



**James A. Williams House**  
1225 West 19th Avenue, Spokane, WA

*Photo taken in c. 1911*

46-8

# 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 **JAMES A. WILLIAMS HOUSE**

## 2. Location

Street & Number 1225 West 19th Avenue  
City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99203  
Parcel Number 35302.3305

## 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 Roger F. and Kathleen M. Chase  
Street & Number 1225 West 19th Avenue  
City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99203  
Telephone Number/E-mail 838-1040

## 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\_\_  
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	Irving Heights Lots 5-6, Block 22
UTM Reference	Zone 11; Easting 467775; Northing 5275900
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	30 May 2001

## 12. Additional Documentation

Map	Spokane City/County plat map, 1999
Photographs and Slides	22 black & white prints; 13 color slides

13. Signature of Owner(s)

*Kathleen McChase*  
Kathleen McChase

14. For Official Use Only:

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Attest: *Lenny R. Givens*

Date Heard: 9/17/01 City Clerk

Commission Decision: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved as to Form: *Larry Warner*

Council/Board Action: 9/17/01 - Approved Assistant City Attorney

Date: 9/20/01

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

*[Signature]* - 9/20/01  
MAYOR, City of Spokane  
or

CHAIR, Spokane County Commissioners

CHAIR, Spokane City/County Historic Landmarks Commission

*Maria Z. Brown*  
OFFICER, City/County Historic Preservation Officer  
City/County Historic Preservation Office  
Sixth Floor - City Hall, Spokane, WA 99201

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

Built in 1911, the James A. Williams House is an excellent example of the Prairie style in Spokane. The house follows a modified rectangular plan with formal massing and has a low-pitched hipped roof. A 68-foot-wide, first-floor, full-width front porch is the home's most distinctive feature and extends past both ends of the house, forming wrap-around porch extensions, and an attached *porte cochere* on the east elevation. Another dominant feature of the house is the roofline and widely overhanging eaves of the house and porch. Together, the eaves cast deep shadows across the house that exaggerate the home's horizontal lines, rendering it organically integrated to the flat building site on which it is built. Constructed to withstand structural threats, the house is supported by a two-foot-thick basalt stone foundation, an iron I-beam under the first floor, and is completely clad in smooth, red pressed-brick veneer that covers 14-inch-thick brick masonry load-bearing walls--a structural feature infrequently used in early 20th-century domestic architecture. The interior of the house is a blend of Prairie and Craftsman style elements and features an open floor plan with a large central hall, clean lines, built-ins, and finished-oak woodwork. The house is located in an area of tree-lined streets and 50-foot-wide lots in the greater Cannon Hill Park neighborhood on Spokane's South Hill. Facing north, the house fronts onto West Nineteenth Avenue and is set behind a cultivated lawn that slopes towards the street. Also built in 1911, a garage echoes the house in design and materials and is located on the southeast corner of the lot. The house and garage are in excellent condition and have had little alteration since their construction. The garage and house retain all five elements of integrity: original location, design, materials, workmanship, and association.

**Current Appearance and Condition***Site and Exterior Appearance of House and Garage*

Located on the southeast corner of the intersection of West Nineteenth Avenue and South Adams Street, the James A. Williams House and garage are sited on Lots 5 and 6, Block 22, in the Irving Heights subdivision, one and one-half miles southwest of downtown Spokane. The Addition extends west from South Madison Street to Cedar Street, and south from West Fourteenth Avenue to Twenty-First Avenue. Together, the lots measure 100 feet wide and 142 feet deep, and are surrounded by single-family homes built mostly from 1910 to 1940. The Williams House rises two and one-half stories and forms a slightly irregular rectangular footprint that measures 48 feet wide and 36 feet deep with 1728 square feet each on the first and second floors. The house is supported by a basalt rock foundation. The exterior walls of the house are constructed of brick masonry and are clad in red pressed-brick veneer laid in common bond. The brick veneer wall cladding is smooth and unadorned except for a cut sandstone belt course that separates the first story from the second story just below the window sills of the home's second-story windows.

The dwelling is covered by a low-pitched hipped roof with composition shingles and flares slightly at the eaves. The widely overhanging roof eaves are unenclosed and are supported by extended scroll-sawn rafter tails. The north, east, and west roof slopes are each embellished with one hipped roof dormer, and the south roof slope features a shed-roof dormer flanked by two eyebrow windows. Two brick chimneys rise from the roof at the east and west elevations of the

house, and the west chimney is distinguished with three concrete chimney pots. A one-story porch spans the full width of the home's facade and wraps around the front northwest and northeast corners of the house. A *porte cochere* extends another ten feet from the east elevation of the porch. The majority of original windows in the house are symmetrically placed one-over-one, double-hung, wood-sash units. Exceptions are fixed plate-glass units located in the living room, dining room, and sun room; and original casement units located on the second-floor in the dressing room of the master suite, and on the third floor.

The facade of the Williams House faces north along Nineteenth Avenue and is the most striking feature of the house. It is distinguished with smooth pressed-brick veneer cladding, symmetrically placed fenestration, and a full-width one-story porch with an attached *porte cochere*. A dominant feature of the facade and an identifying element of the Prairie style is the porch and *porte cochere* that span a combined width, measuring 78 feet. The porch and *porte cochere* are supported by square brick pillars and a wide brick porch wall with cut sandstone coping. A small second-story balcony extends over the center entry of the first-floor porch. It is partially enclosed by a shingled wall and is supported by three square columns at the northeast and northwest corners. Decorative mortise-and-tenon joinery embellish the columns. A centered hipped roof dormer projects above the second-story balcony and is clad in wood shingles. Original galvanized metal downspouts are painted white and are attached to the northeast and northwest corners of the house.

The east elevation of the house is dominated by a one-story *porte cochere* that extends east ten feet from the first-floor porch wall. A one-foot-high sandstone stoop originally designed for horse-and-buggy access separates a paved driveway from the porch. A centered hipped roof dormer clad in wood shingles projects from the east roof slope, and fenestration on the east elevation forms a symmetrical pattern with original one-over-one, double-hung, wood-sash windows. The west elevation of the house features a centered hipped dormer on the west roof slope, symmetrical fenestration, and part of the first-floor front porch that wraps 12 feet around the northwest corner of the house. The rear, south elevation of the house is dominated by a first-and-second-story bay that features an enclosed sunroom on the first floor and an open sleeping porch with a brick porch wall on the second floor. The second-floor sleeping porch is supported by two square columns at the southeast and southwest corners of the porch. Located at the southeast corner of the house, a shed roof covers an enclosed one-story porch with a back entrance adjacent to the sunroom.

### *The Interior*

An original plate-glass and oak-paneled front door opens into a small vestibule. The vestibule features a built-in bench seat and wainscoting made of oak, an original brass and hand-blown swirl-glass light fixture, and original one-and-two-inch tan, brown, and rust-colored glazed ceramic floor tiles arranged in a random pattern. The vestibule opens to a large foyer and central hall that lead to a dining room on the east, a living room and library on the west, and a staircase and hall to the south. The spacious foyer is a focal point of the interior and is embellished with original solid oak floors, hand-rubbed quarter-sawn oak woodwork fumed and finished to a

golden-hued patina, and a 40-inch-wide formal staircase that winds up to the second and third floors. The staircase features an open string design with oak treads and risers, a stepped balustrade with square balusters, and a total of 12 square newel posts embellished with decorative carved and incised geometric designs characteristic of the Craftsman and Prairie traditions. A built-in oak bench seat is located at the base of the stairs in the foyer. Across from the stairwell, three sets of solid oak-paneled pocket doors slide open to reveal a dining room, a living room, and a library.

The dining room features oak wainscot, an oak plate rail, and a built-in oak buffet and china cupboard with multi-paned glass doors and original brass hardware. Designed as a food service feature, the buffet extends through the backsplash to the kitchen. The living room, located west across the foyer from the dining room, is a large rectangular room with a fireplace on the west wall. The fireplace features an oak mantel and a green-glazed, matte-finish ceramic tile fireplace surround and hearth characteristic of the Craftsman style. The south wall of the living room opens to a small library with a plate rail and built-in oak bookcases with glass doors. Craftsman-style brass-and-glass wall sconces are located in the library, and brass wall sconces similar to the room's original fixtures are located in the living room. The library opens to a central hall which leads to a powder room, enclosed sunroom and porch, a remodeled kitchen, and a narrow staircase that is located at the rear of the house and originally designed for use by domestic help. Ceiling heights for the first floor measure nine feet high.

A formal oak staircase located in the foyer winds up to the second floor which comprises four bedrooms, two bathrooms, two porches, and eight-foot-high ceilings. Except for the finished-oak stairwell, all of the woodwork on the second floor is painted white enamel. An original circa-1911 cast-iron and porcelain oval clawfoot bathtub, round toilet tank, and pedestal wash basin are located in the bathroom on the west wall. A dressing room with built-in closets and dressing table is located on the north wall and opens to a second-floor balcony. The oak staircase narrows to 36-inches-wide at the second floor as it ascends to the third floor. The third floor has two bedrooms, a bathroom with an original claw-foot bathtub and a wall-mounted wash basin, and an unfinished storage room. The basement of the Williams House is finished and features nine-foot-high ceilings, a concrete floor, and rooms for laundry, fruit and cold storage, mechanical and furnace equipment, and a large recreation area. Although existing original light fixtures in the vestibule and the front porch are electric, the house was originally built to accommodate both gas and electric lighting.

#### *The Garage and Garden*

The garage is a one-and-one-half story brick masonry building that measures 16 feet wide and 18 feet deep, and reflects the design and materials used on the house. The garage has red pressed-brick veneer wall cladding, a low-pitched hipped roof, widely overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails, and four dormers centered one each on the north, south, east, and west roof slopes. Two pairs of carriage house doors with divided lights open from the north facade of the garage. The brick veneer covering the west elevation of the garage is painted white. The interior of the garage is unfinished.

The garage was originally designed with one carriage house door that was replaced with a pair of doors after 1936. In 1959, an “Esther Williams” patented swimming pool made of poured concrete with a vinyl liner was constructed below grade just west of the garage, and the brick veneer on the west elevation of the garage was painted white.

The garden and pond located in the southwest corner of the property were originally designed by Mrs. Williams and constructed during the 1920s. Although a replacement water pump was installed in the 1990s, the original design for the garden and pond, and some of the plantings, remain. A Horse Chestnut tree and a Mountain Ash tree planted by Mrs. Williams provide a canopy of shade over the garden and a molded concrete bench, part of the original Williams collection pictured in a circa-1930 photograph.

### **Original Appearance and Subsequent Alterations**

Very few exterior alterations have been made to the Williams House since it was built in 1911. The original wood-shingled roof was replaced with composition shingles in 1940, 1970, and 1994. Designed for sleeping in fresh air, the north and south elevation second-floor balcony/porches were originally enclosed with screens that were removed in 1955. Metal storm windows were installed over original first and second-floor windows from 1970 to 1990. The one-story back porch at the southeast corner of the house was partially enclosed in 1991.

First, second, and third-floor interior changes are minimal except for the original butler’s pantry and kitchen on the first floor. The butler’s pantry was removed and the kitchen remodeled in the 1950s, followed by another remodel in 1991. The circa-1991 kitchen remodel features an oak floor, built-in painted wood cupboards and cabinets, and period light fixtures. Shelves in a second-floor linen closet were removed and replaced with a stacking washer-and-dryer unit in 1991, and a bathroom on the east wall was remodeled in 1991. Except for the vestibule and the front porch, all of the original light fixtures in the house were replaced in the 1950s with architecturally inappropriate lighting which was then replaced by appropriate light fixtures in the 1990s. In the basement, a coal-fired boiler originally produced hot water heat that was piped to radiators located throughout the house. The original radiators remain, but heat is currently produced by a circa-1996 gas-fired boiler. The basement was renovated and refinished in the 1990s to include a large recreation room.



Area of Significance	Architecture
Period of Significance	1911 to 1950
Significant Date	1911
Builder	Cyrus Augustus Conant
Specific Date	1911

### STATEMENT of SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1911 for Spokane attorney James A. Williams and his wife Corinne Conant Williams, the well-preserved James A. Williams House is an exceptional example of Prairie-style architecture and was home to the Williams family for 33 years. The house was built by Corinne Conant Williams's father, Cyrus Augustus Conant, a Spokane general contractor specializing in bridge building. Remarkably intact, the Williams House is architecturally significant and is eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Category C.

### Historic Content

#### *Early Spokane*

The town of Spokane began in the early 1870s when trappers, lumber jacks, and pioneers settled in the area, joining Spokane Indian tribes who lived and fished along the banks of the Spokane River. Recognized as a center for mining, lumber, agriculture, and rail transport, Spokane's population surged to over 100,000 by 1910. Railroad magnates, lumber barons, mining millionaires, and wealthy businessmen bought land in the city and commissioned Spokane's most noted architects and builders to design and build their new homes. These houses ranged from grand, sometimes-ostentatious homes, to spacious yet more moderate dwellings built from designs regarded as modern and fashionable for the time. The finished homes and their groomed grounds attracted prospective homeowners and were catalysts and cornerstones for the subsequent settlement of residential neighborhoods throughout Spokane. The James A. Williams House located in the Irving Heights Addition in the greater Cannon Hill Park neighborhood is one such home.

#### *Irving Heights Addition and the Cannon Hill Park Neighborhood*

Before 1887, the Irving Heights Addition was undeveloped, unplatted land located on a plateau on Spokane's South Hill above a high basalt bluff that overlooks the city. The undeveloped plateau was characterized by gentle slopes and an irregular rocky landscape with verdant stands of pine and cedar trees, scrub brush, wildflowers, and native grasses. Rocky basalt outcroppings dotted the landscape, and Indians hunted wild game throughout the area. Between 1887 and 1889, the land was platted with 50-foot-wide lots located between a gridwork of streets. Sporadic homesites dotted Irving Heights Addition and the greater Cannon Hill Park neighborhood by 1905, but without city services such as fresh drinking water, underground sewer, and paved roadways, area settlement was slow. Then, in 1907, the nationally acclaimed Olmsted Brothers Architectural Firm of Brookline, Massachusetts arrived in Spokane. They proposed a comprehensive park plan for the entire city that included a small 14-acre park at the site of an abandoned brickyard located at West Eighteenth Avenue and South Lincoln Street adjacent to the Irving Heights Addition. Famous for their park designs of New York's Central

Park and Boston's "Emerald Necklace" park system, the Olmsted Brothers espoused ideals linking clean fresh air to renewed invigorated health. They promoted city parks as one of the best means of drawing urban residents outside. They claimed that parks were aesthetically necessary to cities, calling them the tool that could "provide and preserve landscape for the enjoyment of [all] people."

The Olmsted Brothers' design was originally called Adams Park, but was changed to Cannon Hill Park. The design and name change were adopted, and construction commenced in 1908. The park was completed with shallow ponds, manicured lawns, indigenous plantings, and gracefully arched bridges constructed of native basalt. The park's aesthetic appeal and close proximity to Spokane's central business district prompted developers to risk speculative success and improve the area with much-needed infrastructure. By 1910, roads were graded, concrete curbs and sidewalks were set, sewer lines were laid, fresh drinking water was supplied, electric street lights were installed, and street trees were planted. Public transportation was provided by cable cars that made a loop from downtown Spokane, and in 1922, the first building for Woodrow Wilson Elementary School was built on the northwest corner of Nineteenth Avenue and South Jefferson Street across the street from the Williams House.

Building restrictions and community covenants were instituted in the Cannon Hill park area and served as early land use controls designed to regulate and protect neighborhood development. The covenants permitted the construction of single-family homes, but prohibited the erection of apartments, stores, or business structures. The covenants also stated dwellings must be set back 25 to 30 feet from the street and must be valued at \$3000 or more. Settlement was robust and by 1945, Irving Heights Addition and the Cannon Hill Park neighborhood were completely developed. Most of the domestic architecture built in the area represented vernacular bungalows and small Tudor Revival-style cottages, but a few large landmark houses were constructed and intermixed with the vernacular homes. These landmark homes included high-style examples depicting architectural traditions such as Tudor and Colonial Revivals, Spanish Eclectic, Italian Renaissance, Craftsman, and one large Prairie School design represented by the James A. Williams House.

#### *James Albert Williams and Corinne Conant Williams*

James Albert Williams was born in Bethel, Ohio in 1870, attended college at the University of Oregon, and taught school in counties near Eugene. In 1892, Williams changed his career path and studied law under the direction of Eugene attorney A. E. Gallager. One year later, the two men relocated to Spokane where Gallager employed Williams as a law clerk, and the next year, as a law partner. Williams practiced law and partnered with various Spokane attorneys for the next 50 years, including his sons Richard and Jerome, and his son-in-law, Paul Cooney. During his law career, Williams was retained by the Cowles family who published the *Spokesman-Review* and the *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, the city's two most widely read newspapers, and was vice president of Northwestern Title Insurance Company. He was an active member of local county, state, and national bar associations and the Spokane Club. His offices were located in the Hyde Block, and later, in the Paulsen Building.

Dedicated to the practice of law, Williams worked until his death in 1962, at the age of 92, and was at that time declared to be Spokane County's oldest practicing attorney (*Spokesman-Review*).

In 1904, James A. Williams married Corinne Adeline Conant, and together they moved into the San Marco Apartments located on West Riverside Avenue. They lived there for two years and then moved to a single-family residence at West 525 Waverly Place. In 1911, the Williams relocated to their newly erected home at 1225 West Nineteenth Avenue, custom-designed and built for them. They raised five children--Roger, Jerome, Richard, Dorothy, and Jack--and provided a home from time to time for various grandchildren and Corinne's mother, Johanna Conant. The Williams employed a cook (Mary Saare), a maid (Rachael Horn), and a nurse/governess (Gertrude Schmidt); the nurse and cook lived in the house in quarters on the third floor. Even though they owned an automobile and had second-floor living space in the garage dedicated for use as a chauffeur's quarters, the Williams had no need for a driver. James Williams rode the street car to his office in downtown Spokane while Corinne Williams drove the family car. She was noted as one of the first women in Spokane to be issued a Washington State driver's license. The Williams family lived in the house until November, 1944, when they sold it to William and Alice Winkler for \$19,000.

William Winkler founded a concrete and road construction business in 1919, calling it the William Winkler Company. He was president of the company for 66 years and, according to newspaper accounts, was responsible for the company's construction of hundreds of miles of concrete sidewalks, curbs, and roadways in Spokane. William and Alice Winkler lived in the Williams House for 11 years and raised 11 children. In addition to fulfilling her home-based responsibilities, Alice Winkler was a noted civic benefactor who "volunteered thousands of hours to various civic, school, and church organizations" (*Spokesman-Review*). In 1955, the Winklers sold the house for \$20,000 to George Melvin, his wife Jackie, and her parents Nelson and Josephine Maxwell.

George Melvin taught school, Jackie Melvin played violin with the Spokane Symphony, and her father, Nelson Maxwell, worked as a dispatcher for the Great Northern Railroad. An accomplished musician, Jackie Melvin taught music lessons in the sunroom in the Williams House and hosted musicals and orchestra parties in the home. In 1961, Gonzaga University English literature professor William Safranek, and his wife Mary Lou, bought the house for \$30,000. They raised six children and lived in the house for 28 years. In 1989, Roger and Kathleen Chase bought the Williams House for \$152,000. Roger Chase is an attorney with Paine, Hamblen, Coffin, Brooke and Miller, and Kathleen Chase teaches Montessori Preschool. Their daughters Stephanie and Elizabeth are university students. Stephanie helped prepare the Spokane Register of Historic Places nomination for the James A. Williams House.

### Architectural Significance

#### *The Prairie Style*

In the context of Spokane, the James A. Williams House is a hallmark example of the Prairie style. Like many midwestern versions of the Prairie style documented by noted author Paul Duchscherer in his book *The Bungalow: America's Arts and Crafts Home*, the Williams House is constructed of brick masonry load-bearing walls clad in smooth brick veneer. Strong horizontal lines are revealed by the home's low-pitched roof, widely overhanging eaves, and one-story porch and *porte cochere* that together produce a wide span of nearly 80 feet across the face of the house. Of primary importance to the Prairie style ethic, the exaggerated horizontality and wide design of the house effectively integrate the dwelling to the expansive hillside on which it is sited.

The Prairie style is one of America's few indigenous architectural traditions and a "truly American art form" (Carley, 1994). The style was developed in 1900 by architects intent on establishing progressive ideals and standards of design independent of historical European references. The most influential architect associated with this ethic was Frank Lloyd Wright, who along with other Midwestern architects from Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, created the Prairie style. The style was developed specifically to relate a house design to the spreading horizon that dominates the wide, open prairie landscape of the midwestern United States. Wright believed that a building should appear to grow organically from its site and that the dwelling's beauty should be drawn from the anatomy of the building rather than from applied decoration. This esthetic was in complete juxtaposition to traditional Victorian ideals that promoted tall, vertically aligned dwellings draped in lavishly applied decorative embellishment. The Prairie style used undecorated natural materials and promoted new concepts of open interior space designed for efficiency and comfortable living. Driven by a relentless quest to emphasize horizontal lines that flatten and root the house to the ground, Prairie-style elements include low-pitched hipped rooflines; hipped roof dormers; widely overhanging eaves; two stories with one-story wings, porches and *porte cocheres*; eaves, cornices, and facade detailing that emphasize horizontal lines such as wide friezes, wide belt and dripstone courses, ribbon windows and porch walls; and porches with massive, square porch supports. Similar to the Craftsman style, Prairie-style interior design is characterized by an open floor plan with spacious rooms that radiate from a centrally located foyer, stairwell, or fireplace. Clean lines are revealed in natural finished woodwork, built-in bench seats, buffets, closets, cupboards, and massive fireplaces.

Even though the first Prairie-style homes were landmark examples originally designed for affluent clientele, the Prairie style's design concepts, centering around human scale and sensible plans, were embraced by American home designers around the country and helped shape a growing phenomenon for the time--the emergence of the affordable suburban house. Pattern books and magazines offered high-style and vernacular examples of the Prairie style and were distributed nationwide. The Prairie style enjoyed a span of popularity from 1900 to 1920, but the style quickly faded from fashion after the interruption of World War I.

*The James A. Williams House*

In 1909, James A. Williams bought two lots located on a wide hillside on Spokane's South Hill for \$2200. James Williams's grandson, Roger Williams, remembers his grandfather telling the family that he hired Spokane architect Albert Held to create plans for a large brick house able to accommodate a large family. James Williams was friends with Held and had become familiar with his work when he and his wife Corinne lived in the Held-designed San Marco Apartments, and when Williams occupied office space one floor below Albert Held's office in the Hyde Block. The family claims Held designed the Williams's new house in the Prairie style--a style more common to the midwestern United States than Spokane, but a style that was characterized by spacious living and efficient interior design necessary to support a large family. The house was built by Corinne Williams's father, Cyrus Augustus Conant, a Spokane building contractor who specialized in railroad bridge construction. Illustrating Albert Held's Prairie-style house design and C. A. Conant's building expertise, the Williams House is well-constructed with thick brick load-bearing walls designed to withstand the effects of seismic anomalies that occasionally occur in the area.

According to the Williams family, the brick masonry walls of the house may support more than the building. Roger Williams recalls the story about a young bricklayer who stole \$30,000 and tried to find a place to stash the cash. When questioned by James Williams (one of the attorneys working on the case), the thief said he hid the money in a brick wall he had just finished building. When Williams asked him where that was, the bricklayer answered that the wall was located in a big brick house--the one on West Nineteenth Avenue where the attorney lived. The original walls of the Williams House remain intact, and the mystery remains unsolved.

*Architect Albert Held*

Albert Held, was born, raised, and educated in the same midwestern area in which the Prairie School developed. Born in Minnesota in 1866, Held came west after learning the news of Spokane's Great Fire of 1889 that destroyed 30 blocks of buildings in the city's downtown core. In an effort to assemble necessary manpower, leaflets were distributed by railroads throughout the midwest and east coast of the United States imploring craftsmen, builders, and architects to come to Spokane to help rebuild the city. Albert Held answered the call. From his arrival in Spokane in 1889, until his death in 1924, Albert Held achieved success and was recognized many times for his superior designs and architectural work in the Spokane area. He was active in city planning and served on the Spokane Park Board. He was also the first architect in Spokane to join the American Institute of Architects. Among his many designs were the Holley-Mason Building, Home Telephone Company, Spokane Dry Goods Warehouse, Centennial Mill, the San Marco Apartments, Breslin Apartments, Knickerbocker Apartments, Ammann Apartments, and a number of schools including North Central, Webster, Lowell, Grant, and Lincoln. Held also designed single-family homes including the Armstrong House (1022 West Ninth Avenue), James Clark House (2308 West 3rd Avenue), Robbins House (2425 West Pacific Avenue), and the Reid House (2315 West First Avenue).

*Compare and Contrast*

The Williams House is one of the few Prairie-style homes in Spokane. The house features a typical broad Prairie-style house-form with a low-pitched hipped roof, widely overhanging eaves, and a wide front porch that work together to produce exaggerated horizontality. Even though the roof's exposed rafter tails and built-in interior design features are influenced by the Craftsman style, the house form, building materials, and overall horizontal appearance of the Williams House is indicative of the Prairie style. Situated on a broad hillside, the wide Williams House blends well with its building site. Built in the Irving Heights Addition, a neighborhood of small bungalows and Tudor-Revival-style cottages, the Williams House stands out as the only Prairie-style house and as the largest home in the neighborhood.

In Spokane, the Williams House can be compared to the Sengfelder-Bungay House located at 1321 West Ninth Avenue (designed by Kirtland Cutter and built in 1907), and a house located at 620 West Sixteenth Avenue (built in 1908). All three houses are large two-story dwellings erected within four years of each other. All three homes feature similar Prairie-style design elements including a low-pitched hipped roof, a symmetrically designed facade, a central hipped roof dormer, a one-story front porch supported by square brick porch supports and brick porch wall, brick veneer wall cladding, and simple one-over-one double-hung wood-sash windows. All three houses have similar front porches that span the entire width of the house, but the porch designs for the Williams House and the Sengfelder-Bungay House are most similar. Both porch designs feature extensions that further emphasize the horizontal lines of the houses.

At the national level, the Williams House can be compared to the Butler House located in Fort Dodge, Iowa. Pictured in McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses* (pp. 445) as an example of the Prairie style, the Butler House features a design similar to the Williams House. Both houses have two and one-half stories and feature a rectangular form with Prairie-style elements including a low-pitched hipped roof, widely overhanging eaves, a one-story full-width front porch supported by square brick pillars and a brick porch wall, an east-elevation *porte cochere*, brick wall cladding, and a symmetrically designed facade.

*Integrity*

The James A. Williams House retains excellent interior and exterior architectural integrity. Built in 1911, the Williams House meets the 50-year age criteria for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places. It retains the integrity of its original location on West Nineteenth Avenue and its original association as a single-family residence. Except for the kitchen and second-floor bathroom remodels, the house retains all of the elements of its original design, materials, and workmanship, and is exceptionally intact on both the interior and the exterior.

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WILLIAMS HOUSE  
 1225 W. 19TH  
 SPOKANE, WA.



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
 COUNTY OF BENTON  
 I, SADIE CLINE,  
 County Clerk,  
 do hereby certify that  
 the foregoing is a  
 true and correct copy  
 of the original.

of Spokane  
 certify that  
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**James A. Williams House**  
1225 West 19th Avenue  
Spokane, WA





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**PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION**

Photos 1 and 2: North facade of house. Photos taken in 2001.



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**PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION**

Photos 3 and 4: North facade of house. Photos taken in 2001.



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**PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION**

- Photo 5: Front porch of house looking northwest.  
Photo 6: East elevation of house looking southwest.



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**PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION**

- Photo 7: East elevation of house: see front porch extension and *porte corchere*.
- Photo 8: Roof overhang and exposed rafter tails.



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**PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION**

- Photo 9: West elevation of house.  
Photo 10: South, rear elevation of house.





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**PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION**

- Photo 11: Vestibule, looking northeast.  
Photo 12: Foyer and stairwell, looking south.



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**PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION**

- Photo 13:                Stairwell on second floor.  
Photo 14:                Stairwell leading to third floor.



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**PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION**

- Photo 15: Living room fireplace.  
Photo 16: Library bookcases.



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**PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION**

- Photo 17: Dining room wainscot detail (oak battens).  
Photo 18: Dining room built-in.



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**PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION**

- Photo 19:                First-floor kitchen.  
Photo 20:                Second-floor bathroom.



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**PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION**

- Photo 21:                Second-floor dressing room.  
Photo 22:                Third-floor bathroom.

