United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number ______  Page ______

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92000101  Date Listed: 3/10/92

American Fork Second Ward Meetinghouse
Property Name

Utah  UT
County  State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic
Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation
subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments,
notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included
in the nomination documentation.

Signature of the Keeper  3/11/92
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Statement of Significance: Under Criteria Considerations
(Exceptions), A is checked.

This information was confirmed with Charles Shephard of the Utah
State historic preservation office.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name AMERICAN FORK SECOND WARD MEETINGHOUSE
other names/site

2. Location

street & number 130 West 100 South
N/A not for publication
city, town American Fork
state Utah
N/A vicinity
county Utah
N/A code UT
N/A county code 049
N/A zip code 84003

3. Classification

Ownership of Property
- private X
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
- building(s) X
- district
- site
- structure
- object

No. of Resources within Property
- contributing
- noncontributing

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _meets_ does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official: Wm. Mat Date: 1/21/92
Utah Division of State History, Office of Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _meets_ does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
✓ entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet
determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet
determined not eligible for the National Register
removed from the National Register
other, (explain:

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
The American Fork Second Ward Meetinghouse is a brick, eclectic Gothic Revival style building constructed in 1903-04 and expanded in 1930 by a large, well-matched addition. Only minor modifications have been made to the building since then, none of which affect its overall architectural integrity.

As built in 1903-04, the meetinghouse had a basically rectangular plan with the narrow end facing the street and a square entrance tower at the southeast corner. The original building featured a large assembly room or chapel, the tower with its entry vestibule, and a two-story rear (north) section containing small classrooms and offices. The rear section projected slightly beyond the side walls of the chapel, giving the building footprint a slight "T" shape, though the overall form was rectangular. The original building was constructed of brick masonry with a wood-framed interior floor and roof structure. The 35-foot tall spire on the tower is also wood-framed.

The building's architectural style is Gothic Revival in spirit and eclectic in detailing. All major window bays are Roman-arched with thick mullions and Gothic transoms. Door bays and the lancet bays in the tower are also Roman. Extensive brick corbeling is used to trim the window and door openings, cornices, and tower pinnacles. The front gable is trimmed with stepped corbeling terminating in a semi-circular arch under the apex. The spire is a massive two-tiered structure with wood shingles painted with an aluminum-colored coating. Colorful Victorian-era stained glass transoms and metal pinnacle and spire finials add further detail.

A major addition to the west side of the main building was constructed in 1929-30. The roughly L-shaped addition, when connected to the original structure, resulted in a building with a U-shaped plan with the open end of the "U" facing the street. The main entry was shifted from the tower to the center of the connecting wing. At the same time, the chapel was remodeled by reversing the location of the podium from the north end to the south.1 The new, two-story section contained a recreation hall and classrooms. It was built with brick, trim, openings, and a gabled roof matching those of the original architecture. The replication is so complete that the addition appears to have been built at the same time as the original. Since its completion, the building has remained virtually intact with the exception of a small gabled canopy built to protect the rear entrance and the modification of some windows on the west elevation.

--- See continuation sheet

The American Fork Second Ward Meetinghouse is significant as the only intact example of the eclectic Gothic Revival architecture once employed widely throughout the community by the LDS church during a period of ecclesiastical expansion after the turn of the century. It was one of four ward (congregation) meetinghouses constructed in the city around 1903-04. Each was a tall, brick, late Gothic Revival edifice with a corner steeple tower. Each had a combination of Gothic and Roman-arched windows, corbeled brick ornamental motifs, art glass transoms and accent windows, stone foundations, steeply pitched gable roofs, and other shared features. The Second Ward Meetinghouse is the only one of those four churches to retain its architectural integrity. The large, well-matched 1929-30 addition to the meetinghouse is also significant. It documents two important changes in LDS church architecture after about 1920. First, it reflects the influence of the church's newly created centralized architectural department and its emphasis on standard plans. Second, it illustrates the church's new policy of including all church auxiliaries and their functions in a single building rather than in separate structures. The addition is a successful blending of functional and aesthetic considerations. It provided the necessary space for the ward's varied activities and did so in a manner that conformed with both the new standard plan and the original eclectic Gothic Revival design.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The town of American Fork was founded in 1850 by members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon or LDS church). This was just three years after the Mormons immigrated from the Mid-west and began establishing their new home in the Utah territory. American Fork was one of several towns established in Utah Valley by the Mormons during the 1850s. Agriculture was the principal local industry throughout the 19th century, though the coming of the railroad in 1873 and mining in the nearby mountains also influenced the local economy. The town, always predominantly Mormon, grew slowly but steadily and by 1900 the population was estimated to be over 2300.

Growth in the community was sufficient by 1901 to prompt the division of the single Mormon ward (congregation) into four separate wards. The process of dividing...
wards was common in many Mormon communities at this time, brought on by population growth, the death of many long-time local leaders, and changing church policies.

The Second Ward, along with the other three wards, soon felt the need for its own building. In a ward council meeting of 29 September 1901, Second Ward Bishop Joseph H. Storrs proposed that the ward begin efforts to provide a new building. He named a committee of five to recommend a building site. This was accomplished by November 1901, but planning for the construction continued for nearly a year. At a special meeting on 9 October 1902, the Bishop reported that they had taken upon themselves the responsibility of contracting for the brick and obtained the members' approval. The bishop appointed a finance committee, and James H. Pulley, a local carpenter/builder, presented a plan for the building. Pulley had recently been given the assignment to "get the plans" for the city hall, which was also being built at the same time. It also seems likely that Pulley designed the other three ward meetinghouses, given the similarity of their appearances.

Each of the four wards in American Fork were building new meetinghouses during this period and found "they could get brick cheaper in large quantities, so they all ordered their brick together, thus all the four ward chapels were constructed of the same color red brick." According to the ward minutes, all the required brick was on hand by 5 July 1903 and "the masons would finish their work in a few days and the material was on the ground for the roof. Ward members all working together were doing a fine job, but it was slowed down for lack of finances."

The ward began using the meetinghouse on January 31, 1904, even though all of the work on the building was not completed. By June of 1904, the ward still owed $700.00 and needed an additional $1,050.00 to finish the building and the tower. The tower, easily the most distinctive feature of the building, included a special room for Mormon prayer circles. That same month, Robert L. Ashby, a high school woodworking teacher, moved into the ward building to work on the interior woodwork. When he finished, Ashby rejected attempts to pay him for his work. Other members of the ward similarly donated labor and money to the project, which cost a total of $10,000.20. After the final debts were paid, the Second Ward Meetinghouse was dedicated on 17 February 1909.

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2Ellen J. Tracy, "History of Second Ward Chapel of the American Fork, Utah," Historical Scrapbooks, American Fork City Library. Also, Meeting minutes, American Fork Second Ward Bishopric, 9 October 1902. Copies of portions of these minutes are available in the National Register file, Utah State Historic Preservation Office.

3ibid.

4ibid.

5ibid.
By 1929, growth of the Second Ward membership and changing church policies prompted the ward to expand the meetinghouse. The local newspaper explained the decision as follows.

On the 9th day of June, 1929, the Bishopric of the American Fork Second ward, in regular session of Sacrament meeting of the members of the ward, presented the problem of meeting the new plans of activity as outlined by the General Authorities of the Church with the existing facilities offered by the present building accommodations (sic). It was pointed out that to be able to make a success of the plan it would be necessary for the ward to have an Amusement Hall in connection with the Ward Meeting house.

By a unanimous vote of the members present it was decided that the entire membership of the ward would assume the obligation of financing the remodeling of the chapel to make it in harmony with the new Amusement Hall, and to furnish adequate (sic) class rooms to take care of all the activities of all the organizations of the ward.6

As a result, under the direction of Church Architect Don Carlos Young, architects Young and Hansen of Salt Lake City designed the addition and directed a remodeling of the earlier wing.7 Ramm Hansen and Joseph Don Carlos Young, Jr. formed an architectural partnership in 1916 that lasted until the 1950s. Their work was diverse and included the old Federal Reserve Bank and old Deseret Gymnasium buildings in Salt Lake City, the Women's Residence Hall at Utah State University and numerous projects for the LDS Church including the Riverton, Utah, Second Ward Meetinghouse designed in 1928.8

Work on the addition to the American Fork Second Ward Meetinghouse began on 14 June 1929. The contract for this work was given to Chipman Mercantile Co. The total cost of this hall, which became known as "Firmage Hall" because of a $15,000 donation from Mr. and Mrs. John Firmage, and other alterations and additions to the original structure was $48,555.54. These new changes were celebrated by the ward on 2-4 February 1930. Church President Heber J. Grant dedicated the building on 4 September 1932, after the small loan needed to complete the project was paid.9 According to one resident, "for many years this was the nicest place in town to hold wedding receptions as well as dramas and other gatherings."10

The meetinghouse continued to be used as an LDS church until the early 1980s when it was abandoned by the Second Ward in favor of a newer facility. In 1984 the building was purchased by Michael Bigelow, the present owner. The interior of the

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7 Ibid.

8 Architects File, Utah State Historic Preservation Office.


10 Tracy, "History of Second Ward Chapel...."
building was modified slightly to accommodate a residence for the Bigelows in the upper floor Sunday School Room, and a pipe organ design and manufacturing plant on the main level and basement. The current owner restored windows and other original features which had been altered over the years. He placed a wood shop in the gymnasium addition and created an assembly shop in the former chapel, in both instances retaining the original openness and architectural character of the spaces.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The four LDS meetinghouses built in American Fork c. 1903-04 were all eclectic Gothic Revival style buildings. This was a distinct variation from the existing meetinghouse, the Science Hall (now demolished), an 1861 Greek Revival structure typical of the Greek Revival style public buildings erected by the Mormons throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. As the century came to a close, however, designers of Mormon buildings began employing various Victorian styles. Following the pattern of other Christian denominations, Gothic Revival styling was considered especially appropriate for church buildings. The precedent for Gothic Revival religious architecture in American Fork was set by the Presbyterians, who constructed a brick church in the style in 1879-81 (National Register, 1980). In the early 1900s, the four LDS ward meetinghouses continued the Gothic Revival theme.

The large addition to the Second Ward Meetinghouse, built along the west side of the building twenty years later, also has significance in documenting the results in the changing way in which Mormons practiced architecture after 1920. Prior to that time, the designs for all ward meetinghouses were provided by local designers or private architects from larger cities. Local members also constructed the buildings themselves during this period. Due to rapidly increasing membership and building expenses after World War I, LDS Church leaders created a centralized architectural department and designed replicative "standard plans" in an effort to erect meetinghouses more quickly and at less expense. The first standard plans featured Colonial Revival elevations applied to L and U-shaped floor plans. These plans contained significantly more square footage than before because of an organizational policy change requiring all of the religious auxiliary organizations to be housed in the ward meetinghouse rather than in separate structures.11

When the 1929-30 addition to the American Fork Second Ward was designed, it was sized and located so as to create the church’s new, larger, U-shaped plan. The local newspaper reported it thus:

"The new 40x80 foot recreational hall...with the present chapel will make one of the church's most beautiful and serviceable new style U type buildings. It provides a ward chapel, ward amusement center and ward office and classroom units which have proved to be the most successful type of structure for the varied needs of a ward." 12

Rather than apply NeoColonial elevations to an existing Gothic building however, the architects respected the original design and sensitively repeated it in the addition. The final building, then, reflects Mormon architectural designs and building practices from two different eras: the Victorian period of independent, local design and the modern period of standardized and centralized design. Moreover, the American Fork Second Ward Meetinghouse represents a successful blending of the two disparate approaches to design in that the final building features the eclectic Gothic style of the earlier era as well as the larger, more functional floor plan of the later era.

Of the four turn-of-the-century LDS meetinghouses built in American Fork, only the Second Ward and Third Ward buildings survive. The Third Ward Meetinghouse has been adversely altered, including a large addition and the removal of the original steeple and other character-defining features. The Second Ward Meetinghouse is thus the most intact and most significant remaining example of the four churches used by this Mormon community between about 1903 and 1980. It is also the last intact example of the Victorian-era Gothic churches built in American Fork by Mormons. The 1881 American Fork Presbyterian Church, also Gothic Revival, remains in use and is listed in the National Register. The LDS Alpine Stake Tabernacle, a building constructed for the larger meetings of combined congregations, was the last LDS building erected in the "historic period." Begun in 1909 and completed in 1914, its modified NeoClassical style and monolithic boxlike shape differed radically in style from the four earlier ward buildings. This departure from what was now the anachronistic Gothic style ushered in a new era of church building in a variety of revival and modern styles.

9. Major Bibliographical References

American Fork Citizen, 1929-32.
Tracy, Ellen J., "History of the Second Ward Chapel of American Fork, Utah" (located in the American Fork Library historical scrapbook archives).

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property .98 acre

Primary location of additional data:
X State historic preservation office

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
___ preliminary determination of individual listing
     (36 CFR 67) has been requested
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings
     Survey # ___
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering
     Record # ___

Specify repository:

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title ___ Martha S. Bradley, Historian; Allen Roberts, Architect/Architectural Historian; also USHS staff
organization ___ Cooper/Roberts Architects, AIA
street & number ___ 202 West 300 South
city or town ___ Salt Lake City
county ___ Salt Lake
state ___ Utah
zip code ___ 84103

date ___ November 1991
telephone ___ (801) 355-5915
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number PHOTOS Page 1 American Fork Second Ward Meetinghouse, American Fork, Utah

PHOTOGRAPH LABELS

Photo No. 1 -- Overview Photo
1. American Fork Second Ward Meetinghouse
2. Utah County, Utah
3. Photographer: Allen Roberts
4. Date: August 1991
5. Negative on file at Utah SHPO
6. South elevation (camera facing north)
7. Photo No. 1

Photo No. 2 -- Detail Photo
1. American Fork Second Ward Meetinghouse
2. Utah County, Utah
3. Photographer: Allen Roberts
4. Date: August 1991
5. Negative on file at Utah SHPO
6. Detail of transom and inscription plaque, south elevation of corner tower, main level (camera facing north)
7. Photo No. 2