

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received FEB 7 1984

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic SUSAN WISSLER HOUSE

and/or common SUSAN WISSLER HOUSE

## 2. Location

street & number 406 Main Street not for publication

city, town Dayton vicinity of N/A

state Wyoming code 056 county Sheridan code 033

## 3. Classification

| Category  | Ownership                                     | Status  | Present Use   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district               | <input type="checkbox"/> public               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied          | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture                  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private   | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure              | <input type="checkbox"/> both                 | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress             | <input type="checkbox"/> educational                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                   | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                     | <b>Accessible</b>                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object                 | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process       | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted              | <input type="checkbox"/> government                   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A being considered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial                   |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> no                           | <input type="checkbox"/> military                     |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> museum                       |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> park                         |
|   |   |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> religious                    |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific                   |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation               |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> other:                       |

## 4. Owner of Property

name Laura Tinker

street & number 406 Main Street

city, town Dayton vicinity of N/A state Wyoming 82836

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Sheridan County Courthouse

street & number South Main Street

city, town Sheridan state Wyoming 82801

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wyoming Historical Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1981  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records WY Recreation Commission

city, town Cheyenne, state WY

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Located among other false front buildings along Main Street in Dayton, Wyoming, the Susan Wissler house is a frame, false front structure. Although minor alterations have occurred through the years, basically the building has retained its architectural and historical integrity. The Wissler house is a 1½ story, detached building originally constructed as a commercial structure in 1885. The traditional storefront design, typical of late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial architecture, is still evident. The large storefront windows with centrally located entry and gable roof hidden by the frame facade is representative of other small town commercial buildings in Wyoming. The shiplap siding has been painted grey and the rock foundation was recently covered with the same type of siding. The structure is rectangular with a small, one-story shed-roofed addition attached to the rear. The two windows on the upper facade are original double hung fixtures although the shutters were added later. The wood door and sidelights are not original but the adjacent storefront windows on the first story have not been changed. Grillwork was added to the first story windows for protective purposes. Currently, the first floor is still utilized for commercial purposes and the owners reside in the second story. The nominated area includes only the Wissler house with its modern addition.

## 8. Significance

| Period  | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric          | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning     | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture         | <input type="checkbox"/> religion        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499            | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic    | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation           | <input type="checkbox"/> law                            | <input type="checkbox"/> science         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599            | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture            | <input type="checkbox"/> economics              | <input type="checkbox"/> literature                     | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699            | <input type="checkbox"/> architecture           | <input type="checkbox"/> education              | <input type="checkbox"/> military                       | <input type="checkbox"/> social/         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> art                    | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                          | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce               | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy                     | <input type="checkbox"/> theater         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–     | <input type="checkbox"/> communications         | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation  |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              |   | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

**Specific dates** 1885 - 1915 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

In 1911 Susan Wissler was elected mayor of the small ranching community of Dayton, Wyoming, thus becoming the first woman mayor in Wyoming, and one of the first in the United States. Wissler served three terms as mayor of Dayton, and made great strides toward improving the quality of life in that small northern Wyoming town. She lived in the house at 406 Main Street from 1905–1915, encompassing her years in office. Built in 1885, the house is typical of other commercial structures in Dayton, and has retained its historical integrity through the years. In keeping with its historic significance, for its association with Susan Wissler, and to honor her contributions to the political life of Wyoming and the United States, the house at 406 Main Street is deserving of enrollment in the National Register of Historic Places.

### ADDENDUM

Susan Ellen (Frisby) Wissler was born February 23, 1853 at Broadhead, Minnesota. As a young girl of nine, she moved with her family to Denver, Colorado. Susan eventually married in Denver, and bore two children. In 1890 the Wissler family loaded a single wagon and moved to Sheridan County, Wyoming. Shortly after arriving in Wyoming, Susan's husband began to exhibit symptoms of tuberculosis and she was forced to assume greater responsibility for the family.

The Wisslers settled in Dayton, a small cattle town located in the foothills of the Big Horn Mountains about 25 miles northwest of Sheridan. Established in the early 1880's as a trading post on the Bozeman Trail, Dayton became a station on the stagecoach line between North Creek, Wyoming and Custer, Montana. When the Wisslers arrived in 1890, Dayton boasted two hotels, three general stores, and four saloons as well as a bank, flour mill, and stucco factory.

Susan's husband died of tuberculosis in 1896, and in order to support the family she taught grade school at several locations in Sheridan County. Within a few years Wissler had saved enough money from teaching to open a small dry goods store and millinery in Dayton. In November of 1905 Susan bought the house at 406 Main Street for the sum of \$700.00. She opened her millinery shop in the front of the first floor, with the family living quarters in the back and on the second floor.

In May, 1911 Susan Wissler was approached by a group of Dayton citizens and was asked to run for mayor of the town. These citizens were dissatisfied with the incumbent, charging him with causing the town to lose saloon license revenues through family business practices. Susan at first declined to run for office but was eventually convinced to campaign. She ran on a non-partisan ticket against a Republican opponent and promised to make Dayton "the cleanest

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE ADDENDUM

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Dayton South, Wyoming

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

|      |   |         |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 3 | 3       | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2        | 0 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 0 |
| Zone |   | Easting |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

B 

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| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

G 

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| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

H 

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| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Verbal boundary description and justification** This nomination includes only the Wissler House and the lot on which it sits - located on the Main Street of Dayton, Original Town, specifically Lot 2 and North 3' of Lot 3, in Block 15. There is no need to extend these boundaries as they adequately encompass the significant historic site described in this nomination.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title David Tinker/Michael Gorman

organization Wyoming Recreation Commission

date February 21, 1983

street & number 1920 Thomes Avenue

telephone 777-6179

city or town Cheyenne

state Wyoming 82002

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Alvin J. Baston*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 1/26/84

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*for Alvin J. Baston*  
Keeper of the National Register

Added to the  
National Register

date

3/8/84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet

ADDENDUM

Item number

8

Page 2

town in Wyoming, morally, physically, financially and every other way."<sup>1</sup>

On May 9, 1911, Susan Wissler became the first woman mayor in Wyoming and one of the first in the United States. Fifty-three votes were cast and Wissler received a majority of nine. She was subsequently reelected to two, additional one-year terms and was asked to run for a fourth, but declined. Wissler's administration was marked by a strong effort to improve the quality of life in Dayton. Gambling was curbed and saloons were regulated. She had the city's first water works installed, and instituted a speed limit of five miles per hour for automobiles. She also prohibited the shooting of firearms within the city limits.

After serving three years in the mayor's office and continuing to operate her shop at 406 Main Street, Susan Wissler left Dayton. She moved in 1915 to Ashland, Montana and the ranch of her daughter, Brownie Wissler Schaudel, who was to become a noted western artist. In June, 1935 Wissler suffered serious injuries in a fall and was moved to a resthome in Dayton where she died on February 9, 1939. A few years before her death, she told a reporter, "giving the franchise to women in Wyoming was a very advanced movement. Although some thought it was a great joke, less than 50 years later it proved to be what the whole country demanded. By the rights given them, women have studied politics, gained public offices and proved themselves competent to fill any position entrusted to them."<sup>2</sup>

As Wyoming's, and possibly America's first woman mayor, Susan Wissler helped show the nation that women were quite capable of political affairs. Enrollment of her home on the National Register is a fitting tribute to the contributions of this strong-willed woman.

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Notes:

<sup>1</sup>Sheridan Press: 9 February, 1934

<sup>2</sup>Sheridan Press: 25 February, 1934

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National Park Service**

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Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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McPherson, Ida. "Dayton, the Historical." W.P.A. Mss #1461. Cheyenne, Wyoming: Wyoming State Archives, Museums and Historical Dept.

NEWSPAPERS

Sheridan Press: 9 February, 1934  
25 February, 1938  
8 August, 1963