

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

For the Montana National Register of Historic Places Program and State Antiquities Database

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
PO Box 201202, 1301 E Lockey
Helena, MT 59620-1202

Property Address: **1459 Wilder Ave.**

Historic Address (if applicable): **1459 Wilder Ave.**

City/Town: **Helena**

Site Number: **24LC2453**

(An historic district number may also apply.)

County: **Lewis and Clark**

Historic Name: **Logan and Katie Smith House**

Original Owner(s): **Logan and Katie Smith**

Current Ownership Private Public

Current Property Name:

Owner(s): **Lennon, Maureen H**

Owner Address: **1459 Wilder Ave., Helena, MT 59601**

Phone:

Legal Location

PM: **Montana** Township: **10 N** Range: **04 W**

$\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ **SW** $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section: **24**

Lot(s): **1 & 2**

Block(s): **127**

Addition: **Ming** Year of Addition: **1887**

USGS Quad Name: **Helena** Year: **1992**

Historic Use: DOMESTIC/single residence

Current Use: **DOMESTIC/single residence**

Construction Date: **1907** Estimated Actual

Original Location Moved Date Moved:

UTM Reference NAD 27 or NAD 83(preferred)

Zone: **12 T** Easting: **419099.08** Northing: **5161685.02**

Geocode: **05-1887-24-3-12-03-0000**

National Register of Historic Places

NRHP Listing Date:

Historic District:

NRHP Eligible: Yes No

Date of this document: **7/18/2016**

Form Prepared by: **Delia Hagen**

Address: **660 River Court, Missoula, MT 59801**

Daytime Phone: **(406) 360-0120**

MT SHPO USE ONLY

Eligible for NRHP: yes no

Criteria: A B C D

Date: **7/18/2016**

Evaluator: **Kate Hampton**

Comments: Identifying Montana's African American Heritage Places Project

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Architectural Description

Property Name: Logan and Katie Smith House

Site Number: 24LC2453

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural Style: **Other:** If Other, specify: **Pyramidal**
Property Type: **Residential** Specific Property Type: **Single-family dwelling**

Architect: **unknown** Architectural Firm/City/State:
Builder/Contractor: **unknown** Company/City/State:
Source of Information:

Following the orientation of the Northern Pacific Railroad track, Wilder Avenue runs southeast to northwest. 1459 Wilder faces northeast, but for ease of description, the northeast elevation is described as the north, northwest as west, southwest as south and southeast as east.

The property commonly known as 1459 Wilder Avenue occupies a rectangular parcel on the south side of Wilder Avenue, at the southeast corner of the avenue's intersection with Mountain View Street. The block is bordered by an alley to the south, Wilder Avenue to the north, Mountain View Street to the west and Henderson Street to the east. A rear gravel alley runs along the southern edge of the parcel. Property boundaries are delineated by a chain-link fence which encompasses the northern portion of the property, and a tall wooden fence which surrounds the southern backyard. The residence faces north to Wilder Avenue. The building occupies the northern portion of the parcel with a fenced yard, planted to grass. A city sidewalk runs parallel to Wilder Avenue. A concrete slab sidewalk extends from the city sidewalk, through a chain-link gate, to a modern small wood stoop that leads to the centered entrance. At the stoop base, small narrow concrete paths lead to both the west and east sides of the house. The backyard contains a metal shed as well as a detached rectangular wood-frame garage, which abuts a rear alleyway. A mature ash tree grows centered in the narrow west yard. Little other mature foliage exists around the property.

The simple, small, one-story, cast concrete block building features a large wood-frame gabled addition at the southwest corner, resulting in an irregular footprint. The original portion of the house features a nearly pyramidal roof capped with a small side-gable at the ridge. Horizontal wood clapboard fills those gable ends, while t-lock asphalt shingles cover all roof slopes. Exterior walls are cast concrete blocks - rough-cut above the water table and smooth-finished below - atop a concrete wall foundation. The north entrance façade features an enclosed hipped-roofed projecting porch with a centered gabled pediment above the entry. Constructed after 1958, the nearly square addition extends from the historic core of the house at the south elevation's west side. The addition is clad in wide horizontal wood board, has a gable roof oriented north-south, and sits atop a concrete foundation.

North (front) elevation

The enclosed projecting front porch dominates the façade (north wall) of the house. Originally open, the historic square posts, with plain wood capitals and bases, are still visible at either side of the centered door opening and at the corners. Vertically-oriented T-111 panels cover the porch walls, punctuated by one-by-one vinyl sliders appearing centered on both the west and east elevations, as well as one either side of the centered north entry. The entry contains a modern one-by-one sliding door, accessed by a four-step small wood deck.

West (side) elevation

The west wall displays three components: the enclosed entrance porch to the north, the original concrete block bay at center, and the wood-framed addition to the south. The addition's west elevation protrudes from the original wall plane by approximately five feet, and contains a single one-by-one vinyl slider, identical to those on the porch, far on the south side. The central bay features replacement windows within original evenly-spaced openings: a one-over-one double hung vinyl-clad window to the north, and a smaller one-over-one vinyl double-hung, placed in the larger ghost of the original opening.

South (rear) elevation

The rear addition, constructed after 1958, extends from the west side of the south elevation and nearly doubles the footprint of the original house. The addition's south wall features rounded gable end returns and a single one-by-one vinyl sliding window at both the west and east sides. A partial concrete slab patio, sheltered by a shed roof, appears within the ell formed by the original house and addition. The south elevation's east side features a large one-light fixed window.

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Architectural Description

Property Name: Logan and Katie Smith House

Site Number: 24LC2453

East (side) elevation

Like the west elevation, the east elevation displays three bays: the enclosed entrance porch, the central historic bay, and the rear addition. The addition's east elevation has a single window, a one-by-one vinyl slider identical to those on the façade enclosed porch, as well as an entrance to/from the backyard patio. The historic core of the building contains a one-over-one double hung replacement within an original opening off-center to the south, while the porch contains the slider noted above.

Garage

Constructed in 1964, a detached, one-story, wood-frame garage sits on the southwest corner of the property. Clad in wood shingles, it stands atop a slightly raised concrete wall foundation. The garage has a front gable roof oriented west-east. Horizontal wood boards fill the gable ends. The west elevation faces Mountain View Street, where a concrete driveway leads to the building's large single-car modern, 16-panel overhead door. Additional features include the north elevation's single pedestrian entry to the east and a one-by-one vinyl slider off-center to the west, and a centered wood-frame three-by-three slider on the east elevation.

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History of Property

Property Name: Logan and Katie Smith House

Site Number: 24LC2453

HISTORY OF PROPERTY

This property was first platted in 1887 as Lots 1 and 2 of Block 127 of the Ming Addition, along the southwest side of Wilder Avenue, on the south corner of its intersection with Mountain View Street. Tax records indicate that the current house was built in 1907, and this is likely accurate: the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company did not map the area in 1892, but by 1930—when it next mapped the neighborhood—the current one-story concrete-block house was extant and identified as 1459 Wilder (as was an alley house with attached garage identified as 1321 Mountain View St.). Shortly after 1907, the property was acquired by its first private owner, Logan B. Smith, a member of Helena’s African-American community.¹ When census takers enumerated the Logan and his wife Katie in 1910, they were living in the current house. The Smiths would own the property for most of the next 50 years, staying in their Wilder Avenue home until their deaths.

When he acquired the property at 1459 Wilder, Virginia-born Logan Smith had been in Helena many years. City directories listed him at a series of addresses during the 1890s and in the years immediately prior to his purchase of his Wilder Avenue home.² During that time he worked a variety of jobs, including a porter, waiter, and janitor. In 1910, when he’d settled into his final home with his Missouri-born wife Katie (48), Smith, 54, was working as a janitor in an office building. Katie died by 1930, and in 1950 city directories still listed Logan as the occupant of 1459 Wilder.

Logan owned the property upon his death later that decade, and in 1957 his estate conveyed it to Clifford A. Nelson. Nelson owned it only a year before deeding it to Robert A. Strainer. Four years later, it passed from Strainer to Mario B. Cervelli, who owned it from 1962 until 1967. That year, Frank J. Brothers acquired it, and the Brothers family would own it for the next 40 years. In 2007, the estate of Lois Brothers deeded 1459 Wilder to Anette Jorgenson, who in turn conveyed it to the current owner and occupant, Maureen Lennon, in 2009. When the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company completed its last map of the neighborhood in 1958, the footprints of the buildings on the property remained as they’d been on the first area Sanborn maps, completed in 1930.

¹ Katherine Ming and the Ming Realty & Improvement Co. apparently lost the property in the late 1890s, and in 1899 it was transferred into receivership (Eugene Wilson, receiver) by a sherriff’s deed. In 1902 a Receiver’s Deed conveyed it to the Conrad Stanford Co., from whom Logan Smith acquired it in May of 1909.

² Logan Smith’s previous addresses included 520 N. Benton (1892), 58 N. Main (1894), 16 N. Ewing (1895), 702 Harrison (1898), and 204 E. Lyndale (1903-1907, at least).

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Information Sources/Bibliography

Property Name: Logan and Katie Smith House

Site Number: 24LC2453

INFORMATION SOURCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ancestry.com, various military and death records

Bureau of the Census. "9th Census of the United States, 1870: Population Schedules: Montana, Lewis and Clark County." Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census, 1870.

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Hagen, Delia. "National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: African- American Heritage Places in Helena, MT," 2016.

Helena, City of, Town Plats

1887 Ming Addition

Lewis and Clark, County of. Clerk and Recorder's Office, property title records.

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Montana, State of, Department of Revenue, Lewis and Clark County. Property record files.

R.L. Polk & Co. *Polk's Helena City Directory, 1898- 1950*. Helena, Mont.: R.L. Polk & Co.

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Statement of Significance

Property Name: Logan and Katie Smith House

Site Number: 24LC2453

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

NRHP Listing Date:

NRHP Eligibility: Yes No Individually Contributing to Historic District Noncontributing to Historic District

NRHP Criteria: A B C D

Area of Significance: **Ethnic Heritage & Social History** Period of Significance: **1907-1957**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1907, the Logan and Katie Smith house is significant under NRHP Criterion A (local level) as a residential property associated with the history of African-American people in Helena, MT. Built during the heyday of the black community in Helena by two of the city's 400-plus black residents—Logan and Katie Smith—the home was subsequently occupied by its owners for fifty years. The Smith house is thus associated with two significant historic contexts: its origins lie in the heyday of Helena's, and Montana's, African-American community, ca. 1875-1910, while its subsequent development reflects the decline and endurance of that community, ca. 1910-1940. The property's period of significance extends from its initial construction in 1907 through 1957, when widower Logan Smith died and the property was no longer owned by African-Americans.

The Smith house represents these significant historic themes in a number of specific ways. Located near the black Baptist Church (on the corner of Wilder and Harrison), it was one of multiple homes in the surrounding west-end neighborhood that housed a cluster of African-American families. And like other black families in the region, the Smiths migrated to Helena in the late 19th century from border-states, like Missouri, and other southern locales. Once in Helena, Logan worked as a porter, waiter and janitor—prototypical positions for black men, who in this period were oft-confined by structural racism to low-status, low-waged work.

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Integrity

Property Name: Logan and Katie Smith House

Site Number: 24LC2453

INTEGRITY (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, association)

The Logan and Katie Smith House at 1459 Wilder Avenue witnessed several changes that diminished its integrity since the Smith's tenure there from 1907 through the 1950s. These changes include new windows and door, enclosing the front porch, and a large addition at the south (rear) side of the building. Despite these changes, however, the essential form and design are retained. The pyramidal roof, original fenestration pattern and trims, support and decorative structure of the front porch, and distinctive concrete block material remain intact. Its feeling and association remain strong, and it remains in its original location within a historic neighborhood setting.

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Photographs

Property Name: Logan and Katie Smith House

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Feature #
Facing: SW

Description: North and east elevations

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Photographs

Property Name: Logan and Katie Smith House

Site Number: 24LC2453



Feature #
Facing: SE

Description: North and west elevations

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Photographs

Property Name: Logan and Katie Smith House

Site Number: 24LC2453



Feature #
Facing: NE

Description: South elevation (obscured)

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Photographs

Property Name: Logan and Katie Smith House

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Feature #
Facing: N-NW

Description: South elevation and east elevation of garage.

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Site Map

Property Name: Logan and Katie Smith House

Site Number: 24LC2453

SITE MAP - MT HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD FORM



PROPERTY:

1459 Wilder Ave
Lewis and Clark County
Helena, Montana
GeoCode:
05-1887-24-3-12-03-0000
LAT 46.603830
LON -112.056379

LEGEND:

 Site

NAD_1983_StatePlane
Montana_FIPS_2500 meters
Scale: 1:400



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www.wgmgroup.com

Proj Mgr: D. Hagen MFG 24 10/2016
Drawn by: SAA Date: 11/3/2016
Proj: 15-05-54 Aerial 2013 ESRI

Disclaimer: This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as such. This map is a graphic representation. WGM Group does not guarantee the accuracy, current status, or completeness of the material contained herein and is not responsible for any misuse or misrepresentation of the information or its derivatives.

MONTANA COUNTIES



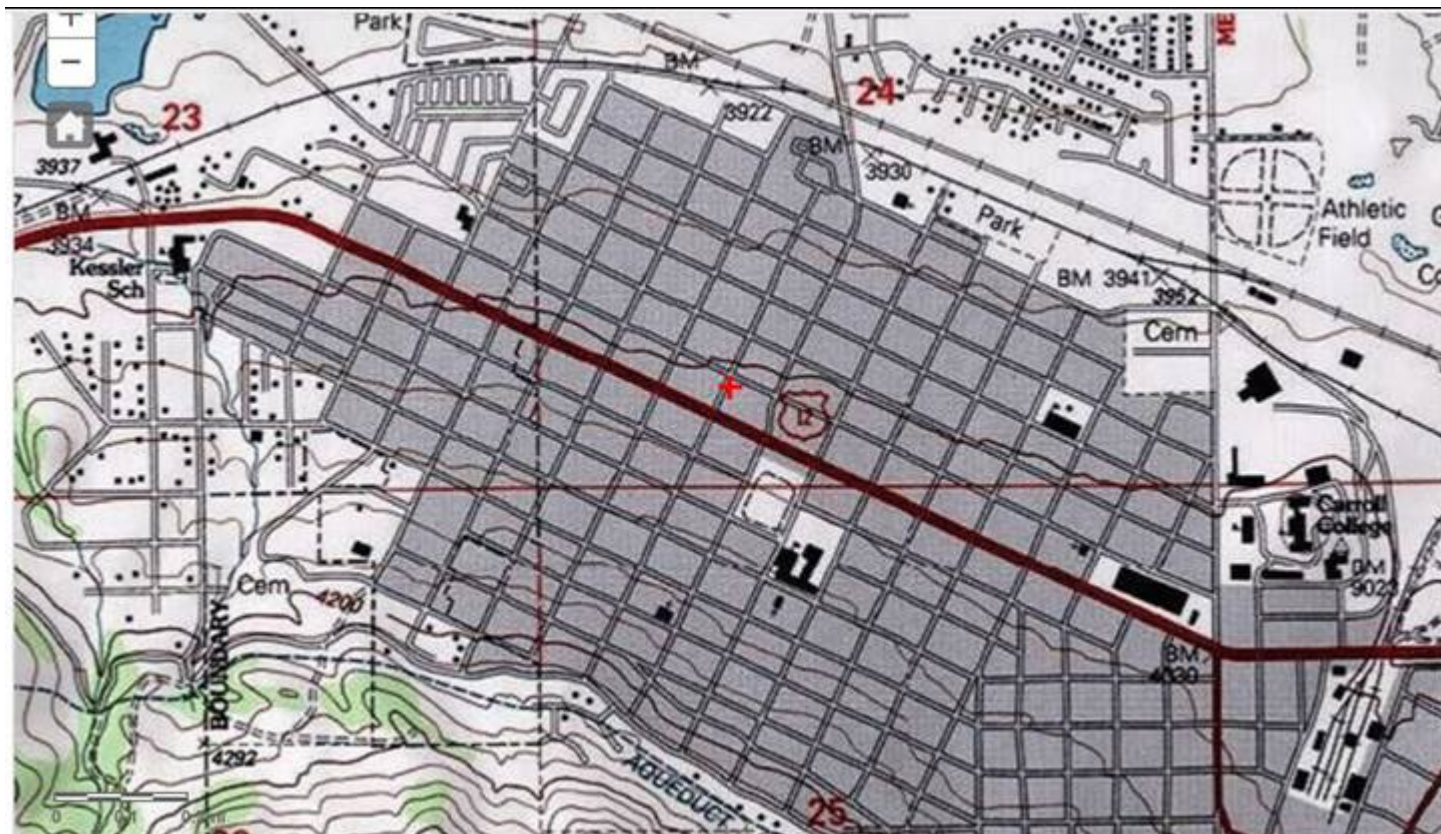
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Topographic Map

Property Name: Logan and Katie Smith House

Site Number: 24LC2453



PROPERTY:

1459 Wilder Ave
Lewis and Clark County
Helena, Montana
GeoCode:
05-1887-24-3-12-03-0000
LAT 46.603830
LON -112.056379