

THE CORBET-ASPRAY HOUSE

*Built 1908
Kirtland Kelsey Cutter, Architect*



**820 West 7th Avenue
Spokane, WA 99203**

(Photo taken by Linda Yeomans, 1999)

RECEIVED
JUN 10 1999
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination

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

1. Name of Property

Historic Name **CORBET-ASPRAY HOUSE**

2. Location

Street & Number 820 West 7th Avenue
City, Town, or Vicinity Spokane
County Spokane
State Washington
Zip Code 99204
Parcel Number 35193.0005

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 | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <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 Shawn Nichols and Ann Marie Byrd
Street & Number 820 West 7th Avenue
City or Town Spokane
County Spokane
State Washington
Zip Code 99204
Telephone Number 747-6235

5. Location of Legal Description

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds Spokane County Courthouse
Street & Number 1116 West Broadway
City or Town Spokane
County Spokane
State WA
Zip Code 99201

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Title City of Spokane Historic Landmarks Survey
Date Federal__ State__ County__ Local 1979
Depository for Survey Records Spokane Historic Preservation Office
City or Town Spokane
State WA

7. Description

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions) | Condition | Check One |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> fair | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | Check One |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | <input type="checkbox"/> moved & date _____ |

Description of the present and original (if known) physical appearance:

Narrative Description

Summary Statement

Built in 1908, the well-preserved Corbet-Aspray House retains excellent integrity and is a fine example of eclectic style architecture especially prevalent in America in the latter part of the 19th-century. The Corbet-Aspray House is distinguished by the free use and mixture of forms and details borrowed from other architectural styles. A lighter brick belt course separating the first and second floors as well as sharp shadows cast by widely overhanging eaves emphasize the home's strong horizontal lines indicative of Prairie style influence. Additional architectural prototypes are depicted on the exterior of the house including the use of decorative cornice brackets and front entry hood ornamentation characteristic of the Italian Renaissance style. Furthermore, the use of rough-textured clinker brick veneer is characteristic of the Craftsman style. Together, the various stylistic elements of the Corbet-Aspray House distinguish it as one of Spokane's most unique eclectic style homes.

1999 - Current Condition and Appearance

The Corbet-Aspray House is located at 820 West Seventh Avenue in the Hill Park Addition. Platted only one-half mile south and uphill from downtown Spokane, the neighborhood is characterized by rocky basalt outcroppings dotting a steep slope that rises to meet the base of a basalt bluff of jagged cliffs. Facing north, the steep slope commands a panoramic viewshed of Spokane and distant mountain peaks. A dominant feature of the neighborhood is an unusual broken basalt rock wall serving as a meridian that divides Seventh Avenue; the uphill, southern half of the street traverses one way east while the lower, northern half is a one-way road leading west. Constructed of the same basalt used in the street divider, the perimeter of the Corbet-Aspray property is marked by a five to six foot-high rock wall with vertically set, jagged rock spires that form a soldier course designed to deter trespassers. Facing south, the Corbet-Aspray House fronts onto Seventh Avenue and is surrounded by cultivated gardens and a manicured lawn that slopes downhill to the north. The occurrence of native basalt is repeated again in the property's east garden where massive basalt outcroppings dominate the area. Possibly original to the home's landscaping, mature lilac bushes and pine, oak, ash, maple, and horse chestnut trees screen

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and shade the property. Original brick pavers form a circular walkway through the lawn by the front entry. The property forms a rectangular footprint measuring 125 feet wide and 158 feet deep, and paved parking lots abut the property to the north, east and west. Apartment buildings and historic residential estates renovated for use as commercial space look onto the Corbet-Aspray House from their hillside location south across Seventh Avenue.

Home Exterior

The Old-House Dictionary: An Illustrated Guide to American Domestic Architecture (1600-1940) authored by Steven J. Phillips defines "eclecticism" in reference to architecture as "the free use and mixture of forms and details from any historic style; especially prevalent in the latter part of the 19th-century in the United States (p.69)." Built in 1908, the Corbet-Aspray House is an amalgamation of traditional architectural elements including influences from Italian Renaissance, Craftsman and Prairie styles.

The two and one-half story Corbet-Aspray House forms a rectangular footprint measuring 53 feet wide and 41 feet deep with over 4300 square feet on the first and second floors. The third-floor attic comprises an additional 543 square feet of finished open space. The house is covered by a low-pitched, clipped hip roof of composition shingles. Three hipped roof dormers extend from the roof's south slope across the facade. The east and west roof slopes support one hipped dormer each while the north, rear roof slope supports a shed dormer that serves as a sleeping porch. Two clinker brick chimneys rise from the east and west ends of the house. Widely overhanging boxed eaves are supported by decorative brackets of carved wood. The platform-framed house is clad in rough-textured, red and black-colored clinker brick veneer while pink/orange-hued, lighter-colored common bricks form quoins that define the corners of the house. Accentuating the home's strong horizontal lines, the same lighter-colored bricks also form a wide belt course that separates the first floor from the second floor.

The facade focal point of the Corbet-Aspray House is a centrally placed, recessed front entry embellished with a large, elliptically arched entry hood supported by decorative, scroll-sawn brackets. Painted a smooth white gleaming enamel, the ornamental entry hood is conspicuous against dark-colored, coarsely textured clinker brick veneer cladding. The recessed porch features a floor surface of red ceramic quarry tile while decorative leaded-glass side lights flank the front door. All windows in the home are original and well-preserved. The fenestration pattern for the south facade achieves an overall symmetrical spatial balance while existing as individual asymmetrically placed units. Facade windows are a mixture of multipaned fixed sash and paired casement units of varying sizes with decorative leaded-glass muntin bars. The east elevation is dominated by a massive clinker brick chimney and features multipaned, leaded-glass windows opening from the first and second floors, attic dormer and basement level. The west elevation features asymmetrically placed multipaned, leaded-glass casement and double-hung, wood-sash windows. The rear, north elevation of the house also features multipaned, leaded-glass fixed, casement, and double-hung wood-sash window units. Designed specifically to accentuate a first-floor sunporch, window units capped by segmental arches illuminate the interior porch located at the northeast corner of the house; all other window openings

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located at the first floor and basement are constructed with flat arches. Window frames for units located on the second floor and in dormers meet the cornice line and have no arch. Window sills are constructed of brick and cast concrete.

Incorporating the advantage for light and access produced by the property's steep north-facing slope, the rear of the Corbet-Aspray House features a daylight basement. A first-floor deck measuring 16 feet deep by 30 feet wide projects from the north, rear elevation of the house over the exposed-basement elevation. Constructed of wood, the deck is stained dark brown and is supported by massive brick piers. A flight of cement steps protected by a stepped porch wall clad in clinker brick leads from the deck down to a manicured lawn at the northeast corner of the house. A new sliding glass door protected by a hipped roof canopy embellished with decorative eave brackets opens from a center bay onto the deck. The home's foundation below grade is constructed of basalt rock and mortar with a thickness measuring 24 inches. Above grade, the foundation is composed of a 20 inch-thick, masonry-constructed wall clad in clinker brick veneer. The masonry-constructed foundation extends vertically to a platform frame beginning at the first floor. A flight of cement steps protected by a stepped porch wall clad in clinker brick leads from a first-floor back entry to the basement-level driveway at the northwest corner of the house. The porch wall is protected by molded cement coping.

Garage Exterior and Interior

A two-car garage built in 1910 is located at the extreme northwest corner of the property. The building's footprint measures 30 feet wide by 22 feet deep for a total area of 660 square feet. The garage rises one story and is covered with a low-pitched hipped roof with widely overhanging boxed eaves. The roof is covered with composition shingles, and the garage is clad in clinker brick veneer with lighter-colored common brick quoins marking the corners. Fenestration includes symmetrical placement of eight-over-one, double-hung, wood-sash windows on the east, west and north elevations. The south elevation of the garage forms the facade and features one multipaned, double-hung, wood-sash window unit at the southwest corner of the building. Two automatic garage doors made of metal painted white slide open to reveal a floor of poured concrete. A mechanic's pit opens from the floor in the middle of the garage and is covered by removable boards. A small room designed for use by domestic help is located on the west wall of the garage. Containing a source of heat and hot water for the garage, the apartment room includes a small closet and the original coal-fired boiler used to heat water for recirculation through pipes located within the garage. A small half-bath is adjacent to the apartment and features an original bracketed basin and ceramic toilet with oak seat and oak tank cover. A paved driveway leads uphill from the garage past the house along the west-boundary rock wall to Seventh Avenue.

Home Interior

The centrally located front door of the Corbet-Aspray House is made of three-inch thick European mahogany and opens to a spacious foyer. First-floor ceilings rise to eight feet, and the floor is constructed of solid oak planking. The formal foyer is distinguished by a 45-inch wide staircase accentuated by square, mahogany newel posts and a turned-post balustrade that rises to a landing lit by paired leaded-glass casement windows. The stairs reverse turn at the landing and extend up to the second floor. A radiator cover disguised as a built-in bench seat resembling a settle is located in the ell between the staircase and the front door. Illuminated from four sides, the foyer opens east to a formal living room, north

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to a large dining room, and west to a den, half bath and hallway designed for use by domestic help. Narrow "servant's stairs" lead from the hallway to the second floor. Three-inch thick mahogany pocket doors open to a formal living room that measures 30 feet long and 26 feet wide. The focal point of the room is a seven-foot wide fireplace embellished with a moss green-colored, antique Rookwood ceramic tile hearth and fireplace surround. Built-in bookcases flank a large window that faces south, and a radiator covered by a built-in seat is located beneath the window. Accentuating the home's interior horizontal lines, painted crown, floor and picture rail moulding highlight the living room and extend throughout the house. The living room opens to a sunporch located at the northeast corner of the first floor. The sunporch features clinker brick walls (painted white) and two interior wall windows that look into the living room and the dining room. An exterior door opens out to the deck. The foyer and dining room are joined by double mahogany pocket doors and feature boxed-beam ceilings. The beams are faux-painted to resemble finished mahogany. Two built-in china cupboards flank a sliding glass door that leads outside to the deck, and brass wall sconces light the dining room from four walls. The dining room opens to an unfinished kitchen (undergoing current remodel/restoration). Opposite the living room, the foyer leads west to a small half-bath with original fixtures, a den with built-in bookcase, and to a hallway that leads to a flight of narrow stairs that rise to the second floor. A leaded-glass window illuminates the stairs at a landing.

Measuring 2173 square feet, the second floor is composed of five bedrooms, three bathrooms, a balcony-sleeping porch, storage cupboards and a central hallway. The hallway is wide measuring more than five feet. A cedar-lined linen closet with double doors opens from the hall on the north wall; a built-in bookcase with decorative leaded-glass doors is located on the hall's east wall. The master bedroom, located in the southeast corner of the house, features a full bath with a triangular-shaped shower stall and a closet with built-in cupboards. The bedroom opens to a balcony-sleeping porch facing south. The northeast corner bedroom features a deeply coved ceiling with original Craftsman-era, brass light fixtures that hang from the ceiling's four corners. The northwest corner bedroom and the middle bedroom are joined by a bathroom with original fixtures, towel bars and medicine cabinets. A bedroom located in the southwest corner of the house was designed for use by domestic help and opens to a small bathroom with original wash basin and clawfoot bathtub. The entire floor surface of the second floor--including the bathrooms--is made of solid oak planks, and the ceiling rises to eight feet.

A third flight of stairs measuring 45-feet wide rises from the second to the third-floor and is illuminated by a leaded-glass casement window at the landing. Designed for multiple uses including a ballroom, childrens' play area, or servants' quarters, the third floor features a large finished room that opens to a sleeping porch and closet doors enclosing attic storage space under the roof eaves. The basement is unfinished and extends the full length and width of the house. Massive ten-inch square wood posts and rough-cut, wood floor joists measuring ten inches by two inches support the first floor of the house. Ceiling height in the basement measures seven feet, and the floor is constructed of poured concrete.

Original Appearance and Subsequent Alterations***1908 and 1910 Original Design***

Succumbing to only minor changes, the Corbet-Aspray House retains excellent interior and exterior architectural integrity. A *Spokane Spokesman-Review* article dated April 4, 1909,

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describes the home's interior doors and boxed ceiling beams as finished in mahogany, the woodwork in the dining room finished in "golden oak," the trim in the first-floor den "finished in fir stained brown," and the remaining woodwork in the house painted in "old ivory" enamel. In addition, the article describes the living room's original fireplace embellished with a "rich Rookwood [ceramic tile] facing and hearth in blended greens and browns" and a mahogany mantel shelf supported by decorative brackets. All windows, interior doors, brass and crystal door knobs, and other hardware are original. Wall and ceiling surfaces constructed of original lathe and plaster are intact. Nearly all of the bathroom fixtures are original except those in the master bath and the toilet in the second-floor southwest bathroom. Similar to those designed by Gustav Stickley, original handmade Craftsman style light fixtures hang from the northeast bedroom ceiling.

Outside, the basalt rock walls surrounding the property are original and were constructed when the house was built in 1908. Two years later, in 1910, a two-car garage was constructed with storage closets, a small half-bath with toilet and washbasin, and an apartment designed for use by domestic help. The apartment and garage were heated by a coal-fired boiler that recirculated hot water throughout the garage. Originally designed with the garage, a mechanic's pit opens from the concrete floor. Two paneled garage doors with multipaned transom lights opened for automobile access.

1930s-1960s Alterations

The Corbet-Aspray House remained untouched for 25 years until the early 1930s when wall coverings were changed and finished fir, oak and mahogany woodwork in the den, dining room and foyer were painted ivory enamel. In 1948, the original butler's pantry was removed, and the kitchen was remodeled with knotty pine paneling and white enamel metal cupboards and cabinets. The kitchen floor was recovered, and light fixtures were replaced. During the same time, the clawfoot bathtub in the master bathroom was removed and replaced with a small tub/shower stall, and both wash basins were removed and replaced with one basin and a built-in counter. Sometime during the 1930s or the 1940s, original light fixtures throughout the home were replaced except for the four Craftsman-style fixtures in the northeast bedroom on the second floor. Occurring about 1950, the living room fireplace embellished with ceramic Rookwood tile surround and over mantel was partially covered with painted wallboard. The original mahogany mantel supported by decorative brackets was replaced by a smaller mantel finished in mahogany and enamel paint. In 1952, the roof was recovered with green-colored composition shingles replacing original green-tinted cedar shingles. Ten years later, in 1962, a deck was added to the rear, north elevation of the house. A plate-glass window in the dining room was replaced with a sliding glass door that leads to the deck.

1980s-1997 Alterations

Within the last ten to fifteen years, the original paneled doors with multipaned transom lights located on the south facade of the garage were replaced with metal doors activated by an automatic opener. In 1997, the front hall stairs and white enamel-painted boxed beams in the home's foyer and dining room were faux-grained to resemble finished mahogany. In 1999, plywood covering the living room's ceramic tile fireplace surround was removed exposing original Rookwood tile. In addition, the pine paneling and metal cupboards in the kitchen were removed, and restoration of walls and woodwork in the foyer, living room and dining room was started.

8. 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 or history.

| Areas of Significance | Period of Significance | Significant Dates |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Architecture | 1908 | 1908 |
| Community Planning and Development | 1908 | 1908 |
| Specific Dates 1908 | Architect, Designer, and/or Builder Kirtland K. Cutter, Architect | |

Statement of Significance:

Statement of Significance

Summary Statement

Built in 1908, the Corbet-Aspray House is one of Spokane's finest renditions of architectural eclecticism. It was designed by master craftsman Kirtland Kelsey Cutter--one of the most prolific and widely acclaimed architects in Washington State. The house was built for noted Spokane mortgage banker James Corbet and his wife Ruth, and was later home to the Melvin and Grace Aspray family for over 55 years. A prominent area practitioner, Dr. Melvin Aspray was one of Spokane's first physicians to specialize in radiology, and helped establish the radiology department in Sacred Heart Medical Center. Grace Parsons Aspray was widely recognized for her service to the community as a civic benefactor and philanthropic leader. The Corbet-Aspray House demonstrates turn-of-the-century community development in the Hill Park Addition along once-prestigious West Seventh Avenue and is one of only 15-percent of homes to survive the onslaught of commercial encroachment and demolition in the Hill Park neighborhood during the last 50 years. The house is eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its historic significance and association with the early settlement of Spokane. Architecturally significant as the work of a master, the well-preserved Corbet-Aspray House retains excellent integrity, and is also eligible for listing under Criterion C.

Historical Context

Early Spokane

Spokane is the commercial center of an area approximately 200 miles in diameter known as the Inland Empire. Ancient, powerful, cataclysmic events produced the scenic beauty of

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the area's rugged topography displayed in rocky outcroppings, basalt bluffs and massive rimrocks that overlook Spokane and the Spokane River. The city is sheltered by mountain ranges to the north and northeast, and is marked by a series of waterfalls formed by the river as it plunges in elevation. Before 1870, Spokane was a favorite fishing area for various Indian tribes. Derived from the Indian word *spokan* which means "children of the sun," the town was named Spokane in honor of the Indians who lived in the area. Drawn by the landscape's natural beauty and untapped resources, fur traders, frontiersmen and pioneers settled in the town, and by 1880, Spokane's population had reached 500. Along with the river's water power, the city gained recognition as a center for mining, lumber and agriculture. Beginning with utilization of the area's natural resources and the arrival of the transcontinental rail lines in the late 1880s, Spokane experienced a period of fantastic fortune, city boosterism and unprecedented growth with a population exceeding 100,000 by 1910. Prosperous Spokane homeowners commissioned architects and builders to design and erect their custom-designed homes throughout the city. Enticed by rugged topography and unprecedented views, Spokane's most prominent architect, Kirtland Cutter, was drawn to the jagged basalt bluff at the base of the city's South Hill. He used the landscape's rustic beauty to his advantage along with his celebrated skills as an artist and architect, and designed seven of Spokane's most elegant homes sited within a two-block area along West Seventh Avenue. The Corbet-Aspray House is one of these homes.

The Second Addition to Spokane's Railroad Addition and the Hill Park Addition

Before 1887, the northeast quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 19, Township 25, Range 43 was undeveloped, unplatted land at the base of a steep, wooded, rocky bluff. The area was platted and replatted and is now called the Hill Park Addition, part of the Second Addition to Spokane's Railroad Addition. Cited on current Spokane County plat maps, the Hill Park Addition is small and extends along the north and south sides of Seventh Avenue from Stevens to Lincoln Streets. In the late 1800s, the landscape was characterized by large, jagged basalt outcroppings strewn across a steep slope as it rose to meet the bluff's base. Commanding an uninterrupted panoramic vista of the city and distant mountain peaks to the north, the area offered some of the most picturesque and desirable--albeit topographically challenging--building sites in early Spokane.

In 1887, architect Kirtland Kelsey Cutter--destined to become Spokane's most celebrated architect--built a small frame cottage at 628 West Seventh Avenue in the center of Hill Park Addition. In the next ten years, sewer and water lines were laid, streets were paved and lighted, and schools were expanded and rebuilt. By 1908, when the Corbet-Aspray House was erected at 820 West Seventh Avenue, the small, two-block addition included six magnificent homes all designed by Cutter. Five of these homes were grandiose mansions on lavish estates located on the south side of West Seventh Avenue between Stevens and Lincoln Streets. They were built for some of early Spokane's first railroad, water power and mining magnates. In addition to designing homes for his wealthy friends and clients, Cutter enlarged and embellished his own house located on the north side of Seventh Avenue. Cutter's unusual Swiss Chalet style home called "Chalet Hohenstein" depicted an architectural tradition completely new to Spokane, and soon became a gathering place for Spokane's society, many of whom were Cutter's neighbors on Seventh Avenue. Boasting an array of custom-designed homes and estates, West Seventh was recognized as one of Spokane's most prestigious and best-dressed avenues.

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By 1945, there were fifteen homes and three apartment houses erected from 1887 to 1937 in the Hill Park Addition. They included the grand, Cutter-designed mansions built along the south side of the street as well as large, but less pretentious homes along the north side of Seventh Avenue. After World War II, the appearance of the West Seventh Avenue neighborhood began to change. By 1950, the magnificent F. Rockwood Moore Mansion was razed after falling victim to unpaid back taxes and the ubiquitous wrecking ball. By the late 1960s or early 1970s, Cutter's Chalet Hohenstein was demolished--a rare example of late 19th-century Swiss Chalet style architecture and the architect's personal artistic approach to interior design emulated by the Arts and Crafts movement. The Moore Mansion was replaced with a public park while Cutter's home was replaced by a massive, eight-floor, concrete-and-glass, high-rise apartment building that is architecturally incompatible in design, bulk and scale with existing historic building stock facing West Seventh Avenue. Elegant homes with mature deciduous and evergreen trees once surrounded the Corbet-Aspray House to the north, east and west. These homes and trees were razed to make way for three, large paved parking lots--a stark, visual contrast to the elegant Corbet-Aspray House and mature foliage that shades the home. By 1995, nine of the fifteen neighborhood homes and two of the three apartment houses had been demolished. The encroachment of downtown commercialization combined with poor planning and unacceptable urban design has rendered the two-block West Seventh Avenue neighborhood in danger of further demolition. Remarkably, the Corbet-Aspray House has survived the destructive forces of the last 50 years. Currently surrounded on three sides by a "sea of cement," the Corbet-Aspray House remains a 91-year old symbol demonstrating the development of the Hill Park Addition in late 19th-century Spokane during a time when the elegance of neighborhood design was deemed notable.

James M. Corbet and Ruth Cole Corbet

James M. Corbet is first listed in Polk's *Spokane City Directory* in 1890 as a manager for the Vermont Loan and Trust Company located in downtown Spokane. By 1896, Corbet had established his own mortgage and loan banking business with offices in the Granite Block, Room 31. He listed his "home" as the Spokane Club. Ten years later in 1906, Corbet is noted in both the alphabetical listings and classified business sections of Polk's *Spokane City Directory*. His mortgage business was advertised under the heading of "mortgage loans," and his residence was listed at 2114 West First Avenue in Browne's Addition. The next year in 1907, Corbet bought one of Spokane's most coveted pieces of real estate from Kirtland Cutter for \$5500. Cutter began purchasing lots in the Hill Park Addition beginning in 1887 when he built his home, and by 1888, possessed two city blocks between Howard and Lincoln Streets. In addition to his home site, Cutter may have bought the land for its investment potential.

Located at 820 West Seventh Avenue directly north of the palatial, patrician estate designed by Cutter for Austin Corbin II, Corbet's new view property was located a few hundred feet west of Cutter's private residence. In addition to gaining property with an incredible panoramic vista of Spokane, Corbet made a wise investment in real estate that would multiply many times in assessed value. In 1907, Corbet held a mortgage for \$3000, but five years later in 1912, the mortgage was paid, and James Corbet conveyed the property "free from all encumbrances" to his wife Ruth Cole Corbet. The Corbets' social position and new home afforded local recognition. In 1909, they were listed in the *Spokane Blue Book*--Spokane's social register of the day. "Wednesday" was noted as the day Ruth Cole Corbet received guests in her elegant new home on West Seventh Avenue.

CORBET-ASPRAY HOUSE***Conrad and Helen Paine Gotzian***

James M. Corbet lived in his home for 16 years from 1908 until his death in 1924. As a widow, Ruth Cole Corbet continued to live in the house for three more years and was employed as a secretary for the Rocky Bar Mining Company. She sold the house to Conrad Gotzian, a successful Spokane investment broker, and his wife Helen Paine Gotzian, in 1927 for a reported \$25,000. After 14 years, the Gotzians sold the house to Dr. J. Melvin Aspray and his wife Grace.

Dr. J. Melvin Aspray

Dr. Joseph Melvin Aspray and his wife Grace Parsons Aspray bought the Corbet-Aspray House from the Gotzian family on the 18th day of February, 1938. F. S. Barrett Real Estate Company described the deal as "the largest transaction in 1938." The reported purchase price was "around \$17,000" with Equitable Life Assurance Society holding a mortgage for Dr. Aspray in the sum of \$12,000. Noted as one of Spokane's first radiologists, Dr. Aspray founded the Aspray, Gross and Marcus Radiology Group with offices located in both the Paulsen Medical and Dental Building, and in the Medical Center Building west of Sacred Heart Hospital. The group's specialized practice was limited to "x-ray diagnosis, x-ray radium therapy, and dental x-ray." In addition, Dr. Aspray continued to establish the radiology department founded by his father, Dr. Joseph Aspray, at Sacred Heart Medical Center. Dr. Aspray was also involved in numerous church, civic and social affairs in Spokane and Hayden Lake, Idaho. He was president of the Spokane Municipal League, the Downtown Rotary Club, the Spokane Country Club, and the Spokane Taxpayers Association. He was nominated to Spokane's Quality of Life Council and was an active member of the Episcopal Church of St. John the Evangelist. An accomplished golfer and bridge player, Dr. Aspray continually won many regional golf tournaments and was recognized as a life-master in bridge.

Grace Parsons Aspray

Grace Parsons Aspray was recognized numerous times for her "unselfish contributions made through the years in almost every phase of community endeavor" (*Spokane Spokesman-Review*, 21 April 1966). A sustaining member of Spokane's Junior League for many years, she received the philanthropic organization's Outstanding Sustainer Award for noteworthy contributions to her community. She taught Sunday School for ten years at St. John's Cathedral, served on the board of the Washington State Children's Home, was a United Crusade colonel, read to the blind, and was an active member of various medical guilds and Spokane Women of Rotary. Long interested in dramatics, Grace Aspray presented plays to Spokane schools, directed musicals at the Spokane Country Club, and participated in Spokane's Civic Theater. Grace and her husband Dr. Melvin Aspray, were devoted to their family and raised five children: Florence, Rosalie, Elizabeth, Joseph and Tom.

Grace Aspray died in 1989, followed by her husband's death in 1993. The estate was sold in 1994 to Richard W. and Jeanne Jahnke. Retired from business in Southern California, the Jahnkes bought the Corbet-Aspray House for \$293,000. After five years, the Jahnkes sold the Corbet-Aspray House to Shawn Nichols and Ann Marie Byrd in 1999 for \$355,000. Shawn works as a developer, Ann Marie is an elementary school teacher, and together they are experienced restaurateurs. Currently, they are renovating the Corbet-Aspray House for use as a bed-and-breakfast (B&B) to be called "Hannah's Garden Inn."

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The B&B will feature seven guest rooms and private suites, a formal living and dining room, a garden terrace, and manicured lawns suitable for overnight guests, receptions, weddings, meetings, and other events.

Architectural Significance***Kirtland Kelsey Cutter***

The creative genius evidenced in Spokane homes and buildings designed by master architect Kirtland Kelsey Cutter cannot be over-emphasized. In his definitive treatise *Kirtland Cutter: Architect in the Land of Promise*, architectural historian Henry Matthews describes early Spokane through the critical eyes of Cutter's contemporaries.

"In 1905, the well-known polemicist Elbert Hubbard, founder of the Roycrofters' Arts and Crafts workshops and a self-styled successor to William Morris, declared Spokane 'the most beautiful city ever created within so short a time in the history of the whole world'...the 'model city of America.'

Matthews also cites praise from the 1921 California journal *Architect and Engineer* whose editors favorably compared Spokane's architecture to that of Los Angeles and Portland, Oregon. Matthews says,

"Both Hubbard and the professional jury who reported their findings to Architect and Engineer named Kirtland Cutter as the individual responsible for the outstanding urban environment of Spokane. Hubbard described him as 'a designer and architect who has keyed Spokane in an artistic way'; the jury wrote of his 'rare architectural force and genius for design.'

Matthews further states that Cutter's significance is based on a half-century of work mostly executed in the American West. In his book, Matthews establishes Cutter "as a western architect whose contribution should not be overlooked by those studying American architecture as a whole." He points out that Cutter's career "provides a fascinating study of the frontier architect who through fortuitous economic circumstances had the opportunity to bring civilization to a remote region."

The Early Years

Born in 1860, in Cleveland, Ohio, Kirtland Kelsey Cutter grew up in a privileged home where family members included a successful merchant, land developer, doctor and naturalist, banker and auctioneer. In his book, *Kirtland Cutter: Architect in the Land of Promise*, author Henry Matthews explains that Cutter originally intended to become an illustrator and was educated at the noted Art Students' League in New York City, and abroad in European art academies. During the early 1880s, Cutter was exposed to centuries-old European architecture, and appears to have been greatly influenced by traditional timber-framed buildings in Germany and by Craftsman ideals espoused by the English Arts and Crafts movement. He was also influenced by European villages where irregular patterns of half-timbered walls and gables projecting from clusters of buildings around marketplaces and countryside farms provided a rustic charm not seen on American soil. Cutter soon returned to the United States, and by 1887, he was living with his Uncle

CORBET-ASPRAY HOUSE

Horace Cutter, a prominent Spokane banker. Although Kirtland Cutter had completed his studies in art and illustration, he switched to architecture as his chosen avocation. Cutter had no formal architectural training or experience, but with determination and an eye for detail and design, Cutter designed a home for his uncle followed by one for himself. Two years later, the Spokane Fire of 1889 proved to be the catalyst that ignited Cutter's career.

During a hot, dry, dusty afternoon in August, 1889, a huge fire destroyed over 30 blocks of business and housing stock in downtown Spokane. A distress call went out for architects, engineers and the construction trade to help rebuild the city. Devastation caused by the fire coupled with Cutter's introduction by his uncle into Spokane's elite social circles provided him with the opportunity in which to embark on his architectural career. Cutter designed residential estates and commercial buildings for a number of Spokane's most influential men and women from 1887 to 1923. He first partnered with Spokane architect John Poetz, and later with Swedish-born architect Karl Malmgren. Cutter's commercial designs, alone and with partners, include the Cushing Building, Rookery Block, First National Bank, Sherwood Building, Fairmont Cemetery Chapel, Chronicle Building, Davenport Hotel, Spokane Club, City Steam Plant, and the Myrtle Apartments. Outside of Spokane, Cutter's design for the Idaho State Building at the 1892 Chicago World Columbian Exposition won "best of show."

Residential Designs

In addition to his commercial renditions, Cutter is probably best known in Spokane for his residential designs. Beginning in 1889, he was commissioned by attorneys, bankers, merchants, entrepreneurs, railroad barons and wealthy miners to design some of the city's most lavish and opulent estates. These include the Amasa B. Campbell House, the Wakefield Mansion, the Finch Estate, and the Patsy Clark Mansion all located in Browne's Addition, one of Spokane's first and finest residential neighborhoods. Another group of late 19th-century grand estates was designed by Cutter and sited on spectacular view lots located on West Seventh and Eighth Avenues overlooking the city of Spokane. The estates included the Glover House built for Spokane's "founding father" James N. Glover; the D. C. Corbin and Austin Corbin II Houses; the F. Rockwood Moore Mansion (now demolished); and the F. Lewis Clark Estate and Gatehouse.

Representing the extravagant and expensive tastes of his affluent clients, Cutter designed their homes in varying styles always marked by the architect's propensity for eclectic adaptations of traditional elements. Henry Matthews notes Cutter's approach to architectural styles in turn-of-the-century Spokane. He explains,

"Like many of his American contemporaries in that era of ambition and enterprise, Cutter exploited an astonishing range of styles and types, drawn from diverse sources and freely adapted to meet new expectations and changing patterns of life...Today we can easily admit that no single, unified style could express the values, aspirations, and desires of a dynamic and multifaceted society. The historicism in Cutter's architecture was an inevitable response to the life of his era" (Kirtland Cutter: Architect in the Land of Promise).

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From 1887 to 1923, Cutter produced designs for over 70 Spokane homes. Documentation provided by Henry Matthews in his book reveals that 69 homes were built, but that only 35 of them remain today. The 35 remaining Spokane homes designed by Cutter represent various architectural styles embellished by Cutter's personal artistic expression. Ten homes depict the half-timbered Tudor Revival style executed in landmark examples including the Campbell House, Glover House, F. Lewis Clark House, Jasper House, Humbird House and the Jay P. Graves House on Waikiki Road. Three grand estates--the D. C. Corbin and Austin Corbin II Houses located on West Seventh Avenue and the Jay P. Graves House located in Browne's Addition--epitomize the classic Colonial Revival style. Also landmark examples, the Wakefield Mansion and the Thomas House are excellent representations of the Mission Revival style. In addition, the elegant and opulent Finch Mansion is one of Spokane's finest examples of the Neoclassical style, and Cutter's own home--Chalet Hohenstein (demolished)--was an extraordinary rendition of the Swiss Chalet style rarely seen in Spokane. Punctuated by Cutter's unique adaptation of Islamic-style influence, the exotic and pretentious Patsy Clark Mansion is perhaps Cutter's most flamboyant example of eclectic architectural elements.

The Corbet-Aspray House

Built in 1908, the newly completed home for James M. Corbet garnered instant recognition. The style of the Corbet-Aspray House was described by Cutter as "Dutch Colonial" and was praised in an article that appeared in the *Spokane Spokesman-Review* on April 4, 1909,

*"J. M. Corbet's New Residence Is Finest Example
of This Architecture in Spokane."*

In addition to a photograph of the house, the article devoted a lengthy description of the home's exterior and interior design as well as a reproduction of Cutter's first and second floor plans. The term "Dutch Colonial" is no longer used to describe the architectural style depicted by the Corbet-Aspray House. However, architectural historian Henry Matthews makes the following observation. Referring to the Corbet-Aspray House, he says,

"Its compact block of dark red brick under a hipped roof suggests the type of 17th-century Dutch house that influenced English architecture at the Restoration. Its quoins of a lighter, pinkish brick and a belt course of the same material at second-floor level emphasize a geometrical ordering characteristic of the Renaissance, but the formality is broken in the balanced asymmetry of the windows. The broad overhang of the eaves, casting a shadow on the wall, and the horizontal line of the belt course give a hint of the Prairie School."

The Corbet-Aspray House is an eclectic mixture of traditional architectural prototypes found in the Italian Renaissance, Craftsman and Prairie styles popular in America from 1895 to 1935. Italian Renaissance and Prairie style influence are seen in the home's two-story, rectangular form covered with a low-pitched hipped roof. Prairie style elements include a conspicuous front entry and strong emphasis on horizontal lines evident in shadows cast from widely overhanging eaves and by a brick belt course that separates the first and second stories. Italian Renaissance influence is seen in an elliptically arched front entry hood, decorative cornice-line brackets and lighter brick quoins that mark the corners

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of the house. The design for the Corbet-Aspray House also includes the use of clinker brick veneer--a Craftsman style element. Influenced by his European travels, the 19th-century English Arts and Crafts movement, and the American Craftsman ethic, Cutter creatively interpreted the earth-hugging, organic Craftsman style and building materials in his design for the Corbet-Aspray House. Similar to native basalt rock found on the homesite, Cutter clad the house in clinker brick--a roughly textured, flash-fired broken brick that simulates the uneven, jagged black-colored basalt rock indigenous to the area. Sited on some of Spokane's most challenging topography, the house is surrounded by rugged basalt outcroppings and steep slopes. Cutter built the Corbet-Aspray House into the slope and used the abundant basalt rock to form the home's foundation and rock wall that marks the property. The rock wall is a contiguous part of the Corbet-Aspray property as well as the neighborhood. In addition to surrounding the property, the rock wall extends east along both sides of Seventh Avenue for several hundred feet.

Compare and Contrast

At the state level, the Corbet-Aspray House can be compared to the Hervey Lindley House in Seattle, Washington. Both homes were built in 1908 and were designed by architect Kirtland Cutter as simple, rectangular, two-story boxes covered with low-pitched hipped roofs reminiscent of the Arts and Crafts manner of internationally acclaimed British architect Charles F. A. Voysey (*Matthews, 1998*). The Corbet-Aspray House and the Hervey Lindley House are both embellished with distinctive, widely overhanging eaves supported by decorative brackets. Nearly identical, both homes feature three hipped dormers projecting from the roof's facade slope. Both homes feature a conspicuous, recessed front entry with an elliptical arch, and both homes are embellished with a belt course separating the first and second floors that accentuates the buildings' horizontal lines. Lastly, both homes contain similar facade fenestration depicted in multipaned fixed sash and paired casement units. Even though the windows depict varying sizes and are placed in an asymmetrical pattern, an overall symmetrical spatial balance is achieved on the facades of both houses.

Spokane homes designed by Cutter's office that are similar to the eclectic style of the Corbet-Aspray House include the Knight House built in 1910 (1715 North West Point Road) and the Malmgren House (709 West Sumner Avenue) built in 1909 for Cutter's partner, architect Karl Malmgren.

Displaying a mix of traditional elements like the Corbet-Aspray House, the Malmgren House is also an excellent rendition of architectural eclecticism. It was designed by Kirtland Cutter's partner as a two-story, rectangular box with a hipped roof. However, the roof pitch of the Malmgren House is steep while the roof pitch of the Corbet-Aspray House is shallow. Both homes have conspicuous, centrally located front entries, widely overhanging eaves with decorative brackets, and multipaned casement windows. In addition, both homes give the illusion of Prairie style horizontality achieved by strong shadows cast across the facade. However, the Malmgren House does not feature additional architectural elements that emphasize horizontal lines such as the prominent, lighter brick belt course of the Corbet-Aspray House that separates the first and second floors.

Similar to the Corbet-Aspray House, the Knight House--listed on the Spokane Register of Historic Places--was also designed by architect Kirtland Cutter in the vernacular Prairie

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tradition even though it was erected nearly two years after the Corbet-Aspray House was built. Both homes feature the same two-story, low-slung Prairie form with a hipped roof and widely overhanging eaves. Both homes feature hipped roof dormers, centrally placed conspicuous front entries, horizontal lines emphasized by sharp eave shadows and by belt courses that separate the first and second floors--all Prairie style elements. Both homes feature decorative eave brackets borrowed from the Italian Renaissance style. Displaying similar shapes, the elliptically arched front entry hood of the Corbet-Aspray House resembles a prominent, swept, eyebrow-arched eave located on the facade of the Knight House. Even though the materials are different, both homes depict a creative use of exterior cladding organically integrated to their specific sites. The Corbet-Aspray House is clad in a favorite Craftsman-style material: dark-colored, coarsely textured clinker brick that resembles the rugged, black basalt rock and uneven ground surrounding the house. In contrast, the Knight House is located on even ground and exudes a sense of classic formality with its smooth, pressed brick and shingle wall cladding. While the Knight House is a reflection of Cutter's vernacular Prairie style interpretation, the Corbet-Aspray House cannot be defined by one style, but instead by an eclectic mix of stylistic elements that compliment each other.

Conclusion

The Corbet-Aspray House is one of the finest eclectic-styled homes in Spokane and is the only example in the Hill Park Addition that displays a diverse mix of Prairie, Craftsman and Italian Renaissance style influence. Surviving the demolition of over 85-percent of the neighborhood's housing stock, the Corbet-Aspray House demonstrates early Spokane development and settlement in the Hill Park Addition along once-prestigious Seventh Avenue. The Corbet-Aspray House is well preserved and retains excellent interior and exterior integrity in its original location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, and in its association with early Spokane. Furthermore, the house reflects the celebrated work of Spokane's most noted, turn-of-the-century architect--Kirtland Kelsey Cutter. Historically and architecturally significant, the Corbet-Aspray House is eligible for listing under Criteria A and C in the Spokane Register of Historic Places.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

- Aspray, Thomas. Personal interview with Linda Yeomans, April-May, 1999.
Chambers, Florence Aspray. Personal interview with Linda Yeomans, May, 1999.
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Phillips, Steven J. *Old-House Dictionary: An Illustrated Guide to American Domestic Architecture 1600-1940*, Preservation Press: Washington, D.C., 1989.
Polk, R. L. *City Directory*, Spokane, 1890-1999.
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Spokane, WA. New York, NY, 1910-1952.
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Spokane Daily Chronicle, various articles.
Spokane Spokesman-Review, various articles.
Walker, Lester. *American Shelter (Revised Edition)*, New York: Overlook Press, 1996.

10. Geographical Data

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Acreeage of Property | Less than 1 acre. |
| Verbal Boundary Description | Part of the NW quarter of the SW quarter of Section 19, Township 25 North, Range 43 EWM, in the City of Spokane, County of Spokane, beginning at a point on the South line of Block B of the Second Addition to the Railroad Addition to the Town of Spokane Falls (now City of Spokane), as per plat recorded in Volume "A" of plats, Page 8, in the office of the County Auditor of said County, which point is 406.35 feet Westerly from the SE corner of said Block B: thence West along the Southline of said Block B 125 feet: thence South 158 feet: thence East 125 feet: thence North 158 feet to the place of beginning; Also the East 125 feet of Tract B of Hill Park in the City of Spokane, County of Spokane, as per plat recorded in Volume "D" plats, page 23. |
| Boundary Justification | The nominated property includes the entire parcel and urban legal description which contains the Corbet-Aspray House. |

11. Form Prepared By

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Name and Title | Linda Yeomans, Preservation Consultant |
| Telephone | 509-456-3828 |
| Street & Number | 501 West 27th Avenue |
| City, State and Zip Code | Spokane, WA 99203 |
| Date | 24 May 1999 |

12. Additional Documentation

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Map | Spokane City Plat Map, 1999. |
| Black & white photographic prints | 22 black and white prints. |

13. Signature of Owner(s)

[Handwritten signature]

14. For Official Use Only:

Date Received: _____ Attest: _____

Date Heard: _____ City Clerk

Commission Decision: _____ Approved
as to Form: _____

Council/Board Action: _____ Assistant City Attorney

Date: _____

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

MAYOR, City of Spokane
or

CHAIR, Spokane County Commissioners

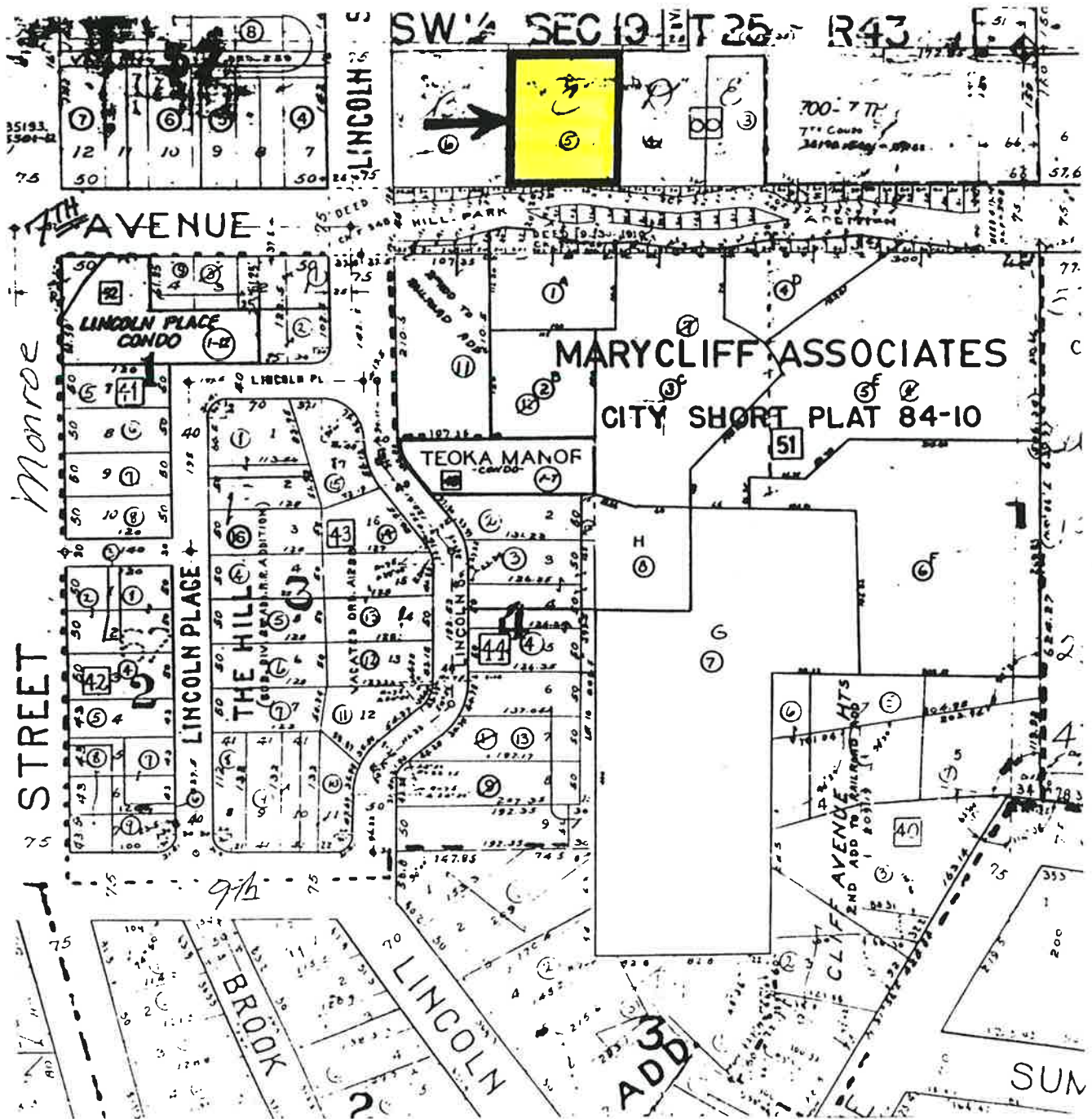
CHAIR, Spokane City/County Historic Landmarks Commission

[Handwritten signature]

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

CORBET-ASPRAY HOUSE

Spokane City/County Plat Map, 1999



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Photos 1 and 2:

South facade of house and front entry hood; 1999.



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Photos 3 and 4:

Southeast corner and east elevation of house; 1999.



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Photos 5 and 6:

North, rear elevation of house in 1999.



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Photo 7:

North, rear elevation of house and back steps.

Photo 8:

West elevation of house. Photos taken in 1999.



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Photos 9 and 10:

Foyer and central hall. 1999 photos.



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Photos 11 and 12:

Foyer as seen through dining room; looking south.



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Photos 13 and 14:

Living room facing east and northeast.



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Photos 15 and 16:

Living room facing south in 1999.



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Photo 17:

Casement window.

Photo 18:

Dining room facing north. 1999 photos.



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Photo 19:

Landing from first floor to second floor via front hall stairs. Photos taken in 1999.

Photo 20:

Stairs to third-floor attic.



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Photos 21 and 22:

Third-floor attic and window to sleeping porch.

