

SPOKANE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Nomination Form

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

Type all entries--complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The Whitten Block
and/or common Hamer's

2. Location

street & number North 1 - 7 Post Street
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site			<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes:restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes:unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	

4. Owner of Property

name Joseph M. & Mary Z. Dinnison
street & number 6205 S. Ferrall
city,town Spokane vicinity of _____ state WA 99223

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse,registry of deeds,etc Spokane County Courthouse
street & number 1116 West Broadway
city,town Spokane state WA 99201

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Landmarks Survey, City of Spokane
date 1979 federal state county local
depository for survey records Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office
city,town Spokane City Hall, West 808 Spokane Falls Blvd. state WA 99201

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7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Rising five stories high on the northwest corner of Post Street and Sprague Avenue, the Whitten Block faces the Peyton Annex to the east and the Davenport Hotel's restaurant wing to the south. Its restrained Romanesque Style was a preferred choice for the many commercial buildings that rose in Spokane's Central Business District after the Great Fire of 1889. Completed in November of 1890, it's exterior is red brick, with corbelling above the windows and at the cornice, and stone accents. Rectangular in shape, the Whitten Block's primary elevation faces Post street, with four store front bays of nearly equal size. Lending grace and distinction to its lines are the pilasters that separate the bays and rise to form arcades above fifth floor windows. The windows, grouped between the pilasters, receive a different design treatment at each level. Other than alterations to its surfaces and interior at street level, the Whitten Block is almost unchanged. Apartment units on the upper floors are remarkably intact. Its condition is good despite windows and interior surfaces in need of repair.

Located between Riverside Avenue and the Davenport Hotel, the Whitten Block sits in the heart of downtown Spokane in an area sprinkled with historic commercial architecture. It shares its west wall with the Miller Building, also an 1890 structure, notable for its buff-colored brickwork and its wide bands of foliated rinceau.

The Whitten Block's wood frame masonry construction rests on a below-grade rock foundation with a full basement. Ninety feet in length and fifty feet deep, the building has a primary facade that still retains its four original bays, although columns that separate the bays have been refaced with a beige brick. The columns, not quite equally spaced in order to accommodate two slightly larger bays on the south, become pilasters at the second level and rise to form four shouldered arcades of equal size, just below the cornice. Contemporary treatment at street level includes bulkheads of concrete faced with buff brick and canopies extending from the facade above wood-framed plate glass windows. Exterior doors are of wood, with multiple panels.

Windows are arranged in groups of three between the pilasters, with center windows of slightly larger proportions. The windows, all one over one sash, with stone sills and lintels, are deeply set below corbelled brick. At the second level, the windows have slipsills and plain lintels. Lintels above third floor

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windows have segmental arches. Fourth floor windows have sills that form a continuous belt course across the front and around the south elevation. The windows have transoms and plain lintels. Fifth floor windows are capped with semicircular arches. Corbelled brickwork supports the cornice. Ornamental wrought iron railings are set in the lower portion of several window openings. Centered on the primary facade, between arcading and corbelling, is the title stone, in cast concrete. Behind the cornice, the tar and composition roof is flat.

The south elevation repeats the style of the east facade, with only slight variation in the placement of the pilasters and the window groupings. There are three arcades, the center one narrow, with single windows. The east arcade has double windows, separated by a pier, and the west arcade repeats the three-window grouping of the primary elevation. Originally without commercial storefronts, and only an unobtrusive doorway on the west end, the street level was altered early to provide a corner entry.

The north elevation shared a wall with an adjoining building when constructed, but has been faced with red brick trimmed with a row of corbelling. The finish is identical to the wall treatment on the west elevation of the Miller building, and the east elevation of the Germond Block, just west of the Miller Building.

The first floor interior was designed to accommodate up to four commercial spaces. There are two interior brick walls with arched openings; one separates the north half from the south half, and the other divides the north half into two equal spaces. Dividing the south half of the interior is a decorative beam supported by three cast iron Corinthian columns. Above a false ceiling, there are remnants of a pressed tin ceiling.

Upstairs apartments are accessed through the original entrance, just north of the facade's center column. From the second level to the top floor, the stairwell and stained-wood staircase are intact. Centered against the building's west wall, the stairwell is lighted by a skylight. Interior hallways have service style wainscoting, deep baseboards, and interior windows, all with the original wood-stain finish. Doorways and transoms are also original, with molded trim surrounds and

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corner rosettes. Apartment units have similar wood trim that is painted. Kitchen units have glass-front cupboards.

Once unfinished, with a partial dirt floor, the basement was remodeled in 1982 for restaurant space, and is currently occupied. The recycled walls and woodwork are stained dark, and resemble the style of the Whitten's existing upstairs interior. The remainder of the building is not currently in use.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1890, 1891

Builder/Architect Lorenzo M. Boardman

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

Completed in 1890, the year after Spokane's Great Fire, the Whitten Block is historically significant for its role in Spokane's rise as a commercial and trade center. Tenants have comprised some of Spokane's earliest and best-known business enterprises. A legacy from Spokane's greatest building boom, the Whitten Block is architecturally important as one of a mere handful of buildings that survive from that era, and is unique even among this group because of its nearly original condition. It is Spokane's only remaining example of a commercial building designed by Lorenzo Boardman. The Whitten Block is also significant for its association with Spokane pioneers Leydford Whitten and Georgia Ballou Whitten, as well as Spokane's foremost restauranter, Louis Davenport.

Following the arrival of the first permanent white settler in 1873, three principal historic events determined Spokane's destiny: the discovery of gold in the Coeur d'Alenes, the arrival of the railroads in the early 1880's, and the Great Fire of 1889.

In the first seven years after founding father James Nettle Glover purchased 160 acres on the Spokane River's edge, only a handful of settlers chose to take up permanent residence in Glover's townsite. Not until the 1880's began, with intended railroad routes identified, and the development of North Idaho's mineral wealth, did the City of Spokane attract potential residents in any number. The decade of the 1880's marked Spokane's first economic boom, and businessmen were just beginning to replace frame structures with more substantial brick and masonry business blocks when Spokane's thirty-two block core was destroyed by fire. The drought summer of 1889 gave rise to fires that leveled downtowns across the

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State; Seattle's in June, Ellensburg's in July, and Spokane's in August. What followed was a wave of immigration and growth as communities rebuilt. With the embers still smoldering, Spokane's businessmen surveyed the devastation and collectively agreed to seize the opportunity and rebuild a grander commercial core. In the aftermath of the fire, buildings rose as rapidly as supplies could be brought in. For Spokane, it introduced the City's era of greatest prosperity; what is today described as "The Age of Elegance".

The lot on which the Whitten Block sits is located in the heart of downtown Spokane. It passed through the hands of the City's founder, as well as its most successful pioneer businessmen. Constructed in the post-fire building boom, the Whitten Block's commercial spaces have quartered a series of Spokane's leading commercial interests.

Glover's original townsite, platted in the early 1880's, by 1889 had a sizeable business core, centered on Riverside Avenue. The parcel that today contains the Whitten Block was a portion of his holdings deeded to pioneer entrepreneurs J. J. Browne and A. M. Cannon in 1878. Leydford B. Whitten, a pioneer investor himself, purchased lot 12 of block 23, just south of Riverside Avenue, in 1882. With business expansion moving southward by early 1889, he erected a frame structure that housed four businesses, including a drug store. It was reduced to ashes in the fire.

Using insurance dollars, Whitten began rebuilding almost immediately. The pressure to provide accommodations for the many businesses temporarily housed in tents may have led to Louis Davenport's use of the Whitten Block while it was still apparently under construction. Louis Davenport had arrived in Spokane only a few months earlier, opening his first Spokane restaurant on Howard Street. Days after the fire, he reopened behind today's Spokesman Review building, moving within weeks to the Whitten Block. Within a year, he was in his own newly erected building, just south of the Whitten, in what was to eventually become the Mission style Davenport Restaurant we know today, the forerunner, and then adjunct of his world-famous hotel. Davenport continued to live in a second floor apartment at the Whitten until 1893 when he moved above his restaurant.

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When Louis Davenport moved out, the Crescent, one of Spokane's best-known dry goods stores, moved into the south half of the newly-completed Whitten, remaining there until 1893. Other early commercial tenants included W. S. Hoyt's Flower Shop, the Spokane Shoe Store, and Whitten's Candy Store, which later became the Pohlman-Kipp Confectionery and then the popular Palm Confectionery. From 1921 to 1957, the Chicago-Milwaukee-St. Paul Railroad offices occupied the south half of the main floor. Other tenants have included a music store, tailor shop, jewelry store and cigar stand. More recently, the Klothes Kloset, and then Hamer's, two of Spokane's leading mens clothing stores, were located here.

The last standing example of Lorenzo M. Boardman's contribution to Spokane's commercial architecture, the Whitten Block illustrates the Romanesque Revival Style he leaned toward. Of the few buildings that remain from the immediate post-fire era, it is perhaps the most intact.

One of Spokane's earliest and most respected architects, Lorenzo Boardman is listed in the 1889 City Directory with only seven others. A year later, the number of architectural firms had more than doubled, and their staffs had swelled, as professionals from the midwest and east took up residency to fill design demands for dozens of new buildings. Boardman, like several of his contemporaries, emulated the commercial styles that were currently popular in such cities as Chicago and Minneapolis. The greatest concentration of new buildings rose on Riverside Avenue, and their character reflected a spectrum of styles from late Victorian to the emerging Chicago School genre. Only a few remain to suggest the diversity that once stood: the Great Eastern Block (Peyton Annex) to the east is Richardsonian Romanesque; the Miller Block, immediately west, has its striking Sullinanesque panels; the Spokesman-Review building, its Victorian tower. The Whitten Block's stately Romanesque Revival appearance creates a contrast and at the same time suggests the more disciplined commercial styles to come.

A native of Pennsylvania, Boardman came to Spokane when he was in his mid-fifties. He practiced only a decade in Spokane before his death in 1897 of Bright's Disease, nonetheless he was responsible for a number of prominent structures. He did the Windsor Block, one of the first

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buildings to be completed after the fire. Removed in 1913 for railroad expansion, it was located on Howard at the entrance to Riverfront Park. He also designed the five story Traders Block, predecessor of the Spokane and Eastern building, once located on the southwest corner of Howard and Riverside; and the Temple Court, another 1890 structure, for the northwest corner of Riverside and Washington. It was destroyed by fire in 1973. Other major buildings included the Ross Block and, in 1896, Spokane's fruit fair building. He was employed by the State of Washington, and among his institutional designs in that capacity was the Medical Lake Hospital Building. It is the only other Spokane area building he designed that remains standing today. Financially established, he also held mining interests and served as president of the Ben Lummon Mining company of the Methow Valley.

One of Spokane's earliest businessmen and real estate investors, Leydford B. Whitten was born November 15, 1850, in Roanoke, Virginia. After receiving his education and training as a carpenter there, he migrated west in the late 1870's, stopping first in the Dalles, Oregon. He arrived in Spokane in January of 1880, and purchased a homestead in what is today the Lidgerwood area, north of Gonzaga. He also bought a business site in downtown Spokane and opened a carpentry shop. He retired from the carpentry trade in 1885 as his real estate holdings expanded. With property on Front Street (today Spokane Falls Boulevard), and Howard and Mill Streets, farm holdings, and mining interests, he turned full time to the management of his business investments. In November of 1888, he married Georgia Ballou. They had four children. He died in 1927, leaving his substantial estate to his sons.

Georgia Ballou, arriving in the Northwest in the early 1880's, was one of Spokane's earliest female physicians. From a prominent and well-educated family, she grew up in Ohio, and after briefly teaching school, earned a degree from the Women's Medical College of Philadelphia. She retired from the practice of medicine after her marriage to Leydford Whitten, and the birth of their children, although she took a refresher course around 1900 and briefly considered returning to active medical practice. She and Leydford Whitten divorced in 1903, and Georgia assumed ownership of the Whitten Block and their home at Sixth and Madison on Spokane's South Hill. Georgia continued to manage the Whitten apartments. Of Leydford

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and Georgia Whitten's four children, three survived childhood. Tragically, their two sons were institutionalized for emotional illness as adults. Paul, the oldest, suffering from alcoholism, shot and killed an employee of his mother's. Lester, a graduate of Harvard, became disfunctional after serving in World War I. Georgia Whitten led a secluded life until her death in 1950. Her sons inherited her estate, including the Whitten Block, under guardianship. It remained in their ownership until their deaths in 1958 and 1966.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nomlnated property 90' x 50'

Verbal boundary descriptlon and Justlflcatlon

Resurvey & Add Spokane Falls Lot 12, Block 23

llst all states and countles for propertles overlapping state or county boundarles

state _____ county _____

state _____ county _____

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sally R. Reynolds, Consultant

organization NA

date 10-2-92

street & number 7015 East 44th

telephone (509) 448-0311

city/town Spokane

state WA 99223

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Bibliography

Durham, N. W. Spokane and the Inland Empire. Spokane, 1912
Edwards, J. Illustrated History of Spokane Co. Spokane,
1900

Hyslop, Robert. Building Blocks

Polk, R. L. City Directories. Spokane

Eastern Washington State Historical Society. Photographic
Collection

Pioneer Title Company. Tract Books

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. 1888-1925

Spokesman Review. Selected articles, 1889 -1966

Spokane Public Library, Northwest Room. Vertical Files.

12. Signature of Owner(s)

[Handwritten Signature]

For Office Use Only:

Date Received: 10-7-92

Date Heard: 10-21-92

Commission Decision: Aggravated

Council/Board Action: Approved

Date: 11-9-92

Attest: *[Handwritten Signature]*
City Clerk

Approved as to Form:

[Handwritten Signature]
Ass't City Attorney

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

[Handwritten Signature]
MAYOR, City of Spokane

or

CHAIR, Spokane County Commissioners

[Handwritten Signature]
CHAIR, Spokane City/County Historic Landmarks Commission

[Handwritten Signature]
City/County Historic Preservation Officer

The Whitten Block
Spokane County, WA

Photographs, black/white

Photographer: Sally R. Reynolds
Date of Photos: September 1992
Original negatives: Spokane City/County Historic
Preservation Office

Photograph and #

- 1 East (primary) and south elevations, looking northwest
- 2 South elevation, looking north
- 3 Doorway, east elevation, looking west
- 4 Post Street streetscape, looking north
- 5 Sprague Avenue streetscape, looking east
- 6 Post Street streetscape, looking south
- 7 First floor interior, looking northwest
- 8 First floor interior, looking northeast
- 9 Sprague Avenue streetscape, looking west
- 10 East elevation, street level, looking west
- 11 Second floor, se corner apartment, looking west
- 12 Second floor hallway, looking northeast
- 13 Second floor hallway, looking south
- 14 Second floor, se corner apartment, looking east
- 15 Third floor, se corner apartment, looking east
- 16 Fourth floor, se corner apartment, looking east
- 17 Stairwell from third floor, looking east
- 18 Fifth floor, looking east
- 19 Fifth floor, looking north
- 20 Fifth floor, skylight







