



NPS Form 10-9000  
(Rev. 8-86)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: Bickel School

other name/site number: Bickel Elementary School / 001703

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2. Location

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street & number: 607 Second Avenue East

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Twin Falls

vicinity: N/A

state: ID county: Twin Falls code: 083 zip code: 83301

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Public-local

Category of Property: Building(s)

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Thomas J. Allen Signature of certifying official 7-2-90 Date

Idaho State Historic Preservation Office State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register Autumneth Allen 8/17/90  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
for Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: EDUCATION: School Sub: \_\_\_\_\_

Current : EDUCATION: School Sub: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Colonial Revival

Other Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Materials: foundation concrete roof asphalt  
walls brick other terra cotta

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: locally.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A & C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A

Areas of Significance: Education  
Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1937-38

Significant Dates : 1937-38

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: McQuaker, Andrew  
Chytraus, Enoch

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

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 9. Major Bibliographical References
 

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See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State historic preservation office

Other state agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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 10. Geographical Data
 

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Acreage of Property: 2.5 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>11</u>	<u>708430</u>	<u>4713990</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: \_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

All of block 77, Twin Falls townsite.

Boundary Justification:  See continuation sheet.

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 11. Form Prepared By
 

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Name/Title: Elizabeth Egleston, State Architectural Historian

Organization: Idaho State Historical Society Date: May 10, 1990

Street & Number: 210 Main Street Telephone: (208) 334-3861

City or Town: Boise State: ID Zip: 83702

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Located in a residential area of Twin Falls, the Bickel School is oriented to the northwest. Its unusual plan is that of a "V," with the primary facade cutting across the corner property at a forty-five degree angle, and two wings which contain the classrooms that are parallel to the streets. The diagonal portion contains the offices and what was once the library; the auditorium is placed behind these rooms on the other side of the hall and faces the playground. The school is sheathed in red brick in a Flemish bond pattern, and has a flat roof and a concrete foundation. With the exception of the one-story auditorium, and present library, the school has two stories. Originally, the school's windows had multiple sets of lights, but these have been replaced. This is the only feature that mars the building's integrity.

The use of several distinct details, some in an abstracted form, give this building a Colonial Revival appearance. The main entrance is located on the primary facade, and is ornamented with a terra cotta surround with a simple entablature and quoins. Two columns and two pilasters with Tuscan capitals support a semi-circular balcony, which is ornamented with a wrought iron rail on the balcony. The frieze of the balcony states "Bickel Public School." Above the entrance, on the second floor, is an indication of a Palladian window, also surrounded with terra cotta. The entrance and the window above are enclosed in a slightly projecting block that is demarcated by the outline of a pediment, that does not extend above the roofline. A beltcourse of soldier and header bricks extends along this facade and those of the classroom wings. Two oculus windows with four voussoirs can be seen on the second story of the primary facade. Flanking the entrance are two sets of double-banked windows on each floor, as well as a single window on the first floor. The double-banked windows are separated with spandrels. All of the windows in the building have terra cotta sills with lintels of soldier bricks.

The street facades of the classrooms wings include three sets of five single-banked windows on each floor. Entrances are located at each end of the wings, and include similar stylistic details as the main entrance. The double doors and transom, both of which have the original fenestration, are embellished with a terra cotta surround, two Tuscan columns and two pilasters that support a simple entablature, and a balcony ornamented with wrought iron. On the second floor is a single window; a decorative arch with a keystone and two voussoirs are located above this. The south and east elevations of these wings have fire escapes and single windows on each floor.

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The rear, or southeast elevation, is actually the inside of the "V." The classrooms that face this direction are illuminated by sets of five single-banked windows on each floor. The auditorium is marked by five arched windows, each with a terra cotta keystone and two voussoirs. On either side of the auditorium, in the classroom wings, are entrances and stairwells, each illuminated with three sets of windows. At the end of the east classroom wing is a one-story projection; this now houses the library, but originally it was the gymnasium. The plan of the building remains almost intact. The library used to be located above the vestibule, but it has been divided into four small classrooms, and as stated above, the gym is now used for the library. Interior features, such as the linoleum, the six lights in all the doors, and the small bumps along the banister (used to prevent students from sliding) still exist.

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The Bickel Elementary School is historically significant for its association with the development of a small city in south-central Idaho, as well as public education in Twin Falls county. At the time of its construction from 1937 to 1938, the school was part of the most expensive building campaign that had occurred in the community, and was part of the town's efforts not only to improve educational facilities but also to create jobs and generate income. Its namesake was Paul S. Bickel, the first mayor of Twin Falls and the Chief Engineer for the Twin Falls Land and Water Company. Architecturally it represents the use of the Colonial Revival style which was widely used for schools from 1920-1940.

The school is located in Twin Falls, a town that was erected almost overnight as settlers arrived in the region to reclaim newly irrigated land. Such reclamation was possible because of the construction of the Milner Dam and its related canal system, built under the auspices of the Carey Act of 1894. This legislation provided federal land to settlers in arid areas, after private investors supplied the capital to build the necessary dams and canals. The investors would recoup their money by selling water rights to the settlers, and once the farmers had successfully reclaimed their land, they could apply for a deed. Settlers lost no time in establishing the community institutions and amenities they had known elsewhere. In 1904 the Twin Falls News, itself a recent creation, reported that residents had raised \$600 in one hour to build a school and hire a teacher. One of the town's first frame structures was built for this purpose and housed one teacher and seventy-two pupils. This simple school was the first in a six-year period in which a new school was built every two years.

After this initial surge in school construction, however, no new schools were built until 1937; reasons for this can only be surmised. Most likely, capacity was sufficient through 1918, and when commodity prices plummeted after World War I, Twin Falls, whose economy was based on agriculture, could not afford to construct new schools during the twenties. In the thirties, however, the Twin Falls area was caught in an unusual situation: while people suffered the constraints of the Depression, the disastrous drought that affected the Midwest did not affect irrigated land. At the onset of the Depression, county officials thought that people would leave the area, but no exodus occurred, and the population grew as agricultural workers arrived from the Dust Bowl. Thus, the school district had to house more students, but on little money.

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Newspaper articles indicate that by 1937, the schools were in bad shape. The open central stairwell in the original Bickel School, built in 1906 was mentioned as a dangerous fire trap; the use of portable classrooms was similarly lamented. Sixth-graders were moved from the crowded elementary schools to the junior high. In response to this, the city held elections for a bond issue for \$350,000, which passed on May 25, 1937. This money was to be divided five ways: \$50,990 for improvements at the high school, \$136,460 to expand the Washington and Lincoln elementary schools, \$139,410 to rebuild the Bickel School and \$23,130 to modernize the lighting systems. The building campaign was enthusiastically supported, as it represented additional income for many residents. The architect for all four schools was Andrew McQuaker. The construction contract for the new Bickel School was awarded to Enoch Chytraus and Sons of Salt Lake City.

Surprisingly, this building campaign was not financed by the Public Works Administration (PWA), and the relief workers of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) were only involved in the demolition of the 1906 school. Shortly after the bond issue was passed, Chamber of Commerce members and school district officials investigated the possibility of increasing the funding of the project to \$600,000 through PWA monies, but unfortunately, they were too late for past grants and were ineligible for the influx of money poured into the PWA under 1937 legislation.

At any rate, construction on the new Bickel School commenced in November 1937 and was the first of the four school projects to get underway. The new school was to be on the same lot as the original Bickel School, and was to be built around the old building so that the school year would not be interrupted. The architects determined that the easiest way to accomplish this would be to design a central block that was diagonal to the street intersection, and the two wings containing classrooms would flank the original building. An unusual plan resulted, that of a wide "V," and the old building would not have to be razed until the new school was ready for occupancy.

Fire hastened the demolition of the original school on June 10, 1938, damaging the third floor and the roof. The Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees) was granted approval to salvage materials from the old school so that they could build a gymnasium for the community. They were awarded a \$8,268 contract through the WPA for salvage and demolition, and augmented their funds by sponsoring a contest to guess the number of bricks that were used in the original school. Razing the old school



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began in July, 1938, and the new school was open to public view on September 2, 1938, as was the newly-constructed Lincoln School. Officials declined to conduct an official opening, feeling that long speeches would only be tedious.

Architecturally, the school is significant as an example of the Colonial Revival style that was commonly used during the 1920's and 1930's. While this style was used extensively in residential architecture and for civic structures, it was most frequently employed in public school buildings. Architects, educators and local officials preferred the Colonial Revival because it was a recognizable expression of American democratic ideals and it could be adapted to a variety of plans and forms. It was particularly popular during the 1930's, as it represented stability and tradition when the country was forced to re-examine its social and economic tenets. Lisa B. Reitzes sums up the popularity and usefulness of the style when she writes:

it [the Colonial Revival] could accommodate many variations from the most archaeological to the most allusive, from the insistently traditional to the streamlined and modernized, without losing its symbolic essence. Up-to-date, low-slung school buildings with the latest in courtyard plans needed only to sport red brick walls, gables, and perhaps a cupola to retain an image which clearly continued to be important and meaningful to many communities... (footnote: Lisa B. Reitzes, "The Colonial Revival and Public School Buildings, 1920-1940, Paper presented at the 43rd meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians, Boston, Mass., 30 March 1990).

The Bickel School exemplifies the use of the style for this building type. The architects managed to incorporate the necessary elements for the school in a unique but functional plan. It has only a few details, such as the use of Tuscan orders, wrought iron, quoins, and references to a Palladian window and a pediment that keep the school from being a simple block, but these details and the use of red brick manage to convey the building's purpose and give it an authoritative appearance. As in thousands of communities across the country, it typifies the town's desire to have its school impart democratic ideals and reflect educational and civic progress.

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Burkhart, Mrs. John. "Our Heritage." Magic Valley Story #6, document in the Idaho Room of the Twin Falls Public Library, Twin Falls, Idaho.

Reitzes, Lisa B. "The Colonial Revival and Public School Buildings, 1920-1940." Paper presented at the 43rd meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians, Boston, Mass., 30 March 1990.

Rosholt, John A. "Milner Dam and Main Canal of the Twin Falls Canal Company." Historic American Engineering Record. National Park Service, Western Region, San Francisco, CA., 1989.

Wright, Patricia. Twin Falls Country. Boise, Idaho: Idaho State Historical Society, 1979.

"Approval of School Bonds Would Boost Building." Idaho Evening Times, 4 May 1937, p. 13.

"Bickel Building to Be Replaced." Idaho Evening Times, 26 May 1937, p. 2.

"Bickel Project Wins Approval." Twin Falls News, 25 May 1938, p. 2.

"Bickel School Damages Fixed." Twin Falls News, 9 June 1938, p.2.

"Bickel School Razing Starts." Twin Falls News, 2 July 1938, p. 10.

"Chance for PWA Funds is Killed." Idaho Evening Times, 20 July 1937, p. 2.

"Fire Trap at Old School." Idaho Evening Times, 20, May 1937, p. 1.

"First Step Taken to Get Community Gym." Idaho Evening News, 12 April 1938, p. 6.

"New School Buildings Open to Public View." Twin Falls News, 2 September 1938, p. 7.

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"New Schools Present Interesting Contrasts." Twin Falls News, 2  
September 1938, p. 13.

"PWA Funds May Help Work Here." Idaho Evening Times, 3 July  
1937, p. 1.

"PWA Shuts Off New Cash Plea." Idaho Evening Times, 15 July  
1937, p. 4.

"School PWA Funds Pondered by Board." Idaho Evening Times, 13  
July 1937, p. 1.

"\$350,000 Outlay Seen as Major Aid to Business." Idaho Evening  
Times, 4 May 1937, p. 3.

"Trustees Award \$139,678 Bickel School Contract." Idaho Evening  
Times, 5 November 1937, p. 1.

"Twin Falls First Schoolhouse Burns." Twin Falls News, 10 July  
1938, p. 1.

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BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary is based on the legally-recorded boundary lines of the property, and contains the area which has historically been associated with the Bickel School.