

July 1, 2021

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Regarding the National Endowment for the Humanities' Section 106 Review of Montana Historical Society's New Montana Heritage Center

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) awarded the Montana Historical Society, a Challenge Infrastructure and Capacity Building grant (CHA-276822). NEH is an independent grant-making agency of the United States government dedicated to supporting research, education, preservation, and public programs in the humanities. This public notice is issued as part of NEH's responsibilities under 36 C.F.R. Part 800, the regulations which implement Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S.C. § 470. NEH, a funding agency, is required by regulation to identify and assess the effects of any proposed actions on historic properties. If any proposed action will have an adverse effect on historic resources, NEH works with the appropriate parties to seek ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse effects. Additionally, the Section 106 regulations require NEH to consider the views of the public on preservation issues when making final decisions that affect historic properties.

While there is a larger planned construction of a 64,369 square foot addition and a complete renovation of the existing 94,146 square foot Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building, NEH supported work is limited to purchase and permanent installation of compact shelving for collections storage, refurbishing original windows in the historic Veterans and Pioneers Building, and significant improvements to the HVAC system in that building.

The VPB is located at 225 North Roberts St. 9620-1201. The building was designed by Angus Vaughn McIver and constructed in 1953 by Carson Construction Company. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NHRP) (Ref # 04001357) in 2004, at the state level under Criterion A, for its association with the history of art and education in Montana, and Criterion C, as an excellent example of the International Style of architecture as executed in a public building. It is adjacent to Montana State Capitol Campus Historic District (NHRP Ref #16000033).

The Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building is a large, flat-roofed, "L"-shaped, asymmetrical building, with steel beam framing, reinforced concrete construction, finished with Indiana limestone. The roof is reinforced concrete slab covered with pitch and gravel roofing over two-inch thick foam glass insulation. The building rests on a concrete wall foundation. The north wing is three stories tall, with a daylight basement. The south wing houses the museum area, and is a single story with a full basement and sub-basement, where the boiler room is located. The building has two additions: a 1970, one-story addition fills the space between the original wings of the building, and creates a roughly rectangular footprint; a second addition was completed in 1986, and extends to the east (rear) from the north wing. Despite these changes, the building still retains a high degree of integrity, as the additions are to the rear of the building, and sensitive to the original design.

Montana Heritage Center planning committees, including a steering committee, building committee and stakeholder groups, were formed in January 2020 to provide informational input and oversight for the design of the Montana Heritage Center. The Montana State Historic Preservation Office, a program of MHS, is involved in the design process and has been consulted on all building plans and projected changes to the existing historic building. In a letter dated January 22, 2021, the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred with the following NEH determinations:

- \* The addition to the VPB which includes impacts to the original building's form, exterior cladding, some interior spaces, and proposed window replacement constitutes an adverse effect.
- \* The demolition of 1400 8th Ave., which qualifies under criterion A and C for the NHRP, constitutes an adverse effect.
- \* There will be no adverse effect on the Montana State Capitol Campus Historic District (24LC2422) or the Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Building (24LC2381).

In addition, NEH and the SHPO agree that given that the NEH project is limited to the existing facility, NEH has determined that utility work at the site, unrelated to the NEH project, does not prevent compliance with Section 106 and do not restrict the subsequent consideration of alternatives to avoid, minimize or mitigate the undertaking's adverse effects on historic properties.

The NEH will work with the SHPO, the Montana Historical Society, and other consulting parties to develop a Memorandum of Agreement to mitigate the adverse effect to the historic property.

As required by Section 106, NEH is providing the public with information about this project, as well as an opportunity to comment on any knowledge of, or concerns with, historic properties in the proposed project area, and issues relating to the project's potential effects on historic properties. Comments may be submitted to the NEH by e-mail to [FPO@neh.gov](mailto:FPO@neh.gov). The deadline for submitting comments August 2, 2021.

225 North Roberts Street  
P.O. Box 201201  
Helena, MT 59620-1201  
(406) 444-2694  
(406) 444-2696 FAX  
[montanahistoricalsociety.org](http://montanahistoricalsociety.org)