

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

NOMINATION: (TOURTELLOTTE AND HUMMEL ARCHITECTURE IN IDAHO ^a TR)

SITE NAME: Funsten, Bishop, House

SITE NUMBER: 6

Boise
LOCATION: 2420 Old Penitentiary Road, Ada County (001), Idaho

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS:

Friends of the Bishops' House
Meg Pfoertner, President
1301 North Sixteenth Street
Boise, ID 83702

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Boise south, 7.5 minute ACREAGE: two and one-half acres

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nomination includes the Bishop Funsten House and the property on which it stands, the SW 1/4, NW 1/4, and the NW 1/4, SW 1/4, all in the NW 1/4, SE 1/4, SE 1/4 of Section 11, T3N, R2E, Boise Meridian. Legal description on file at the Ada County Courthouse, Boise, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11/5,67,650/48,27,940

DATE OR PERIOD: 1900

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

CONDITION: excellent unaltered moved November 4, 1975

DESCRIPTION:

The Bishop Funsten House is a two-and-a-half-story frame house built in 1890 and remodeled by Tourtellotte and Company a decade later in the Queen Anne Style.

The original structure was wooden-sided top to bottom. The original configuration, still visible under the 1900 renovation, was a tall hipped block with gabled eels at front and sides and a hipped extension to the rear. Decorative treatment was largely confined to metal cresting along the ridgebeams; polychromatic roof material in the form of a single band of contrasting shingles; a double overhang in the middle front gable; and a cross-facade porch with a gabled entrance, turned posts, and spindlework balusters and undereave trim.

The 1900 renovation was described in the local press as involving: "four rooms being added, besides a tower and spacious porches nearly around the entire building, two mantles, hot water heating and modern plumbing. The exterior when completed will be in keeping with other buildings in the immediate vicinity. The

exterior when completed will be in keeping with other buildings in the immediate vicinity. The first story will be veneered with stone; also porches to the top of the railing."¹

Because the original drawings have not been found, it is not apparent where additional space was created other than in the turret and balcony. The other exterior changes are as described, with additional features not mentioned in the newspaper account. The porch walls and column bases and the first-story house walls are veneered with random-coursed Boise sandstone. The front porch curves around to the right and runs past the right side ell; to the left, it crosses the facade, makes a right turn at an outset corner gazebo, and runs as an open terrace back to the rear side porch. The gazebo is decorated with a narrow band of vertical ceiling strips between two smooth fascia bands. Its hipped roof is finished with a conspicuous metal finial, as in the conical turret roof of the two-and-a-half story round tower added at right front. The porches are strongly, if picturesquely, classical with groups of Doric columns and pediment-like gablets over the entrances. The Doric columns recur as supports for the small open balcony to the left of the tower, and, stylized as dividers between the elements of the Palladianesque window groups in the front and left side gables. These Palladianesque windows also have flared heads over their rectilinear elements, and these are concentric semi-circles of shingle over the round-arched central elements; the right side group, in addition, has swept or dimpled outer edges. The group in the left-side gable is without an arched element or columns but shares the flared heads. The entire upper story is covered with shaped shingles, the several patterns separated by bands of square shingles that are emphasized with contrasting paint. The second story is flared at its base, as are the gables.

The house was fully restored to its early-1900's appearance after being moved to a site east of Boise in 1976. The only change discernible in a comparison with a 1905 image is the absence of original stone chimneys at either end of the main ridgebeam. The ridgebeams were evidently cleared of their original cresting in 1900. The two-story open porches at right rear do not appear in photographs of the 1890 house but are clearly early and may also have been added in the turn-of-the-century remodeling project.

1. (Boise) Idaho Daily Statesman, August 27, 1900, p. 5, c. 1.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Episcopal bishops' house, commissioned by Bishop James Funsten in 1900, is architecturally significant as a large-scale and successful example of the firm's imprinting of an existing building with a personal stylistic signature by means of remodeling. It is an early example of the movement of the Queen Anne style to a later, more academic, classicizing phase. The house is historically significant as evidence of the beginning of the firm's relationship with the Episcopal Church under Funsten, an institutional client exceeded in importance only by the Catholic Diocese and the State of Idaho.

The original house, built for the Episcopal bishops in 1890, would also have been described as Queen Anne in style, but the decorative elements were modest in nature and were essentially applied to the margins of a simple and boxy, if ample, house. The remodeling of 1900 reportedly cost \$3,000. Involving as it did one of the corner turrets for which Tourtellotte had developed an affection, and a big wraparound porch with an outset finialed gazebo, it made the house substantially more irregular in plan and profile. The surface veneering with Boise sandstone and shaped shingles, materials that these architects used consistently in their Queen Anne and colonial work, produced substantially more texture and contrast of surface. The result is thus more emphatically Queen Anne--and the sort of Queen Anne that had done much to make the senior partner's reputation. At the same time, the use of classicizing elements on the addition and revisions and the relatively stable and imposing appearance as compared to the fanciful Pierce-Borah House make this a fine example of the tendency to square up, solidify, and classicize the Queen Anne style. The Hester Spackman House [National Register, State Street Historic District, 1978], and the Sommercamp house (site 25) are other good examples of the Queen Anne-classical style, but on a less substantial scale. The Bishops' house was scaled to match its neighboring St. Margaret's School, for which Tourtellotte and Company designed an addition in 1907, and the slightly earlier Brady and Eoff houses in the next block, as well as the slightly later and also nearby Falk, Grunbaum, and Curran houses. Only the first of these Tourtellotte and Company commissions is still standing in a recognizable form.

The commission for the St. Margaret's School addition was one of several major ones the firm secured from the Episcopal Church during the first years of the century, in the early tenure of the Right Reverend James Bowen Funsten, a Virginia native who had been consecrated as First Missionary Bishop of Idaho in 1899. These commissions included St. Michael's Rectory and the supervision of construction of St. Michael's Episcopal Cathedral in 1900 and the St. Luke's Hospital building in 1903. Minor but important commissions during this period included small frame churches at Shoshone [National Register, Shoshone Historic District, 1975], Mackay (site 18), and St. Anthony, all in 1902; Ross Fork in 1904 (site 33); Gooding in 1909 (site 60); and Bruneau in 1911 (site 75).

The Bishop's house was moved to prevent its demolition in November, 1975. On its new site in east Boise, against a background of sagebrush-covered hills and with young trees planted around it, the house is unusually evocative of early Boise's oasis-like appearance. It has been fully restored, is being refurnished, and is open to the public as a gathering place, thanks to the non-profit group that saved it. The house is nominated on its new site because of its architectural significance as an excellent example of the Queen Anne-classical Tourtellotte and Company house; its historical significance as the earliest of a series of important commissions for an ambitious Idaho bishop; and its sensitive relocation, restoration, and complete accessibility to the public.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

(Boise) Capital News, January 1, 1901, p. 1

(Boise) Idaho Daily Statesman, August 27, 1900, p. 5, c. 1; January 1, 1901, p. 9, c. 5; December 2, 1918, p. 1, c. 6.



Tourtellotte and Hummel Architecture in Idaho
Funsten, Bishop, House, site #6
2420 Old Penitentiary Road
Boise, Ada County, Idaho

Photographer:
Patricia Wright
1980

Negative on file at Idaho State Historical Society,
Boise, Idaho

View from southwest

Photograph one of one