



## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent       deteriorated  
 good             ruins  
 fair              unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located at 1647 West Main Avenue, the two-and-one-half story Pietsch House (pronounced "peach") is a contributing building in the Peaceful Valley National Register Historic District. Designed and built in 1891-1892 by Franz Pietsch, the well-crafted Pietsch House is architecturally significant for its finely crafted representation of the Italianate style rarely seen in Spokane. The Pietsch House is completely clad in red brick, and is distinguished by tall, vertical, paired windows crowned with segmental arches and elaborate hood ornamentation. More than 100 years old, the Pietsch House is one of Spokane's earliest homes, and continues to be admired as a Peaceful Valley landmark.

The Pietsch House stands on the extreme northwest corner of its 100 by 100 square foot lot. The property sits below street level as Main Avenue rises east to meet Monroe Street. Main Avenue and a rock retaining wall form the property's northern border. The Estate is bounded by abrupt and steep bluffs to the east and south that rise to meet Browne's Addition. Ash Street, once called Ontario, was renamed in 1909 and forms the property's western boundary.

With very limited setback, the large Pietsch House is an imposing building located near its property lines at the intersection of Main Avenue and Ash Street. The cross-gabled Pietsch House supports a steeply pitched shake roof that was rebuilt in 1995. Three decorative brick chimneys rise from the roof. A two-story porch placed within the "L" made by the two wings is covered by a flared eave projection of the principal roof. Plain vergeboard is protected under overhanging open eaves. The porch was rebuilt in 1995 with a plain, square balustrade and plain porch supports. The most character defining feature of the House is the liberal use of red brick and well-spaced vertical 1/1 double-hung sash windows. The windows are

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supported by molded brick lug sills. The entire house is clad in brick and is constructed of one foot thick brick exterior walls. Two quarter-round windows light each gable. Upper story windows located in the gable ends are placed in pairs and capped with molded brick hood ornamentation typically found on Italianate buildings. Rectangular recessed insets provide decorative detail under the windows. Lower-level windows and doors display segmental arches. A molded brick belt course separates the upper and lower stories. The House is supported by a two foot thick stone foundation. Rounded river rock, quarried from the shores of Peaceful Valley and the Spokane River, combines with cement to form the foundation. Cut black stone has been added to the exterior foundation as a decorative veneer, and covers the river rock.

Two doors on the lower level open to the home's interior. The building is completely gutted and shows one foot thick brick exterior walls and a wood platform frame. Wood two-by-ten inch floor joists with sixteen-inch centers support the first and second floors. The House reveals nine foot ceilings for both levels and wood-burning or cook stove flues in nearly every room. An upstairs bathroom was originally built as a bedroom. In 1911, indoor plumbing was extended to the House, and the bedroom was converted to a bathroom. The original walnut-stained fir woodwork is visible on the first floor, while the upper floor is adorned with ivory painted woodwork and trim. Four-paneled interior doors with the original black enamel and brass door knobs are featured throughout the interior. Plaster and lathe walls enclose the home's interior perimeter. Six inch fir strips provide a surface for the floor. An upper-story door opens to the second-story porch.

Significant features of the Pietsch House are found on the exterior and the interior. The original floorplan, unaltered for over 100 years, combines interior hall space with large and small rooms. Some rooms contain closets, a rare feature of turn-of-the-century homes. The interior stairs lead up a narrow, enclosed staircase that turns to meet the upper-level hall. Two bedrooms open to the hall at an angle - a surprisingly contemporary element. An exterior feature significant to the House is the east elevation, two-story covered porch. The narrow-width porch, reminiscent of porches found on Italianate townhouses, was replaced in 1995, and duplicates the original porch configuration. Another significant feature is the cedar shake roof. Rebuilt in 1995, it replaces the old shake roof. The new roof was altered to

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retain a south-slope skylight. The windows of the Pietsch House are a defining feature of the home. Nearly all of the original 1/1 double-hung sash windows and their wood casings are intact. The quarter-round attic windows remain complete and unaltered.

Prolific vegetable gardens, bee hives, fruit trees, and natural springs once landscaped the property. Two one-story frame houses were built to the south and east behind the Pietsch House in 1901. They were constructed from identical reversed plans to include a hipped-roof, clapboard siding, and a front porch covered by a shed roof. The two houses were originally used for rental purposes, and were later occupied by the Pietsch family. Both buildings have been demolished, the springs covered, and the gardens cleared. The century-old Pietsch House, however, continues to stand, and remains a favorite and unique Peaceful Valley landmark.

## 8. Significance

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

<b>Specific Dates</b>	1891-1892	<b>Builder/Architect</b> Franz Pietsch
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**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

A contributing building in the Peaceful Valley National Register Historic District, the Pietsch House, located at the intersection of Main and Ash, is the District's most unusual and unique building. Designed and built in 1891-1892 by Franz Pietsch, an accomplished German stonemason and brick-layer, the Pietsch House displays a fine quality of craftsmanship unequaled in Peaceful Valley. Once adorned with decorative vergeboard, bric-a-brac, and spindlework most probably painted white, the Pietsch House remains a testimony to the superior construction and masonry skills of its builders. Together with his sons, Louis and Max, Franz Pietsch helped build the Great Northern Railroad clock tower, the Davenport Hotel, Medical Lake Hospital, and many other Spokane buildings. The Pietsch House represents the ultimate building ideal to the skilled craftsmen who settled in Peaceful Valley and constructed their own homes. After more than 100 years, the well-built Pietsch House continues to represent Peaceful Valley and the working-class immigrants who built it.

To avoid conscription into the German army, Franz Pietsch and his wife Augusta emigrated from Germany to the United States during the last half of the Nineteenth Century. With many other German families, they settled in Minnesota near a village called Smith's Mill, south of Minneapolis. For the next two decades, Franz and Augusta Pietsch kept busy farming their land and raising their six children: Arthur, Louis, Max, Hattie, Anna, and Jennie. Franz heard tempting reports of fertile land out west, and saw Northern Pacific Railroad reports promoting acreage sales to farmers and the availability of special trains to transport prospective buyers to the areas. In 1889, a devastating fire swept through and destroyed much of downtown Spokane - one of the western towns offering abundant land. Newspapers advertised work available to skilled men who were willing to help rebuild Spokane. The Spokane Fire of 1889 and the ensuing building boom provided the catalyst for Franz Pietsch to move westward. In addition to being a successful

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farmer, German-born Franz Pietsch was also an accomplished stonemason and bricklayer - two occupations for which the Germans held a reputation for excellence. Less than one year later, Franz, Augusta, and their children were riding the rails west to Washington State. Franz left the family farm in Minnesota to his eldest son, Arthur, and relocated his family to Spokane.

Spokane began in the 1870's with a trading post and a lumber mill. By 1890, Spokane, with its abundant and rich natural resources, had become a busy, bustling center for the mining, timber, and agricultural trade of the Inland Empire. Miners, loggers, farmers, laborers, saloon keepers, and investors began filling Spokane's streets. Men in need of work responded to the call for skilled labor to help rebuild Spokane after the deadly fire. Drawn to fellow craftsmen, many skilled immigrants sought homes in Peaceful Valley.

For over 100 years, Peaceful Valley has been a small, isolated working-class neighborhood on the south bank of the Spokane River just west of downtown Spokane. The narrow strip of land forming the Valley is bound by a steeply sided bluff rising to Browne's Addition on the south, and the Spokane River on the north. The Valley, once known as "Spring Flats" for its many natural springs, was a favorite fishing and camping area for early Spokane Indian tribes. The Valley was also used by early settlers as a preferred picnic ground. A view from the cliffs at Browne's Addition shows the winding Spokane River at the base of a series of cascading waterfalls. The river outlines scenic Peaceful Valley - a spit of land with rich soil, pine and deciduous trees, and grassy fields. Immigrants flocked to the Valley after the Spokane Fire of 1889. Skilled Finns, Swedes, Germans, and Italians bought or leased land and built their own small, wood frame cottages. The working-class area became known as "Poverty Flats" and was a haven for immigrants in search of low-cost housing.

In November 1890, C.F. Clough - Spokane mayor and real estate developer - platted the First Addition of West Riverside in the Valley into lots measuring 25 by 100 feet. The Riverside Land Company bought the Second Addition in 1891. Clough is credited with rechristening the locale from "Poverty Flats" to "Peaceful Valley." With its new name and platted land, lots begin to sell in Peaceful Valley.

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Franz Pietsch was one of the first immigrants to buy the newly platted land. In June 1891, Pietsch bought lots 18 and 19 for a total of 5000 square feet for \$550. Five months later, he purchased lots 16 and 17 of equal size for an additional \$500. All four of the lots are located at the bottom of the Main Avenue hill at the intersection of Main and Ash Street. With their extensive knowledge of masonry and their accomplished building skills, Franz Pietsch, and his two sons Max and Louis, cleared the land and built their two-and-one-half story brick home. The 1893 City Directory lists Franz Pietsch and his family as residents in their home at 1647 West Main Avenue - eight years before the Spokane County Assessor's records indicate the house was built. Longtime Peaceful Valley neighbor, "Dutch" Groshoff, remembers the Pietsch House was covered with "a lot of bric-a-brac" and was a very "nice house." Peaceful Valley residents fondly refer to the brick building as the "big Pietsch House." Neighbors and residents of Peaceful Valley remember climbing the stairs and paths up the bluff behind the Pietsch House to go to the Washington School in Browne's Addition. The Pietsch family also built two other houses located behind the Pietsch House. They were identical reversed plans. The wood frame houses were built in 1901 and used for rental purposes. The Lipscomb's, one of the first black families to live in Peaceful Valley, rented the house south of the Pietsch home. Bailey Lipscomb Pierce tells how she and her sister, Mattie, used to slide down the bannisters of the stairs leading up the bluff from the Pietsch House.

Franz Pietsch and his son, Louis, worked as stonemasons and bricklayers, while Franz's son, Max, was employed as a plumber. Max was listed as a charter member of the local plumbers' union. Together, they contributed their talents and skills and helped build Spokane. Florence Schubach, great-granddaughter of Franz Pietsch, and granddaughter of Max Pietsch, remembers that Franz helped build the c.1908 Great Northern Railroad clock tower - a Spokane landmark. Laurin Pietsch recalls his father, Louis, was employed in the construction of the Davenport Hotel, Medical Lake Hospital, and many other buildings in Spokane.

In addition to his stone and brickmason skills, Franz Pietsch was listed in Spokane's City Directories as a market gardener - a nurseryman who supplied grocery markets with fresh produce. The Pietsch Estate covers 10,000 square feet of

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rich valley soil and natural springs. Peaceful Valley residents remember a fruit orchard and bee hives tended by Franz. Florence Schubach recalls a grape arbor climbing the east porch. She says the grapes were used to make wine which was stored in the home's cellar. A large, bountiful garden was located behind the Pietsch House. Florence Schubach recalls that her great-grandmother, Augusta Pietsch, cared for her five children and her garden while her husband, Franz, spent two years in Germany laying cobblestone roads. Augusta raised vegetables and took them to town in her apron to sell. Confirming their fortitude, neighbor and friend "Dutch" Groshoff remembers the Pietsch family as "hard working." Whether large or small, vegetable gardens are significant to the Valley's landscape, and can be found on almost every plot of land.

For 23 years, from 1891 to 1914, Franz Pietsch and his family lived in the big, brick house. The building was constructed with a wood stove in nearly every room, but with no fireplaces. Fresh drinking water was plentiful from natural springs that fed the property. In 1911, twenty years after the house was built, water and sewer service was extended to the home, and convenient indoor plumbing and drinking water facilities were installed.

The Pietsch family lived and worked together. Franz Pietsch was a stonemason and bricklayer, but also helped his wife Augusta with their extensive garden where they grew vegetables they sold to markets. Their son, Louis Pietsch, was also employed as a bricklayer and stonemason. Their son, Max Pietsch, worked as a plumber, and their daughter, Hattie, was listed in Polk's City Directories as a chocolate dipper.

Max Pietsch married Mary Gothmann in 1900 under a tent at the Spokane Fruit Fair. The wedding proved to be a profitable move. Max and his bride received merchant gifts that included a rocking chair and other furniture, groceries, clothes, shoes, a mink cape, and \$50 in cash. They homesteaded in Ione, Washington for eighteen years, and raised four daughters.

Franz Pietsch died in 1913. His son, Louis, brought his wife, Anna, and their three sons - Frank, Laurin, and Archer - to live with Augusta in the big Pietsch House.



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Louis continued to work as a bricklayer, while his sons chose other professions. Frank worked as an auto mechanic, Laurin was employed as a delivery boy for the Spokane Daily Chronicle, and Archer worked as a casket trimmer for the Spokane Casket Company, located a few blocks away in Peaceful Valley.

When Louis Pietsch and his family moved to Idaho in 1928, Max Pietsch and his family returned from Ione, and settled in the little frame house behind, and south of, the brick Pietsch House. Max and Mary Pietsch lived in the frame house on the Pietsch Estate for the next 32 years, and Max continued to practice his craft as a plumber in Spokane.

From 1929 until 1960, the brick Pietsch House was rented to various people including a series of market gardeners from the Phillipines. The Pietsch House has stood vacant since 1960. Exposed to the elements, the building has deteriorated. However, the stone foundation and brick walls remain in remarkably sound condition. A new shake roof and front porch were constructed in 1995. The century-old red brick Pietsch House remains a testimony to the exacting and superior building skills attributed to Franz Pietsch and his two sons, Louis and Max. Representing the building skills of the immigrant working-class craftsmen who lived in Peaceful Valley at the turn of the century, the Pietsch House is the Valley's ultimate ideal. It is one of a few early Spokane houses and represents an architectural style rarely found in the area. The Pietsch House remains a unique neighborhood focal point and landmark attesting to the working-class immigrants who settled in Peaceful Valley and helped build Spokane.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See Item 9 page 2.

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated property 0.22

Riverside West 2nd Add L16-17-18-19 B8

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Verbal boundary description and justification

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

state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_  
state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Linda Yeomans, Historic Preservation Planner  
organization City of Spokane-Hist. Pres date October 2, 1996  
street & number 808 Spokane Falls Blvd. telephone 509-625-6983  
city/town Spokane state WA 99201

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