

# Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination

*Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office, City Hall, Sixth Floor  
808 Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, Washington 99201-3337*

## 1. Name of Property

Historic Name **JOSEPH & MAZIE ALBI HOUSE**

## 2. Location

Street & Number 525 East 12th Avenue  
 City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99203  
 Parcel Number 35203.2706

## 3. Classification

Category of Property	Ownership of Property	Status of Property	Present Use of Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both		<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> residential
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes, restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other

## 4. Owner of Property

Name Dr. Richard and Angela Witter  
 Street & Number 525 East 12th Avenue  
 City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99203  
 Telephone Number/E-mail 747-0080 home, 838-4141 office

## 5. Location of Legal Description

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds Spokane County Courthouse  
 Street Number 1116 West Broadway  
 City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99260  
 County Spokane

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Title City of Spokane Historic Landmarks Survey  
 Date Federal\_\_ State\_\_ County\_\_ Local 1979  
 Depository for Survey Records Spokane Historic Preservation Office  
*final draft 10/1/2001 revised per 9/19/2001 landmarks Commission meeting*

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair  
 deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check One

unaltered  
 altered

### Check One

original site  
 moved & date \_\_\_\_\_

*Narrative description of present and original physical appearance is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

## 8. Spokane Register Criteria and Statement of Significance

**Applicable Spokane Register of Historic Places Criteria--mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for Spokane Register listing:**

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Spokane 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 history.

*Narrative statement of significance is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

*Bibliography is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre.  
Verbal Boundary Description Manito Park 3rd Addition, east 1/2 of Lot 14 & west 37.5 feet of Lot 15, Block 3.  
Verbal Boundary Justification Nominated property includes entire parcel and urban legal description.

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name and Title Linda Yeomans, Consultant  
Organization Historic Preservation Planning  
Telephone Number/E-mail 509-456-3828 or lyeomans@qwest.net  
Street and Number 501 West 27th Avenue  
City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99203  
Date 29 August 2001

## 12. Additional Documentation

Map Spokane City/County plat map, 2001  
Photographs and Slides 10 black & white prints; 10 color slides, black & white photocopy of circa-1928 print

13. Signature of Owner(s)

x *[Signature]*  
x *Angela G. Hitter*

14. For Official Use Only:

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Heard: \_\_\_\_\_ City Clerk

Commission Decision: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved

Council/Board Action: \_\_\_\_\_ as to Form: *[Signature]*  
Assistant City Attorney

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**We hereby certify that this property has been listed in the Spokane Register of Historic Places.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**MAYOR, City of Spokane**  
or

\_\_\_\_\_  
**CHAIR, Spokane County Commissioners**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**CHAIR, Spokane City/County Historic Landmarks Commission**

*[Signature]*  
**OFFICER, City/County Historic Preservation Officer**  
City/County Historic Preservation Office  
Sixth Floor - City Hall, Spokane, WA 99201

Built in 1913, the Joseph Albi House is an excellent example of a one and one-half story bungalow designed in the Craftsman style. The house follows a modified rectangular plan and reveals a typical Craftsman bungalow form with a low-pitched roof, two front-facing gables, and a front porch covered by a shed roof. The house is clad in narrow-width wood clapboard siding on the first floor and false half-timbering with stucco infill in the gable peaks. Character-defining exterior features of the house include a wide, deep front porch supported by large tapered brick porch piers, a plain wood baluster that appears to pierce the brick piers and extend through to the other side; a prominent front-facing chimney; and multi-paned windows and doors with battered surrounds. The interior of the house also reflects the Craftsman style with quarter-sawn oak floors, woodwork, built-in bench seats, bookcases, drop leaf desk, dining room buffet and china cabinet. The house is located in an area of tree-lined streets and 50-foot to 100-foot wide lots in the greater Rockwood Boulevard neighborhood on Spokane's South Hill. Facing south, the house fronts onto East 12th Avenue and is set behind a cultivated lawn that slopes toward the street.

### **Current Appearance and Condition**

#### *Site and Exterior of House*

The Albi House is sited on the east half of Lot 14 and the west part of Lot 15, Block 3 in the Third Addition to Manito Park. Part of the Addition is located in the north end of the Rockwood Historic District. The Rockwood Historic District's northeast boundary extends to the south side of 12th Avenue, but does not include the Albi House which is located on the north side of the street. The property measures 62 feet wide and 125 feet deep, and is surrounded by single-family homes built mostly from 1905 to 1960.

The Albi House forms a slightly irregular footprint that measures approximately 31 feet wide and 56 feet deep with more than 1700 square feet on the first floor and 1232 square feet on the second floor. The house has a front-facing jerkinhead gabled roof with a lower projecting gable. A shed roof dormer extends from the west roof slope, and a matching shed roof dormer extends from the east roof slope. The roof is covered with composition shingles and is low-pitched with wide unenclosed eave overhangs, exposed rafter tails, and scroll-sawn knee braces. Wide vergeboards embellished with tail cutouts highlight the roofline. A prominent front-facing tapered and shaped brick chimney extends through the eave overhang on the facade of the house and is embellished with a decorative molded cement cap. The house is clad in narrow-width wood clapboard siding on the first floor and decorative false half-timbering with stucco infill in the gable peaks. An eight-inch-deep wood beltcourse separates the clapboard siding from a basalt foundation covered with a concrete skim-coat. The Albi House retains 10 of its original 19 windows located on the first and second floors. The original circa-1913 windows feature battered surrounds and multi-paned decorative lights on the upper sash. The battered design is repeated in the front door surround.

*Facade and Secondary Elevations*

The facade of the Albi House faces south and is shaded by widely overhanging roof eaves and by a partial-width 11-foot-deep front porch that wraps around the southeast corner of the house. The porch is covered by a shed roof and features a curved spandrel supported by large tapered brick pillars. The porch deck is made of poured concrete. The west elevation of the house features two gabled bays that are joined by a brick terrace. Multi-paned French doors open onto the terrace and are flanked by original windows with battered frames and multi-paned upper sashes. The rear, north elevation of the house features an exposed foundation wall built partly above grade. A wood deck spans the width of the north elevation. A second-story dormer overhangs the first floor and is embellished with a jerkinhead gable. The east elevation of the house features two gabled bays and the front porch's wrap-around extension. Original multi-paned French doors finished in golden-oak open from the porch into a den.

*Interior*

A 40-inch wide oak door with beveled glass lights opens from the front porch into a small foyer. The foyer is distinguished with a built-in oak bench seat and beveled plate glass mirror with an oak frame located on the wall opposite of the front door. An oak-paneled pocket door separates the foyer from a den to the east. The den features oak-paneled wainscoting, built-in oak bookcases with glass doors, and an oak drop leaf desk. The foyer also opens west to a living room and dining room. A south-wall fireplace is the focal point of the living room. It is made of red brick and features an arched fire box with radiating voussoirs. The firebox is fitted with a custom-made copper and brass fireplace screen. Brick corbels support a curved oak mantel with a beveled plate glass mirror. The living room and dining room are separated by a pair of oak half-wall partitions. The dining room features an oak plate rail with decorative brackets, French doors on the west wall that open to an outside terrace, and a built-in oak buffet and glass-doored china cabinet. The buffet is designed with a curved spandrel supported by square piers. The backsplash is covered with a beveled glass mirror. The built-in buffet and cabinet retain the original brass knobs and drawer pulls. The floor, doors, and woodwork in the foyer, den, living room, and dining room is made of hand-rubbed, golden-oak-finished quarter-sawn oak.

The dining room opens to a kitchen, family room, bathroom, and bedroom in the north and northeast end of the house. A flight of stairs rises to the second floor which contains a hall, four bedrooms, and one bathroom. The floor is finished fir and all of the windows are new wood casement units.

**Original Appearance and Subsequent Alterations**

The home's footprint and identifying elements including the front porch, exterior cladding, false half-timbering, battered window and door surrounds, wide eaves, exposed rafter tails, and roof brackets remain unaltered along with the interior foyer, den, living room, dining room, and part of the first floor bedrooms (one is now used a family room).

The first-floor northeast bedroom, kitchen, and second floor were remodeled. All of the home's original attached light fixtures were removed in the 1960s-1970s except for the original light

fixtures in the foyer, den, and southeast bedroom on the first floor. During the 1970s, two windows at the southwest corner of the kitchen were replaced with wood sash windows. In 1989, the current owners replaced two original deteriorated windows in the southeast bedroom on the first floor, and two deteriorated original windows in the bathroom on the first floor with vinyl units. In 1999-2001, the kitchen was remodeled to include new wood cabinets, counters, sink, appliances, and built-in breakfast table. A window in the northwest corner was replaced; two kitchen windows along the north, rear wall of the house were replaced. The interior door and part of the south wall in the northeast bedroom on the first floor was removed. The interior stairwell was refinished.

On the second floor, a shed roof dormer was built in 2000-2001 on the west elevation roof slope, and a matching dormer was built on the east elevation roof slope. The dormers allowed the original two bedrooms and hallway with 530 square feet, to be enlarged to four bedrooms and one bathroom with a total of 1232 square feet. The floors in the hallway and bedrooms are made of architecturally appropriate finished fir planks. The woodwork is finished fir. The original bedroom and bathroom doors were re-installed. All of the replacement windows are wood casement units. The design for the windows was borrowed from the design of the original wood casement window located on the facade of the house in the south second-floor bedroom. The casement window located in the gable peak on the home's facade is nearly identical to the original wood casement window that was replaced due to deterioration. Period-appropriate light fixtures were installed where the original lights were missing throughout the house on the exterior as well as in the first and second floors.

A new composition roof was installed in 2000, replacing composition shingles installed in the 1960-1970s. The exterior of the house was painted in 2001. The dormers were clad with similar materials as the original materials to produce an extension of the original false half-timbering and stucco infill design that is revealed in the original gable faces of the house. Rafter tails and brackets were made to duplicate the original design and installed under the widely overhanging eaves of the dormers. The original rafter tails and brackets located under the home's roof eaves were rebuilt and replaced with new rafter tails and brackets made exactly like the deteriorated originals. A cedar deck that replaces an existing circa-1950s deck is currently being installed along the rear of the house at the north elevation.

Areas of Significance	Commerce, Recreation, Law, Community Planning/Development
Period of Significance	1913, 1919-1951
Significant Dates	1913, 1919-1951
Architect	Unknown
Builder	Walter L. Weld
Specific Dates	1913

### Statement of Significance

#### *Summary Statement*

The Joseph Albi House was erected in 1913, and is a fine example of a Craftsman style bungalow. Built by Spokane contractor Walter L. Weld as a “spec” home, the property was given to Joseph Albi and his wife Mazie as a wedding gift from Albi’s parents. During the 43 years that Joseph Albi lived in the house, he became one of Spokane’s most well-known and influential leaders. He was a successful attorney and businessman, philanthropist and civic benefactor, and an indomitable fund-raiser and sports-supporter. Implementing his ideas for the promotion of sports in Spokane, Albi helped found the Spokane Athletic Round Table and served as its president for 42 years. Backed by the organization, Albi spearheaded the fundraising, construction, and creation of the Esmeralda Golf Course and Clubhouse, and the Joe Albi Stadium in Spokane--public facilities that continue to be enjoyed by thousands of people in the Spokane community year after year. In addition, Albi was appointed by Italy to act as the Italian Consulate for Idaho and Eastern Washington from 1929 to 1941. A *Spokesman-Review* article on May 9, 1962 summed up Joe Albi’s contributions to Spokane and said,

“He did more for Spokane and the Inland Empire sports world  
than any other man, ever.”

The Albi House is significant as the home of Joseph Albi, and is eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Category B.

### Historic Context

#### *Early Spokane and the Rockwood Boulevard Neighborhood*

The town of Spokane began in the early 1870s and became a center for mining, lumber, agriculture, and rail transport. The town’s population tripled from 36,000 in 1900, to over 100,000 by 1910. Neighborhoods were planned, streets were laid, houses and schools were built, and suburban settlement grew around the city. One of these places was Spokane’s South Hill and the neighborhood surrounding Rockwood Boulevard.

Early Spokane pioneer Jay P. Graves arrived in Spokane in 1887, and within two decades, had risen to prominence as a mining and railroad developer. He recognized potential real estate bargains available in Spokane for those who had money to invest, and in 1903, he purchased almost 800 acres of mostly undeveloped South Hill land. Promising to add

improvements and take full advantage of scenic possibilities, Graves developed the acreage as the Manito Park Addition. Graves also bought and developed an additional 100 acres of land between Hatch and Arthur Streets, and between 11th Avenue and 29th Avenue. The north part of this area includes the Third Addition to Manito Park, including East 12th Avenue between Sherman and Sheridan Streets located just two blocks north of Rockwood Boulevard.

By the end of 1909, Rockwood Boulevard neighborhood homesites were being actively marketed. Ed Kienholz, a carpenter working in Spokane, bought the east half of Lot 14 and all of Lots 15 and 16 located at 525 East 12th Avenue. He sold the property for \$2500 to land, timber, and real estate investor, James A. Tormey, in 1909. The warranty deed for the property included two covenants written to protect future development of the neighborhood. The first covenant stated that “no residence shall be erected upon said lot that shall cost less than \$2500” and that the residence must be of “modern style of architecture.” The second covenant warned that “no building on said lot shall be used for business purposes of any kind.”

#### *The Joseph & Mazie Albi House*

On December 31, 1912, Tormey sold the east half of Lot 14 and the west 40 feet of Lot 15 for \$2000 to Walter L. Weld and his wife Ada. Walter Weld, a Spokane building contractor who owned W. L. Construction Company, worked for more than 45 years in the Spokane building trade. In June, 1913, Weld applied for city water service and a building permit to construct a house on the 12th Avenue lots. He estimated and reported the cost of the residence at \$4000, and was issued a three-month-long building permit. Construction commenced immediately and in November, Weld sold the property to the Home Investment Company, James Tormey’s real estate development business. Mortgages totaling \$5500 remained outstanding on the property during an economic decline in Spokane real estate prices. Finally, in 1915, real estate investor Ferdinand A. Davis and his wife Myrtle purchased the house for \$4500.

The Davis’s owned the property for only four years, but did not live in the house. In 1919, they sold it to Joseph Albi and his wife Mazie for \$6500. The Albi family recalls that Joseph Albi’s mother and father gave the property to Joe and Mazie as a wedding present. They were the first people to live in the house even though it had been built six years before they took possession. They raised two sons and a daughter and made the property their home for 47 years until Joseph died in 1962, and Mazie sold the house in 1966. The house then changed hands five times until 1988, when it was purchased by Richard Witter for \$77,000. Richard is a Spokane dentist with a practice on Southeast Boulevard, and his wife Angela divides her time between their two children and office/accounting management for her husband’s dental practice.

#### **Historic Significance--Category B**

Spokane philanthropist and sports promoter Joe Albi was described in the *Spokesman-Review* as a “unique blend of cheerleader, comedian, and Old West tonic salesman.” His “sports-minded, fun-loving nature worked like a cure-all elixir” and encouraged the Spokane community to strive for the impossible. A May 9, 1962 *Spokesman-Review* article called Joe Albi a “finisher.”

“What he began, or helped begin, he stayed with, nurtured, encouraged, [and] made to succeed.” He dreamed on a grand scale and never stopped until he died in 1962.

Joseph Aloysius Albi was born in Spokane, Washington in 1892, to Louisa and Garibaldi Albi, Italian immigrants who settled in Spokane in 1889. Joe grew up in Spokane’s Logan neighborhood in a house located at 901 East Sharp Avenue and graduated from Gonzaga University. He then completed a law degree from Georgetown University in Washington DC, and returned to Spokane to start a private law practice beginning in 1916. Except for two years in which he served in the Army during World War I, Albi practiced law in Spokane in his office at the Old National Bank building for 44 years until his death. Albi family members remember Joe as a “good businessman, a smart attorney, and a noisy and flamboyant trial lawyer” who won all of his murder cases.

Joe Albi was “a man with a million ideas, every one of which was designed to help some deserving youngsters and to promote [Spokane], his favorite city” (*Spokane Daily Chronicle*). In 1920, Albi helped found the Spokane Athletic Round Table (A.R.T.), a fun-loving sports-promoting club that, with Albi at the helm, raised more than \$700,000 from A.R.T. members and from 20 other private clubs for the construction of Spokane’s Memorial Athletic Stadium in 1950. To honor his dedication and outstanding efforts, the stadium was re-named in honor of Joseph Albi in 1962, and called the Joe Albi Memorial Stadium. A bronze sculpture created in the likeness of Joe Albi was cast in 1997. A tribute to Albi, the life-size statue is located in the stadium and was described as the “embodiment of a man who enjoyed life, raised money, and did everything for the kids” (*Spokesman-Review*).

Known as “Mr. Round Table,” Joe Albi was the Athletic Round Table’s president from 1920 to 1962. He was the brainchild and motivation behind the A.R.T. and spearheaded the construction of the stadium, and the Esmeralda Golf Course, located in Northeast Spokane. Albi and A.R.T. helped raise \$250,000 for the golf course and the construction of a club house, then gave the course and club house to the City of Spokane for use as a public recreation facility in 1956. Albi was instrumental in launching Spokane and the Esmeralda Golf Course as the site for the first United States Women’s Open Golf Championships, and as the site for the first two U. S. Senior Open Golf Championships. Capitalizing on Albi’s ideas, the Athletic Round Table invited pro-golfers Sam Snead and Ben Hogan to the tournaments, and paid \$25,000 in prizes, including two airplanes.

Joseph Albi served as president for other local organizations including the Spokane Club, the Spokane Country Club, and the Gonzaga Alumni Association. He was a charter member of the American Legion in Spokane and was active in the Knights of Columbus, the Elks, Kiwanis, and Sacred Heart Parish. A March 28, 1962 article in the *Spokesman-Review* credits Joe Albi as the man who has done “more materially and spiritually for sports than any other man in this community.” He was a respected Spokane lawyer, civic booster, and renowned financial supporter of Spokane athletics who, along with the Athletic Round Table and other organizations, was said to have distributed more than two million dollars throughout the

Spokane sports community. A *Spokesman-Review* article summed up Joe Albi's contributions and said, "He did more for Spokane and the Inland Empire sports world than any other man, ever" (May 9, 1962).

### **Architectural Integrity**

Built in 1913, the Albi House meets the 50-year age criteria established for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places. In addition, the property retains good integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and association, and conveys its significance as a Craftsman style bungalow.

### *Location*

The Albi House remains in the original location in which it was built in 1913.

### *Design and Materials*

The Albi House is a fine example of a Craftsman style bungalow. In contrast to the hundreds of plain, simple bungalows built in the vernacular tradition in Spokane from about 1905 to 1930, the Albi House is distinguished as an excellent example of a bungalow richly embellished in the Craftsman style. The house reveals the typical bungalow form with front-facing gables, a low-pitched roof, and a deep covered porch. Applied Craftsman elements include a jerkinhead facade gable that acts to flatten the appearance of the house, rendering it organically integrated to its building site. Additional Craftsman embellishments include very wide overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails, knee-brace brackets, decorative false half-timbering with stucco infill, narrow-width clapboard siding, infrequently found battered door and window surrounds, gabled bays with eave brackets, and a front porch supported by tapered brick pillars. Mature native Ponderosa pine trees are located around the house and were described and pictured in an article and photograph published on January 6, 1929 in the *Spokesman-Review*. The article's title says that "builders have made good use of native pines" and praises the Albi property as an "attractive house with a fine lawn for a setting, and shrubbery planting as a frame." The original trees and shrubs remain on the property.

The original design and materials for the Albi House are retained in the interior of the first floor, and on the exterior of the first and part of the second floor. The house retains its original footprint, overall bungalow form, and original wood siding. It also retains character-defining features such as the wooden false half-timbering; brick chimney; front porch design and materials; battered window and door surrounds; original den, dining room, living room, and family room windows with multi-paned upper sash; oak floors, and interior quarter-sawn oak woodwork including door and window trim and built-in bookcases, desk, and dining room buffet. Some original materials and design were lost when three windows in the kitchen at the rear of the house, four windows on the east elevation, and two second floor windows were replaced. In 1999-2001, two shed roof dormers was built on the house: one on the east roof slope and one on the west roof slope. Even with the addition of the new dormers, the house retains its overall low, horizontal bungalow form and character-defining jerkinhead facade gable,

clapboard siding, false half-timbering, battered porch piers, door and window surrounds, and original multi-paned windows in the foyer, den, living room, dining room, and family room.

*Workmanship*

The original exterior workmanship of the Albi House is evident in the original wood clapboard siding, false wooden half-timbering, battered door and window surrounds, and original windows with multi-paned upper sash. Original interior workmanship is found in the foyer, den, living room, dining room, and family room and can be especially seen in the oak floors, hand-rubbed quarter-sawn oak woodwork and built-ins, and the arched fireplace.

*Association*

The Albi House retains its association in Spokane as a single-family residential home.

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**Bibliography**

Albi, Joseph A. "ART's Exciting Years," Spokane, 1956.

Albi, Mrs. Robert. Personal interview with Linda Yeomans, 2001.

Eastern Washington State Historical Society, photo archives, Joseph Albi House, 525 East 12th Avenue, accession number L87-1.37247-28.

Polk, R. L. *Spokane City Directory*, volumes from 1889-2001.

Rosler, Bud. Telephone interview with Linda Yeomans, 2001.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1910, 1952.

Spokane County Assessor's records.

Spokane County building permits.

Spokane County warranty deeds, 1909-2001.

*Spokane Daily Chronicle*, various articles.

*Spokesman Review*, various articles.

Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet  
**JOSEPH & MAZIE ALBI HOUSE**

**Section 10**

Photo taken in 2001 of south facade of house.



Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet  
**JOSEPH & MAZIE ALBI HOUSE**

**Section 10**

Photo taken in 2001 of southeast corner of house.



Photo taken in 2001 of west elevation of house.



Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet  
**JOSEPH & MAZIE ALBI HOUSE**

**Section 10**

Photo taken in 2001 of east elevation of house (top photo) and rear of house.



Photo taken of south-facing facade in 1928.



Photo taken of Joe Albi in 1941.

