

Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination

Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office, City Hall, Sixth Floor
808 W. Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, WA 99201

1. Name of Property

Historic Name **COMSTOCK-SHADLE HOUSE**

2. Location

Street & Number 1106 West Ninth Avenue
City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99204
Parcel Number 35193.0607

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<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 type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> residential
	<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 Gerry & Patty Dicker
Street & Number 6708 S. Tomaker Lane
City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99223
Telephone Number/E-mail 448-0844

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 of Existing Surveys

Title City of Spokane Historic Landmarks Survey
Date Federal____ State____ County____ Local 1979
Location of Survey Records Spokane Historic Preservation Office

Rough Draft for 26 April 2006

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(see nomination, section 8)

Condition
 excellent
 good
 fair
 deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check One
 unaltered
 altered
Check One
 original site
 moved & date _____

8. Spokane Register Categories and Statement of Significance

Applicable Spokane Register of Historic Places Categories: Mark "x" on one or more for the categories that qualify the property for the 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	2 nd Railroad Addition, All Lot 7 & east 33 feet of Lot 8, Block 69.
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 & Design
Street, City, State, Zip Code	501 West 27 th Avenue, Spokane, WA 99203
Telephone Number	509-456-3828
Email Address	lindayeomans@comcast.net
Date Final Nomination Heard	24 May 2006

12. Additional Documentation

Map	City/County of Spokane current plat map.
Photographs and Slides	20 black & white prints, CD of color images

13. Signature of Owner(s)

Name _____

Name _____

14. For Official Use Only

Date Received _____ Attest _____

Date Heard _____ City Clerk _____

Commission Decision _____ Approved as to Form
Assistant City Attorney _____

Council/Board Action _____

Date _____

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

DEPUTY MAYOR, City of Spokane
or

CHAIR, Spokane County Commissioners

CHAIR, Spokane City/County Historic Landmarks Commission

OFFICER, Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Officer
Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office
Sixth Floor, City Hall, W. 808 Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, WA 99201

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Built in 1910 in Spokane, Washington, and listed in 1994 on the National Register as a contributing property of the Ninth Avenue National Register Historic District, the Comstock-Shadle House is a fine example of the Tudor Revival style and the Comstock-Shadle Garage (located behind the house) is a good example of the Craftsman style. The house features Tudor Revival-style depicted in the home's tall two-story form, steeply pitched roof, two full front-facing facade gables, lower cross-gables at side elevations, wide bargeboards, full-height square bays, tall narrow windows, and prominent false half-timbering with stucco infill. Inspired by the Craftsman style, a single-story front porch is supported by a basalt porch foundation, brick piers, and large square wood pillars. The low-pitched porch roof has widely overhanging eaves with exposed scroll-sawn rafter tails. A prominent gabled portico projects over the front porch steps and is supported by massive curved brackets that are anchored to brick porch piers. Typical of the Tudor Revival style, the home's interior is dominated by massive ebony-finished oak and mahogany woodwork which has been hand-rubbed during the last nine decades to a deep patina. The garage features typical Craftsman styling with a low-pitched pyramidal hip roof, widely overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails, and horizontal clapboard siding. The Comstock-Shadle House & Garage are well preserved and retain excellent exterior integrity in original location, design, materials, workmanship, and association as a single-family residence and garage built in the early 1900s on Spokane's South Hill.

CURRENT APPEARANCE & CONDITION***Site***

Located on the northwest corner of the intersection of West Ninth Avenue and South Madison Street, the Comstock-Shadle House is built in the center of Spokane County tax parcel number 35193.0607 which is described legally as all of Lot 7 and the east 33 feet of Lot 8 on Block 69 in the Second Railroad Addition to Spokane. The lot measures 88 feet wide and 142 feet deep. The Ninth Avenue National Register Historic District surrounds the property and is composed of tree-lined streets platted to a directionally correct grid pattern, and large single-family homes built between the late 1890s and 1940.

Garage

A concrete driveway leads north from West Ninth Avenue at the front of the house to the rear northwest corner of the property. The driveway curves to the east and stops in front of a three-car single-story garage which was built behind the house in 1910. In contrast to the tall, two-story Tudor Revival-style Comstock-Shadle House, the garage depicts the Craftsman style and has a low-pitched pyramidal hip roof with widely overhanging eaves. Exposed tapered rafter tails and purlins support the eaves. The garage is clad in four-inch horizontal wood clapboard siding (matches the house) and features a wide frieze band with false half-timbering and smooth stucco infill. Corner boards and horizontal wood stringcourses articulate the design of the building. The west façade of the garage is highlighted by a symmetrical design that features a low-pitched, front-facing gabled portico located over a center garage door. Like the front porch of the

house, the portico is supported by massive curved brackets. The garage appears to retain original integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and association except for contemporary overhead doors that were installed in the 1970s. The garage was re-roofed and re-painted in the 1980s. It is eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places as part of the Comstock-Shadle property and is included in this nomination.

House Exterior

The footprint of the Comstock-Shadle House forms an irregular rectangular shape. The house is tall with two stories and has a half-story space in the third-floor attic. The roof is steeply pitched with wide eaves that flare slightly. Exposed rafters embellish the eaves. The ends of the rafters are covered by 12-inch-deep bargeboards which flare outwards slightly at the ends. The roof is covered with composition shingles and has two large brick chimneys. Brick coping crowns the chimneys. The house is clad in four-inch-wide horizontal wood clapboard siding on the first floor, and false half-timbering with smooth stucco infill on the second floor and in the gable peaks. The foundation is made of indigenous black basalt, and the windows are a combination of small casement windows and original tall, narrow 1/1, double-hung, wood-sash units arranged as singles, pairs, or trios.

The *front of the house faces south* onto West Ninth Avenue and is dominated by two full front gables, a front porch at the first floor, and an open gabled porch portico over the front steps. The other prominent façade feature of the house is the robust use of false half-timbering and stucco infill, a strong tenet of the Tudor Revival style. The foundation is exposed and features black basalt, the first floor is clad with horizontal wood clapboard, and the second floor and gable peaks are clad with false half-timbering and stucco infill. A center shed roof is located between the two full front gables. Fenestration is symmetrical and features original 1/1, double-hung, wood-sash windows. Influenced by the Craftsman style, the single-story porch is located on the front of the house and extends across part of the home's façade. It has a low-pitched hip roof with widely overhanging eaves, a center front-facing gabled portico which projects over the front steps, and a basalt porch foundation. Brick porch piers are anchored to the basalt foundation, and large square wood pillars are anchored to the brick porch piers, all working together to support the covered porch. The west half of the covered porch is open while the east half of the porch is enclosed, originally designed in 1910 as a solarium. The porch balustrade (west half of porch) is made of brick and features a unique cross-buck design. The porch deck is made of red glazed ceramic quarry tile and is open at the west end where steps descend to grade. A stepped basalt stairwell wall with molded concrete coping protects the stairway. The front steps are made of brick pavers, and the front walkway to the street is made of poured concrete.

The *east elevation* is dominated by a center projecting, lower cross-gable that forms a full-height square bay. Like the home's façade, the east elevation reveals a basalt foundation, horizontal wood clapboard siding on the first floor, and false half-timbering

with stucco infill on the second floor and gable peaks (attic). A wood watertable (horizontal band) separates the foundation from the first floor, and two wood stringcourses (horizontal bands) separate the first floor from the second floor, and the second floor from the gable peaks. Fenestration is asymmetrical and original except for multi-paned French doors that are located on the first floor by the rear, northeast corner of the house (installed in the 1980s).

Like the east elevation, the *west elevation* is also dominated by a center projecting, lower cross gable which forms a full-height square bay. The west elevation features (like the rest of the house) a basalt foundation, first-floor wood clapboard siding, and second floor and gable peak false half-timbering with stucco infill. Windows are a combination of tall, narrow 1/1, double-hung, wood-sash units and single-pane casement units. A round metal coal chute penetrates the basalt foundation at the center of the west elevation. Embossed printing on the door indicates the chute was made by the Grand Rapids Foundry Company which patented the chute's design in 1904.

The *north, rear elevation* of the house is similar to the home's south façade, minus the front porch. Like the façade, the north elevation is dominated by two projecting full-height gables at the northeast and northwest corners which are joined by a center shed roof. The north elevation has a black basalt foundation, horizontal wood clapboard siding on the first floor, and false half-timbering and stucco infill on the second floor and gable peaks. A small, single-story back porch is located on the northeast corner of the house. It has a low-pitched hip roof and a small open-gable portico which projects slightly over back steps. Like the portico on the front porch, the back porch portico is supported by massive curved wood brackets. A small covered wood breezeway is connected to the house under the portico and extends north to the south wall of the garage. A door on the garage wall opens into the garage. Fenestration is mostly original except for two windows on the second floor (sleeping porch), two windows on the first floor (kitchen), and French doors on the first floor (kitchen).

House Interior

The original c.1910 quarter-sawn solid oak front door has a beveled-glass light and opens to a small center vestibule with a built-in oak inglenook on the west wall. The vestibule opens north to a center reception hall. The reception hall is large, housing a four-foot-wide formal staircase that rises to a landing, turns, and ascends to the second floor. The stairway is made of solid quarter-sawn oak which is finished in rich ebony. Battered square newel posts are anchored to a plain wood balustrade and a closed stair stringer. Oak wainscoting surrounds the perimeter of the hall. The hall opens west to a formal living room. The focal points of the living room are a center fireplace on the north wall and a built-in bookcase on the west wall. The fireplace has an original wood mantel, scroll-sawn brackets, and original glazed ceramic tile surround and hearth. The tiles are six-inch-square and are mottled with mixed green-brown coloration, and glazed with a matte finish which is typical of tiles manufactured by the Grueby Tile Company (a

popular tile manufacturer during the early 1900s). The built-in bookcase has glass doors with original brass hardware. The woodwork in the living room is made of the finest Honduras mahogany finished in deep ebony. The floor in the living room and the reception hall is made of solid oak planks.

The reception hall opens east to a formal dining room which is dominated by two focal points: a built-in sideboard and china cabinet on the east wall and a row of windows that overlook the solarium on the south wall (southeast corner of enclosed front porch). The woodwork is ebony-finished oak. A door from the dining room opens north to the original butler's pantry which has painted built-in cupboards. The butler's pantry opens west and north to an enclosed staircase which was designed for use by domestic help, a powder room (installed in 2005), and a kitchen (remodeled in 2000-2002).

The reception hall opens north along side the front stairwell to a library which was designed with built-in bookcases. The hallway turns west by the library and opens to a bathroom and master bedroom. The bathroom is original with a glazed ceramic tile floor, porcelain fixtures, and nickel-plated chrome-and-glass towel bars. The bedroom, library, and dining room floors are oak planks. The ceilings on the first floor are nine feet tall, the walls and ceilings are made of a combination of original lathe-and-plaster and contemporary sheetrock, and the light fixtures are period-appropriate antiques.

The formal front staircase ascends to the second floor which has four bedrooms, two bathrooms, and an office in the northeast corner (this room was originally designed as a "servant's room" for use by domestic help). The woodwork is a combination of ebony-finished oak and painted pine. The floors are oak planks, the ceilings are eight feet high, and the bathrooms retain original fixtures and glazed ceramic floor tiles.

The basement is unfinished and retains an original three-basin porcelain laundry tub, an original boiler (which still works and is fired by natural gas), and a concrete floor. The boiler heats water which is circulated throughout original radiators in the house.

ORIGINAL APPEARANCE & SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS

Original Appearance

The original appearance of the Comstock-Shadle House was pictured in a photograph featured in the *Spokesman-Review* on February 26, 1911.¹ Taken at an angle from the southwest, the photograph pictured the southwest corner of the house, including part of the south façade and the west elevation. Originally the house had a pair of 1/1 windows which were located on the west elevation at the first floor by the southwest corner, and a solid row of windows that wrapped around the enclosed east half of the front porch. It is believed that originally the back of house (north elevation) had a center screened sleeping porch on the second floor (now enclosed with windows), a screened back porch on the

¹ "Whole Block of Costly Half-Timber Houses Give Mark of Distinction to Ninth Avenue." *Spokesman-Review*, 26 Feb 1911, p. 1, pt. 4.

first floor by the northeast corner (now enclosed as part of the kitchen), and an open or screened porch at the first floor in the center of the house (now enclosed as a kitchen). Inspection of the basement revealed that a center back porch existed with an open-air crawl space that extended south and west beneath the porch to the basalt foundation wall of the house.

Modifications

Pre-1952: Modifications to the property began before 1952 when a breezeway was installed between the house and the garage.²

1960s: The interior of the house was altered to accommodate four apartment units. A Spokane building permit issued January 6, 1960 (permit number B-46851) listed the cost at \$3,500 and the contractor as Bert Dinnison. Exterior modifications included:

- Removal of three original windows in the solarium (SE corner of house at front porch)
- Removal of a window pair on the west wall in the living room
- Removal of part of a row of original windows (screened and/or glazed) at the second-floor center sleeping porch
- Back porch enclosed

1980s-1990s: The center back porch below the sleeping porch was enclosed and finished as a kitchen. French doors, two small contemporary windows (over the kitchen sink), and an exterior wood deck were installed on the center north elevation at the first floor. French doors were also installed on the east elevation in the kitchen along with a small wood deck. The exterior of the house was repainted and a new composition roof was installed (it is not known how many roofs were installed between 1910 and the 1980s-1990s).

2005-2006: The current owners are restoring the interior and exterior of the house back to its original design as a single-family residence. They removed all construction related to the c.1960s apartments which were located in the basement, the first floor, and the second floor. They removed the c.1980s deck at the east elevation and will eventually remove the French doors where they plan to re-install new windows that will be duplicates of the original 1/1, double-hung, wood-sash windows. They are restoring the solarium's original window design with exact window duplicates that will match existing windows. They plan to refinish interior walls, ceilings, floors, and bathrooms; remodel the kitchen; repaint the interior; restore the "servant's staircase" in the center rear of the house; and update wiring and plumbing systems.

² The breezeway was installed prior to the completion of a 1952 Sanborn Map on which it is pictured.

Conclusion

The Comstock-Shadle House retains good to excellent integrity. Although some modifications have occurred during the last 96 years, an overwhelming majority of the home's original design, materials, and workmanship remain intact, and all of its original location and association as a single-family home remain intact. The modifications should not preclude the property from being listed on the Spokane Register of Historic Places for its architectural significance under Category C. As explained in *National Register Bulletin Number 15*, the property meets the requirement where it must retain sufficient architectural integrity "necessary to convey its significance" as an excellent example of the single-family residential building type and the Tudor Revival style.³ The home's façade, and east and west elevations, and part of its rear elevation, combine to meet the requirement and easily convey the property's significance as an excellent example of the single-family residential building type and as an excellent example of the Tudor Revival style.

³ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. *National Register Bulletin Number 15*. Washington DC, 1995, p. 3.

Areas of Significance	Architecture, Commerce, and Community Planning & Development
Period of Significance	1910-1948
Significant Date	1910
Architect	Willis Ritchie
Builder	Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1910, and listed in 1994 on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing property in the Ninth Avenue National Register Historic District, the Comstock-Shadle House is one of the best preserved historic properties in Spokane, Washington. It is significant in the area of significance, “architecture,” as an excellent adaptation of the Tudor Revival style and as a representation of the work of Willis Ritchie, a master architect who practiced in Spokane during the late 1890s and early 1900s. The property achieved further importance in the area of significance, “community planning & development,” for its association with the residential development and subsequent settlement of the Ninth Avenue National Register Historic District, especially pertaining to the north side of an entire city block between South Madison and Jefferson Streets. Perhaps the strongest historic significance attributed to the Comstock-Shadle House, however, is in the area of “commerce” through its association with the Comstock and Shadle families who were recognized as some of the most charitable benefactors to ever live in Spokane. The house was built for James & Elizabeth Comstock, civic philanthropists, pioneer merchants, and founders of the Spokane Dry Goods Company, the Dry Goods Realty Company, and the Crescent Department Store. After James Comstock’s death in 1918, Eugene Shadle and his wife, Josie Comstock Shadle, moved into the Comstock home to be with Josie’s mother. During their residence there, Eugene & Josie Shadle carried on the magnanimous philanthropic work begun by James & Elizabeth Comstock. They continued to give hundreds of thousands of dollars to the beautification of Spokane parkland and waterways along the Spokane River, built Comstock Park/pool/playground and donated it to the City of Spokane, helped finance the multi-million dollar enlargement of St. Luke’s Hospital, and “were always ready to contribute liberally to anything pertaining to the welfare of the city which they both loved so well.”⁴ Perhaps the Shadles greatest gift to the Spokane community was the Shadle Trust Fund which they organized while they lived in the house before Eugene Shadle’s death in 1944. The trust fund was administered by the Comstock Foundation and gifted over \$31.5 million dollars throughout the Spokane community for more than 50 years until 2000.⁵ Historically and architecturally significant, the Comstock-Shadle House & Garage are individually eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Categories A, B, and C.

⁴ “Gene Shadle, Former Algonan, Dies in Spokane.” *Spokesman-Review*, 1 Feb 1944.

⁵ Kershner, Jim. “Empty Treasure.” *Spokesman-Review*, 17 June 2000.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT***Ninth Avenue National Register Historic District***

Before it was platted in 1883, the Ninth Avenue National Register Historic District was an undeveloped north-facing hillside dotted with rocky basalt outcroppings, wild grasses, and native pine and fir trees. Located about one mile southwest from downtown Spokane, the hillside area was mostly platted by prominent pioneer businessman, Anthony Cannon, and was colloquially called the “South Hill.”

Cannon arrived in Spokane Falls on April 24, 1878, with his partner, J. J. Browne. With an initial investment of \$50 down on a \$3,000 mortgage, Browne and Cannon acquired one-half interest in James Glover’s [Spokane] townsite. By 1890, Cannon and Browne were both millionaires and hailed as civic leaders. Five years later, Cannon died alone and penniless in New York City, ostracized by the town in helped to build.⁶

With Cannon’s social influence in Spokane, the District became one of the city’s finest residential neighborhoods. Prominent lawyers, businessmen, miners, merchants, entrepreneurs, and Spokane socialites purchased lots in the neighborhood and hired architects and contractors to design and build their homes which were sometimes large and lavish, a reflection of the homeowner’s success and status in Spokane society.

Residences in the...District range from majestic Queen Anne, Tudor Revival, and NeoClassical homes to more modest Craftsman dwellings and bungalows. These reflect the wide diversity of styles popular around the turn of the 20th-century. Spokane’s foremost architects of the time, including Willis Ritchie, Kirtland Cutter, Loren Rand, John Dow, Julius Zittel, Albert Held, and W. W. Hyslop, all contributed to the physical appearance of this distinctive neighborhood.⁷

The Comstock-Shadle House

On June 3, 1906, James & Elizabeth Comstock purchased Lots 7, 8, and 9 on Block 69 in the Second Railroad Addition in the West Ninth Avenue National Register Historic District for \$3,000. In the next few years, they commissioned a prominent Spokane architect to design a home at the opposite end of the block on which they lived at 1128 West Ninth Avenue. Construction of the house was completed in 1910, and in 1911, the *Spokesman-Review* featured the Comstock’s new residence on the front page of the newspaper’s real estate section. The newspaper reported the home’s architect as “W. A.

⁶ Garrett, Kit, et al. *West Ninth Avenue National Register Historic District, 1994*. Spokane Public Library, Spokane, WA, p. 8:1.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 7:2.

Ritchie” and a construction cost “between \$15,000 and \$20,000.”⁸ James Comstock lived with his wife in the house from 1910 to 1918, the year of his death. Elizabeth Comstock continued to live in the home, and three years later in 1921, her daughter, Josie Comstock Shadle, and her husband, Eugene Shadle, sold their home next door west (1112 West Ninth Avenue) and moved in with Elizabeth. After her mother’s death in 1934, and her husband’s death in 1944, Josie Comstock Shadle sold the property in 1948 “with love and affection”⁹ to Russell & Wanaka Peters. A nephew of Eugene Shadle, Russell Peters was employed as a “buyer” at the Crescent Department Store in Spokane.

In 1952, the Peters sold the property to Ray Dycus, an accountant for Kaiser Aluminum Chemical Company, and his wife, Georgia White Dycus. They sold the property four years later in 1956, to Mary & Collier Cole, secretary/treasurer of the Variety Sales Company in Spokane. The Coles remodeled the house to accommodate four apartments, residing for awhile in one of the suites. From 1970 to 2005, the property changed ownership several times and was continually rented as an apartment house. In 2005, Gerald & Patty Dicker bought the property for \$462,000. Owners/proprietors of GVD, Inc, a major real estate development company, the Dickers are currently undoing the c.1960s apartment modifications, and are restoring the Comstock-Shadle House to its original use as a single-family residence.

HISTORIC INTEGRITY

Category A

The Comstock-Shadle House is historically significant as a tangible expression of the development and subsequent settlement of the Ninth Avenue National Register Historic District on Spokane’s South Hill. The north side of West Ninth Avenue between Madison and Jefferson Streets contains four historic homes, all built and owned at different times by James & Elizabeth Comstock and their daughter and son-in-law, Josie & Eugene Shadle. Built in 1906, the first two homes on the block were erected for the Comstocks and the Shadles at 1128 and 1118 West Ninth Avenue respectively.¹⁰ In 1910 and 1911, two additional homes were built at 1106 and 1112 West Ninth Avenue. After their completion, Josie & Eugene Shadle resided in the house at 1112, and James & Elizabeth Comstock lived in the house next door east at 1106. From 1921 to 1948, Elizabeth Comstock and her daughter and son-in-law, Josie and Eugene Shadle, resided together in the Comstock-Shadle House at 1106 West Ninth Avenue.

The combined Comstock-Shadle family contribution to the block between Madison and Jefferson Streets on the north side of West Ninth Avenue was large. They built four

⁸ “Whole Block of Costly Half-Timber Houses Give Mark of Distinction to Ninth Avenue.” *Spokesman-Review*, 26 Feb 1911, part 4, p. 1.

⁹ Spokane County Warranty Deed #848292A, Book 576, page 50, dated 8 Nov 1948.

¹⁰ “J.M. Comstock’s Residence.” *Spokesman-Review*, 10 Dec 1905, and “Attractive Home of E. A. Shadle.” *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Dec 1905, describe the two homes. The Shadle article pictures photographs of both homes in 1905.

homes, lived in all four at different times, and spent over \$52,000 on construction costs. The February 26, 1911 edition of the *Spokesman-Review* featured all four homes on the front page of the real estate section:

*Whole Block of Costly Half-Timber Houses Give Mark of Distinction to
Ninth Avenue*

Present homes of J. M. Comstock and son-in-law, Eugene Shadle, [are pictured along with the] new residences of Mr. Comstock and Mr. Shadle respectively. The first two [homes] are on the northeast corner of Ninth Avenue and Jefferson Street, and the last two [homes] are on the corner of Ninth Avenue and Madison Street. W. A. Ritchie is architect for the new houses. The new corner house [1106 West Ninth Avenue] will cost between \$15,000 and \$20,000, and the Shadle home [1112 West Ninth Avenue]...will cost between \$12,000 and \$15,000.¹¹

All four homes were architect-designed, all four homes were built for the Comstock and Shadle families, and all four homes are well-preserved residences designed in the Tudor Revival style. More than 60 years after they were built, a 1971 article in the *Spokane Daily Chronicle* featured a photograph of the Comstock-Shadle House (1106) and the Shadle House (1112), and reminisced that “families usually were larger—so often were homes in the Spokane of yesteryear. Evocative of that by-gone era are these half-timbered houses [pictured] on Ninth [Avenue] west of Madison.”¹²

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Category B

The Comstock-Shadle House & Garage are historically significant as the residence of James & Elizabeth Comstock and Josie & Eugene Shadle during one of their most productive periods from 1910 to 1944, during which time they gave millions of dollars to various charities, civic programs, and individuals throughout Spokane. It was also the time in their lives when they achieved their highest success in owning, promoting, and managing the Crescent Department Store in Spokane.

James M. Comstock

James M. Comstock was born in Rome, New York in 1838. His family moved to Wisconsin in 1846, where he was educated and where he enlisted in the First Wisconsin Cavalry in the Civil War, achieving the rank of Captain. After the war, he relocated to Algona, Iowa where he owned a general merchandise store.

¹¹ “Whole Block of Costly Half-Timber Houses Give mark of Distinction to Ninth Avenue.” *Spokesman-Review*, 26 Feb 1911, part 4, p. 1.

¹² “A Spot in Spokane.” *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 27 Feb 1971.

In 1889, Comstock came west to Spokane. Along with his partner, R. B. Paterson, he opened a retail dry goods store in the Crescent Block, next east of the Spokesman-Review Tower on the corner of Riverside and Monroe in downtown Spokane. On August 3, 1889, a huge fire broke out in Spokane and enveloped most of the downtown, destroying more than 30 city blocks in its path. Amazingly, Comstock's store was untouched, and he had the dubious distinction of having the only dry goods and mercantile store intact after the fire.

His success as a merchant paved the way for his store's enlargement and move to new quarters at the northwest corner of Riverside and Wall in downtown Spokane. He named his business the Spokane Dry Goods Company and called the store the Crescent Department Store. He founded the Spokane Dry Goods Realty Company as an avenue to transact real estate investments.

Comstock and his wife, Elizabeth Comstock, resided in a house at 1128 West Ninth Avenue from 1906 to 1910, at which time they moved to their new home at the east end of the block at 1106 Ninth Avenue. James Comstock died in 1918, and Elizabeth continued to live alone in the house until 1921, when her daughter, Josie Comstock Shadle, and her husband, Eugene Shadle, moved in to live with her.

Much has been written about James Comstock and his many contributions to Spokane. At his death in 1918, it was said that "few men were better known in Spokane than Mr. Comstock."¹³ His success as the founder of the Crescent Department Store landed him a rating as "one of the leading merchants of the Pacific Northwest."¹⁴ "Surrounded by a group of younger men, whom he attracted to him by his personality, he built up the largest mercantile establishment in the city [of Spokane]."¹⁵ As reported in the *Spokesman-Review* in his obituary on September 2, 1918, "Mr. Comstock's latest months were filled with carrying into effect his dream of many years, the building [and construction] of the fine new home of the Crescent [Department] Store on Main Avenue... His waking hours were a continual delight as he saw his dream nearing realization. He retained his interest in business affairs until the last and worked as industriously as any member of the firm."¹⁶ Comstock was venerated as "one of the leading citizens of the city, and his work will long have an effect... As a member of the [Spokane] City Council, as [a past one-time] mayor [of Spokane], and as a citizen, he has done more than we can realize."¹⁷ He was respected and honored as "one of the makers of the Inland Empire."¹⁸

¹³ "J.M. Comstock Is Called By Death." *Spokesman-Review*, 2 Sept 1918, p. 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Botting, Roland B. *Contributions to the History of the Pacific Northwest*. Pullman: Washington State College, 1938, p. 18.

Eugene Shadle met James Comstock in Algona, Iowa, where Shadle was employed at Comstock's dry goods store. At the same time, Shadle also met Comstock's daughter, Josie, who he later married in 1901. After Comstock moved to Spokane in 1889, Eugene Shadle followed in 1891, at Comstock's request. Shadle worked in the Crescent Department Store, starting at the bottom and working up to his final position before his death in 1944 as the store's president and general manager. An advertisement in the 1940 *Spokane City Directory* listed the Crescent with the following merchandise:

The Crescent, owned and operated by the Spokane Dry Goods Company

Retail dry goods, men's, women's, girl's & boy's apparel, millinery, furs, women's & children's shoes, luggage, furniture, rugs, washing machines, ranges, heaters, frigidaire, housewares, draperies, radios, china, silver & art, goods

Main Avenue and Riverside & Wall

Eugene Shadle was praised by many at his death in September 1944, as "an early day merchant of Spokane and one of the city's outstanding civic leaders and philanthropists. Until his retirement last month, he had been president and general manager of the Spokane Dry Goods Company and owner of the Crescent Department Store with which he had been associated [for more than] 52 years."¹⁹ He was one of the "last of a group of early-day merchants who joined forces...to develop a business that is still a leading factor in its line."²⁰

Perhaps the largest contribution made by the Comstock and Shadle families were the millions of dollars in charitable and philanthropic gifts to the City of Spokane, civic groups, hospitals, and individuals in Spokane. The Comstocks were known for their "charitable work" and after James Comstock's death, Josie & Eugene Shadle "carried on." They financed, built and donated Comstock Park and pool to the City of Spokane in honor of James Comstock, financed and built part of St. Luke's Hospital, developed Shadle Park and donated it to the City of Spokane, gave over \$100,000 to improve Spokane parks and parkways, and "were always ready to contribute liberally to anything pertaining to the welfare of the city which they both loved so well."²¹ "The benefits which have enriched the life of Spokane and her citizens through the Comstock and Shadle families are many."²² The Shadle Trust Fund, organized by Eugene & Josie Shadle before his death in 1944, was later administered by the Comstock Foundation which donated more than \$31.5 million dollars to causes and civic groups in Spokane between 1950 and 2000. The Comstock Foundation has been "the largest giver in

¹⁹ "Eugene Shadle Taken By Death." *Spokesman-Review*, 1 Feb 1944.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ "Gene Shadle, Former Algonan, Dies in Spokane." *Spokesman-Review*, 1 Feb 1944.

²² Powers, Dorothy Rochon. "The Shadle Trust Fund." *Spokesman-Review*, 29 Sept 1968.

Spokane, distributing millions to charities, civic organizations, arts organizations,” schools and universities.²³ The impact associated with the generosity of James & Elizabeth Comstock and Josie & Eugene Shadle is huge and continues to be felt by many in the Spokane community today.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Category C

Tudor Revival Style

The Comstock-Shadle House is a fine example of the Tudor Revival style. Defining features of the style include homes built in America from 1890-1940 with steeply pitched roofs, a façade dominated by one or more prominent front-facing gables, decorative (rather than structural) half-timbering, tall narrow windows, and protected front entrances (either recessed or covered with a small porch).

A revival of forms and methods associated with medieval England and Europe, the Tudor Revival style (also known as the Elizabethan and Jacobean styles) borrowed design elements and characteristics from English homes, ranging from grand baronial manor houses to small, thatched roof cottages erected during the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603). Affectionately called “black and white houses” by people in Chester, England, the prominent half-timbering created a sharp contrast between darkened wood timbers and white plaster or stucco infill. In America, the Tudor Revival style began in 1890, and was eventually adapted to smaller dwellings from 1920 to 1940.

The Comstock-Shadle House is a good depiction of the Tudor Revival style. It has a steeply pitched roof with three front-facing gables at the facade, lower cross gables on the side elevations, and a robust “black and white” design that features prominent false half-timbering and stucco infill. Rather than typical Tudor Revival-style brick or stone cladding, the home has horizontal wood clapboard siding on the first floor which was considered uncommon. As explained by architectural historians, Lee & Virginia McAlester, clapboard or wood shingle siding were “occasionally seen” on houses designed in the Tudor Revival style; “stuccoed gables with half-timbering” were often added above the siding.²⁴ Tudor Revival-style interior appointments include the home’s prominent ebony-finished oak and mahogany woodwork which displays a rich patina, resulting from decades of hand-polished care.

Craftsman-Style Influence

The Comstock-Shadle House also features elements from the Craftsman style. Depicted on the front porch, Craftsman elements include the porch’s low-pitched hip roof, widely overhanging eaves with exposed scroll-sawn rafter tails, indigenous black basalt porch foundation, brick porch piers and balustrade, large square wood porch pillars, and massive curved wood porch brackets which support an open gable portico over the front

²³ Kershner, Jim. “Empty Treasure.” *Spokesman-Review*, 17 June 2000.

²⁴ McAlester, Lee & Virginia. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Knopf, 1989, p. 355.

steps. Craftsman-influenced interior features include battered Newell posts and plain, square-cut balusters at the reception hall stairs which are reminiscent of Gustav Stickley designs, a built-in inglenook in the vestibule, glass-doored bookcases, and a dining room sideboard and china cabinets.

Willis A. Ritchie, Architect

Regaled as “one of Spokane’s pioneer building architects,” Willis Ritchie designed the Comstock-Shadle House in 1910.²⁵ He was born in Ohio in 1864, studied architecture, and eventually moved to Kansas where he “obtained commissions for bank, college, school, hotel, courthouse, and post office buildings.”²⁶ In 1889, he relocated to Seattle where he specialized in designs for public buildings. He was responsible for the King County Courthouse in Seattle, the Whatcom County Courthouse in Bellingham, the Soldier’s Home at Orting, and other public structures in Vancouver, Port Townsend, and Olympia, Washington.

In 1892, he came to Spokane where he designed Spokane City Hall (demolished) and the Spokane County Courthouse, a remarkable landmark example of French Chateausque-style architecture rarely seen in the west. In addition to the city hall and courthouse buildings, Ritchie designed a women’s dormitory at the University of Idaho in Moscow and “many homes” in Spokane, including the Oscar Bowen House (1924 S. Upper Terrace), the Shadle House (1112 West Ninth Avenue), and the Comstock-Shadle House (1106 West Ninth Avenue).²⁷ Especially seen in the Spokane County Courthouse, Ritchie’s artistic expertise identifies him as a master architect of early Spokane buildings.

Conclusion

The Comstock-Shadle House & Garage are individually eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places for their architectural and historic significance as 1) excellent examples of the Tudor Revival (home) and Craftsman (garage) styles and as product of Spokane architect, Willis Ritchie, 2) the place of residence of the Comstock-Shadle family during some of their most productive and philanthropic years from 1910 to 1948, and 3) for its association with the development and settlement of the Ninth Avenue National Register Historic District on Spokane’s South Hill.

²⁵ “Willis A. Ritchie, Architect, Dies.” *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 17 Jan 1931, p. 1.

²⁶ Eastern Washington State Historical Society. *Spokane Skyline: A Century of Architecture 1889-1989*. Spokane: 1989, p. 43.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

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