

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

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

✓ SITE NAME: Regan, John, American Legion Hall ↓ SITE NUMBER: 135

✓ LOCATION: 401 ~~West~~ Idaho Street, Boise, Ada County (~~001~~), Idaho

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS:

Quentin and Margie Howard
401 West Idaho Street
Boise, Idaho 83702

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Boie South, 7.5 minute ACREAGE: less than one

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nomination includes the John Regan American Legion Hall and the property on which it stands, lots 11 and 12, block 33, Boise City Original Townsite. Legal description on file at Ada County Courthouse, Boise, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11/5,64,760/48,28,110

DATE OR PERIOD: 1939

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

CONDITION: good unaltered original site

DESCRIPTION:

The John Regan American Legion Hall is a diminutive concrete building in a hybridization of the art deco and art moderne styles. The structure is one story in height, flat-roofed, rectangular in plan, set laterally to Idaho Street. The surface is stuccoed and penetrated by multi-light steel casements and has a fluted metal coping running continuously around the roofline except where the entrance ensemble, centered on the front elevation is extended above it.

The entrance ensemble consists of two broad piers shallowly outset from the main wall surface and cresting above cornice line; between them is a slightly taller inset form with vertical striations on either side of a panel of unelaborated stucco terminating in a small stepped ornament. The recessed entry below is a single plate glass door to the left of a plate glass panel of the same size, with a common transom over both; they are flanked by squared, fluted, opaque glass forms which act as embedded columns and make the transition from the plane of the doors to that of the outset piers. A rectangular metal marquee hangs over the entrance, which is approached by a broad flight of concrete steps with raked parapets and wrought-iron rails. The fenestration is consistently multi-light, set cleanly into the stucco

with narrow outset sills but no lintels. There are vertical four-light strips in the front surface of each of the entryway piers; narrow rectangular midwall windows, with strips of fixed panes on either side of and above an eight-light casement; and broad multi-light windows meeting at the corners.

The interior of this former legion hall has been subdivided and remodeled for professional offices. The exterior appears as designed except for the hanging of metal awnings.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The John Regan American Legion Hall in Boise has exceptional architectural significance as the moderne representative in the triad of motif-related late 1930s buildings in the Thematic Group; as the clearest revelation in the group of the firm's awareness of the international style; and as a useful illustration, in comparison with other legion halls by the firm, of the picturesque possibilities of apparently progressive styles.

As noted in the significance statements for the Morris Hill mausoleum and the Gem County Courthouse (site 132 and 134), the Boise legion post is one of three buildings of radically different function and scale which the firm designed around variations of a single distinctive entryway motif in 1937, 1938, and 1939. In contrast to the relatively classicizing courthouse and the stylistically intermediate mausoleum, the legion post is a very streamlined little building, with smooth surfaces and the corner windows suggesting the international style and its demonstration of the possibilities of the new structural materials and methods. The most significant building designed by the firm to incorporate the visual/structural devise of the corner window was, very appropriately, the terminal building for Boise's new airport, on the second bench south of the city, in 1939. As designed and built, it had full corner windows on each of its two stories; these windows were the corner elements of long lateral bands of windows, separated by panels of horizontally grooved concrete. This fenestration suggested, if it did not quite demonstrate, the possibilities of the curtain wall. The legion post thus assumes greatly increased importance as the only surviving expression of this facet of the architects' (surely Frank Hummel's) production. The only other building in the group which could be called clearly moderne represents a distinctly different and more obviously picturesque variant (see site 136).

Appropriate as this style may have been to the air terminal, the fact that it was applied as well to a legion hall demonstrates once more than even these progressive, socially conscious architectural stylistic factors were another form of picturesque imagery for these architects. They designed a legion hall in Twin Falls in 1929 in art deco brick, one in Nampa in 1931 in a medievalizing vein (site 121), and one in Boise in 1939 using moderne international devices. They would as easily return to revivalism in other contemporary commissions--for example, in the last two sites included in the Thematic Group.

Construction of the John Regan post began in 1939, with Kloepper and Cahoon taking the main \$8,381 building contract. The total cost as reflected in the architects' certificate book was approximately \$11,200.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Boise, Idaho. Hummel Jones Miller Hunsucker P.A. Certificate and Collection book reference 1938-1940.