

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

JOHN & ALTA GRAHAM HOUSE

2. Location

Street & Number 607 S. Monroe
City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99204
Parcel Number 35192.4601

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 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 Daniel & Angie Freerksen
Street & Number 2804 S. Wall Street
City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99203
Telephone Number/E-mail 230-3929 and 624-7806 and 270-7806

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

Final nomination presented at hearing, 15 Sept 2004

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 or 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 | 2nd Railroad Addition, Lots 1 and 2, Block 57 |
| 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 |
| Street, City, State, Zip Code | 501 West 27 th Avenue, Spokane, WA 99203 |
| Telephone Number | 509-456-3828 |
| Email Address | lkyeomans1@aol.com |
| Date Final Nomination Heard | September 15, 2004 |

12. Additional Documentation

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Map | City/County of Spokane current plat map and site plan. |
| Photographs and Slides | 27 B&W prints, 11 color slides. |

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.**

CITY ADMINISTRATOR, 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 OF PROPERTY

Sited on a steep hillside bluff in the vicinity of West Seventh Avenue in Spokane, Washington, the John and Alta Graham House and carriage house are good examples of the Neoclassical style. The one and one-half story home was built in 1908 and features a symmetrical design with a side gable roof, prominent gable-end brick chimneys, brick masonry construction, and a full-width front porch. The porch is covered by an extension of the principal roof and is supported by colonnade of massive fluted wood columns. A covered inset balcony is located above the first-floor porch and is supported by round tapered columns and a Chippendale-pattern porch balustrade. The exterior trim on the house is painted a crisp, classic white, producing a dramatic contrast to the deep red face bricks that clad the home. Built in 1921, a two-car carriage house/garage is located on the northeast corner of the property and is also constructed of brick masonry. The Graham House and carriage house have received some modifications over time but retain good exterior integrity with original features in original location, design, materials, workmanship, and association as a residential property built in the early 20th century in Spokane, Washington.

CURRENT APPEARANCE & CONDITION***Site***

Built on the southeast corner of the intersection of West Sixth Avenue and South Monroe Street, the Graham House is located on Lots 1 and 2, Block 57, in the Second Railroad Addition on Spokane's South Hill. The combined lots measure 100 feet wide and 142 feet deep and are located on a steep north-facing slope. Massive outcrops of basalt rock (sometimes called "haystacks") dominate the hillside topography of the property. Two basalt outcrops flank a paved driveway, which angles uphill from Sixth Avenue to the front of the house. Another basalt outcrop abuts the east elevation of the carriage house. Framing the house and carriage house, the grounds are groomed and landscaped with rock gardens, deciduous trees and shrubs, and evergreen trees that were planted on the west side of the property when the house was built. Still growing today, these trees include Blue Spruce, Tamarack, and a variety of firs. A small covered carport is located on the southeast corner of the property behind the house. The property is bordered by Sixth Avenue to the north, Monroe Street to the west, a multi-story contemporary apartment building to the east, and large historic homes built during the early 1900s to the south. The surrounding neighborhood was once a showplace of landmark residences built during the late 1890s and early 1900s. During the last 50 years, however, some of the homes were altered for use as apartment or event houses, and many dwellings were replaced with contemporary apartment blocks, condominium units, parking lots, and medical buildings that are now part of the Deaconess and Shriner's Hospital complex.

House Exterior

The Graham House has an irregular footprint that measures approximately 50 feet wide and 55 feet deep. The house is brick masonry construction and is clad with red-colored face bricks that are laid in stretcher bond. The home has one and one-half stories with a

side gable roof. The roof has widely overhanging eaves with square-cut exposed rafter tails. Fenestration patterns are symmetrical, and are composed of original multi-paned windows and multi-paned French doors. The house has a black basalt rock foundation that measures up to two feet thick.

The façade of the house faces north with a view of downtown Spokane and is dominated by a wide front porch and a second-story balcony. Located on the first floor, the formal front porch extends the full width of the house, measures ten feet deep, and is covered by an extension of the principal roof. The porch is supported by four large symmetrically balanced, round tapered fluted wood columns. A plain, square-cut wood balustrade, which is located between the columns, protects the porch deck. The porch deck is made of poured concrete and is supported by a foundation constructed of black basalt rock. A series of concrete steps rise from grade at the driveway up to the porch deck, and are flanked by stepped basalt rock stairwell walls. The walls are capped with poured concrete coping. A partial-width dormer with an inset balcony and a shed roof projects from the north slope of the principal roof and is clad in wood shingles. The shed roof of the dormer extends over the balcony, and is supported by five tapered round columns. A square-cut wood balustrade with a Chippendale pattern surrounds the balcony's deck. Two multi-paned French doors open from the balcony and are flanked by plate-glass windows.

The south, rear elevation of the house is dominated by a lower cross-gable wing which was built in 1929. The wing addition features brick masonry construction with red face bricks that are laid in stretcher bond, and has a gable-end roof. Exterior doors are located on the west elevation and the south elevation of the wing. A brick chimney rises from the south elevation and is flanked by multi-paned metal casement windows.

The west elevation of the house is dominated by a symmetrical design with a center tapered brick chimney, which is flanked by 10/1 multi-paned double-hung, wood-sash windows on the first and second floors, and by two quarter-round leaded-glass multi-paned windows in the gable peak. *The east elevation* of the house is similar to the west elevation and has a center brick chimney, which is flanked by multi-paned windows on the second floor and gable peak. A back door is located on the southeast corner of the house and is distinguished with an arched pediment. The pediment projects three feet from the planar wall surface of the house and is supported by knee-brace brackets. Six concrete steps descend from the back porch stoop to grade.

House Interior

The interior of the Graham House comprises over 2,400 square feet throughout the first and second floors. Located in the center of the front porch, the front entrance of the house features an original 42-inch wide wood screen/storm door and original multi-paned wood French exterior doors that open into a central reception hall. The reception hall leads to an eating area and kitchen on the east, which open to a central hall, bathroom,

and two bedrooms. A large living room, which measures 21 feet wide and 29 feet deep, is located to the west of the hall. A fireplace is located in the living room in the center of the west wall. The ceiling in the living room has boxed beams and deep cove molding. The doors and woodwork on the first floor are painted white, the floors (except kitchen and bathroom) are solid oak, and except for two windows, all of the windows on the first floor are a combination of original double-hung or fixed, wood-sash, multi-paned units. The two exceptions are two plate-glass windows which flank the front entrance. An open staircase, which is located in the center rear of the house, rises and turns up to the second floor. The second floor has two apartments which each have a bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, and living/eating area. The basement is partially finished with a laundry room, furnace/mechanical room, and storage space.

The rear wing of the house, which was built in 1929, is accessed through a door by the staircase. The wing addition measures 33 feet wide and 26 feet deep and has two exterior doors. A door, which is located on the south elevation, opens to a large recreation room. The recreation room opens east to a small galley kitchen, a bedroom, and a bathroom, and opens northwest to a small entry hall with an exterior door on the west wall. The recreation room has a vaulted ceiling with exposed truss work made of hand-hewn wood beams. Wrought iron braces connect the truss work. The floor is made of reddish-brown molted, matte, glazed ceramic tile. The walls are finished with trowel-patterned plaster and walnut-stained mahogany wainscoting. The doors are made of mahogany and feature a vertical board pattern with hammered black wrought iron strap hinges. A brick fireplace is located in the center of the south wall. Original brass and glass candle-style wall sconces illuminate the mahogany mantel. The bathroom features an original glazed ceramic tile floor and tile wainscoting in shades of tan and blue/green turquoise.

ORIGINAL APPEARANCE & SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS

The original design of the Graham House was built from plans and specifications rendered by the home's architect, W. W. Hyslop. A June 28, 1908 *Spokesman-Review* newspaper article featured a large photograph of the home, Hyslop's floor plans, and a detailed description of the interior and exterior of the house:

Constructed of red brick, with shingled gables stained green, and trimmings of white, the house has at once an attractive color scheme and an appearance of substantialness. There is a rustic foundation, the rock being used in massive effect. The wide veranda in front is covered by the main room, supported by large, fluted, tapering columns. The veranda extends the full length of the house and has a cement floor.

The grounds slope to the city, and the trees and boulders have been worked into pleasing landscape effects. An unsurpassed view is to be had from the front veranda and all of the east windows.

A reception hall leads from the porch into the living room, which is one of the largest in the city. It is in the shape of an “L” and is 29 feet in the greatest lengths. All of the floors on the first floor are quarter-sawed oak... The walls and ceilings are papered, the hall being done in conventional design, with pink predominating; while the living room walls are treated in French gray silk fiber paper. There is a huge fireplace of red brick... French doors open upon the veranda... The doorknobs in the living room are glass and the hardware throughout is dull brass. All of the chambers [bedrooms on the second floor] are in ivory white... There is a linen closet built in the hall.

According to Spokane Building Permit #34822, a one-story addition was added as a lower cross gable wing to the back of the house on the south elevation in 1929. The interior of the addition served as a recreation room, complete with fireplace, kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom.

A historic photograph of the house reveals a historic modification to the dormer on the north façade of the house.¹ The dormer was enlarged and remodeled as an inset balcony with an extension of the dormer’s shed roof, which is supported by round tapered columns. A Chippendale-style balustrade was built around the balcony. The dormer’s four multi-paned windows were changed: two windows were replaced with plate-glass units, and two windows were replaced with multi-paned French doors that open onto the balcony.

Spokane Building Permits #41947, 44857, 53676, and 56340 indicate that from 1958 to 1963, the first floor and the second floor of the house were remodeled for use as three apartments with one large two-bedroom apartment on the first floor, and two smaller apartments with one bedroom each on the second floor. At this time four original multi-paned windows on the first-floor façade were replaced with two plate-glass units.

Pictured in the 1908 *Spokesman-Review* newspaper article and the 1910 photograph (EWSHS #L83-10.101) of the house, the original roof was made of wood shingles. It is not known when the shingles were removed or how many subsequent roofs were installed, but the current roof of the house was installed in the 1990s and is covered with one layer of composition shingles.

¹ Eastern Washington State Historical Society photo archive #L83-10.101. Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture, Spokane, WA. The back of the archival photograph lists 1910 as the date the photograph was taken, which was two years after the house was built. Upon closer inspection however, it appears that the photograph may have been taken in the 1920s, 1930s, or 1940s. This conclusion was reached due to mature plant growth, lack of buildings such as the apartment block next east and Deaconess Hospital, and the weathered condition of painted surfaces on the house that are featured in the photograph.

The original 1908 plans for the home featured a front porch with *no* balustrade as revealed in the 1908 and 1910 photographs of the house. Sometime between 1910 and 1980, a balustrade was added to the porch and then subsequently removed. In order to satisfy building code and insurance/personal liability requirements, a plain wood balustrade was built in 2004 between the columns on the front porch.

Carriage House

Reported in Spokane County Tax Assessor Records, the Graham carriage house was built in 1921 as a brick masonry structure with one and one-half stories. The building measures 20 feet wide and 25 feet deep for a total of 500 square feet on the first floor. The carriage house has a side-gable roof with widely overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails. A shed dormer with widely overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails projects from the north slope of the garage roof; another identical shed dormer projects from the south slope of the garage roof. Two garage-style doors open from the north façade, which abuts the south side of Sixth Avenue. An original wood door with multi-pane glazing in the upper half, and an original multi-paned window are located on the first floor of the west elevation of the building. Tax Assessor records indicate that an apartment was built on the second floor of the carriage house in 1961. The construction included the installation of two plate-glass windows in each dormer (these apparently replaced the original dormer windows), a second-story window and a second-story door on the west elevation, and a wood-and-metal stairway that leads from grade to the door on the second story. The alterations to the exterior of the carriage house are minimal and do not reduce the architectural integrity of the building.

Attached Garage

A two-car garage was built and attached to the northeast corner of the Graham House in 1963. It measures 24 feet wide and 42 feet deep. Due to the steep slope of the hillside, the garage, which is built at grade, is located below the level of the front porch and first floor of the house. The garage has a two-story apartment built above the automobile area. A concrete-and-metal staircase is located on the northwest corner of the garage and leads to the second-floor apartment. The garage has a flat roof, wide horizontal wood clapboard siding, a second-story porch, and a large metal garage door at ground level.

The Neoclassical Style

The Graham House is designed in the Neoclassical tradition which was popular in Spokane from about 1890 to 1925. Neoclassical-style features found on the Graham House are dominant on the home's original 1.5 story, side-gabled house form, full-width colonnaded front porch, and partial-width second-story colonnaded balcony. Other Neoclassical-style elements of the home include original exterior features such as symmetrical fenestration patterns, exterior brick cladding, white-painted fluted porch columns, white-painted round balcony columns, white-painted trim, a Chippendale-pattern balcony balustrade, multi-paned windows, decorative back door pediment, and multi-paned French doors which accentuate the front entrance. In addition to elements of

the Neoclassical style, elements influenced by the Craftsman style are found on the Graham House and carriage house. These include decorative brackets and exposed rafter tails, and the liberal use of indigenous black basalt rock in the foundation of the home.

Summary

To summarize, the Graham House and carriage house retain good exterior architectural integrity. The property has sustained some changes but retains sufficient original design, materials, and workmanship to convey the architect's original plan, and architectural building trends, materials and designs that were popular in the early 1900s in Spokane. While the 1963 garage may be regarded as "architecturally incompatible," it does not substantially reduce the exterior architectural integrity or architectural significance of the property. To summarize, the Graham House and carriage house are in good condition, and changes to the property have not substantially affected the architectural integrity or architectural significance of the property.

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Areas of Significance | Commerce, Community Planning & Development |
| Period of Significance | 1908 to 1941 |
| Significant Date | 1908 |
| Architects | W. W. Hyslop (1908 house) Whitehouse & Price (1929 wing addition) |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historically significant for its association with John W. Graham and “The Hill” neighborhood, the Graham House and carriage house are typical examples of the development and subsequent settlement of “The Hill,” an area that was built as a residential neighborhood for some of Spokane’s most prominent citizens and social elite. Threatened by inappropriate commercial encroachment, many historic homes in “The Hill” area have been destroyed during the last century. Although they are surrounded on three sides by apartment buildings and a large hospital complex, the Graham House and carriage house have miraculously survived as tangible reminders of the early residential development and settlement associated with the “The Hill” neighborhood in Spokane. More than any other residence in which the Grahams resided, the Graham House and carriage house are especially associated in the area of “commerce” from 1908 to 1941, with the most productive period of the life of John W. Graham, one of Spokane, Washington’s most revered pioneer merchants, business leaders, and beloved civic benefactors. Built in 1908 and 1921 respectively, the house and carriage house were the home of John W. Graham and his wife, Alta Graham, for nearly five decades until John’s death in 1941, and Alta’s death in 1957. During this time, John W. Graham coined the slogan, “If Its Made of Paper, We Have It,” and founded, owned, operated, and expanded the John W. Graham Company into “one of the finest and largest stationery, book, and office supply stores” in the Western United States.² Graham’s business empire was a mega-operation in early Spokane that constituted four multi-story brick commercial retail sales buildings (located between West Sprague and West First Avenues) and two warehouses, a warehouse and office in Seattle, and a retail store in Ellensburg. A 1929 newspaper article reported that the John W. Graham Company was “the largest depository of books west of the Mississippi” at that time.³ Another newspaper article exclaimed that the John W. Graham Company was “one of the largest merchandising organizations of its kind in the Northwest” and supplied “most of the textbooks used in Washington schools...”⁴ Compared to other Spokane merchant leaders, and praised for his keen sense of business, his boundless energy, and his genuine commitment to customer service, John W. Graham was honored in his obituary in the May 21, 1941 edition of the *Spokane Daily Chronicle* as the “best businessman in the Pacific Northwest.” Similar public accolades continually surrounded John W. Graham and his life in Spokane. Documented to date, an assortment of nearly 100 articles,

² “His Capital Was \$300; His Store, a Tent.” *KHQ and KGA Advertisement*, Spokane, WA, 1937.

³ “Tent Store Days till Now, 1889-1929: 40 Years in Spokane.” *Spokesman-Review*, 1929.

⁴ “Graham’s Pioneer Firm Began Operations Here 61 Years Ago.” *Spokesman-Review*, 28 Jan 1951.

advertisements, books, brochures, and other publications have been written about John W. Graham and his company. The *Spokesman-Review* newspaper reported that “there was no man more energetic, no man with more force and vision...[and] no man more generous and considerate of others” than John W. Graham.⁵ The newspaper stated that “his genius as a salesman and executive...made his store the biggest in its line in the West, and nationally recognized in the paper industry.” Historically significant in the areas of “commerce” and “community planning & development,” the Graham House and carriage house are eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Categories A and B.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The Graham House

On May 16, 1907 a warranty deed was conveyed to John and Alta Graham for the property described as Lot 1 and the west half of Lot 2, Block 57, Second Railroad Addition. The cost of the property was recorded at \$3,300 (Spokane County warranty deed #172230). Soon after the transaction, the Grahams commissioned Spokane architect W. W. Hyslop to design a home for their steep hillside lot. Commanding a panoramic view of Spokane, the property posed some challenges for Hyslop. Located on a rocky bluff, the hillside was characterized by a very steep slope and was strewn with massive rocky outcroppings of black basalt. Hyslop carefully sited the house between outcroppings, gaining as much level ground as possible. Construction of the home commenced, and when it was completed in 1908, it was described in a feature spread in the *Spokesman-Review* newspaper on June 28, 1908. The headlines read:

DIGNIFIED HOUSE OF DUTCH DESIGN

John W. Graham's New Residence Is Simple and Attractive

Rooms of Generous Size

Living Room 30x30, Main Chamber 13x33, Walls Richly Papered, Old Ivory Finish

The article included a large photograph of the house, the architect's floor plans, and a three-column description of the home, beginning with the following excerpt:

Roominess and solid comfort, added to the simple dignity and unpretentiousness of the Dutch Colonial⁶ cottage, are apparent, even in the exterior lines of the residence that John W. Graham

⁵ “John W. Graham Dies from Heart Attack at His Home.” *Spokesman-Review*, 21 May 1941.

⁶ The use of the term “Dutch Colonial” in the 1908 newspaper article may refer to the “Dutch-influenced design” of the home's matching east and west elevations, which reveal a side-gable roof with a center chimney that projects through the apex of the gable peak. This design is similar to side-gable roof designs with center chimneys and stepped roof parapets that were especially popularized in the Netherlands during the 1700s, 1800s, and early 1900s.

has just completed on the east side of Monroe Street, between Sixth and Seventh Avenues. The house cost about \$8,500.

Described in a July 30, 1925 *Spokesman-Review* article, the Graham's property was regarded as a Spokane showplace. The article stated that "Mrs. John W. Graham" presided over "one of Spokane's most charming homes, set in amid the rocks at Sixth and Monroe." The article explained that the landscape was "full of wild birds" which lived in "the shrubbery and trees massed against the [large basalt] rock [outcropping] in the garden." According to Alta Graham, the rock gave "the place unusual privacy" and was a "viewpoint, overlooking the city." The grounds around the Graham House were so beautifully designed and landscaped that they "won a prize as the most artistic and well-kept in the city in 1926."⁷

John W. and Alta Graham owned the Graham House from 1908 to 1942. John died in May 1941, and Alta conveyed the property "in consideration of love and affection" to their daughter, Molly Graham Pattullo. Even though her daughter owned the property, Alta Graham continued to live in the Graham House for the next 15 years until her death in 1957.

In 1958, Wallace, Idaho residents, Anton and Katherine Mautz, and their daughter Kathryn Ann Mautz, bought the house and carriage house, for \$18,000. A prominent Spokane attorney, Kathryn Ann Mautz was a judge for Spokane County Justice Court #4 for many years. In 1967, Earl King, an executive with Markham Advertising, and his wife, Elinor, purchased the property for \$58,000. In 1990, David Baker and Stanley Bailey bought the house for \$150,500, and sold it to Richard and Christina Baker in 1996 for \$215,000. Daniel and Angie Freerksen bought the property in 2002 for \$215,625.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Category A—Building/development Trends

The John & Alta Graham House is nominated to the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Category A for its association with historic trends and patterns associated with residential development that evolved in early Spokane. Especially important during its period of significance from 1908 to 1941, and in the area of significance, "community planning & design," the Graham House and carriage house are physical demonstrations of the original development and subsequent settlement of the vicinity around Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Avenues along the terraced basalt rock bluff that runs from Division Street west to just past Oak Street. Part of the area, which includes the hillside lots where the Graham House is sited, was known as "The Hill" section of Spokane. Rivaling other early prestigious neighborhoods in Spokane like Browne's Addition, "The Hill" was the home of some of Spokane's most affluent and socially prominent citizens. Such names as James Glover, D. C. Corbin, F. Rockwood Moore, Senator Turner, Kirtland Cutter, James Corbet, and John W. Graham were among those who owned

⁷ "J. W. Graham Buys Old Clark Home." *Spokesman-Review*, 21 May 1926.

property and lived in large homes built on “The Hill.” Some of the dwellings still exist, but many in “The Hill” area were converted to apartment houses or were demolished. This is due to years of commercial encroachment associated mainly with the erection of new apartment and condominium buildings, and Shriner’s and Deaconess Hospitals. The Graham House escaped demolition and exists as one of the few original homes originally built in “The Hill” neighborhood.

Designed by W. W. Hyslop, the Graham House conveys a popular trend in early Spokane which embraced a preference for custom homes that were designed by Spokane architects for wealthy patrons. Most plan-book house designs were built for the middle-class masses, but many homes rendered by architects and builders were specifically designed, planned, and constructed for Spokane’s social elite, individuals who had sufficient social and financial resources to accommodate their housing wants and needs. As an example of one of these homes, the Graham House retains good integrity and conveys popular late 19th and early 20th-century construction practices, building materials, designs, and stylistic influences of the day.

Category B—Significant Person

In the area of “commerce,” the Graham House and carriage house are nominated under Category B for their association with John W. Graham and the significant contributions he made in Spokane. Displaying a noted entrepreneurial attitude of respectful and friendly customer service, John W. Graham was celebrated as one of the most ambitious, successful, longstanding and popular merchants in the history of Spokane, Washington. His impact and contributions on Spokane’s early business development, downtown commercial core, and merchant trade is particularly notable, and his longstanding association with the hundreds of people that he steadily employed for more than 50 years—even through the Great Depression, is a tribute to his honor. Compared to other merchants and civic leaders in Spokane, many people agreed that “few men who have lived in Spokane...have contributed more to the upbuilding of Spokane than Mr. Graham.”⁸ His obituary in the May 21, 1941 edition of the *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, praised Graham, saying that “he was the best businessman in the Pacific Northwest... There was no man more energetic, no man with more force and vision...[and] no man more generous and considerate of others.” Graham was praised as a “leader in civic affairs, taking an active part and giving generously to all civic endeavors.”⁹ He was a director of the Spokane Chamber of Commerce, a board chair for several banks, and an active member of the City Club, the Spokane County Club, the Elks Club, and St. Andrews Episcopal Church. He founded, owned, and operated the Spokane region’s largest paper supply store which proffered the slogan, “If Its Made of Paper, We Have It.” Comparing his store in a larger context, Spokane KHQ and KGA radio stations

⁸ “John W. Graham Dies From Heart Attack at His Home.” *Spokesman-Review*, 21 May 1941.

⁹ Ibid.

claimed that Graham's store was "one of the finest and largest stationery, book, and office supply stores" in the Western United States.¹⁰

John W. Graham

John W. Graham was born on March 24, 1860 in Rockport, Indiana. He was orphaned as a young boy, but nevertheless pursued and received a public education in Rockport. Needing to earn a living, Graham started selling newspapers. He added periodicals to his newspaper sales, and eventually operated a small newsstand. An article in the June 23, 1940 edition of the *Spokesman-Review* described Graham's early drive and determination to reach success:

As a boy...[Graham]...had built up a little newsstand business for himself. There was no railroad... Papers came in by steamboat and stage. A competitor entered the field with a horse—stiff opposition for a youngster [who was] small physically and dependent on his short legs alone. A doctor let him use his horse, and he borrowed a sulky.

The two youthful salesmen drove out the pike daily to meet the stage and raced back to town to be the first with the papers on the street. On one occasion the race was almost a dead heat, but that night his competitor's horse died. It was John W. Graham's first business break. A drug store operator took an interest in him and offered him a corner in the store for a newsstand, rent-free, in return for sweeping out and keeping the kerosene lamps clean.

In 1885 Graham moved to Minneapolis to visit his sister. While there he secured employment in a stationery store. He saw an article about a city called "Spokane Falls, Washington Territory."¹¹ Spellbound by the article, Graham relentlessly quizzed stationery store customers and businessmen about Spokane until he met a writing pen salesman who had knowledge of the town. The salesman recited a glowing account of Spokane and gave Graham the name of a successful Spokane stationer, Sylvester Heath. Graham wrote Heath a letter but received no reply. Undaunted, Graham traveled to the West Coast and arrived in Spokane in 1888. He met Sylvester Heath, who showed him the town, including Coeur d'Alene Park in Historic Browne's Addition. Today lush with mature plantings, the park at that time was "merely a barren tract with a fence around it and few trees."¹² Disillusioned with what he saw, Graham returned to Minneapolis. His return was short, however, because as one acquaintance stated, "the lure [to go West] was in his blood."¹³ The next year Graham traveled again to Spokane, and this time he stayed for the following 52 years until his death.

¹⁰ "His Capital Was \$300; His Store, a Tent." *KHQ and KGA Advertisement*, Spokane, WA, 1937.

¹¹ "Presenting John W. Graham." *Spokesman-Review*, 23 June 1940 (photos).

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

Alta Burch Graham

John Graham married Alta Burch, a daughter of Dr. and Laura (*nee* Havermale) Burch on October 28, 1891. Alta Graham's father was one of Spokane's earliest pioneers and her grandfather was the Reverend Samuel G. Havermale, who settled in the city in 1875. Havermale Island, located in the center of downtown Spokane in the Spokane River, is named in his honor. The Grahams had one daughter, Molly Laura Graham, and resided in a house at 818 W. York Avenue in north central Spokane before moving to their custom-designed home at 607 S. Monroe in 1908.

The Monroe Street house was John W. Graham's refuge, and numerous newspaper articles and photographs chronicle his time spent among his grounds and gardens. Graham's foremost hobby was his garden. A *Spokesman-Review* article, dated June 23, 1940, reported that Graham was "up at 6:00 a.m. every morning to put in several hours in the garden" before he went to work. When golf interfered with his gardening, Graham "tossed his golf bag and clubs into a corner of the attic... He declares he can play a round of gardening any morning with a hoe in several strokes under par."

The John W. Graham Company

In 1889, Graham worked for \$75 a month as a salesman in Heath's paper and stationery store, which was located on the corner of West Riverside Avenue and South Monroe Street. A short time later, on a sweltering afternoon on August 4, 1889, a huge fire broke out in Spokane. It grew uncontrolled and by the next morning, the inferno had destroyed and leveled more than 30 blocks of the town's central business district, including the building that housed Heath's stationery store. Heath decided to quit after the fire and gave his blessing to young John W. Graham, who wanted to rebuild Heath's stationery business. The very next morning, amid the smoldering embers and black ashes of the fire-racked business district, Graham pitched a tent where Heath's store had been. As pictured in historic photographs taken just after the fire, other businesses pitched tents along with Graham. They included the Spokane Daily Chronicle newspaper office, the White House Department Store, and A. W. Siegel Cigars & Tobacco.¹⁴ Distinguishing him from the other merchants, Graham was noted as the Spokane businessman who had the "first paper and pencils for sale in the city after the big fire."¹⁵ John Graham exclaimed, "They went like hotcakes and I put in a second order at the end of the second day."¹⁶

John W. Graham soon moved in 1890 to the Great Eastern Building at 723 West Riverside Avenue. A photograph of the storefront, which was taken in 1893 (EWSHS L83-10.1), pictured the name of Graham's business as "John W. Graham & Co." Advertisement art announced sale items as "books, stationery, wallpaper, and moldings." Old-timers recounted that "those were the good old wallpaper days when the firm sold

¹⁴ Kalez, Jay J. *Saga of a Western Town...Spokane*. Lawton Printing Company: Spokane, WA, 1972.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ "John W. Graham & Co. to Celebrate 35th Anniversary." *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Aug 1924 (photo).

five or six [railroad] carloads in a season. Mr. Graham moved his desk nearer the door and greeted all the customers with his well known smile.”¹⁷ A few years later in 1898, fire was again a determining deterrent. Graham and his business were burned out.

Proving resourceful in the face of adversity, Graham temporarily set up shop across the street and in 1901, purchased a building at 707-711 W. Sprague Avenue, which extended through the block to another building at 708-710 W. First Avenue. The 1902 *Spokane City Directory* listed John W. Graham & Co. as a supplier of “books, paper, stationery, typewriters, news dealers, wallpaper & moldings, cameras & photographic supplies, wholesale & retail” (p. 361).

In 1910 a third fire challenged Graham, destroying part of the three-story brick building that fronted both Sprague Avenue and First Avenue. Without hesitation, Graham rebuilt the building from three stories to five stories. “The store continued business even with the roof and upper floors gone, and didn’t miss a day.”¹⁸ Around this time Graham built a wholesale warehouse building at 118 North River Drive and acquired two more warehouses in the area (now all demolished). By 1926, John W. Graham & Co. owned almost 157,000 square feet of retail and wholesale space.¹⁹

The year 1926 was a banner year for John Graham. He purchased two more buildings, located adjacent west on Sprague and on First Avenue. The existing buildings and the two new buildings were remodeled, the expenditure being many thousands of dollars higher than the first estimates.²⁰ Finally the work was completed and an open house was held. A November 21, 1926 *Spokesman-Review* article described the event:

Graham’s Greater Spokane store...made its debut to the public last night amid a profusion of flowers... Between 7:30 and 9:30 p.m. it was estimated [that] 6,000 people visited the modern and beautiful store that John W. Graham ‘has builded from a tent.’ It was an amazed public that viewed the store for the first time... so marvelous was its transformation. Fifth Avenue [in New York City] or the shops of Paris are no finer...

Regarded as one of the “leading merchandising institutions of the Northwest,”²¹ John W. Graham & Co. had an incredible inventory and sold a vast array of items to people in Spokane, Idaho, Montana, Alaska, Oregon, and up and down the west coast. Spokane city directories listed the John W. Graham Company at different times from 1900 through the 1950s as a retailer and wholesaler in the classified business section under at least 24 categories. This was a huge number when compared to all of the other retailers and

¹⁷ “Sold Stationery First When 10 Years Old.” *Spokesman-Review*, 5 Dec 1926 (photo).

¹⁸ “Presenting John W. Graham.” *Spokesman-Review*, 23 June 1940 (photos).

¹⁹ “Graham & Co. Buy Two Buildings.” *Spokesman-Review*, 18 April 1926 (photo).

²⁰ “Graham’s Makes Big Alterations.” *Spokesman-Review*, 1 Aug 1926.

²¹ “Tent Store Days till Now 1889-1929: 40 Years in Spokane.” *Spokesman-Review*, 1929.

wholesalers who were also listed in city directories but under only one or two categories. According to classified categories in city directories, the John W. Graham Company specialized in the following:

Architects' supplies, artists' materials, bookcases & sections,
books & stationery, engravers, hammocks, mimeographs,
news dealers, office furniture, office supplies, paper,
photographic supplies, picture frames & moldings, printers' stock,
school books, school supplies, seals, stationery, toys, twine,
type foundries, typewriters, typewriter supplies, and wallpaper.

Other stores in Spokane such as Shaw & Borden, Kemp & Hebert, the Palace Department Store, and Tull & Gibbs Furniture Company were also large like the store owned by the John W. Graham Company. The difference was in the type and amount of merchandise. Kemp & Hebert, the Palace, and Tull & Gibbs sold drygoods, which included housewares, clothing, and furniture. In contrast, Graham's sold giftware, appliances, and office furniture rather than housewares and home furnishings. Graham's also sold specialized clothing such as uniforms rather than men and women's everyday apparel. Shaw & Borden sold "stationery, bank, county, and office supplies, and [office] furniture"²² while Graham's sold those items *plus* books, art supplies, school supplies, and much more. A 1929 newspaper article claimed that John W. Graham & Co. was a "paradise for the booklover" and that at that time, was "the largest depository of books west of the Mississippi."²³ In addition to books, the store was noted for its rare gifts from all over the world. John W. Graham & Co. was a "multi-service store" which was "famous for its many departments and its variety of service."²⁴

School Supplier

The John W. Graham Company grew to become one of Spokane's largest department stores which specifically specialized in a complete line of supplies, furniture, and textbooks for public schools in Washington, Oregon, and Alaska. Distinguishing the John W. Graham Company from other competitors, Graham's produced a product directory every year from 1907 to the 1960s that indexed available school supplies from ink, crayons, paper, chemistry sets, school desks, and textbooks, to educational games, toys and playground equipment.²⁵ A *Spokesman-Review* newspaper article stated that although the John W. Graham Company in the beginning was "primarily a stationery shop, that's a small part of the business now. The major item is textbooks, Gramahs being a publishers' depository, which supplies most of the textbooks used in Washington

²² Spokane City Directory, 1924, p. 838.

²³ "Tent-Store Days Till Now, 1889-1929: 40 Years in Spokane. *Spokesman-Review*, 1929.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Collection of school supply directories are included in John W. Graham Collection in the Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture, Spokane, WA.

schools and...in Oregon and Alaska.”²⁶ The John W. Graham Company and its slogan, “If Its Made of Paper, We Have It,” became readily familiar to hundreds of schools, teachers, students, parents, and educational facilities throughout the Pacific Northwest.

After founding and then managing the John W. Graham Company in Spokane for 51 years, John W. Graham died on May 20, 1941. Company managers continued store and warehouse operations until 1951 when a group of longtime employees of the business purchased the company. They maintained Graham’s store in Spokane until the 1960s and early 1970s when they finally moved the operation to Seattle. Today the only tangible demonstration of the merchandising empire created by John W. Graham is, by association, the John & Alta Graham House and carriage house, located at 607 S. Monroe in Spokane, WA. As recalled by old-timers in the region,²⁷ many people in Spokane and Eastern Washington will always remember the wide array of merchandise, the excellent service, and genuine good will shown toward all who worked for or knew John W. Graham.

²⁶ “Graham’s Pioneer Firm Began Operations Here 61 Years Ago.” *Spokesman-Review*, 28 Jan 1951.

²⁷ Personal interview with May Johanson Fierce, former employee of the John W. Graham Company, 2004.

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John & Alta Graham House

607 S. Monroe Street
Spokane, WA 99204

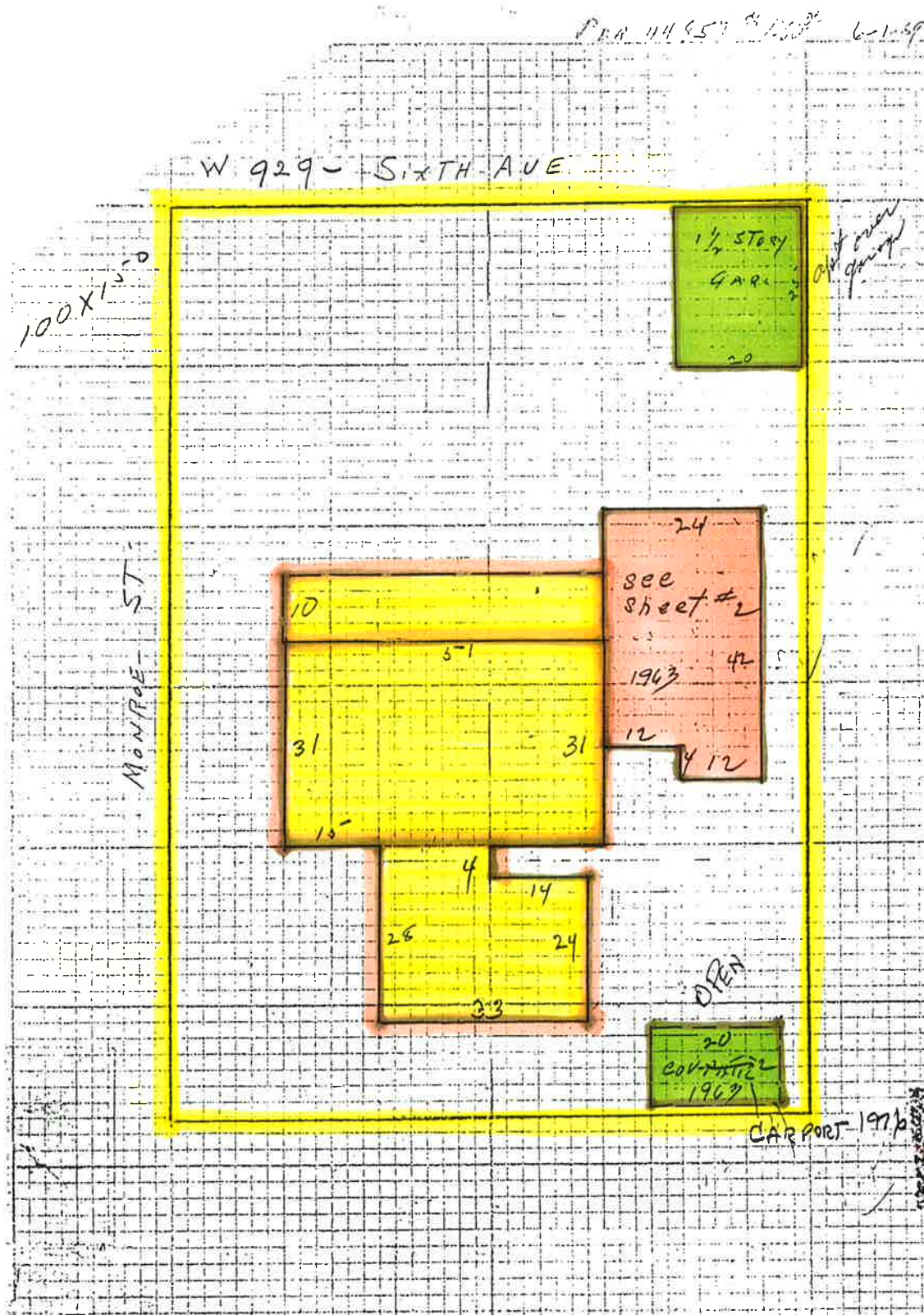
Photograph of John W. Graham and Alta B. Graham, circa 1925
(source: *Spokesman-Review* photo archives)



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
JOHN & ALTA GRAHAM HOUSE Section 9

Site plan

Site plan of property from Spokane County Tax Assessor.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
JOHN & ALTA GRAHAM HOUSE Section 9

Plat Map

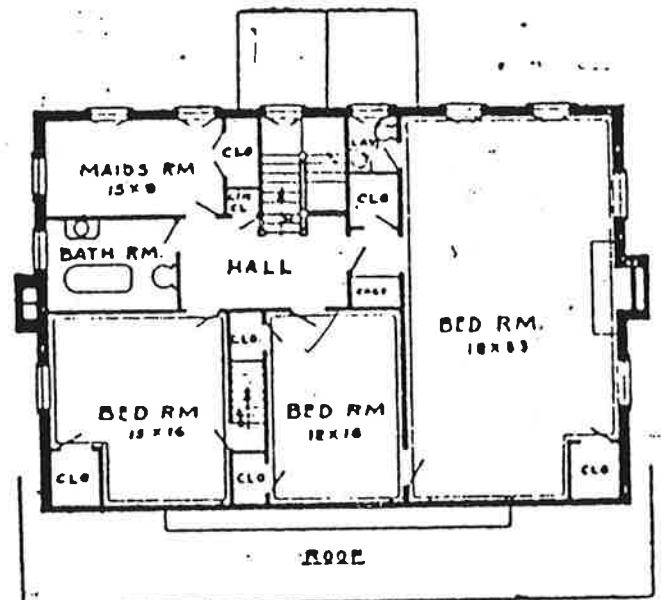
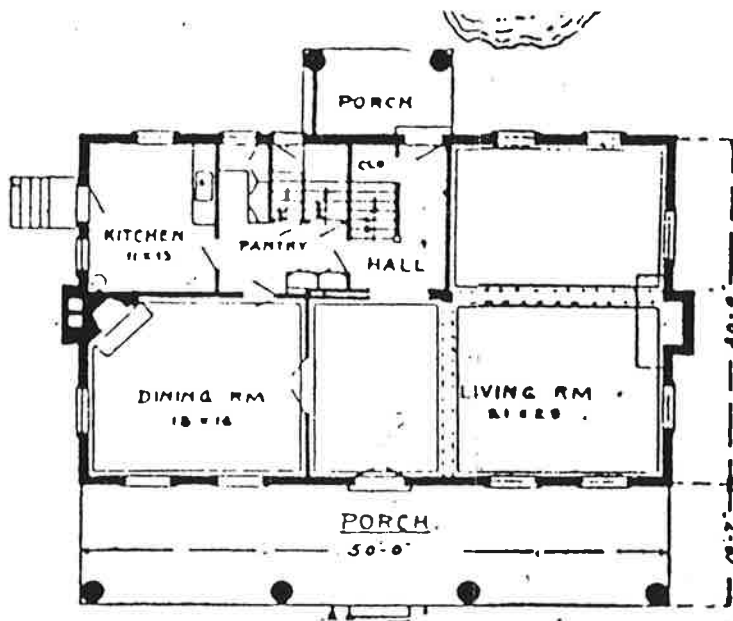
Source: Spokane City/County Plat Map, 2004.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
JOHN & ALTA GRAHAM HOUSE **Section 9**

Floorplan 1

Original floor plan of Graham House. Source: "Dignified House of Dutch Design." *Spokesman-Review*, 28 June 1908. Plans rendered by Spokane architect, W. W. Hyslop.



Floor plans of John W. Graham's residence.

Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
JOHN & ALTA GRAHAM HOUSE **Section 9**

Photo 1

1908 photo of east elevation of house; photo taken just after construction of home completed. Source: "Dignified House of Dutch Design." *Spokesman-Review*, 28 June 1908.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
JOHN & ALTA GRAHAM HOUSE **Section 9**

Photo 2

Circa 1915 photo of north façade of house. Source: EWSHS.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
JOHN & ALTA GRAHAM HOUSE **Section 9**

Photos 3 and 4 2004 photo of north façade of home.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
JOHN & ALTA GRAHAM HOUSE **Section 9**

Photos 5 and 6 2004 photo of north façade of house and north façade of garage addition.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
JOHN & ALTA GRAHAM HOUSE **Section 9**

Photos 7 and 8 2004 photos of north façade of house showing porch detail.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
JOHN & ALTA GRAHAM HOUSE **Section 9**

Photos 9 and 10 2004 photos of front door (north façade) and north porch.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
JOHN & ALTA GRAHAM HOUSE **Section 9**

Photos 11 and 12 West elevation of south wing.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
JOHN & ALTA GRAHAM HOUSE **Section 9**

Photos 13 and 14 2004 photos of south elevation of south wing, and east elevation of south wing.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
JOHN & ALTA GRAHAM HOUSE **Section 9**

Photos 15 and 16 2004 photos of east elevation of house and porch detail.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
JOHN & ALTA GRAHAM HOUSE

Section 9

Photos 17 and 18 Interior of house: boxed beam ceiling design in living room, and French doors that open to front porch on first floor.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
JOHN & ALTA GRAHAM HOUSE **Section 9**

Photos 19 and 20 Interior of south wing: fireplace along south wall in living room.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
JOHN & ALTA GRAHAM HOUSE **Section 9**

Photos 21, 22, 23 Glazed ceramic tile fireplace hearth, tile floor in bathroom, and
solid vertical board wood door (north wall).



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
JOHN & ALTA GRAHAM HOUSE **Section 9**

Photos 24 and 25 Carriage house at 927 W. 6th Avenue; north façade.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
JOHN & ALTA GRAHAM HOUSE **Section 9**

Photos 26 and 27 Carriage house, west elevation.

