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

NOMINATION: (Lava Rock Structures in South Central Idaho TR)

SITE NAME: Richfield Pump House SITE NUMBER: 9

LOCATION: ~~One mile southeast~~ SE of Richfield, ID

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Riverwood Land and Livestock Company
c/o Terre E. Siedler
Richfield, ID 83349

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Richfield, 7.5 minutes ACREAGE: less than one

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nomination includes the Richfield Pump House and the property on which it stands, the SW 1/4, SW 1/4, NE 1/4, SW 1/4, SW 1/4 of Section 25, T4S, R19E, Boise Meridian. Legal description on file at Jerome County Courthouse, Jerome, Idaho.

UTMs: 11/732140/4769190

DATE OR PERIOD: 1909 ARCHITECT OR BUILDER: W. O. Pearce
Hayden

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: architecture, exploration/settlement, engineering,

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: local

CONDITION: deteriorated, unaltered, original site

DESCRIPTION:

This one-story, shingled hip-roofed building is approximately 23 by 25 feet. The rubble walls are of very dark lava above an approximately two-foot-tall concrete foundation. The curving joints have almost flush, yellowish, sand-colored mortar in them. The corners of the building and the side of each opening are decoratively trimmed with one, two, or three courses of buff-colored brick. Each window and the door has a shallow brick relieving arch above it. On the facade is a wide centered opening, large enough to take large machinery in and out. Flanking it are two windows. The opposite rear wall has four symmetrically placed windows. On the right wall are two windows and on the left wall is a centered door flanked by two windows. Most of the glass in the windows is broken, but the double-hung frames and curved heads are still in place. Sills are sloping concrete-covered brick outset about two inches. The roof has deteriorated, and all of the interior wood, including flooring, is gone. The walls and brick work are in excellent condition, showing no signs of deterioration or cracking.

SIGNIFICANCE:

This bulding is significant for its architecture and because it housed the water pumping equipment that made possible the settlement of Richfield, Idaho. Further, it is one of the few buildings in the thematic group that had benefit of architectural design. W. O. Pearce, a draftsman for the Idaho Irrigation Company, developer of the Lincoln County Irrigation Tract, designed the building. News stories refer to him as a "trained architect." Although designed to house a Plat Iron Works triplex pump on a De La Verne 35-horsepower oil engine to pump water from the Little Wood River up a hill to the newly built mains of the recently platted town of Richfield, the building very much resembles a small house. Perhaps this was the intent of the company, for two photos of it appeared in the elaborate booklet published by the Idaho Irrigation Company to persuade people to come to the Richfield area to make entry under the Carey Act. The decorative, neat appearance of the pump house contrasted very favorably with the frame prove-up shacks built by entrymen who lacked capital. Of the building, the local newspaper commented that it was, ". . . almost as light as out-of-doors. It is substantially and pleasingly built, with a fine eye for the artistic as well as the practical." (Richfield Recorder, May 13, 1909) Another story refers to it as, ". . . one of the most beautiful as well as one of the most substantial buildings in Southern Idaho." (Richfield Recorder, April 22, 1909) A Mr. Hayden was the stonemason. Local newspapers rarely acknowledge, let alone praised, the work of artisans; however, of Mr. Hayden, the paper stated, " . . . Mr. Hayden thoroughly understands his business he having built the power house of the water works." (Richfield Recorder, August 26, 1909) Perhaps the most remarkable thing about this structure is that it could be made usable again by replacing glass and wooden parts of the building. Only the shingles have deteriorated; the wood is missing because it was salvaged by local residents for use in their own buildings.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Richfield Recorder, May 13, April 22, and August 26, 1909.

Richfield, Idaho. Portland, Oregon: Sunset Homeseekers Bureau, Oregon Shortline Railroad, [c. 1910].



Lava Rock Structures in South Central Idaho
Richfield Pump House, site 9

One mile southeast of Richfield
Richfield vicinity, Lincoln County, Idaho

Photograph by Jennifer Eastman Attebery
July 1983

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

View from southeast

Photograph one of one