

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

NOMINATION: (TOURTELLOTTE AND HUMMEL ARCHITECTURE IN IDAHO TR)

SITE NAME: Wolters Double Houses SITE NUMBER: 51

LOCATION: 712-16, 720-22 ⁸⁴⁷North Eighth Street, Boise, Ada County (001), Idaho

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS:

House A: Otto F. Schmidt and
Helen B. Anchustegui
722 North Eighth
Boise, ID 83702

House B: Margaret Leonhard
and Maxine Rasor
c/o Duane Stueckle
200 Parkway
Boise, ID 83702

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Boise South, 7.5 minute ACREAGE: less than one

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nomination includes the Wolters Double Houses and the property on which they stand, lot 7, west 1/2 lot 8, block 92, Boise City Original Townsite. Legal description on file at the Ada County Courthouse, Boise, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11/5,64,780/48,29,840

DATE OR PERIOD: 1908, 1909

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

CONDITION: fair altered original site

DESCRIPTION:

The Wolters Double Houses are a pair of two-story bungalow stone and stucco "half-timber" apartment buildings on the east side of Eighth Street at the southwest intersection with Hays Street. They were built from identical plans, and have survived in close to identical condition. Both have two full stories, the first veneered with random-course rock-faced stone and the second with stucco and half-timber strips. They have lateral ridgebeams with large brackets supporting the raked gable eaves and notched, exposed rafters under the lateral eaves. Low, wide gabled dormers emerge center front at attic level, with shingle sides, notched rafters, and figure four brackets. The centered front porches are outset on squared posts. A two-story beveled window bay, with small individual roofs and exposed rafters, is outset on each sidewall. The sash windows on the first story have slightly outset stone sills and lintels which are flush with the prevailing rough-cut surface. On the upper story, the windows are neatly framed with the half-timber strips.

The plans are U-shaped halved front to back, with single-family occupancy planned for each half. On the plan, the rear extension on each side contained the kitchen and pantry areas below and bedroom above, finished on the exterior in the same

materials as the main block. Behind that were a kitchen porch and sleeping porch which were, respectively, frame below and stucco and half-timber above. Both buildings have now been subdivided into a larger number of apartment units.

House A, 720-22 North Eighth:

The first Wolters Double House built to this plan has experienced more alteration than the second, but the alteration is minimal and a major feature of it is in fact questionable. The plans for the Wolters Double Houses, and a rendering published in the newspaper shortly after the first one was completed late in 1908, show an exterior balcony with a square-member balustrade above the front porch. The existing house has in its place an enclosed sun or sleeping porch. However, since the enclosure has the same cementine and half-timber finish as the rest of the upper story, it represents either an especially respectful and probably early alteration or, possibly, an alteration made to the plans during construction.

The rear porches of this house have been remodeled, and the upper-story stucco has been painted. The exterior is otherwise unaltered and matches House B. The only distinction is that House A has paneled wooden porch walls.

House B, 712-16 North Eighth Street:

The exterior of the 1909 Wolters Double House is very close to its original condition. It retains its unpainted cementine upper surface and the balcony space, though not the balcony rail, above the front porch. Porch walls here are stone. The original rear porches have survived intact, with the stuccoed upper stories cantilevered slightly over the frame lower levels.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Wolters Double Houses are architecturally significant as the first externally clear examples of bungalowoid design to appear in the Thematic Group and as an example of how the style was absorbed into the firm's work. They are also a good example of unselfconscious recycling of plans, this time by a client.

The Wolters Double Houses, though clearly bungalowoid in profile and treatment, are just as clearly not bungalows. The two-story structures are much too large and elaborate, and have too many recollections of other styles--Queen Anne textural mix, classically derived outset porches--for them to be reasonably considered bungalows. Therein lies an interesting point about this firm's adaptation of the bungalow style. Just as the first evidences of it were masked within more conservative shells, as in the Rossi and Schmelzel cottages (sites 43 and 44) or any of the western shingle houses, so those houses designed about this time that looked really bungalowoid on the exterior--the Wolters houses, the Varian and Nesbit houses in Weiser (sites 63 and 62)--were distinguished in various ways, particularly in scale, from ordinary bungalows (the kinds of houses for which people could and did order plans from magazines, or pick them up from the local lumber yard). When Tourtellotte and Company bungalows of ordinary residential scale do appear, they generally display some complexity of plan--as do the Reiger bungalow A (site 68)

or the Hunt bungalow in Meridian (site 82)--or at the very least unusual finesse of treatment, as does the Stephan bungalow (site 88), which suggest that they are more than standard plans. Not until the 1920s and the end of the style in the firm's work do we find really modest bungalows: for example, the ineligible farmhouse at the Nampa State School and the Father Lobell bungalow in Mountain Home (site 105).

The Wolterses built the first of these double houses, house A on the corner, as rental housing to manage from their residence at the other end of the block. So pleased were they with the results, apparently, that they decided to use the plan again in the eighth-block between the new structure and the alley, and to move into half of building B themselves. The Wolters houses, identical when built, join other examples in the North End of houses erected on speculation from a single plan in an early approximation of modern subdivision practice. Institutions reused plans as well: Bishop Funsten of the Episcopal Diocese built three frame churches apparently identical in plan from a Troutellotte and Company design in 1902 (see site 18) and the State Industrial School at St. Anthony used its plans for a girls' cottage at least twice in the early 1920s (site 104).

Albert Wolters was a mining engineer and a colleague of Charles Hummel in the German-American Turnverein Society. The double houses may have been a retirement project, as no occupation was listed for him in later years. The houses were reported to cost about \$8,500 each.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

(Boise) Idaho Statesman, June 10, 1908, p. 5, c. 3; August 5, 1908, p. 5, c. 5; January 3, 1909, sec. 3, p. 2, c. 3; February 24, 1909, sec. 5, p. 2; March 22, 1909, p. 5, c. 3; May 1, 1909, p. 5, c. 2.

Polk and Company. Boise City Directories. 1908, 1912-1913.

Boise, Idaho. Hummel Jones Miller Hunsucker P.A. File 408D. Collection and drawing loan book references to A. Wolters, 1909 and 1910. Tracings signed John E. Tourtellotte and Company.