

Architectural Inventory Form

Official Eligibility Determination
(for OAHP use only)

- Date _____ Initials _____
- Determined Eligible - National Register
 - Determined Not Eligible - National Register
 - Determined Eligible - State Register
 - Determined Not Eligible - State Register
 - Need Data
 - Contributes to eligible National Register District
 - Noncontributing to eligible NR District

I. Identification

1. Resource number: 5HN68.35
2. Temporary resource number: 59
3. County: Hinsdale
4. City: Lake City
5. Historic building name: O.K. Building
6. Current building name:
7. Building address: 223 Silver Street, Lake City, CO 81235
8. Owner name and address: Ken Beshears, P.O. Box 835 , Lake City CO 81235

II. Geographic Information

County Property No.: R1184

9. P.M. 6th Township 44N Range 4W SW4 of SE4 of SW4 of Section 27
10. UTM reference
Zone 13 296650 mE 4211320 mN
11. USGS quad name: Lake City Quad year: 1985 Map scale: X 7.5' ___ 15'
12. Block(s): 57 Lot(s): 5 Legal:
Addition: Year of Addition:
13. Boundary description and justification: Perimeter of parcel

III. Architectural Description

14. Building plan: Irregular
15. Dimensions: 2386 square feet
16. Number of stories: 1
17. External wall material(s): Wood, adobe
18. Roof configuration: False front
19. Roof material: Asphalt
20. Special features: Decorative cornice
21. General architectural description:
One-story, front-gabled building with false-front facade. Metal roof. Side walls side walls of concrete over adobe according to assessor records. False front is clad in clapboards; has a bracketed cornice. Façade has centered recessed entrance with paired paneled and glazed doors; transom above. Façade has two large, fixed-sash 4-lite windows framed by paneled square supports with capitals; kickplates below. Boardwalk in front. On rear: shallow shed-roofed addition with swing out doors covered in diagonal siding on north; long, narrow, flat-roofed addition on south.
22. Architectural style/Building type: False Front Commercial
23. Landscaping or special setting:

24. Associated building, features or objects:

IV. Architectural History

25. Date of construction Estimate: _____ Actual: 1876 Source of info: Lake City SILVER WORLD, Sat., August 5, 1876, page 1
26. Architect: Unknown Source of info:
27. Builder/contractor: Unknown Source of info:
28. Original owner: Louis Kafka Source of info: Lake City SILVER WORLD, Sat., August 5, 1876, page 1
29. Construction history (major additions, alterations, demolitions):
Rear section of building finished as an apartment circa 1990. Tax Assessor records.
30. Original location: Moved Date of move(s) _____

V. Historical Associations

31. Original use(s): Specialty store
32. Intermediate use(s): Specialty store, grocery store
33. Current use(s): Specialty store
34. Site type(s):
35. Historical background:

223 Silver Street together with adjoining 221 (Kennedy Store) and 219 (Women's Club) Silver constitute a rare multi-building false-front business block which was built on the eve of Colorado Statehood in 1876. The single-story business block shares a common cornice consisting of overhang supported by paired wooden brackets. Near-identical fronts on all three stores consist of clapboard on the false-front above the show windows, the latter consisting of identical window openings with wood mullions separating nine panes of glass, three-over-three, on 221 and 219 Silver, and four larger panes of glass, two-over-two, on 223 Silver. All three buildings have symmetrical alignment with show windows on either side of recessed doorways with tall double doors and transom windows. Front elevation woodwork surrounding windows and doorways consists of recessed panels with column capitals.

Through deductive historical research, it may be assumed that businessman Morris Rich was the original owner of the three-unit business block: Rich and Louis Kafka are listed as owners of 223 and 221 Silver in 1877, and Rich & Gebert are cited as owners of 219 Silver 1878-1880. It is likely that Gehert, an early Lake City sawmill owner, supplied the frame components of the business block. On July 8, 1876 – a date identical with the start of construction of 223 Silver – the Lake City SILVER WORLD reported “the steam saw mill erected by Messrs. Gebert, Cary & Milligan of Parsons, Kansas, has commenced operations, and its shrill whistle is a welcome sound to all. It is situated about a mile up Henson Creek, and has a capacity from 12,000 to 15,000 feet per day.”

Although apparently of frame construction, close inspection of the three buildings reveals thick adobe side and rear walls on 223 and 221 Silver, and hewn log walls on 219 Silver. Later rear additions on both 223 and 221 Silver were of brick. As originally constructed, an approximate 7' gap between 221 and 219 Silver was filled with a small false-front commercial structure which was historically used as a physician's office.

The in-fill building was apparently of inferior construction in comparison to its neighbors to the north and south, although uniformity was achieved with a continuation of the same cornice (without brackets) and clapboard false-front. The 7' in-fill building had a single, non-recessed doorway abutting boardwalk and smaller two-over-two show window which was not aligned with its neighbors. Unlike adjoining buildings at 223 and 221 Silver, both of which have gable roofs behind the false-fronts, the 7' in-fill building apparently had a sloping flat roof shedding water toward the rear of the lot. It historically had problems with drainage and was in such poor condition by 1949 that it was entirely removed as part of the renovation of 219 Silver.

223 and 221 Silver have the fewest alterations, the most significant change being the total replacement

of the south adobe wall on 221 Silver in February, 1985. The deteriorating adobe wall was replaced with a frame counterpart. The south wall of 221 Silver now consists of a clapboard exterior with four evenly spaced rectangular windows set high in the wall. The greatest amount of alteration has occurred at 219 Silver (Women's Club Building) starting in 1949 when the deteriorating structure was stabilized and cornice removed. Further alterations came in 1986/87 when the exterior front elevation was substantially reconstructed, including replication of the original cornice, and 1992 when the gable roof and entire north wall were replaced. The north wall's original combination of hewn log and adobe was replaced with frame construction.

223 Silver, known as the O.K. Building, is historically associated with its first owner, Lake City businessman Louis Kafka (1845-1909). Kafka was a native of Prague, Austria, who immigrated to Baltimore, Maryland, in 1859 and worked as a clerk in clothing stores in Denver and Central City, Colorado, prior to going into partnership with Moritz Rich in Lake City in 1876. Lake City SILVER WORLD in August, 1876, reported the "best building in town is the new adobe store of Louis Kafka... it is 35 feet front by 50 feet deep [and] will be occupied by the O.K. Clothing store of Rich & Kafka."

The firm, according to the WORLD, "will sell anything a gentleman may want in their line without adding freight." Moritz Rich was a silent partner in the men's furnishings firm and may be assumed to have furnished monetary backing for constructing the building and stocking the merchandise. Rich remained a partner with Kafka in the business until 1880 when his interest was acquired by George J. Richards. Kafka was sole proprietor of the O.K. Store after 1882.

As the region's largest supplier of gentlemen's clothing, Kafka's O.K. Store was one of the best known stores in both Lake City and the entire San Juan mining region. In addition to "men's furnishing goods," the firm stocked hats, caps, trunks, boots and shoes for both retail and wholesale. The trademark "O.K." emblem was emblazoned in hobnails on the soles of shoes manufactured by the firm and even appeared on the blue and white striped canvas store-wide awning which was erected along the Silver Street frontage of the building in 1877. It was reported in 1881 that the O.K. Store was also the office of Rocky Mountain Stage Co., with Louis Kafka as agent. A January, 1877, business review cites Rich & Kafka for a "heavy and complete stock... at their place of business one can purchase anything in the line of gentlemen's wear, from California mining suits to the best broadcloth, hats, caps, shirts, collars, cuffs, ties, hose, etc., etc., and a trunk valise and gripsack to put them in."

Louis Kafka was known as a shrewd businessman who during his long Lake City business career opened branch clothing stores at different times in Aspen, Sherman, Carson, Creede, and Henson at the Ute-Ulay Mine. He was adept at quickly moving his stock of merchandise -- and occasionally the store buildings themselves -- from one booming mining camp to another. In 1893, as the economic bloom at Carson Camp paled, it was reported Kafka had moved his stock of merchandise from Carson to Lakeshore. At his death in 1909, the Telluride JOURNAL reported that Louis Kafka established Telluride's first clothing store in 1883, later selling the business to well known Telluride businessman W.B. Van Atta.

Kafka accumulated a large portfolio of Lake City real estate and was also interested in mining ventures, the latter proving his economic undoing. Beginning in 1904 he became principal lessee of the Hidden Treasure, a major lead and silver mine located adjacent to the Ute-Ulay Mine on Henson Creek. Lake City newspapers periodically reported Kafka was funding improvements at the mine and shipping ore, but also referenced instances of "hard luck," the first in 1905 when the dam washed out at the Hidden Treasure Mill. Repairs were made and production resumed, although in January, 1907, further difficulties occurred when a shortage of water resulted in a temporary suspension of work at the mine.

Court litigation ensued between Kafka and owners of the mine, resulting in a court ruling against Kafka in March, 1907, and his bankruptcy. In June, 1907, it was reported Louis Kafka, "turned over his store building and stock of goods to P.C. McCarthy to partially satisfy his indebtedness to the latter, who is now in charge. The new owner expects to make large additions to his stock and bring the old O.K. store up to its former high standard." Louis Kafka moved successively to Grand Junction, Colorado, and Twin Falls, Idaho. He died at Twin Falls in October, 1909.

Bankruptcy proceedings resulted in the sale of all Kafka real estate holdings in mid-October, 1909, none of which, according to Lake City TIMES, resulted "in very high prices." The Silver Street business and lot on Silver Street were sold to Herman Mayer for \$450. Subsequent businesses in the O.K. Store were Louis Kranichfeld's shoe store (1911) and a furniture store featuring the residue of merchandise from the defunct Luckett furniture store (1915).

Ida and Emil Soderholm, who owned the adjoining building at 225 Silver, acquired the O.K. Store in 1927 and expanded their general merchandise business into both buildings with clothing, sewing items, hardware, shoes, etc. According to Herman Heath (born 1906), the Soderholm store consisted of a "clutter of stuff everywhere," Heath adding the highly diverse departmentalized stock was the result of Mrs. Soderholm "not wishing to miss a sale." As a teenager, Heath sought Mrs. Soderholm's advice on a remedy for an active case of acne, Mrs. Soderholm responding by selling him a jar of breast development cream.

Soderholms sold the building to Tomkins Hardware Co. for \$550 in 1939, the Tomkins firm occupying it as a hardware store until sale to Mike and Stella Pavich in 1942. Two Pavich sons, Jesse Pavich and Lloyd Micky Pavich, opened Pavich Bros. Grocery in the building for a few years in the late 1940s. In 1949 it was announced that the availability of 24-hour electricity made it possible for Lake City stores to begin stocking frozen foods. "Mrs. Mabel Rawson and Mrs. Harold Rawson are the first to make a purchase at the Pavich Bros. Store," according to the Lake City News columnist.

Although Paviches retained ownership of the store building until 1976 when they sold to John Parker, the store was thereafter leased out, beginning with Bud and Dot Slater's Lake City Sports Shop in 1952, and later as the "Malt Shop" to L.C. Ely (1958). A 1952 photograph of Slater's sports shop shows a variety of signs on the building advertising "Fishing Information," "Fishing Tackle -- Sure Catch Products Sold Here," "Fishing Licenses," "Live Bait," and "Self-Service Laundry." In the latter 20th Century, the O.K. Store housed a restaurant, "Teresa's Place," operated by Teresa Carl, and a popular summer theatre venue, "The Popcorn Palace," staged by Texas summer residents Louis and Sally Harris

36. Sources of information:

Lake City SILVER WORLD, Sat., July 8, 1876, page 3, Sat., August 5, 1876, page 1, Sat., January 5, 1878, page 2; Lake City TIMES, Thurs., December 29, 1892, page 3, Thurs., May 19, 1904, page 3, Thurs., November 9, 1905, page 3, Thurs., January 10, 1907, page 3, Thurs., March 14, 1907, page 3, Thurs., October 21, 1909, page 3, Thurs., November 11, 1909, page 3, Thurs., February 2, 1911, page 3, Thurs., November 25, 1915, page 2; Lake City PHONOGRAPH, Sat., June 8, 1907, page 4, Sat., October 16, 1909, page 1; Gunnison COURIER, Thurs., June 2, 1949; Gunnison NEWS-CHAMPION, Thurs., October 2, 1958, page 2; PORTRAIT AND BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD OF THE STATE OF COLORADO, Chapman Publishing Co., Chicago, 1899, page 1092; Abstract of Title to Lots 4 and 5, in Block 57, in the Town of Lake City, Colorado; Sanborn Insurance Co. Map for Lake City, October, 1902; telephone conversations with Herman T. Heath, Albuquerque, New Mexico, and H. Brice Pavich, Lake City, March 2, 2003.

VI. Significance

37. Local landmark: Yes No Date of design.: _____ Design. authority: _____

Within Lake City Historic District (local historic district)

38. Applicable National Register Criteria:

- A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history;
- B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory
- Qualifies under Criteria Considerations A through G
- Does not meet any of the above National Register criteria

39. Area(s) of significance: Social history, architecture

40. Period of significance: 1876 -1904

41. Level of significance: National State Local

42. Statement of significance:

This building is associated with settlement and development of Lake City during the late 1800s mining era. The building originally housed O. K. Store operated by Louis Kafka, the largest supplier of gentlemen's clothing in the San Juan region. After Kafka sold the store in 1907, the building contained a series of businesses, including Louis Kranichfeld's shoe store and Luckett furniture store. Joined with adjacent building at 225 Silver, it also housed Soderholm's general merchandise store, Tomkins Hardware, Pavich Grocery, Lake City Sports Shop, and the Malt Shop (see Historical Associations). The building is a well-preserved representative of the false front building constructed during Lake City's initial 1876 - 1878 boom, as reflected in its false-front façade, bracketed cornice, and large display windows.

43. Assessment of historic physical integrity to significance:

The architectural integrity of this building is intact, as evidenced by minimal alterations to its character-defining features.

VII. National Register Eligibility Assessment

44. National Register eligibility field assessment: Eligible Not Eligible Need Data

45. Is there National Register district potential? Yes No

Discuss _____

If there is National Register district potential, is this building Contributing Noncontributing

46. If the building is in an existing National Register district is it? Contributing Noncontributing
(Lake City National Historic District)

VIII. Recording Information

47. Photograph numbers: Roll 12, frames 8, 22 Negatives filed at: Lake City Town Hall

48. Report title: 2003 Architectural Survey of Lake City, Colorado

49. Date(s): September 2002 - June 2003

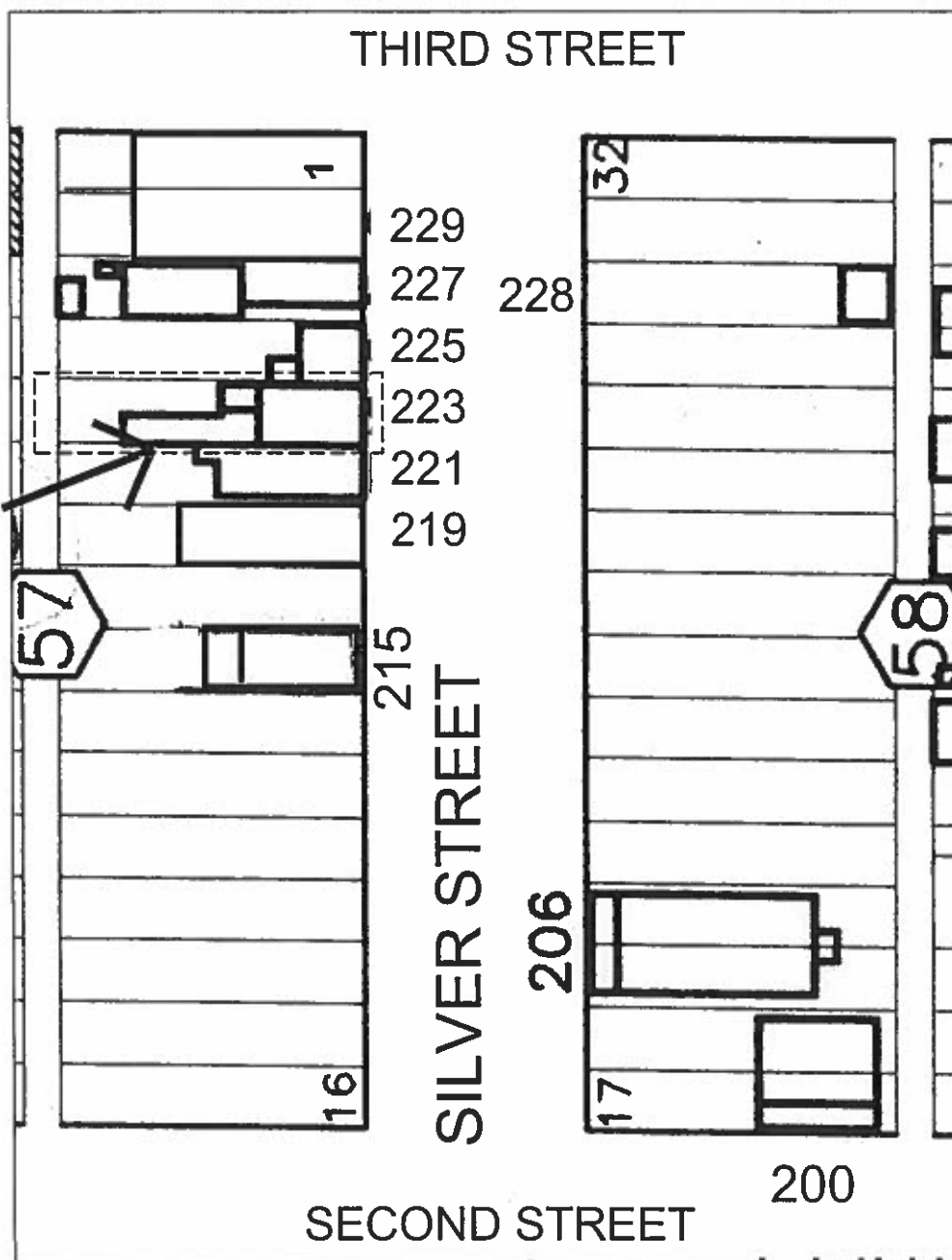
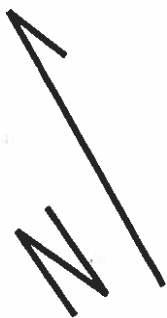
50. Recorders Cathleen M. Norman and Grant E. Houston

51. Organization: Town of Lake City

52. Address: 230 Bluff Street, Lake City CO 81235 53. Phone no. (970) 944-2333

Colorado Historical Society - Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
1300 Broadway, Denver CO 80203 (303) 866-3395

NOT TO SCALE



5HN68.35

223 Silver Street