

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **JUL 31 1985**

date entered **AUG 29 1985**

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

**1. Name**

historic Teapot Dome Service Station

and/or common N.A.

**2. Location**

street & number Old State Highway 12 not for publication

city, town Zillah  vicinity of

state Washington code 053 county Yakima code 077

**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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>n/a</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Richard L. Thomas

street & number Box 44

city, town Naches vicinity of state Washington 98937

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Yakima County Courthouse

street & number 128 North 2nd Street

city, town Yakima state Washington 98901

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Washington State Inventory of Cultural Resources has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1977  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

city, town 111 W. 21st Ave., Olympia state Washington 98504

## 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 type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	date August 1977
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

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

The Teapot Dome Service Station, constructed in 1922, is a circular frame building with conical roof, sheet metal "handle" and concrete "spout," resembling a roadside teapot. Presently located on Old State Highway 12 near Zillah, Washington, the station was moved 1.2 miles west of its original site on the highway in 1978 during the construction of Interstate 82. The new location, which includes the original outhouse as well as station, closely approximates the historic site.

The station, which rests on a new concrete slab, is sided with wood shingles. At its base, the building measures 14 feet in diameter with a 44 foot circumference. The building has an interior ceiling height of ten feet and rises 13 feet on the exterior to the top of the roof. The conical roof is covered with asphalt shingles, has projecting eaves, exposed rafters, and a fascia, and is crowned with a glass globe with flashing light at its apex. The "spout" functions as a stove pipe in cold weather; the "handle" is purely decorative.

The building is lighted by two large fixed multi-paned windows on either side of a single leaf door with a glazed panel of nine panes. A small fixed window with six lights is placed on the side opposite the door. The door and window openings are framed with simple wooden surrounds. The interior of the station is a single, undivided space with plywood walls and floor. The lowered ceiling is made of composition panels. Two florescent lights, spaced four feet apart, hang from the ceiling.

Two rectangular frame buildings are also located on the nominated property. The original outhouse, moved to the new site in 1978, measures four by 11 feet with single leaf doors at both ends. The interior of the building is divided by a center partition. This building contributes to the nomination. The second ancillary building is the well house/storage facility. It measures five by 11 feet and was constructed after the station was relocated. It does not contribute to the nomination. Other non contributing improvements on the property include a cement pump island with two historic pumps (not original to the property), a non-historic light pole, and three non-historic gas pumps. Although the door and front windows of the station were damaged shortly before its relocation, they have been repaired to original condition. The historic "gas" sign and sign pole were moved with the station in 1978 and rest on the rear of the property where they are visible to motorists on Interstate 82.

# 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1922 **Builder/Architect** Jack Ainsworth

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Teapot Dome Service Station is a landmark example of the roadside architectural "follies" built during the expansion of the national highway network in the 1920's and 30's. Constructed in 1922 to resemble a teapot, complete with handle and spout, the gas station is a humorous reminder of the Teapot Dome oil lease scandals that rocked the Harding Administration. Station owner Jack Ainsworth designed and built the structure the year of the scandal; the business was purchased by A.J. Thomas in 1928 and has been operated almost continuously since then by his family.

Fanciful architectural expressions were a colorful feature of highway culture and commerce during the period. Highly visible and usually humorous, these buildings caught the eye of the passing motorist and served as effective advertisements. The Teapot Dome station is a familiar sight to travellers in eastern Washington and ranks among the most notable "follies" in the state. Unlike others, however, the Teapot Dome Station conveys a political joke, selling oil products from a structure that reminds us of the controversy that sent U.S. Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall to prison for transferring government oil reserves to private producers in return for money.

In 1978, the station was moved 1.2 miles west of its original location on State Highway 12 during the construction of Interstate 82. The move was assisted by the State Department of Transportation in an effort to preserve the station. From its new location on old Highway 12, the Teapot Dome continues to pump gas in a setting strongly reminiscent of the original site. Field inspections and aerial photographs confirm that the original location of the station is nearly identical to the current site in setting, siting, and configuration. At both sites the station was oriented toward the highway not far from the side of the road, surrounded by open farmland and a few scattered farm structures. The building was kept intact during the move in 1978 and retains all the essential historic design features (although it now rests on a new concrete slab). In addition to the station, the original outhouse, sign pole and sign were moved to the new site to preserve the original context.

### Exception to the Criteria Considerations

Although the National Register does not ordinarily list properties that have been moved, the Teapot Dome Service Station is eligible for its exceptional architectural value. Informal surveys of other "follies" in the state have identified the Java Jive Restaurant in Tacoma ("coffee pot," c. 1930's), the Benewah Creamery Buildings in Spokane ("milk bottles," 1935), and the Hat 'n Boots Restaurant in Seattle ("hat and boots," c. 1940) as other outstanding examples of novelty architecture from the period. Even among this group, however, the Teapot Dome Service Station is distinguished by its age, its integrity, and its careful replication of an oversized "teapot."

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Box, Elmer. Interview, 119 Pearson, Zillah, Washington 98953, July 1984.  
 "Teapot," Yakima Herald-Republic, June 13, 1978  
 Thomas, Ruth. Interview, wife of A.J. Thomas, July 1984.  
 Wesselvis, Gib. Interview, 1111 2nd Avenue, Zillah, Washington 98953, July 1984.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2 acres

Quadrangle name Granger N.W.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

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7	1	2	6	8	0
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5	1	4	0	6	2	5
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 Zone Easting Northing

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 Zone Easting Northing

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** The nominated property is a rectangular parcel located in the northeast quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 6, Township 10 North, Range 21 East, in the vicinity of Zillah, Yakima County, Washington, and is described thusly: beginning at a point on the north side of old State Highway 12, (continued)

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

state	n/a	code	county	code
	n/a			

state	n/a	code	county	code
	n/a			

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Richard L. Thomas, Owner	Edited by Leonard Garfield Archaeology & Hist. Pres.
organization		date January 1985
street & number	Box 44	telephone (509) 829-5100
city or town	Naches	state Washington 98937

## 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

*Jacob E. Shaw*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date July 3, 1985

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date 8/29/85

*J. Nelson Bryan*  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

10

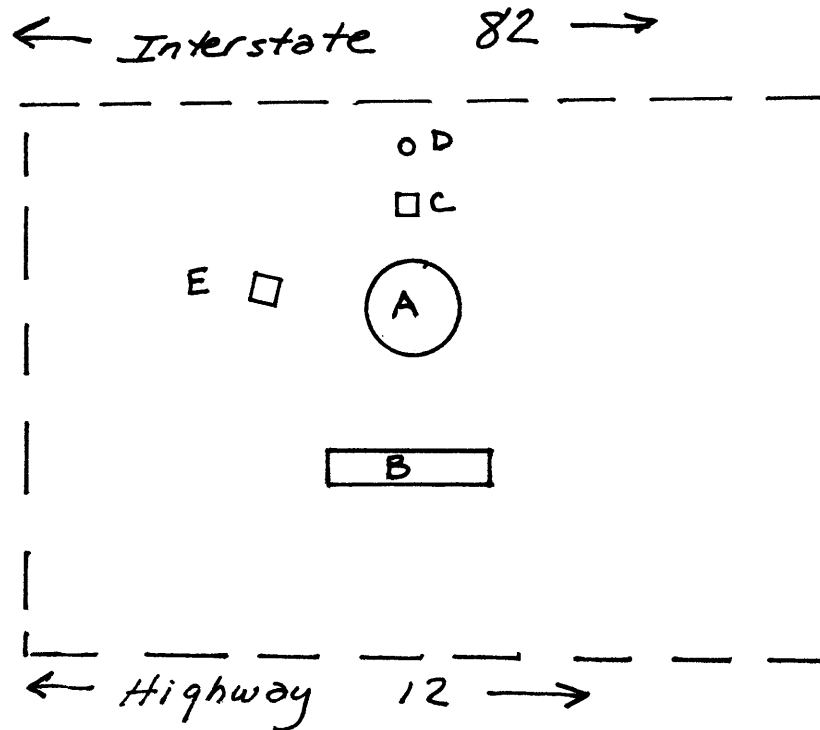
Page

2

approximately 1200 feet east of the junction of I-82 exit ramp No. 52 and Highway 12, proceed 564 feet east along the north edge of Highway 12; thence proceed 420 feet north to the rear of the property; thence proceed 564 feet east along the rear property line; thence proceed 420 feet south to the point of beginning. The parcel is legally described as tax parcel 211006-11016, County of Yakima, Washington.

# TEAPOT DOME SERVICE STATION

SKETCH PLAN  
(NOT TO SCALE)



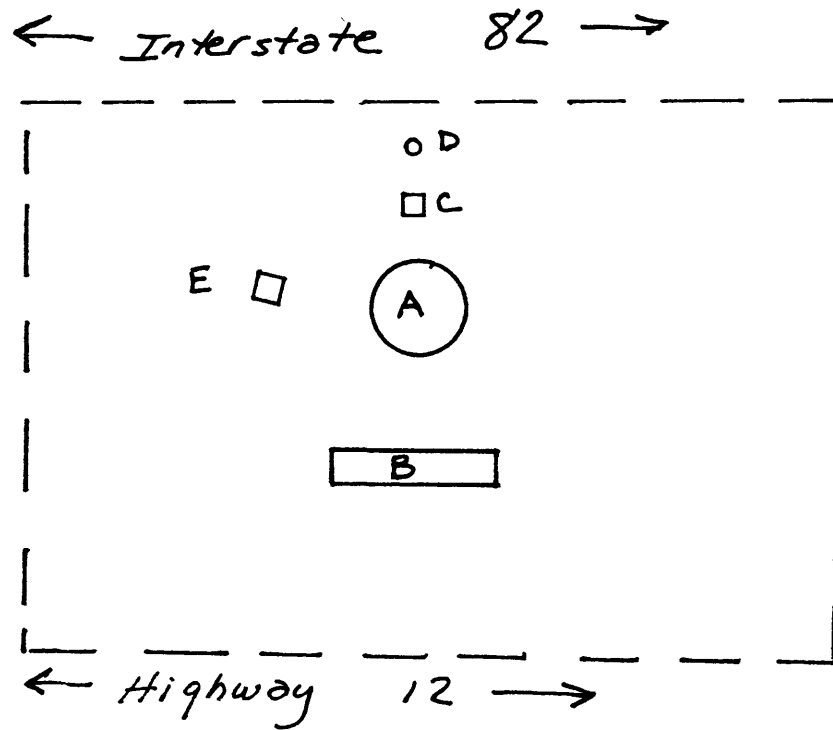
Key:

- A = service station (contributing)
- B = pump island (non-contributing)
- C = outhouse (contributing)
- D = sign pole (contributing)
- E = well house/storage (non-contributing)

--- = boundary (see VBD)

# TEAPOT DOME SERVICE STATION

SKETCH PLAN  
(NOT TO SCALE)

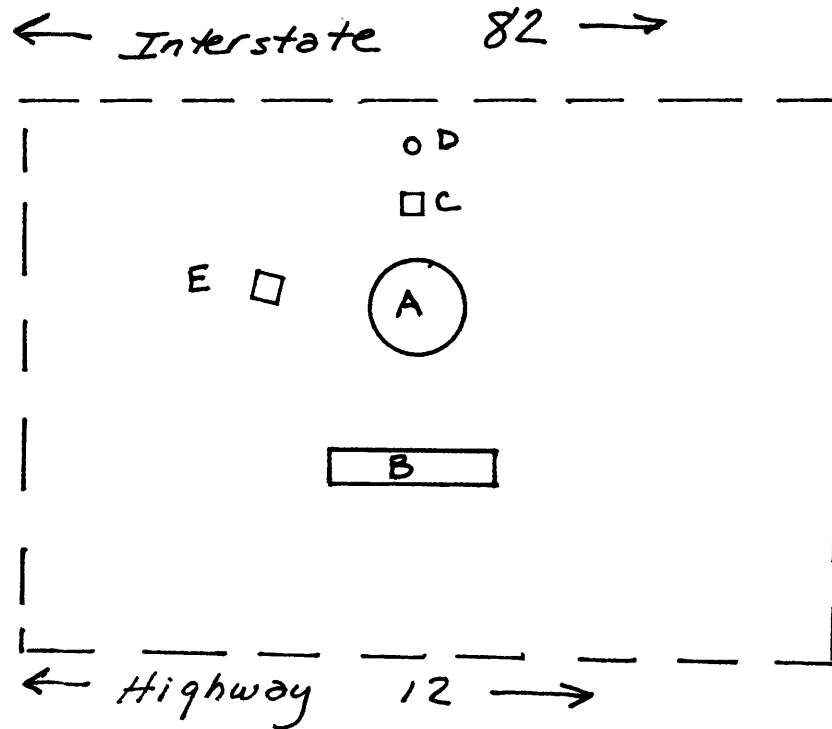


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