

OPR 88-660

Spokane Register of Historic Places

Nomination Form

City/County Historic Landmarks Commission
Fourth Floor - City Hall
Spokane, Washington 99201-3333

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name Spokane City Hall

historic Spokane City Hall

and/or common Old City Hall

2. Location

street & number N 221 Wall St.

city, town Spokane _____ vicinity of

state Washington _____ county Spokane

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<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 checked="" 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 Old City Hall Associates, c/o Hillman Properties Northwest

street & number N. 221 Wall St., Suite #438

city, town Spokane _____ vicinity of _____ state Washington 99201

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Spokane County Courthouse

street & number W. 1116 Broadway Ave.

city, town Spokane _____ state WA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Spokane Historic Landmarks Survey

date 1977 _____ federal _____ state _____ county ~~xxx~~ local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Office, Spokane City Hall

city, town Spokane _____ state WA

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7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved

date November 20, 1983

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Old City Hall Building, vacated in 1982 when the City of Spokane moved its quarters to the renovated former Montgomery-Wards Building, sits squarely at the southwest corner of Wall Street and Spokane Falls Boulevard. On the northern edge of the city's Central Business District, bordering Riverfront Park, the building combines elements of both the Commercial Style and the Sullivanesque or Chicago School as defined in the works of such authorities as Whiffen, Blumenson and Poppeliers. (See Bibliography.) It is straight fronted, characterized by regular fenestration, flat-roofed with a projecting cornice, and is divided into three vertical components which correspond to the classic base, shaft, and capital of a column, the tripartite system of articulation credited by most architectural historians to Chicago's Louis Sullivan. Sited on a 19,946 square foot lot, the six-story structure is articulated by eight symmetrical bays along its 140 feet on Spokane Falls Boulevard and seven symmetrical bays along its 142 feet on Wall Street.

The basic structure of the Old City Hall is post and beam, with a red brick masonry skin, using two interior masonry shear walls. The columns are of cylindrical cast iron, which in turn support a wooden floor joist system. The plan is U-shaped, offering an interior light well that was once used as an exercise yard when the City Jail was located in the reinforced concrete south wing of the Building.

Resting firmly on a plinth of cut granite blocks, the first floor elevations are done in a rusticated stretcher bond brick coursing, with recessed door and window openings. The two most southerly openings on the Wall Street facade have been filled in with a newer brick. The windows, all original, are triple wooden, one-over-one, double-hung sash, resting on cast concrete sills. The Spokane Falls Boulevard entrance has double wooden doors with Street entrance has two sets of double wooden doors with lights, with a mullion between each set and a large single transom light. This entrance is framed by cast concrete piers with recessed panels that project from the buildings facade plane. Along with twin console-like cartouches, they support a projecting architrave, belt course and decorative hood, all of paneled cast concrete. The four western door openings on Spokane Falls Boulevard, originally the city's firehouse, have overhead rolling wooden garage doors, with transom lights and lighted panels in the doors themselves.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1912-1913 Builder/Architect Julius A. Zittel

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Old City Hall is significant both historically and architecturally. It served as Spokane's Seat of city government for nearly 70 years, and as such was the site of many events that have had an important impact on the temporary home for the city's government until funds could be appropriated for a grander structure, the building stubbornly held onto its original purpose, perhaps because of the austere conservatism that has been a constant pattern in Spokane's politics throughout its history. Ironically, this austerity has resulted in an excellent example of an architectural style that was prevalent throughout most American cities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but in many cases, because of economic or structural obsolescence, fell prey to the wrecking ball. As a public building in everyday use, the Old City Hall was maintained in good operating condition, and was never altered significantly. Save for some minor modifications, the structure remains largely in its original condition, a well-preserved legacy of the Commercial Style and Chicago School of Architecture, as interpreted by a Pacific Northwest architect.

The Old City Hall owes much of its style to the Chicago School, which is appropriate since Julius A. Zittel, the architect, studied in Chicago around the time of the movement's development. The building's windows occupy a large percentage of the facade areas, a hallmark of both the Chicago School and Louis Sullivan's buildings. Its sense of verticality, articulated tripartite structure and ordered symmetry, are all elements of the Chicago School of commercial architecture. Popularized by Louis Sullivan, Daniel Burnham, John Root, and others, the Chicago School was the forerunner of modern American commercial architecture. Its emphasis on form and practicality was a radical departure from the eclecticism of the Beaux-Arts tradition that pervaded American architecture in the nineteenth century. Technological advances in steel and glass making, elevator safety and construction techniques enabled the commercial style and architects to bring America its first skyscrapers. Structural steel frames liberated buildings from the need for massive masonry load-bearing walls, allowing for broader expanses of glass, greater heights, and more flexibility in interior planning. The Old City Hall departs from this practical austerity only insofar as it exhibits rather restrained ornament in cast stone (as did Sullivan's own works).

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Separating the first and second floor elevations of the buildings is a cast concrete belt course from which rises the massive brick piers that comprise the second through fifth floors vertical element. These piers sit on simulated cut granite plinths made of cast concrete and are topped by cast concrete cartouches and capitals. The bays are spanned by recessed, paneled brick spandrels. The window openings are atop the spandrels, with concrete sills and paired wooden, one-over-one, double-hung sash windows. All brickwork is done in stretcher bond coursing. An unbroken brick architrave sits atop the masonry piers, spanning the facades along the fifth floor header line, supporting a cast concrete belt course, which divides the fifth and sixth floors.

The sixth floor's cast concrete sills and window openings begin at the belt course and are set in recessed panels. The windows are triple wooden, one-over-one, double-hung sash, similar to those on the first floor. The piers between each opening continue along the same axes as those below, forming a smooth facade, save for the recessed window panels. Another cast concrete belt course, topped by a smooth course of masonry, provides a transition from the verticality expressed by the facades below to the horizontality expressed by the building's cornice. The Cornice is of pressed tin with a pseudo-fleur-de-lis pattern along its ridge, painted to match the color of the cast concrete components used throughout the facades. It is highlighted by dentils along its underside.

An unusual exterior feature of note in the Old City Hall is the use of hooded exterior roll-down shutters on the windows of the rear (alley) elevation. These shutters are believed to be the only extant such window treatment in Spokane. They will remain in place after rehabilitation.

Since the Old City Hall was originally built to be later converted into a warehouse, its interiors were designed to be inexpensive, yet functional. Significant features include Alaskan Marble in the lobby areas of the first floor, maple flooring throughout most of the upper floors, fireproof vaults on each floor, two passenger elevators and one freight elevator, and its interior light well. Various parts of the interior have been remodeled and updated over the years, including some minor structural changes.

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Spokane's Old City Hall stands as one of the city's important examples of buildings heavily influenced by the Commercial Style, the Chicago School, and Louis Sullivan's considerable contribution to America's urban architecture. Daniel Burnham's Old National Bank Building (1909), Hermann Preusse's Fernwell (1890), and John K. Dow's Empire State and August Paulsen Buildings (1900 and 1906) are other extant examples within Spokane's central business district; but the number of these structures is relatively small. Each represents an important example of the debt Spokane owes, in its architectural patrimony, to the era dominated by the Chicago School.

Zittel was born in Germany in 1869 and came to America in 1882. He studied architecture in Chicago and came to Spokane in 1887, where he initially worked for Hermann Preusse, a notable early-day Spokane architecture, most notably Our Lady of Lourdes Cathedral, the Gonzaga College Building, (now the university's administration building), the Armory and St. Aloysius' Church. The firm dissolved in 1910. Zittel started his own practice, forming various professional affiliations throughout the remainder of his architectural career. Also active in business and civic affairs, he served as a Vice-President and later President of Citizens Building and Loan Association, was in the hotel business as owner of the Spokane Hotel, and was an adviser to two Washington state governors on public building programs.

The need for a new City Hall arose when in January of 1910 the Spokane City Commissioners agreed to sell the then-present City Hall to the Milwaukee and North Coast Railroad to make way for a new right-of-way. Located at Trent and Howard, (Trent is now Spokane Falls Boulevard), the site sold for \$352,000.00. Zittel was selected to draw plans for a lavish eight-story building with an adjoining firehouse. However, the city's voters did not concur with the City Commissioners and soundly defeated two separate bond issues that would have been required to pay for the proposed structure. Lacking public support, the commissioners decided to build a less grand six-story structure, using \$100,000.00 from the City Treasurer's coffers and issuing warrants for the balance.

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Accepting the task at hand, Zittel toned down his design in terms of cost and appointments to fit within his scaled-down budget. He designed the Old City Hall so it could be converted into a warehouse when a newer, more lavish building could be built, originally to have been within about five years of its completion. In May of 1912, a contract was let to the M.C. Murphy Co. for \$239,335.00 to build the structure. At the laying of the cornerstone on October 26, 1912, Mayor W.J. Hindley stated to those at the ceremony, (which was later followed by a parade), "It is built along business lines . . . Some day we hope to have a magnificent structure . . . which will stand as a monument to the for all time." (1)

Ironically, this "temporary" structure ended up being Mayor Hindley's "monument" for almost 70 years, surviving several attempts to replace it with more modern structures. Though not magnificent, the Old City Hall is indeed a monument: to 70 years of a frontier town's development into a modern, thriving metropolis.

(1) Architect Looks Back at City Hall. Spokesman Review, November 10, 1983

9. Major Bibliographical References

History of the City of Spokane and Spokane County, Washington, Durham, Nelson Wayne, Spokane: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1912

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .46 acres

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 1,2 and the East half of L3, block 12 resurvey and addition to Spokane Falls

Parcel # 18533-0301

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

state _____ county _____

state _____ county _____

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Scott Brooks-Miller, Historic Preservation Officer

organization City of Spokane

date 8/15/88

street & number W. 808 Spokane Falls Blvd.

telephone 456-4378

city or town Spokane,

state WA

12. Signature of Owner(s)

Jean C. DeLoe
VICE PRESIDENT, MILLMAN PROPERTIES NW.

For Office Use Only:

Date Received: AUGUST 9, 1988

Date Heard: SEPT 14, 1988

Commission Decision: APPROVED

Council/Board Action: Approved

Date: September 26, 1988

Attest Maxilyn J. Montgomery
City Clerk

Approved as to form:
Stanley Schuster
Ass't. Corporation Counsel

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

Vicki S. McNeill
Mayor, City of Spokane

~~Chair, Spokane County Commissioners~~

Joe Hunt
Chair, Spokane City/County Historic Landmarks Commission

Scott Brooks-Miller
City/County Historic Preservation Officer

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