

# SPOKANE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES Nomination Form

**City/County Historic Landmarks Commission  
Sixth Floor - City Hall  
Spokane, Washington 99201-3337**

Type all entries--complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Armstrong House  
and or common \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number 1022 West Ninth Avenue  
city/town Spokane vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_  
state Washington county Spokane

## 3. Classification

<b>Category</b> <input type="checkbox"/> district <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) <input type="checkbox"/> structure <input type="checkbox"/> site <input type="checkbox"/> object	<b>Ownership</b> <input type="checkbox"/> public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private <input type="checkbox"/> both  <b>Public Acquisition</b> <input type="checkbox"/> in process <input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<b>Status</b> <input type="checkbox"/> occupied <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress  <b>Accessible</b> <input type="checkbox"/> yes restricted <input type="checkbox"/> yes unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> no	<b>Present Use</b> <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> military  <input type="checkbox"/> museum <input type="checkbox"/> park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence <input type="checkbox"/> religious <input type="checkbox"/> scientific <input type="checkbox"/> transportation <input type="checkbox"/> other:
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## 4. Owner of Property

name George Avellar  
street & number P.O. Box 334  
city, town Leavenworth vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state WA

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds etc. Spokane County Courthouse  
street & number West 1116 Broadway  
city, town Spokane state WA 99201

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title \_\_\_\_\_  
date \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local  
depository for survey records \_\_\_\_\_  
city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located within the National Register Ninth Avenue Historic District, the majestic Armstrong House serves as a welcoming gateway to the area, and stands on the street for which the district is named. With its massive, prominent portico rising the full two-and-one-half stories of the house, and supported by marble-white Ionic columns, the Armstrong House at 1022 West Ninth Avenue represents one of the best-preserved and finest examples of Neoclassical style architecture rarely found in Spokane. Built in 1910 for Lida B. and Major James Melville Armstrong, a Civil War veteran who lost his leg in the battle of Atlanta and an early Spokane entrepreneur, the house glistens a classic pristine-white against its red roof, red brick foundation, and the deep green trees and shrubs that envelope it. The 6000-square foot house sits squarely on three, large, tree-lined lots, and boasts a circular drive, a porte-cochere, and a 1910 outbuilding that once served as a carriage house.

Constructed in 1910 in the Neoclassical style - an eclectic fusion of Georgian, Adam, Early Classical Revival, and Greek Revival traditions (13) - the Armstrong House is an imposing two-and-one-half story, rectangular, wood frame building featuring a full-height entry porch with a lower, full-width porch. The capped hip roof, covered in red asphalt composition shingles, supports a series of small dormers leading to the servants' quarters in the attic. The pedimented roof dormers employ arched, multipaned double-hung sash windows and keystone fenestration reminiscent of the Georgian style influence (2). A string course of three small windows protected by a shed roof rests between two dormers at the rear of the house. Commanding the viewer's attention and projecting twelve feet from the building's southern facade stands a massive, pedimented portico supported by four, evenly spaced 24-inch wide, pristine-white, Ionic columns rising the full height of the house. The prominent portico retains a semi-circular window set in the gable, and displays deeply incised and classically planed entablature. Two balconies separating the first and second floors project from the building, and flank the columned portico. The balconies are protected by a closed, paneled balustrade providing maximum protection, and are supported by Tuscan columns. Both balconies extend beyond the east and west side of the building. The west extension forms a porte-cochere ushering a circular drive through the property.

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The house is clad in narrow, white-painted, three-inch wood clapboards. A rich, red brick foundation supports the narrow, whitewashed clapboard cladding resulting in a handsome combination of color and texture. A deeply planed, molded water table divides the exterior clapboard from the brick foundation. Below grade, stone and cement form the foundation that supports the brick. The foundation extends to and surrounds the building's 60-foot, full-width porch culminating in brick piers that flank the front steps leading to the raised porch.

A series of eight-over-one, double-hung, rectangular sash windows are symmetrically placed on the building's facade as well as the remaining elevations. The front entry, protected under the massive, pedimented portico, is embellished with two arched, multipaned windows and a decorative, balustraded balconet projecting over the transom-lit front door. The balconet is adorned with turned posts, dentil molding detail, and is supported by scroll-shaped brackets. The house's west elevation is dominated by a centrally placed, double-windowed balconet supported by three brackets. Decorative brackets also support the entablature above the windows, which are set directly below two roof dormers. Below the balconet is a small, arched, multipaned window capped by molded hood ornamentation. East elevation fenestration is characterized by an arched and keystone inset balcony protected by a turned-post balustrade. The balcony is supported by two small Tuscan columns on the north side, and a matching Tuscan pilaster on the south side. The rear, north side of the house employs a clapboard-clad, pedimented basement entry that projects six-feet from the house, and leads to the cellar. To the west of the cellar entry is found a classically planed entablature supported by scrolled brackets. It is believed that the window below the entablature has replaced the original former rear entry. With its base four-feet above grade, the entry may have opened to a raised landing that served as a loading or delivery dock.

The heavy, wood-paneled, 42-inch-wide front door displays Greek key design, and reflects a honey-colored burl wood facade and a walnut-stained tiger-sawn oak interior surface. It opens to a grand foyer measuring twelve-by-twenty-one feet with a solid oak floor, trim, cornice molding, and interior doors. The generous four-foot wide, walnut-stained, oak staircase features an open string course embellished with a wave pattern. Three turned posts on each riser complete the balustrade. Square Newel posts anchor the staircase as it rises and turns to meet the second floor. The open stairwell is lit from above by a stained-glass skylight.

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The expansive foyer opens on the east to a large front parlor and adjoining dining room. The cherry-stained woodwork, picture-rail molding, boxed ceiling beams, and green tiled fireplace lend a sense of classic formality to the room. The fireplace in the adjoining dining room employs a Craftsman style oak mantel adorned with an intersecting triglyph and disc pattern.

The interior of the house has sustained a 1937 remodel as the building's use changed from a single-family to a multi-family residence. In addition, stained glass windows have been added to many rooms, and plush carpet and wallpaper cover floor and wall surfaces. The basement reveals a change in heating systems from coal-fired to gas-fired steam heat. Concerned with heating his home throughout the long Spokane winters, Major Armstrong built two storage rooms that held the coal needed to heat his large home. Another striking feature found in the basement is the employment of two steel "I-beams" that support and transverse the breadth of the house - an application of building material unusual for the time the house was built. Floor joists were built for strength, and are constructed of massive two-by-twelve-inch wood beams.

Also built in 1910, a hip roofed, flared eave, rectangular, white clapboard-clad carriage house located behind the main building, comes equipped with a one room/one bath servant's quarter. Glazed and paneled doors open from the east facade of the carriage house, and meet with the driveway.

The property retains three lots allowing for 21,300 square feet. Mature maple and sycamore trees form a green canopy of shade over the street and the property. Many pine trees native to the area dot the estate, and are said to be nearly 200 years old. An evergreen arborvitae hedge, and a grape arbor intertwined through a metal cyclone fence protect and outline the property. With its sparkling white frame, marble-like columns, and red brick foundation, the classic lines of the Armstrong House are set in stark relief against the muted-green foliage surrounding the estate. The Armstrong House remains a well-built, well-preserved building attesting to the high quality craftsmanship necessary to build it. The home's fine Neoclassical style is unusual for Spokane, and sets the Armstrong House apart from other homes in the neighborhood. As an area landmark, the imposing Armstrong House sets the stage for the high-styled, opulent, turn-of-the-century neighborhood nationally registered as the Ninth Avenue Historic District.

## 8. Significance

### Period

- prehistoric
- 1400-1499
- 1500-1599
- 1600-1699
- 1700-1799
- 1800-1899
- 1900-

### Areas of Significance-Check and justify below

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> archaeology-prehistoric</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> archaeology-historic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> agriculture</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> art</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> commerce</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> communications</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> community planning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> conservation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> economics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> education</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> engineering</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> industry</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> invention</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> law</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> literature</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> military</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> music</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> philosophy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> politics/government</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> religion</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> science</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> sculpture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> theater</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> transportation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)</li> </ul> |
|---|--|--|

**Specific Dates** 1910

**Builder/Architect** Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

With its glistening white clapboard frame, massive marble-like columns, red roof and red brick foundation, the stately Armstrong House is set in stark relief against the deep green foliage framing it, and is reminiscent of the grand, antebellum mansions of the Southern States. Architecturally significant as one of Spokane's best-preserved and finest examples of the Neoclassical style - an architectural style rarely seen in Spokane - the Armstrong House commands a look of appreciation and wonder from passersby. Located on Spokane's prestigious South Hill at 1022 West Ninth Avenue at the intersection of Ninth Avenue and Madison Street, the Armstrong House ushers the way to the Ninth Avenue Historic District - a neighborhood district placed on the National Register of Historic Places due to its retention of excellent integrity reflecting the area's turn-of-the-century character. The house was built in 1910 for Major James Melville Armstrong, a Civil War veteran and early Spokane business and mining entrepreneur who died shortly before the house was built, and his wife Lida B. Armstrong who succeeded her husband as president of his company and oversaw the house's construction.

The Armstrong House at 1022 West Ninth Avenue is located within the Ninth Avenue Historic District of Spokane's prestigious South Hill on the street for which the district was named. Prior to 1883, the South Hill was unplatted and undeveloped land. Ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, and extensive basalt outcroppings characterized the area. A Spokane founding-father and wealthy businessman, A.M. Cannon, platted Cannon's Addition on Spokane's lower South Hill. The land development boom began, and the Second Railroad Addition was platted encompassing the area adjacent to Cannon's Addition. Major and Lida B. Armstrong built their house in this newly platted addition. The City of Spokane set sewer and water lines, paved the streets with red bricks, and laid trolley lines for the street cars that carried passengers throughout the South Hill. The trolley route passed by the Armstrong House as it traversed Ninth Avenue and Madison Street. Maple and sycamore trees line the neighborhood avenue providing a living, verdant street canopy. Affluent citizens of Spokane's first society families moved "up the hill" to the neighborhood. Noted Spokane architects were hired and commissioned to build large homes depicting the popular styles of the day as well as the expressive character of the homeowners. John Jamieson White, Jr. writes in

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his book, The Architectural Development of Spokane, Washington (22), that the period from 1905 to 1915 evidenced Spokane's "most productive building activity." He cites, "The same good architects that built the best in the commercial buildings happily turned their talents to the domestic buildings." Spokane's most celebrated architects of the time - Kirtland Cutter, Whitehouse and Price, Julius Zittel, A. Held, J.K. Dow, Willis Ritchie, Loren Rand, and W.W. Hyslop - "designed nearly all of the more notable buildings."

Homes within the Ninth Avenue Historic District employ a wide variety of styles including Queen Anne, Tudor Revival, Neoclassical; and modest Craftsman bungalows. White comments that classical revival in domestic architecture came as an "aftermath of the heavy embellishments of the clumsy Victorian styles" resulting in a "desire to achieve the other extreme of a severe simplicity in the white Corinthian-columned porches." The elegant Armstrong House, with its two-story pedimented portico supported by massive Ionic columns, centrally located doorway, and symmetrically placed windows achieves a fine representation of Neoclassical style described by White.

Major James Melville Armstrong, "a pioneer of 1883, and an influential and highly esteemed citizen of Spokane" (6), with his wife Lida, designed and built his beautiful Neoclassical home after the style with which he and his wife were familiar. Born in 1844 in Washington, Pennsylvania, and residing in Washington, Iowa, Washington, D.C., and Washington State, Major Armstrong spent much of his life in "communities named in honor of the father of his country" (9). The Neoclassical style, prevalent in homes and government buildings throughout the eastern and southeastern United States, symbolized the truth, honor, and classic Greek and Roman political ideals all sought for the newly organized post-Revolutionary War United States government. Major Armstrong - a veteran of the Civil War, a Columbia Law School graduate, and a register of land grants appointed by President Hayes - had his roots in classic government, and was duly influenced in his choice of home design. After serving as a land-grant register for Washington State, Major Armstrong was elected county clerk, then became treasurer and co-incorporator of the prominent LeRoi Mining Company - a member of the mining industry that became the catalyst for Spokane prosperity.

Major Armstrong was a heavy stockholder when the company was sold, and his mining investments brought him "splendid returns" (9). With his good fortune, Armstrong bought land and became co-owner of downtown Spokane's Hyde Block. In addition, he bought Spokane Machinery Company and Spokane Iron Works - two successful enterprises. His newly incorporated company held his name: the Armstrong Machinery Company. An advertisement in R.L. Polk's 1909 City Directory lists the company's function as

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manufacturers of mining and woodworking machinery, engines, boilers, pumps, pulleys, sawmills, elevators, logging engines, and ice machines. The Armstrong Machinery Company manufactured many of Spokane's first refrigeration machines - the forerunner to modern refrigerator compressors.

Major James M. Armstrong "became one of the most prominent residents" of Spokane, and "took high rank among the men whose enterprise and business ability developed and built up Spokane. He was determined and energetic, and his resolute spirit enabled him to carry forward to successful completion whatever he undertook. He never allowed the accumulation of wealth to in any way affect his relations toward those less fortunate, and was always willing to extend a helping hand where aid was needed" (9).

On June 11, 1873, Major Armstrong married Lida B. Murphy, a descendant to one of early America's most prominent English families and daughter of a successful Philadelphia attorney and editor. The Armstrong's had one child - a daughter they called May Edith - born April 17, 1880. Just three days later on April 20th, Major Armstrong received his appointment as land grant register to Washington State from President Hayes. As a new mother with her babe in arms, Lida Armstrong and her husband, Major Armstrong, pioneered the long, difficult journey from Washington D.C. to his new post in Washington State. The trip westward was made by rail to San Francisco, boat to Portland, and stagecoach over rutted, dusty, dirty roads to Colfax, Washington (11). Three years later with their three-year old daughter, the Armstrong's moved to Spokane along with the land grant office.

Major Armstrong and his wife Lida purchased the three lots on Ninth Avenue in 1907 for \$3900. The warranty deed held a legally binding covenant for five years from date-of-purchase that did not allow buildings to be erected for temporary or business purposes, or that cost less than \$2000. These early design and land use controls were intended to enhance and perpetuate the appeal and attractiveness of the area. With this in mind, Major Armstrong commissioned a spectacular two-and-one-half story home with twelve rooms that was reported to have cost \$15,000 - a very large sum of money in 1910 (10).

Certainly the Armstrong's were influenced in their choice of style and design by their familiarity with the Neoclassical style found in the eastern United States from whence they came. Lida Armstrong, who was from a socially prominent Philadelphia family, may have lived in and visited many homes representing the Georgian, Adam, and Early Classical Revival traditions that formed the "eclectic Neoclassical style" (13). Sears and Roebuck advertised many manufactured homes: their "Magnolia" was similar to the Armstrong House (21). Spokane's Finch House built in 1898

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by Kirtland Cutter may have influenced their choice of home style. The choicest building materials and most accomplished craftsmen were employed in building the house as evidenced by the well-preserved condition and striking characteristics of the building. Sadly, Major Armstrong, at age 65, died a few months before his beautiful home was completed in 1910. "During the last five years of his life Major Armstrong was an invalid, compelled to spend much of his time within doors" (9). During this time Lida Armstrong, at age 60, assumed the responsibility and arduous task for selling her's and Major Armstrong's estate at the corner of North Monroe and West Sharp (10), overseeing the building of their new home at Ninth Avenue and Madison Street, and moving their entire household from one building to the other.

Before his death, Major Armstrong hired attorney Don Kizer, and named him vice president of Armstrong Machinery Company. Family ties were strengthened when Armstrong's young vice president and attorney "married the boss's daughter." After Major Armstrong's death in 1909, Lida B. Armstrong succeeded Major Armstrong as company president. For 17 years Lida B. Armstrong served as Armstrong Machinery Company president, and worked shoulder-to-shoulder with her vice-president son-in-law, Don Kizer. Lida, daughter May, and son-in-law Don all lived in the big Armstrong House until Lida's death at age 81 in July 1931. Lida B. Armstrong, as her obituary reads, was a "true pioneer" of Spokane "for nearly half a century" (11).

Living up to the high standards his mother and father-in-law espoused, Don Kizer became a prominent political figure in Spokane serving as United States district attorney. He also served as treasurer for Central Business Property, succeeded Lida B. Armstrong as owner of Armstrong Machinery Company, and was honored as the grand lodge master of Washington State Masons.

In 1937 the Kizer's sold the Armstrong House to the Jorgensen's, who immediately quit claimed it to Ingvard Eskeberg. Both Jorgensen and Eskeberg worked for Union Sash and Door, a local planing mill, and eventually became the company's owners. Eskeberg spent \$3000 and remodeled the Armstrong House into a multi-family residence with five apartments. Later in 1937 he spent \$150 to add a three-car garage at the rear of the property.

Eskeberg sold the Armstrong House in 1954. It changed hands several times until Dr. R.W. Biggs and amona Vande Veegaete, former Alaska State speech pathology/audiology facilitator, bought the house in 1976. The house reverted back to a single-family residence after 39 years of apartment use. Allowing for efficient business, Dr. Biggs conducted his dental practice from the house until his death in 1995.



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In 1996 George Avellar, the present owner, bought the Armstrong House. Mr. Avellar, a retired airline pilot, is currently restoring the home's exterior. The interior will be remodeled to accommodate the home's intended future use: a luxurious managed care, assisted living senior residence of the highest quality. The plans to "beautify and improve the property in order to create a truly distinguished ... appeal that speaks of elegance, perfection, and care" (23) will lengthen the life of Major and Lida B. Armstrong's resplendant Neoclassical home - a magnificent showpiece attesting to the historic character of the Ninth Avenue Historic District and perpetuating turn-of-the-century charm. The Armstrong House - with its impressive Neoclassical style symbolizing truth, honor, and love of country - remains an area landmark, and with its stately elegance and grandeur, befits the man and woman for whom it was built.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See Continuation Sheet, Item Number 9, Pages 2 & 3

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated property 0.48

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Railroad 2nd L10-11-12 B68

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list all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_  
state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Linda Yeomans  
organization Historic Preservation date April 9, 1996  
street & number City of Spokane telephone 509-456-3828  
city/town Spokane state WA





**12. Signature of Owner(s)**

George L. Arledge  
4/25/96

**For Official Use Only:**

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Heard: \_\_\_\_\_  
Commission Decision: \_\_\_\_\_  
Council/Board Action: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk  
  
Approved as to Form: \_\_\_\_\_  
Asst. City Attorney

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR, City of Spokane

or

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIR, Spokane County Commissioner

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
City/County Historic Preservation Officer

