

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Condition

Check one

excellent

unaltered

good

altered

American Vernacular

fair

with Queen Anne elements

deteriorated

Check one

ruins

original site

unexposed

moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance.

LOCATION

The J. F. Strong House is situated at the southwest corner of the intersection of Strong Road and Austin Road on one of the highest rises of Five Mile Prairie. Five Mile Prairie is about 5 miles north of downtown Spokane. It is a 3400 acre plateau which rises almost 400 feet above the surrounding floor of greater Spokane. Five Mile was considered part of in Spokane County until 1966, when one-third of the South parcel was annexed to the City of Spokane by petition. Strong Road runs east-west across the prairie dividing, forming the boundary between the City and the County. The Strong House sits on a lot of nearly an acre in the shade of a few old Walnut and Black Locust trees.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Summary

The J. F. Strong House is a fine example of a Queen Anne House featuring many details typical of this style. The Queen Anne Style, originally came from England in the late 19th Century and was a popular domestic building style from about 1880 through 1900, and through 1910 in the Spokane area. The Strong House is a two and one-half story cruciform plan. It measures approximately fifty feet long and thirty feet wide. The north and south gables rise slightly higher than the east and west gables forming a cross gable. There is a one story porch wrapping around the front (north) elevation and connecting at the east and west wings. Patterned wood shingles cover the four gables of the roof. A cut-away bay window is located on the center of the east side on the first floor.

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Exterior Description

Completed in 1900 during the latter half of the Queen Anne boom, and the home of the region's first settler and prominent farming families, the J. F. Strong House is a simple rural home that is appropriately free of the gingerbread of its city cousins. The facade maintains the characteristic asymmetrical appearance in the placement of its doors and windows. There are two original front entrances, both facing north. The main entrance is slightly off center on the dominant front of the house.

This entrance, which accesses the front parlor, retains the original red fir door with decoratively carved wood appliqué. A twist bell awaits callers and the upper half of the door has a large single-paned window. To the west of this entrance is the large picture window of the parlor, with a leaded glass transom window above. The other front is to the left and rear on the north side of the east wing. This door is painted and less decorative. Both doors have original storm windows with switch-out screened insets.

The one story porch wraps around the front of the house to the east and east wings. The roof of the porch is hipped and has wood shingles. The porch roof is supported by eight columns of the Tuscan Order; a good example of the "free classic" style typical of Queen Anne architecture. Steps descend on both the north and east sides of the porch to the lawn and front brick walkway.

The Strong House retains its thirty-two 1 over 1 wood sash double hung windows. Most of these have original storm windows and screens. There is a large cutaway bay window on the center of the east wing. The middle panel of the bay features paired double-hung windows facing east. The north and south panels of the bay have single, narrow double-hung windows.

The first two floors have clapboard siding. Each of the four gables are clad with panels patterned decorative wood shingles. In ascending order, the shingles with plain rectangles, followed by alternating long and short imbricated rectangles, fish scales and sawtooth.. The top of the gables have additional rectangles surrounding a six petaled rosette of diamond-patterned shingles.

Interior Description

The interior of The Strong House contains a great deal of red fir woodwork. There is a large red fir front staircase which has never been painted. There is also a similar staircase to the third floor that is smaller and less ornate which also retains its original wood finish. There is an enclosed back stairway to the second floor from the kitchen. Throughout the house are the original Eastlake doors and most of the decorative hardware remains. The entire house, including the four bedrooms on the second floor and the three rooms on the third floor, have red fir flooring. The main floor consists of a parlor, dining room library, kitchen, pantry, and a bathroom which was added in 1925. There are newly restored pocket doors connecting the parlor and the dining room and the dining room and library. A swinging door separates the kitchen from the front of the house.

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Alterations

The two story south facing wing is the original part of the house, built as early as 1879. This was a simple two room two story house consisting of a basement, a kitchen, an enclosed stairway and the one bedroom. The rest of the house which gives Strong House its characteristic Queen Anne style, was added in 1900. Since 1900 the house has remained almost unchanged. During the 1920's a side/back porch to the southeast was enclosed to accommodate the addition of a bathroom and pantry. A rear entrance was enclosed at this time. In the 1940's, asphalt fiberglass shingles were installed over the clapboard siding; these are being removed by the present owners. In the 1960's the west facing side/back porch was also enclosed. There was a south facing window and a transom window above the back door which were enclosed at this time.

For many years a large lilac planted in the front of the house was allowed to overgrow and cover the entire front of the house at the first floor. During this time the use of the ceremonial entrance ceased and the common entrance which could be accessed from the side was used exclusively. And while the house itself remained almost unchanged, the east facing side of the house was treated as the front while the distinctive north wing was forgotten. After significant pruning the north facing front of the house is again visible and in use. As the current restorative work comes to completion the only external alternations of the house remaining will be the two enclosed back side/porches and the approach of the house from the front will be as it was at the turn of the century.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Settlement

1879-1900

1879

Specific Dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of significance.

Summary Statement

Built in 1879 and added to in 1900 the J. F. Strong House is one of the earliest and best preserved homes in North Spokane County. Located on Strong Road, Strong House is historically significant under Criterion A for its association with the first owner J. F. Strong, the first successful settler in the 5 Mile Prairie area, for whom the road was named. Originally located on a 160 acre homestead, the Strong House represents the early settlement of Five Mile Prairie and the agricultural heritage of the area. It served as the Strong Family home for over thirty years. Only slightly altered, the Strong House is one of the few houses on Five Mile Prairie to remain from before the turn of the century.

History of Five Mile Prairie

Five Mile Prairie and its cliffs can be seen by most residents of the city of Spokane as they look north from downtown.. It is with the traditional territory of the Spokane Indian Tribe, who named it Billymeechum, "home of the tall grass". Their ponies grazed on the four foot tall bunch grass that also served as home to the wild game that was plentiful.

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In 1872, early Spokane area settlers J. J. Downing and L. R. Scranton made an unsuccessful first attempt to settle on 5 Mile Prairie. Both Downing and Scranton were unable to overcome the hardships, including rattle snakes, coyotes, and the perceived danger of Indian uprising.

Seven years after this first attempt, in the spring of 1879, a second set of pioneers were drawn to the mesa. Climbing to the top and seeing for the first time the splendor of the untouched prairie, J. F. Strong exclaimed, "Beautiful land! Glorious in prospect! Grand in environment! Salubrious in climate! Rich in soil! Where is thy equal?" He wasted no time in becoming the first to settle on the prairie, which was later renamed Five Mile Prairie. Strong was immediately followed by J. R. Depew and J. Dozier and, later that year, by six others. Many of these settlers acquired land through the Homestead Act, which required them to occupy and improve the land for five years.

During the next fifteen years Five Mile Prairie was transformed from an untouched land of bunch grass and wool grass to the checkerboard landscape of a variety of farms. Every known type of deciduous fruit tree, berries of all kinds, as well as wheat, barley, and oats grew on Five Mile Prairie. The History of Spokane County, published in 1900 says of Five Mile Prairie, "Unsurpassed for grain, cereal and orchards as evidenced at the Spokane Fair." Pictures of the time showed exhibits labeled "Grown without irrigation on Five Mile Prairie".

Crops of all kinds continued to flourish until 1927 when a terrible dry freeze killed most of the orchards high on the prairie. Today, a few old apple and plum trees, in protected lower areas of the prairie, endure as a tribute to the past. After the freeze, fruit growers were unable to compete with orchards in the Spokane Valley who were establishing trees more quickly through the use of irrigation. During the depression years the face of the Five Mile farmer changed with the rest of the country. Most of the residents became truck farmers, growing diversified crops to be "peddled" in downtown Spokane.

From the early pioneering days Five Mile Prairie was becoming a community of its own. Common lifestyles and challenges of pioneering brought them together. The families of the first pioneers would gather together in one home gaining comfort and support from each other during trying times. By the 1930's, the people of the prairie united in the face of the Great Depression sweeping across the nation. The community continued to evolve independently as public and private buildings provided gathering places for the neighborhood. In the 1930's, Five Mile Prairie had a new brick elementary schoolhouse, a community center, a general store, even a dance hall. An apple packing shed became the home of the Five Mile Grange which is still in use today. Generations were born, grew up, married, and raised their families on farms on Five Mile Prairie.

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The Strong Family

In the spring of 1879, John F. Strong became the first settler on Five Mile Prairie. He and his brother Alfred W. Strong had come to the Spokane area from Illinois. They both set up farms on the prairie. Alfred soon returned to city life, becoming active in Spokane business as county assessor, and later was appointed registrar of the United Land Office. John, however, remained on Five Mile Prairie, farming 160 acres and establishing some of Spokane's first apple orchards. The small, 2 room, two story house that John and his young wife Susie lived in during their first years on the prairie now comprises of the south wing of the Strong House. Before the turn of the century, John and Susie had four sons and in the late 1890's they divided their residence between their small farm house and a home in the city in order to enlarge their home to accommodate their growing family. During this time the two room farm house was transformed into a large 2 ½ story Queen Anne. The J. F. Strong House still presides over Five Mile Prairie, the home of the Strong family for thirty-three years, and sits on Strong Road which was named in tribute to this first pioneer.

Context in the History of Five Mile

The farm life heritage of Five Mile Prairie is rapidly being absorbed by Spokane's expanding suburbs. The same attractions that make the prairie unique are threatened by the masses drawn to this area. For thirty years the community has endeavored to preserve the open spaces but yearly more is lost to new development. At the close of the 19th century about forty farms and farmhouses checkered the landscape. Today very few of these houses remain. Even twenty-five years ago farm life on Five Mile was threatened by development and it was reported that less than six original homes from around 1900 and before remained there. Today there are fewer than that. Among the remaining original homes on Five Mile Prairie the landmark J. F. Strong House is the best example of the area's historic past. It retains its integrity as a textbook example of the Queen Anne style of the Victorian Period while incorporating a structure predating that time the original 1879 wing of the house. As such, it is the oldest inhabited house remaining on Five Mile Prairie.

Current Ownership

Robert and Beth Fairfax purchased Strong House from Elmer and Betty Dunham in January of 1997, and live in the home with their three sons. Robert is a Certified Physician Assistant working in Orthopedics. They are currently restoring the house.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form. Use continuation sheets if necessary.)

Baker, John Milnes. American House Styles. WW Norton and Co., New York 1994

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property .91

UTM References

1 <u> / </u> <u> / / / / / </u> <u> / / / / / </u>	3 <u> / </u> <u> / / / / / </u> <u> / / / / / </u>
Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
2 <u> / </u> <u> / / / / / </u> <u> / / / / / </u>	4 <u> / </u> <u> / / / / / </u> <u> / / / / / </u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description and justification (Use a continuation sheet if necessary.)

Tract "B", Dunham City Short Plat No. 9600029-SP

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Beth Fairfax	date	November 24, 1998
organization		telephone	(509)465-9301
street & number	2015 W. Strong Road.	zip code	99208
city or town	Spokane state WA		

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A city map indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

- Representative black and white photographs of the property and streetscape.
- At least 8 color slides of the property and streetscape.

Application Fee

\$25.00 for residential property/\$50.00 for commercial property.

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

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Major Bibliographical References

Caley, Rachel. The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture.
Henry Holt Co. New York 1980

Dworin, Lawrence, Renovating and Restyling Vintage Homes. Craftsman Book Co.
Carlsbad, CA 1996

Labine, Clem. The Original Old-House Journal Compendium. The Overlook Press.
New York 1980

Poore, Patricia. The Old-House Journal Guide to Restoration. Dutton.
New York 1992

“Greening of Five Mile Prairie” Tri-County Tribune. May 3, 1973

Spokane City Directory 1899

1900 Census-Index Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census

Spokane Review Obituaries, June 21, 1930.

The History of Spokane County, 1900

12. Signature of Owner (s)

For Official Use Only:

Date Received: _____
Date Heard: _____
Commission Decision: _____
Council/Board Action: 10/11/99
Date: _____

Attest: *Seri R. Foster*
City Clerk

Approved as to Form:
[Signature]
Asst. City Attorney

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

John Albott
MAYOR, City of Spokane

or

CHAIR, Spokane County Commissioners

CHAIR, Spokane City/County Historic Landmarks Commission

City/County Historic Preservation Officer







