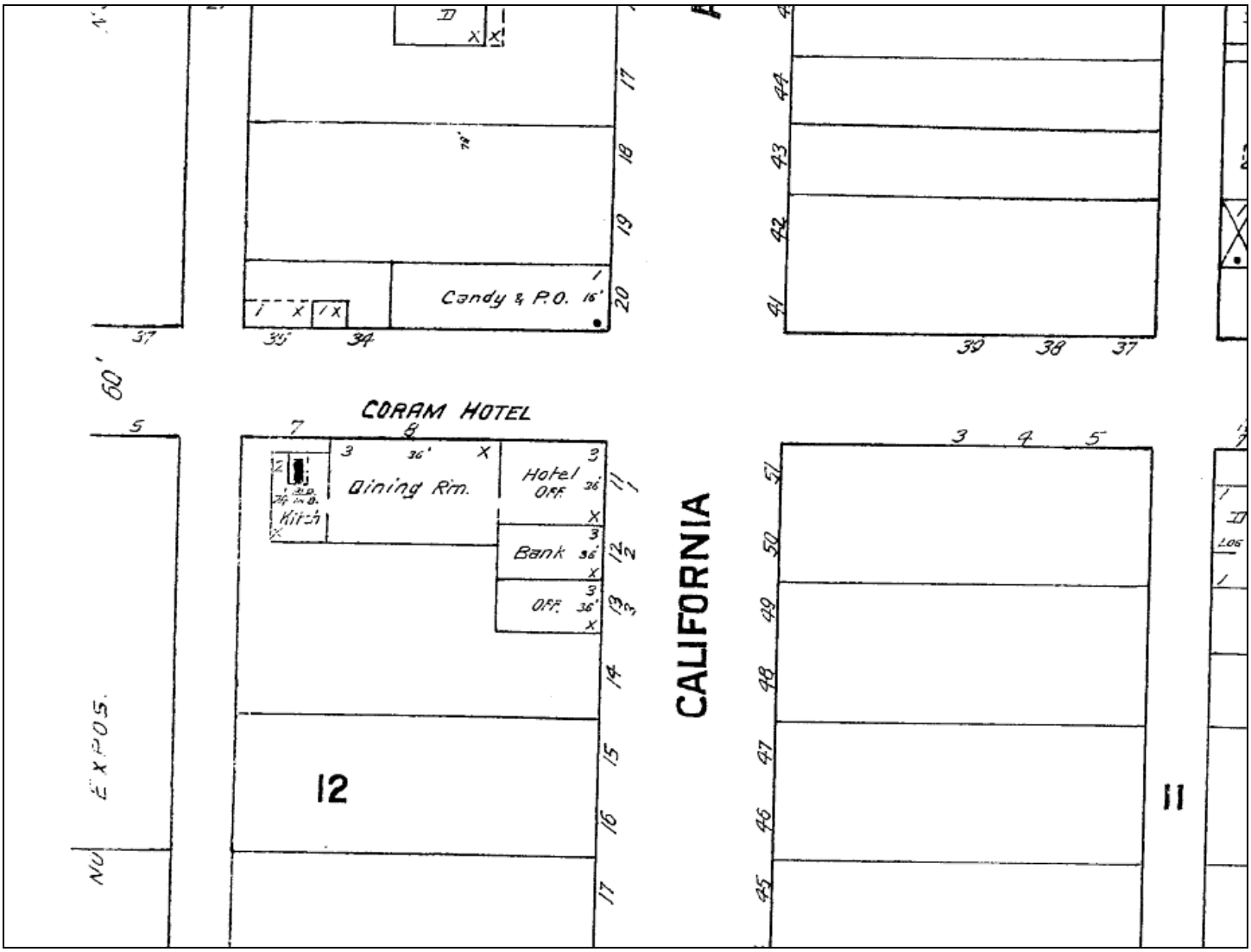
state WA

zip code 98042-5706

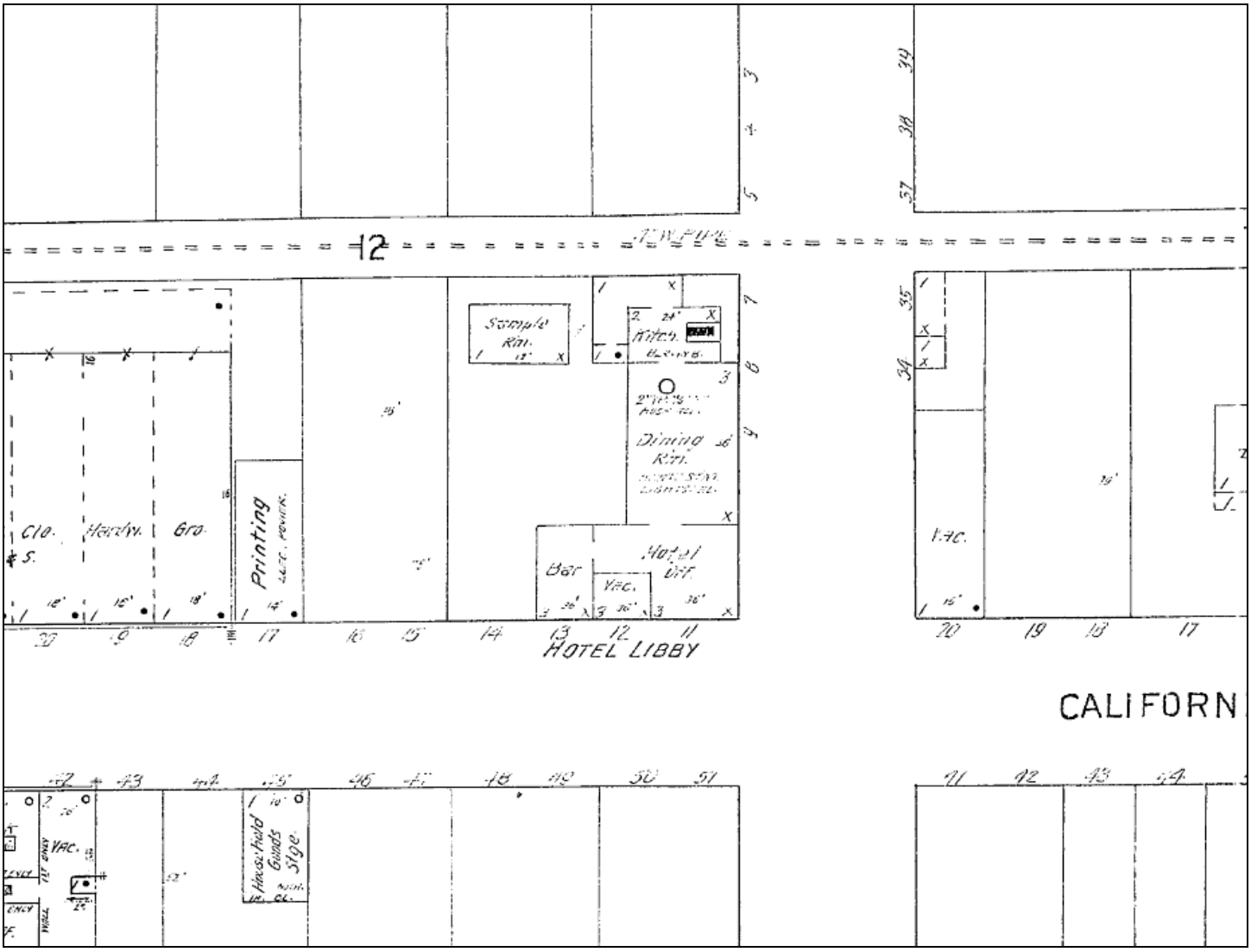
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



The Location of Coram Hotel: found on the Libby, MT 7.5' quadrangle map (1963, photorevised 1983)



1910 Sanborn Map of Libby Showing the Coram Hotel (North is top of page)



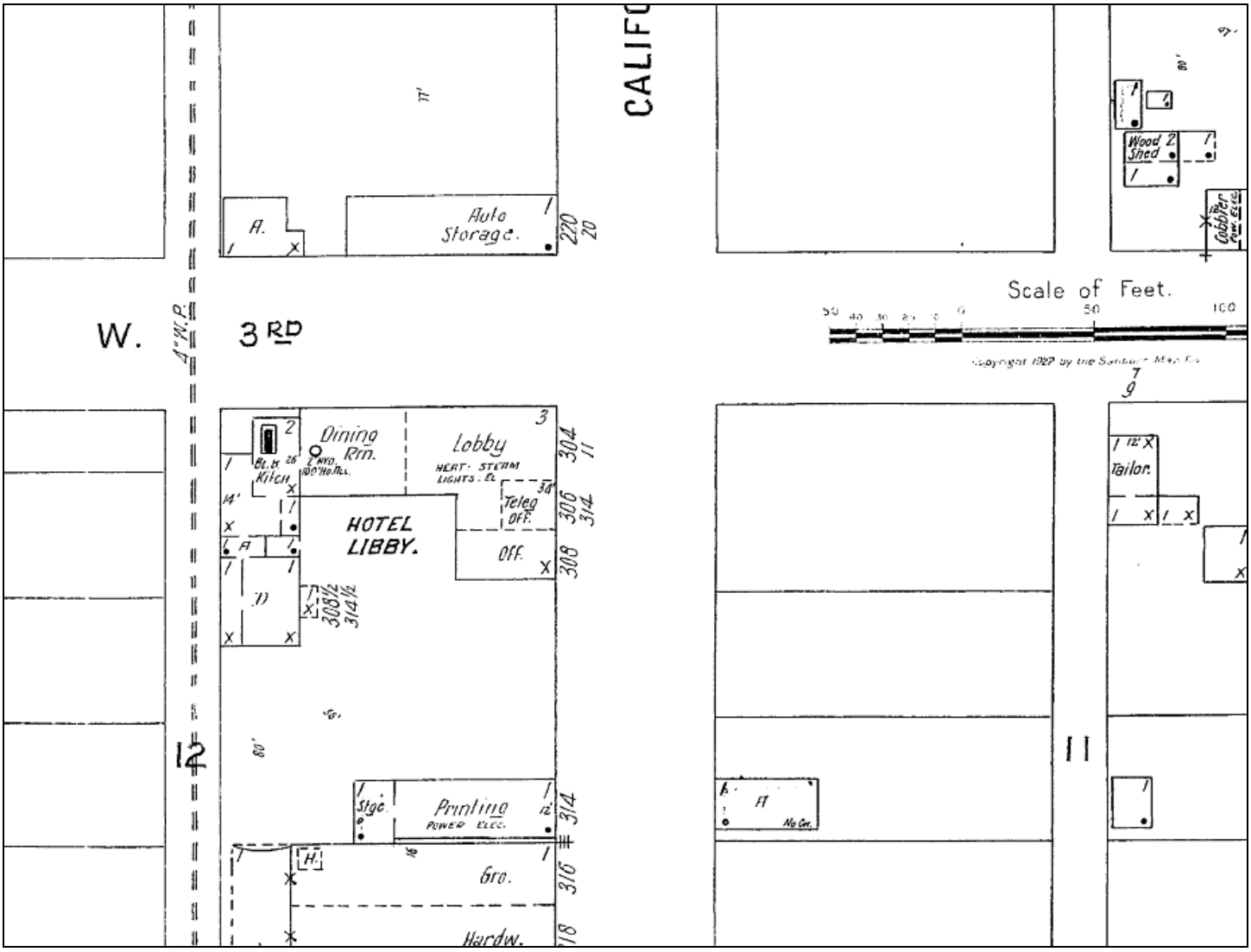
1916 Sanborn Map of Libby Showing the Coram Hotel (now called Hotel Libby) [North is right side of page]

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Coram Hotel
Name of Property
Lincoln County, MT
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Section 10 Page 25



1927 Sanborn Map of Libby Showing the Coram Hotel (now called Hotel Libby) [North is top of page]

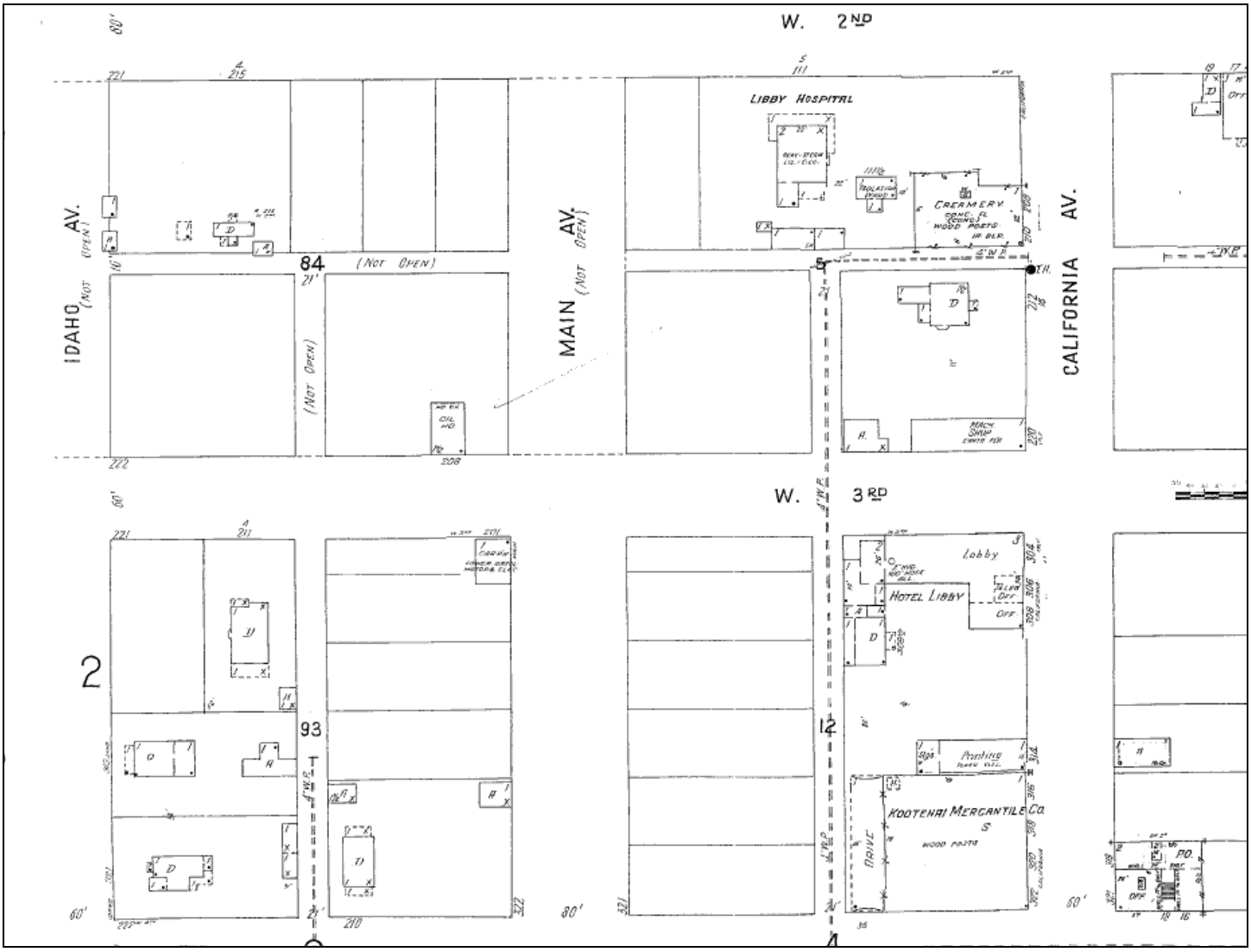
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

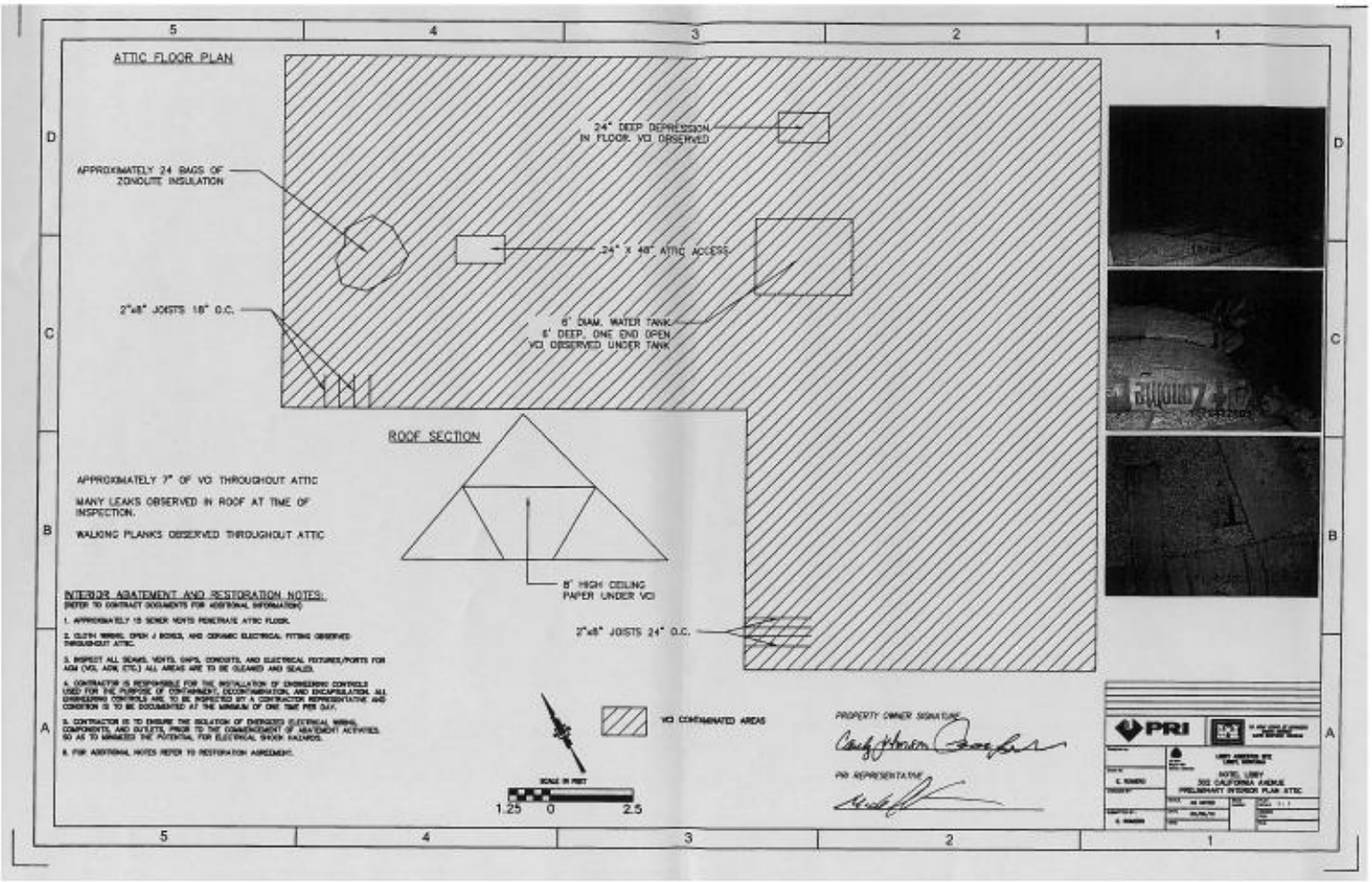
The Coram Hotel
Name of Property
Lincoln County, MT
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

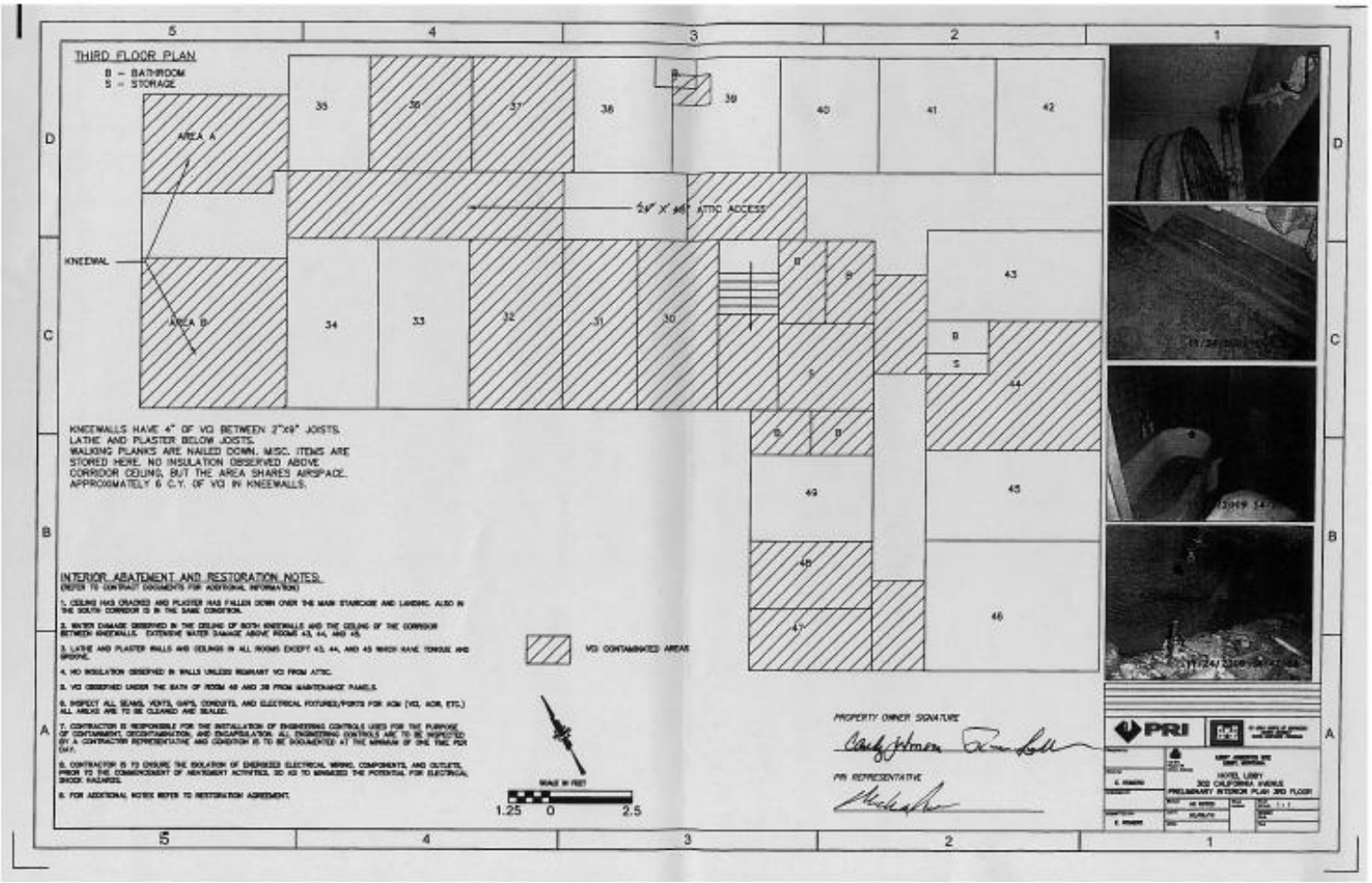
Section number Section 10 Page 26



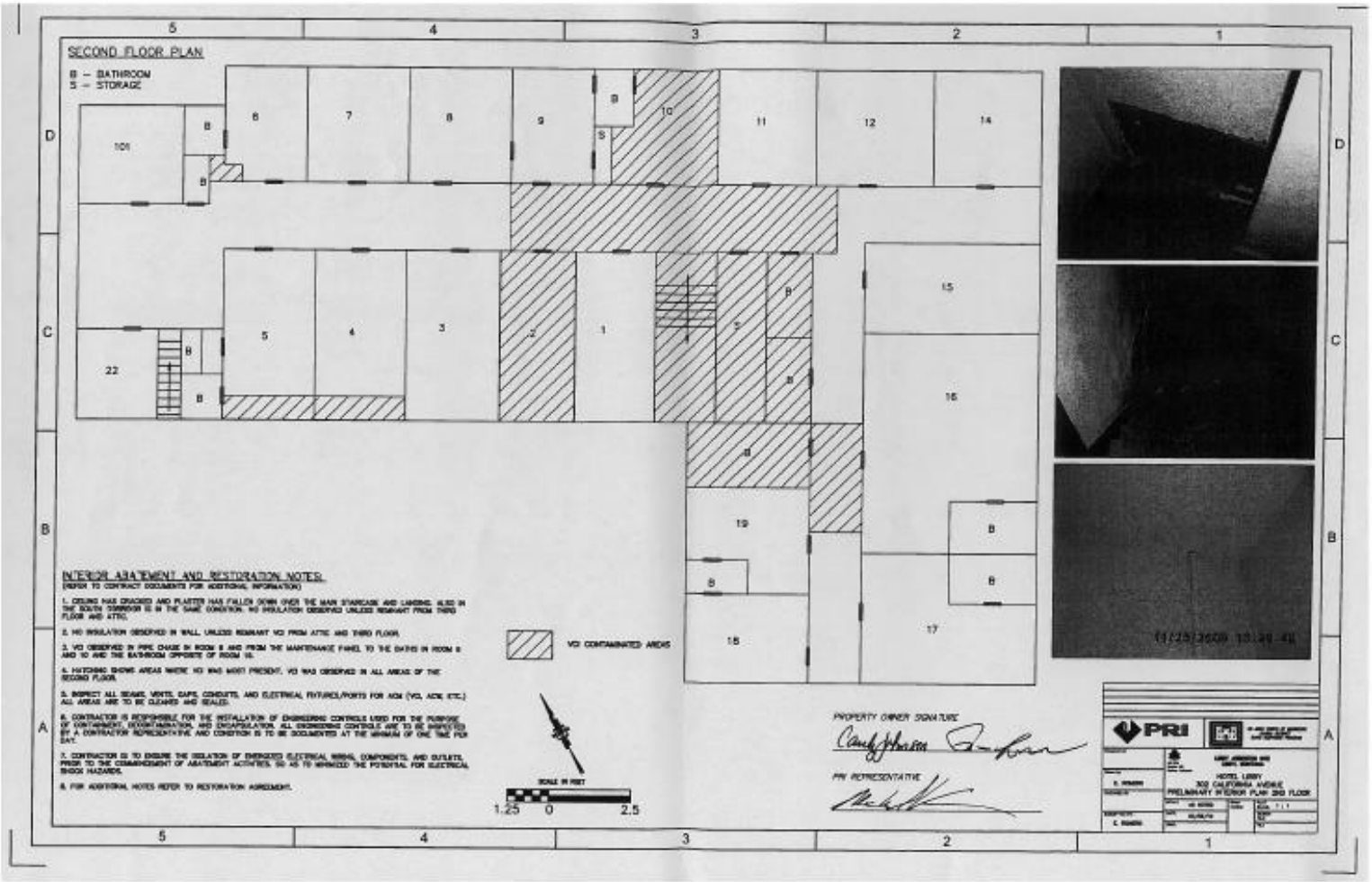
1927-1942 Sanborn Map of Libby Showing the Coram Hotel (now called Hotel Libby) [North is top of page]



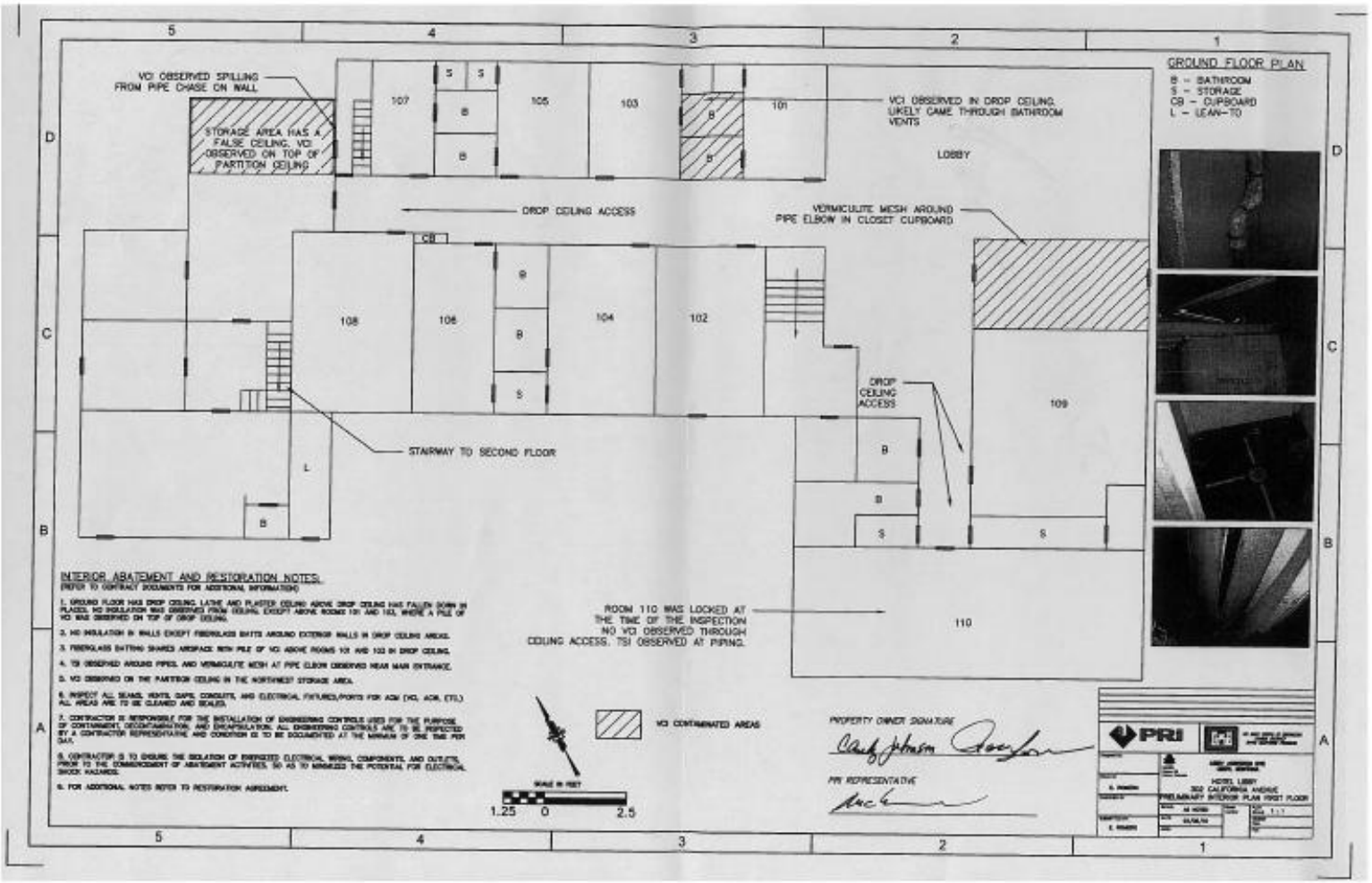
Attic Floorplans from the Interior Abatement and Restoration of the Coram Hotel, 2010



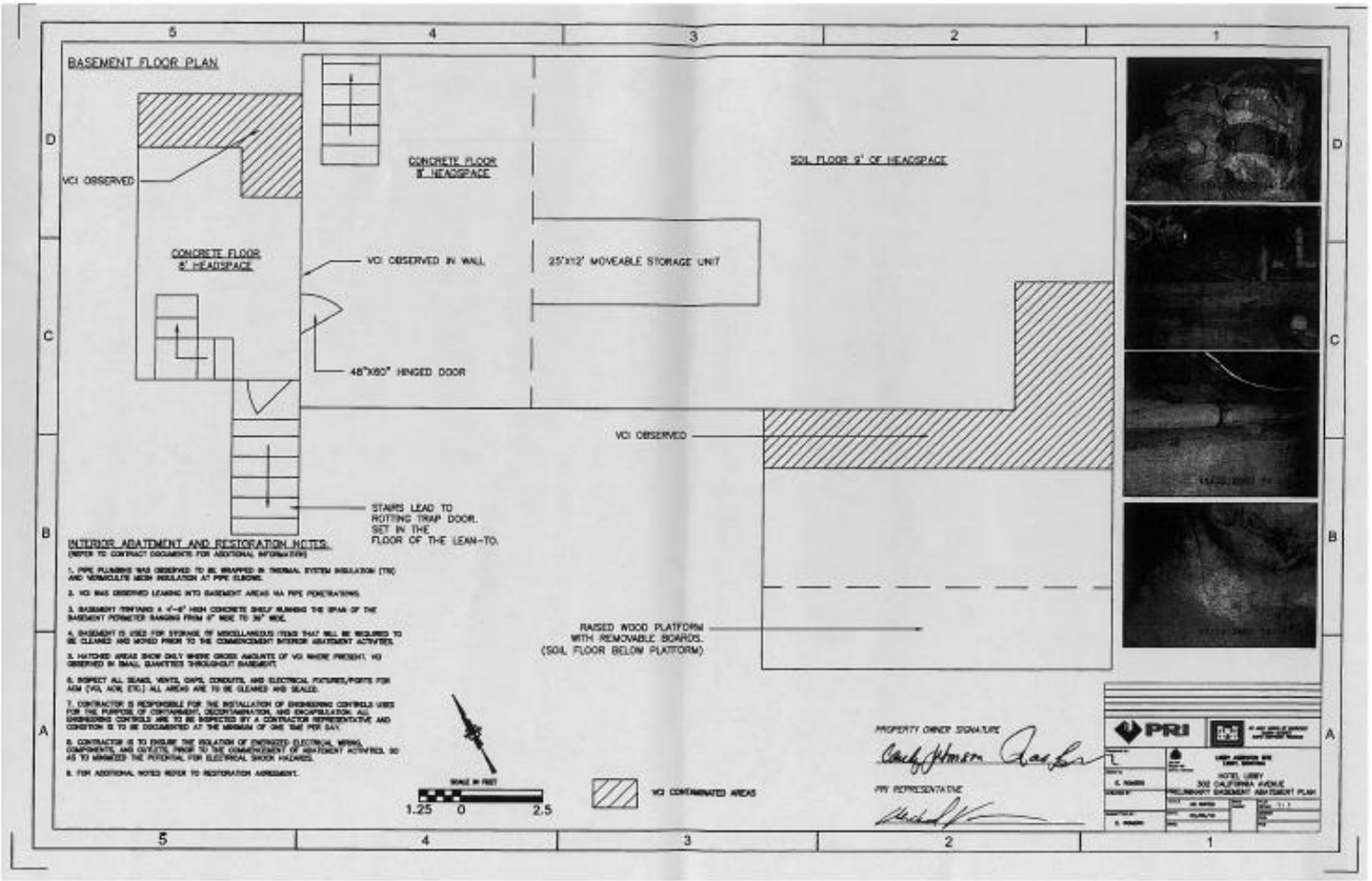
Third Floor Floorplans from the Interior Abatement and Restoration of the Coram Hotel, 2010



Second Floor Floorplans from the Interior Abatement and Restoration of the Coram Hotel, 2010



Ground Floor Floorplans from the Interior Abatement and Restoration of the Coram Hotel, 2010



Basement Floorplans from the Interior Abatement and Restoration of the Coram Hotel, 2010

Historic Photographs

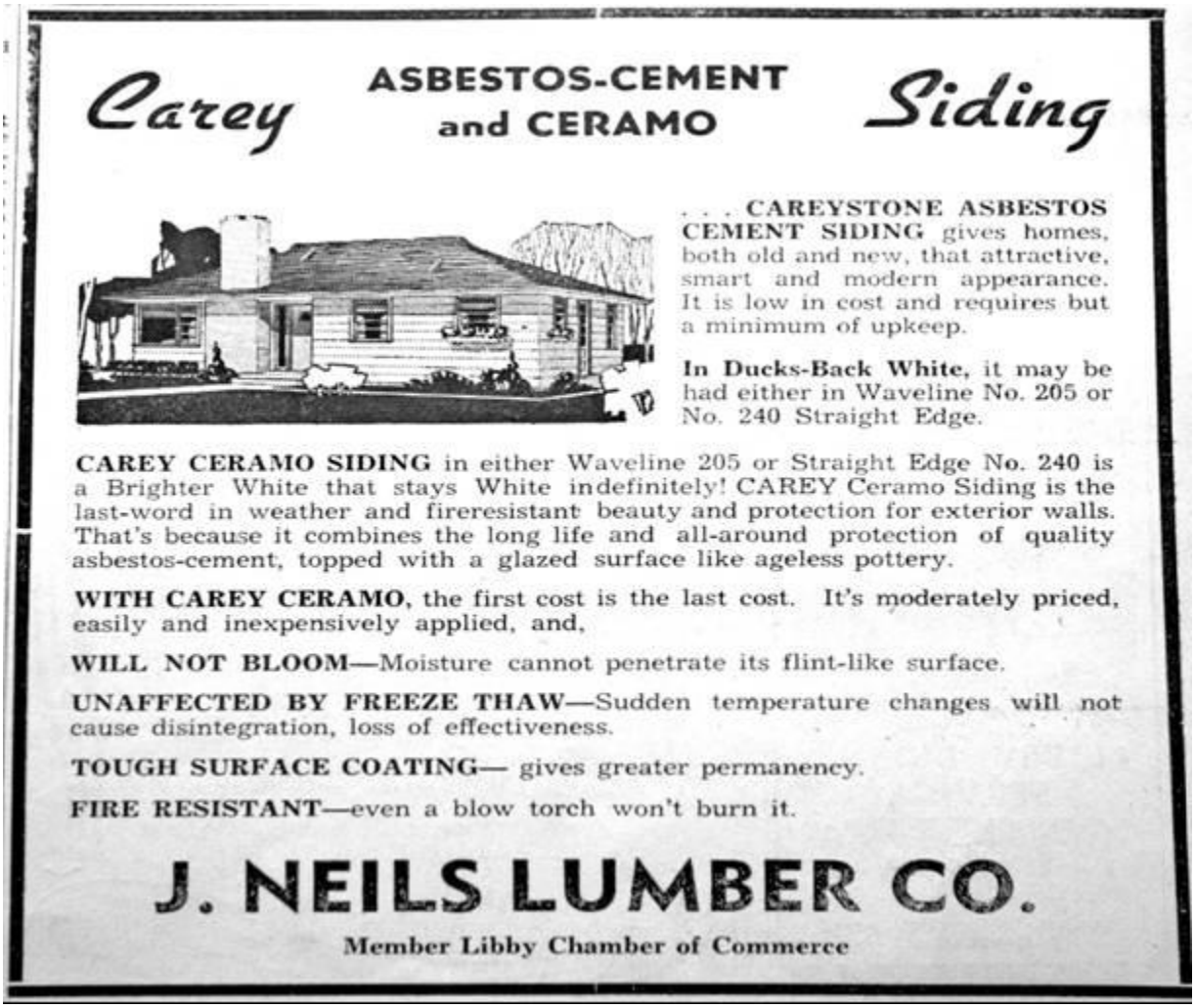
Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln State: Montana
Photographer: unknown
Date Photographed: 1906
Description of Photograph: Framework of the Coram

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln State: Montana
Photographer: unknown
Date Photographed: 1910
Description of Photograph: Front view of the Hotel with unpaved streets and newly paved sidewalks. Coram sign has been removed from the front. (light spot over center windows)

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln State: Montana
Photographer: unknown
Date Photographed: 1910
Description of Photograph: Fire training using the Hotel to test new equipment, with unpaved streets and newly paved sidewalks. New Hotel Libby sign visible on roof.

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln State: Montana
Photographer: unknown
Date Photographed: 1920's
Description of Photograph: Local car club meets in front of the Hotel Libby

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln State: Montana
Photographer: unknown
Date Photographed: middle to late 1930's
Description of Photograph: Overview of building. View to the east.



Carey ASBESTOS-CEMENT and CERAMO Siding

. . . CAREYSTONE ASBESTOS CEMENT SIDING gives homes, both old and new, that attractive, smart and modern appearance. It is low in cost and requires but a minimum of upkeep.

In Ducks-Back White, it may be had either in Waveline No. 205 or No. 240 Straight Edge.

CAREY CERAMO SIDING in either Waveline 205 or Straight Edge No. 240 is a Brighter White that stays White indefinitely! CAREY Ceramo Siding is the last-word in weather and fireresistant beauty and protection for exterior walls. That's because it combines the long life and all-around protection of quality asbestos-cement, topped with a glazed surface like ageless pottery.

WITH CAREY CERAMO, the first cost is the last cost. It's moderately priced, easily and inexpensively applied, and,

WILL NOT BLOOM—Moisture cannot penetrate its flint-like surface.

UNAFFECTED BY FREEZE THAW—Sudden temperature changes will not cause disintegration, loss of effectiveness.

TOUGH SURFACE COATING— gives greater permanency.

FIRE RESISTANT—even a blow torch won't burn it.

J. NEILS LUMBER CO.

Member Libby Chamber of Commerce

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln
Photographer: The Western News archives
Date Photographed: *1950*

Interior view of stone foundation of Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby). June 2011.

Grand staircase leading from 2nd to the 3rd floor of Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby). June 2011.

Grand staircase leading from lobby to 1st floor of Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby). June 2011.

One of three Roy Porter landscape murals in the lobby in the Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby). June 2011

One of three Roy Porter landscape murals in the lobby in the Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby). June 2011

One of three Roy Porter landscape murals in the lobby in the Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby). June 2011.

Detail of original wood flooring. June 2011.

1st floor hallway to guest rooms in the Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby). June 1011. .

2nd floor looking east toward California Ave. June 2011.

National Register Photographs

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln
Photographer: Gail Burger
Date Photographed: *6/2011*
Description of Photograph: Hotel Libby, California Avenue and 3rd Street view.
Photograph # 0001

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln
Photographer: Gail Burger
Date Photographed: *6/2011*
Description of Photograph: Hotel Libby, Close up of east elevation dormers.
Photograph # 0002

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln
Photographer: Gail Burger
Date Photographed: *6/2011*
Description of Photograph: North elevation from 3rd street.
Photograph # 0003

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln
Photographer: Gail Burger
Date Photographed: *6/2011*
Description of Photograph: North elevation, close up of dormers.
Photograph # 0004

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln
Photographer: Gail Burger
Date Photographed: *6/2011*
Description of Photograph: North elevation showing west portion of building including two-story addition used as the dining room. Taken from 3rd street.
Photograph # 0005

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln
Photographer: Gail Burger
Date Photographed: *6/2011*
Description of Photograph: North elevation showing western portion of building.
Photograph # 0006

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln
Photographer: Gail Burger
Date Photographed: *6/2011*
Description of Photograph: West elevation, view to the southeast. .
Photograph # 0007

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln
Photographer: Gail Burger
Date Photographed: *6/2011*
Description of Photograph: West elevation, view to the east.
Photograph # 0008

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln
Photographer: Gail Burger
Date Photographed: *6/2011*
Description of Photograph: West elevation, close up showing brick chimney and fire escape. View to the east.
Photograph # 0009

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln
Photographer: Gail Burger
Date Photographed: *6/2011*
Description of Photograph: South and west elevations showing rear courtyard area. View to the northeast.
Photograph # 0010

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln
Photographer: Gail Burger
Date Photographed: *6/2011*
Description of Photograph: Close up of south and west elevations of building. Tall windows are grand staircase windows.
Photograph # 0011

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln
Photographer: Gail Burger
Date Photographed: *6/2011*
Description of Photograph: West elevation, view to the east. .
Photograph # 0012

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln
Photographer: Gail Burger
Date Photographed: *6/2011*
Description of Photograph(s) and number: South elevation, west portion of building. View to the North.
Photograph # 0013

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln
Photographer: Gail Burger
Date Photographed: *6/2011*
Description of Photograph: East elevation. View to the west.
Photograph # 0014

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln
Photographer: Gail Burger
Date Photographed: *6/2011*
Description of Photograph: Close up of “Hotel Libby” sign mounted on east elevation. View to the west.
Photograph # 0015

Name of Property: Coram Hotel (Hotel Libby)
City or Vicinity: Libby
County: Lincoln
Photographer: Gail Burger
Date Photographed: *6/2011*
Description of Photograph: Modern garage, view to the northwest.
Photograph # 0016