# **Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination Form**

# City/County Historic Preservation Office Sixth Floor - City Hall Spokane, Washington 99201-3337

1. Name of Property				
Historic Name	<b>Earl Browne House</b>			
2. Location				
Street & Number:	5807 South Dear	rborn Road		
City, Town or Vicintiy	Spokane			
County:	Spokane			
State:	Washington			
Zip Code:	99223			
3. Classification				
	0 11	g	<b>D</b> 477	
Category of Property	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
_x_ building(s) site structure	public _ <u>x_private</u> both _x_residence	_x_occupied work in progress	agriculture commercial educational	museum park
_ object	Public Acquisitionin processscientific	Accessible _x_yes, restricted	entertainment government	religious
	being considered	yes, unrestricted	industrial	
	transportation	no	military	other:
4. Owner of Property				
Name	Mark Mansfield	and Juliana Scham		
Street & number	5807 South Dearborn Road			
City or town State County Zip code	Spokane Washington Spokane 99223			

5. Location of Legal Description		
Courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.	Spokane County Courthouse	
Street & number	West 1116 Broadway/	
City or town	Spokane	
State Washi	ngton	
Zip code	99201	
6. Representation in Existing Surveys		
Title		
Date	federalstate	countylocal
Depository for survey records		
City, town		
State		
7. Description		
Architectural Classification	Condition	Check one
(Enter categories from instructions.)	excellent good fair	_x_unaltered altered
	_x_deteriorated	Check one
	ruins	_x_original
site		
	unexposed	moved

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

The Earl Browne House, built in 1908, is one of Spokane County's earliest and most intact historic homes. Sited on the west slope of Browne's Mountain – namesake to Earl's prominent Spokane family- the house is a two-story Craftsman style home that is well preserved and intact.

The Earl Browne House is surrounded by the developing suburb of Moran Prairie, yet remains visually separate from the surrounding grounds. The ornamental and practical placement of -now mature- trees, as well as the orchard behind the house, stand as evidence of cultivation from a different period. The Earl Brown house is positioned on the lower West slope of Browne's Mountain, namesake to the pioneering J.J. Browne family. The mature Locus trees on the property line would have originally tied into a continuous promenade to the Browne family

estate. These mature Locus trees, Horse Chestnut trees, and a Blue Spruce, the age of the home, intermix with native Pines to screen the house on all sides. Behind the house, the grounds promote the history of the house where approximately one acre is flush with a mature orchard of fruit trees that blossom in the spring. The Apple, Cherry, Plum, Apricot, and Pear trees that remain are what is left of what was once a much larger orchard and an estate that was home to J.J. Browne, his two sons Earl and Guy, and their immediate families. Today the Earl Browne home and property are surprisingly undisturbed in their major features and the home retains its architectural integrity; it is still an idyllic plot – an oasis on the hillside.

The Earl Browne house is a large home with over 4600 square feet of total living area, yet, despite its size, it blends into its surroundings. Its steep roof relates to the slope of the hillside. The massive, single gabled roof, mirroring the angles of the namesake Browne's Mountain, give the house a chalet appearance. This appearance is further emphasized by a series of massive, stacked, knee-brace brackets that seem exaggerated in their scale though are consistent with the Craftsman aesthetic, emphasizing structural form in lieu of ornament. The roof takes a cruciform line with the dominant central gable intersected by gables pitched across from each other. Hanging under the gable's eaves are wide bargeboard overlaid with a geometric motif. The Craftsman house is brick on the first level with an ornamental half-timbering and stucco on the upper story. The steep gables, barge-boards, and half-timbering with stucco infill promote a gothic aesthetic harkening to the English roots of the American Arts and Crafts movement. The house is exemplar of a Craftsman style home with Tudor-revival influences.

The house does not mimic the architecture of a gothic structure but freely mixes late-Medieval details. The decorative half-timbering suggests medieval English construction. The house incorporates many elements that are hallmarks to the Craftsman style: A Grand chimney with a large tail prominently featured on the North side of the house. The Flemish bond pattern of the brick adds ornamental detail - again, emphasizing the structural form as the ornamental detail. The chimney is capped with a massive single cut stone, and the porch and main floor windows all have sills of hand cut stone. The foundation is four courses of brick on which a cut stone façade is achieved in mortar. A theme throughout the house is solid craftsmanship that highlights material over ornament.

Centered under the peak of the roof, a single flight of stairs leads up 14 steps to a porch that runs the width of the house. The porch, under the protectorate of the upper story, is supported by four box columns. The porch serves as a threshold to the front door and, like many elements of the home, engage the inhabitants with the outdoors. A solid fir door opens directly into a living room that spans the width of the house subdivided by box beams and built-in bookcases to delineate a more formal living room from the den alcove. First impressions yield a warm generous space. A key feature as you first enter a unique conical shaped hammered copper and iron fireplace hood mounted on a stepped brick hearth to the left of the entry. A footing of slate tiles is worked into the wood floors. Beams box and frame the smooth plaster ceiling of the living room into a geometrical grid work of six squares. A prominent beam runs across the room separating the den alcove with its fireplace from the greater living room. These spaces are furthered separated by a split ceiling height that is lower in the den-alcove, creating a more intimate space with box beams running lengthwise to the fireplace. In the alcove, the picture rails and box beams of a richly stained fir further emphasize the rote geometry that plays in these

spaces and throughout the house. With the exception of the North wall, with its modest twin casement windows flanking each side of the fireplace, each exterior wall of the living room is framed by an oversized window, making the view – the outside – a dominant element inside. The sills of the windows are less than twenty inches from the floor. These windows provide a dramatic visage and like the front porch, and sleeping porch, the windows emphasize a strong unity with the surrounding landscape. The living room offers sweeping views to the gentle plains of Moraine Prairie to the South, the abrupt horizon line towards the West Plains area, and North towards Mount Spokane. To accommodate the windows, low, ornamental radiators with as many as thirty-two individual baffles run underneath the window openings.

A hallway connects the living room to every other room on the main floor as well as to the upper and lower floors through two separate and enclosed stairwells. Almost all of the original millwork and hardware is in place and intact. The millwork is a richly stained clear vertical grained fir and the hardware is brass and has acquired a subtle patina over the years. The more formal living spaces have floors of quarter-sawn oak.

Pocket doors open from the living room to dinning room. In the dining room, as well as the living room, original light fixtures punctuate the intersection of the box beams. The Earl Browne house still relied on gaslight and each of the main rooms are piped so that there would be a combination of gas and electric fixtures. The house is generously apportioned with lighting elements. The dining and living room have four electroliers with a central fixture that was both gas and electric. In the dining room, a bracketed plate rail aligns with the horizontal lines of the windows and a built-in sideboard. The glass panels of the cupboards house beveled glass and a mirror at the back of the sideboard reflecting the natural southerly light through grand sash windows opening almost from floor to ceiling.

The dining room connects to the kitchen through a butler's pantry. Commodious floor to ceiling cabinets flank both walls of the pantry, many faced with glass. The kitchen maintains its original footprint, but was remodeled in the early nineteen seventies to standards and style unsympathetic to house's architecture. Current plans for restoration keep the kitchen construction unified with existing elements of the house.

The main floor bathroom maintains its original character. The floor of individual circular tiles was discovered intact under linoleum. The room has a built in medicine cabinet with a beveled mirror and a generous claw foot tub. A pair of windows flanks the bathroom door allowing light to pass through the bathroom into the inner hallway.

Also noteworthy to the main floor is its study, a room with two doors opening into the main hallway and with an additional passage through a closet into a bedroom that is situated in the Northwesterly corner of the house.

A tall pocket door in the main floor hall opens to access the upstairs. The staircase leading upstairs is solid fir. The simple lines are enhanced by the natural decorative qualities of the grain. Balusters are turned and though fairly elegant and not overwrought with ornament. Light in the stairwell streams though an aperture that appears to be a window to the outside, but is actually an opening into an upstairs closet with another window to the true exterior wall. The

natural light is brought through this window into the stairway and across the open top rail of the staircase into the upstairs hall.

The upstairs houses four bedrooms, one of which, a master suite, adjoins the sleeping porch, recessed under the roofline. A combination of casement and double-hung windows is applied throughout the upstairs. Each room has coved ceilings, which follow in accordance with the rooflines and dormers framing above the spaces.

The basement ceiling is over eight feet high. The downstairs main attraction is a thirty by twenty foot billiard room as richly finished as the living room with boxed beams, picture rails and dark wood trim. The room has an oversized four-foot wide door that exits via a small flight of stair to the south side of the house. The doors and windows all have two casement windows that form an arch. This arched element is key feature to the face of the house as seen from the street. The billiard room has a large fireplace on the north wall and still retains the original andirons that incorporate aesthetic motifs from the fireplace's mantle. The billiard room has maple flooring throughout.

The Earl Browne home is exemplar of Arts and Crafts design and craftsmanship. The house stands today, very much as it did when first erected, constructed for the pioneering Browne family.

#### 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.
- x B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- <u>x</u> 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.) <b>Dates</b>	Period of Significance	Significant
Architecture, Commerce	1900-1915	1908

Commerce

Exploration/Settlement

Specific Dates	Builder/Architect
1908	Unknown

Statement of significance.

The Earl Browne House, built in 1908, stands as a landmark because of the significance of originating family contribution to settling and developing Spokane, as well, the home is architecturally significant as a good example of a Craftsman style. Earl Browne, son of J.J. Brown and brother of Guy Browne, was an important contributor to the Browne family's early pioneering in Spokane. Historically significant for its association with the prominent Browne family, the Earl Brown House represents early development of rural Spokane County and is a landmark to the homestead of one of Spokane's most noted pioneering families. The Earl Browne House is one of the few remaining historic homes in Moran Prairie and one of the most intact homes in Spokane County. The house and grounds have remained largely unaltered and provide a unique preservation opportunity to protect what has never been changed.

In May of 1908, J.J. Browne deeded acreage from his land on the west slope of Brown's Mountain to Earl. The Earl Browne House today is largely unchanged from its original construction in 1908. Earl Browne was one of two sons who carried on the legacy of their father, J.J. Browne, a recognized founder of the city of Spokane, figurehead of development of local arts and commerce and a patron to the first parks of the area (Bamonte, p. 12).

In 1878, J.J. Browne left the thriving metropolis of Portland (population around 15,000) and on a boat trip up the Columbia River, met the equally entrepreneurial and adventurous A.M. Cannon. Inspired by the natural resources and the waterpower available, they made their destination the place called Spokane Falls. When they arrived in the wild area, they negotiated with James Glover, who owned Spokane Falls, to buy half of the town-site, which at the time consisted of 54 people. J.J. Browne and Cannon then went back to Portland where J.J. Browne immediately made arrangements to move his wife and their 11-month-old son Guy to Spokane Falls.

Mrs. J.J. Browne describes her experience of arriving in Spokane Falls "I shall never forget my feelings that night as we drove into Spokane. We turned toward the river and drove down through a grove of Pine trees in the roadway that had been named Howard Street. As we swung up to the platform beside the little wooden store building on the southwest corner of Front my heart went down. Men roughly dressed in frontier garb came out on the platform to get the mail and see what the stage had brought. I felt that I was coming to a very desolate place" (Powers, p.210).

John J. Browne, father of Earl Browne, was born in Ohio, yet after his mother died when he was two years old, his maternal grandparents in Indiana reared him. After high school, J.J. Browne went to Wabash College, working during summer vacations and in the evenings after school to earn funds for his education. After college, he became a teacher and was given charge of the high school in Columbia City and also acted as superintendent of the schools in Goshen, Indiana. Seeking new challenges, J.J. Browne attended the University of Michigan where he earned a degree in law. He practiced law for a year in Columbia City, Indiana and afterward for four years in Oswego, Kansas. Maintaining his educational interests, he served for a time as county superintendent of schools. The call West was irresistible to J.J. Browne and he made his way to Portland, Oregon, where he entered the practice of law and also became active in the local schools; serving first by appointment and later by election as superintendent of the schools of Multnomah county. When J.J. Browne moved with his family to Spokane Falls, he already had years of experience of actively serving a significant role in education and practicing law. This was a foundation of his experience which played an important role in how he helped Spokane blossom to a thriving city in the years of his life there. "From his arrival in July of 1878 until his death March 25, 1912, John J. Browne transforms all he touches" (Powers p.211).

In the 34 years that J.J. Browne lived in Spokane, his contributions are so vast and significant that in a 1912 biography about him was written, "He has left his impress upon the commercial, industrial and financial development of this section of the state and has been equally active and helpful in educational and political lines"(Durham p. 756). In the realm of industry and financial development, J.J. Browne founded Browne National Bank in 1888. He also owned and operated several investment institutions: Browne Investment Company, Columbia Investment Company, and Prairie Development Company. J.J. Browne helped organize the Spokane Chamber of Commerce in order to help support local business. Along with Mr. Cannon, J.J. Browne saw a need for a local newspaper and as a result, established and for a time published the Spokane Chronicle. J.J. Browne later became individual owner of the Spokane Paper. On a political level, J.J. Browne was elected twice as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention and he helped draft Washington State's constitution. A year after he arrived in Spokane, he wrote the bill that created Spokane County out of a part of Stevens County. J.J. Browne influenced the

development of Spokane's public school system. He was on the school board for over fifteen years and was for a time the Superintendent of schools. J.J. Browne "...was of both a practical and progressive character and through his advocacy of improved methods the standard of the city schools was greatly raised" (Durham p.758).

After the J.J. Browne family first moved to Spokane in 1879, they built a small frame cabin and soon replaced it with a larger home at 1717 West Pacific Avenue. A few years later, J.J. Browne moved his family to a large mansion at 2216 West 1st Avenue and in 1885 J.J. Browne became Spokane's first millionaire. J.J. Browne divided and platted 160 acre preemption claim for what became Browne's Addition, the Inland Empire's most sought after residential property of the 1890's. Along with A.M. Cannon, J.J Browne donated 10 acres of land in the center of Browne's Addition to the city of Spokane for the Coeur d'Alene Park, Spokane's first park. In 1890, J.J. Browne purchased over 2000 acres on Moran Prairie and what is now called Browne's Mountain. On that property, just north of 57th Avenue between Glenrose Road and Palouse Highway, he built a large estate with a fifteen-room house, a barn and a creamery. J.J. and his wife, Anna lived here with the five children, Earl, Guy, Alta, Irma, and Hazel. He planted rows of Locusts, Linden and Maple trees along 57th Ave, many of which still stand today. J.J. Browne later donated part of his land and built Inland Empire Electric Railroad. The railroad route not only went to and from Spokane, it also extended to Fairfield, Colfax, Pullman and Moscow, Idaho. Not only did J.J. Browne bring the first electricity to Moran Prairie homes, he helped establish the school, grange hall, cemetery, and the Moran Methodist Church.

Browne's Mountain was named in honor of J.J. Browne's tremendous influence on the Moran Prairie. Because of their prominence other locations bear the family name as well, including Browne's Addition and Browne School. In 1907 and 1908, J.J. Browne deeded acreage from his land on the west slope of Browne's Mountain to his two sons Earl and Guy. Guy's land was at the east end of 57th Avenue and South Custer Road and Earl's land was located on Dearborn Road. The homes of Earl and Guy Browne still stand intact.

Earl Brown was one of the first children born in Spokane Falls (Spokane). When his father settled in Spokane with his mother and their first son – his brother Guy – they were one of the first eight families to settle the small town. Among many pioneering firsts that the family is noted for Earl Brown was one of the first football players at Washington State University. Browne, along with brother Guy worked alongside their father and served as principals in the family's extensive banking and investment empire. Earl Browne maintained the home at 5807 South Dearborn as his primary residence at least until 1915. In 1915 the family reorganized their assets. Earl, who had maintained a principal role in Spokane, moved to Coeur d'Alene during this time of business reorganization. The family continued to maintained and inhabited the property for thirteen years when, on February 15, 1921 Earl's sister, Irma B. Ross, sold the family's interest in the house.

The Earl Browne house is one of the few remaining building from the Browne family (J.J. Browne's home was destroyed by fire in 1936) and is one of the most intact historic buildings on Moran Prairie. The House is a two-story Craftsman style house with Tudor-revival influences. The home shares many of the craftsman details and has similar interior treatments as the Guy Brown house. The architect and builder of both the Earl Browne and the Guy Browne house

remain unknown. The Earl Browne house resembles the architect-designed J.W. Turner House at 527 E Rockwood Boulevard. Designed by noted Spokane architect Carl Jabelonsky, the Turner House was built three years after the Earl Browne House by prominent Rockwood homebuilder John E. Anderson. The J.W. Turner House and Earl Browne share general style characteristics; similar construction details; and like building materials. Both homes are exemplar of Craftsman style homes with Tudor-revival influence. Like the Earl Browne House, the exterior of the J.W. Turner House is a masonry and half-timber with steep gable ends. Both homes first levels are masonry with a Flemish bond pattern: the pattern of dark headers and red stretcher bricks create a near checkerboard pattern. The main entry of both homes is offset to the left of center that is approached by climbing a large staircase and crossing the front porch spanning the width of the home. Other elements of fenestration and false half-timber framing create a strong visual parallelism between the two homes. One of the key elements of the front façade of the Earl Brown House is the arched window providing light to the full basement. This characteristic element is also dominant too on the J.W. Turner House.

Architecturally and historically significant, the Earl Browne House remains well preserved and intact and stands as a landmark to the pioneering Browne family and their extensive contributions to the settling of Spokane and Moran Prairie.

#### 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Calloway, Stevens and Cromley, Elizabeth. *The Elemenst of Style, Revised Edition* – A Practical Encyclopedia of Interior Architectural Details From 1485 To The Present, Simon & Schuster: New York, 1996.

Durham, N. W. *History of the County of Spokane and Spokane Country, Washington*, Vol. I & II, S. J. Clarke Publishing Company: Spokane, 1912.

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June 24, 1923; August 26, 1928; September 29, 1929; March 23, 1966

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Turgeon, Kitty and Rust, Robert. The Arts & Crafts Home, Friedman / Fairfax: New York, 1998.

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#### 10. Geographical Data

Land Sq Feet

39936

Verbal Boundary Description and justification:

Brown Park Addition

Lot 3 Block 10 (excluding west five feet)

Parcel Number: 34023.0205

#### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title

Mark Mansfield & Juliana Scham

organization

date

04.20.01

street & number

5807 S. Dearborne Rd

telephone 509-448-3942

city or town

Spokane

state

WA

zip code

99223

#### **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.

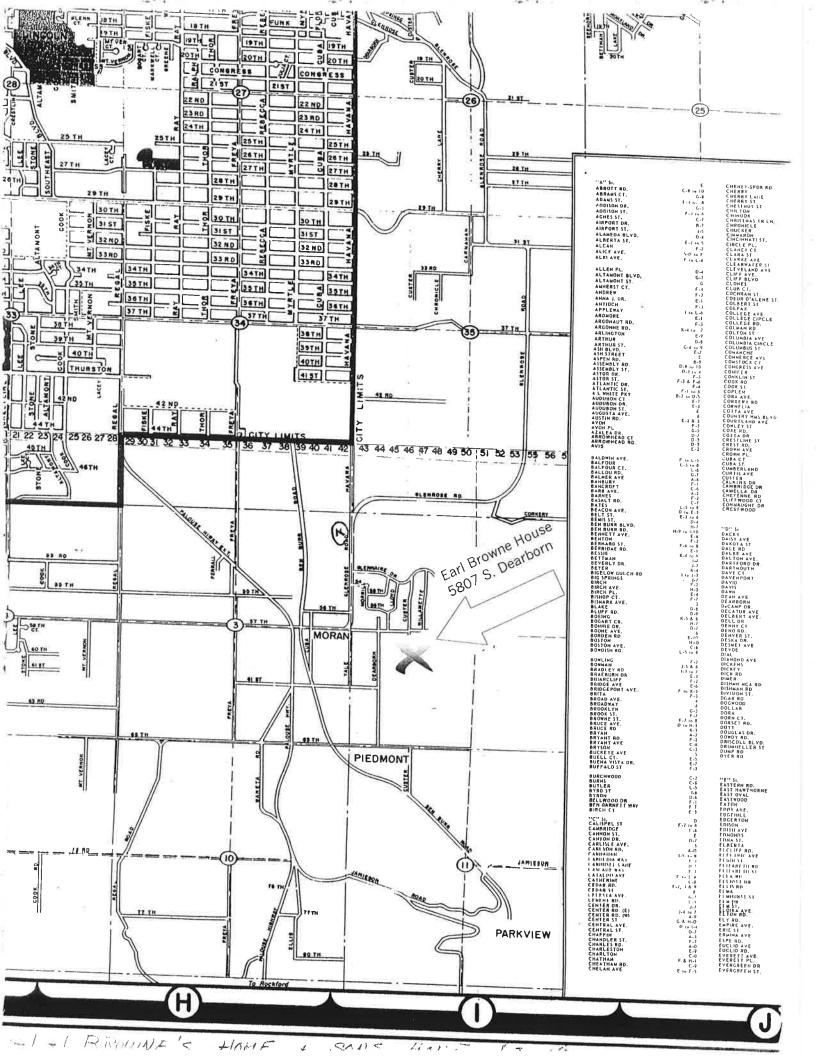
#### 12. Signature of Owner (s)

For Official Use Only:	
Date Received:	
Attest:	
Date Heard:	City Clerk
Commission Decision:	
Council/Board Action:	Approved as to Form:
Date:	<u> </u>
	Asst. City Attorney
We hereby certify that this property has been Places.	listed in the Spokane Register of Historic
MAYOR, City of Spokane	
	or
CHAIR, Spokane County Commissioners	
CHAIR, Spokane City/County Historic Landr	marks Commission
City/County Historic Preservation Officer	

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

# **Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination Form**

<b>Continuation Sheet</b>		Item Number
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# Earl Browne House 5807 South Dearborn















