

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 Spokane Flour Mill

and/or common The Old Flour Mill

2. Location

street & number West 621 Mallon Avenue

city, town Spokane _____ vicinity of

state Washington _____ county Spokane

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input 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 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 Spokane Flour Mills

street & number West 621 Mallon Avenue

city, town Spokane _____ vicinity of _____ state Washington

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Spokane County Courthouse

street & number West 1116 Broadway

city, town Spokane _____ state Washington

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Washington State Inventory of Historic Places

date 1975 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

city, town Olympia _____ state Washington 15-2

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Spokane Flour Mill, constructed in 1895, is located in the city center on the north bank of the Spokane River's middle falls. Originally the site adjoined that of the Centennial Mill and faced the C & C and Echo mills. While all of the other early mills were removed from the falls area, the Spokane Flour Mill continued to survive in the decaying inner city neighborhood. Urban revitalization efforts accompanied Spokane's "Expo '74". Today the city's Riverfront Park occupies a large portion of the north bank and island areas, as well as a substantial part of the south bank. The Spokane Flour Mill is one of the oldest buildings on Mallon Avenue and Howard Street, and is an outstanding landmark of the Spokane Falls.

The red brick flour mill rises on a granite foundation from the rocks of the riverbank, up the slope of a low bluff to the north. To the immediate west are trees leading down the slope to a park-like area at the rear of the building. A parking lot west of the structure is screened by these trees. To the east is the recently-constructed Federal Credit Union and the Howard Street Bridge to Canada Island. Across Mallon Avenue to the north is a secondary parking lot for the mill. To the northeast across Howard Street is a brick building constructed circa 1909. Abandoned tracks of the Great Northern Railway cross the street and border the mill building on the west.

In terms of design, the Spokane Flour Mill is reflective of its function and period of construction. With a four-story street facade and a seven-story elevation to the rear, the proportions of the structure are typical of a mechanized roller mill operation in which a multi-level building was necessary for the movement of grain and flour from one process to another. One distinctive feature of the Spokane Flour Mill is an original car shed for railroad shipping which extends along the east elevation. A low-pitched gambrel roof complements the general massing of the structure.

In September of 1895, bricklaying began on a granite foundation 8 inches in thickness. The foundation stone is square-cut and laid in regular courses. With exterior dimensions of 60 feet by 103 feet, the building rises to a height of 45 feet on the Mallon Avenue facade and 86 feet on the rear or river facade. The brick walls are 20 inches thick at the piers and 12 inches thick at the narrowest points. The building is divided laterally into two unequal portions with the north 25 feet (originally used for grain storage) separated by a brick wall that rises the full height of the structure. The chief source of exterior surface ornamentation is provided by high-relief, brickwork corbelling which encircles the main body of the structure along the roofline. This corbelling is interrupted by piers on the north and south elevations. On these elevations the gambrel parapet is coped with granite.

The south or river facade of the mill is of particular interest. Four recessed panels of brickwork are separated by five projecting piers. The outermost piers rise to the middle of the seventh-story level and are there splayed outward giving a pseudo-bellcast effect to the roofline. The three inner piers rise to full building height. The paired windows of the south facade are composed of modern, fixed sash over casements, set in segmental arched openings. The upper surrounding areas are decorated with rowlock bond and paired window treatment is visible on the east and west elevations and in the two outer-most panels of the Mallon Avenue facade.

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On the east side of the mill building is an open flat car shed which permitted grain loading in all weather. In 1939 and 1960 respectively, concrete grain bins and a dock extension were appended to the south elevation of the shed, leading to the river's edge. In an adaptive remodeling of the flour mill in 1974, the car shed was converted to a covered promenade extending from Mallon Avenue to the rear of the mill. The promenade continues onto the concrete flour bins and abutments, providing a pedestrian view to the river below.

A small brick masonry wing on the south elevation was enlarged in 1938-39 with the addition of a second story. This rear extension features brick corbelling, granite coping and trim, and a window treatment similar to that of the main body of the mill. In 1974, a pent-roof, glass enclosed space was erected atop this rear wing at third-floor level.

A one-story L-shaped annex of considerable floor area was appended to the north and west facades of the mill in 1916. Constructed of yellowish-toned brick masonry on a granite foundation, the annex has a flat roof and crenellated parapet. The annex windows are paired, with three-centered arch surrounds and granite trim, and the wall surfaces are articulated with masonry piers and panels.

In 1974, a complete conversion of the entire mill structure to a shopping center and office complex occurred. The remodeling involved the addition of some partitions and stairs, and the construction of glass extensions at third and fourth-floor levels on the south facade, providing restaurant space which overlooks the falls. A wooden porch entryway at the northeast corner of the mill building was removed, and a major split entrance created on the north facade.

On the interior of the building, all remaining mill machinery was removed. A major corridor running in a north-south direction is lined with shops on floors three and four, and an intersecting corridor houses two levels of shops. A restaurant is located to the rear of the structure, as well as restrooms and an elevator. This elevator provides access to three upper floor levels occupied principally by offices, as are the first and second stories.

Originally one of many early mills situated along the falls, the Spokane Flour Mill has outlasted the others by a decade in its operation as a flour mill, and still longer as an extant and useful urban structure. Now converted to a shopping center and restaurant complex, the mill is a unique architectural remnant of the industrial history of Spokane Falls.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1895 **Builder/Architect** E.P. Allis, mill designers, and others

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Spokane's history centers around the majestic falls of the Spokane River. The city is no longer known as Spokane Falls but it is true that all early developments in the city were directly related to the falls. The city first developed milling power for lumber but early prosperity could be attributed to the agricultural resources of the countryside. The Spokane Flour Mill was one of a series of mills built along the falls before 1900. In the depression of the 1890's, Dutch money helped Spokane and the Spokane Flour Mill to survive. The international lawsuit involving the interest of the Dutch in the Spokane Flour Mill, was one of the most explosive and long fought battles in the city's legal history. By mid-20th century the central city had begun to decay; the mills were old and the equipment worn out. When the city's rebirth began in the 1970's, only the Spokane Flour Mill remained. Reminiscent of many other mills of the period, its sturdy and practical design is a unique river front landmark.

The falls of the Spokane River came to the nation's attention during Colonel George Wright's campaign against the Inland Empire Indians. he camped along the river and the Falls are fully described by Colonel Wright, Captain Mullan and Lieutenant Kipp in the journals of the campaign. The area is in many ways unchanged. "We passed the great Spokane Falls. It is a high, narrow basaltic canyon, where the whole river passes over an inclined ledge or rocks, with a fall between forty and fifty feet. The view from every point is exceedingly picturesque,"

Although most who settled along the falls appreciated the 'picturesque' view, the first settlers were attracted by the water power potential. Scranton and Downing built the first saw mill on the falls in 1873. James Glover, the city founder, eventually bought out their claims, and continued to encourage further development of the water power. By 1880 the first flour mill had been built by F.T. Post, founder of Post Falls, Idaho. In 1889, there were three separate mills along the falls, but only one, the Centennial Mill, was situated on the north bank.

By 1889 much of the land around the falls had been consolidated into a package owned by the Spokane Falls Water Power Company by E.J. Brickell, Spokane's first millionaire. At the time of his death in 1891, Brickell's estate included 27 acres around the falls. The property encompassed the Penobscot Building, the Centennial Mill, and the city water works; all were leased to their operators by the Spokane Falls Water Power Company. The company was in competition with Washington Water Power, a slightly younger firm which controlled the Edison Electric Illuminating Company on the upper falls.

After Brickell's death in 1891 the management of the company was continued by A.M. Cannon, President of the Bank of Spokane Falls and Simon Oppenheimer, general manager of Spokane Falls Water Power Company. When the Depression hit in 1893, Cannon's bank failed, lost \$54,000 of the city's deposits. In order to recoup their losses the city bought some 101,000 Shares of the Spokane Falls Water Power Company stock from a New York mortgage firm for \$27,000. In the same year Simon Oppenheimer sold Spokane Falls Water Power

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Company, of which he owned one fifth of the shares, to the Northwestern Milling and Power Company, of which he owned two thirds of the stock. In order to construct a new sawmill and flour mill on the falls, he mortgaged the company for \$300,000 to Amsterdamsch Trustees Kantoor of Holland.

It was not unusual for a Spokane business man to mortgage property to a Dutch bank. Lower interest rates and a greater willingness to loan money stimulated Spokane's growing reliance on Dutch money. Because of their heavy investment in Spokane firms, it is estimated that over 13 solid city blocks were controlled by Dutch companies in the 1890's. In Amsterdam, Spokane was the best known of all the western cities, illustrated by the fact that both Portland and Seattle were generally referred to by the Dutch as being "near Spokane". The only unusual point of this particular mortgage was that Oppenheimer did not notify a major stockholder, the city of Spokane, of the mortgage and sale proposal.

The contract for construction of the new mill brought E.P. Allis of Milwaukee and the firm of W.C. Care Milling to Spokane to design and plan the structure. The early estimated cost of construction was \$90,000, compared to \$40,000 for the companion Sawmill Phoenix. The sawmill opened in September, 1895, while the foundation of the flour mill was laid. By December, the flour mill was nearly complete. The seven-story structure was already hailed as "one of the most handsome and imposing mills on the coast". J.E. Watson, first American miller allowed in to Budapest, center of the newest development in roller mill technology, completed the E.P. Allis Company's work on the mill. Watson stated, "It is one of the best structures west of the Mississippie river and when completed and in operation will be unexcelled in the United States by any mill of its capacity."

The Spokane Flour Mill never began operations in the 19th century. From its completion in 1895 until 1900 the mill, equipped and ready, sat unused. Simon Oppenheimer declared bankruptcy, deserted his floundering company, and went east to an undisclosed location. Northwestern Milling and Power was placed in the receivership of James Glover in 1896. The background for one of the most spectacular lawsuits in Spokane's history was complete.

In an attempt to reverse its loss of Spokane Falls Water Power stock, the city sued Northwestern Millings, claiming that both the sale of the company and the subsequent mortgage were illegal. Kantoor foreclosed on its mortgage almost simultaneously. In countersuits for control of the city water works, the contenders fought all the way to the state supreme court. Ultimately, the firm of Kantoor won all the suits in which it engaged. Other suits against Northwestern Milling continued, however, involving General Electric and numerous smaller firms. Subsequent suits brought against the city also included the Cannon estate which disputed the city's right to the shares. From early in 1896 until 1900, the legal battles dragged on, flaring occasionally into heated debates in sessions of the City Council and amongst United States Senators. The accounts of the suit in contemporary newspapers read much as the popular serials published in the same issues.

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At the end of July, 1900, Kantoor sold the 27 acre tract with all of its buildings, including the newly-constructed flour mill, to Washington Water Power Company for \$300,000. Kantoor's sole profits were derived from income from the sawmill Phoenix during a portion of that period, lease payments, and \$45,000 for a right-of-way for the Great Northern Railroad. On the other side the city recouped only \$17,000 on stock estimated at a value in excess of \$100,000.

In 1901 the mill was incorporated as Inland Empire Milling. In 1904 it was disincorporated, and reincorporated as the Spokane Flour Mill. Under the management of Lodwyk C. Lens the mill operated until 1943. Mark Miller and his heirs owned the property from 1935 to closure in 1972. The mill had suffered through various economic difficulties including the boycott of American flour during the Russo-Japanese war and the Great Depression. It survived each of them until depreciation and obsolescence of its equipment finally forced closure. With its termination there remains but one operating flour mill in Spokane.

In 1973-74, the Spokane Flour Mill was adaptively renovated as a shopping center. Originally, some machinery was left in place on the lower floors. Financial difficulties during the early operation of the center forced utilization of the entire structure. It has become one of the most popular of the smaller shopping centers in Spokane. Its nearness to the city center and county buildings ensure a steady stream of customers to the stores on the third and fourth floors; its restaurants are a continuing treat for the hungry shopper.

Washington wheat has played a changing role in the world's economy. Initially, most of Spokane's wheat was consumed in the Inland Empire. Today, over 80% of it is exported. — Eastern Washington's farmers have continued to compete in the world-wide market by converting from hard to soft wheat in recent years. However, this important change has virtually ended Spokane's milling industry, for soft wheat is shipped in grain form to cake and pastry manufactories in other parts of the country.

Flour milling was Spokane's first large scale industry and a mainstay of its economy for three-quarters of a century. Literally all visible remnants of that relationship to one of the richest farm lands in the United States have vanished. The Spokane Flour Mill is a unique reminder that Spokane's history and wealth began in the power of the falls and endured through the bounty of the surrounding countryside.

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Verbal boundary description and justification

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

state Washington county Spokane

state _____ county _____

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stephen S. Glass, Property Manager

organization Kiemle & Hagood Company

date 4/3/86

street & number 1010 Washington Mutual Building

telephone 838-6541

city or town Spokane

state Washington

12. Signature of Owner(s)

By: GVL Investors

By: Kiemle & Hagood Company, Agent for Owner

Stephen S. Glass
Stephen S. Glass, Property Manager

Attest Marilyn J. Montgomery
City Clerk

For Office Use Only:

Date Received: 4-1-86

Date Heard: 5-19-86

Commission Decision: APPROVED

Council/Board Action: APPROVED

Date: July 7, 1986

Approved as to form:

[Signature]
Asst. 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 or

Chair, Spokane County Commissioners

[Signature]
Chair, Spokane City/County Historic Landmarks Commission

[Signature]
City/County Historic Preservation Officer

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The City of Spokane Falls and Its Tributary Resources issued by the Northwestern Exposition, Spokane Falls, Washington, 1890. Buffalo: Mathews and Northrup, 1890.

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"For Two Big Mills". Spokane Spokesman Review, May 22, 1895, p. 3.

"Kantoor Case Reviewed by Mayor Olmsted". Spokane Spokesman Review, October 14, 1896, p.1.

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"A Milling Center". Spokane Spokesman Review, November 22, 1895, p. 3.

Music of the Saws". Spokane Spokesman Review, September 24, 1895, p. 2.

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"Sale of the Upper Falls", Spokane Spokesman Review, July 28, 1900, p.1.