

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 **BEAR FRAME & AXLE GARAGE**

2. Location

Street & Number West 232 Sprague Avenue
 City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99201
 Parcel Number 35184.1210

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both		<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> residential
<input type="checkbox"/> object	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other

4. Owner of Property

Name Havermale Park LLC c/o ConoverBond Dev.
 Street & Number 157 S. Howard Ste. 600
 City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99201
 Telephone Number/E-mail 755-5555

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

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	Havermale Park Addition South 90 feet of Lot 7, Block 2.
Verbal Boundary Justification	Nominated property includes entire parcel and urban legal description.

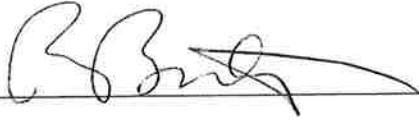
11. Form Prepared By

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	18 June 2003

12. Additional Documentation

Map	Spokane City/County plat map, 1999
Photographs and Slides	11 black & white prints; 6 color slides

13. Signature of Owner(s)



14. For Official Use Only:

Date Received: _____ Attest: _____

Date Heard: _____ City Clerk

Commission Decision: _____ Approved
as to Form: _____

Council/Board Action: _____ Assistant City Attorney

Date: _____

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

CITY ADMINISTRATOR, City of Spokane
or

CHAIR, Spokane County Commissioners

CHAIR, Spokane City/County Historic Landmarks Commission



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

Listed as a contributing property in the National Register East Downtown Spokane Historic District, the Bear Frame & Axle Garage was built in 1930 on West Sprague Avenue (Spokane County Tax Assessor Records). Influenced by the Art Deco style, the design of the structure is typical of industrial service garages built during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s in Spokane. The garage is a one-story brick masonry building with a basalt rock foundation and a flat roof. The building's interior is unfinished with original exposed brick masonry walls, open truss work, a concrete floor with a mechanic's pit, and multi-paned metal casement windows. Except for slight modifications to the exterior storefront of the building, the building retains good to excellent integrity in its original location, design, materials, workmanship, and association as an automobile garage.

CURRENT APPEARANCE & CONDITION

Site

The Bear Frame & Axle Garage measures 50 feet wide and 88 feet deep and is in good condition. It is sited on the south half of Lot 7, Block 2 in the Havermale Park Addition. Facing south on Sprague Avenue, the garage is surrounded by historic brick buildings that were designed as SROs and were built during the early 1900s. The garage is attached to the three-story brick masonry Mearow Block on the east and is adjacent to a three-story brick masonry building on the west; a narrow alley separates the garage from the building next west. Another narrow alley separates the garage on the north from the three-story Hale Block.

Exterior

The primary south facade of the garage is clad in multi-hued, wire-cut brick laid in stretcher bond. The east and west elevations and north rear of the building are constructed of brick masonry laid in common bond. The facade of the building features a symmetrical design framed by brick pilasters with a brick chevron at the top corners. A molded concrete parapet wall embellished with pyramidal corner projections highlights the roof. At street level, a center wood-paneled, accordion-fold garage door is flanked by two storefronts with two single entry doors. The storefronts have wood-framed merchandise windows and wood-mullioned transom windows. A uniform row of multi-paned metal casement windows illuminate the west and north elevations of the garage. A brick chimney rises from the northwest corner of the roof.

Interior

As it was when it was built in 1930, the interior of the garage is unfinished with exposed brick masonry walls and contains 4400 square feet on one floor. The floor is constructed of poured concrete and a mechanic's pit is located in the north end of the garage floor. Open truss-work is exposed in a vaulted ceiling.

ORIGINAL APPEARANCE & SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS

The original appearance of the garage differed only slightly from today. In 1977, the storefront windows were partially covered with vertical board siding installed by the Sylvan Furniture Company, who at that time owned the building. The interior of the building is original and has never been finished (some of the exposed brick masonry walls were covered with a coat of paint during the 1970s).

Area of Significance	Architecture, Commerce, Transportation
Periods of Significance	1930-1953
Architect/Builder	Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bear Frame & Axle Garage has been a public service automobile garage for 73 years since it was constructed in 1930 and is listed as a contributing property in the National Register East Downtown Spokane Historic Business District. The structure is an excellent example of the industrial garage building type that evolved due to local, state, and national transportation trends that spurred the construction of hundreds of thousands of similar garages across the country. With original Art Deco-style detailing especially seen on the building's facade in pyramidal parapet corner projections and pilaster chevron motifs, the design of the Bear Frame & Axle Garage is typical of public service garages built during the 1920s, 1930s and early 1940s in Spokane, WA. Although the highest concentration of automobile garages was built along West First, Second, and Sprague Avenues between Monroe and Maple Streets, which is an area west of the building, the Bear Frame & Axle Garage is representative of similar garages that were built less frequently east of Monroe Street to Division Street, and beyond to the city limits at Havana. Escaping demolition by the wrecking ball, the Bear Frame & Axle Garage is the only surviving garage on Block 2 in the Havermale Park Addition, which was once the site of three garages. Sandwiched between two multi-story, brick-masonry single room occupancy hotels that were built in the early 1900s, the Bear Frame & Axle Garage reflects part of a contiguous historic building facade along West Sprague Avenue that conveys construction trends and designs, building practices, materials, and workmanship that were popular during the early decades of the 20th century in Spokane. As a good example of the industrial service garage building type, the Bear Frame & Axle Garage achieved architectural and historical significance in the areas of "architecture," "commerce," and "transportation" during its period of significance from 1930 to 1953. It is eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Categories A and C.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Spokane grew from a small village in the 1870s to a bustling city with more than 125,000 residents by 1930. As depicted on a circa 1925 *Inland Automobile Association Map* of general automobile transportation routes in the city, Sprague Avenue was a highly traveled transportation corridor in Spokane and was an extension of US Highway 10 from Bernard Street east to Havana Street at the city limits. To accommodate and serve the needs of early automobiles, public service garages were built, dotting the streetscape along West and East Sprague Avenue. The Bear Frame & Axle Garage, located at West 232 Sprague Avenue, was one such garage.

Broadview Dairy Company

The site of the Bear Frame & Axle Garage was originally occupied by a single-family house with two outbuildings as pictured on an *1891 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*. In 1906 the Northwestern & Pacific Hypotheekbank (Northwestern & Pacific Mortgage Company) sold Lot 7 on Block 2, which was located in the Havermale Park Addition, to Spokane real estate investors and developers Edward J. Young and Fred Zahn. The cost of the property was \$15,000. A mortgage for \$25,000 was secured one year later in 1907. During this time, developers Young and Zahn built the Hale Block on the north half of the block (West 231 Riverside Avenue) and a one-story brick masonry building on the south half of the block at West 232 Sprague Avenue. The building housed the Broadview Dairy Company, "dealers in butter, milk, cream, and ice cream" (*1906 City Directory*).

The Garages

In 1908, Spokane developer, property owner, financier, "capitalist," and Fidelity Savings & Loan Company vice president Michael Lang and his wife Nora purchased Lot 7 (which included the Hale Block and the dairy) for \$100,000. In 1912, the dairy moved to North Washington Street, and the small brick building at West 232 Sprague Avenue was leased by the Spokane Everitt Motor Company as pictured in a circa 1912 photograph (Eastern Washington State Historical Society, L83-72.3 and L83-72.4). From 1915 to 1923, the building was occupied by a public service garage and autobody shop, which was owned by several service agencies, including James Stack Automobiles, Frank Warren Auto Repairs, and "tinnier" Ethelbert Jones. In 1923, William F. Henderson and his wife Lucille purchased the business interests in the garage. Listed in city directories from 1923 to 1928 as the Exide Service Station and the Henderson Battery Company, garage advertisements declared:

All Makes of Batteries Repaired

Your Battery Recharged in Eight Hours

Constant Potential System

The Henderson Battery Company was listed as manufacturers of the Aladdin Battery, specializing in "batteries built and repaired for all makes of automobiles, radio and farm light plants" (*1927 Spokane City Directory*). In 1929, the Henderson Battery Company listed their business as "battery dealers and service" (*1929 Spokane City Directory*).

According to Spokane city building permits, Spokane County tax assessor records, and visual differences between the circa 1912 photograph and a circa 1960 tax assessor

photograph, the brick building was rebuilt in 1930 with a new design that included a taller roof, concrete parapet, and a new facade. The building remained under the ownership of Michael Lang and was continually leased as a public service automobile garage by various dealers from 1930 to 1947. At different times, these included the Midway Garage, Grant-McKinley Company Auto Dealers, George Preston Auto Repair and Radio Sales & Service, the Economy Radiator Company, and the Hobby Clock Shop.

The Bear Frame & Axle Service Company

Beginning in 1947, the Bear Frame & Axle Service Company (owned by Edward L. Vacura) leased the garage for 48 years until 1995, at which time the Sylvan Furniture Company occupied the premises for use as a garage and storage facility. The Lang family owned the property from 1908 to 1968, when they sold it to Sylvan and Eleanor Dreifus, founders of the Sylvan Furniture Company.

ARCHITECTURAL & HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Associated with early 20th-century transportation trends and the advent and evolution of the construction of public service garages in Spokane, the Bear Frame & Axle Garage is one of the city's best examples of buildings of this type and is the only remaining historic garage on Block 7 in the Havermale Park Addition. The garage is a contributing property in the National Register East Downtown Spokane Historic Business District and conveys early 20th-century building trends, practices, designs, materials, and workmanship associated with the evolution and ever-increasing dependence on automobile transportation in the Spokane region.

Like many of the historic public service garages described in the National Register nomination for the West First Avenue Historic District, the interior and exterior design of the Bear Frame & Axle Garage conveys similar design features of the garages and retains its original 1930 design. These features, which are characteristic of the West First Avenue garages *and* the Bear Frame & Axle Garage, include the low, one-story height of the building, a decorative parapet, a garage door and street-level storefront bays with merchandise windows and transom windows, an interior mechanic's pit, and an exterior design that reveals subtle Art Deco-style influence, which is especially evidenced on the Bear Frame & Axle Garage in the corner pilaster's chevron design and the parapet's corner pyramidal projections.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Eastern Washington State Historical Society Photo Archive Collection. MAC, Spokane, WA. L83-72.3 and L83-72.4.

“General Route Map of Spokane, Washington.” Spokane: *Inland Automobile Association*, circa 1925.

Hyslop, Robert B. *Spokane's Building Blocks.* Spokane: Spokane Standard Blueprint Company, 1983.

“Lang, Catherine Obituary.” *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 11 Oct 1972, p. 51.

“Pioneer Killed in Hotel Fall.” *Spokesman-Review*, 29 Mar 1946, p. 6.

Polk, R. L. *Spokane City Directories, 1888-2003.*

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1891, 1902, 1910, 1927, 1953.

Spokane County Building Permits, Tax Assessor Records, Warranty Deeds. Spokane County Courthouse.

Photos 1 and 2 South facade of property.



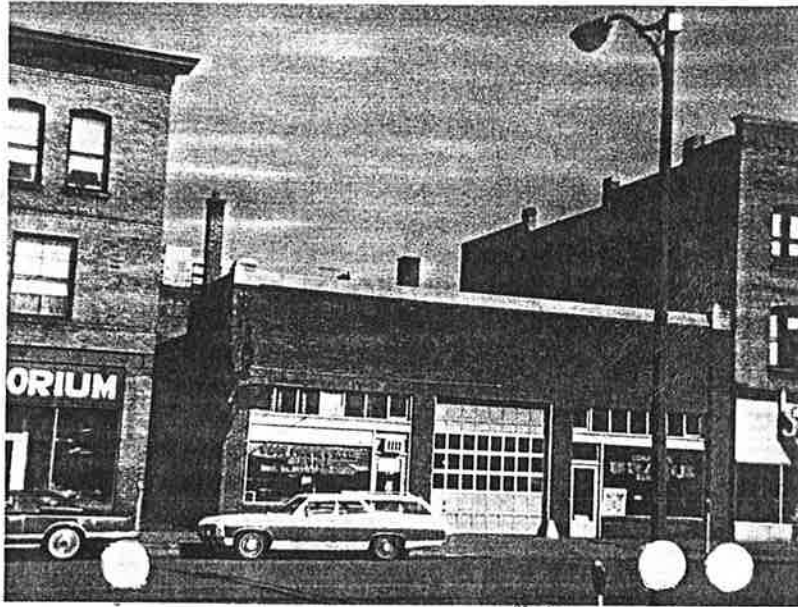
Photos 3 and 4

South facade details: roofline cornice and facade entrance.



Photo 5 Circa 1960 photo of south facade of garage (next to Mearow Block) from Spokane County Assessor's records.

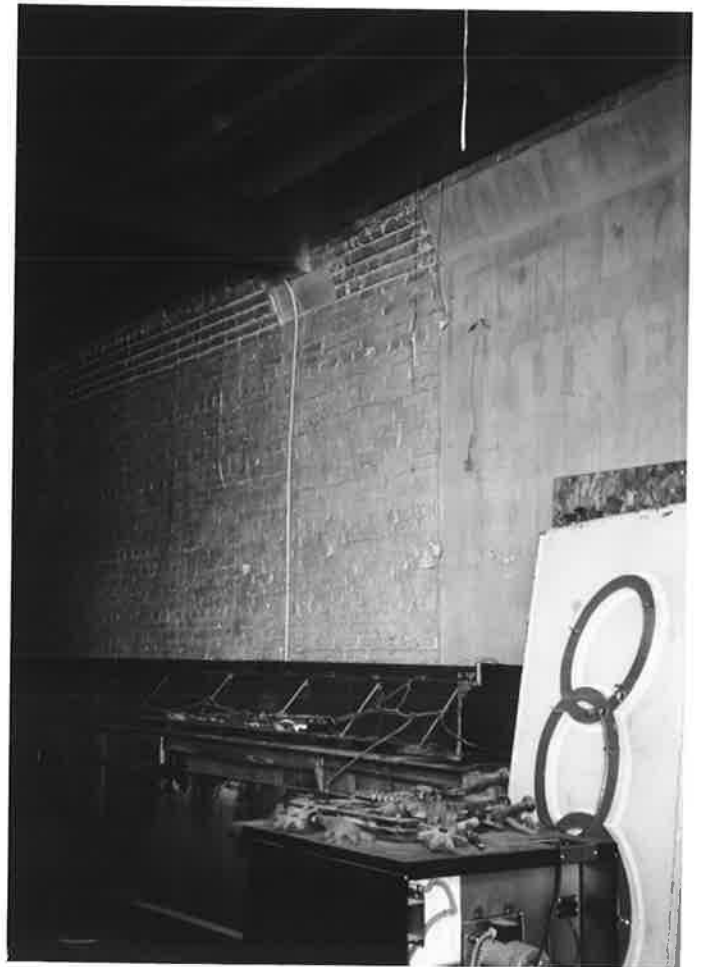
Photo 6 Interior of garage, looking north (photo taken in 2003).



Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
BEAR FRAME & AXLE GARAGE

Section 9

Photos 7 and 8 Interior of garage, looking northwest and northeast. Photos taken in 2003.



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BEAR FRAME & AXLE GARAGE

Section 9

Photos 9, 10, 11 West and north windows in garage and skylight.

