

Utah State Historical Society

Property Type:

Historic Preservation Research Office

Site No. BV-04-172

Sign. Site #32

Structure/Site Information Form

IDENTIFICATION 1

Street Address: 35 No. 1st East UTM: 12/356575/4237350  
 Name of Structure: Beaver Relief Society Meetinghouse T. R. S.  
 Present Owner: Beaver City Less than one acre  
 Owner Address: Beaver, Utah 84713  
 Year Built (Tax Record): Effective Age: Tax #: B-118  
 Legal Description: Kind of Building:  
 Northeast Quarter of Plat A, Blk 29, Lot 1

STATUS/USE 2

Original Owner: Beaver Relief Society (Beaver MRA) Construction Date: 1896 Demolition Date:  
 Original Use: Beaver Relief Society Meetinghouse Present Use: Fire station  
 Building Condition: Integrity: Preliminary Evaluation: Final Register Status:  
 Excellent  Site  Unaltered  Significant  Not of the  National Landmark  District  
 Good  Ruins  Minor Alterations  Contributory  Historic Period  National Register  Multi-Resource  
 Deteriorated  Major Alterations  Not Contributory  State Register  Thematic  
 North addition

DOCUMENTATION 3

Photography: Date of Slides: Slide No.: Date of Photographs: Photo No.:  
 Views:  Front  Side  Rear  Other Views:  Front  Side  Rear  Other  
 Research Sources:  
 Abstract of Title  Sanborn Maps  Newspapers  U of U Library  
 Plat Records/Map  City Directories  Utah State Historical Society  BYU Library  
 Tax Card & Photo  Biographical Encyclopedias  Personal Interviews  USU Library  
 Building Permit  Obituary Index  LDS Church Archives  SLC Library  
 Sewer Permit  County & City Histories  LDS Genealogical Society  Other Fieldwork

Bibliographical References (books, articles, records, interviews, old photographs and maps, etc.):  
 1933 photo on tax records  
 Mr. Wayne Behunin, Stonemason, interviewed 6/12/79 in Beaver by Linda L. Bonar.  
 Mr. Conrad Grimshaw, firechief, interviewed in 1976 and 6/12/79 in Beaver by Linda L. Bonar.

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Building Materials: Tuff (pink rock)

Building Type/Style:

Description of physical appearance & significant architectural features:  
(Include additions, alterations, ancillary structures, and landscaping if applicable)

The building is a tall pink rock structure with a flat roof that was originally built by and for the Beaver Relief Society, a women's organization in the L.D.S. Church. On the ground floor there are large, well-carved stones and towards the top of the structure is a plaque which reads "Erected by B.R.S. 1896". The blocks of stone have an inch of finely tooled work around the edges, the centers being left with a rusticated appearance. The building was vacant for many years but in 1977 was retrofitted to serve as Beaver's new fire station. A concrete addition was built to the north of the original building which serves as the stations garage. It is currently being faced with ashlar pink stone to match the original facade by a local stonemason. The original structure houses a meeting room and firemen's quarters, the meeting room having been decorated and restored to c. 1900.

Statement of Historical Significance:

Construction Date:

The Beaver Relief Society Meetinghouse, built in 1896, is significant as one of only two buildings associated with the Beaver Relief Society, an important organization for women within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This group was organized in Beaver in the 1860s as a relief arm of the church, charged with visiting the sick, caring for the needy, and working as necessary for the general benefit of church members. The meetinghouse remains as one of the oldest religious buildings in Beaver and in the context of stone construction in the town, is the only Relief Society structure built of stone (the other is the East Ward Hall, Site #36, of brick). The stones in this building exhibit fine tooling around the edges with the centers remaining rusticated. The Beaver Relief Society Meetinghouse remains as the only symbol of the single relief society institution in the town of Beaver.

With the call of John Riggs Murdock to head the Mormon settlement of Beaver in the 1860s, came a permanence which was reflected in the use of stone as a stable building material. Institutions also mirrored this progression, with the Beaver Relief Society as a primary example. Under Murdock's leadership the society was organized in 1868. This action came as a result of the desire of the LDS Church general authorities to have female relief societies organized in all wards and branches of the church. Their primary function was to tend to the physical relief of church members. They were to visit the sick and needy, make quilts, clothing, etc. for those in need, and provide assistance where needed for the general welfare of the church. In Beaver, such a group provided yet another element of security and permanence to that fledgling community.

Built in 1896, the meetinghouse was used for general gathering purposes. Projects were undertaken there, as well as meetings. The building was

Beaver Relief Society Meetinghouse Continuation Sheet for Item #5

constructed of pink tuff stone, with individual stones exhibiting an inch of finely tooled work around edges, while centers were left with a rusticated appearance. Stone, as a material, represented Beaver's evolution into a permanent settlement, as did the establishment of institutions like the relief society.

As a result of the town's growth, the Beaver Ward was divided in 1905, with the creation of the East Ward and West Ward. This subdivision also led to the split of the Beaver Relief Society into two organizations. Thus, the new societies left this structure and each built their own, with the East Ward Relief Society Meeting hall, erected in 1909 (Significant Site #36), the only one of those two still in existence. The East Ward hall, however, was built of brick.

The Beaver Relief Society Meetinghouse served other purposes. It was used by the Board of Education in Beaver, functioned as a feed and grain firm, and served uses for Beaver City. In 1977 the structure received a north addition, compatible in materials, style, design, massing, etc. to the original, and was converted into the Beaver Fire Station. Such an adaptation has not destroyed the historic integrity of the original portion, but has, in fact, insured its survival.