Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination

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

Name of Property

Historic Name And/Or Common Name			Thomas J. Graham House Rebecca Mack and Tim Frothingham House		
2. Locati	ion				
Street & Number City, State, Zip Code		1204 S. Adams Spokane Washington 9920 35193.2401	4		
3. Classi	fication				
Category of Property _X_buildingsitestructureobject	Ownership of Propertypublic _X_privateboth Public Acquisitioin processbeing considered	_X_yes, restricted	Present Use of Property agriculturalmuseum commercialpark educationalX_residential entertainmentreligious governmentscientific industrialtransportation militaryother		
4. Owner of Property					
Name Street & Number City, State, Zip Code Telephone Number/E-mail			Rebecca Mack 527 W. 13 th Avenue Spokane Washington 99204		
5. Locati	ion of Legal De	scription			
Courthouse, Registry of Deeds Street Number City, State, Zip Code County		s Spokane County Co 1116 West Broadw	Spokane County Courthouse 1116 West Broadway Spokane, WA 99260		
6. Repre	sentation in Ex	isting Surveys			
Title Date			storic Landmarks Survey State County Local		

Depository for Survey Records Spokane Historic Preservation Office

7. Description		
Architectural Classification	Condition	Check One
(enter categories from instructions)	_X_excellent	unaltered
	good	_X_altered
	fair	
	deteriorated	Check One
	ruins	_X_original site
	unexposed	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:

- _X_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.
- _X_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 < one

Verbal Boundary Description Booges Addition, N. 70 ft of Lots 1, 2, and 3, Block12 Verbal Boundary Justification This legal description defines the location of the

building and the lot.

11. Form Prepared By

Name and Title Stephen Emerson, Director

Organization Archisto Enterprises

Telephone Number/E-mail 466-8654; semerson@mail.ewu.edu

Street and Number W. 212 Dawn

City, State, Zip Code Spokane Washington 99218

Date May 2006

12. Additional Documentation

Map

Photographs and Slides

13. Signature of Owner(s)	
14. For Official Use Only:	
Date Received:	Attest:
Date Heard:	City Clerk
Commission Decision:	Approved
Council/Board Action:	as to Form:Assistant City Attorney
Date:	
We hereby certify that this property has Historic Places.	been listed in the Spokane Register of
CITY ADMINISTRATOR, City of Spok	cane
CHAIR, Spokane County Commissioner	rs ·
CHAIR, Spokane City/County Historic	Landmarks Commission
OFFICER, City/County Historic Preserv	vation Officer

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

7. Narrative Description: The Thomas J. Graham House is a wood frame residence with an east-facing façade. The plan consists of the 2½-story main section with a square footprint, a rectangular ½-story rear extension, and a wrap-around porch on the three exposed sides of the main section. The design is an eclectic blend of several different stylistic idioms. The main section exhibits several classic characteristics of the American Four Square style, with its square plan, semi-pyramidal roof with hipped dormers, and wrap-around porch. The steeply pitched roof, enclosed eaves, and porch balustrade, however, are indications of a strong Victorian influence. Other styles represented to a varying degree are Italianate, seen in the wide roof eaves with decorative brackets, and the canted bays, and Classical Revival, represented by the sets of fluted porch posts with modest capitals, the row of dentils below the porch eaves, and the broken pediment above the porch entry. Overall, the house displays a remarkable asymmetry in the placement of exterior features, with the exception of the location of the various dormers.

Most roofs of the house, including that of the main section, the rear extension, the wraparound and rear porches, the south side bay window, and all dormers, are hipped. The exception to this rule is the 2½-story canted bay of the north side, which is topped by an oversize gabled roof. All roofs are covered with composition shingles. The eaves treatment is variable. The roof of the main section has widely overhanging enclosed eaves with ornamental brackets. The eaves of the wrap-around porch are moderate in width, enclosed, and feature a line of decorative dentils beneath. Eaves of the rear extension, and of the dormers, are shorter, enclosed, and unembellished. A massive rectangular brick chimney emerges from near the southwest corner of the main section roof.

The primary exterior walls are clad with narrow horizontal clapboard siding, set off by corner boards and horizontal boards across the tops and bottoms of wall panels. Dormer walls are clad with wood shingles. The original foundation of the house is basalt rubble, but this is externally visible in only a few areas. A portion of the south foundation wall is covered with a veneer of concrete that has been incised with straight lines that mimic the appearance of concrete blocks. A portion of the north side daylight basement wall is covered with concrete. The wrap-around porch foundation is made of poured concrete, obviously non-original. It is unclear if the porch originally had a stone or wood frame foundation.

The wrap-around porch, in addition to the roof and eaves details discussed above, features fluted square wood support posts, arranged in pairs, except at the corners, where there are three posts. The posts are connected by a simple open wood balustrade. A broken pediment surmounts the front entry opening of the balustrade, which is accessed by simple poured concrete steps. Also, small wood scroll embellishments flank the cornice returns of the entry pediment.

The appearance and fenestration of each elevation of the house is unique from the others, and consistent only in their asymmetrical design. Each is described in turn below.

East (front) elevation: The roof dormer contains a set of three connected wood sash double-hung windows. At the second-floor level, A large wood sash casement window, with wood sash transom, is placed to the left, and a double set of narrow wood sash double-hung windows, each with separate wood sash transoms, is placed to the right. At the first floor level, a large wood sash casement window with transom, similar to the one above it, is placed to the left. The off-center and over-size front entry contains an old wood panel and glass door. In keeping with the asymmetrical design of the house, the front door does not even center with the porch opening and pediment.

South elevation: The roof dormer of the main section has three wood sash windows similar to that of the front. However, only one (the left one) is double-hung, the other two are casement windows that swing inward to open. The roof dormer on the rear extension contains two single pane wood sash casement windows. On the second level of the main section there are three wood sash double-hung windows and with wood sash transoms. The two on the left are narrow and placed near each other, but not conjoined. The other is placed to the right side of the wall and is wider. At the first floor level of the main section, to the left side, is a canted bay window with three wood sash double-hung windows. A metal coal chute door is situated in the foundation beneath the bay window. To the right of the bay is a single wood sash double-hung window. The rear extension of the first floor level contains two wood sash double-hung windows.

West (rear) elevation: The hipped roof of the rear extension peaks partially up the rear side of the main section roof. The two dormers of the west roof slope each contain two wood sash casement windows. Two similar casement windows are placed on the rear wall. The back porch is situated to the left side. It consists of a wood deck and stairs, with simple balustrade, and a hip-roofed canopy supported on the right by a square wood post and on the left by a partially enclosed electrical panel enclosure. The rear entry contains a wood door. An unfinished wood frame addition has built on the right side of the rear wall, with a gabled roof and exposed rafter ends. This is designed to shelter an old exterior basement entrance that descends to an access door.

North elevation: This side has a daylight basement with a separate entry, containing a wood and glass door, and a small gabled canopy, placed in the foundation wall of the north side bay, as well as several wood sash double-hung windows to either side of the entry. The wall of the rear extension contains three similar wood sash double-hung windows. Another such window is located on the first floor level of the main section. The most striking feature of the north elevation is the 2½-story canted bay window placed near the center of the house. The bays of the first and second levels each contain wood sash double-hung windows, trimmed with wide boards, with shingle-clad skirts beneath. One window of the bay's first level, facing the wrap-around porch, was replaced at an early date with a wood door. The bay is crowned with an over-size gabled roof that juts out beyond the bay, revealing decorative wood brackets. The face of the

gable is clad with wood shingles and a square window opening is currently covered with wood.

The interior of the house has been divided in various ways during nearly a century of use as an apartment building. For most of this time it has been divided into four separate units. Currently two units are located on the upper level, one is located in the daylight basement area, and the largest apartment occupies the main level of the building. This level contains several original features, including the open stairwell, newels, and banisters of the entry foyer, interior walk through arches with rounded upper corners, and a remarkable living room fireplace with polychromatic tile cladding, wood surround, and a mantelpiece containing a mirror. The kitchen has been thoroughly modernized. Except for windows, original features have been largely removed from the other three apartments.

Alterations: The Thomas J. Graham House retains remarkable integrity of its original exterior features. The most extensive alteration to the house is the poured concrete foundation of the wrap-around porch. Due to the lack of a known historic photograph, it is uncertain if the house previously had a stone foundation or a wood frame understructure. Although this foundation is an obvious departure from the original appearance, it does not appreciably detract from the historic appearance of the house and was probably instrumental in preventing further deterioration, or even removal, of the porch structure itself. Areas of the house's stone foundation that have been coated with concrete are compatible, and may be historic in and of themselves, unlike the porch foundation, which was probably the result of a relatively recent restoration.

Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, going back as early as 1902, are evidence that the basic plan of the house has never been changed, including the main structure, the wrap-around porch, the back porch, and both canted bays. The roof cladding has, of course, been replaced, probably several times, but the roof profiles, including that of the dormers, appear to be original. The narrow clapboard siding and shingle cladding appear to be original. The house was converted to apartments in the 1920s, resulting in the installation of non-original doors in both of the canted bays. One of these doors, on the north side, remains. It appears quite old, and may be original to the conversion period. The other door, in the south bay, was removed during the recent renovation. It was replaced with a wood sash double-hung window compatible with the original windows of the bay. The other windows of the house appear to be original except for those of the rear extension dormers and of the rear (west) elevation. The original windows at these locations had been replaced by metal sash sliding units at a relatively recent date. During the recent renovation, the metal sash units were replaced with the current fixed wood sash units, which are more compatible, if not original. Other minor alterations include the partial reconstruction of the back porch and the addition of the enclosed basement entry in the rear.

The interior of the house underwent significant alterations in the 1920s, when the original single-family house was converted to apartments. The basement apartment was probably created in the 1930s, resulting in further alterations. All of these room configuration

alterations are older than fifty years. Several significant interior features of the original house have been retained, as described above.

8. Statement of Significance: The house at 1204 S. Adams Street was constructed in 1896 for the family of Thomas J. Graham and his wife Charlotte. Although records at the Spokane County Tax Assessors Office give the date of construction as 1899, the Polk City Directory indicates that the house was first occupied in 1896. Little is known about the Grahams. What can be learned about their years in Spokane can be gleaned from city permits and the Polk City Directory (Note: this source, from various years, is referenced throughout this document and is listed in the bibliography). The only clue that Thomas J. Graham was the first owner of the house comes from a faded 1890s permit to connect the house of a Mr. T.J. Graham, at 1204 S. Adams Street, to the city water main (All permits referenced are on file at the Spokane City Hall). From here the Polk City Directory picks up the story.

Thomas Graham and his wife arrived in Spokane at an auspicious time. The city and the region were recovering from the financial crisis sometimes called the "Panic of 1893." Among the first to suffer in Spokane was pioneer A.M. Cannon, who had overextended his investments, some of which subsequently failed. When he was denied funding from local banks to recoup, the bank that Cannon had founded, the Bank of Spokane Falls, closed its doors on June 5, 1893, insolvent. Within just days, a chain reaction of panic closed other major banks and people's savings were snuffed out (Durham 1912:449-450). Before things leveled out, many formerly rich men had lost their fortunes. When the Grahams arrived in 1896, the economy was well on its way to recovering. In that year N.W. Durham wrote: "Spokane stands on the threshold of a new career. It is not a boast to say that the outlook, as we stand in the dawn of a new year, is better than ever for further progress and substantial development. With the planning here of national government interests, the establishment of new productive industries, and the rapid growth of mining interests, Spokane's future is assured" (Durham 1912:477).

Apparently, it was the later endeavor that brought wealth to Thomas Graham. In the 1899 Polk City Directory, his occupation is listed simply as "mining." Like other newly flush recipients of the mining bonanza, he used his money to make more money through real estate and other investments. Between 1896 and 1898, he was in a partnership with James A. Odell, whose company (Odell and Graham) dealt in "Bonds, Warrants, and Other Investments." Their business office was located in the old Rookery Building. In 1902, Graham was dealing in real estate on his own, from an office in the Mohawk Building. During 1905, the last active year of his life, he was a partner in "Livingood and Graham," trading real estate with J.T. Livingood. Thomas Graham died in 1906, his listing in the Polk City Directory replaced by that of his wife Charlotte G. Graham, who was identified as the widow of Mr. Graham, residing at 1204 S. Adams Street.

The house that the Grahams had had built in 1896 was pretentious in the way that the nouveax riche can be. It was large and complex, with a porch wrapped around three sides, and high canted bay windows that looked toward Spokane to the south. It was among the first houses to be built high on the South Hill. Exclusive residential

development had begun along the lower reaches of the Hill and only gradually crept to the heights above. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (referenced throughout, for various years, and listed in the bibliography) of the period indicate that in 1891 the area between Cliff Drive and Manito Park had been platted but sparsely inhabited. The same source shows that even by 1902, houses in the vicinity were few and scattered. Also, notably, they were large, many with several stories, large porches, and carriage houses. The area was obviously the new location of choice for the city's well-to-do. The Graham house itself was accompanied by a separate 1½-story carriage house, where Mr. Graham undoubtedly stabled the horse and carriage that took his family on Sunday drives and possibly to his place of work downtown.

The information available on the Thomas Graham family leaves much unanswered. Although Mr. Graham was quite well off, it is apparent that he was not one of the town's more visible or news-worthy people. He does not appear in either of the primary "mug books" of the period, those issued by Jonathan Edwards and N.W. Durham (Durham 1912; Edwards 1900). In Durham's book, the author meticulously records political and economic events during the years between 1896 and 1906, years when the Grahams lived in the house on Adams Street. Despite the voluminous listing of the names of many, many men, and a lesser number of women, neither of the Grahams is mentioned. Likewise they are not listed in any of the *Spokesman-Review* indices for those years. So it seems apparent that the Grahams were but one family among the many that found passing prosperity during the years that Spokane was experiencing growth and affluence never seen before or since.

Following Thomas Graham's death in 1906, the family's fortunes declined. One of his two sons attempted to carry on the family real estate business, but failed to do so. In 1905, the Polk City Directory lists son Thomas L. Graham as an associate of "Livingood and Graham," his father's company. The next year, following the father's death, Thomas L. Graham and John T. Livingood are named as the proprietors of the "Northwest Bureau of Information," located at 814½ Riverside Avenue, dealing in "Real Estate, Rentals, Business Chances." This company, with the optimistic sounding name, evidently blew its business chances. In 1907, Thomas L. Graham has no listed occupation whatsoever, while John T. Livingood had become a carpenter, perhaps reverting to an occupation in which he was engaged before his heady days as a real estate dealer. Mr. Livingood toils as a carpenter until 1908, after which he disappears from the record. Thomas L. Graham continues to be listed in the Polk City Directory until 1911, never with a stated occupation. He appears to have died in 1912, with his younger brother moving into Thomas's house at 2418 E. Mission Avenue.

John H. Graham, the younger son of Thomas and Charlotte, never had a chance to make a go at the real estate game. He was trained as a tinner (sheet metal worker) by the Brown Brothers Company while still living with his mother Charlotte at the 1204 S. Adams home. The next year, 1907, John had been hired by H-M Hardware. He was still living with his mother at the time, but a year later he had acquired his own house, at 1208 E. Indiana Avenue. John Graham went back to the Brown Brothers Company in 1908. He remained single for some time, moving from house to house, including his brother

Thomas's place in 1912, finally settling at Vera, in the Spokane Valley. He married his wife Leonora in 1918. The next year, the Polk City Directory lists a John H. Graham employed as a window trimmer, a person who sets up store window displays. It is uncertain if this is the same son of Thomas and Charlotte Graham who was a sheet metal worker. There are never two simultaneous listings of the same name, just the shift from 1918 to 1919. The occupation change seems odd. Also, following 1919, the window trimmer John Graham married twice in three years. If these men were one and the same, then John Graham would have married three times in four years. This seems somewhat doubtful for a man who had waited for ten years after leaving home to get married the first time. Whatever the truth is, after 1922 there are no further listings in the Polk City Directory of anyone named John H. Graham.

It is quite possible that Mr. Graham was relatively young when he passed away; the death may have come as a shock. Charlotte seems to have held onto the house; at least she is listed as an owner in an inspection permit issued in 1910 and signed by "Mrs. T.J. Graham." Sanborn Maps indicate that by 1910, the carriage house had been removed and another house built on the lot, with an address of 1210 S. Adams Street. The aforementioned permit reveals that Mrs. Graham owned that house as well. This house, directly south of the Graham House, still exists. Charlotte Graham never remarried, and continued to live in the house. She probably died in 1922. For unknown reasons, she moved from the original house to the newer one at 1210 S. Adams, back to the original house, and finally back to the newer house, before she disappears from the record.

The next time the Graham House is traceable is 1929, at which time it had already been converted to an apartment house with three units. The occupants are listed as James (tire company manager) and Elsie Bennyhoff, James (fieldman) and Beatrice Haworth, and H. Harleth (commercial artist) and Hazel Steinke. This was just a beginning of a long list of tenants that by 2002 would include no less than 185 persons. At first the house was divided into three separate apartments, but by the 1930s a fourth had been added, possibly the current basement quarters. The Graham House was among the first houses to be converted in a phenomenon that began in the 1920s, that of converting many of the large houses erected in the prosperous earlier years. This occurred as people moved on or fell upon hard times. As the boom years between 1896 and 1910 passed into history, the demographics of Spokane changed, with more of the population being of modest incomes working in commercial or service industries. Sanborn Maps indicate that many of the former mansions of the rich were being divided into apartments. This process quickened in the 1930s, following the devastating economic effects of the Great Depression.

The occupants of the Graham House reflect the changing nature of society as well as the general decline of the building, from semi-affluence to decaying low-rent tenement. No matter whom the residents were, one fact never changed: the Graham House apartments had an astounding rate of occupancy turn over; almost never did a resident or family remain for two consecutive years. The earliest residents held fairly lucrative positions. Among them were Arthur B. Salmon, manager of the Gilman Manufacturing Company, and his wife Mabel, William A. Wells, an architect and president of the Ce-Lock

Concrete Units Corporation, and his wife Lucy, Guy Andrus, assistant manager of the Masonic Temple, and his wife Frances, and Carl Ferguson, a teacher at Lewis and Clark High School, and his wife Lorraine. As late as 1940, one apartment was occupied by Thomas Berry, manager of the State Department of Public Service, and his wife Marie. But in general, as the Depression stretched on, succeeded by WWII, the character of the residents became more blue collar, including mechanics, salesmen, railroad workers, and truck drivers, mostly living with their wives. Occasionally a woman's occupation is named in the Polk City Directory, such as secretary or stenographer. Following WWII, and especially after 1950, many residents of the apartments were members of the armed forces, primarily the Air Force, again mostly married men with their wives. During the earlier years, the only single women residents were widows, but during the 1950s that began to change, with the occasional appearance of single working women, such as Irene Isabell, who was employed at Buchanan Chevrolet in 1955.

Despite the high turn over, apartments of the Graham House were seldom vacant until the 1960s. During that decade the nature of residents began to change again. More retired people and students were listed as occupants, people with limited or fixed incomes. This was probably an indication that the apartments were degrading into low rent affairs. Between 1964 and 1974, the building was known as the Robinson Apartments, the only period when the house had a commercial name. By the mid-1970s, the Polk City Directories had begun to downsize and become less efficient at providing information. Often no occupations were given for residents; later yet, only last names were mentioned. So the occupants became more and more anonymous. For most of the 1990s, much of the building was occupied by members of the Mills family, including Marjorie Mills and, presumably, several of her children. The Mills family residency represents almost a "dynasty" in the history of the Graham House apartments, dwelling in the building longer than any family since the Grahams themselves. This ended in 1999, a year when there were no verified residents in the house at all. By 2003, the building was in a state of near collapse. Paint was peeling, clapboards were loose, and balusters were missing from the porch rail. But the basic raw materials of the house remained. The lack of upkeep and disinterested nature of the ownership had actually contributed to this. Consequently, the current owners were able to restore the building while retaining the greater part of its original appearance.

Spokane Register Eligibility: The Thomas J. Graham House is eligible for inclusion on the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for its long association with the phenomenon of creating multiple unit apartments out of the houses of formerly wealthy Spokanites, a legacy of the passing of the city's so-called Age of Elegance. It is an unusually early example of such adaptive utilization, having served as an apartment building at least since 1927, and perhaps earlier. Its remarkably high turn over rate has made it one of the most lived in houses in the city and the roster of its former residents is a virtual catalog of the evolving demographic and social makeup of Spokane.

The Thomas J. Graham House is also eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, as an excellent example of the eclectic use of different architectural traditions to create unique and fitting residences for the newly emerging

affluent classes that populated Spokane, especially the South Hill, following the years of prosperity brought by mining, as well as other natural resource-based industries such as forestry and agriculture. The Graham House combines elements of four architectural styles: American Four Square, Victorian, Italianate, and Classical Revival. Local architects often created whimsical blends of different styles in an effort to please their wealthy clients, many of whom only recently had come into money. They often eschewed pure architectural styles, preferring to pick and choose among features that pleased them. Architects of the period were well-versed in many styles, and freely borrowed from various traditions to create residences that pleased them as well as their clients. This tendency is particularly noticeable in houses designed by Loren Rand. One can browse through photographs of Rand houses and notice the same approach to design as that used in the Graham House. In fact, in would not be surprising to discover that Mr. Rand designed the Graham House, the architect of which is unknown at this time. Pictures of some of his houses already listed on the local register bear a striking resemblance to the Graham House. Such comparison reveals that the Graham House is the equal of others as an excellent and largely intact example of eclectic residential architecture as practiced by Spokane's premier architects at the turn of the last century. As such it is eligible for listing under Criterion C. This eligibility is enhanced by the house's outstanding integrity of its historic appearance and original construction materials.

Furthermore, the Thomas J. Graham House is a contributing property of a potential Historic District in the vicinity of W. 12th Avenue and S. Adams Street. Such a district would be eligible under Criterion A, for its association with the history of this and other prominent South Hill neighborhoods and, under Criterion C, as outstanding and largely intact examples of the eclectic residential architecture that characterizes the more elegant neighborhoods of Spokane.

9. Bibliography:

City of Spokane, permits on file at city hall.

Durham, N.W. *History of the City of Spokane and the Spokane Country, Washington, Vol.1*. S.J. Clarke Publishing Company: Spokane-Chicago-Philadelphia, 1912.

Edwards, Rev. Jonathan. *An Illustrated History of Spokane County, State of Washington*. W.H. Lever.

Polk City Directory, City of Spokane. Various years.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, City of Spokane. Various years.

Spokane County Tax Assessor's Office.

Photo Index: Graham House

- 1. South and east (front) elevations, view to the northwest.
- 2. East (front) elevation, view to the west.
- 3. Front entry detail, view to the west.
- 4. East (front) elevation, view to the southwest.
- 5. North elevation, view to the southwest.
- 6. North elevation, view to the south.
- 7. North entry detail, view to the south.
- 8. North and west elevations, view to the southeast.
- 9. West elevation detail, view to the east.
- 10. West entry detail, view to the northeast.
- 11. West and south roof detail, view to the northeast.
- 12. South elevation, view to the northeast.
- 13. Entry foyer and stairs, view to the west.
- 14. Entry foyer and door, view to the southwest.
- 15. Same, with door open, view to the southwest.
- 16. Reverse of same, view to the northeast.
- 17. Fireplace, view to the northwest.
- 18. Bay windows, view to the southwest.
- 19. Kitchen, view to the southwest.
- 20. S. Adams Street south of house, view to the southwest.
- 21. S. Adams Street south of house, view to the southeast.