

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

NOMINATION: (TOURTELLOTTE AND HUMMEL ARCHITECTURE ~~IN IDAHO~~ 7R)

✓ SITE NAME: Thompson Mortuary Chapel ✓ SITE NUMBER: 136
Gooding
✓ LOCATION: 737 Main Street, Gooding County (047), Idaho

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS:

Anna Barrus	and	Clifford L. Riley
c/o Gerald J. Cahill		745 California
P. O. Box 641		Gooding, ID 83330
Filer, ID 83328		

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Gooding, 7.5 minute ACREAGE: less than one

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nomination includes the Thompson Mortuary Chapel and the property on which it stands, lots 19-24, block 54, Gooding Townsite. Legal description on file at the Gooding County Courthouse, Gooding, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11/6,86,680/47,56,230

DATE OR PERIOD: 1939

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

CONDITION: excellent unaltered original site

DESCRIPTION:

The Thompson Mortuary Chapel is a one-story brick structure utilizing stucco, glass brick, and metal to achieve an art moderne style. The plan and profile are rather irregular but basically resolve into a rectangle with a thirty-five foot frontage on Main Street, a ninety-foot side elevation, and several projections. A garage and morgue section are outset at right rear and there is a family room, providing a private entrance and seating space off the chapel, outset on the left side of the building. The front of the building, which contains the main entrance, has a brick facade, lower in height than the main block, outset to the front and right side. It has rounded corners with large curved glass block windows in recessed bays. The entrance, centered on the facade between original multi-light steel casements, is glass-paneled and sidelighted. It is approached by a flight of concrete steps with curved and streamlined metal rails and is covered by round metal marquee with a deco crest. A series of inset string courses provide horizontal articulation of the window band level. Set back from the brick facade, and inset from it on the right side, is the taller main block of the building. The portion of the elevation which extends above the level of the brick and around the sides is plain stucco over frame.

The building appears precisely as designed except for the carpeting of the stoop and the very unobtrusive replacement of steel multi-light with aluminum windows on the right side. The marquee, which does not appear in the original drawing, is however clearly original.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Thompson Mortuary Chapel in Gooding has exceptional architectural significance as the only example in the Thematic Group of the streamlined, windswept variant of the art moderne style, which took its cues from steamship or other locomotive design and employed such distinctive devices as round corners and glass block windows.

This was not a common style even in the late work of the firm. With few exceptions, the only other drawings which reflect it and which appear to have been executed are for a series of elegant storefront remodelings--among them several for an old client, the Alexander's stores. None of these fronts has been found extant. They were in fact more attuned to the spirit of this style than is the Thompson mortuary, for they tended to use sleek and shiny materials such as metal, glass, and tile along with large fluid moderne graphics. The densely textural brick surface employed on the mortuary, and the fact that the distinctive round corners (here sharply recessed as though to increase their wind resistance) occur on a wraparound facade above which the main rectilinear block of the building is clearly visible, produces an oddly mixed effect which underscores the basically picturesque design inclinations.

The building was constructed for A. E. Thompson, owner of Thompson's Furniture Company in Gooding, apparently in late 1939. The combination of the furniture and undertaking businesses was a common one in Idaho. The late 1930s saw Tourtellotte and Hummel develop several contracts for funeral parlor work, a field they had not much worked in except in a local commission for Schreiber and Sidenfaden in 1909.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Boise, Idaho. Hummel Jones Miller Hunsucker P.A. File 134G. Collection book reference and correspondence 1939. Drawings signed Tourtellotte and Hummel.