

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

NOMINATION: TOURTELLOTTE AND HUMMEL ARCHITECTURE IN IDAHO (192)

✓ SITE NAME: Morris Hill Cemetery Mausoleum SITE NUMBER: 132

✓ LOCATION: Morris Hill Cemetery, Boise, Ada County (~~001~~), Idaho

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS:

City of Boise
City Hall
Boise, ID 83702

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

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

This nomination includes the Morris Hill Mausoleum at NW 1/4, NE 1/2, S 1/2 of Morris Hill Cemetery, which is situated in the W 1/2 of SW 1/4, section 9, T3N, R2E, with a margin of 25 feet on all sides. Legal description on file at the Ada County Courthouse, Boise, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11/5,62,210/48,28,340

DATE OR PERIOD: 1937

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

CONDITION: excellent unaltered original site

DESCRIPTION:

The Morris Hill Cemetery Mausoleum is a 117-foot-ten-inch-by-42-foot-eight-inch laterally oriented, reinforced-concrete building, its plain unfenestrated surfaces jointed to resemble stone block. The wings are plain; the single opening in the front elevation is the entrance, centered and recessed in an outset ensemble itself emerging from a broad and even more shallowly outset central bay. The end elevations are pierced with tall stained glass windows in slightly outset bays; the rear elevation has a large, ribbed, centered stained light opposite the entrance. These openings correspond to a plan based on lateral corridors lined with crypts on either side of a central chapel.

The entryway is composed of two blocky side piers cresting above the level of the broader central bay, which has itself a cornice line elevated above the main flat roof line of the building. The slightly recessed wall between these piers is cut still more deeply by the plane of the opening itself, which contains a pair of double doors flanked by fictive sidelights and surmounted by a deep rectangular glass window. Fluted quarter-round forms resembling stylized imbedded columns rise beside the piers to the level of the top of the lights. The space is vertically tri-sected by two narrow ribs which separate the sidelights from the doors and

continue up through the transom-level lights, then out and up again over the upper bay, to crest between the piers.

The building exactly duplicates the original drawings for it.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The public mausoleum at Morris Hill Cemetery has exceptional architectural significance, not just as a locally interesting and unusual example of a hybrid deco moderne building, and as a representative of its stylistic period in monument architecture (see also the early classicizing individual mausolea, sites 36 and 55). Even more, it is one of an illustrative triad of buildings--sites 132, 134, and 135--which demonstrate the relationship in the work of these architects between the art deco and the art moderne styles, as well as their propensity to recycle a design idea.

This building, with its low profile and its sleek but jointed surface, is aesthetically equidistant between the Gem County Courthouse (site 134), an institutional art deco structure with snatches of pure classical ornament, and the John Regan American Legion post (site 135), a smooth-surfaced, corner-windowed little building which clearly reflects the influence of the international style. At the same time, all three buildings are based upon the same dominant motif: a centered entryway composed of blocky side piers and a recessed, tri-sected overdoor treatment. The relationship between the mausoleum and courthouse entries is particularly literal, as both employ the same fluted column-like elements, the same transom configuration and trisecting ribs. The legion hall stylizes these forms considerably further, in keeping with an art moderne appearance which is otherwise represented in the group only by the Thompson Mortuary in Gooding (site 136). These sites show very clearly how the styles overlapped in the work of the firm. A few changes in detail produced either the more conservative, elaborated, and upright art deco look or, the sleeker aerodynamic look of art moderne, as might be appropriate to client taste or to building function or scale.

The City of Boise was named as both owner and contractor for the mausoleum on a building permit issued late in 1937. The projected cost was \$85,000.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Boise, Idaho. Boise City Building Permit. November 2, 1937.

Boise, Idaho. Hummel Jones Miller Hunsucker P.A. File 306C. Drawings signed Tourtellotte and Hummel.