

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

DEC 27 1988

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Peterson-Biddick Seed and Feed Company
other names/site number Peterson-Biddick Company

2. Location

street & number 102 S.E. Aldrich Ave. not for publication N/A
city, town Wadena vicinity N/A
state Minnesota code MN county Wadena code 159 zip code 56482

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>6</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>6</u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>12</u>	<u> </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

Nina M. Archabal 12/19/88
Signature of certifying official Nina M. Archabal Date
Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

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.
 See continuation sheet. Bill Boland 1/30/89

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/processing

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/processing

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

METAL

roof METAL/Aluminum

other Steel

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Peterson-Biddick Seed and Feed Company consists of four brick buildings and an assortment of grain storage structures erected between 1916-1936 located at the corner of Aldrich Ave. and 1st St. S.E. immediately south of the Northern Pacific (presently Burlington Northern) Railroad tracks in the west-central Minnesota county seat of Wadena. These buildings essentially represent three construction phases which roughly correspond to shifting agricultural trends during the early 1900s.

The following description considers each building individually and is keyed to the map on Continuation Sheet for Section 10.

1) Original Building, contributing. Constructed in 1916, the original Peterson-Biddick Co. building was a 45' x 80' rectangular-shaped, flat-roofed, two-story brick building with a corbeled cornice. Situated at the northeast corner of Aldrich Ave. and 1st St. S.E., it was five bays wide and nine bays long and had 2/2 double hung sash windows with segmental brick arches and sills. A loading dock, the main entrance, and a wide delivery door were located on the south wall. The former entrance is now a small 1/1 double hung window and the loading door serves as the main entrance (aluminum and glass). A sign painted on the brick between the first and second floors wrapped around the west and south elevations pronouncing the "PETERSON-BIDDICK COMPANY WHOLESALE PRODUCE AND SEEDS, POTATOES, EGGS, VEAL, POULTRY AND HAY." It is now partially obscured by a later addition. In its original configuration the building's first floor handled incoming and outgoing produce, the second floor was used exclusively for poultry "where all fowls [were] couped, fattened and prepared for shipment"; the full basement served as storage space. The north wall originally had five 2/2 double hung sash windows on the second floor with four of the same sash on the first story; those on the lower level have been bricked in.

A one-story brick addition was adjoined to the west wall of the original 1916 building in 1940. Used as office space, its cornice closely matches the original two-story building, although the six double hung windows have aluminum frames and infill panels at the top. It is considered a non-contributing addition.

2) 1927 Addition, contributing. In response to increased business, the company expanded the original building to the east in ca.1927 with a two-story, ten bay wide addition. It matches the brick and cornice work but differs in fenestration with larger 9/9 double hung sash windows on the

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second story facade and nine-light awning windows on the first floor. The second floor east wall of the ca.1927 addition has nine double hung sash windows on the second floor. This building originally functioned as a storage facility and continues to fulfill this purpose today.

- 3) Warehouse, contributing. In ca.1927 a one-story, brick, 75' x 137' flour, feed, and grain warehouse was constructed across Aldrich Ave. from the main building. Its north-facing, three bay facade has a stepped gable, false front which obscures a gently pitched gable roof. Several garage doors, windows, and entrances pierce the facade which is accented with buff-colored decorative trim, while the west wall has seven eight-light fixed windows. The cornice is slightly corbeled.
- 4) Warehouse addition, contributing. In ca.1935 the company enlarged the warehouse with a large, square, one-story addition attached to the east wall. Built of red tile brick, this addition has two garage doors, and multiple entries and windows on the north facade, with numerous openings on the east and south elevations. The entire warehouse complex still serves this function today.
- 5) Grain Storage, contributing. Between 1933-1936 several multi-story grain elevators and related structures were erected along the south side of the railroad spur line. One of the structures is a five-story, square-shaped, wood frame elevator which has two gable roofed additions to the south, and is flanked by two narrow, four-story wings. This complex is covered with metal.
- 6) Grain Dryer, 1933-1936, contributing. This is one of four tall, round metal-clad structures placed in a row parallel with the railroad tracks.
- 7) Grain Dryer, 1933-1936, contributing. This is identical to No. 6 above.
- 8) Grain Dryer, 1933-1936, contributing. This is identical to No. 6 above.
- 9) Grain Dryer, 1933-1936, contributing. This is identical to No. 6 above.
- 10) Loader/Scale, 1933-1936, contributing. This consists of a tall, gable roofed structure covered with metal and brick at part of the base. It is open at the bottom to allow trucks to drive underneath for loading and unloading grain. A series of tubular shafts link the loader to the driers and storage buildings.

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- 11) Feed Storage, 1917-1923, contributing. This wood frame, one-story building with a clerestory and beveled lap siding was constructed adjacent to the five-story elevator by another company for use as a wholesale produce warehouse. The Peterson-Biddick Co. began using it to store feed and assumed ownership in ca.1932 (within the period of significance), thus it is considered a contributing building.

- 12) Garage, contributing. By 1936 the company had expanded again, adding a two-story, rectangular-shaped, brick veneer building onto the southwest corner of the warehouse. It was used originally as a hatchery upstairs with a truck garage on the ground floor. In its original appearance, the west-facing, four bay facade featured a large garage door on the left side, a five panel central door, four 12-light windows on the upper floor, and two recessed panels above the windows. The austere, flat-roofed building did not have a cornice. Its north wall had six eight-light fixed windows on each floor, while the south elevation was unbroken except for two tiny fixed windows. Today the building's facade has a small span of new windows on the right side of the ground floor, its north-facing first floor windows have been bricked in, and the south wall has a small garage door. A diminutive gable-roofed structure clad with galvanized metal was built just southeast of the garage in ca.1980; it is considered a non-contributing addition.

Despite a few changes to the buildings, the entire Peterson-Biddick site retains good historic integrity and easily conveys its association with agricultural production during the early twentieth century. Until 1978 it was operated by descendants of the company's founder, John Peterson. The Peterson-Biddick Co. continues to be an active and prosperous business serving a large number of Wadena area residents.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1916-1936

Significant Dates

1916

ca.1927

1933

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Nelson, N.O., builder

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Considered within the historic context Agricultural Development and Railroad Construction, the Peterson-Biddick Seed and Feed Company is significant in American history as a rare example of a small-scale farm product wholesaler which has continually grown and changed in response to various trends in the agricultural industry. From its inception in 1910, the Peterson-Biddick Co. has evolved from a small, family-run produce, vegetable and meat wholesaler to become one of the few remaining large independent hybrid seed and feed companies in the state. Each of the Peterson-Biddick Co. buildings reflects the continual growth and development of the company over a thirty year span.

John F. Peterson, the founder of Peterson-Biddick Co., was born on a farm near Willmar, MN. After attending business college in Crookston, he worked at various grocery stores for three years before establishing his own grocery business in the small, northeastern Iron Range community of Marble. Peterson hired a man named Biddick to assist his firm before he sold the store in 1910 and moved to Wadena to establish the Peterson-Biddick Co. Biddick remained in Marble to sell the various products purchased in Wadena. By the summer of 1911 Peterson-Biddick Co. was advertising in the local newspaper as "General Produce Dealers" and operating out of a wood frame building which is no longer extant.

In 1916 Peterson contracted with local builder N.O. Nelson to construct a two-story brick building on Aldrich Ave. fronting on the Northern Pacific line, prompting the Wadena Pioneer Journal to suggest that "the growth of this concern has been nothing short of remarkable..." The Peterson-Biddick building was one of many construction projects in Wadena at the time; a new Northern Pacific passenger depot, a county sanitarium, and several public and commercial buildings erected in 1916 reflected a dramatic period of growth and development in the city. At the same time Peterson-Biddick plants were established in Crookston and Thief River Falls, both county seat cities in northwestern Minnesota. In 1922 the company also built a branch in Jamestown, North Dakota. A large part of Peterson-Biddick's business in the first two decades of the century was purchasing and shipping potatoes, since Wadena and parts of central and northwestern Minnesota were leading growers of the vege-

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table. The company operated potato buying stations from Wadena extending north to the Canadian border, and in 1918 shipped 2,000 railroad cars of potatoes for use in U.S. Army camps.

As the regional market for potatoes declined, Peterson-Biddick shifted the focus of their business in favor of wholesale seeds, eggs and poultry. An indication of their commitment in this area came in ca.1927 when the firm more than doubled the size of their existing building, and constructed a separate warehouse directly across Aldrich Ave. for storing seed. Small retail stores associated with the company were established throughout the region, and eventually ten Peterson-Biddick shops were buying and selling poultry, eggs, feed, and seed from Eagle Bend to Warroad. During this period the Seed Department of the business had developed experimental seed corn plots north of Wadena and was working closely with a University of Minnesota corn breeding specialist to produce hybrid seed corn. In 1933 a new multi-storied seed storage facility was erected adjacent to the railroad tracks, and three years later the company added a long, two-story brick building on 1st St. which served as a garage and hatchery upstairs.

By the mid-1930s Wadena and other west-central Minnesota communities had become very active in the poultry and hatchery business. Reflective of the importance of the chicken industry to the area, the Wadena Pioneer Journal started a weekly column in 1938 offering advice on raising, maintaining, and improving poultry flocks. The Peterson-Biddick Co. was one of the pioneers in the concept of purchasing eggs on a graded basis, and by the 1940s was shipping hundreds of railroad cars of eggs to Chicago. As the hatchery and chicken processing business became more mechanized and specialized, however, Peterson-Biddick phased out this facet of their business to concentrate on the production of feed and hybrid seed corn which is the mainstay of the firm today. In 1943 a wholesale seed branch business was opened in Carroll, Iowa to accomodate the growing number of customers there.

In order to streamline its business, Peterson-Biddick has within the last five years sold all of its branch operations and today maintains only its Iowa and Wadena plants. Over its 75-year history the company has grown from a small, general wholesaler of agricultural products operating out of a single building, to a hybrid seed corn specialist with an array of structures throughout northwestern Minnesota. Today, all of the Peterson-Biddick buildings in Wadena are actively used and in good condtion. While some alterations have been made, collectively the property offers an important contribution to the state's agricultural history.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Blegen, Theodore C. Minnesota: A History of the State. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975.

Murray, Stanley N. The Valley Comes of Age: A History of Agriculture in the Valley of the Red River of the North, 1812-1920. Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1967.

Wadena Pioneer Journal. 15 July 1911; 14 October 1915; 23 March 1916; 8 August 1935; 31 December 1936; 30 December 1937; 1 July 1981.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property Approximately 2 acres

UTM References

A

1	5	3	3	6	0	4	0	5	1	4	5	0	2	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B

Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Peterson-Biddick Seed and Feed Co. is shown as the broken black line on the accompanying map entitled, "Peterson-Biddick Seed and Feed Co., Wadena, Wadena Co., MN Boundary Map, 1987", and drawn at a scale of 50 feet to the inch.

See continuation sheet 10:1

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the original Peterson-Biddick building and subsequent additions including the warehouse and garage that have historically been part of the Peterson-Biddick Co. and that maintain historic integrity. That parcel of land north of the garage has been included because it originally contained a Peterson-Biddick building (no longer extant) and presently functions as a parking area for the company's agricultural equipment.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

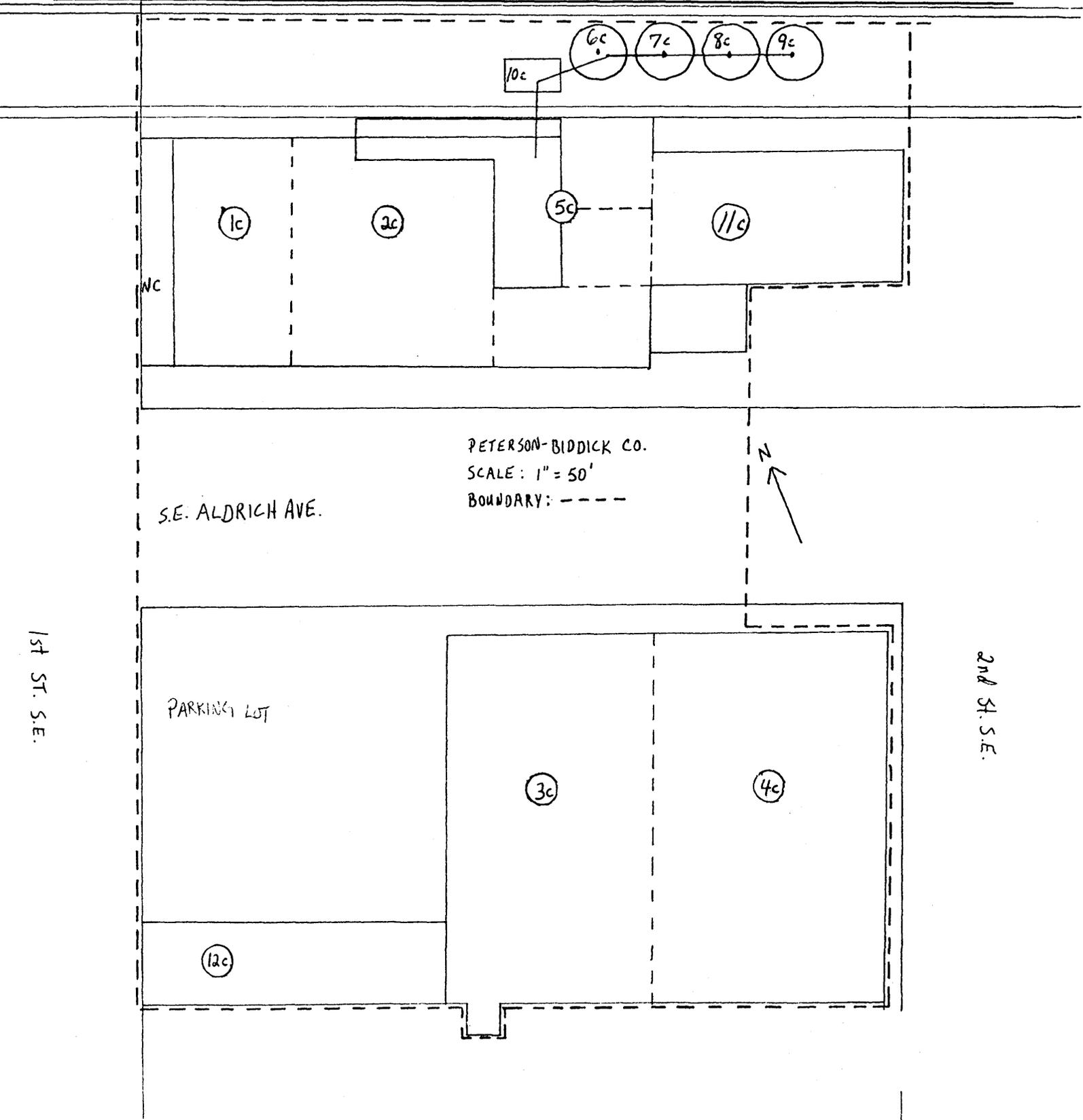
name/title Michael Koop
organization N/A date July 1987
street & number 615 Jackson St. NE telephone 612-623-8356
city or town Minneapolis state MN zip code 55413

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 88003227

Date Listed: 1/30/89

Peterson-Biddick Seed and Feed Company
Property Name

Wadena
County

MN
State

Multiple Name _____

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth Boland
Signature of the Keeper

1/30/89
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Item #3. Classification: The correct count is 4 contributing buildings and 6 non-contributing structures.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 88003227

Date Listed: 1/30/89

Peterson-Biddick Seed and Feed Company
Property Name

Wadena
County

MN
State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth Boland
Signature of the Keeper

12/19/89
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

Item #3. Classification: The correct count is 4 contributing buildings and 6 contributing structures.

The correct category is district.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)