

Utah State Historical Society

Property Type: _____

Site No. _____

Historic Preservation Research Office

Structure/Site Information Form

IDENTIFICATION 1

Street Address: 846 20th Street
Ogden, Weber County, Utah UTM: 12 419810 4564650

Name of Structure: Utah School for the Deaf and Blind T. R. S.
Boys' Dormitory

Present Owner: Utah School for the Deaf and Blind

Owner Address: 846 20th Street
Ogden, Utah 84401

Year Built (Tax Record): _____ Effective Age: _____ Tax #: 02-046-0001
Legal Description: _____ Kind of Building: _____

The building is located on a large campus comprising approximately 4 city blocks, upon which are located numerous other school buildings. The portion of the property upon which this building sits is described as follows: Commencing 200 feet E of the SW corner of Block 51 Plat C Ogden City Survey, thence N 200 feet, E 350 feet, S 200 feet, W 350 feet to point of beginning. Approximately 1.5 acres

STATUS/USE 2

Original Owner: State of Utah--School for the Deaf and Blind Construction Date: 1934-35 Demolition Date: _____
Original Use: educational Present Use: educational

Building Condition: Integrity: Preliminary Evaluation: Final Register Status:

<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Site	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Significant	<input type="checkbox"/> Not of the	<input type="checkbox"/> National Landmark	<input type="checkbox"/> District
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor Alterations	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributory	<input type="checkbox"/> Historic Period	<input type="checkbox"/> National Register	<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-Resource
<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated		<input type="checkbox"/> Major Alterations	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Contributory		<input type="checkbox"/> State Register	<input type="checkbox"/> Thematic

DOCUMENTATION 3

Photography: Date of Slides: 1984 Slide No.: _____ Date of Photographs: 1984 Photo No.: _____
Views: Front Side Rear Other Views: Front Side Rear Other

Research Sources:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Abstract of Title	<input type="checkbox"/> Sanborn Maps	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/> U of U Library
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plat Records/ Map	<input type="checkbox"/> City Directories	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utah State Historical Society	<input type="checkbox"/> BYU Library
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tax Card & Photo	<input type="checkbox"/> Biographical Encyclopedias	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal Interviews	<input type="checkbox"/> USU Library
<input type="checkbox"/> Building Permit	<input type="checkbox"/> Obituary Index	<input type="checkbox"/> LDS Church Archives	<input type="checkbox"/> SLC Library
<input type="checkbox"/> Sewer Permit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County & City Histories	<input type="checkbox"/> LDS Genealogical Society	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Bibliographical References (books, articles, records, interviews, old photographs and maps, etc.):

Fourth Report of the Utah State Building Commission for the Biennium from July 1, 1934 to June 30, 1936. n.p., 1936.

"Eber F. Piers." Architects File, Preservation Office, Utah State Historical Society.

Third Report of the Utah State Building Commission for the Period from January 1, 1933 to June 30, 1934, n.p., 1934.

Architect/Builder: Eber F. Piers/James J. Burke and Co. (Salt Lake City)

Building Materials: brick

Building Type/Style: PWA Moderne

Description of physical appearance & significant architectural features:

(Include additions, alterations, ancillary structures, and landscaping if applicable)

This is a 2-story brick building that is constructed in the PWA Moderne style. It has a flat roof and a long rectangular plan that consists of a slightly projecting center block flanked by side wings in a linear fashion. Large low-relief piers are found at each of the building's corners. These piers visually break the plane of the walls and the line at the edge of the roof and thus serve to effectively define the three main sections of the building. The window on both floors exist in horizontal bands and the main entrances are found on the side wings. The doorways here are recessed and enframed by brick pilasters. A lighter shade of brick is used in a geometric pattern to highlight the tops of the entrance pilasters. The dark red brick walls are circled by two contrasting belt courses. The first occurs at a level just above the tops of the first story windows and consists of a broken line of yellow-tiled square blocks. The second belt course is found running above the second story windows and is composed of a white band punctuated by a broken line of black tiles. This upper course has a distinctive dentil-like appearance. The building remains in good original condition and there are no major alterations.

Statement of Historical Significance:

Construction Date: 1934-35

Built in 1934-35, the Boys' Dormitory at the Utah School for the Deaf and Blind is part of the Public Works Buildings Thematic Resources nomination and is significant because it helps document the impact of New Deal programs in Utah, which was one of the states that the Great Depression of the 1930s most severely affected. In 1933 Utah had an unemployment rate of 36 percent, the fourth highest in the country, and for the period 1932-1940 Utah's unemployment rate averaged 25 percent. Because the depression hit Utah so hard, federal programs were extensive in the state. Overall, per capita federal spending in Utah during the 1930s was 9th among the 48 states, and the percentage of workers on federal work projects was far above the national average. Building programs were of great importance. During the 1930s virtually every public building constructed in Utah, including county courthouses, city halls, fire stations, national guard armories, public school buildings, and a variety of others, were built under federal programs by one of several agencies, including the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), the National Youth Administration (NYA), the Works Progress Administration (WPA), or the Public Works Administration (PWA), and almost without exception none of the buildings would have been built when they were without the assistance of the federal government.

The Boys' Dormitory at the Utah School for the Deaf and Blind is one of 233 public works buildings identified in Utah that were built during the 1930s and early 1940s. Only 130 of those 233 buildings are known to remain today and retain their historic integrity. In Weber County 15 buildings were constructed. This is one of 7 that are left.

It was built as a Public Works Administration (PWA) project between 1934 and 1935 at a cost of \$105,000 which also included the purchase and installation of an additional boiler in the central heating plant of the
(See Continuation Sheet)

Boys' Dormitory - Utah School for the Deaf and Blind
History continued:

school. Following its construction the Utah State Building Commission, in its report for 1934-1936, described it as follows:

"This building is on the south side of the campus abutting on 20th Street just east of Monroe Avenue. In this location it rounds out the arrangement of buildings on the campus and is the complement of the girl's dormitory built in 1930.

"It is 50 feet wide and 88 feet long with a projecting central portion facing the campus. It has a basement and two stories.

"The walls are of brick with ornamental tile trim. The former was made in Ogden by the Leek Brick and Tile Company. It has a flat roof supported by shallow frame trusses and the roof insulation is provided by 'metallation,' two very thin sheets of bright aluminum foil interlaid with Kraft water proof paper. The insulation is accomplished by reflection of the heat instead of allowing it to pass through the structure thus conserving interior heat in winter and excluding exterior heat in summer. It is quite efficient. The walls and floors (reinforced concrete) are fire-proof and the latter are of beam and thin slab design. The beams are spaced 16 inches on centers and the intervening spaces are filled with hollow tile. This makes a simple and comparatively inexpensive forming for the pouring of the concrete and prevents the passage of noise from one story to another, which is very desirable, as the shops and play rooms are in the basement with living rooms above.

"The basement contains large play and work rooms, store and service rooms and separate locker, shower and toilet rooms for each of the two groups of boys, the deaf and the blind.

"The first and second stories are identical in plan and provide sleeping and study accommodations for fifty boys each, one hundred in all."

The architect of the building was Eber F. Piers of Ogden, and the contractor was James J. Burke and Company of Salt Lake City. Eber F. Piers was born in Denver in 1889. He studied architecture briefly at the University of Colorado and in 1908 moved to Ogden, Utah, and began working as an architectural draftsman for the firm of Smith and Hodgson. Two years later he opened his own office. He practiced alone until 1952 when he went into partnership with his son, John F. Piers. He died in 1959. During his career he designed more than 300 buildings, most of them in the Ogden area. They include the Edmund O. Wattis residence (1914), the Ruth Wattis Gwilliam residence (1917), the Ezekial Dumke residence (1917), the Virginia Houtz Green residence (1914), the Royal Eccles residence (1920), the Marriner Adams Browning Residence (1914), the South Ogden High School, Ogden's Central Junior High School, the First National Bank Building in Ogden, and a number of WPA buildings during the 1930s, including the Boys' Dormitory at the Utah School for the Deaf and Blind, the Industrial and Trades Building at the Utah State Industrial School, the Utah State Tuberculosis Sanitarium, the North Ogden Elementary School, and the El Monte (Ogden Municipal) Golf Course Clubhouse.