

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

NOMINATION: (TOURTELLOTTE AND HUMMEL ARCHITECTURE ~~IN IDAHO~~ (R))

✓ SITE NAME: Meridian Exchange Bank SITE NUMBER: 45

✓ LOCATION: 109 ~~East~~ <sup>2nd</sup> Second Street, Meridian, Ada County (001), Idaho

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS:

Cleora S. McFadden  
P. O. Box 275  
Meridian, ID 83642

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Meridian, 7.5 minute ACREAGE: less than one

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nomination includes the Meridian Exchange Bank and the property on which it stands, lot 10, excluding the south 63.55 feet of the west 10 feet, Meridian Original Townsite. Legal description on file at the Ada County Courthouse, Boise, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11/5,49,280/48,28,580

DATE OR PERIOD: 1906

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture, Commerce

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

CONDITION: fair unaltered original site

DESCRIPTION:

The Meridian Exchange Bank is a two-story pressed brick and stone Renaissance Revival stone structure with a strongly classicizing corner entrance on the intersection of Second and Broadway, matched by a stairwell entrance in the fourth bay north on Second Street. It is distinguished by a series of upper-story sash windows--one on Broadway, one on the beveled corner wall, and six extending down the length of the building on Second Street. These openings have broad rectangular surrounds, slightly outset in contrasting pale-colored brick and embellished with keystones and recessed inturning "quoins." These windows and their surrounds rest on a continuous cut stone sill which separates the two stories. The first-floor windows have individual sills, and along with the door in the third Second Street bay, angular heads formed by a single outset row of contrasting header bricks.

The main entrances have shallow brick pilasters with simple stone capitals and bases, seated on tall stone pedestal blocks. Plain entablatures support denticulated cornices. The cornices are surmounted by low, corner-pilastered parapets which form mock balconies to the second-story windows above the entrances. Three courses above the second-story windows, there is a triple string course of con-

trasting pale bricks; the upper and lower courses are outset. Five courses higher is another triple string course under a small stone cornice. The parapet above is finished with smooth stone coping, and the profile of the roof is broken by four corbelled brick chimneys rising immediately behind the parapet. Three have their stone coping intact.

The storefront beyond the side stairwell entrance on Second Street has a beveled, inset, centered entry, plate glass display windows, and a coffered wooden base. This storefront is entirely unaltered, though its surface is deteriorated. The same is true for the buidling as a whole. Except for a concrete slip which obscures the brick and stone along the base of the walls, it retains its original exterior texture throughout. Interior materials, however, are completely altered.

#### SIGNIFICANCE:

The Meridian Exchange Bank, like the Mitchell Hotel (site 42), is one of the few commercial structures included in the Thematic Group. It is architecturally significant as a very good exsample of the firm's out-of-town commerical work, which was almost without exception at a more modest scale than could be capitalized in Boise. It is also significant as the only example in the Group of an important functional type, and as the most distinguished early commercial bulding in Meridian.

Like the Mitchell Hotel, the Meridian Exchange is a very good example of the kinds of brickwork, here made especially attractive (as on the Boise Turn Verein) by use of contrasting colors of brick, which the firm was using on its smaller commercial buildings at this time. It is also a good example of the propensity for classifying forms, here used very handsomely to surround the tyypical corner entrance to a banking room. The classical vocabulary, which the firm liked to use in monuments like the state capitol and which surfaced more and more frequently in smaller commissions as well, has often been considered particularly appropriate to dignify and validate the image of banks--institutions of unusual importance that particularly benefitted from an image of stability. No other early building in the small town of Meridian approaches the Exchange Bank for stylishness or state of preservation; most have been fairly roughly treated, as had the firm's 1906 Compton building next door.

The Exchange Bank commission came about as the result of the firm's Boise contacts. Horace Neal of the Capital State Bank of Boise had become president of the Meridian institution, founded in 1903, when it was reorganized and incorporated in 1905. According to contemporary newspaper reports, the first story of the building was to accommodate the banking room and three stores (only one of which was built). The offices of the Independent Telephone Company were on the second floor. The projected cost was \$9,000. Allen and Barber were the contractors.

#### MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Barrett, Glen. Idaho Banking, 1863-1976. Boise: Boise State University Press, 1976.

(Boise) Idaho Statesman, May 27, 1906, p. 5. c. 3; September 26, 1906, p. 5, c. 2.

Boise, Idaho. Hummel Jones Miller Hunsucker P.A. File 401C. Collection book references to Capital State Bank and Bank of Meridian, 1906. Tracings signed John E. Tourtellotte and Company.