

**SPOKANE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
Nomination Form**

City/County Historic Landmarks Commission  
Sixth Floor - City Hall  
Spokane, Washington 99201-3337

Type all entries--complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic The Crescent  
and or common Frederick and Nelson

**2. Location**

street & number 707 West Main Avenue  
city/town Spokane vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_  
state Washington county Spokane

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name W 201 North River Drive Limited Partnership  
street & number W 201 North River Drive, Suite 100  
city, town Spokane vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state WA

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds etc. Spokane County Courthouse  
street & number W 1116 Broadway  
city, town Spokane state Washington

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A  
date \_\_\_\_\_    federal    state    county    local  
depository for survey records \_\_\_\_\_  
city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair  
 deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Rising seven stories high and covering the south 3/4 of Main Avenue from Wall Street, the Crescent Building was completed in 1919 in order to house the fast-growing Crescent Store. Owners Robert B. Paterson and Captain J.M. Comstock, hired prominent Spokane Architect L.L. Rand to design the building which would fit the future needs of their customers. Bay windows cover the entire street level of the store, making window shopping a new and exciting tradition for those visiting the Crescent. Windows also decorate every floor of the building, giving the building not only a unique quality (most department stores did not have windows on each floor), but also allowing a much more open and inviting look. The windows made it possible for those enjoying lunch on the sixth floor to marvel at the view from their table. Stylistically, the building reflects Rand's emphasis on detail, with brackets, cartouches, and cornice elements executed in white-glazed terracotta. The structure itself is constructed of steel reinforced concrete.

The Crescent Building sits in the heart of downtown Spokane and shares its historical traditions with such contemporaries as Old City Hall, the US Bank Building and the Smith Funeral Home.

The majority of the windows on the original building are arranged in groups of three, with the center window of slightly larger proportion. The windows are all one-over-one sash with stone sills and lintels and are set below corbelled brick. Fifth floor windows have lintels that form a

City/County Historic Landmarks Commission  
Sixth Floor - City Hall, Spokane, WA.

## Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination Form

Continuation Sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

continuous belt around the east and north sides of the building, while the sixth floor window sills exhibit this same detail. Between each row of windows, pilasters decorate the building, giving a classic look to the building. On each corner of the building, in cast concrete, is the building's title stone. Capping the seventh floor of the building, corbelled brickwork supports the cornice. Corbelled brickwork can also be found below the stringcourse which runs along all sides of the building between the first and second floors. Each floor measures approximately 144 feet by 208 feet, totalling 29,952 square feet per floor.

The building's first floor windows and interior have been altered over the years, reflecting the generations of change in retailing that have occurred in the Crescent Building. Random colors and patterns scatter the six floors used for daily business. One of the few fixtures remaining constant, extravagant elevator banks can be found on six of the seven floors.

The Crescent Building rests on a below-grade concrete foundation and has an unusual attribute: two basements. The first level basement is used as a lower level retail area, while the sub-level basement sits under only 1/3 of the total building and is used to house the electrical wiring and boiler for the building. The columns, equally spaced with some beginning in the sub-basement and some beginning in the first level basement, are an integral part of the structure of the building.

## 8. Significance

Period

Areas of Significance-Check and justify below

- |   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric<br><input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499<br><input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599<br><input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699<br><input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799<br><input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1919 | <input type="checkbox"/> archaeology-prehistoric<br><input type="checkbox"/> archaeology-historic<br><input type="checkbox"/> agriculture<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture<br><input type="checkbox"/> art<br><input type="checkbox"/> commerce<br><input type="checkbox"/> communications<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning<br><input type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> economics<br><input type="checkbox"/> education<br><input type="checkbox"/> engineering<br><input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement<br><input type="checkbox"/> industry<br><input type="checkbox"/> invention<br><input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture<br><input type="checkbox"/> law<br><input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input type="checkbox"/> military<br><input type="checkbox"/> music<br><input type="checkbox"/> philosophy<br><input type="checkbox"/> politics/government<br><input type="checkbox"/> religion<br><input type="checkbox"/> science<br><input type="checkbox"/> sculpture<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian<br><input type="checkbox"/> theater<br><input type="checkbox"/> transportation<br><input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |
|---|--|--|---|

Specific Dates 1800 - Present

Builder/Architect Loren L Rand

5. Significance (in one paragraph)

The original Crescent, located on West Riverside, opened for business on August 5, 1889. The day after the Great Fire of 1889, which destroyed most of downtown Spokane. As the town's only remaining dry goods store, this small 16' x 19' establishment sold out it's entire stock on it's first day of business. Owner Robert B Paterson and his Charles City, Iowa partner, Captain James M Comstock, supported the post-fire effort and did not raise their prices in order to take advantage of the fire's victims. Beginning the tradition "be fair to everyone".

Born and raised in Monterey, Wisconsin, Captain James M Comstock took the newly completed Northern Pacific Railroad to the Pacific Coast in the early 1880's. During a stopover in a small town then known as Spokane Falls, Captain Comstock took a liking to the community. In the spring of 1889 he decided to send his partner from Charles City, Robert Paterson, to see what he thought of it. The visit resulted in the immediate establishment of the first Crescent Store.

The Great Fire of 1889 led to many changes in Spokane Falls. Buildings were rebuilt and the industrialization of this small community began to become a reality. Often referred to as Spokane's "Age of Elegance", this

City/County Historic Landmarks Commission  
Sixth Floor - City Hall, Spokane, WA.

## Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination Form

Continuation Sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

time of prosperity brought much growth for Mr Paterson and his partner, Captain Comstock. The Crescent quickly outgrew its small storeroom/store on Riverside. Early locations included the Whitten Block at the corner of Post and Sprague. In 1898 the company took a big step forward and purchased over 60-feet of frontage on Riverside for \$42,000 and began the erection of their own building. The Crescent Building was finished and occupied on March 29, 1899. Over the years the Crescent's success continued and in 1914, the company began plans for another new building. Spending \$125,000 to purchase the property at the corner of Wall and Main, construction commenced in May of 1917, just as the U.S. entered World War I. The new seven story Crescent Store, designed by L.L. Rand, which was to form the first unit of the present seven-story structure, was not completed until 1919.

This new building housed five floors of merchandise ranging anywhere from men's and women's clothing to gourmet foods and wines. The new building was also home to two restaurants, which were popular to the downtown lunch crowd and afternoon shoppers. Known for its Christmas decorations, the Crescent used extensive lights, window decorations and two large wreaths that hung from the roof on the east side of the building to reflect the spirit of the season.

The Crescent could boast many "firsts" in the realm of business policies and philosophy. It was the first Spokane store to close at 6:00 pm every day. It was the first to close at 6:00 pm on Saturdays. The Crescent led the movement to shorten the workday to 9:30 am to 5:30 pm. It was the first to adhere to adopt the money back policy if a customer was not satisfied. In 1948 the Crescent was also the first business to install escalators. They were described as "the most modern post-war type" and were the only escalators between the Twin Cities and Seattle. Local police were called in to handle the crowds that turned out to try out the latest addition to the store.

City/County Historic Landmarks Commission  
Sixth Floor - City Hall, Spokane, WA.

## Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination Form

Continuation Sheet

Item number 8

Page 3

In 1949 the Crescent purchased the Alexander Building, located on Wall Street directly south of the Crescent. The new Crescent Building was now extended half a city block.

The Crescent enjoyed great prosperity in a city that looked to this store not only for its physical needs, but as a symbol of the community's history and heritage. In April of 1988, the Crescent ended its 99 year reign in Spokane by merging with a Seattle-based company. Rumors began to circulate of the stores impending bankruptcy, and the drastic changes to be made by the new management. The new owners, however, made no major changes to the store, with the exception of a new name, Frederick and Nelson.

Despite the many attempts to revive the once grand Crescent tradition, Frederick and Nelson filed Chapter 11 on September 17, 1991, closing five of its ten stores. The downtown Spokane store officially closed its doors on April 12, 1992.

Today the Crescent Building remains a tangible and significant reminder of a revered local business which served this community for nearly a century. Architecturally impressive, as well as an outstanding example of the work of architect Loren L Rand, the Crescent's fine terracotta exterior is among the finest in Spokane. Goodale and Barbieri Companies are desirous to revive that spirit by having The Crescent Court become the focal point of the region's retail core. The new Crescent Building will offer a large variety of specialty retail shops, a grand ballroom, convention hall and trade show facilities as well as four floors of office space above. We believe the redeveloped historic Crescent Building will be the pride and joy of a rejuvenated downtown Spokane.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

"Crescent Memories" The Spokesman Review, Spokane, WA 1992

The Story of a Store and a City, Published by The Crescent on their 50th Anniversary

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated property .69 Acres

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning from the Alley running East and West between Wall and Post and North to Main Avenue.

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

state N/A county \_\_\_\_\_  
state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kasi Willey  
organization Goodale and Barbieri date September 1, 1993  
street & number W 201 North River Dr telephone (509) 459-6109  
city/town Spokane state Washington

12. Signature of Owner(s)

*Thomas M. Barbieri*

West 201 North River Drive L.P. by North River Drive Company, it's General Partner, by Thomas M Barbieri, it's Vice President.

For Official Use Only:

Date Received: 11-10-93  
Date Heard: 11-17-93  
Commission Decision: Approved  
Council/Board Action: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

Approved as to Form: \_\_\_\_\_  
Asst. City Attorney

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR, City of Spokane

OR

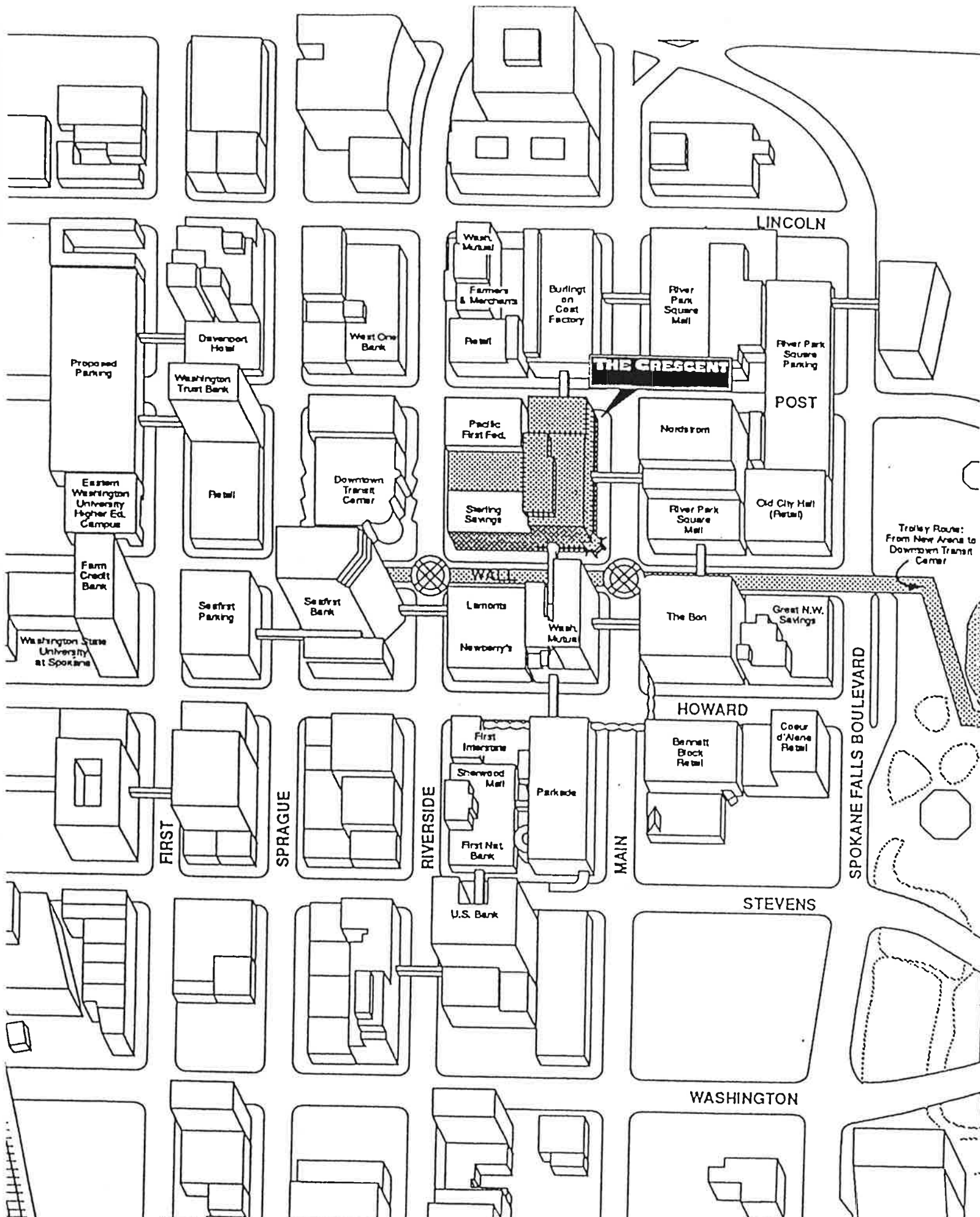
\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIR, Spokane County Commissioner

*Robert Ogden*

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIR, Spokane City/County Historic Landmarks Commission

*Kathleen W. Darnett*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City/County Historic Preservation Officer





LINCOLN

POST

THE CRESCENT

Trolley Route:  
From New Avenue to  
Downtown Transfer  
Center

SPOKANE FALLS BOULEVARD

HOWARD

STEVENS

WASHINGTON

FIRST

SPRAGUE

RIVERSIDE

MAIN

NORTHEAST CORNER -  
CRESCENT COURT



NORTHSIDE ENTRANCE



5TH FLOOR ELEVATOR BANKS



5TH FLOOR ELEVATOR CLOCK



ORIGINAL TITLE BLOCK  
MAIN LEVEL



MAIN LEVEL ELEVATOR BANKS



MAIN LEVEL GENERAL AREA



MAIN LEVEL COLUMN



3RD FLOOR GENERAL AREA



4TH FLOOR COLUMN

