

INVENTORY SHEET FOR GROUP NOMINATIONS: IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, BOISE, IDAHO

NOMINATION: (TOURTELLOTTE AND HUMMEL ARCHITECTURE ~~IN IDAHO~~ ^{7.2}),

✓ SITE NAME: Boise Junior College Administration Building ✓ SITE NUMBER: 138

✓ LOCATION: Boise State University campus, Boise, Ada County ~~(001), Idaho~~

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS:

State Board of Education
c/o President
Boise State University
Boise, ID 83725

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Boise South, 7.5 minute

ACREAGE: ^{3 3/4 acres} ~~less than one~~

Lmc
1/3/83

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nomination includes the Boise Junior College Administration Building and the property on which it stands, UTM 11/5,64,270/48,27,950 in section 15 T3N, R2E, with a margin of 25 feet in rear and 50 feet on the sides and front of the Boise Junior College Administration Building. Legal description on file at the Ada County Courthouse, Boise, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11/5,64,270/48,27,950

DATE OR PERIOD: 1940

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: State

CONDITION: good unaltered original site

DESCRIPTION:

The Boise Junior College Administration Building is a long, shallow--274 feet by 64 feet 8 inches--red brick building with terra cotta trim, two stories tall, in a neo-Tudor Gothic style. The structure is generally symmetrical in outline, except for as square four-story bell tower rising from the roof to the right of the entry pavilion. Shallowly projecting wings cross the lateral block at each end. An equally shallow central crosswing contains the entry pavilion in front and the projecting portion of a lecture room in the rear.

The building was designed to house almost all academic and administrative functions of the new college. A long hall runs the length of the building from the library at left. Offices were in the front of the building to the right of the entrance. The remainder of the floor plan was devoted to lecture and classroom space. Although interior spaces have been re-assigned as the institution acquired more buildings, the exterior is effectively unaltered.

The principal visual device is the contrast of the extensive terra cotta trim against the red brick fabric. Terra cotta is used as coping for low stepped cresting above the cross wings, as framing for the windows, and as panels, embellished with vaguely heraldic devices, between the first- and second-story windows. Windows are multi-light and tripled in each bay, four bays wide between the entrance and the end-wings on either side, one bay deep on either side of the outset secondary entrances in the end-walls.

The terra cotta treatment is especially elaborate on the pavilion tower and on the left end-wing, which has a quoined and crested parapet above its second-story windows and an outset bay. The end entrances have low, Tudorsque arches and keystone forms. Terra cotta-capped buttresses appear elsewhere on the building as well. The entrance is tripartite--two double doors flanked by two singles, with a segmented transom light in the arch. It is approached by brick steps and terrace and surrounded by a terra cotta frame with a flattened arch and a stepped cornice with relief decoration. Above it are two tiers of five contiguous windows, framed and separated by segmented bands of terra cotta. Small, grotesque figures decorate the narrow bottom band; vaguely heraldic devices, the broad central one; and plain panels with gill-like upper borders, the top one. The gill-like forms recur on the top of the double louvered slits opening in each face of the tower, just under the coping. Both tower and entry have terra cotta-capped buttresses terminating at several levels.

The only exterior alterations to the building are screening and reglazing of some of the original multi-light windows, replacement of the front doors, and provision of a handicapped access ramp on the right side of the entry stair.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Boise Junior College Administration Building is of exceptional architectural significance, not only as a building of unusual institutional importance to the state of Idaho, but as one of the two very large-scale federally assisted projects with which Tourtellotte and Hummel closed out the Depression years. Both projects were carried out jointly with Boise's other major architectural firm, Wayland and Fennell; the Boise Junior College building is the only example included in the Thematic Group from among a number of such joint projects in the last several years of the firm's activity as Tourtellotte and Hummel. A comparison between the design for the Boise Junior College Administration Building, for which Tourtellotte and Hummel took primary design responsibility, and the Ada County Courthouse (National Register 1976, Boise Capitol Area Historic District), in which Wayland and Fennell took the lead, points up very clearly the conservative tendencies of the first firm and places it in a somewhat wide context.

In contrast to the tall, monochromatic, modernistic courthouse, the administration building for Boise Junior College is strongly evocative of the Tudor revival style of the firm's University of Idaho administration building of 1907: long dimensions around a central tower, contrasting materials, flattened arches, medievalizing ornament.

This contrast suggests once more that modern approaches to exterior design were picturesque options rather than ideological imperatives to these architects. This was probably true for most architects of the period; Wayland and Fennell too

designed many "Unprogressive" buildings in the 1930s. But the contrast revealed here suggests a particular bias toward revivalism on the part of Tourtellotte and Hummel. That apparent bias cannot be explained wholly in terms of appropriateness to particular projects.

The Boise Junior College Administration Building has substantial significance on a state level as the principal early building of an Idaho state institution of higher learning--and eventually its third university. During 1940-1941 the college conducted a great building campaign. The \$180,000 administration building was completed in 1940 by contractor J. O. Jordan.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Hart, Arthur A. Historic Boise: An Introduction to the Architecture of Boise, Idaho, 1863-1938. Boise: Boise City Historic Preservation Commission, 1979.

Neil, J. Meredith. Saints and Oddfellows: A Bicentennial Sampler of Idaho Architecture. Boise: Boise Gallery of Art, 1976.

Boise, Idaho. Hummel Jones Miller Hunsucker P.A. File 121N. Certificate book references. List of Volume of Work by Year, 1940. Drawings signed Tourtellotte and Hummel-Wayland & Fennell Associated Architects.



Tourtellotte and Hummel Architecture in Idaho
Boise Junior College Administration Building
site #138

Boise State University Campus
Boise, Ada County, Idaho

Photographer:
Patricia Wright
1980

Negative on file at Idaho State Historical Society
Boise, Idaho

View from northeast

Photograph one of two



Tourtellotte and Hummel Architecture in Idaho
Boise Junior College Administration Building
site #138

Boise State University Campus
Boise, Ada County, Idaho

Photographer:
Patricia Wright
1980

Negative on file at Idaho State Historical Society
Boise, Idaho

Detail view from north-northeast

Photograph two of two