

SPOKANE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Nomination Form

City/County Historic Landmarks Commission
Sixth Floor - City Hall
Spokane, Washington 99201-3333

Type all entries--complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The Commercial Block
and/or common

2. Location

street & number 1111 to 1119 First Avenue West
city/town Spokane vicinity of
state Washington county Spokane

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied (partially)	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site			<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object			<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes:restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes:unrestricted		
		<input type="checkbox"/> no		

4. Owner of Property

name John and Min Ha
street & number 110 South Madison
city,town Spokane vicinity of state WA 99204-0580

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc Spokane County Courthouse
street & number 1116 West Broadway
city,town Spokane state WA 99201

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Landmarks Survey: City of Spokane
date 1979 ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☒ local 10a-2
depository for survey records Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office
city,town City Hall, Spokane state Washington

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
--excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	--unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
--good <input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	--moved date _____
--fair <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Commercial Building sits on a double lot on the south side of First Avenue between Madison and Jefferson Streets. Three stories tall, the structure was built to accommodate commercial and retail uses at street level, below two stories of apartment units. The central structure in a city block comprised of four complementary and continuous brick facades, the Commercial Building reflects the trend toward simplified styling with restrained classical detailing that became the precursor of the Modern movement. Designed by architect Isaac J. Galbraith, the building was constructed in 1906. Its neighbor to the west, the Norman, was built in 1908. One lot beyond is the Jefferson, completed in 1909. To the east, construction of the Atlantic (today the Otis Hotel) began in 1910. Collectively, they reflect the mixed commercial-residential uses that still sustain this neighborhood on the west fringe of Spokane's business district. Except for surface and entry alterations at the street level, the Commercial Building remains intact.

Square in shape, the Commercial Building has a 100 foot facade and a height of 44 feet. Construction is of wood framing and brick over a full, below-grade basement with rock foundation. At street level, four identical storefronts are symmetrically placed on either side of a central entry that accessed second and third floor apartments. The storefronts are separated by cast iron piers joined at their crest by decorated metal tie beams. The central entry, now boarded up, still contains its original transom consisting of vertical panes of glass. Early photographs indicate similar glass transoms formed a continuous ribbon above the storefront windows.

The facade of the second and third floors is a uniform surface of red pressed brick laid in Flemish bond. Windows that feature label moulds with stops, also of red brick, form the only surface interruption. Above the third floor, a projecting metal cornice is supported by brackets over a simple string course, suggesting Italianate influence. Bracket placement corresponds with the position of the window stiles below. A sloped parapet with decorative coping conceals a flat roof. The raised center of the parapet bears the title "COMMERCIAL" in raised letters within a recessed panel. Original one-over-one sash windows remain. They are wood-framed with protruding brick sills. Over the central entry, they are paired, and separated by a mullion. Eight

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additional windows on each upper level are uniformly spaced.

On the storefront bays, bulkheads, transom windows, and display case glass have been refaced with rose-colored brick, wood paneling, and shingles. A rectangular sign, with the title "COMMERCIAL APTS", once hung in the center of the facade, in the space between second and third floor windows.

The south, or rear elevation, reached by means of an alley, reveals the narrow window well that transects the center of the building and opens second and third story apartment units to daylight. The well extends to the main staircase inside the front entry. The south elevation is faced with red brick laid in common bond and culminating in a simple brick parapet. The brick has been painted white on the first floor. Eight window/fire escape openings serve each residential level. Uniform in style and shape, with brick sills, and caps with radiating voussoirs, most openings have been boarded up. An original wood-frame window with double-hung sash repeats the window type found on the primary facade. Boarded street-level openings indicate each store was accessed from the rear by a plain recessed doorway between two windows. The only exception is the east quarter, which accommodates heating system vents. This elevation is recessed from the adjacent structures, which were built to a depth of 156 feet. The resulting space is used for parking.

County Assessor and City Directory records indicate there were forty apartment units on the upper floors, consisting of one and two rooms with common bath facilities. Interior floors on these levels are of fir, with lath and plaster walls and ceilings. While the plaster, particularly on ceiling surfaces, shows some damage, in hallway areas the baseboards, interior windows and transoms, and wood trim remain mostly intact, with slight evidence of wear. The main staircase, just inside the central entry, fills the space between walls and rises to a large landing that divides three smaller staircases of four risers each, that access hallways to the east, west, and south. Railings have been removed. Interior store spaces on the first level have undergone numerous changes to serve a series of tenants. Two store units, West 1111 and 1113 First, have been partitioned to accommodate more than one commercial tenant.

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8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance-Check and justify below			
--prehistoric	--archeology-prehistoric	--economics	--military	
--1400-1499	--archeology-historic	--education	--music	
--1500-1599	--agriculture	--engineering	--philosophy	
--1600-1699	Xarchitecture	--exploration/settlement	Xpolitics/government	
--1700-1799	--art	--industry	--religion	
--1800-1899	Xcommerce	--invention	--science	
X1900-	--communications	--landscape architecture	--sculpture	
	--community planning	--law	Xsocial/humanitarian	
	--conservation	--literature	--theater	
			--transportation	
			--other(specify)	

Specific dates 1906, 1934

Builder/Architect Isaac J. Galbraith

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Built in 1906 on the western fringe of Spokane's downtown core, the Commercial Building is historically significant for its association with pioneer Spokane business and civic leaders Harriet Ross Gandy, Doctor Joseph E. Gandy, and Lloyd E. Gandy. Both Joseph and Lloyd Gandy were active in local and state politics. One of the few remaining structures designed by Isaac J. Galbraith, the Commercial Building is architecturally important as a representative example of his work, and as an example of the architectural variety of mixed-use buildings that once dominated this neighborhood. The building and its adjacent structures were constructed in response to the explosive influx of working people that migrated to Spokane in the first decade of the century. From a social perspective, it reflects the development of the City during its greatest period of growth.

Harriet Ross Gandy purchased lots 3 and 4, the site of the present Commercial Building, in 1900 and 1902 respectively. Mrs. Gandy, among the city's earliest residents, came to Spokane with her first husband, Andrew J. Ross, in 1884. Two years later, they purchased the 480 acres of railroad company land that eventually became known as Ross Park Addition. Andrew Ross is recognized for numerous achievements. In partnership with A. M. Cannon and J. J. Browne, he helped build the first street railway system in the city and was a founder of the Exchange National Bank, Spokane's leading bank by 1900. The Rosses also held mining interests. Both civic activists, they founded the city's first kindergarten system and influenced the establishment of numerous schools. Andrew Ross was also the organizer and first president of the Spokane Pioneer Society, for which Mrs. Ross served as president in 1914. After the death of

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Andrew Ross in 1898, Mrs. Ross married Dr. Joseph E. Gandy.

Dr. Gandy was born in 1847 in Wisconsin and received his degree in medicine from the University of Michigan in 1873. He came west to the Washington Territory, settling in Tacoma in 1876. Serving in the Washington Territorial Legislature in 1879, he learned of the favorable climate and character of the Spokane region and, in the spring of 1880, moved to Spokane with his first wife and their two children. He purchased a tract of land from James Glover and built his first home on North Howard Street, where the Union Block stands today. In 1884, he was elected to the City Council and served as its president. He also served several terms in the newly-created State Legislature. Retiring from active medical practice in 1889 in order to devote more time to managing his property interests, he helped develop the Gandy Block on Sprague Avenue, The Tull and Gibbs building, the Union Block, and the Atlantic Building (today, the Otis Hotel.) He actively pursued projects that he felt would benefit the community, from railroad development to federal acquisition of the land that became Fort Wright. A veteran of the Grand Army of the Republic, having served both in the Civil War and in the Northwest Territories, he maintained his associations with the G.A.R. He, too, was an organizer of the Pioneer Society.

Together, Dr. Gandy and Harriet Ross Gandy developed the eastern two-thirds of the 1100 block of West First Avenue, first with the Commercial Building in 1906, and four years later with the Atlantic. Harriet Ross Gandy died in the early 1920's and Dr. Gandy died in June, 1934. Ownership of the Commercial Building and the Atlantic passed to Dr. Gandy's son by his first marriage, Lloyd E. Gandy.

Lloyd Gandy, born in Puyallup in 1877, spent his boyhood in Spokane, and graduated from the Spokane Public School system. He obtained his law degree from the University of Michigan in 1903, married, and returned to Spokane to practice law. Involved with community affairs, and the Republican Party, he was elected to the State Legislature in 1910. He represented Washington State's Governor at a reception in Washington D.C. honoring Theodore Roosevelt after he left the Presidency. An organizer and trustee of the Spokane Social Service Bureau and the Community Welfare Federation, he was also active in the Inland Empire Council for Boy Scouts. In 1959 he was honored by

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the Eastern Washington State Historical Society as an outstanding pioneer citizen. Upon his death in 1963, his property holdings on First Avenue remained in the Gandy family, passing on to his son, Joseph E. Gandy, II, until their sale in 1971.

Isaac J. Galbraith, a native of Pennsylvania, was educated at Wesleyan University and received his architectural training through his affiliation with a prominent Pittsburgh architectural firm, later establishing his own partnership. He moved to Montana in 1887, remaining there for twelve years and, while there, received the commission to design the Montana State building for the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. Like so many of his peers, he arrived in eastern Washington with professional credentials and an established reputation. During the twelve years he actively practiced in Spokane, he designed numerous downtown structures, ranging from the Gandy Block to the First Methodist Episcopal Church. Little of his work remains. An exception is the Holmes Block, a historic register property on North Monroe. Due to the brevity of his tenure in Spokane, and the fact that few of his buildings still stand, he is less known than many of his professional contemporaries. His specifications for the Commercial Building reflect the tradition of restrained style and subdued renaissance detail that began with the New York urban town houses and apartments of McKim, Mead, and White in the late 1800's.

At the turn of the century, the south side of First Avenue contained a series of wood frame structures that included dwelling units, a livery stable, hay and feed store, and a blacksmith shop. The Washington Stone Company occupied the south side of the current Otis Hotel site. A small frame Episcopal church stood across the street where the Greyhound bus depot is now located. The displacement of these buildings with a solid streetscape of brick structures three to five stories in height verifies the rapid transition of Spokane from a "boom town" to a sophisticated and urbane population center. Located between the business core and the prestigious Browne's Addition residential area, this neighborhood had both commercial and residential desirability. Just to the north and northwest, the present-day character of Riverside Avenue was emerging, with the construction of the San Marco, the City's most elegant apartment house, and the Carnegie Library in 1904, the Masonic Temple in 1905, and Our Lady of Lourdes Cathedral, begun in 1907.

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The Commercial Building and its adjacent structures were a response to the demand for temporary housing resulting from the influx of job seekers as Spokane experienced commercial expansion. One year after its disastrous fire of 1889, Spokane's population had grown to almost 20,000. In the following decade, between 1900 and 1910, the city's population nearly tripled, swelling from 36,848 to 104,402 residents. A 1910 profile of residents of the Commercial Apartments reveals a mix of male and female tenants, the majority unmarried, in their twenties and early thirties, and originating from the midwest. Most were employed, working in occupations that included salesman or sales clerk, waitress, cook, electrician, bricklayer, with an occasional professional. The majority of tenant stays were a year or less, indicating the popularity of such lodgings as temporary living quarters for residents preparing to either move up or move on. Occupancy rates remained high, with few vacancies, through the 1940's. By 1960, the vacancy rate had climbed to more than 50%. The Commercial Building ceased functioning as an apartment building after 1970, but assessor records indicate it was operated as a hotel, under joint ownership with the Otis Hotel to the east. Upper floors have been unoccupied since the early 1980's.

Commercial use of the four street level bays has remained almost constant until recently. Original tenants included the Palace Meat Market, and the Crescent Furniture Store. Long-term lessees through the thirties and beyond have included an auto supply store, office and store fixture supply company, jewelry shop, barber shop, and later, beauty salon. Two of the store fronts are currently occupied.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Durham, N. W. Spokane and the Inland Empire. Spokane, 1912
Edwards, Jonathan. Illustrated History of Spokane County. Spokane, 1900
Hyslop, Robert. Spokane Building Blocks. Spokane, 1983
Polk, R. L. City Directories. Spokane
Pioneer Title Co. Tract Books

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property ~~approximately~~ 1/3 acre (100' x156')

Railroad Addition; Lots 3-4, Block 19

Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state _____ county _____

state _____ county _____

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sally R. Reynolds, Consultant, Planning & Historic Preservation

organization _____

date January 28, 1992

street & number 7015 East 44th Avenue

telephone (509) 448-0311

city/town Spokane

state WA 99223

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12. Signature of Owner(s)

John H. Ha
Min Ja Ha

For Office Use Only:

Date Received: 2-5-92

Date Heard: 2-19-92

Commission Decision: Approved / Re-approved

Council/Board Action: Approved

Date: 12-13-93

Attest: Marilyn J. Montgomery
City Clerk

Approved as to Form:

Shirley Schwaif
Ass't City Attorney

We hereby certify that this property has been listed on the Spokane Register of Historic Places:

Sheri S. Barnard
MAYOR, City of Spokane

or

CHAIR, Spokane County Commissioners

Robert Ogden
CHAIR, Spokane City/County Historic Landmarks Commission

Katherine W. Barrett
City/County Historic Preservation Officer







