

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

NOMINATION: Idaho Falls Downtown multiple resource area
(partial inventory: architecture)

SITE NAME: Montgomery Ward Building (historic name) SITE NUMBER: 4
Ahlstrom Building (common name)

LOCATION: 504 Shoup Avenue

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS:

Paul Ahlstrom
578 Safstom Place
Idaho Falls, ID 83401

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

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nomination includes the Montgomery Ward Building and the property on which it stands, lots 1, 2, and the south 40 feet of lot 3, block 17, Holmes Addition, Idaho Falls.

UTM(S): 12/416085/4815885

DATE OR PERIOD: 1928-1929 ARCHITECT OR BUILDER: unknown

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: architecture

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: local

CONDITION: good, altered, original site

The Montgomery Ward Building is a two-story steel and brick structure with its orange and burnt red brick veneer laid in common bond. A plain metal cornice tops an attic story that has vents with outset concrete surrounds. Attic story brickwork has courses of soldier and stretcher patterns. A concrete cornice demarks the attic. The south facade has eleven bays with Chicago windows set between outset brick pilasters with plain molded concrete capitals. The wood window trim is painted brown. The transom lights are gray and green glass set in a diamond pattern. Flat relieving arches above the windows have oversized keystones. A concrete cornice and paneled brick pattern are in the area above the mezzanine lights, which match the transoms in color and design. A canvas street-level canopy is striped in orange, brown, and white. Storefronts appear unaltered with the exception of modern metal-framed doors. Brown and green tile below windows appears to be original.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Montgomery Ward Building is architecturally significant as a late example of the local use of the Renaissance Revival style, which shows Art Deco influence. A frequent style blend in the 1920's and 1930's commercial buildings of southern Idaho, the combination is evident here in the Montgomery Ward Building's geometric colored glass, patterned brickwork, and storefront tilework, which are set into highly formal arrangements like keystone segmental openings.

The building was erected as the Montgomery Ward and Company Department Store in 1928-1929.