

# Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination Form

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

## 1. Name of Property

Historic Name: **MONTVALE BLOCK**  
and/or Common Name: **Montvale Apartments**

## 2. Location

Street & Number: 1001-1009 West First Avenue  
City, Town, or Vicinity: Spokane  
County: Spokane  
State: Washington  
Zip Code: 99204

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both		<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> residential
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<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: Robert Brewster, Jr.  
Street & Number: S. 2049 Oneida Place  
City or Town: Spokane  
County: Spokane  
State: Washington  
Zip Code: 99203

## 5. Location of Legal Description

Courthouse or Registry of Deeds: Spokane County Courthouse  
Street & Number: West 1116 Broadway  
City or Town: Spokane  
County: Spokane  
State: Washington  
Zip Code: 99223

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Title:

Date:

Federal\_\_\_\_ State\_\_\_\_ County\_\_\_\_ Local\_\_\_\_

Depository for Survey Records:

City or Town:

County:

State:

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**  
(enter categories from instructions)

**Condition**

**Check One**

☐ excellent

☐ unaltered

☐ good

☒ altered

☒ fair

☐ deteriorated

**Check One**

☐ ruins

☒ original site

☐ unexposed

☐ moved & date \_\_\_\_\_

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

### *Summary Statement*

Located on the southwest corner of First Avenue and South Monroe Street, the Montvale Block is the cornerstone of a row of single room occupancy (SRO) hotels that line the south side of West First Avenue for two blocks from Monroe to Jefferson Street. Built in 1899, the Montvale Block is one of Spokane's oldest and best-preserved examples of the property type "Single Room Occupancy Hotels" as identified in the National Register Multiple Property Listing (MPL) *Single Room Occupancy Hotels in the Central Business District of Spokane, Washington, 1900-1910*. The unreinforced red brick building retains excellent upper-level integrity, and meets the registration requirements for SROs established in the MPL. The Montvale Block sets the stage for other West First Avenue SROs built in the early 1900s that form the last remaining unintruded continuous facades of single room occupancy hotels in Spokane.

### *1997 - Present Appearance and Conditions*

The Montvale Block is located on Lots Five and Six, Block 18 in Spokane's Northern Pacific Railroad Addition within the city's central business district. The building comprises a footprint measuring 100 feet square with 10, 000 square-feet on each floor. A thick stone foundation of basalt supports the building and houses a full basement divided into five spaces conforming with the ground-level commercial bays. A three-story brick building built in 1912 is attached to the Montvale Block's west wall. The building fills two-thirds of its lot space; a 55 by 100-foot paved parking area abuts the Block at its south (rear) elevation. Twelve-foot wide sidewalks along First Avenue and Monroe Street separate the building from the street.

### *Exterior*

The three-story Montvale Block rises nearly 50 feet and retains excellent integrity above street-level. Red brick laid in common bond variant with six stretcher rows for each header

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row measures sixteen to twenty inches thick, and forms the building's structural walls. The bricks are fired a deep red color and completely clad the building except for the street-level commercial bays. Lacking terra cotta, granite, or other decorative materials often used in Spokane commercial buildings, the red brick is used to create patterns of decorative relief across the building's exterior surface. A stepped roof parapet rises above a corbelled cornice on the building's north facade and east elevation. The roof is flat with layers of built up tar. An additional centrally placed parapet on the Block's north face proclaims the building's original, and present, appellation, "MONTVALE." Symmetrically placed original, one-over-one, double-hung, wood-sash windows open from the building's north facade and east elevation revealing the Montvale Block's interior single-occupancy room arrangement. These windows are arranged in groups of two and three, and are capped with flat arches or round connecting arches. Brick pilasters separate the window groups.

Five commercial bays, each measuring twenty feet wide, line the building's north street-level facade. Each bay is supported by cast iron piers and beams. The piers are encased within fluted brushed aluminum. The storefronts are composed of plate glass windows supported by bases clad in a veneer of sandstone-colored stone cut in the shape of elongated bricks. Of the five bays, only the center bay is recessed with a protected front entry. A narrow horizontal space spanning the building's north face is composed of panels designed to hold signage, and separates the street-level bays from the second floor. A revolving vertical, fluorescent-lit sign suspended on the building's northeast corner is attached above the signage panels and rises to roof-height.

The building's east elevation features one commercial bay on the southeast corner. An original recessed entry supported by a brick arch is located adjacent to the corner bay, and leads to upper-level residential rooms. Small mosaic tiles cover the floor of the recessed entry. Double paneled wood doors open to a small foyer. Single-paned transom lights are located above the doors. Block letters attached to the building's exterior brick surface cap the arched entry and spell "MONTVALE." A tall, vertical window composed of square glass-blocks is located between the arched entry and another recessed entry added in 1967 that leads down to the building's northeast corner retail bay. Three small window openings located over the newer entry are closed and filled with brick. Paint covers the exterior street-level east elevation.

A line of roof tar and a row of cement-filled holes where roof rafters once joined the building are located on the building's rear (south) elevation, and reveal evidence of a one-story building once attached to the Montvale Block. Original upper-level one-over-one wood-sash windows are symmetrically placed and capped by a segmental brick arch. The base of the windows on the second floor were filled in with bricks to accommodate the intersecting roof of the once-adjointing building. Metal fire escapes are attached to the building's north, east, and south elevations.

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*Interior*

A significant feature of the Montvale Block is the upper-level room arrangement and floorplan that clearly conveys the historic use of the building as a single room occupancy hotel. Sixty-one single-occupancy rooms remain extant. Double-doors open from an arched, recessed entrance at South 108 Monroe Street to a five-foot wide staircase that leads to the Montvale Block's upper-level residential rooms and lobby. Separated from the street-level commercial space of the building, the lobby and upper-level rooms are accessible only from the Monroe Street entrance. The second and third floors of the Montvale Block share an identical floorplan and room configuration. The third floor features 30 single-occupancy rooms. The second floor holds 29 residential rooms; an interior wall was removed in a southeast corner room creating one large room. The upper-level residential rooms, washrooms, and hallways wrap around a large interior lobby and mezzanine with natural light provided through an expansive skylight that rises from the third-floor ceiling. The mezzanine is supported by square pillars and is protected by a railing and turned-post balustrade that looks down upon the second-floor lobby. Hallway widths measure four to five feet, and ceiling heights in residential rooms exceed eleven feet. Most single-occupancy rooms measure ten by sixteen feet and contain the openings where transom windows were once installed. All rooms are designed with interior doorways that open to the adjoining room which allowed for the possibility of tenants renting rooms *en suite*. Plaster and lathe cover the walls and ceilings; some of the walls and ceilings have succumbed to decay and are deteriorated. Mopboards, window, door, picture rail and chair rail moldings are made of fir and stained a red tint, or painted an ivory color. Most of the rooms' doors have been removed, but the existing doors show a maple-stained finish with a six-panel design. Each room receives natural light and has one or two windows that open to the outside, to interior lightwell shafts, or to the main skylit lobby area. Exterior windows are a double-hung, one-over-one construction with wooden sashes. After years of use, misuse, and eventual neglect, most of the upper-level exterior windows are severely deteriorated. Evidenced by exposed drain pipes, wall basin bracing and a few remaining fixtures and closets, all rooms contained a private washbasin that hung on the wall and was once positioned next to a built-in closet, or armoire. Plumbing, installed in front of the original floor molding, was added after the initial construction of the rooms, and is hidden within some of the built-in wardrobe closets. Each floor has two common washrooms that were shared by the residents of the Montvale. Each washroom contains two toilets, a washbasin, and a bathtub area. Interior windows above the bathtub area open to a lightwell shaft leading to the roof. Floor surfaces in the bathrooms are composed of small ceramic tiles, while floor surfaces in residential rooms are made of fir planks. A few of the residential rooms feature floors with a painted geometric border design. Wiring and light fixture remnants indicate that each room once contained electric lighting and a telephone call button activated from a central switchboard in the lobby.

The street-level interior space of the building was originally divided into five evenly spaced retail bays. However, the walls defining the five bays have been removed over the years to accommodate the needs of various commercial tenants. The building's First Avenue

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entrance opens to an interior wall that spans the length of the building and divides the first-floor commercial space in half. An opening in the Block's west wall allows entrance to the adjacent building attached to the Montvale's west elevation. The rear third of the interior space that abuts the building's south wall is composed of small rooms with office/storage space and a first-floor mezzanine. The mezzanine is closed off from the building and is encased behind a wall. Four separate staircases lead to the mezzanine, the basement, and exits to the alley and Monroe Street. A fifth stairwell located behind the First Avenue entrance also leads to the basement. A platform has been built around and over the stairwell which is no longer used.

A water-powered hydraulic freight elevator (no longer in operation) is located next to the alley entrance and drops down to the basement. The basement is divided into five bays by walls constructed of brick and rough-cut boards of fir. In addition to the walls, massive wood beams support the first floor. Large wood piers are held by cement footings imbedded in compacted soil, and extend through the ceiling to the street-level bays. A basement floor is suspended twelve to thirty inches over the uneven soil, and is made of rough-cut planks of fir. A small basement space is located under the Monroe Street entrance and staircase that leads to the upper-level residential rooms. A massive coal-fired double boiler built of bricks and iron is located in this space. Coal was dropped through metal grates that open from the sidewalk into a storage area at the basement's east wall.

***1919 - Historic Appearance***

As viewed in a black and white photograph taken in 1919 by Charles Libby, the Montvale Block's north facade remains unchanged above street-level. The photograph shows five north-face commercial bays with the two east bays and two west bays featuring recessed entrances. Plate glass windows and multi-paned transom windows light the storefront interiors. Cast iron piers dividing the five retail bays are visible. The bases of the bays are not visible in the photograph, but were, most probably, covered with the same red bricks that clad the building's exterior. The photograph shows a sign attached to the building's north facade that reads "MONTVALE APARTMENTS" with "HOUSEKEEPING." Other attached signage and window stenciling advertise the building's commercial tenants. Three small windows opened from the building's east elevation and are capped by segmental arches. Dwellings and other buildings were located behind the Montvale Block as shown on a 1902 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*. After 1910, the buildings were replaced with one single-story brick building that joined the south wall of the Montvale Block.

Building permits designate city water was supplied to the Montvale Block in 1899, and specified the washroom facilities located in the upper-level common bathrooms. The building was steam-heated from the coal-fired boiler in the basement. Flue openings are located in some of the upper-level rooms that have outside walls, and indicates auxiliary heat was provided from stoves that burned oil, wood, or coal. Food may have been cooked on the stoves as well. In 1914, hot and cold running water and wall-mounted washbasins were added to each room. Wood-paneled wardrobe closets were constructed

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in each room, and some of the closets were built around the exposed water pipes. Polk's 1914 *City Directory* advertises the Montvale as offering "furnished rooms."

***1930s-1970s - Appearance, Condition, Alterations***

A black and white metal sign with an Art Deco design spelled "MONTVALE HOTEL-APTS." It was attached to the building and was suspended over the arched Monroe Street entrance probably in the 1930s; the sign was removed by 1980. The Montvale Block's street-level commercial bays on First Avenue were brought flush with the building's exterior surface resulting in a continuous facade of plate-glass storefront windows. The center bay was then recessed and constructed to hold two entrances. Aluminum sheathing was wrapped around the cast iron piers, and the street-level brick surface of the east facade was painted. Three small windows on the building's east elevation were filled in with bricks, and a street-level entrance was added below the windows in 1967. The single-story brick building attached to the Montvale Block's south elevation was demolished in 1967. In preparation for a parking lot, the space was graded, leveled, and paved. In 1971, an opening in the Block's west wall was created allowing access to the attached building to the west. In 1980, the building's owner stripped the upper-level residential rooms of their interior doors, transoms, light and plumbing fixtures, and paneled wardrobe closets. Exposed copper pipes, radiators, and stoves were also removed. In the street-level bays, original walls and light fixtures were removed and the mezzanine was encased behind a wall. Acoustic ceiling tiles and air conditioners were installed. Signage located on the building's north facade was changed to meet the demands of changing commercial tenants, and a revolving sign lit by fluorescent light was hung on the building's northeast corner. Aside from the street-level commercial bays, the exterior of the Montvale Block retains excellent integrity. The interior of the upper-levels has succumbed to decay and deterioration, but clearly conveys the historic use of the building as a single room occupancy hotel dating from the turn of the century.

## 8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National 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 (Enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Community Planning & Development, Social History	1899 to 1945	1899

Specific Dates	Architect, Designer, and/or Builder
1899	Unknown

Statement of Significance:

### Summary Statement

Built in 1899 for civic, social, and business leader Judge John W. Binkley, the Montvale Block is one of Spokane's oldest and best-preserved examples of the property type "Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Hotels," and is eligible for listing in the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its architectural integrity as a turn-of-the-century commercial building, and as an excellent representation of the SRO property type. Constructed at the beginning of Spokane's greatest building boom and population increase, the Montvale Block is also eligible under Criterion A for its association with working class housing and the rapid growth of the city of Spokane from 1900 to 1910. The Montvale Block is identified in the National Register Multiple Property Listing (MPL) *Single Room Occupancy Hotels in the Central Business District of Spokane, Washington, 1900-1910*, and meets the National Register of Historic Places requirements for SROs established in the MPL.

### Historical Significance

#### Early Spokane

In 1870, thirty years before the Montvale Block was constructed, the tiny community called Spokan Falls was little more than a trading post, a sawmill, and a small cluster of shacks. Nestled next to and named for the cascading waterfalls spilling forth from the Spokane

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River, the town was also named for the Spokane Indian tribes who fished along the river's banks. The town's name was changed to Spokane in 1891, two years after Washington Territory became a state in 1889. The community grew and gained increasing recognition as a center for mining, lumber, agriculture, and rail transport. The area's economic climate, along with nationally improved financial conditions, led to a bustling building boom. Experiencing phenomenal growth, Spokane's population tripled from 36,000 in 1900 to over 100,000 by 1910. Thousands of men, women, and children seeking employment and a better life flocked to Spokane. Local historian Orville Pratt reports, "So many homeless men were thronging in that the hotels and lodging houses could not care for them. Many slept on chairs or floors in hotels and saloons." Working class housing was at a premium. Answering the call for living space, hotels, apartments and lodging houses were built to hold the growing number of homeless immigrants, laborers, and fortune seekers. The Montvale Block was one such facility.

The aerial perspective *Spokane 1884* and the *1891 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* show the space where the Montvale Block now stands as previously occupied by frame dwellings. One of the houses, located on the southwest corner of First Avenue and Monroe Street, was used as a rooming house by Mrs. Clara Dobson, and housed five boarders (Hyslop). By 1899, just before the Montvale Block was constructed, Mrs. Hilma Anderson was listed in Polk's *City Directory* at 1001 West First Avenue where she offered "furnished rooms." Other small dwellings lined West First Avenue and were advertised as lodging and boarding houses that helped house the growing numbers of Spokane's itinerant working class. Located between downtown and fashionable Browne's Addition, West First Avenue was becoming highly desirable real estate. Mixed-use buildings promised greater returns than did frame boarding houses. Spokane probate Judge John W. Binkley realized the need for housing to accommodate the rush of working class people arriving daily in the city. Seizing his chance for speculative success, Binkley bought Lots Five and Six in Block 18 at First Avenue and Monroe Street in March 1899. He replaced the frame dwellings with a large, three-story red brick building. Judge Binkley named his new Block after "Montvale Farms," his beloved country estate on the Little Spokane River.

Meeting the need for increased housing, the Montvale Block was the first SRO built along West First Avenue from Monroe to Cedar Streets, and provided an example for the construction of many other single room occupancy hotels. In 1904, four years after the Montvale Block was erected, the New Madison Hotel was built on the corner of First Avenue and Madison Street. From 1900 to 1910, other SROs were erected along West First Avenue: the Commercial Block in 1906, the Parsons and the Norman Hotels in 1908, the Jefferson and Darby Hotels in 1909, and the Atlantic (or Willard, now the Otis) Hotel in 1911. Beginning at Monroe Street with the Montvale Block as the street's anchor, West First Avenue's south side retains a chain of buildings originally built as SROs that present a streetscape reminiscent of the turn-of-the-century period from which they date.



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*John W. Binkley*

John W. Binkley was born in Ontario, Canada in 1856. After receiving a law degree from Toronto University, he came to Spokane and formed a law partnership with his cousin Jacob R. Taylor. Together they organized the Northwestern and Pacific Mortgage Company which subsequently merged with the noted Dutch-owned Northwestern Hypotheekbank--the lender responsible for providing the millions of dollars that fueled Spokane's most prolific building boom from 1900 to 1910. A civic and financial leader, Binkley served as a Spokane probate judge, organized Spokane's first industrial expositions and fruit fairs, and helped establish the Fort George Wright Army Post. On the eve of Spokane's population explosion in 1899, the Montvale Block was constructed with over 60 single occupancy rooms, and offered a clean, affordable place to stay for Spokane's growing working class. Judge Binkley owned and operated the Montvale Block as an SRO for 32 years until his death. Binkley's Montvale Block--more than any other building he owned--symbolizes his civic and philanthropic contributions to Spokane where he was praised as an "eminently public-spirited citizen, and one whose influence has been very sensibly felt in the development of the city" (Edwards).

*The Montvale Block*

The Montvale Block was commonly known as the Montvale Apartments and features the name "Montvale" in the building's roof parapet. It is listed in Polk's *City Directories* from 1901 to 1974 under the apartment house classification, and as the "Montvale Block" in the alphabetical index of names. *Raymer's 1906 Dictionary of Spokane* also lists the Montvale as an apartment house. However, exterior signage attached to the Montvale announced its dual use as a hotel as well as an apartment house, complete with housekeeping. Helping to serve the housing needs of Spokane's itinerant working class population, the Montvale Block served as the typical turn-of-the-century SRO. Author and preservationist Craig Holstine best describes SROs and their use.

"The concept of single individuals occupying a private room was not new; first-class hotels had always met the needs of traveling business persons who could afford to pay for the space and accompanying service. SROs, on the other hand, had private rooms furnished only with a bed, sometimes with a sink and portable closet, in moderate buildings offering lodging at prices affordable to the legions of working class immigrants arriving to fill the ranks of new and expanding industries" (*The Commercial Block*).

The three-story Montvale Block offered street-level commercial space and two upper-level floors with 30 residential rooms on each floor. Fresh air and natural light were provided to every room through a window, lightwell, or skylight. Mens' and womens' common washrooms held two toilets and one bathtub respectively, and were shared by the residents of each floor. Steam-heat was provided to every room, and by 1914, all residential rooms offered washbasins with hot and cold running water, built-in wardrobe closets, and furnished rooms. Room rates for typical turn-of-the-century SROs were advertised at \$1 to

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\$2 per week, or \$5 a month (*Spokane Spokesman-Review*, Dec. 1899). Although far from the opulence offered in grand hotels, the Montvale Apartments provided a measure of privacy, rest, and comfort for the weary traveler arriving in Spokane with no place to stay, and served as a welcome respite from the overcrowded, and often-reported, filthy lodging houses of the day (*Single Room Occupancy Hotels in the Central Business District of Spokane, Washington, 1900-1910*).

Census records of 1900 and 1910 reveal nearly equal numbers of males and females living in the Montvale Apartments. The tenants' places of origin were recorded as Canada and the eastern United States as well as Germany, Norway, Sweden, Ireland, and other European countries. Listed occupations included a predominance of working class stations: laborer, farmer, machinist, tailor, candymaker, dressmaker, cook, and waitress. Families with children lived in the Montvale Apartments as well as single men and women. By 1930, more than half of the residents of the Montvale Apartments were women living alone as noted by their names being preceded by "Miss and Mrs." Working class occupations remained the norm. After 1965, fewer and fewer rooms were rented, and by the middle 1970s, the Montvale Apartments were advertised as the "Spokane Youth Hostel" in the *City Directory*. During the summer of 1974, Spokane was host to the World Exposition, and recognized the increased need for temporary lodging facilities. Along with motels, hotels, bed-and-breakfast facilities and private residences, the Montvale Block responded to the city's call for help and opened its doors to the influx of people coming to see Expo '74. The Block's single occupancy rooms were rented for \$2 a night, and a make-shift kitchen and dining room were installed in two residential rooms on the second floor. After Expo '74, interest in the Montvale Apartments waned, and the residential rooms were closed in 1980.

Street-level commercial bays in the Montvale Block numbered six, with five spaces fronting First Avenue and one facing Monroe Street. The bays housed various service and mercantile enterprises over the years. Both the Ideal and the Montvale bakeries, along with Isbister Plumbing and Heating Company, leased space in the early 1900s soon after the Montvale Block was constructed. Kilmer and Sons Hardware occupied the first four bays from the northeast corner of the building beginning in 1911, and was addressed as 1001 to 1007 West First Avenue. Kilmer and Sons also used the building's basement for storage. They secured a room in the basement, covered the floor with cement, and used it as an emergency ammunition supply room during World War II. Myer S. Rubens Stove and Furnace Repair Works leased the fifth bay at 1009. The sixth commercial bay was located at South 110 Monroe Street and opened from the building's east elevation. The space was used by an early ice-maker, and later by a tailor, a typesetter, an architect, a realtor, a musician's association, and a carpet broker. A single-story brick building was attached to the south end of the Montvale Block after 1910 and served as a motorcycle shop, a battery repair, a store for Northwestern Fire Apparatus, and an extension to Kilmer's Hardware. The building was demolished in 1967 and was replaced by a paved parking area.

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After a long and prosperous career, Judge John W. Binkley died in 1931. Binkley's daughter sold her father's Montvale Block to his close friend and longest-standing commercial tenant William Kilmer (Kilmer Hardware) in 1936. Kilmer owned the building and occupied the entire First Avenue street-level space until 1967. Sam A. Postell, a property management owner of Postell Enterprises and the Towne Center Motel, purchased the Montvale Block in 1966 for \$125,000. He leased the First Avenue street-level space to Clark Evans Music Company and Music City. Postell sold it to Spokane attorney Werner Rosenquist in 1980. Since that time, Stark's Vacuums and Music City have occupied the First Avenue commercial space. The current owner, Robert C. Brewster, Jr. bought the property in 1996.

### ***Architectural Significance***

The architect and builder responsible for the Montvale Block remain unknown. However, the well-built brick building's load-bearing masonry construction and spacious skylit interior suggest the work of an experienced architect. The Montvale Block retains excellent exterior integrity, and the building's facade of decorative brickwork bespeaks the artistry of a skilled craftsman. Judge Binkley's social standing allowed him acquaintance with popular architects, and his financial success provided abundant capital to hire the architect of his choice.

The Montvale Block is architecturally significant as one of Spokane's oldest and best-preserved examples representing the property type "Single Room Occupancy Hotels." The building's commercial style and room configuration exemplify the typical turn-of-the-century SRO: a two or three-story building constructed of unreinforced masonry with street-level commercial bays and upper-level single-occupancy rooms. The rooms shared common bath and toilet facilities, and were sometimes furnished with washbasins and closets, or armoires. Interior centrally placed skylights and light wells were characteristically surrounded by wide hallways and rooms that ringed the building's interior parameter.

Until recently in 1980, the Montvale Block served as an SRO for more than 80 years. It holds a unique distinction in Spokane as one of the city's oldest, best-preserved, and longest-functioning SROs. Unlike other downtown SROs, the Montvale's upper-level floorplan and room configuration remains extant with few alterations. A comparison can be made with other SROs in Spokane's central business district. For example, upper-level interior integrity has been compromised at the Transient Hotel (built in 1904, now the Minnesota Building), the New Madison Hotel (1904), the Parsons and Globe Hotels (both 1908), the Darby (1909), and the Grand Coulee (1910, now the Upton). The New Madison and Parsons were remodeled extensively, and the Parsons no longer functions as an SRO. Upper-level rooms in the Transient Hotel were altered, and now serve as law offices. The Grand Coulee added private bathrooms to residential rooms, the second floor of the Globe Hotel was completely gutted, and the Darby was demolished. Most of

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Spokane's early SROs have been destroyed by fire or the wrecking ball. Of the few SROs that survive, the Montvale Block remains one of the most important. Many downtown SROs retain architectural integrity on their upper-level facades, but the Montvale Block is one of the city's oldest SROs to retain upper-level exterior integrity. In addition, the Montvale Block serves to anchor a row of buildings originally constructed between 1900 and 1910 as SROs along West First Avenue from Monroe to Cedar Street. They represent Spokane's last remaining unintruded continuous facades that characterize turn-of-the-century single room occupancy hotels. Of these buildings, the Montvale Block is the oldest and best-preserved, and remains a community focal point.

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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- Pratt, Orville Clyde. *The Story of Spokane*, Unpublished MS, Northwest Room, Spokane Public Library, 1948.
- Raymer's Dictionary of Spokane*, 1906.
- Rovtar, John. Architectural drawings of the Montvale Block, 1997.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. Spokane Public Library, Spokane, 1882-1952.
- Spokane 1884*. Aerial perspective, Eastern Washington Historical Society, Cheney Cowles Museum, Spokane.
- Spokane County Assessor Records.
- Spokane County Building Permits Records.
- Spokane Daily Chronicle*, various articles.
- Spokane Spokesman-Review*, various articles.
- Willis, Charles. Personal interview with Linda Yeomans, July 1997.

## **10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References:

Verbal Boundary Description: Parcel Number 35192.1104  
Railroad Addition Lot 5-6 Block 18

Boundary Justification: The legal boundaries include the building. There are no elements contributing to the property's significance outside the stated boundaries.

## **11. Form Prepared By**

Name and Title: Linda Yeomans, Preservation Consultant  
Organization: Linda Yeomans Historic Preservation Planning  
Street & Number: 501 West 27th Avenue  
City or Town: Spokane  
State: Washington  
Zip Code: 99203  
Phone: 509-456-3828  
Date: August 1997

## **12. Additional Documentation**

Maps:  
A city map and plat map indicating the property's location.

Photographs:  
1919 black and white photograph.  
1997 black and white photograph.  
Representative black and white photographs of the property and streetscape.  
Color slides of the property and streetscape.

Application Fee:  
\$25.00 for residential property / \$50.00 for commercial property.

**13. Signature of Owner(s)**

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**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**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**OFFICER, City/County Historic Preservation Officer**

**14. For Official Use Only:**

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

*Geri L. Gyster*

Date Heard: \_\_\_\_\_

City Clerk

Commission Decision: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved  
as to Form:

*Stanley Schubert*

Council/Board Action: 10-13-97

Assistant City Attorney

Date: 10-14-97

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

*Jack Burris*

**MAYOR, City of Spokane**  
or

\_\_\_\_\_  
**CHAIR, Spokane County Commissioners**

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

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





SR  
Jan. 30  
1966

## Downtown Store Building Is Sold

This three-story brick building at Monroe and First, the home of Kilmer & Sons hardware store for more than 30 years, was purchased last week for \$125,000 by Samuel A. Postell, Spokane businessman with other property interests in that area and in Spokane Valley. The main building is 100 by 100 feet. Additions covering 50 and 100 feet in the rear will be razed for parking. Postell said he plans to modernize the struc-

ture, built in 1900, and later make room for retailing ventures there. The hardware store has a long-range plan to move its distributing business to another site. The two upper floors contain the 60 rooms of the Montvale Hotel. Postell acquired the building from descendants of W. J. Kilmer, who founded the hardware business in 1907. Kilmer bought the building in 1936.

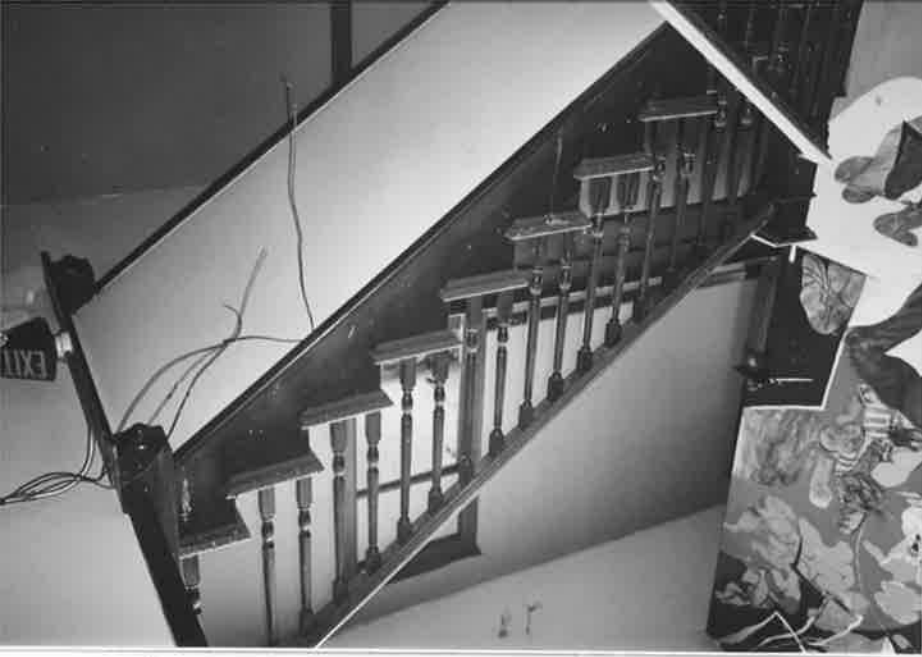


1997















8/97  
Montvale Block  
1001-9 W. First  
Spokane, WA 99204

