



**Historic Name(s):** Pouder Furniture

**Location / Address:** 2923 Montana Ave

**Owner and owner address and phone number:** Brad Anderson  
Hospitality Concepts 2923 Montana Ave. Billings, MT  
59101-2143

**Legal description of the property:** L:12 B:107 BILLINGS ORIGINAL TOWNSITE

**Year of construction and architect:** 1916

**Architectural description and classification:** Western commercial, this building contributes to the district.

**Building integrity, including modifications and alterations:** The Pouder Furniture Building retains good levels of historic integrity. Its simple design remains intact, and changes to the storefront are still compatible with the original intent. Overall, the masonry, window treatments and interior still convey many aspects of the original design, and the building plays a strong role in establishing the historic character of Billings' downtown core.

**Interior and exterior description:** The Pouder Furniture Building is a two story commercial building of red brick. Standing on a prominent downtown corner, the building fronts onto Montana Avenue to the south, and secondarily onto N 30<sup>th</sup> Street to the west. It is rectangular in massing and symmetrical in design.

The south elevation features a storefront on the ground floor, which once likely had a recessed entrance storefront glazing and a transom band above. Altered in recent years, the storefront is finished with high, full glass panels framed in aluminum, and a matching glass door to one side. A matching entrance and doorway is located just around the southwest corner, which is wrapped by a suspended 2x4 & lattice awning, decoratively draped with fabric banners. On the second story, the south side includes three windows with hooded segmental brick arches. Similar fenestration characterizes the west elevation. These windows share a continuous sill course which trims both sides of the building. Completing the front, brick piers visually frame the building and the parapet, which is trimmed by recessed squares and darker brick coping. Tie-rods with star-shaped heads support and ornament the masonry.

On the interior, the front portion of the building is a small café, and behind this, a warehouse and storage area. A mezzanine was added to the front area in the 1930s. Current owners stripped stucco from interior to reveal the original brick walls. Upstairs, the second floor originally had a central hallway accessing many small lodging or office rooms. A few currently remain at the front, an apartment occupies the rear, and between them the space has been opened to house a small store.

**Building materials, including foundation, walls and roof:** The foundation is concrete, the walls are brick and the roof is timber with a membrane.

Historic overview and functions of the building: The Pouder Furniture Building is a strong building in Billings Montana Avenue corridor, and in its corner setting acts as an anchor in the historic streetscape. The occupant over the years were typical small businesses, representative then and now of the neighborhood. Small downtown businesses filled out the complement of businesses and services in the young and growing city. And the character which emerged at that time has continued to dominate the Montana Avenue corridor as downtown matured.

Architecturally, although it is not a particularly complicated design, the building is typical of the sturdy, no-nonsense 2-3 story business buildings that cropped up throughout downtown as it grew. The format of lodgings over storefront was common throughout the business district, and only changed in recent years as automobiles changed the patterns of where people lived and how they used downtown.

**Any significance and specific dates of particular events during that significance:** As downtown Billings grew, for years Block 107 was located beyond the fringe of downtown commercial development. It was not until after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that businesses grew in this direction. Except for a Chinese laundry at the other end of the block and a small wooden dwelling dating to the mid-1880s, this stretch of Montana Ave in Block 107 stood relatively empty until the 1910s. Speculators including AL Babcock and JD Losekamp owned portions of the block at various times, and in the end, the block was developed by local owners who generally developed their own small businesses onsite.

A series of small businesses operated in this building during its lifetime. AB Pouder opened a furniture business in this building in 1916, and Pouder Furniture remained here through 1929 when Howard J. Pouder was running the business. This was followed

by Central Sheet Metal (1930-40), Central Second Hand Store (1941-44), National Cash Register (1947-1948), Mills Cigar Distributing (1949), Bolton Finance (1949-50), Universal Carloading & Dist (1950-54), Miller Properties (1959-78), Billings Indian Center (1979). Harry Miller Sr., lived upstairs for 20 years; the current owner purchased the property from Harry Miller Jr. in 1997.

**Historic photographs available of the blocks or buildings:** Yes, at the Western Heritage Center.

Black and white photographs of the property (prints and scanned): Yes

Current use of the building: Current home of the Mountain Mudd offices and coffee shop.



Photo courtesy of Paul Whiting, 1998



Photo courtesy Western Heritage Center, 2005