

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

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

SITE NAME: University of Idaho Gymnasium and Armory ✓ SITE NUMBER: 24

LOCATION: University of Idaho Campus, Moscow, Latah County ~~(057), Idaho~~

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS:

State of Idaho  
Room 227  
Len B. Jordan Office Building  
Boise, ID 83702

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Moscow West, 7.5 minute ACREAGE: two and one-half acres

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nomination includes the University of Idaho Gymnasium and Armory and the property on which it stands, the SE 1/4, SE 1/4, NW 1/4, NE 1/4, Section 18, T 39N, R5W, Boise Meridian. Legal description on file at the Latah County Courthouse, Moscow, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11 499 15 517454 per OTHER 9/1/80

DATE OR PERIOD: 1903

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: State

CONDITION: good altered original site

DESCRIPTION:

The original gymnasium and armory on the University of Idaho campus in Moscow was built to a rectangular 64-by-129-foot plan, two full stories of brick fabric over a tall stone basement story which stands fully above grade on the right or north side of a sloping site. The complex roof has a long front-to-back ridgebeam which stops short of the end walls; the end pavillions, which project slightly on either side, are covered with hipped sections, laterally ridged.

The main entrance is in the east end wall. It is surmounted, as are the secondary entrances designed to be centered on the other walls (outset on the sides), by a shouldered, flatheaded parapet extending upward from a break in the modillioned eaves. All of the entrance bays contained essentially the same decorative elements on the upper levels. The parapet has stone coping, and there is a long pike-shaped niche above a wide horizontal sill just above the level of the eaves. Immediately below the sill is a Palladiansque window group with its round-headed central light finished with an arch of light-colored brick and an elongated keystone and its flanking sashes with heavy stone lintels. On the front elevation there is a

slightly outset porch, with a broadly notched stone-coped parapet over a brick- and stone-trimmed, round-arched entrance at first-story level. The broad flight of steps that runs up from ground level is parapeted with stone. Side entrances lead directly into the basement level. Upper flanking windows are rectilinear; first-story ones are round- and segmentally-arched with light-colored brick heads; the squat basement windows are segmentally arched.

The original plan called for a basement level containing lockers, an arsenal, a drill room, and storage with a two-story gymnasium-auditorium taking up the better part of the main floors. The building has been converted to classroom and studio use by the architecture department and connected at the rear to modern classroom buildings in now way related to it stylistically. The side and front elevations are in fine condition.

#### SIGNIFICANCE:

The armory and gymnasium at Moscow is architecturally significant as the first of two early buildings designed by the firm for the young University of Idaho and as a handsome example of academic eclectic architecture. The second Tourtellotte and Hummel design, the 1907 administration building (National Register, February 14, 1978), is one of the firm's major monuments. The armory and gymnasium is also an example of the compromises made by an eclectic architect to the sometimes more conservative tastes of institutional clients. Further, it provides another example, on a larger scale than the Mackay Episcopal Church (site 18) of the recycling of plans.

The two-story brick and stone building, in a tactful and handsome Romanesque-eclectic style, owes its attractiveness to the insistence of the university regents that "exterior design be modified to meet the taste of the regents . . . to harmonize with the present buildings and also to indicate the character of the building."<sup>1</sup> The medievalizing hulk of a structure first visualized and proposed by Tourtellotte and Company had deeply crenellated parapets and a domed, turretted, crenellated tower. It would have made an unfortunate, if picturesque, mark on the campus. (Tourtellotte was similarly chastened when his first submission for Boise High School [site 49], a fortress-like design, was termed "a horrible thing" in the local press;<sup>2</sup> and the University of Idaho administration building, too, as rendered somewhat less spectacular than the architect intended, and much better to modern eyes, when the regents shaved several stories of architectural icing from its tower.) The armory and gymnasium as revised was built with the aid of a \$25,000 appropriation from the 1903-1904 legislature. It was completed in 1904 and served as a gymnasium and armory until the construction of the Memorial Gymnasium in 1928.

In 1909 Tourtellotte and Company got extra mileage from this design by revising it slightly for the Albion State Normal School in southeast Idaho (Albion State Normal School Historic District, National Register November 28, 1980). The Albion plan differs from its Moscow prototype only in having all entrances at basement level (supplementary photograph 2).

1. (Boise) Idaho Statesman, August 13, 1903, p. 23 c. 1.
2. (Boise) Idaho Statesman, September 15, 1908.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Gibbs, Rafe. Beacon for Mountain and Plain: The Story of the University of Idaho. Moscow: Regents of the University of Idaho, 1962.

(Boise) Idaho Statesman, August 13, 1903, p.32, c. 1-3 (includes rendering of original concept).