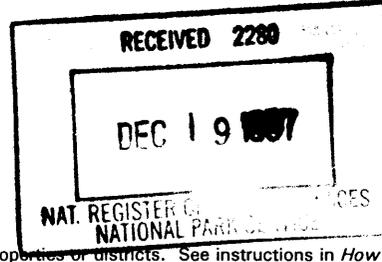


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



1650

# 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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Soderling, Russell and Pearl, House

other names/site number IHSI #21-17876

### 2. Location

street & number 217 W. Madison Street N/A not for publication

city or town Bonnars Ferry N/A vicinity

state Idaho code ID county Boundary code 021 zip code 83805

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 12/8/97  
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. 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] 1/15/98  
 Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Soderling, Russell and Pearl, House  
Name of Property

Bonnors Ferry, Boundary County, Idaho  
City, County, and State

### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Minimal-Traditional  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
walls WOOD: weatherboard  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof ASPHALT  
other STONE

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

X See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

Soderling, Russell and Pearl, House  
Name of Property

Bonnerr Ferry, Boundary County, Idaho  
City, County, and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" on one or more lines for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" on all that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

### Period of Significance

1938

### Significant Dates

1938

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Russell Soderling, Builder

## Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

X See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Boundary County Courthouse

X See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

Soderling, Russell and Pearl, House  
Name of Property

Bonnors Ferry, Boundary County, Idaho  
City, County, and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property less than one acre

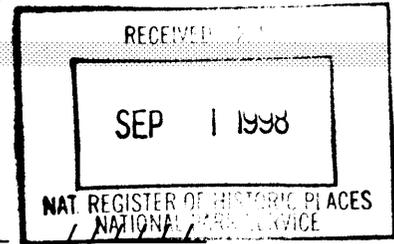
**UTM References**  
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

A 1/1 5/5/0/2/0/0 5/3/9/3/1/2/0  
Zone Easting Northing

B / / / / / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing

C / / / / / / / / / / / / / /

D / / / / / / / / / / / / / /



**Verbal Boundary Description**  
(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

X See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

**Boundary Justification**  
(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

X See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Susan Stagliano-Starnes with assistance from IDSHPO staff  
organization n/a date August 27, 1992  
street & number 217 W. Madison Street telephone (208) 207-7950  
city or town Bonnors Ferry state ID zip code 83805

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Maps:** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and/or properties having large acreage or numerous resources.
- **Photographs:** Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.
- **Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Property Owner**

name Michael & Susan Stagliano-Starnes  
street & number 217 W. Madison Street telephone (208) 267-7980  
city or town Bonnors Ferry state ID zip code 83805

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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County and State Boundary County, Idaho

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### NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

The Russell and Pearl Soderling House is a frame dwelling--standing one story in height--located on the south side of West Madison Street in Bonners Ferry, Boundary County, Idaho. Large deciduous and evergreen trees shade the yard while sidewalks and a grass median separate the house from the street. The house is in excellent condition and shows little exterior alteration since its construction.

The Soderling House rests on a poured-concrete foundation. The walls are of wood frame construction and are sided with clapboards. The steeply pitched cross-gabled roof was originally wood shingle but now is covered with asphalt shingles. Two full-height gabled ells combine with a large front gable to give the Soderling House an irregular T-shape plan. This irregular arrangement is balanced somewhat by the inclusion of a smaller side-gabled wing on the east side of the house which contains the former garage. A small front-gabled entry vestibule is located at the junction of the eastern garage wing and the main body of the house.

Windows and doors in the Soderling House are simple in design. The majority of windows are three-over-one double-hung sash, set singly or in pairs. There are two three-light transom windows located at the rear of the building which provide light to the kitchen and bath, and a small single-light window located in the west gabled end. The main wooden, exterior door features vertical plank construction with period hardware. Window and door trim is very simple consisting of flat boards.

The Soderling House is an eclectic interpretation of the Minimal-Traditional style which gained great popularity during the 1930s. Minimal-Traditional stylistic elements include: a small building footprint, lack of projecting rafters or eaves, and an entry vestibule in place of a front porch. The building exhibits a very simplified decorative approach, typical of the Minimal-Traditional style, which includes minor references to traditional Colonial Revival design such as a molded cornice and gable returns. Several unique elements have also been incorporated into the house design--likely as a result of the owner-builder's individual tastes. These include: an oriel window on the east elevation, a bull's-eye or porthole window on the east side of the front entry, a gabled projecting entry hood, and a large river-rock chimney located in the center of the primary elevation.

The interior of the house retains a large number of original details. These include Celo-tex wall covering, hard wood floors, a river-rock fireplace, and period kitchen fixtures. There have been very few changes to the exterior of the Soderling House over the years. The principal change made to the house was the conversion of the garage into a family room. This necessitated the removal of the garage door from the rear elevation of the house. A compatible door and window have been integrated into the former garage-door area. The concrete pad at the rear of the house, originally associated with the garage, has been converted into a patio and features a shelter roof which is

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attached to the rear of the house. None of these alterations detracts significantly from the building's overall design and character.

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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Russell and Pearl Soderling House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. It is an excellent and somewhat unique local representative of the vernacular Minimal-Traditional style dwellings which became popular with rural and small-town home owners during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The building demonstrates elements important to the Minimal-Traditional style while incorporating several unusual features which serve to impart a unique character to an otherwise modest home. Moreover, this home demonstrates the influence that New Deal-era Federal home owner assistance programs had on the design and aesthetics of the domestic built environment.

#### Architectural Significance

The Russell Soderling House is significant as an example of what has been described as the Minimal-Traditional style of domestic architecture. While the Minimal-Traditional design aesthetic came into its own during the 1930s, it can trace its origins to two earlier influences in American architectural history. Following the general upheaval of the First World War, two very different design philosophies competed for favor in American architecture. The first, and more dominant, can be classified as the Traditional design approach. In the domestic sphere, Traditional architecture embraced a wide variety of historical styles including Colonial Revival, the various Mediterranean Revival styles, Tudor Revival, Norman Revival and even Pueblo Revival. During the relatively prosperous 1920s, neighborhood after neighborhood of small homes rendered in this often bewildering array of period styles were constructed throughout the country.

In contrast to Traditional design modes, a non-historically based architectural approach emerged which emphasized a Minimalist philosophy. Basing their work, in part, on the "organic" architectural philosophy advocated by Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright and the other proponents of the Chicago School--post-war designers in Europe repudiated Tradition and embraced design which emphasized function and a lack of ornamentation. Known as the International Style, this design aesthetic had gained a substantial following in the United States by the end of the 1920s. Both the Art Deco and Streamline Moderne styles can be included within this philosophical framework--even though they embrace much more than strict functionalism.

Beginning in the late 1920s these two, seemingly irreconcilable approaches to architectural design began to draw together. This was particularly true in the area of small house design. During the 1920s, organizations like the Architects Small House Service Bureau began to publish and promote house designs geared toward the lower end of the home building market. The plans that these organizations provided needed to embrace as much economy as possible while fulfilling the basic needs of the prospective owner. As such, their house plans embraced the Minimal approach out of

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sheer necessity. It was quickly learned, however, that the radical and spartan designs typical of the leading International-style architects did not appeal to lower income home buyers. Their tastes were based in the Traditional design aesthetic. As such, a hybrid approach, now known as the Minimal-Traditional, was adopted. A variety of Traditional forms were essentially redesigned using the Minimal approach to ornamentation, economy and efficiency of design. Architectural historians have debated which Traditional influences played the greatest role in defining this new style. Some point to the vernacular influence of the Cape Cod cottage while others suggest the modest Tudor houses of the 1920s is the true antecedent of this form. In many examples, elements of each can be identified.

The popularity of the Minimal-Traditional house soared during the Depression years of the 1930s. As America struggled with the worst economic upheaval in its history, attitudes toward architecture and aesthetics shifted rapidly. The highly eclectic and exuberant period-revival buildings of the 1920s fell into disfavor as relics of an overindulgent, gaudy and frivolous era. Depression and austerity called for a re-evaluation of architectural taste. All economic classes began to favor a simplified approach to design very like the Minimal philosophy. Yet, the majority of home owners were not willing to embrace the pure functionalism of the International Style. They still held an affinity for the basic forms associated with Traditional design. As such, the Minimal-Traditional hybrid--retaining Traditional forms while embracing Minimal ornamentation and space utilization--was adopted on a large scale.

By the time Russell and Pearl Soderling were building their house in the summer of 1938, the small Minimal-Traditional house had reached a very wide level of popularity. Even the architectural press, previously less than concerned with the subject of small houses, was on the bandwagon. In that year the *Architectural Forum*, arguably the most high-style and avant garde architectural publication in the country, published a hardbound book dedicated to the small house. The 1938 Book of Small Houses illustrated a large number of architect-designed affordable homes, the majority of which fell directly into the Minimal-Traditional stylistic category. This publication also provided advice to prospective home owners as to desirable characteristics in home design. Emphasis was placed on economy of design and space utilization, avoidance of ornamentation, rejection of the large front porch in favor of the vestibule entry and the garden terrace, and integrating the garage into the main house. It also loudly trumpeted the benefits of professional architectural services.

Minimal-Traditional popularity can also be attributed to the creation of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in 1934. In order to stimulate the moribund construction industry, devastated by the Depression, the FHA moved aggressively into the home mortgage insurance business and--after 1938--the mortgage business itself. As part of their efforts to ensure that Federal money was being used to support quality construction, the FHA established a series of recommended house

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plans and construction standards. As evidenced by FHA publications, such as Technical Bulletin #4 "Principles of Planning Small Houses," many of the design characteristics of the Minimal-Traditional approach were adopted by the FHA as "guidelines" for Federal mortgage support. To quote directly from the introduction to the "Illustrative Cases" section of this document:

"While all of the successive plans show a range in comfort of living and of slightly increasing accommodation, all of these are stripped of non-essential spaces, of picturesque features, and of any unnecessary element tending to add to cost."  
(Technical Bulletin #4 "Principles of Planning Small Houses" Federal Housing Administration, Washington, D.C., 1936, p#21).

The Russell and Pearl Soderling House is an excellent representative example of the type of Minimal-Traditional housing which was built with Federal mortgage assistance in the late 1930s. Russell Soderling came to Bonners Ferry as a high-school instructor in 1937. The following year he and his wife, Pearl, acquired one of the last open lots on West Madison Street in the Park Addition of Bonners Ferry. Soderling was a very talented and persuasive individual. In the spring of 1938 he managed to convince the Federal Housing Administration to loan him \$2,500 for the construction of a new home on his West Madison property. What is remarkable is that he proposed to design and construct the home himself. Soderling had no formal training in architecture or contracting. Indeed, his skills were acquired solely from having worked as a laborer and on his family's farm in Minnesota. Despite this, the FHA approved his house design and his proposal to do all but the, plumbing, heating and electrical contracting himself. Soderling and his wife dug the basement, poured the concrete, erected the walls and roof, and did all of the interior finish work--including laying up the large main chimney using river rock selected from the nearby Kootenai River.

The design that Soderling used has all the hallmarks of a typical FHA Minimal-Traditional design. It is a compact house which utilizes every available square foot to maximum efficiency. The kitchen and bath are designed to include the minimum space required and the bedrooms are also of minimal proportions. The home contains no long hallways or stair runs. The plan also incorporated a rear-facing garage as part of the main house--another feature encouraged by FHA to minimize costs. The building eschews a large front porch in favor of a small entry vestibule. The gabled-front T-shape plan of the house is similar to many other examples cited in a variety of period publications and architectural history sources.

From a stylistic perspective the house also has many typical Minimal-Traditional features. The exterior cladding is simple clapboards lacking corner boards. The cornice features a very plain molded profile reminiscent of the traditional, simplified Cape Cod cottage. There are also no eaves or roof overhang. The walls meet flush with the roof plain. All of the finish work and trim is plain and uncomplicated. Window openings are generally uniform in size.

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Despite the minimal budget allocated for this home, Soderling did manage to include some rather interesting architectural elements which serve to make the house unique. Perhaps the most interesting element is the oriel window located on the east side of the former garage. This window was included by Soderling in order to provide as much natural light to his garage/workshop as possible. Indeed, neighbors recall that many people did not realize that the garage wing was a garage. They assumed that the oriel window, filled with dusty shelves full of auto parts and other garage debris, was simply a proper room maintained by a messy housekeeper. The river-rock chimney is also a feature not usually found in a \$2,500 home. This element owes its existence merely to the desire by Soderling and his wife to have a picturesque fireplace and chimney, rather than one of more ordinary construction. The bull's-eye or porthole window which illuminates the entry vestibule is also a decorative touch of some distinction.

### Conclusion

The Russell and Pearl Soderling House retains a significant degree of historical and architectural integrity. It is an excellent local example of a Minimal-Traditional-style dwelling typical of small homes of the 1930s. It serves to demonstrate the architectural trend toward economy of ornament, expense, and space utilization which came to dominate popular domestic building trends during this economically troubled time. It also illustrates the effect that Federal mortgage programs and design standards had on small-home construction and style in 1930s small town Idaho. Thus, it is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C.

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### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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McAlester, Lee and Virginia. A Field Guide to American Houses. Alfred A Knopf, New York, 1988.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

#### Verbal Boundary Description:

The west 40 feet of lot 4 and the east 40 feet of lot 5, Block 12, Park Addition to Bonners Ferry, Boundary County, ID.

#### Boundary Justification:

The above described lot portions are all the property historically associated with the Russell and Pearl Soderling House.