

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received **JUL 9 1986**  
date entered **8-13-86**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Benewah Milk Bottle

and or common Milk Bottle

**2. Location**

street & number South 321 Cedar \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Spokane \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of

state Washington code 053 county Spokane code 063

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Richard J. Clemson, Interior Systems Inc.

street & number P.O. Box 4656

city, town Spokane \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state Washington

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Spokane County Court House

street & number 1116 West Broadway

city, town Spokane \_\_\_\_\_ state Washington

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

City of Spokane/  
title Office of Archaeology & Historic Pres. has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1978/1985 \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county  local

Historic Preservation Office, West 808 - Spokane Falls Blvd./  
depository for survey records Office of Archaeology & Hist. Pres., 111 West 21st Ave., Olympia

city, town Spokane/Olympia \_\_\_\_\_ state WA 99201-3333  
WA 98504-5411

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Located at South 321 Cedar in a commercial area near downtown Spokane, the Benewah milk bottle demonstrates a building whose function, structure and material are secondary to its representational quality and structural form. Thirty-eight feet tall and fifteen feet in diameter at its base, with a rear appendage for a refrigeration unit and storage, the bottle was used as a retail outlet by the Benewah Dairy firm.

Completed in 1935, this contoured wood frame structure is built in the shape of a milk bottle. It is stuccoed from the base to that section which tapers down the neck. The neck and cap are covered with sheet metal over a wood frame. The entire structure was originally painted white with a painted bust of Chief Benewah (since removed) hanging over the front door. The three pane leaded windows are placed symmetrically on either side of a wooden framed door. Neon lighting was used to highlight the contour of the building. The interior is specially designed with counter and case fixtures, indirect lighting, curving leaded windows and terrazzo floor all incorporated into the finished building. The structure was designed by the architectural firm of Whitehouse and Price at an approximate cost of \$3,700. The property retains good exterior integrity.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1935 **Builder/Architect** Whitehouse and Price; W.G. Myers

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

A favorite and familiar landmark in Spokane, the Benewah Milk Bottle is a significant example of literalism in the popular commercial architecture of the 1930's. Built in 1935, the bottle-shaped structure was designed by the distinguished Spokane architectural firm of Whitehouse and Price and constructed by contractor W.G. Myers. The building served as a south side retail outlet for the Benewah dairy of Paul E. Newport, who constructed a matching bottle at a north side location. The property is one of a dozen examples in Washington State of novelty architecture which integrated function with advertisement.

The owner, Paul E. Newport, came to Spokane from St. Maries, Benewah County, Idaho, in 1922. He began his dairy products business in St. Maries in 1917, naming it "Benewah" after Coeur d'Alene Indian Chief Benewah, for whom the county was named. Benewah products produced in his first plant and retail store at First and Washington in downtown Spokane included pasteurized milk rich in butterfat, butter made from the highest priced cream, western mild yellow cheese, buttermilk and ice cream. From this store, Newport expanded the business to include outlet stores in the Westlake Market (N. 121 - 5 Post), the Riverside Food Shop (W. 818 Riverside), the Friendly Food Shop (N. 1402 Monroe), stores at N. 16 Wall and S. 16 Washington, and the two milk bottle stores. All of Benewah's products were manufactured by the company, which was noted for quality. In the early stages of business, milk was purchased from local milk haulers in ten gallon cans. By 1939, the dairy had grown, and Newport purchased a new plant and outlet store at East 408 Sprague in which he employed some seventy people and had a fleet of twenty trucks.

From 1922 until 1969 when he relinquished presidency of the business to his son, Richard A. Newport, Paul Newport was a successful and innovative businessman, and active in civic enterprises as a member of Kiwanis, Elks, the Shrine and member of two golf clubs. Richard continued to manage the business, but ownership soon passed from the family. The last Benewah store closed in 1978. The store on Cedar has since been vacant and used as storage, but the new owners plan to rehabilitate it for the use of an office.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

City of Spokane, Washington, Building Department Records.

Liebs, Chester H. "Remember Our Not-So-Distant Past?" Historic Preservation,  
January-March, 1978, pp. 30-35

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1/8 acre  
Quadrangle name Spokane NW (WA) 7.5

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	1	4	6	7	6	0	0	5	2	7	7	6	2	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is a rectangle described thusly: N 57' of Lots 9 and 10, Block 42, Spokane Falls First Addition, City of Spokane, WA

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
N/A			

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy Compau, Historian  
Scott Brooks-Miller, Historic Preservation Officer

organization Historic Preservation Office date \_\_\_\_\_

street & number Fourth Floor - City Hall telephone 456-4378

city or town Spokane state Washington

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Carol E. Thon

title State Historic Preservation Officer date June 26, 1986

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

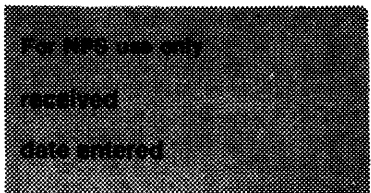
for Melores Byers Entered in the 8-13-86  
Keeper of the National Register National Register date

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration \_\_\_\_\_

**United States Department of the Interior  
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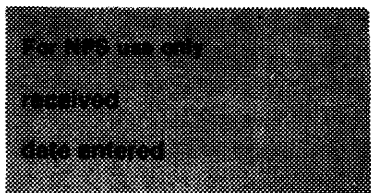
The whimsical and yet functional idea of a milk bottle store appealed to Newport's business acumen. Richard Newport said of his father, "He thought, what better way to sell dairy products than in a milk bottle, the symbol of the product. It seemed natural." Such novelties were not uncommon in the twenties and thirties with the wave of modernism which was sweeping the country. The first milk bottle was built on Garland and Post, the second on S. Cedar. Both still stand. Newport planned to build six of these structures at a cost of about \$3,700 each, but only two were completed. Both stores opened in March, 1935. Neither of them had a soda fountain; they were intended to serve solely as retail outlets for Benewah products. Newport's advertising stated that the bottles were "designed to build better men and women by making dairy products attractive to boys and girls. No expense will be spared to make these new stores as sturdy, as fine, and as good as the products they represent." To mark the opening of the new milk bottle stores, Newport sponsored a soap box derby on Post hill, just below the store on Garland and Post, an event that was enjoyed by thousands of young people.

To design the milk bottles, Newport hired the firm of Whitehouse and Price, architects of such noted Spokane buildings as St. John's Cathedral, the Hutton Settlement for orphans (National Register, 1916) and the Spokane Civic Building/Chamber of Commerce in the Riverside Avenue Historic District (National Register, 1976). The firm began to practice in Spokane in 1913 and continued a successful career over the next fifty years, until Mr. Price's retirement in 1964. Whitehouse and Price designed many outstanding buildings, college administration buildings, and residences throughout Washington, Idaho, Oregon and Montana.

Both J.J.C. Andrew's book, The Well Built Elephant (1984) and John Margolies' book, The End of the Road (1978) catalogue structures like the milk bottles. A photograph of the milk bottle on Cedar illustrated in a Historic Preservation article in which John Margolies stated that, "these structures are a singular contribution to American architecture and design." Chester H. Liebs, in Historic Preservation commented that architectural follies were "an important architectural, sociological, and historical artifact of the 30's...". The Benewah bottle is one of a half-dozen significant examples of novelty commercial architecture in the state identified in informal surveys. The only other example listed in the National Register is the Teapot Dome Service Station in Yakima County (National Register, 1985).

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Continuation sheet

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Marogolies, John. "The Joys of Roadside America." Historic Preservation May-June 1981, pp. 44-47.

Newport, Richard A. Telephone Interview, October 22, 1985.

Polk City of Spokane Directories, 1922, 1923, 1929, 1934, 1935, 1938, 1941, 1945, 1950, 1955, 1960, 1965, 1970, 1975, 1978.

Rees, John E. Idaho Nomenclature. W.B. Conkey Company, 1918.

Spokane Daily Chronicle, December 7, 1934; March 22, 1935.

Spokesman-Review, February 5, 1935; March 16, 1935; March 24, 1935; March 23, 1935; June 5, 1970; August 16, 1983; April 4, 1985; June 26, 1985.

Woodbridge, Sally B. Building Through Time, The Life of Harold C. Whitehouse. Portola Valley, CA: The American Lives Endowment, 1981.