

Holter Hydroelectric Facility,
House No. 7
1675 feet west of Powerhouse
Wolf Creek Vicinity
Lewis and Clark County
Montana

HAER No. MT-94-E

HAER
MONT
25-WOCRE
IE-

PHOTOGRAPHS
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HOLTER HYDROELECTRIC FACILITY,
HOUSE NO. 7

HAER
MONT
25-WOCRE
IE-

HAER No. MT-94-E

I. INTRODUCTION

Location: House No. 7 is located within the Holter Hydroelectric Facility Historic District near the small community of Wolf Creek in Lewis and Clark County, Montana. The house stands 1675 west feet of the Powerhouse in the operators' camp at the facility.

Quad: Sheep Creek

UTM: Zone 12; Easting 423070; Northing 5204460

Date of Construction: c. 1909-10

Present The Montana Power Company
40 E. Broadway
Butte, Montana 59701

Present Use: Single-family house

Significance: The Holter Hydroelectric Facility Historic District is significant as one of the most intact hydroelectric generating plants and operators' camps on the Missouri-Madison Project. House No. 7 contributes to the significance of the district as a vernacular adaptation of a construction camp building for permanent use in the operators' camp.

Historian: Mary McCormick
Renewable Technologies, Inc.
Butte, Montana
July 1997

II. HISTORY

House No. 7 at the Holter Hydroelectric Facility was likely built by the United Missouri River Power Company during the first construction phase at Holter Dam in 1909-10. It then saw reuse in the construction camp when Montana Power completed work on the project in 1916-17. Period photographs and maps show the house to be a rectangular building topped by a front-gabled roof (Figure 1; see also photographs MT-94-A-7, MT-94-B-7, and MT-94-D-9).¹ Like most buildings at the temporary construction camp, House No. 7 had light-weight framing members and was set on wood piers. Earth was likely piled around the foundation to provide some protection from cold winter winds blowing beneath an otherwise raised building. The building's walls and roof were covered with roofing felt, and six-over-six, double-hung windows predominated. A small, open porch projected from the front facade.

House No. 7 received a number of substantial improvements around the mid-1920s, during a fairly massive program by Montana Power to upgrade on-site living conditions for employees at the Holter plant.² At that time, the company appears to have placed the building on a concrete foundation, re-surfaced the roof with wood shingles, covered the exterior walls with drop siding, and replaced most of the windows. The living space at the building probably was enlarged by an addition off the west wall. A full-width, enclosed porch also was constructed, in place of the small open porch at the front facade.³

While most of the houses at the Holter operators' camp served as single-family dwellings, it appears that House No. 7 sheltered the plant's single male employees for a number of years. A 1937 report by the Montana Power listed the building as a six-room bunkhouse.⁴ By at least the late-1960s, however, the company was using the building for single-family housing. The same family has resided there for the last 30 years.⁵

III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The operators' camp at Holter lies due west of the Powerhouse on a wide terrace backed by rolling foothills. It includes eight houses (three are non-contributing to the district), associated outbuildings, four plant and camp maintenance buildings, and a domestic water system (Figure 2). Most of the houses stand in a row and face north or northeast toward a large park that serves as a commons for the camp residents. The park is landscaped by over 150 mature trees including willows, box elders, elms, locusts and others. Each house is surrounded by a lawn, and most of them have a garden plot.

House No. 7 represents a vernacular building form. The wood-frame building has been set on a cinder block foundation in recent years, and it is one of the few houses at the camp without a basement. It exhibits a slightly irregular plan due to the addition off the west wall.

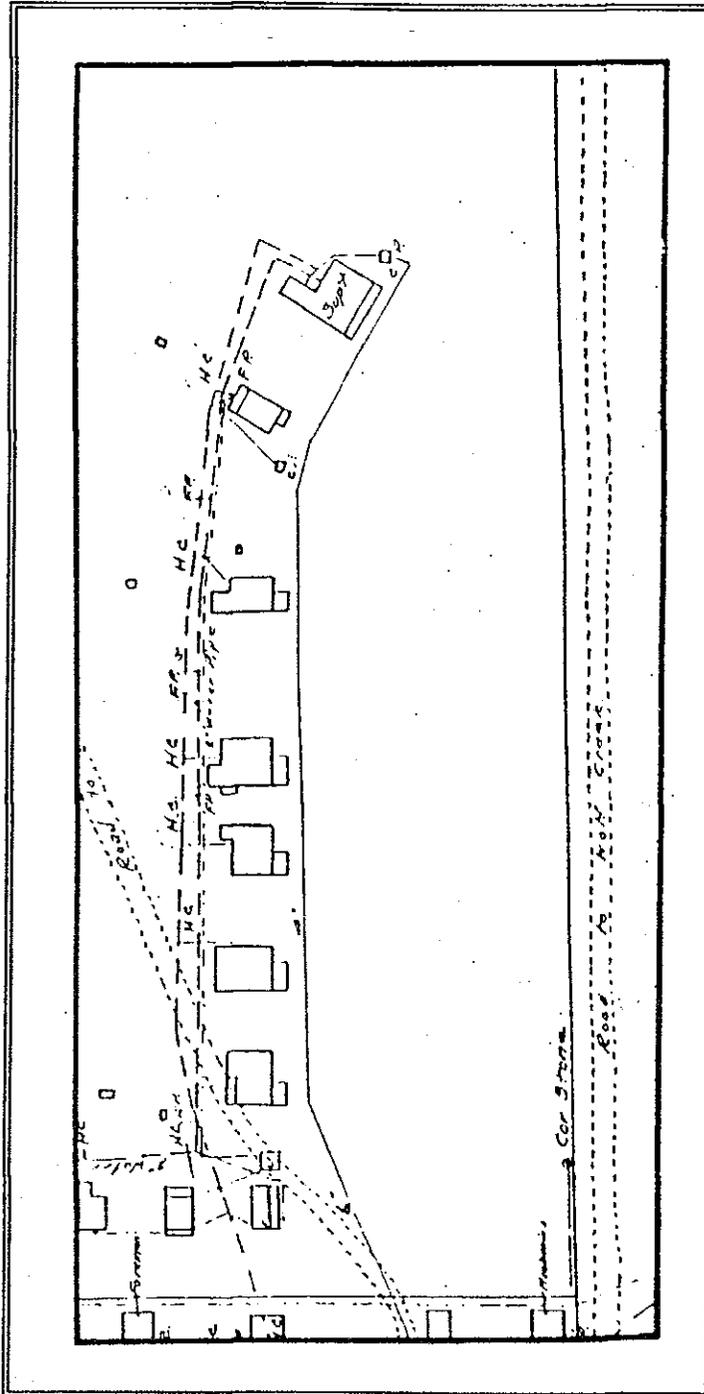


Figure 1. Portion of map reproduced on February 8, 1916 from Stone and Webster drawing. House No. 7 is the seventh building on the left. (MPC Drawing No. 17304-E)

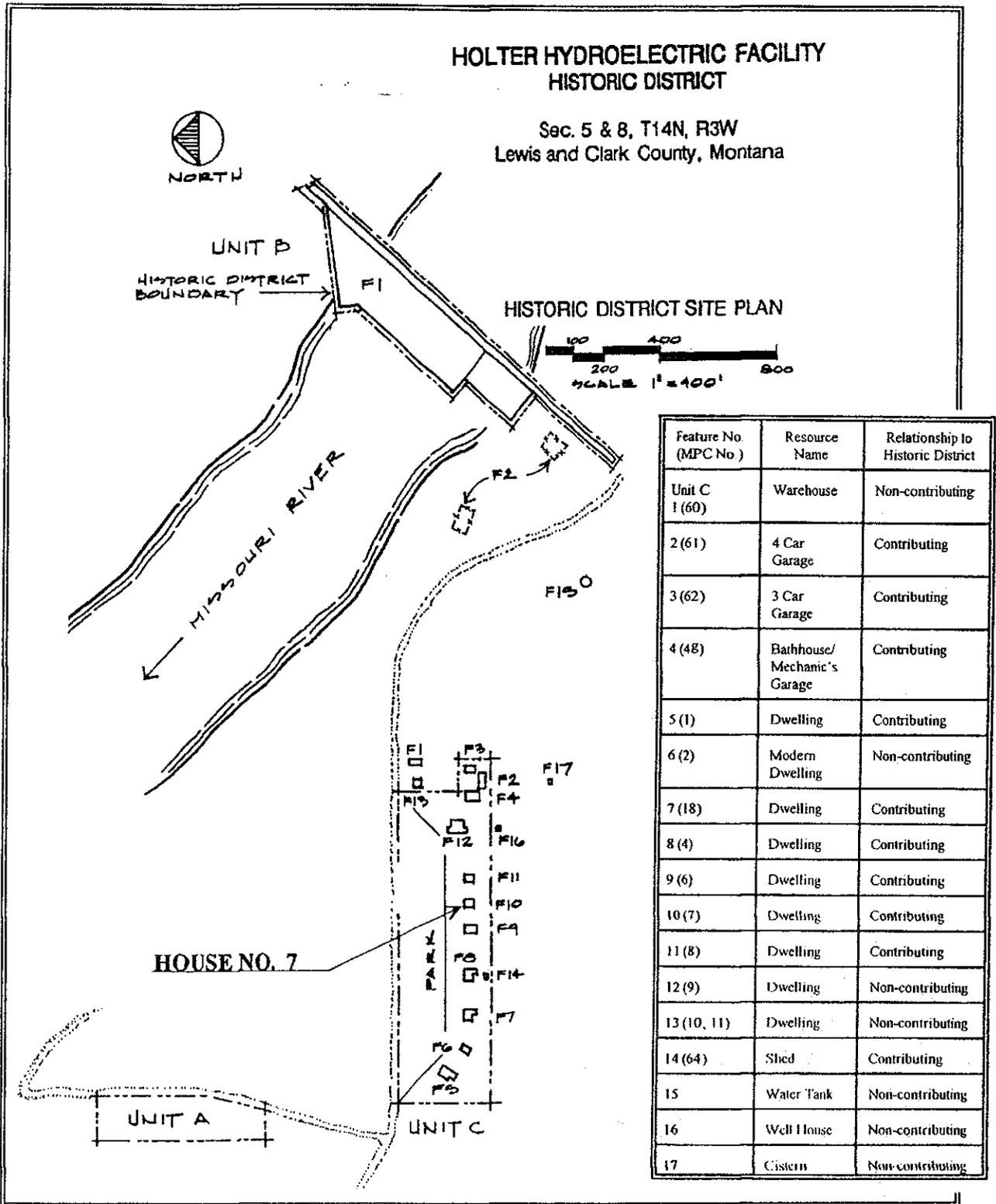


Figure 2. Holter Hydroelectric Facility Historic District.

The original unit at the house is a rectangular block that measures 28'3" x 36'6", while the west addition is about 12' square.

The exterior walls of the house are sheathed by drop siding with a 5" exposure. Four-inch cornerboards trim the wall corners, while an 8" frieze board with bed molding delineates the wall juncture with the roof. A water table at the foundation is created by a slightly-projecting beveled drip above a 10" board apron.

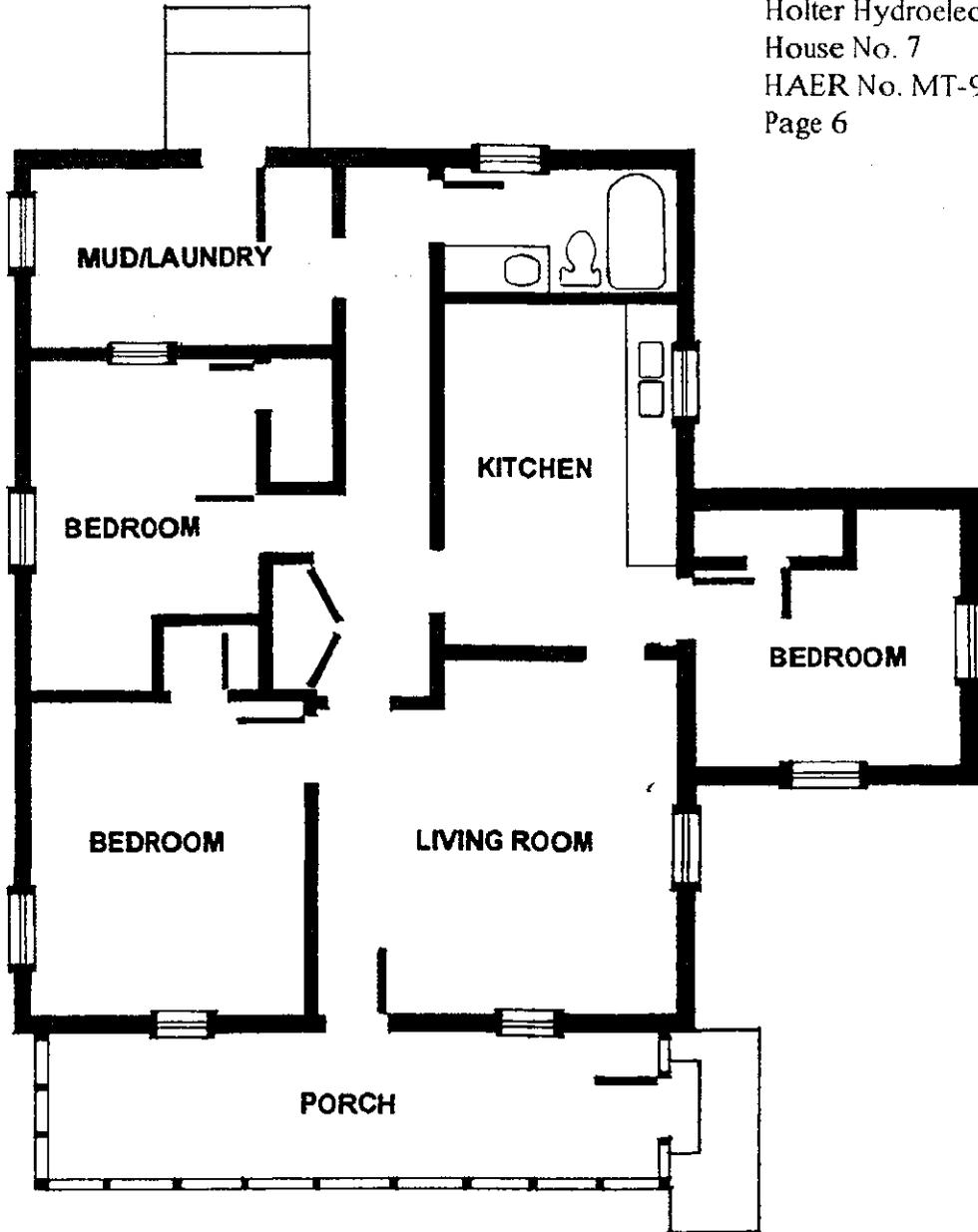
The front-gable roof at the house is intersected below the ridge line by the gable roof over the west addition. The truss system for the roof is composed of 2x4 rafters at 4-foot on center. The bottoms of the rafters are tied together by the 1x6 ceiling joists. Board decking covers the truss system which, in turn, is sheathed by a single layer of wood shingles. Galvanized ridge rolls cap the ridge lines; each roll has ball finials at the ends. The roof eaves have a slight overhang underscored by false rafter tails behind 3" fascia boards.

Most of the windows in the house likely date from the 1920s remodel. These are elongated, wood-sash double-hung units with a one-over-one light configuration. A small, square fixed window of the period is also at the southeast corner (rear). Two historic-era window openings toward the rear of the house have been retrofitted with smaller, double-hung windows and drop siding infill. All of the window openings have square-edge wood surrounds, and those from the 1920s feature a slightly-projecting beveled drip at the hood. Attic ventilators also pierce gable end walls. These are small, square louvered vents made of metal.

The full-width porch at the front (north) facade measures 6'5" x 26'3". It is enclosed by beaded wainscoting and bands of windows on all three walls. The windows are wood-sash fixed units with a thin vertical muntin. Fiberboard covers the area between the tops of the windows and roof line. The hipped roof at the porch is surfaced by wood shingles. A modern, hollow-core door is positioned on the porches' west wall. This entry is accessed by a low concrete stoop with pipe railing.

A second entry is at the rear (south) side of the house. It has a paneled wood, half-light door with an historic screen door. The door opens out to a low, concrete stoop.

The interior of the house contains six rooms off a central hallway (Figure 3). A living room and a kitchen are along the west side of the hall, two bedrooms are along the east side, and a mud room and a bathroom are at the rear (south). The west addition is off the kitchen; it serves as a third bedroom.



FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"



HOUSE No. 7
HOLTER HYDROELECTRIC FACILITY
HISTORIC DISTRICT

Figure 6. House No. 7 Floor Plan

The interior retains little of its historic fabric. Modern materials cover the floors, and the walls have been sheet-rocked in recent years. Most of the doors have either been removed or are replacements. No historic lights remain in the house, and the kitchen and bathroom fixtures are modern.

IV. FUTURE OF THE PROPERTY

The Montana Power Company plans to demolish House No. 7 at the Holter Hydroelectric Facility (FERC Project No. 2188). The company has sponsored recording the building to the standards of the Historic American Engineering Record.

V. ENDNOTES

1. House No. 7 is the left building in the row of four gabled-roof buildings near right center in photograph MT-94-A-7; and it is just right of the side gable building at the left end of the row of buildings at center in photograph MT-94-B-7.
2. The Montana Power Company, "Index of Expenditures and Improvement Requisitions, Electric, For Years 1913 to Date," 1940, unpublished report on file at The Montana Power Company, Record Services, Butte.
3. Many of these modifications were noted in an inspection report completed for House No. 7 in the late 1930s, see The Montana Power Company, "Reclassification of Electric Plant, Vol. No. 1," 1 January 1937, unpublished report on file at The Montana Power Company, Property Accounting, Butte.
4. Ibid.
5. Leo and Maude Becker, current residents at House No. 7, interview with Mary McCormick, 21 May 1997, Holter Hydroelectric Facility, vicinity of Wolf Creek.

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Becker, Leo and Maude. Current Residents at House No. 7. Interview with Mary McCormick, 21 May 1997. Holter Hydroelectric Facility, vicinity of Wolf Creek.

The Montana Power Company. "General Plan of Holter Development, Reproduced from Stone & Wester Draw. No. R16100." 8 February 1916. Drawing No. 17304-E on file at The Montana Power Company, Hydro Engineering, Butte.]

_____. "Index of Expenditure and Improvements Requisitions Electric, For Years 1913 to Date." 1940. Unpublished report on file at Record Services, The Montana Power Company, Butte.

_____. Photograph of the Holter construction camp, 30 August 1916. In "Holter I" photograph album on file at The Montana Power Company, Hydro Engineering, Butte.

_____. Photograph of the Holter construction camp, November 1917. Photograph at the Holter Hydroelectric Facility, vicinity of Wolf Creek.

_____. Photograph of dwellings at the Holter Plant, ca. 1918. Photograph on file at The Montana Power Company, Record Services, Butte.