

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

NOMINATION: (TOURTELLOTTE AND HUMMEL ARCHITECTURE ~~IN IDAHO~~ → TR)

SITE NAME: Nampa American Legion Chateau SITE NUMBER: 122

LOCATION: 1508 <sup>2nd</sup> ~~Second Street South~~, Nampa, Canyon County (~~027~~), Idaho

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS:

American Legion Post  
1508 Second Street South  
Nampa, ID 83651

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

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nomination includes the Nampa American Legion Chateau and the property on which it stands, lots 7 and 8, block 25, Young's addition to Nampa. Legal description on file at the Canyon County Courthouse, Caldwell, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11/5,35,840/48,24,660

DATE OR PERIOD: 1931

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

CONDITION: good altered original site

DESCRIPTION:

The Nampa American Legion Chateau on the northeast corner of Second Street South and Fifteenth Avenue is a one-story, stuccoed building, L-shaped and dominated by a round corner entrance tower.

The L-shaped plan is made up of two rather narrow wings. The longer, seventy-six-by-thirty-one-foot wing is set laterally to Second Street. A sixty-five-by-twenty-four-foot wing comes forward at the right. The plan is notched at the right rear corner of the two wings and filled in the front intersection with the stocky two-story tower. The roof of the tower is conical. The wings have ridgebeams lateral to their long dimensions; the ends of the roofs are hipped up around end-wall dormers to miniature dovecoted gables. The end walls were designed to contain, and the one on the forward wing still does contain, large multi-light casements with iron balustrades. The roof is further embellished by louvered eyebrow vents in the forward slopes, one in each wing, and by a double-width concrete chimney with a pair of spiral chimney pots straddling the roofbeam near the tower on the short forward wing.

The building was designed with a lobby in the tower, a legion hall in the large wing, and a room for the legion auxiliary in the right wing. A dining room was called for at basement level under the legion hall, with a kitchen under the intersection and a furnace under the circular lobby. Widely spaced eight-over-eight-light sash windows with outset sills are dropped from the lateral eaves to light the upstairs rooms.

The entry tower is the decorative focus of this composition. The squat conical roof is topped by a short, spear-pointed finial (the plans called for a wrought-iron weather vane) and its eaves are supported on short, thick, curvilinear brackets. Two tall, narrow windows with diamond-shaped panes and outset sills are widely spaced in the upper surface. Over the entrance is a fictive round arch of cast or incised voussoirs around a recessed, flat niche embellished with a medallion. The rectangular door has a panel of diamond-shaped lights at eye level. Wrought-iron rails follow the sides of the round stoop and curve outward down the steps.

The buildings has had only one significant exterior alteration, and it is tactfully done. The windows under the wall dormer at the left end of the main wing have been replaced with a secondary entrance. The siding used in this renovation is wide clapboards chosen to harmonize with the facing of the gable in the other wing.

#### SIGNIFICANCE:

The Nampa American Legion Chateau is architecturally significant as a fine and especially fanciful example of the reviving picturesqueness more and more evident in this chronologically arranged series of buildings, and one of the few specimens in the Thematic Group of an important series of commissions for legion halls and armories throughout the state. These commissions illuminate an important facet of the career of Frederick Hummel.

Within the Thematic Group, this unusual building looks forward more than back. The stucco surfaces and general penchant for rather loose historicizing are familiar enough, although finding anything this fanciful probably requires looking back twenty-five years to commissions such as the Pythian Castle in Weiser (National Register, 1976). But details such as the diamond-mullioned windows and the dovescotes would be standard in the picturesque design of the 1930s; and the profile is unique in the Group. Its dominant characteristics--a fat corner entry tower, imbedded in a long-legged L-shaped plan--are probably based on one of the best 1930s picturesque houses in Boise, the Peasley house on Crescent Rim Drive. The Nampa design is in fact so closely akin to this tile-roofed stucco house with its round tower that one would attribute the latter to these architects had there not been a collections book reference.

The Nampa American Legion Chateau is also significant as one of the few evidences in the group of an important category of these architects' work in the 1930s: American Legion halls and National Guard armories. These include the very handsome, modestly art deco brick legion hall in Twin Falls (1931; National Register, Twin Falls City Park Historic District, 1978), which is bow-roofed in a sort of miniaturization of the armory type the architects would design for several Idaho cities. Also included is the rather elegant, more-or-less modern John Regan Legion Post in

Boise, done near the end of the decade. The larger and more utilitarian armories, uniformly bow-roofed and of concrete construction, were built in Boise, Burley, and Pocatello; all survive, but none in adequate condition to be included in the Thematic Group. (This bow-roofed form carried over to civilian projects as well: the airplane hanger at the new Boise airport, in 1926, may have been the parent design, and a rash of bow-roofed high school gyms, some in frame and some in brick, were designed for smaller Idaho towns in the 1930s.) More armories were proposed, too, though never built--among them one for Nampa--in the job-hungry 1930s. Projects related in terms of clients, though not in terms of style, were carried out in a series of camp buildings for the National Guard's Boise barracks, the descendant of the Army's Fort Boise, between 1926 and 1941.

These commissions must have had much to do with contacts developed by Frederick Hummel in the course of a long association with the Idaho National Guard. He had first enlisted in 1912, gone to the Mexican border in 1916 and to France in 1917, and became captain of the organized reserves when he was mustered out of federal service in 1919. In 1926 he became colonel of the 116th Engineers, and he was a brigadier general of the Idaho guard by the time he retired from it in 1941.

#### MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Boise, Idaho. Hummel Jones Miller Hunsucker P.A. File 303B. Collection book reference 1931. Drawings signed Tourtellotte and Hummel.