

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

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

SITE NAME: Lemmon Hardware Store

SITE NUMBER: 25

LOCATION: ~~Corner~~ Main Street and Nez Perce Avenue, Richfield, ID

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Jack Lemmon
Richfield ID 83349

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Richfield, 7.5 minute

ACREAGE: less than one

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nomination includes the Lemmon Hardware Store and the property on which it stands, Lots 23 and 24, Block 75, Richfield Townsite. Legal description on file at Lincoln County Courthouse, Shoshone, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11/731940/4770040

DATE OR PERIOD: 1911

ARCHITECT OR BUILDER: attributed to Hayden brothers

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: architecture commerce

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: local

CONDITION: excellent, altered, on original site

DESCRIPTION:

The Lemmon Hardware Store is a rectangular, one-story, flat-roofed building. The original stone portion, approximately 26 by 50 feet, has a lower cinder block addition on the back. The false front wraps around the building to form false side walls that have two step-downs toward the rear. There are large display windows on the front of the building. There are translucent balcony windows above and small translucent panes below the display windows. A similar display window is at the extreme left of the south wall, emphasizing the building's corner location. Above it is a brick relieving arch. The centered entrance is recessed. Above the balcony windows is a horizontal stone sign panel. On the right side of the south wall is a double-hung sash window with a curved head, and an outset, sloping, narrow concrete sill. Above the window is a three-header-wide yellow brick relieving arch. There are decorative, patterned quoins of the same brick on the sides of the window. A red-brick chimney is built into the south wall at the second step-down. Yellow brick is used also on the sides of the front wall, simulating brick columns and forming a panel across the top of the facade. Above the panel is a decorative wooden cornice. The coursed rubble, with stones of varying sizes, has medium wide, nearly flush joints. The sand-colored pointing mortar has a narrow convex beaded line on it, which shows traces of white paint. The interior has original fixtures and counters. The twelve-foot ceiling is covered with an ornate pressed-tin ceiling with side moldings.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Lemmon Hardware Store building is architecturally significant as a lava rock example of twentieth-century commercial architecture. The building's storefront fenestration, stepped side wall, cornice, and interior ceiling, counters, and fixtures are representative of South Idaho commercial architecture in this period. The building is associated with the settlement of Richfield and its surroundings. The value of a hardware store in the new town of Richfield can hardly be overestimated. People in the town and the surrounding countryside depended upon it for tools, machinery, stoves, and building materials to establish their homes and farms. The Lemmon Hardware Store was founded in 1908 in a frame combined residence and store by brothers R. J. and R. A. Lemmon. This lava rock building was built in 1911. A series of news stories in the summer and fall of 1911 are instructive of the amount of time it took to build a lava rock building. An August 14 story announced the excavation had begun. At that point a frame building was planned. The next issue announced plans had been changed and a lava rock building would be built. "This is welcome news to the people of Richfield as a lava rock building will show up well in that part of town." (Richfield Recorder, August 27, 1911) By September 21, the foundation and basement were completed. Three masons were at work on October 5 and had just about completed their work on October 19. The stone work was finished on October 27. The masonry is attributed to the Hayden brothers, Swedish masons. Carpenters were winding up their work on November 2, and the plasterers began work on November 9. On December 28, 1911, the new hardware store was completed. A November 9 story lauds the three-year-old firm: "The success of this firm speaks well for their business ability and shows what can be accomplished in the new towns of Idaho, today, where a man or firm is willing to cast their lot and devote themselves to their business." (Richfield Recorder, November 9, 1911) Because of its location and size, the cinder block addition on the rear of the building does not detract from the charm and authenticity of this early commercial building. The building is otherwise impeccably intact.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Richfield Recorder, August 14, August 27, October 5, October 19, October 17, November 1, November 9, and December 28, 1911.

Lemmon, John, interview with Marian Posey-Ploss, Richfield, Idaho, Spring, 1980.

Paulson, Wanda. "Four Original Richfield Businesses Still Operating," Lincoln County Journal (Shoshone), July 15, 1976.