

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

historic Smith Funeral Home

and/or common North Coast Plaza

2. Location

street & number W. 1124 Riverside Avenue

city, town Spokane _____ vicinity of _____

state WA _____ county Spokane _____

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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 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 North Coast Life Insurance Company

street & number West 1116 Riverside Avenue

city, town Spokane _____ vicinity of _____ state WA _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Spokane County Courthouse

street & number W. 1116 Broadway

city, town Spokane _____ state WA _____

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Spokane Landmarks Survey and the Riverside Avenue Historic District

date 1978 and 1979 _____ federal state _____ county local

depository for survey records Spokane Historic Preservation Office

city, town Spokane _____ state WA _____

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Smith Funeral Home and Apartment Building, W.1124 Riverside Avenue. Immediately to the west of the Elks Temple is the Baroque Revival mortuary and apartment building constructed for Smith and Company, pioneer morticians. It was completed at a cost of \$130,000 in 1912 from designs by Alfred Jones and Joseph T. Levesque, principals of the local firm of Jones and Levesque. Rectangular in plan, the four-story reinforced concrete and brick masonry building has a frontage of approximately 50 feet on Riverside Avenue. Side walls are faced with "leather" colored (red) pressed brick, now over-painted, and the facade has a veneer of glazed creme colored terra cotta. The original block was 112 feet in depth and was augmented a year later in similar style by a six-story annex which fronts on Main Avenue.

The facade is organized formally with two side bays alternating with narrower end bays and a central bay. Rusticated pilasters marking off the bays terminate at the cornice in variants of composite capitals. Bay windows and entrances of the ground story are sheltered by the original copper and glass marquee, which spans the length of the facade and is vaulted over side entries. Window openings of the second story have basket arch heads decorated with Baroque shell motifs. A Mansard roof, which appears to be covered with oxidized stamped copper, rises above a bracketed cornice and balustrade. Its central feature is a square domed pavilion with segmental arched pediment, the tympanum of which is filled with a Baroque cartouche. There are two ornamental oeil de beuf dormers on either side of the dome. Iron cresting trims the roof ridge, and decorative iron grills span the base of second and third story windows.

In the original scheme the second and third stories were to be used for apartment suites. The fourth story contained laundry and work rooms, and the ground story and basement levels contained the parlors and work rooms of Smith and Company. With its marquee intact, the building is in an exceptional state of preservation externally. In 1925 the company expanded its facilities by constructing a steel-framed structure with harmonious terra cotta facing and a single-story garage entrance adjacent to the main building on the west.

Empty for nearly a decade, this structure suffers from vandalism which has destroyed much of its interior features. Purchased in 1988 by its adjacent neighbor to the east, the North Coast Life Insurance Company, it is currently being scheduled for rehabilitation.

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1912 & 1925

Builder/Architect Jones & Levesque

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Listed on the National Register as a contributing structure in the Riverside Avenue Historic District, the Smith Building is situated in what is the most beautiful avenue in any commercial section of Spokane. "Since 1901, this district has increasingly developed a striking individual character in its architecture, usage and atmosphere. The character of the district has been firmly established through the developmental role of each structure in the district. Their individual contributions are of such high quality that the texture of the whole is more than the sum of individual structures." There is a distinctive sense of history in each of the functional members of this district, which collectively create a strong sense of the pattern development of Spokane's cultural and commercial development.

"With nothing funeral about its design, Smith's elaborate facade had much more the appearance of its second function, an apartment house, the Rochester. Smith's Funeral Home was the oldest continuously operating mortuary in the city prior to its closing in the late 1970's. By the decade after the turn of the century, the Smith family, was able to finance the French Renaissance structure. It was designed to house the mortuary and apartments. Its polished terra cotta has a sophisticated and European air that continues the cosmopolitan flavor of the Riverside District.

Empty for nearly a decade it was purchased by North Coast Life Insurance in the fall of 1988 and is scheduled for rehabilitation as an extension of the North Coast Life Building, formerly the Elks Club, which was rehabilitated in 1983.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Riverside Avenue National Register Historic District Nomination

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than one acre

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 24,25,26,27,28, BLK4 Glovers ADD, S half of vac alley Ly N of & Adj to LTS 24&25 and also of vac alley of line W of Lt 26.

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 Historic Preservation Office

date March 1, 1989

street & number W. 808 Spokane Falls Blvd.

telephone (509)456-4340

city or town Spokane,

state WA

12. Signature of Owner(s)

North Coast Life Ins Co.
by Alexander Ogden, Pres.

For Office Use Only:

Date Received: March 1, 1989

Date Heard: _____

Commission Decision: _____

Council/Board Action: _____

Date: _____

Attest: _____

City Clerk

Approved as to form:

Ass't. Corporation Counsel

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

Mayor, City of Spokane or Chair, Spokane County Commissioners

Chair, Spokane City/County Historic Landmarks Commission

City/County Historic Preservation Officer