

Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination

*Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office, City Hall, Third Floor
808 Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, Washington 99201-3337*

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Highland Park United Methodist Church
And/Or Common Name: None

2. Location

Street & Number: 611 S. Garfield Street
City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA 99202
Parcel Number: 35201.5416

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building	<input type="checkbox"/> public <input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure			<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> residential
<input type="checkbox"/> object	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
	<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: Highland Park Methodist
Street & Number: 611 S. Garfield St
City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA 99202
Telephone Number/E-mail: 509-535-2687

5. Location of Legal Description

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds	Spokane County Courthouse
Street Number:	1116 West Broadway
City, State, Zip Code:	Spokane, WA 99260
County:	Spokane

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Title: Enter previous survey name if applicable
Date: Enter survey date if applicable ☐ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local
Depository for Survey Records: Spokane Historic Preservation Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Condition

- ☒ excellent
- ☐ good
- ☐ fair
- ☐ deteriorated
- ☐ ruins
- ☐ unexposed

Check One

- ☒ unaltered
- ☐ altered

Check One

- ☒ original site
- ☐ moved & date _____

Narrative statement of description is found on one or more continuation sheets.

8. Spokane Register Categories and Statement of Significance

Applicable Spokane Register of Historic Places category: Mark "x" on one or more for the categories that qualify the property for the Spokane Register listing:

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Spokane history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory history.
- ☒ E Property represents the culture and heritage of the city of Spokane in ways not adequately addressed in the other criteria, as in its visual prominence, reference to intangible heritage, or any range of cultural practices.

Narrative statement of significance is found on one or more continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography is found on one or more continuation sheets.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 27,012 sq. ft., 1.74 acres
Verbal Boundary Description: The extent of the two parcels on which the church is located
Verbal Boundary Justification: Nominated property includes entire parcel and urban legal description.

11. Form Prepared By

Name and Title: Diana J. Painter, PhD
Organization: Painter Preservation
Street, City, State, Zip Code: 3518 N. C Street, Spokane, WA 99205
Telephone Number: 707-763-6500
E-mail Address: dianajpainter@gmail.com
Date Final Nomination Heard:

12. Additional Documentation

Additional documentation is found on one or more continuation sheets.

13. Signature of Owner(s)

Patricia Morinos

14. For Official Use Only:

Date nomination application filed: January 10, 2023

Date of Landmarks Commission Hearing: February 15, 2023

Landmarks Commission decision: Approved

Date of City Council/Board of County Commissioners' hearing: 3/6/2023

I hereby certify that this property has been listed in the Spokane Register of Historic Places based upon the action of either the City Council or the Board of County Commissioners as set forth above.

Megan Duvall

February 15, 2023

Megan Duvall
City/County Historic Preservation Officer
City/County Historic Preservation Office
Third Floor – City Hall
808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.
Spokane, WA 99201

Date

Attest:

Approved as to form:

Leri Lofgren
City Clerk

Michael J. Pardo
Assistant City Attorney

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Highland Park United Methodist Church and associated buildings and grounds are located within the block bounded by E. 5th Street on the north; S. Conklin Street on the east; E. Hartson Avenue on the south; and S. Garfield Street on the west in southeast Spokane. The complex consists of the church and associated community hall, the parsonage, a gazebo, two sheds and a walk-in cooler, and the grounds, which has both formally landscaped and naturalistic sections. The complex, which was constructed primarily in 1958 in a modern vocabulary, was designed by architect Frank. Y. Toribara and includes the wood-frame A-frame sanctuary and Ranch house style parsonage, both clad in clapboard siding. The outstanding feature of the church is the large laminated beams. The formal landscaping, which includes a rock garden, is Japanese in character. Its design was directed by garden designer Ryotaro Nishikawa. The complex has excellent integrity.



Highland Park United Methodist Church Aerial Site Plan

Source: Google maps

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY¹

Location and setting

The Highland Park United Methodist Church is located southeast of downtown Spokane, immediately south of the I-90 freeway in the South Perry District. The church is located within the block bounded by E. 5th Street on the north; S. Conklin Street on the east; E. Hartson Avenue on the south; and S. Garfield Street on the west. The church is sited in the southwest corner of the block, along with the parsonage, parking facilities, and several sheds. A hexagonal gazebo is located in the southwest corner of the parcel. A large open area is located north of the church (which is also owned by the church), while south of the church is a formally planted garden. In the northeast portion of the parcel is a small wooded area of pine trees.

In general, the immediate neighborhood (south of the freeway) comprises single and multi-family uses, schools, and churches, with many new apartment buildings. A large cluster of medical buildings is located to the west. Hifumi En, an organization that is devoted to the preservation of Japanese heritage in Spokane, is located a little over a block south of the church property.

Buildings

Church – 611 S. Garfield Street

Exterior description. The church is a one-story building with a very tall, steeply pitched, A-frame sanctuary with deep eaves that is the focal point of the building. The large laminated beams that support the roof are exposed below the edge of the eaves at about 8' above the ground, where they emerge from the interior of the building and are fastened to low concrete piers. The sanctuary roof, with its east-west ridge, towers over the remainder of the building, which has an irregularly shaped footprint and moderately pitched hip roof with a north-south ridgeline for most of the building. An extended hip roof on simple wood supports shelters the main entry on the west face of the building, which is within the wing that is south of the sanctuary. A chimney on the roof projects from the kitchen on the south end of the building. The church, addressed as 611 S. Garfield Street, is a wood-frame building with wide clapboard siding on the body of the building and stucco on the faces of the sanctuary. The building has a composition shingle roof and a concrete foundation. The modern church was completed in 1958.

The roughly T-shaped building has four major components; the main entry, the sanctuary, Ellis Hall (to the south), and the stage and adjunct spaces (to the north). Each of these spaces will be described separately below.

Main entry. The main entry to the church is to the right (south) of the sanctuary. It is accessed from the public sidewalk on S. Garfield Street via a broad concrete stair consisting of two flights of six and five steps each that accesses a concrete patio in front

¹ Current photos are by Diana Painter unless otherwise noted.

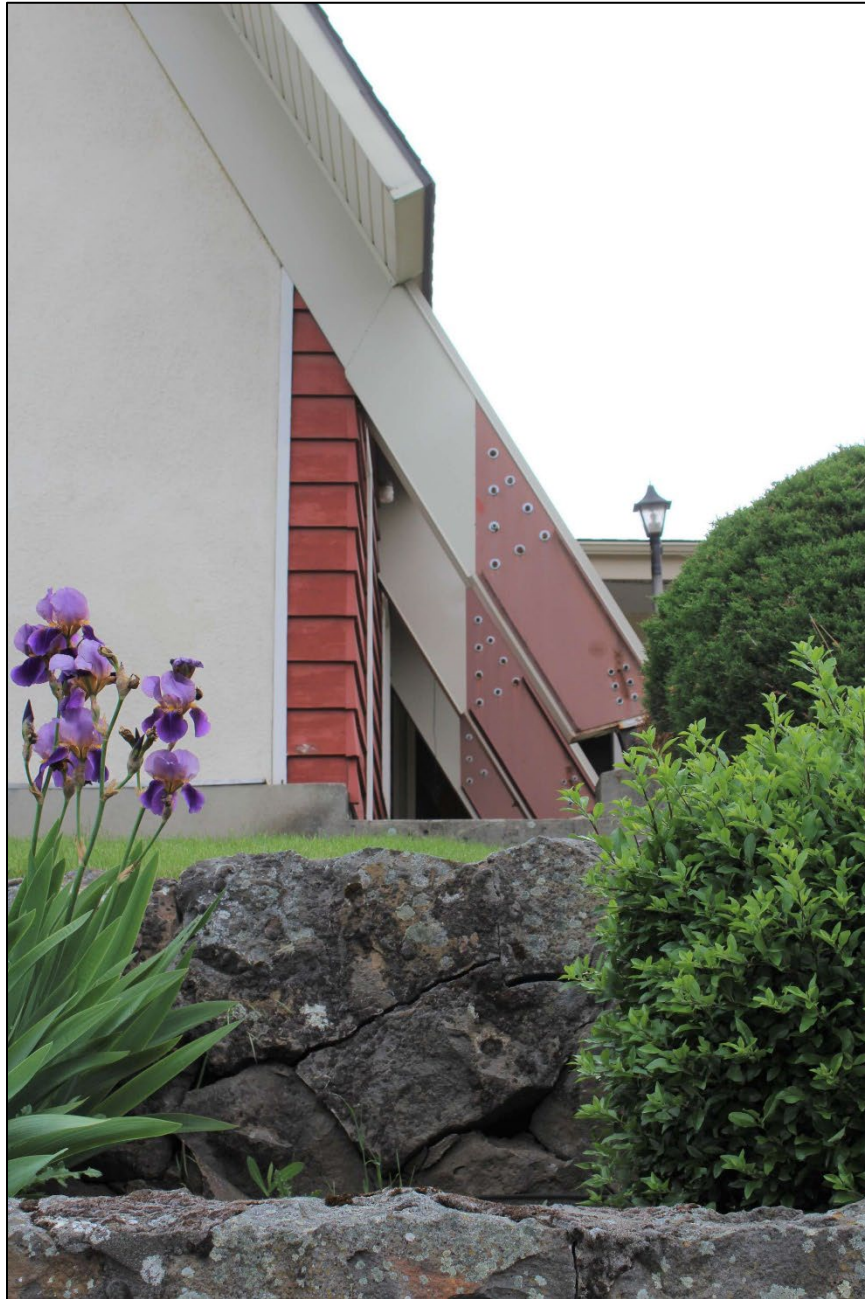


Butler Chapel (Sanctuary), front (west) façade

of the entry. The entry is under a deep overhang that extends about half the width of the south wing of the building that is Ellis Hall and is supported by three simple posts. The entry itself is slightly offset from center within the wing that contains it. The entry door is a double leaf, flush door surmounted by a single-light transom of tinted glass. To its left is a tall focal window that is made up of multiple rectilinear and square panes. To its right, the name of the church is spelled out in freestanding letters in a sans serif type face mounted on a rough-finished stucco wall, with a plain sign with the building address below it. Also to the right of the door is a small marble plaque that states that the church was organized in 1902 and erected in 1958. The south-facing façade of this wing includes a three-part window with a large central pane flanked by two, one-over-one-light windows on the left and a two-part sliding window on the right.

Sanctuary (Butler Chapel). The sanctuary is located on the west side of the building and faces west, overlooking S. Garfield Street. The entire site is set up from the street, retained by a stone retaining wall. Visible here is the tall, A-frame front façade, which is finished in stucco and displays a simple, tall, freestanding cross that fills the face of the gable end. Also visible here are the deep eaves of the building, the large trusses that carry the roof, and the concrete piers to which they are attached. The south-facing side façade

contains a secondary entry toward the west end, with a flush door and transom window of tinted glass. Three trusses emerge along this face, carrying the roof to about eight feet above the ground. Two three-part windows with colored glass are located to the right of the door, one of which is under the roof of the covered entryway. The central pane of the window, which is composed of tinted glass, is operable. The wall here is clad in wide painted clapboards, which is typical of the building.



Beams on south side of sanctuary

The north side façade of the sanctuary is also clad in clapboard. Here five of the beams are visible. This façade otherwise largely mirrors the south façade. A secondary entry matches the entry on the south façade, but is accessed via three concrete steps, which end in a broad concrete stoop. Three three-part windows are located on this façade, that are of the same design as seen on the west façade, with pale tinted glass. The rear, east façade of the sanctuary, visible above the one-story north-south wings, has a stucco finish and no openings other than louvered vents.

Ellis Hall. The building wing that extends to the south, whose west façade can be seen from S. Garfield Street, houses Ellis Hall. This wing houses the large community room, the kitchen, Sunday school and other small rooms, a nursery, and restrooms. On the west façade is a bank of one-over-one-light, nearly full-height windows on the left, a bank of five narrow windows placed higher on the façade in the center that lights the kitchen area, and a paired, one-over-one-light window on the right of the same height as the windows to the left that lights the support kitchen area. The end wall of this wing faces south. A large area toward the west side has been patched with clapboard siding that matches the siding on the rest of the building. Toward the east end of this facade is a double-leaf flush door that accesses the rear hallway of the wing with a broad metal door to the right. Between is a two-part sliding window that lights a janitor's closet on the interior.

The rear, east façade here extends all the way to the end of the building in one plane. The area that fronts on Ellis Hall begins on the south end with a door with a light in the upper portion that accesses the outdoor patio area and a small, nearly square window. The patio is covered by a shelter that is supported by simple wood posts and has the appearance of connecting the barbeque area to a metal container that is located here. The metal container has a shallow gable roof and roll-up garage door facing south. It is used for storage and is fronted by a commercial walk-in cooler. The area is accessed from the lower parking area by a concrete stair with five steps and a tubular metal rail. Beyond the barbeque and food storage area is a series of windows that light classrooms inside the building. They consist of five large, paired, two-over-two-light windows. At the far north end is another entry with a flush door and a five-step stair with a tubular metal balustrade. This accesses the back of the stage.

Stage. The final wing of the building, on the north end, houses the stage and support spaces. The interior is lit by windows on the east façade mentioned above. The north façade has two additional sets of paired windows of the same design. These light indoor support spaces for the stage. The west façade of this short wing has a 'bump out' with no windows that is a large storage area. There are no other openings on this façade.

Building interior. The main entry to the building accesses a large entry vestibule. On the left (north) side of this room is a stone garden with memorials, mementos and artwork belonging to the church. On the back wall of this space are two stained glass windows that were brought to the Highland Park United Methodist Church from their Grant Street



Entry vestibule with stained glass windows

Church. Also visible here are three of the beams from the sanctuary roof, which touch down in this space. Straight ahead is a double flush door covered by a transom window leading to Ellis Hall, which houses a large meeting room, the kitchen and support space, Sunday school rooms, a nursery, restrooms, a janitor's closet, and the hallway to the south exit. To the right are two flush doors that lead to office spaces. To the left, in the northeast corner of the room, are double flush doors covered by a transom window leading to the sanctuary, which is known as Butler Chapel. Artwork and historic photos are mounted on the walls and in a case on the south and east walls of this room.

The Butler Chapel houses the sanctuary and support spaces. On the west wall is the altar, which is accessed via three broad, carpeted steps. On each side are small entry vestibules that access the doors to the exterior on the north and south sides of the church. On the back wall of the altar is a large simple cross that echoes the appearance of the cross on the exterior west façade. To each side of the cross are stained glass windows in wood frames that feature an abstract pattern of tall narrow lights of turquoise and translucent glass. The ceiling above is exposed wood, where the tall, laminated beams that support the church roof rise to the ridge line. Mounted on the ceiling are unique pendant light fixtures made up of three rectangular lights each that are suspended with delicate cords. Also suspended from the ceiling are large ceiling fans. To the rear of the sanctuary is



The Sanctuary or Butler Chapel, looking west

overflow space with the same pews as seen in the sanctuary. This space can be separated from the sanctuary by an accordion folding door. A shallow enclosed room is in back of this space.

To the right (south) of the overflow space is another accordion folding door that leads to Ellis Hall. To the left of the overflow space, in the north wing of the building, is a stage, which is separated from the sanctuary with a large curtain with an Asian motif. On entering the stage area, to the left is a large, enclosed storage space. To the right, in back of the stage, is an enclosed hallway with a series of doors on the left and an exterior door straight ahead (this is the exterior door on the northeast corner of the church). The doors lead to the two large rooms that are straight ahead, on the north side of the stage wing. These are used for storage at this time.

Ellis Hall consists of a large community room with a series of seven doors to ancillary spaces on the east side. On entering the room, a series of classrooms are straight ahead and to the right, including Sunday school rooms, a nursery, and restrooms. The Sunday school rooms are also interconnected with interior doors. To the right, in the southeast corner of the space, is a hallway to the south exit and a janitor's closet in the southeast corner. There is also a short perpendicular hallway here that leads to the outdoor cooking area/patio, food storage container, and cold storage locker. In back of the large community room, which can also be used as a dining hall, is a commercial kitchen, which



Ellis Hall, looking north towards kitchen, classrooms to left

is open to the hall with a long counter. In the back of this space, on the south side of the building, is a support space for the kitchen. Both can be accessed via doors along the hallway. Within the community room, on the west wall, are cases of Hina dolls and other mementos. Finishes in Ellis Hall include a painted ceiling, dropped fluorescent lights, and a linoleum floor. Cupboards have flush doors and round pulls in bronze and silver that date to the mid-20th century.

Changes over time. Very few changes have taken place to the church. In 1984 an addition of two rooms accessed via an east-west hall was constructed on the north side of the church and a large storage area was added on the west side of the stage wing.

Parsonage – 919 E Hartson

Exterior description. The parsonage is a one-story Ranch house with a rectangular footprint and a moderately pitched, side gable roof with a front gable over the attached two-car garage on the east side. Eaves are moderate and boxed. The house is located in the southeast portion of the site, close to the intersection of E. Hartson Avenue and S. Conklin Street. Addressed as 919 E. Hartson Avenue, it faces south, overlooking the street. The wood-frame house is clad in wide clapboard siding that matches the church, with an asphalt shingle roof and a perimeter concrete foundation. The Ranch style house was constructed in 1958.



Parsonage, north (rear) and west façade, looking southeast

The main entry to the house is located at about the center of the south, front façade. It is accessed via a curvilinear concrete walkway with a five-step stair from the public sidewalk and has a broad concrete stoop in front of the door. The flush wood door has a vertical accent panel to its left. A large, three-part focal window is located to the left of the front entry, which lights the main living area. It is composed of a horizontally oriented single light window flanked by two, one-over-one-light, double-hung windows. To the right of the front door are two, two-part sliding windows, which light bedrooms on the interior. Windows have vinyl frames. To the right of the main body of the house is an attached garage with two individual roll-up garage doors, one of which is new and one which has the original wood-panel roll-up door, with two lights in the upper portion.

The east side façade is close to the neighboring house. It features one fixed window. The north façade is the rear of the house. It has a single door with a light in the upper portion and a nearly square window to its right that accesses the back of the garage. At about the center of the main portion of the house is a secondary entry with a small fanlight window in the upper portion. To its left are paired, two-part sliding windows that light a bedroom and two smaller, one-over-one-light windows that light a bathroom and laundry room. To the right of the door are paired, double-hung windows and to its right, a larger, horizontally oriented single light window that lights an eating area. The west façade includes one horizontally oriented, fixed window and one large, three part window that lights the living room. This has a large single light in the center flanked by one-over-one-light windows.

Interior description. The parsonage house for the Highland Park United Methodist Church is laid out like a classic Ranch house, with the common or public rooms occurring in a cluster at one end and a central hall in the other portion of the building, with bedrooms and a bathroom located off this hall. The living room area is light filled. Windows for the bedrooms are placed high on the wall for privacy purposes. A laundry is located in a room near the back door. Near the front door is a low, built-in bench that is designed to sit on while removing one's shoes. Other features of the interior include the original smooth-finished wood cabinets and closets with round, bronze colored, mid-century drawer pulls and door handles.

Changes over time. Very few changes have taken place to the parsonage. The windows have been changed out to vinyl frame and one of the garage doors has been replaced.

Gazebo

The one-story gazebo is a wood-frame building with a hexagonal-shaped footprint and a low-sloped hip roof with flared eaves. The rafters are exposed but covered with a moderate fascia. The building has a wood-shingle roof and concrete slab foundation. Six heavy square posts support the roof. Approximately 4' high walls enclose the building, with the exception of open pass-throughs on the north and south sides.



Gazebo, north façade, looking south

Sheds

Wood shed. There are two sheds on the property and one walk-in cooler. A small shed is located in back of (north of) the house, within the parking area for the church. This is a wood-frame shed with narrow eaves that is clad in plywood with a vertical grain. It faces west toward the back of the church. The entry is close to grade and has a narrow, two-leaf door. This is used for storing landscaping materials.

Metal shed. The metal shed is directly behind the church at the southeast corner. The 1980 shed is 12' by 36' in size, has a moderately pitched gable roof, and is clad in corrugated metal with a metal roof. A roll-up garage door is located on the south side. While not connected to the church, the 11' space between the church and the shed is covered by a nearly flat roof that is supported by simple wood posts so that it appears connected. The patio area between the shed and the church is used for barbequing. The shed is used for storage.

Cooler. The cooler is a standard manufactured commercial walk-in cooler. It is located next to (south of) the metal storage shed.

Site and landscaping

The Highland Park United Methodist Church and ancillary buildings occupy a 27,012 square foot parcel. The north end of the parcel is not formally landscaped. The site here includes a wooded area on the east side and a gravel lot with rocks to prevent parking on the west side. To the east of the church is the parking lot for the church, which extends to the north side of the parsonage and is occupied by the woodshed. It is lower than the church site and is separated from it by a planting bed of juniper and retained on the east side by an informal stone wall. The parking area is large enough for about two rows of perpendicular parking.



View of grounds in front of Ellis Hall, looking south

Formally landscaped areas are located primarily in the southwest corner of the parcel and generally display an informal, naturalistic character. Located here are curving concrete sidewalks, including a sidewalk that accommodates handicapped access; the gazebo, which is close to the south property line; and mature trees and numerous planting beds above the street in this area. Also located here are numerous tributes, including the tribute to garden designer Ryotaro Nishikawa, who worked on the design of the grounds, garden sculptures and decorative benches.



Dedication to garden designer Ryotaro Nishikawa

INTEGRITY

Per the City/County of Spokane *Spokane Register Nomination Guide*, the following aspects of integrity are relevant to the Highland Park United Methodist Church. The following are definitions of the aspects of integrity and a response with respect to the Highland Park United Methodist Church.

- Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.

The present church and associated buildings retain their original location.

- Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.

The design of the church, parsonage, and gazebo, which are the 1958 structures on the property, have a high degree of design integrity. The major change, which is on the north rear façade of the sanctuary and is in keeping in design terms with the remainder of the building and campus, is an addition that houses an additional meeting room and storage closet for the stage.

- Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.

The buildings retain a high degree of material integrity. Some vinyl-frame windows have been added to the parsonage within original openings and displaying the same operation as the original windows. One new garage door has been added to the garage on the parsonage.

- Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.

The buildings retain integrity in their workmanship. Some vinyl-frame windows have been added to the parsonage within original openings and displaying the same operation as the original windows.

- Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

The property retains a high degree of association. The church and associated buildings were developed for the United Methodist Church and they continue to occupy the church property today.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Highland Park United Methodist Church is eligible for listing in the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Category C, for its architecture and landscape architecture, as embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. The church is a modern, A-frame church, designed by architect and congregation member Frank Y. Toribara. It is part of the post-World War II trend to design churches that reflected modern design and a new era of worship. The property is also significant for its landscape, which was designed and built by congregation members, under the leadership of landscape gardener Ryotaro Nishikawa, to reflect the congregation's Japanese heritage.

The Highland Park United Methodist Church is also eligible for listing in the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Category E, as a property that represents the culture and heritage of the city of Spokane, specifically for representing its Japanese ethnic history. The history of the church is integral with the history of the Japanese community in Spokane from the founding of the church in 1902 to the present. The church played a particularly strong role in the early days of immigration, in the early 20th century, when it assisted new community members in acclimating themselves to their new home, in addition to providing educational resources. The church was also very important during World War II, when Spokane's Japanese population increased exponentially, absorbing new residents from the coastal Evacuation Zones in Washington and providing a place where detainees could be released from the internment camp in Minidoka to work or attend school in the later war years.

The church and associated buildings are over 50 years old, having been constructed in 1958. The church retains very good integrity, demonstrating integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and association. The church building retains its same overall form, in particular its characteristic roof design and the materials and workmanship seen in the cedar siding, glulam beams, and prefabricated trusses. The church has seen one addition, on the north side of the church, which added a large room and storage closets north and west of the stage area in 1984. The parsonage also retains integrity. The only change that has occurred to this building is the addition of some vinyl-frame windows in their original openings. The gazebo is also intact. The landscaping has seen some changes over time but retains sufficient integrity to convey the reasons for its significance.

Contributing features of the property include the church, the parsonage, which was built at the same time as the church, the gazebo, which was called the House of Prayer,² which was also built when the church was built, and the landscape. The garden shed, an outbuilding, is not a contributing feature. The period of significance under Category C is

² *Sixty-Five Years in Pictures*. Spokane, WA: The Issei Commission on Evangelism, Highland Park Methodist Church, June 1967.

1958. The period of significance under Category E is 1958 to 1973.³ The architect is Frank Y. Toribara, the builder is Ed Iwata and the garden designer is Ryotaro Niskikawa.

HISTORIC CONTEXTS

The East Central Neighborhood

The Highland Park United Methodist Church is located in Spokane's large East Central neighborhood, just south of the I-90 freeway, at about the center of the west end of the neighborhood, within the South Perry district. The neighborhood is largely bounded on the north by the primary railroad tracks through Spokane and extends as far south as S. 14th Avenue on the south. It is bounded on the west by Division Street and extends to the city limits at Havana on the east.⁴ Originally farmland, the neighborhood became populated by suburban development beginning in the 1890s. It is one of Spokane's oldest neighborhoods and historically one of its most diverse, with many immigrant groups settling there.⁵

Just west of the west boundary of East Central was the historical employment center for the Asian communities, as well as other immigrants. This included Havermale Island and the blocks along Front (later Trent and now W. Spokane Falls Blvd) and Main Avenues. In addition to work for the railroads,⁶ employment could be had in the late 1800s and early 1900s in lumber yards and sawmills, flour mills, laundries, liverys, and hotels. Also present was an iron works, the New York Brewery, and Spokane Mattress & Upholstery Co. (later Carman Manufacturing Co.). By 1910 garages had appeared and warehouses were more prevalent. In these years housing was still mixed with commercial and industrial development on Havermale Island and even with the city hall complex at Howard and Front Streets.⁷

The Freeway, Urban Renewal, and Expo '74. The second half of the 20th century would see great changes in East Central. The east-west I-90 freeway was constructed in the 1960s, with construction occurring in East Central from 1969 to 1971. The freeway severed the neighborhood nearly in half, with its west side traveling just north of 5th

³ Note that on-going significance for a historic resource is established by capping the period of significance as 50 years ago from the present. "Fifty years ago is used as the closing date for periods of significance where activities begun historically continued to have importance and no more specific date can be defined to end the historic period." National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*. Washington DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, 1997 (1977):42.

⁴ City of Spokane, "East Central," *Shaping Spokane, 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update*, <https://static.spokanecity.org/documents/shapingspokane/neighborhood-profiles/east-central-neighborhood-profile.pdf>, accessed October 2022.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The Northern Pacific railroad arrived in Spokane in 1881, the Union Pacific arrived in 1889, and the Great Northern in 1892. The 1891 Union Pacific passenger depot was located at Stevens and Trent, and the 1902 Great Northern railroad station was located on the river at Stevens.

⁷ Sanborn Fire Insurance maps.

Avenue to Liberty Park, and between 2nd and 3rd Avenues from Liberty Park to the east border of the district. An additional impact was that there was no off ramp to the East Central neighborhood.⁸ Its construction caused the Highland Park United Methodist Church to move from its Grant Street location to its current location, as its property was impacted by the construction. The residential neighborhoods were also impacted by construction of the freeway and the commercial/industrial streets of Trent (formerly Front) and Main Avenues were separated from the residential neighborhoods they served. Freeway construction also obliterated 15 acres of what was originally the 21-acre Liberty Park, donated to the city in 1897 and designed for multiple recreational uses in 1907.⁹

What had historically been employment centers provided by the railroads, mills and factories were also lost with the redevelopment of Havermale Island into Expo '74 in the early 1970s. The business district on either side of Stevens Street between Trent and Main Avenues was demolished, to be replaced with surface parking lots that remain to this day. The Washington State Pavilion (the convention center and opera house) was constructed within the northeast quadrant of Washington and Trent, replacing Union Station.¹⁰ Today the block between Washington and Bernard and Trent and Main Avenue, formerly another block of small-scale commercial businesses oriented toward the immigrant communities, is occupied by the 18-story Davenport Grand hotel and related uses.

Despite the losses noted above, the East Central neighborhood is seeing a resurgence today with the development of the University District just east of Division, the revitalization of the South Perry district, the rehabilitation of historic buildings both east and west of Division along Main Avenue, the revitalization of the 5th Avenue business corridor, and the re-opening of the Carl Maxey Center on E. 5th Avenue, which serves the African-American community of East Central. The East Sprague area is also being revitalized with new infrastructure and the rehabilitation of buildings along the corridor.

The Japanese in Spokane

Note: Issei refers to first generation of Japanese immigrants to the U.S. Nisei are the second-generation or children of the Issei and were automatically U.S. citizens. Sansei is the term given to the third generation.¹¹

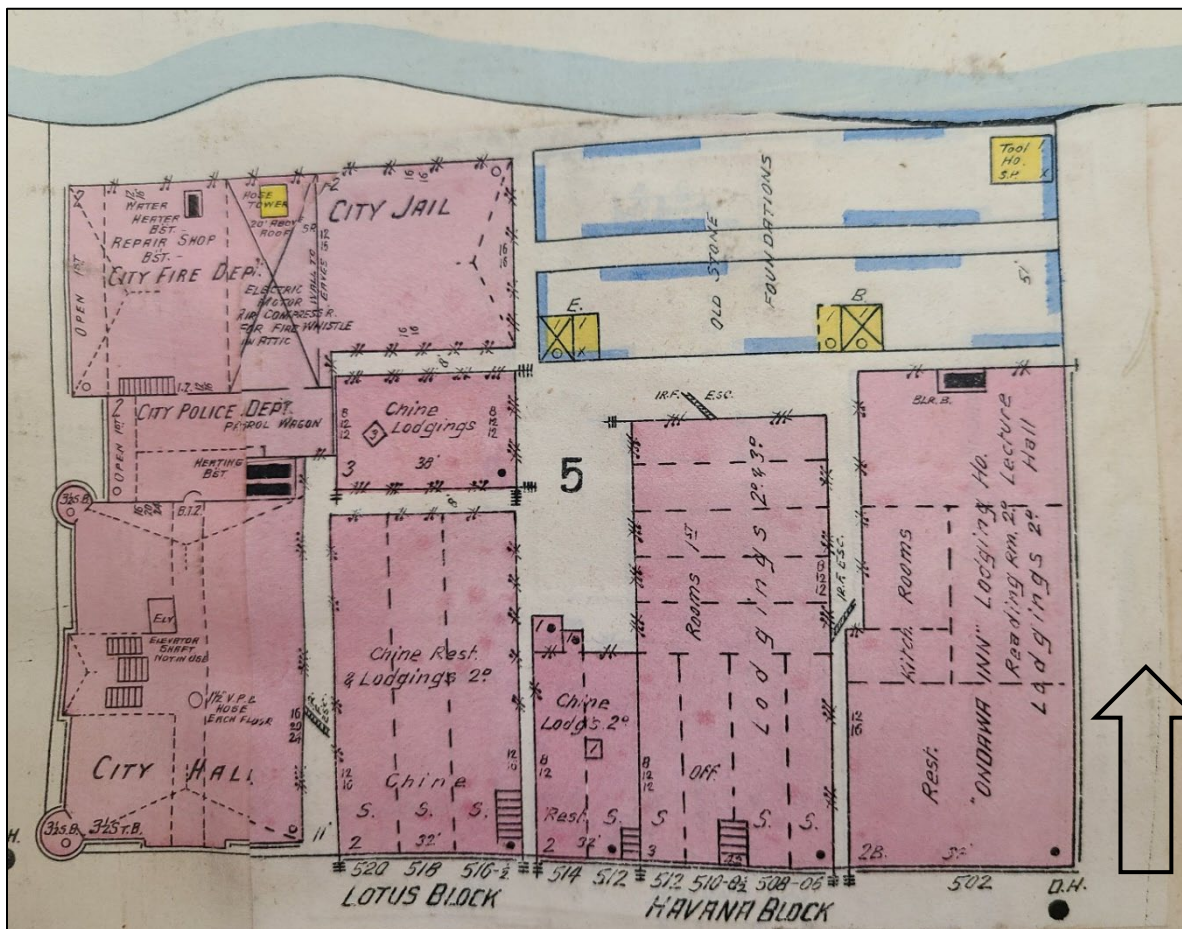
⁸ Spokane Regional Health District's Neighborhoods Matter Project and Frank Oesterheld, "Neighborhoods Matter: The Impact of the I-90 Freeway on the East Central Neighborhood, an Oral History – Introduction," *Historylink.org*, <https://spokanehistorical.org/items/show/468>, accessed October 2022.

⁹ WSDOT paid \$630,000 for the land in 1968. Jesse Tinsley, "Then and Now: Liberty Park gave way to I-90," *The Spokesman Review*, March 9, 2015.

¹⁰ Jesse Roberts, "Washington State Pavilion, Expo '74 and Riverfront Park Tour," *Spokanehistorical.org*, <https://spokanehistorical.org/items/show/274?tour=9&index=14>, accessed October 2022. This is the First Interstate Center for the Arts today.

¹¹ Rose Sliger Krause, *Beyond the Evacuation Zone: Japanese Evacuation and the Resettlement in Spokane, Washington*. MA Thesis, Eastern Washington University, 2006:5.

The Chinese. In the 1850s and 1860s Chinese workers came to Spokane and the region to work on the railroad and in the mines.¹² By the 1880s they came to occupy, with their businesses, an area that became known as Trent Alley (it was also known as Chinatown or Japanese Alley), that was in proximity to the railyards. Trent Alley was an alley between Main and Trent Avenues (historically Front Avenue, now W. Spokane Falls Blvd.) and between Howard and Bernard Streets.¹³ The half block on the north side of Trent Avenue backed up against the Spokane River. In 1902 the half block between Howard and Stevens on the river consisted mainly of City Hall, the Police Department, the Fire Department, and the City Jail, and a stone foundation. By 1905 it also contained five lodgings buildings, three apparently Chinese owned, with shops and restaurants on the ground floor, including the Lotus Block, the Havana Block, and the Ondawa Inn.¹⁴



City Hall and associated buildings in 1905, along with five lodgings buildings

Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance map

¹² Nicolette Reames, "Spokane's Chinatown," *Spokane Historical*, <https://spokanehistorical.org/items/show/400>, accessed October 2022.

¹³ Trent Street was first known as Front Street, then Trent Street, and is now W. Spokane Falls Blvd. in this area.

¹⁴ Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, 1902 and 1905.

As a sample of just one block in this area, across the street to the south were lodgings, baths, a saloon and billiards hall, a variety theater, shops, saloons, restaurants, and a Chinese gaming and lodgings business. It was also known in early days for opium dens and houses of prostitution. This block would later be occupied by the western portion of Trent Alley. It is estimated that before the 1889 Spokane fire, there were approximately 600 Chinese living in Spokane.¹⁵

Despite the visibility of the Chinese and later Japanese inhabitants of Trent Alley and the blocks adjacent to the Spokane River, writers documenting the history of Spokane's Chinese and Japanese communities at this time make the point that the six-block area that housed these residents and their businesses is most appropriately considered an international district. The year 1910 signified the height of the immigration period in Spokane. According to the 13th census of the United States, at that time Spokane's population of males and females over 15 years of age consisted of 39,566 whites of native parentage; 19,205 whites of foreign-born parentage; 20,250 foreign-born whites; 622 blacks; 342 Japanese; 232 Chinese; and 11 Indians.¹⁶ Immigrants from European countries might be Italian, Greek, or German.¹⁷

With the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (and subsequent legislation) Japanese workers were recruited to fill jobs previously undertaken by Chinese workers. They came to Spokane in the late 1880s and early 1890s, where they might work for the railroads, on the mail crews, in the mines, for canneries, and on farms.¹⁸ The community remained small, however. By 1890, one year after Spokane's fire of 1889, and in spite of workers who flocked to Spokane to help rebuild it, Spokane had a population of 20,000, while Spokane's Japanese population totaled 23 people.¹⁹ It was growing however. The 1900 census found 51 Japanese in Spokane.²⁰ And like the rest of Spokane, the Japanese population increased rapidly in the first decade of the 20th century. By 1910, 352 Japanese were recorded as living within Spokane's city limits, and another 76 in Spokane County (note that railroad workers in Hillyard and farmers in the Hangman Creek and Bigelow Gulch areas were in Spokane County at this time).²¹ Historian Deborah Gallacci Wilbert in her 1982 thesis on the Japanese community in Spokane noted that by 1910, "the international district displayed ample evidence of an established Japanese community."²² From its founding in 1902 the Japanese Methodist Mission, the precursor of the Methodist church, served as the social and religious hub of the Spokane Japanese community.²³

¹⁵ Reames, "Spokane's Chinatown."

¹⁶ Thirteenth Census of the United State Taken in the Year 1910, Volume III, Washington Government Printing Office, 1913:995. Note that Spokane's total population in 1910 was 104,402.

¹⁷ Wilbert, 1982:22.

¹⁸ Krause:2006:10.

¹⁹ Krause:2006:9.

²⁰ Wilbert 1982:7.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Wilbert, 1982:9.

²³ Krause, 2006:6.

As the Japanese became established, they ran hotels, boarding houses, barber shops, billiard halls, laundries, fish markets, restaurants, specialty stores, and produce farms.²⁴ According to Spokane journalist Jim Kershner, Trent Alley, within the southerly blocks bounded by Howard on the west and Bernard on the east, started to become more “respectable” as Japanese immigrants and their families began to move in about the turn of the century.²⁵ A few also lived closer to downtown.

Organizations formed that served the Japanese community as well. A Japanese Commercial Club was formed in 1910 and a Japanese Restaurant Keepers’ Association that attempted to control prices was established about 1915. There was also a Spokane Vegetable Growers Association, which represented the about 20 vegetable farms in areas around Spokane. They served as buyers for the produce and distributors to restaurants and grocery stores. There was even a Japanese language newspaper for a few years beginning in 1909, the *Spokane Times*, published by Youshi K. Nakamura.²⁶

A Japanese Association was founded in Spokane before World War I. It consisted of “a loose collection of community leaders who served as liaisons between Issei and local government officials, as well as providing aid for sick or poor Issei who needed it.” They also held social functions for visiting Japanese consulate officials.²⁷ Another organization that served the community was the prefectural association (ken). Cities with larger Japanese communities might have several prefectures (which refer back to the geographic area in Japan from which the members came) but Spokane, having a proportionately small population, had just one prefecture, which was more of an informal social network. It might function to recruit farm and railroad workers to an area and also provided assistance to new community members. They might also provide labor or capital and patronize each other’s businesses.²⁸

Jobs. The Japanese community grew rapidly in the first two decades of the 20th century, as reflected in the businesses and organizations that were in place. Early Japanese immigrants to Spokane might work in restaurants. In 1905 there were three Japanese restaurants in Spokane and by 1912 there were at least sixteen, on Front and Main Avenues and the Washington Street areas. There was even a Japanese Restaurant Keepers Association.²⁹ Others worked as barbers or in pool (billiard) halls. A barber shop might also have baths, as might a laundry. Hand laundries were popular and might be family owned and would serve a white clientele. In 1912 there were at least six hand laundries in Spokane, two of which were large enough to have employees.³⁰ They might

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Jim Kershner, “Spokane Neighborhoods: Old Chinatown – Trent Alley – Thumbnail History,” *Historylink.org*, <https://www.historylink.org/File/8120> (March 2007), accessed October 2022.

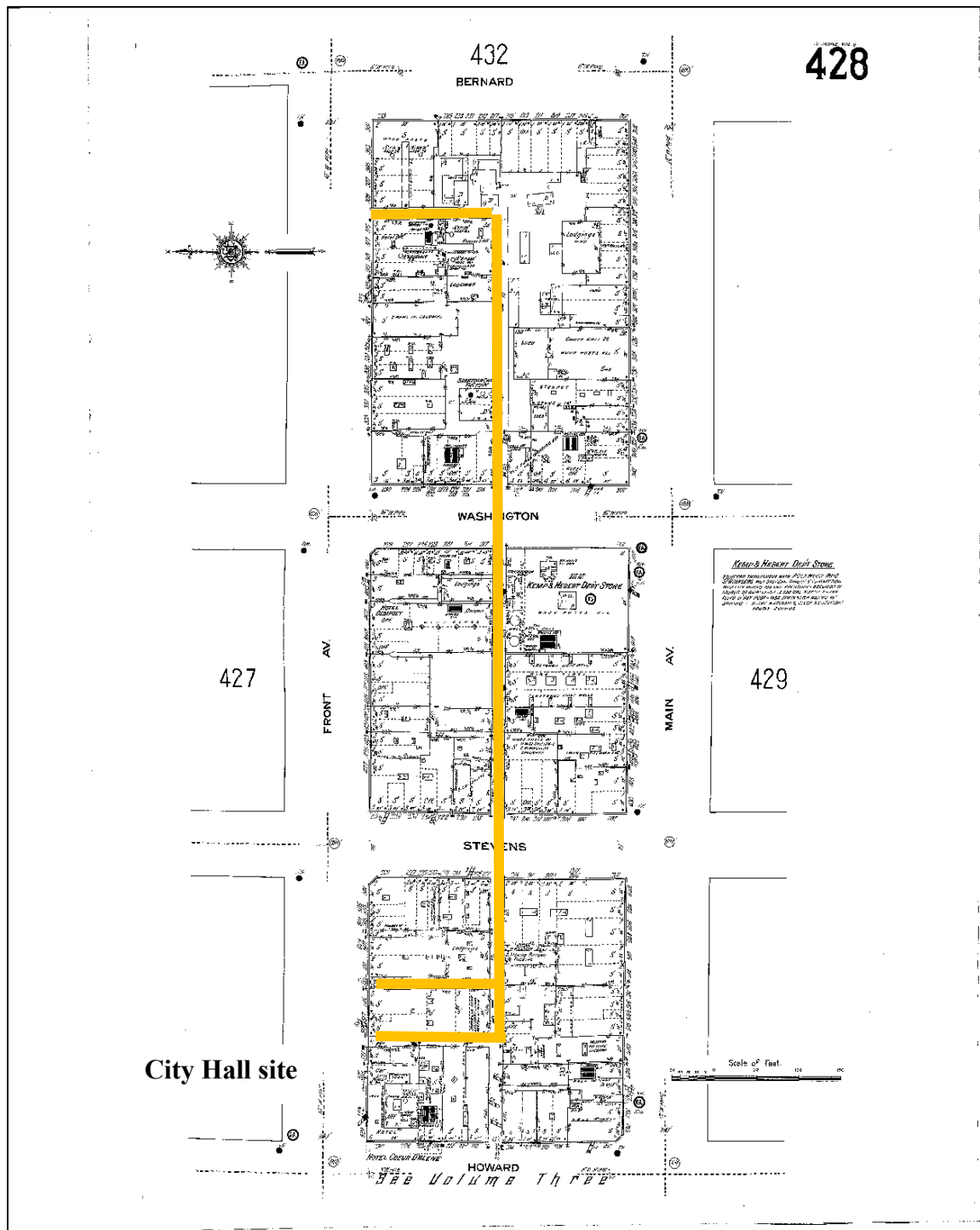
²⁶ Wilbert, 1982:17.

²⁷ Wilbert, 1982:19.

²⁸ Wilbert, 1982:21.

²⁹ Wilbert, 1982:25.

³⁰ Wilbert, 1982:27.



Trent Alley in 1910

Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance map

also operate a Japanese hotel, which was an especially efficient business for couples. They might also work as tailors, a skilled profession. In 1905 there was one Japanese tailor, but by 1910 the number had increased to at least five.³¹

Japanese wage workers included waiters and porters. Railroad workers might also work on the railroad mail gangs or crews. Japanese workers were also employed by the Great Northern Railroad in Hillyard. Wage workers might also work for white-owned businesses, including hotels and clubs, as janitors, cooks, or porters.³² Some might also work as domestics. Outside the city limits, the Japanese might work as farm laborers. The sugar beet industry in Waverly was one in which they were known to work.

Residences. Unless workers were housed by their employers, which might occur in the case of domestics or hotel or railroad workers, the Japanese primarily lived in the international district or in the immediately surrounding area. Efforts in the first two decades of the 20th century to move beyond this area were discouraged by the “color line” an unofficial boundary enforced by realtors and/or property owners.³³ The color line restricted where Japanese businesses and residences could be located in pre-World War II Spokane. This applied not only to the Japanese, but also Chinese and Blacks. They could also live in a few blocks southeast of downtown, near Lewis and Clark High School and the Japanese Methodist Mission.³⁴

The 1920s. In 1908 a “Gentleman’s Agreement” restricted the immigration of Japanese laborers, but allowed for a loophole regarding parents, wives, and children of laborers already in the U.S. By 1921, however, Japan halted the issuance of passports to picture brides³⁵ and in the U.S., the 1924 National Origins and Immigration (Smith) Act prohibited new Japanese immigration.³⁶ Japanese were also barred from becoming naturalized citizens. The Washington Alien Land Law was passed in 1921, which prohibited the Japanese from owning their own land, homes, or businesses.³⁷ In early years Issei would circumnavigate this law by putting property in the name of their Nisei children, who were citizens. But amendments made in 1925 stated that when a minor child of an alien deemed ineligible for citizenship held title to land, the parents were presumed to be the real owners and were thus subject to prosecution.³⁸

³¹ Wilbert, 1982:30.

³² Wilbert, 1982:33.

³³ Wilbert, 1982:37

³⁴ Krause, 2006:15. This information was provided by Spokane Directories and the Japanese Evacuation and Resettlement Survey, which was developed in four volumes in the mid-20th century.

³⁵ The term picture bride refers to a practice in the early twentieth century by immigrant workers who married women on the recommendation of a matchmaker who exchanged photographs between the prospective bride and groom. “Pictures Brides,” *Densho Encyclopedia*, https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Picture_brides/, accessed January 2023.

³⁶ Krause, 2006:10

³⁷ Wilbert, 1982:39.

³⁸ Krause, 2006:11.

By the second decade of the 20th century the Japanese Issei were raising families, which further strengthened their ties to the area. The Japanese Methodist Mission remained the focal point of the community and provided spiritual, social, and even economic support to the Japanese in the area.”³⁹

The 1930s. The Japanese population in Spokane was 393 people in 1930.⁴⁰ The Trent Alley neighborhood suffered during the Depression and some Japanese returned to Japan and some Japanese businesses, which often operated on a slim profit margin, were forced to close. The mechanization of farming and lumbering during this time frame also affected wage earners’ ability to earn a living.⁴¹ By this time some Nisei had obtained college degrees and were interested in entering the professions; however discrimination against their participation was still in place. “By 1941 significant numbers of Nisei had left Spokane to look for jobs elsewhere. Those who stayed remained firmly under the guidance of the first generation and the institutions they had established.”⁴²

The 1940s. World War II had a profound effect on the Japanese community in Spokane, even though people of Japanese descent (both Japanese immigrants and Japanese-Americans) were not forced to evacuate and were not interned in the camps. A total of 120,000 Japanese Americans would eventually be removed from the west coast of the U.S. under Executive Order 9066, issued by President Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, soon after the beginning of the Pacific War against Japan brought on by the December 7, 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor.⁴³ Many Japanese from the coast were interned at the Minidoka Relocation Center in the vicinity of Jerome, Idaho, first arriving on August 10, 1942.⁴⁴

Rev. Taro Goto, who served as pastor of the Japanese Methodist Mission from 1935 to 1941, stepped down at this time and Rev. John B. Cobb, who had served as a missionary in Japan with his wife and was bilingual, was appointed as pastor. During the early days of World War II the number of Japanese people in Spokane grew substantially because the U.S. government had at first established a voluntary program whereby the Japanese in Evacuation Zone 1 (100 miles inland from the coast) could relocate in Spokane and other areas in Washington State that were in Zone 2, or outside the mandatory evacuation area. However, the government deemed that program unsuccessful and established the mandatory evacuation program in 1942 as outlined above.

³⁹ Wilbert, 1982:37.

⁴⁰ Krause, 2006:13.

⁴¹ Wilbert, 1982:40.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Horikoshi, 1967:37. In total, 13, 391 Japanese nationals and Japanese Americans were evacuated from the State of Washington.⁴³

⁴⁴ “Minidoka Relocation Center,” Idaho, *Report to the President: Japanese-American Internment Sites Preservation*, https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/internment/reporta6.htm, accessed June 2022. At its height, the Minidoka housed 9,397 people in 600 buildings. Today six acres of the original 950-acre portion of the developed site are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These same people were first held at the Assembly Center in Puyallup, at the Western State Fair fairgrounds.

The approximately 300 Japanese residents in Spokane were not directly affected by the Executive Order, although as part of Evacuation Zone 2, they had to be interviewed and finger-printed, their movements were restricted, and they were subject to a curfew.⁴⁵ They also had their assets restricted, which also affected the finances of the Grant Street Methodist Church. Japanese institutions were disbanded due to the suspicion of 'all things Japanese,' including the Japanese Association, the Japanese Language School, and ken clubs (prefectures).⁴⁶ Spokane saw a swelling of the Japanese population as residents from the west side of the state relocated to Spokane under the voluntary evacuation program, beginning in spring of 1942, which swelled the local Japanese population to over 1,000 people.⁴⁷ The influx of newcomers changed the complexion of the local Japanese community as well, as newcomers had new attitudes and customs.⁴⁸

By 1945 there were an estimated 2,500 inhabitants of Japanese descent in Spokane that originally came from Washington, Oregon, California and Alaska.⁴⁹ Between 1943 and 1945 Japanese internees from Minidoka were released under certain conditions to work, attend school or join the army and Spokane was the largest nearby city in which they could do this.⁵⁰ The advantage of leaving the camps to do railroad or farm work was that these were considered essential war jobs, which meant that employees qualified for draft exemptions and wartime housing.⁵¹ Internees moved to Spokane because the coastal areas were not yet open. Although many would eventually return to their homes in the coastal areas, many chose to stay.

There was an increase in Japanese-run service businesses to serve this increase in population. The presence of Japanese-run hotels grew from half a dozen at the beginning of the war to 23 in 1946. Japanese-run restaurants, which served both Japanese and Caucasian clientele, increased from about two in 1942 to ten in 1946.⁵² The three to four hand laundries that existed before the war increased to 23 in 1946.⁵³ Other service-oriented businesses sprang up as well.

The agricultural community thrived as well. In Spokane's early years, Italian farmers controlled the produce market. After the war 90% of the produce farms were owned or controlled by the Japanese. Before the war, about 25 Japanese farm families operated

⁴⁵ Jim Zimmer, Mary DeCesare and Michael Dixon, *Injustice at Home: Looking Like the Enemy* (documentary), <https://www.ksps.org/programs/documentaries/injustice-at-home/>, accessed October 2022.

⁴⁶ Wilbert, 1982:41.

⁴⁷ This program failed in March of 1942, after which a mandatory program of mass evacuation occurred. (Krause, 2006:28)

⁴⁸ Wilbert, 1982:41.

⁴⁹ Krause, 2006:2.

⁵⁰ By the end of 1943, 17,000 Japanese nationals and Japanese Americans had left the relocation centers. Krause, 2006:54.

⁵¹ Krause, 2006:49.

⁵² Krause, 2006:77.

⁵³ Ibid.

farms on the outskirts of the city. By 1946 about 55 to 60 Japanese farmers leased or owned small farms in the Spokane area.⁵⁴

In 1952 the McCarran-Walter Immigration and Nationality Act allowed all Asians currently residing in the U.S., including Issei, to become naturalized citizens, while banning further immigration of Asians.

The Post-war Era. After World War II, the Grant Street Methodist Church remained the strongest social and religious institution in the community, despite the formation of a Buddhist Church in 1945. The Japanese could still not purchase and own property outside downtown core and adjacent areas, and the main businesses and occupations were in service industries and labor. They were also still not able to purchase homes outside the informal color lines set by the Spokane Realty Board, a limitation that was shared by Chinese and African Americans.⁵⁵

The U.S. born Nisei assumed greater leadership in the Japanese community in the post-World War II era. One example of this is the 1946 formation of a Spokane chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League (JAPL), which worked for political representation and legal redress.⁵⁶

The total population in Spokane grew during the World War II by 27% to 155,000 in 1946. By 1945 there were 2,500 people of Japanese heritage in Spokane, but by 1946 about 1,200 to 1,500 had returned to the coast. In 1950, the population totaled 1,171.⁵⁷ The Japanese-owned and/or operated businesses in the Trent Alley area were largely vacated by the 1940s.

Transformation & Urban Renewal. The I-90 freeway, which bisected Spokane, separating the northern portion of the city and downtown from the southerly neighborhoods, including East Central, was planned in the late 1950s, with construction completed in the early 1970s. Urban renewal funds were used in part for the destruction of a wide swath of buildings and infrastructure along the path of the East-West freeway, as it was called then.⁵⁸

Spokane lost an estimated 11,000 in population following the construction of I-90, despite its overall growing population, as residents moved to the suburbs.⁵⁹ The downtown business district also faced competition from the new suburban Northtown Mall, constructed in 1955. Urban renewal funds were expected to improve the declining

⁵⁴ Wilbert, 1982:78.

⁵⁵ Krause, 2006:61.

⁵⁶ Wilbert, 1982:41.

⁵⁷ Krause, 2006:2.

⁵⁸ The Grant Street Methodist Church and its parking garage, which was located across the E. 5th Street from the freeway, were not demolished until 1991, however. The site is now a surface parking lot.

⁵⁹ Brandon Block, "Bisected by highways, a Spokane neighborhood shapes what's left," *Crosscut*, August 8, 2022.

downtown in the following ways. A \$10 million dollar bond to be approved by the votes in an initiative in 1962 included building a city hall, police and fire departments, parking areas, landscaping, and a park. Federal urban renewal funds were expected to be used to acquire land and demolish the buildings on Skid Road (the Trent Alley area), relocate displaced persons and businesses, and construct new streets, sewers, and traffic signals.⁶⁰

The Riverfront Development Plans Phase I and Phase II were adopted between 1967 and 1969.⁶¹ A new parking garage (the Parkade), a Japanese Tea Garden, a new air terminal, three new banks, a new J.C. Penneys department store (the largest in the Pacific Northwest), and a new federal building were constructed. A Centennial Committee organized in 1970 planned the 37-acre park to beautify what became the grounds for Expo '74 and is Riverfront Park today. A highlight of the plans was to expose the river – which had previously been obscured by rail lines – for public enjoyment. Buildings removed as part of this redevelopment included the buildings on Havermale Island and in the Trent Alley area.

In 1966 Washington State's Alien Land Law was rescinded. Executive Order 9066 was not revoked until 1979.⁶²

The Highland Park United Methodist Church Congregation

Note that the name of the Japanese Methodist Mission will be used in this nomination until the church bought a permanent facility in 1938, after which became known as the Grant Street Methodist Church. The church changed its name again to the Highland Park United Methodist Church when they moved to their new church and location in 1958.

Introduction. What is today the Highland Park United Methodist Church has been central to the Japanese community's social, cultural and spiritual life in Spokane since the founding of the congregation in 1902. The church has been integral with the Japanese community's history in Spokane for 120 years.

Early History. The Japanese Methodist Mission was founded in 1902, when laymen from the Central Methodist Church in Spokane interested seven young Japanese men in Christianity and started Bible studies and English classes for them.⁶³ It was organized on October 1 under the leadership of the Rev. Genhichi Tsuruta, with these seven charter members.⁶⁴ By 1909 the congregation had 25 young male members, under the leadership of Rev. K. Yoshioka.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ J. William T. Youngs, *The Fair and the Falls, transforming an American environment*. Cheney, WA: Eastern Washington University, 1996:124.

⁶¹ Youngs, 1996:153.

⁶² Krause, 2006:93.

⁶³ Rev. Koga Sumio., (compiled by), *A Centennial Legacy, History of the Japanese Christian Missions in North America, 1877-1977*, Vol. 1. Chicago, IL: Nobart, Inc., 1977:259.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Wilbert, 1982:14.

The young congregation met in several locations in early years. At that time there were approximately 300 to 400 Japanese living in the Spokane area. In 1910, Mrs. John D. Ellis (Mrs. Cordelia J. Ellis), who is considered the “Grandmother” of the church, began to play an important role, along with the Methodist Women’s Home Missionary Society. She began working with the women and children of the congregation, teaching classes on “Americanization” for Japanese adults, including sewing, remodeling, millinery, and cooking.⁶⁶ She also taught kindergarten classes. Mrs. Ellis served as president of the Japanese Mission Board until 1938, when her duties were taken over by Mrs. Alfred D. Butler (Mrs. Zella E. Butler).⁶⁷

By 1912 the Japanese Methodist Mission on Howard Street served as a community center where services were conducted in Japanese and Japanese holidays were celebrated. Adults attended the English language classes and children participated in the kindergarten.⁶⁸ Young people could also attend Japanese language classes. The Epworth League was formed for young people and in 1911 the Epworth League Institute of the Pacific Northwest, representing Washington, Oregon and Idaho, met in Liberty Lake. In 1912 the Japanese Mission Board was formed by the Methodist Churches of Spokane. A Sunday school was organized in 1915 and in 1918 a women’s group was organized.

The 1920s-1930s. By the 1920s the Japanese community in Spokane was firmly established and the Japanese Methodist Mission was the focal point of the community, providing spiritual, social, and even economic support to the Japanese in the area.⁶⁹ By the 1920s and 1930s Japanese Issei were raising families and church activities evolved to support this. Children participated in plays and musical programs and attended Sunday School. The church also had a daily Japanese Language School for the children, which taught not only language skills to the Nisei but also history, culture and values.⁷⁰ The women’s club organized outings and programs for the children. Clubs and social clubs, meetings, parties and dances were organized for the older children as well.⁷¹ The Japanese community also sponsored sports activities, including participation in the Northwest Japanese American League, which was a baseball league.⁷² Other non-church related activities for the children included a judo dojo, established in the 1920s, and a Boy Scout troop made up of Spokane Nisei and sponsored by the American Legion in the 1930s.⁷³ In 1928 an English-speaking Sunday school was organized.⁷⁴

⁶⁶ “Methodists Recall History of Old Japanese Church,” *Spokane Chronicle*, March 20, 1958:10.

⁶⁷ *Sixty-Five Years in Pictures*. Spokane, WA: The Issei Commission on Evangelism, Highland Park Methodist Church, June 1967:83.

⁶⁸ Wilbert, 1982:16.

⁶⁹ Wilbert, 1982:37.

⁷⁰ Wilbert, 1982:38.

⁷¹ Wilbert, 1982:39.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Krause, 2006:20.

⁷⁴ “Guide to the Highland Park United Methodist Church (Spokane, Wash.) Records 1900-1991,” (Finding Aid), Whitworth University Archives, <http://nwda.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv08895>, accessed January 2022.

The Spokane Japanese community's use of the Japanese Methodist Mission as its primary social institution was one of the unique features of Spokane in comparison to other communities on the west coast, many of which had a Buddhist Church and a Japanese Hall. A Buddhist Church would not form in Spokane until after World War II.⁷⁵ Many activities were sponsored by the Japanese Methodist Mission church, but the church also provided meeting space for other activities. For example, a Japanese Language School was located in the church.⁷⁶

Some Japanese families left Spokane for Japan during the Depression years because their businesses could not be sustained, resulting in a decline in the Japanese population to about 385 people.⁷⁷ Nonetheless, the church continued to sponsor a school and activities for young people. The following illustrates activities that continued during the Depression. Mary Oyama was able to report in 1933 that the Mission school had an enrollment of 110 children, taught by eight teachers. Twenty-five junior high school-age students organized an Intermediate Epworth League, of which twenty were enrolled in the Young People's Epworth League, which included high school and college students. They held a fund-raising Halloween carnival in 1932 to pay for eleven delegates to attend the interdenominational Northwest Young People's Christian Conference in Seattle that year. Kindergarten classes also continued. Additional activities included regular meetings of the Women's Club, which sponsored cooking classes and other activities led by Mrs. J. D. Ellis. Ms. Oyama made the point that the Japanese often do not have room in their homes to sponsor gatherings for young people, and in this sense the church functioned as a church and a social and community center.⁷⁸

In the pre-war years Japanese pastors, many of whom had been missionaries in Japan, led the church. The services were primarily in Japanese until about 1935 when Rev. Taro Goto established the Nisei church, which held English language services at a different time than the Issei Japanese language services.⁷⁹ Services for the Nisei included Sunday school and the Epworth and Junior Epworth Leagues. Events featured traditional Japanese dance, music, and flower arrangement. The church additionally had a cemetery association at this time that collected funds for the purchase and upkeep of the Japanese section of the Greenwood Cemetery.⁸⁰

In 1938 the congregation was able to buy and pay for their first permanent home in the former First Swedish Methodist Church at S. Grant Street and E. 5th Avenue (on the southeast corner of the intersection). It became known as the Japanese Community Church or Grant Street Methodist Church. They stayed in this location until 1958, when their new church was constructed at 611 S. Garfield, at S. Garfield Street and E. Hartson

⁷⁵ Krause, 2006:21.

⁷⁶ Krause, 2006:20.

⁷⁷ Reames, *Spokane's Chinatown*.

⁷⁸ On file, Pacific Northwest Protestantism Collection, Highland Park United Methodist Church, Spokane, WA. Whitworth University Archives and Special Collections, accessed October 2022.

⁷⁹ Krause, 2006:18.

⁸⁰ Ibid.



The Japanese Methodist Mission bought the Swedish Methodist Church at 507 E Grant in 1938

Source: Sixty-Five Years in Pictures

Avenue. At that time the church was renamed the Highland Park United Methodist Church.

The 1940s. Mrs. Alfred D. Butler, referred to as the “Mother” of the Japanese Methodist Church, became associated with the Japanese Methodist Mission about 1930 and served as president of the Japanese Mission Board of the Central Methodist Mission for many years. In 1941 Rev. and Mrs. John B. Cobb returned from their work as missionaries in Japan to minister to the Spokane congregation. They would serve the congregation until 1945. Both Mrs. Butler and the Rev. Cobb tried to protect the local Japanese from the prejudices against the Japanese that increased during the war years.

The church continued its numerous activities during World War II, including special services to celebrate holidays, young people’s services, weddings and the like, although the Japanese Language School was discontinued. In 1942 a choir, church school, a youth fellowship program, and a Vacation Bible School were organized. The church also continued to provide space for other organizations to meet, such as the young people’s

Japanese American Citizens Club and the Women's Society and Red Cross First Aid classes.⁸¹

In October 1945 Rev. Taro Goto and Mrs. A.D. Butler made the following report. They noted that Spokane's Japanese population was growing as the internment camps were closed and many came to Spokane while they planned their next steps.⁸² At that time, about 70 people attended Sunday morning services at the church, while about 60 attended afternoon services. They reported that since June 1945, the following activities had been undertaken: a Youth Fellowship, and weekly Bible classes. The church also produced weekly church bulletins written in both English and Japanese.

The church celebrated its 45th anniversary in 1947. In 1949 the Pacific Northwest Conference Woman's Society of Christian Service presented two stained-glass windows, honoring Nisei soldiers who served in World War II, which can be seen in the narthex of the church today. In 1945 the Spokane Buddhist Church formed. The two congregations continued to share activities, which they still do to this day.

The Grant Street Methodist Church remained the primary social and religious organization for the Japanese in Spokane during the war years, when its membership grew to almost 150 people in the inter war years.⁸³ Rev. John Cobb was the pastor from 1939 to mid-1945. At the end of 1945 the church's leadership went to Rev. Taro Goto, who until the evacuation was pastor of the San Francisco Japanese Methodist Church but was held in several relocation centers during the war. The Central Methodist Church was the only church that assisted the Japanese during war.

The fall of 1945 saw the following activities and metrics. There was an increase in the Young People's Church to between 60 and 100 attendees each week; 25 attended the Japanese service.⁸⁴ Overall church attendance grew, with 90 attending weekly English language services and about 40 attending the Japanese language service by the end of 1944. By May of 1945 church reported over 200 members and additionally sponsored a Sunday School Orchestra and Issei choir.⁸⁵

The 1950s-1960s. After the war, leadership of the church community transferred from the first (Issei) to the second (Nisei) generation. In 1950 Rev. Shigeo Shimada became the pastor for the Grant Street Methodist Church. The church celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1952. One of the church's activities to celebrate was to purchase a playground at 5th Avenue and Grant Street in 1950.⁸⁶

⁸¹ This information was provided by Rev. Cobb on February 1, 1942 and is on file, Pacific Northwest Protestantism Collection, Highland Park United Methodist Church, Spokane, WA. Whitworth University Archives and Special Collections, accessed October 2022.

⁸² In the 1945 to 1949 time frame west coast evacuees to the internment camps returned to their homes.

⁸³ Krause, 2006:82.

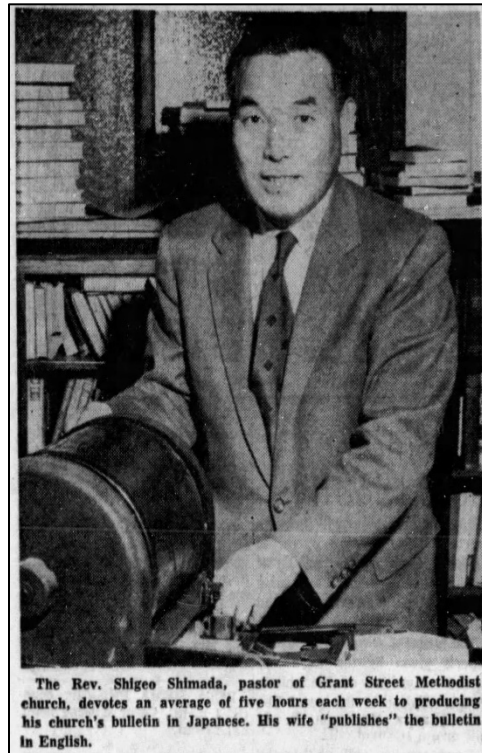
⁸⁴ Krause, 2006:83.

⁸⁵ Krause, 2006:84.

⁸⁶ *Sixty-Five Years in Pictures*, 1967:53.

The church began to host sukiyaki and teriyaki dinners in 1950 for fundraising and public relations purposes.⁸⁷ These events also featured programs of Japanese dances and music and exhibited Japanese flower arrangements to introduce the public to Japanese culture. At this time the dinners were usually attended by about 2,000 people over two evenings.⁸⁸

In general, after resettlement occurred and once the Japanese returned to Spokane and other cities, there was a feeling that there was no need for a segregated church.⁸⁹ Rev. Taro Goto, who served as pastor at the Grant Street Methodist Church from 1934 to 1938 and 1945 to 1950, announced at the 1957 Pacific Japanese Provisional conference that building new churches and integrating the Methodist Church were the big issues facing the church in this era.⁹⁰ The conference consisted of 31 organized churches in six western states. Rev. Goto, who was from San Francisco, had served as the first Japanese leader of the conference since 1949.⁹¹ He announced that the Japanese churches would consolidate with other English-speaking conferences of the Methodist Church by 1964. However, after a time Japanese churches on the west coast began to open their own churches again and as can be seen, the Highland Park United Methodist Church has maintained its church as a Japanese-centric church in the post-World War II years.



Rev. Shigeo Shimada, 1958

In 1958 the new church building and parsonage was erected under the leadership of Rev. Shigeo Shimada. Following the consecration service, the Pacific Japanese Provisional Annual Conference Session was held in Spokane in June 1958. A history of the congregation written in 1967 notes that a dedication service at the church was held on May 16, 1965 to mark the congregation's ownership of the church after repayment of the building loan. At that time, there were 150 Sunday school students, 200 members of the English-speaking division, and 100 members of the Japanese-speaking division.⁹²

⁸⁷ *Sixty-Five Years in Pictures*, 1967:221.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Horikoshi, Y. Casper, "A History of the Japanese Christian Mission and its Meaning," in Rev. Sumio Koga Sumio's *A Centennial Legacy, History of the Japanese Christian Missions in North America, 1877-1977*, Vol. 1. Chicago, IL: Nobart, Inc., 1977: 36.

⁹⁰ "Two Big Issues Face Japanese," *Spokane Chronicle*, April 17, 1956:3

⁹¹ "Japanese Unit to be Absorbed," *Japanese Unit to be Absorbed*, March 12, 1957:6.

⁹² *Sixty-Five Years in Pictures*, 1967:7.



1957 rendering of the church from *The Spokesman-Review*

Today representation and support for the Japanese community in Spokane is shared by a number of organizations, including Spokane's Buddhist Temple. The Hifumi En society promotes the preservation of Japanese American heritage and raises money for scholarships and other causes and activities. They have conducted and posted oral histories of community members on their website: <http://www.hifumien.org/omoide.html>. Hifumi En also features oral histories of Spokane residents that have been undertaken by Densho, which is a state-wide organization.

Spokane hosts the U.S. campus branch of Mukogawa, a women's university based in Nishinomiya, Japan under the auspices of the Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute. Spokane also participates in a sister city program with Nishinomiya. Late congregation member Ed Tsutakawa developed the sister city program and was instrumental in establishing the Spokane Mukogawa campus. There is also a branch of the JACL, the Japanese American Citizens League, in Spokane, which sponsors activities for Japanese members.

Building the Church

A Building Committee made up of Issei and Nisei members of the congregation began meeting in 1955 to discuss building a new education/youth building and a playground and to search for a suitable lot.⁹³ They purchased land across the street from the Grant Street Methodist Church but then learned that the planned I-90 freeway would pass overhead just about two houses from their present lot. They would soon be undertaking a larger project than originally anticipated.

Subsequently, Rev. Shimada appointed a new building committee, with another group of congregation members forming a finance and other committees. At this early date the group anticipated obtaining \$17,500 in donations from the Issei, \$12,500 from the Nisei, and \$15,000 from the Central Methodist Church. Ed Iwata, who became the church's builder, felt that construction could begin on the church in the fall.⁹⁴ The church would eventually purchase the land on which the present buildings and garden are located at a city auction. Plans were developed for the church, the parsonage, a Meditation Center or House of Prayer (the gazebo), and a rock garden. A zone change was sought to accommodate the new campus and the church was incorporated.

On October 30, 1956 the Building Committee met again and reported that they had received comments from the Methodist headquarters architect, but that they preferred architect Frank Toribara's plan, and would respond to headquarters to that effect. At a subsequent meeting of the committee, it was reported that \$25,000 in funding had been procured, contingent on headquarters' approval of the plans.⁹⁵

Ground-breaking for the new church was announced for Easter Sunday, April 29, 1957. It was anticipated that construction costs for the church, parsonage, and land would be \$10,000.⁹⁶

A letter from Building Committee chair Masuo Akiyama to the membership noted that the building foundations were being poured and utilities installed. The letter stressed the on-going importance of fundraising and volunteering to build the new church. "To save more money for our church, a number of Isseis, Niseis, and Sanseis have contributed their help voluntarily for the last four Saturdays and Sundays. They have done everything from tearing down forms, pulling nails out of boards, sorting lumber and cleaning up. As much as \$5,000 or more can be saved by volunteer labor. Can you give a few hours in the evening or some Saturday or Sunday?"⁹⁷

⁹³ Building Committee notes, April 19, 1955. On file, Pacific Northwest Protestantism Collection, Highland Park United Methodist Church, Spokane, WA. Whitworth University Archives and Special Collections, accessed October 2022.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ "Grant Street Church Builds," *The Spokesman Review*, April 20, 1957:7.

⁹⁷ Ibid.



Congregation members join in creating the rock garden in 1958

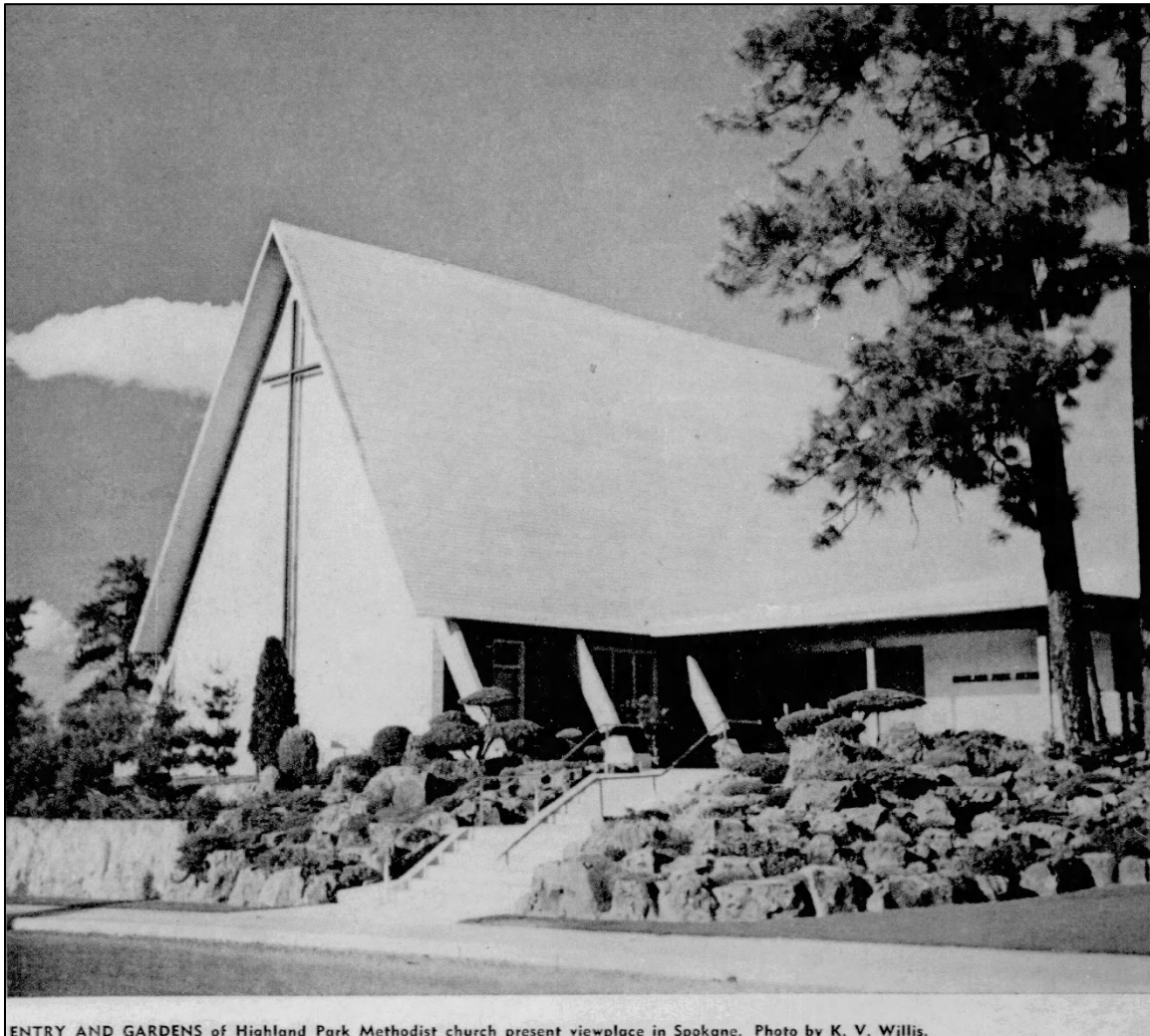
Source: Sixty-Five Years in Pictures, 1967

The Project Team. The ground-breaking for the new church was presided over by Rev. Shigeo Shimada and included Dr. Richard D. Decker, the district superintendent for the Methodist church; Ed Iwata, the contractor; Frank Toribara, the architect; and the co-chairmen of the building committee, Masuo Akiyama and H. Nichifue. A Japanese style rock garden was to be built by Ryotaro Nishikawa, a Japanese landscape gardener, and Tsunazo Edamatwu, a stone mason.⁹⁸ A tribute to Nishikawa is located on the grounds today. The Japanese garden in particular attracted much attention. A newspaper article on the landscape design noted, "Literally the congregation built a church on the rocks, and it promises to be a showplace of the city."⁹⁹

The church building program included sanctuary seating for about 130 people plus the choir, and overflow space for another 130 seats. Twelve classrooms were planned, along with an office and a large kitchen. The narthex contains many tributes to the church's history and special events, in addition to the office.

⁹⁸ "Church Will Get Japanese Garden," *Spokane Chronicle*, November 16, 1957:6.

⁹⁹ "Landscaping at Highland Park Has Simple Beauty," *The Spokesman-Review*, January 1, 1961:65.



ENTRY AND GARDENS of Highland Park Methodist church present viewplace in Spokane. Photo by K. V. Willis.

The completed church and rock garden, ca 1958

Source: Sixty-Five Years in Pictures, 1967

Rev. Shigeo Shimada. Rev. Shigeo Shimada oversaw the planning and building of the Highland Park United Methodist Church. Shimada, who was born in 1906, began preaching in 1933. He spent his first two years in the ministry in Japan. After serving in the Japanese army, he attended the Kwansei Gakvin, School of Theology, and Methodist University in Japan for five years. He then traveled to the U.S. to study at Southern Methodist University for three years, from which he graduated with a bachelor's degree in divinity. He then relocated to attend the Boston University School of Theology, from which he was awarded a master's degree. His first appointment was to the Alameda, California Japanese Methodist Church, where he served beginning in 1939. He preached at the Topaz relocation center in Utah during World War II. In 1945 he went to San Francisco to reopen the Japanese church there. Rev. Shimada came to Spokane in

1950.¹⁰⁰ In 1964 he was the first Japanese Methodist minister elected to office in the Pacific Northwest Methodist Conference.¹⁰¹

Rev. Shimada retired from the Highland Park United Methodist Church in 1971 after serving the church for 21 years.¹⁰² After his retirement he and his wife taught at the Seiwa Women's College in Nishinomiya, Japan for three-and-one-half years. Rev. Shimada would also write two books in retirement, including his own memoirs entitled *A Stone Cried Out*, about his conversion to Christianity. He also compiled the photos for the church's *Sixty-Five Years in Pictures*, published in 1967.¹⁰³ He then retired to Seattle where he died in 1994 at the age of 88.

Architect Frank Y. Toribara. The Highland Park United Methodist Church was designed by Spokane architect Frank Yoshio Toribara, who was a member of the congregation as well. Frank Toribara was born May 15, 1915 in Seattle and attended the University of Washington, from which he graduated in 1935 with a degree in architecture.¹⁰⁴ After graduation he worked as a draftsman for several Seattle firms. He received his architectural license 13 days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and was incarcerated at the Minidoka Japanese internment camp near Jerome, Idaho during World War II.¹⁰⁵ After being released, he and his wife moved to Spokane. He first worked at the architecture firm of Funk, Murray & Johnson, but soon opened his own office (he would collaborate with them at other times as well). One of the projects he was involved in at this time was the design of the 1945 Garland Theater in Spokane, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and on the Spokane Register.¹⁰⁶

Toribara designed a great variety of building types, including churches, schools, medical offices, commercial buildings, multi-family housing, and single-family developments and residences. Another highly visible church designed by Toribara, in addition to the Highland Park United Methodist Church, is the 1948 addition to the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church on W. Augusta Avenue and N. Washington Street, which he designed early in his career. Two of his works are listed in the *Spokane Mid-20th Century Architectural Survey Report*, which documented 53 of Spokane's most outstanding and representative residential, institutional, commercial and industrial buildings that were

¹⁰⁰ "Church Spokane's Gift From City Japanese," *The Spokesman Review*, March 29, 1958:7. Prior to Rev. Shimada's appointment, pastors for the church were Caucasian, often with missionary experience in Japan.

¹⁰¹ "Spokane Ministers Elected to Posts," *The Spokesman Review*, June 15, 1964:5.

¹⁰² "The Highland Park United Methodist Church, Spokane, Washington," *A Centennial Legacy, History of the Japanese Christian Missions in North America, 1877-1977*, Vol. 1. Compiled by Rev. Koga Sumio. Chicago, IL: Nobart, Inc., 1977:260.

¹⁰³ *Sixty-Five Years in Pictures*. Spokane, WA: The Issei Commission on Evangelism, Highland Park Methodist Church, June 1967.

¹⁰⁴ "Toribara, Frank Yoshio (Age 92)," (obit.), June 10, 2007:27.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. Toribara was first held in the Puyallup Assembly facility. He married his wife, Ruth S. Matsumoto, on March 28, 1942.

¹⁰⁶ Note that he is not listed as an architect for this building, but it is mentioned in his obituary. Toribara would have just returned from internment camp when this building was constructed. Al Funk was the architect of record.

constructed at mid-century.¹⁰⁷ These buildings are his own residence, which was built in 1960 and was where he had his offices, and the 1962 Tombari Dental Clinic.¹⁰⁸

Additional projects of note include a 16-story high rise in Anchorage, Alaska, which was to be the tallest building in Alaska (research did not reveal whether this was built). He is also credited with designing the Japanese Pavilion for Expo '74, which was a collaboration between Toribara and Tokyo landscape artist Ken Nakajima.¹⁰⁹ He also designed the houses for a 185-house subdivision in northwest Spokane for Sunset Homes, Inc. in 1951.¹¹⁰ He was slated to design a 60-unit, seven-story apartment building in Browne's Addition; this building is three stories in height today.¹¹¹ Projects range in design from commercial vernacular structures to high style, mid-century modern buildings. An example of a stylish commercial building is the 1948 former Tucker Car Showroom on N. Monroe Street, with its extensive steel-frame, glazed showroom. This building has unfortunately since been altered. Both his own home and the Farline House (SRHP) on lower South Hill are post-and-beam Contemporary houses.¹¹²

Although Toribara was most active as an architect from the 1950s through the 1970s, he retained his practice until his death in Spokane on June 5, 2007.¹¹³

Modern Church Design

While experiments in modern architectural design occurred in the U.S. beginning in the late 1920s in Southern California (Rudolph Schindler and Richard Neutra) and the San Francisco Bay Area (William W. Wurster), modern styles did not come into widespread use in the U.S. until after World War II. Residential design incorporated design and construction efficiencies perfected during the war and then put them in practice in the post-war era designing our suburbs. The design of churches, schools, and shopping centers followed the expanding suburbs with newly adopted modern forms and expressions.¹¹⁴

Developing modern churches that reflected the new age and evolving architectural values became a preoccupation of architects, from the internationally known Frank Lloyd Wright, Eliel Saarinen, and Portland's Pietro Belluschi, to the local and regional architects that built our cities and suburbs. Architects sought new forms to express the new era. The variety of forms they experimented with, evidenced in the list of modern

¹⁰⁷ Aaron Bragg and Diana Painter, *Spokane Mid-20th Century Architectural Survey Report*. Prepared for City of Spokane/Spokane Historic Landmarks Commission. Prepared by helveticka and Painter Preservation, 2017.

¹⁰⁸ He also designed a shopping center for pharmacist William Anthony Tombari.

¹⁰⁹ Dawn Bowers, *Expo '74 World's Fair Spokane, Official Commemorative of the Spokane World Exposition 1974*. Spokane, WA: Expo '74 Corporation, 1974:97.

¹¹⁰ This 280-acre development is bounded by Rowen, Francis, Assembly and A Street.

¹¹¹ This building is located on 4th and Hemlock on Coeur d'Alene Park.

¹¹² This house is located at 2205 E. Girard Place.

¹¹³ Bragg and Painter, 2017:40.

¹¹⁴ Diana J. Painter and Katherine J. Rinehart, *Historic Resource Report for 705 N. Webster Street*. Prepared for Petaluma First Baptist Church. Prepared by Painter Preservation, July 27, 2021:34.

churches in Susan Cerny's *An Architectural Guidebook to San Francisco and the Bay Area*, included modern domes (Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Mill Valley, 1960), A-frames (Hope Lutheran Church, Mario Corbett, Brisbane, California, 1955), pyramidal-shaped churches (Immanuel Lutheran Church, Pietro Belluschi, Silverton, Oregon, 1975-79) and barrel-vaulted churches.

Closer to home, outstanding Contemporary style homes began to be seen in Spokane beginning about 1950.¹¹⁵ Modern church design proliferated in the 1950s as well, and included the design of the Highland Park United Methodist Church.

A windshield survey of Spokane churches by Washington State Architectural Historian Michael Houser identified eleven churches in Spokane that were constructed in the 1940s, including six by architects Whitehouse & Price, who were known for their church design, including St. John's Cathedral, which is a Gothic Revival church. Three were designed in the late 1940s by Funk, Molander & Johnson, with whom Frank Toribara collaborated on occasion. The latter included the lauded 1946 Salem Lutheran Church.

The survey identified 30 churches built in Spokane in the 1950s, in a variety of styles and by a variety of architects, but included seven churches by Eddy, Carlson & James. Most are in the inner suburbs and are modern in style, but only a few could be considered high style in design. Another 22 churches were identified as being constructed in the 1960s, including the 1968 Holy Names Convent by Walker, McGough, Foltz & Lyeria, which won a national AIA award. The 1959 vaulted Westview Congregational Church by Warren Heylman is notable as well.

Architects of the era also adopted other tenets of modernism, such as the use of natural materials and the expression of structure, which could be particularly dramatic on church interiors.¹¹⁶ Belluschi's St. Thomas More Church in Portland, as originally built in 1948, is a case in point, with its wood interiors and modern stained glass. The Highland Park United Methodist Church is an excellent example of a very expressive modern structure, evidenced on both its interiors and exterior.

A-frames, such as seen in the Highland Park United Methodist Church, were a popular modern church form. Belluschi's Church of the Redeemer (Baltimore, MD, 1954-58) is considered one of his finest churches.¹¹⁷ Another lauded and widely imitated A-frame

¹¹⁵ Richard Neutra's International Style house for Dr. Frederick Fischer house was constructed in 1951. Note that Edwin J. Peterson designed some early modern houses, sometimes seen as "Modernistic." One of these houses was the Better Housing Committee Model Home, constructed in 1940. Peterson had actually been awarded the commission as the result of a design competition, which he won first and second place, among a group of ten local architects. Michael Houser, "Edwin J. Peterson, 1907-1991," *Architect & Builder Biographies*. <https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/research-and-technical-preservation-guidance/architect-biographies/bio-for-edwin-j-peterson>, October 2016, accessed October 2022.

¹¹⁶ Susan Dinkelspiel Cerny, Editor, *An Architectural Guidebook to San Francisco and the Bay Area*. Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs Smith, Publisher, 2007:509.

¹¹⁷ Meredith L. Clausen, *Spiritual Space, The Religious Architecture of Pietro Belluschi*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1992:94.

church is Frank Lloyd Wright's First Unitarian Society Meeting House (Shorewood Hills, WI, 1947). Seattle architect Paul Thiry, who is generally credited with introducing European Modernist design to the Seattle area¹¹⁸ and was known in part for his ecclesiastical buildings, said this of A-frame churches: "Isn't all this exactly what the church builder has been looking for all the ages past – greater span, height, lightness, openness, acoustical control, ease of construction, simple methods?"¹¹⁹ A good (and unusual) example of an A-frame church in Spokane is the Lincoln Heights Congregational Church, designed by Douglas Durkoop and built in 1957.¹²⁰

As early as 1944, Dr. John Scotford of New York spoke in Spokane at the Congregational Christian Conference, held in Hillyard, and attended by approximately 200 Washingtonians. While much of Dr. Scotford's address spoke to the interior design of churches and liturgical music, he declared that church design was going to change after World War II: "Revolutionary changes in church architecture will become apparent after the war. . . .", meaning that less focus would be placed on the minister the internal church design would be more informal in character. He noted that the Congregational Churches in the U.S. would be distributing \$6,000,000 after the war to design new churches.¹²¹

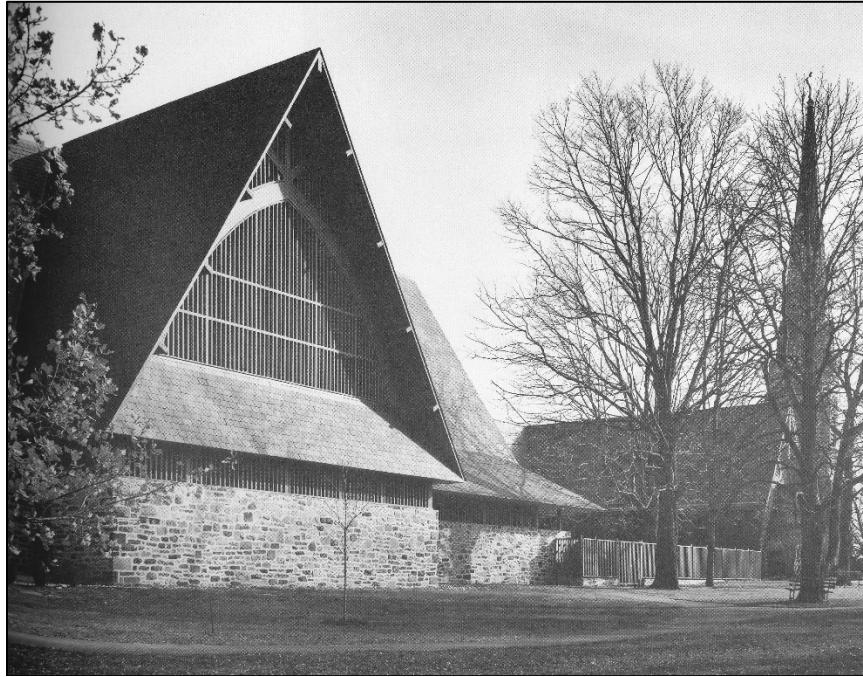
¹¹⁸ Meredith L. Clauson, "Paul Thiry" in *Shaping Seattle Architecture, A Historical Guide to the Architects*, Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, editor. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2014:290.

¹¹⁹ Paul Thiry, quoted in Esley Hamilton and Catie Myers, *Mid-Century Modern Church Survey, Religious Structures 1940-1970* in St. Louis County. 2009-2010:7.

¹²⁰ Michael Houser, "Modern Architecture, Spokane at the Leading Edge" (power point presentation). Olympia, WA: Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, (no date).

¹²¹ Ibid. Thiry was also the author of *Churches and Temples* with R. Bennett and H. Kamphoefner, considered a major work on modern religious architecture in 1953. Clauson, Meredith L., Paul Thiry in *Shaping Seattle Architecture, A Historical Guide to the Architects*, Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, editor. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2014:291.

Church of the Redeemer (Baltimore, MD)



First Unitarian Society Meeting House (Sherman Hills, WI)

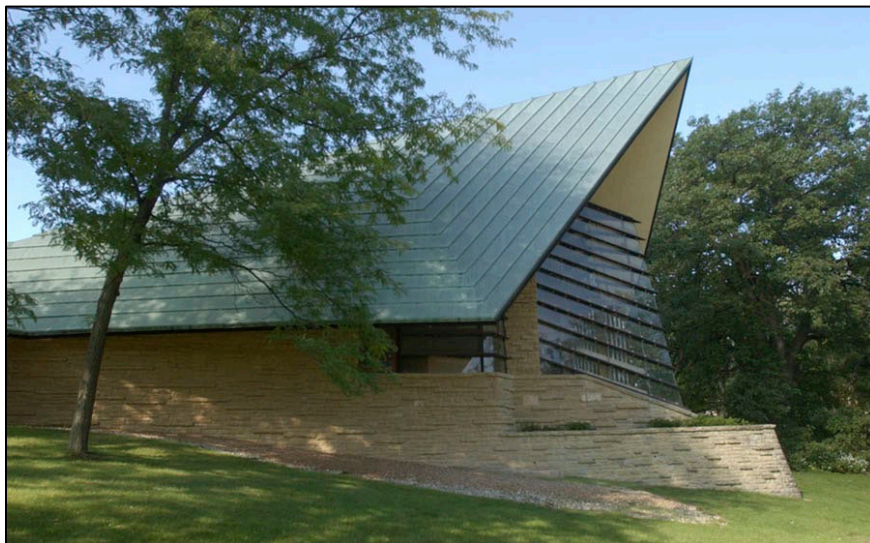


Photo by Mark Hertzberg

As described by architectural historian Dave Weinstein, “. . . since the conclusion of World War II, architects globally were arguing that new churches must have a new style to reflect current needs and functions, new ways of worshipping, and new ways of

understanding God.”¹²² Architectural historian Gretchen Buggeln notes, “Form was . . . a critical marker of modernism; clean and bold lines were better than fussy profiles that hankered after the past.”¹²³ Belluschi himself wrote, “In approaching the problem of designing religious buildings, the contemporary architect is confronted by the difficult problem of creating form[s] appropriate to a modern society without destroying the past.”¹²⁴

Buggeln, in her book, *The Suburban Church, Modernism and Community in Postwar America*, notes that by the 1950s, most churches in the U.S. were built in one of two styles, the traditional “Colonial” church or the “contemporary” church, which she defines as a church in new forms, with new materials, and without extensive ornament: “Many church leaders and architects were increasingly certain . . . that contemporary – and only contemporary – was the appropriate architecture for the postwar church.”¹²⁵ It was felt that the new modern churches should reflect contemporary life and culture.¹²⁶

After World War II congregations flourished and invested in their churches.¹²⁷ In 1953, thirty million people lived in the suburbs in the U.S., and by 1959, it was anticipated that \$950 million would have been spent since World War II on new church buildings.¹²⁸ “Never before or since has so much concerted energy been directed toward American church design.”¹²⁹

¹²² Dave Weinstein, “When God Went Mod,” *The Eichler Network*, <https://www.eichlernetwork.com/article/when-god-went-mod>, accessed October 2022.

¹²³ Gretchen Buggeln, *The Suburban Church, Modernism and Community in Postwar America*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2015:xxiv.

¹²⁴ Meredith L. Clausen, *Spiritual Space, The Religious Architecture of Pietro Belluschi*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1992:189.

¹²⁵ Buggeln, 2015:XV.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Buggeln, 2015:xiii.

¹²⁸ Buggeln, 2015:xxii.

¹²⁹ Buggeln, 2015:1.

Lincoln Heights Congregational Church (Spokane, WA)



Modern Church Design in Spokane

Spokane's venerable architectural firm of Whitehouse & Price were very prolific designers of churches in Spokane and environs in the 1940s.¹³⁰ It would not be until the 1950s, however, that a wide variety of architects began designing modern churches in a range of vocabularies. Salem Lutheran Church by Swedish architect Edwin J. Peterson was startlingly modern in design. Its construction was precipitated by a fire in 1949, which burned some of the church plant. Redesigning and rebuilding the church resumed in 1950.¹³¹ It was published in the national magazine *Architectural Record*, in December

¹³⁰ See for example, "Harold C. Whitehouse Ecclesiastical Architecture," *EWU Digital Commons*, <https://dc.ewu.edu>, accessed October 2022. Whitehouse & Price designed over 2,400 churches and other buildings in the course of their long career together.

¹³¹ Peterson also designed the Ritzville Methodist Church in 1950.

1950.¹³² Peterson grew up in Spokane and studied architecture first at Washington State University and then at Harvard University. Before opening his own practice in Spokane in 1937, he worked for Spokane's Whitehouse & Price, who were known for their church design.

The following sampling of exemplary modern churches in Spokane appear in State Architectural Historian Michael Houser's survey of church buildings in Spokane and the region, beginning with the Salem Lutheran Church and presented in chronological order.¹³³ All are modern churches; the Lincoln Heights Congregational Church is an A-frame.

- Salem Lutheran Church, E.J. Peterson, 1950
- St. Augustine Catholic Church, Funk, Molander & Johnson, 1953¹³⁴
- St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Victor L. Wulff, 1954
- Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, McClure & Adkison, 1956
- Lincoln Heights Congregational Church, Douglas Durkoop, 1957.

The following churches were recognized in the city-sponsored *Spokane Mid-20th Century Architectural Survey Report*, which is a survey of Spokane's mid-century architecture completed in 2017. Fifty-three residential, commercial, institutional and industrial buildings were selected as being among the most outstanding and representative of Spokane's architecture of the era.¹³⁵ Included in this survey are the following churches, in chronological order.¹³⁶ They represent a variety of modern styles.

- St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church, Funk, Murray & Johnson, architects, Harold Balazs, artist, and stained-glass artist Gabriel Loire of Chartres, Parabolic paraboloid, 1961¹³⁷
- Unitarian Church, McClure & Adkison with Moritz Kundig, architects, with artist Harold Balazs, Neo-Expressionist, 1961 (altered)
- First Church of Christ, Scientist, Kenneth W. Brooks, architect, Meisian, 1967
- Temple Beth Shalom, Walker & McGough Architects, Brutalist, 1967
- Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Carroll Martell, architect, Neo-Expressionist, 1969.

¹³² Michael Houser, "Edwin J. Peterson, 1907-1991," *Architect & Builder Biographies*. <https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/research-and-technical-preservation-guidance/architect-biographies/bio-for-edwin-j-peterson>, accessed October 2022.

¹³³ Michael Houser, "Modern Architecture, Spokane at the Leading Edge" (power point presentation). Olympia, WA: Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, (no date).

¹³⁴ Note that Frank Toribara collaborated with Funk, Molander & Johnson at times.

¹³⁵ Aaron Bragg and Diana Painter, *Spokane Mid-20th Century Architectural Survey Report*. Prepared for the City of Spokane/Spokane Historic Landmarks Commission. Prepared by helveticka and Painter Preservation, 2017.

¹³⁶ Buildings in the study that have a religious affiliation include the Garden Crypt Mausoleum, Carl Vantyne, 1957; the Fairmont Sunset Mausoleum, Carl Vantyne, 1965; and the Holy Cross Cemetery and Mausoleum, Carkin & Sherman, 1969.

¹³⁷ These churches are also in the Houser survey. St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church and the First Church of Christ, Scientist are also featured in the City of Spokane's Modern Heritage tour: <https://www.historicspokane.org/HeritageTours/modern/tour/tour.html>, accessed October 2022.

Modern church design was widely accepted after World War II and new churches were in demand, as the suburbs were populated with new subdivisions, schools, churches and shopping centers. The Highland Park United Methodist Church and all the churches listed above demonstrate that urban or inner suburban churches were also being built in modern styles. Churches built in traditional styles were in the minority in Spokane by this era.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Highland Park United Methodist Church in Spokane's East Central neighborhood is significant as representing and embodying the history of the Japanese community in Spokane from the congregation's founding in 1902 to the present (Category E).¹³⁸ During the period in which the new 1958 church was conceived and built, it is also significant for the leadership shown by Rev. Shigeo Shimada. Other important figures in the history of the church, are Mrs. John D. Ellis and Mrs. Alfred D. Butler. Both were members of the Central Methodist Church and served as president of the Japanese Mission Board. Mrs. Ellis was instrumental in founding early church programs that reached out to and established educational programs for Japanese immigrants in the founding years of the church. Mrs. Butler served in the World War II era, which was a challenging era for Spokane's Japanese community, as it absorbed new members during the Evacuation period of World War II and then adjusted again during the post-war years. Their importance to the church is today reflected in the names of the Butler Chapel and Ellis Hall.

The church is also significant as an excellent representation of modern church in Spokane, with its distinctive A-frame design, conceived by architect Frank Y. Toribara and built by builder Ed Iwata (Category C). The formal landscape design, which includes a rock garden, is Japanese in character, designed by garden designer Ryotaro Nishikawa.

¹³⁸ Note that on-going significance for a historic resource is established by capping the period of significance as 50 years ago from the present. "Fifty years ago is used as the closing date for periods of significance where activities begun historically continued to have importance and no more specific date can be defined to end the historic period." National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*. Washington DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, 1997 (1977):42.

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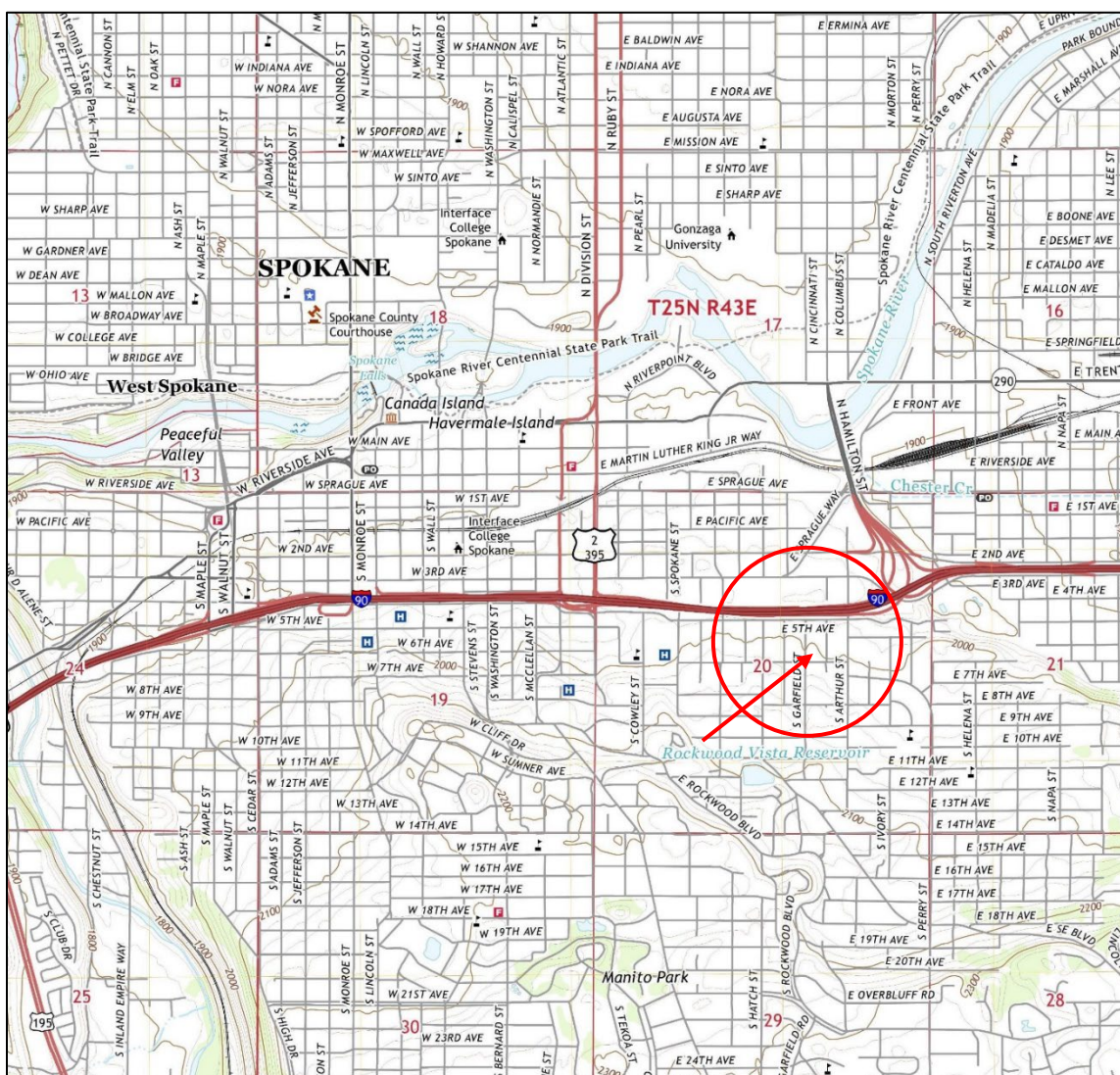
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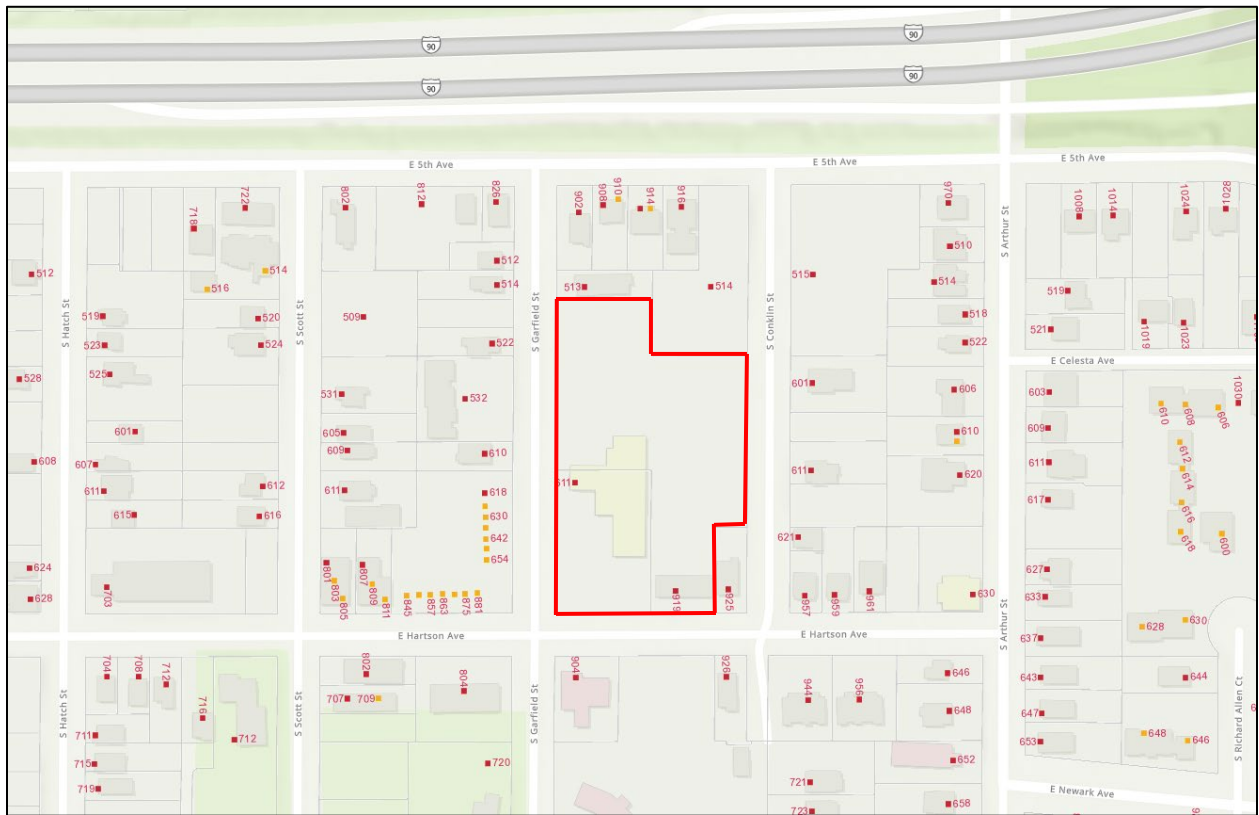
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Figure 1: Regional location map, Spokane NW 7.5 minute quadrangle



Source: USGS

Figure 2: Site parcel map



Source: Spokane County Assessor

Figure 3: Aerial site plan



Source: Google maps



Photo 1: Butler Chapel (Sanctuary), front (west) façade, looking northeast



Photo 2: Entry sign



Photo 3: Beams touching down on south side of sanctuary



Photo 4: Butler Chapel (left), Ellis Hall (right), looking north



Photo 5: Rear view of Ellis Hall and Butler Chapel, looking west



Photo 6: Theater wing (left), Butler Chapel (right), looking east



Photo 7: Sanctuary, looking west toward altar



Photo 8: Sanctuary overflow seating (foreground), stage area (background), looking north



Photo 9: Entry vestibule, display area, historic stained glass windows on wall, looking north



Photo 10: View of Grant Street Church, foreground, in vestibule display



Photo 11: Ellis Hall (fellowship hall), looking south toward kitchen



Photo 12: Classroom doors off Ellis Hall, looking southeast



Photo 13: View of kitchen, looking southwest



Photo 14: Display area in Ellis Hall, showing Hina Dolls



Photo 15: Parsonage, north (rear) and west facades, looking southeast



Photo 16: Shed in parking lot, Parsonage in background, looking southeast



Photo 17: View of grounds, Gazebo in background, looking south



Photo 18: View of grounds, looking south



Photo 19: View of dedication to garden designer



Photo 20: Setting, looking north along S. Garfield Street

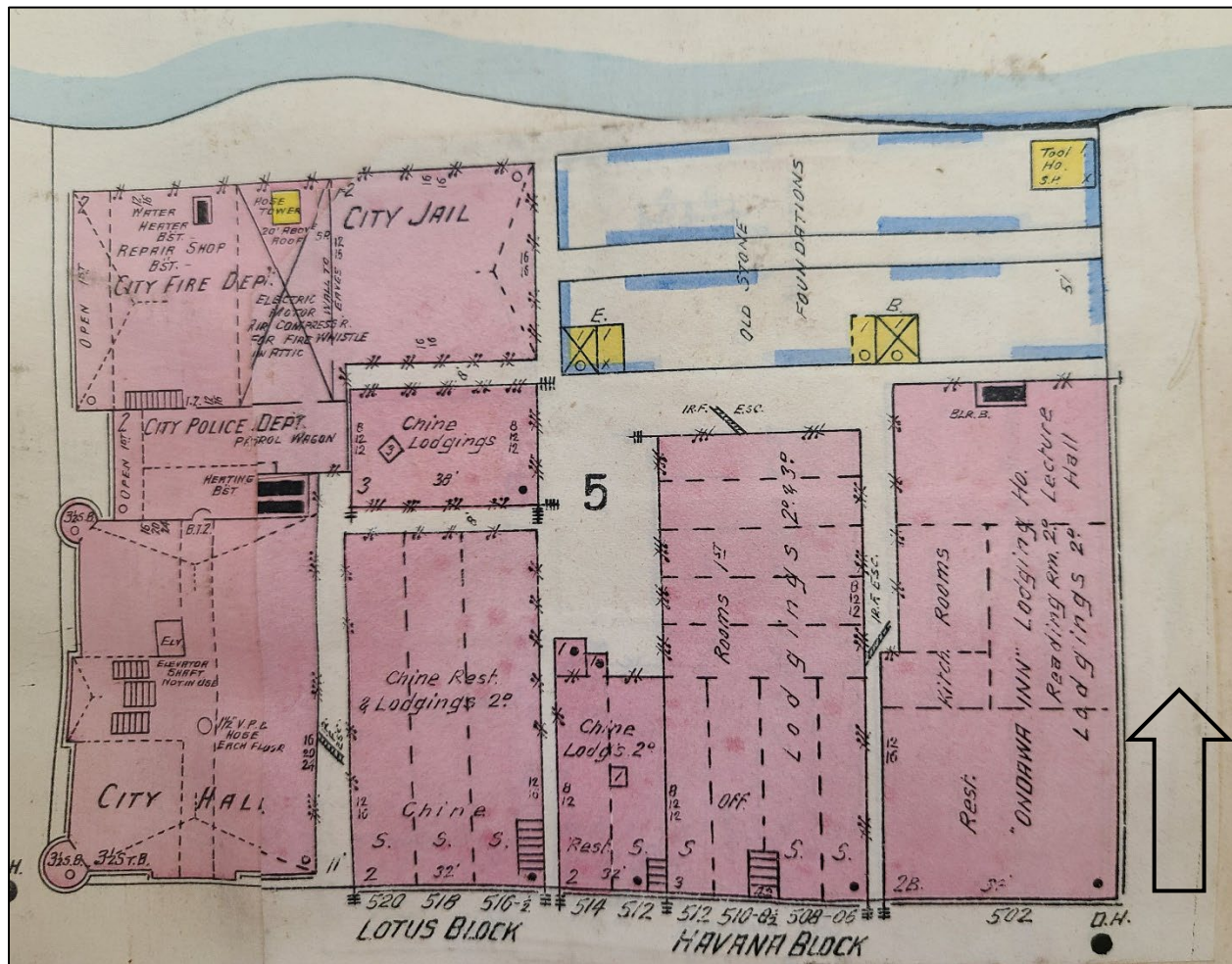


Photo 21: Setting – view toward west along E. Hartson Avenue



Photo 22: Setting – view toward east along E. Hartson Avenue

Figure 4: City Hall and the police and fire departments and city jail in 1905, along with five lodgings buildings (bounded by Howard and Stevens Streets and Front Avenue)



Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance map

432
BERNARD

428

427

FRONT AV.

WASHINGTON

429

MAIN AV.

STEVENS

Howard

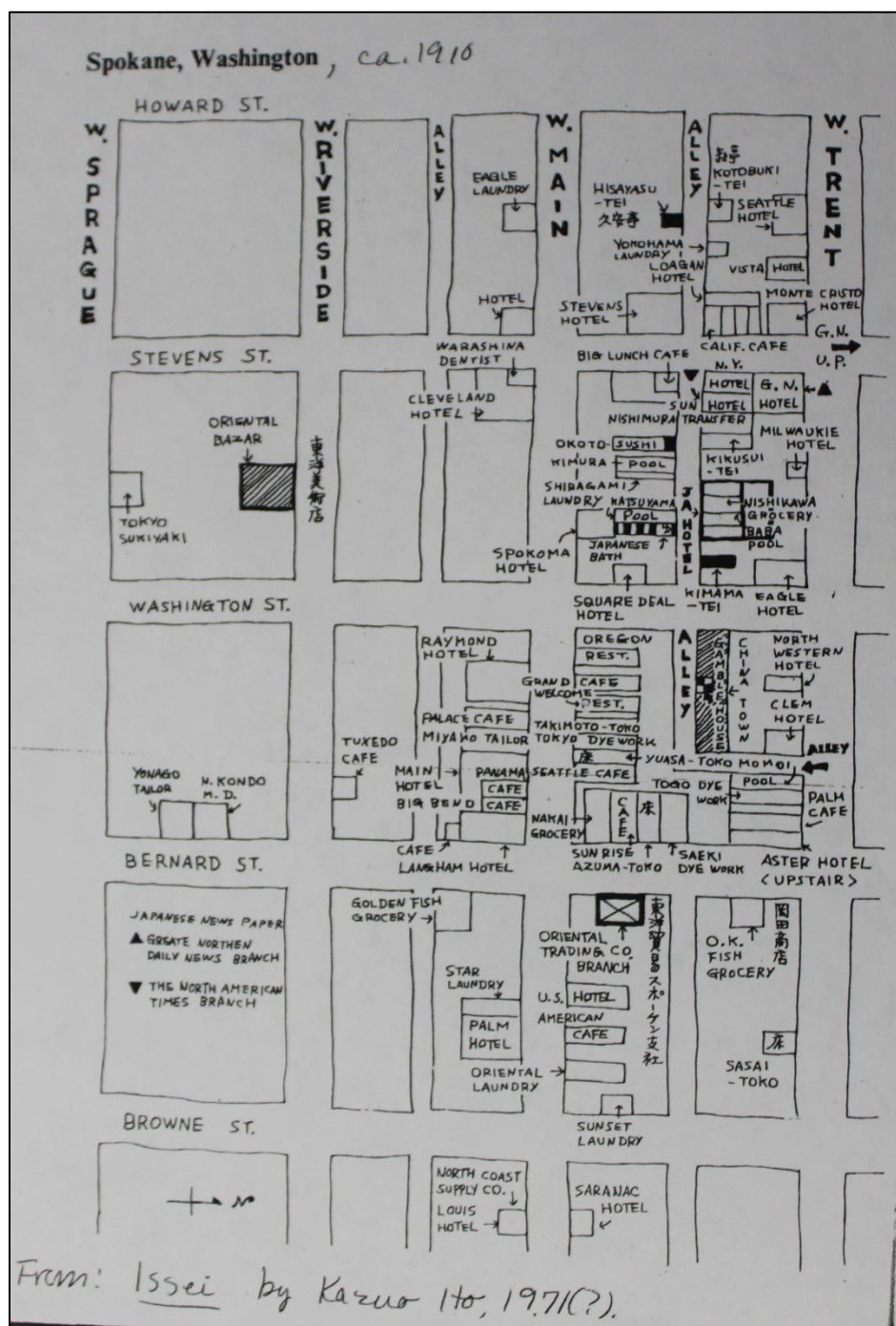
City Hall site

The Volume Three

Scale of feet
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance map

Figure 6: Businesses owned by the Japanese in Spokane ca 1910



Source: Issei by Karuo Ito, ca 1971

Figure 7: Japanese shop from “Spokane Japanese Businessmen and Their Enterprises,”
1914



Photograph by Ryosuke Akashi

Figure 8: Japanese shop from “Spokane Japanese Businessmen and Their Enterprises,”
1914



Photograph by Ryosuke Akashi

Figure 9: The Japanese Mission Church at 512-514 W. Third Avenue picturing women and children

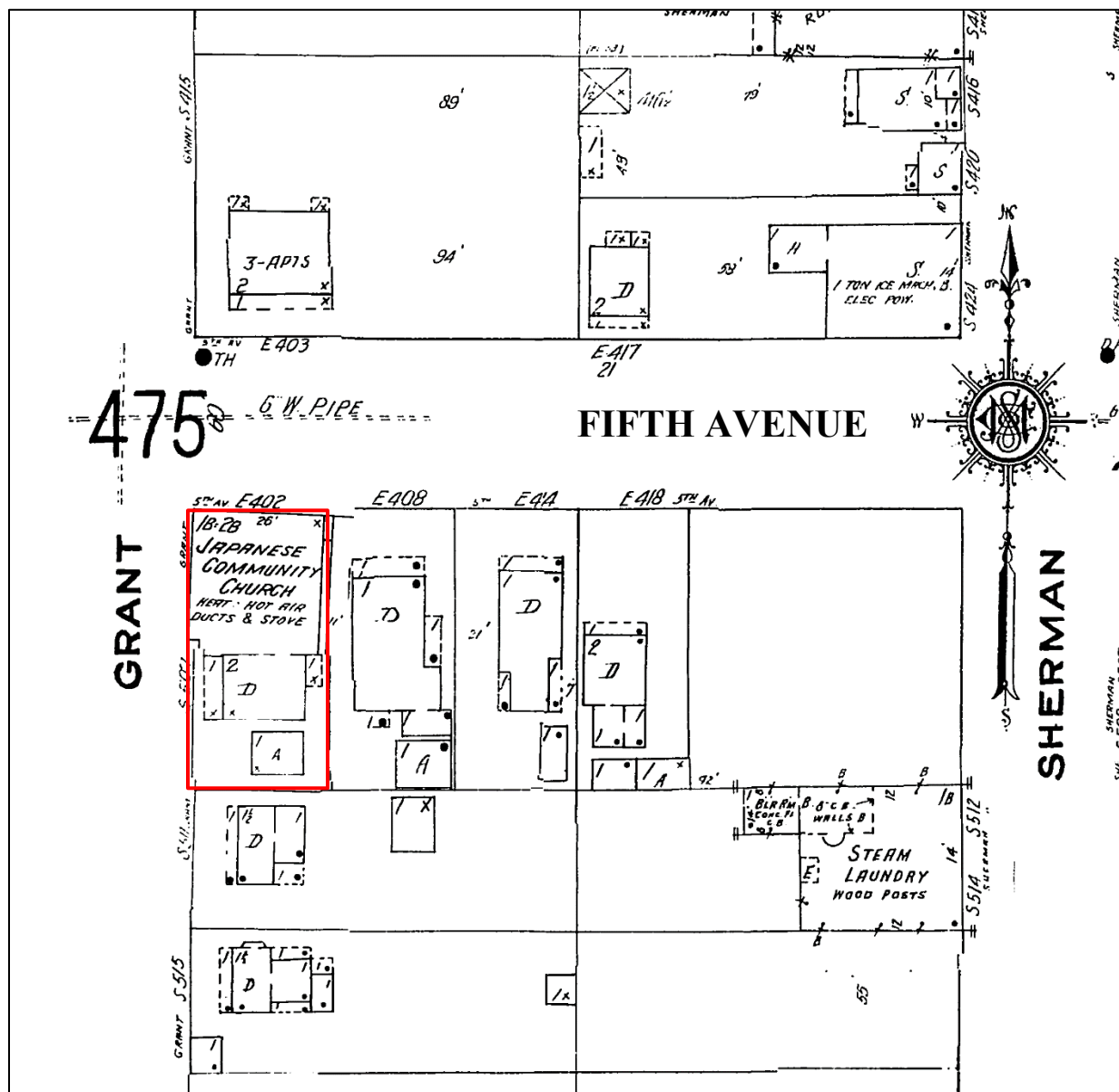


Source: Spokane Public Library

[illegible]

Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance maps

Figure 11: The Grant Street or Japanese Community Church shown in 1950



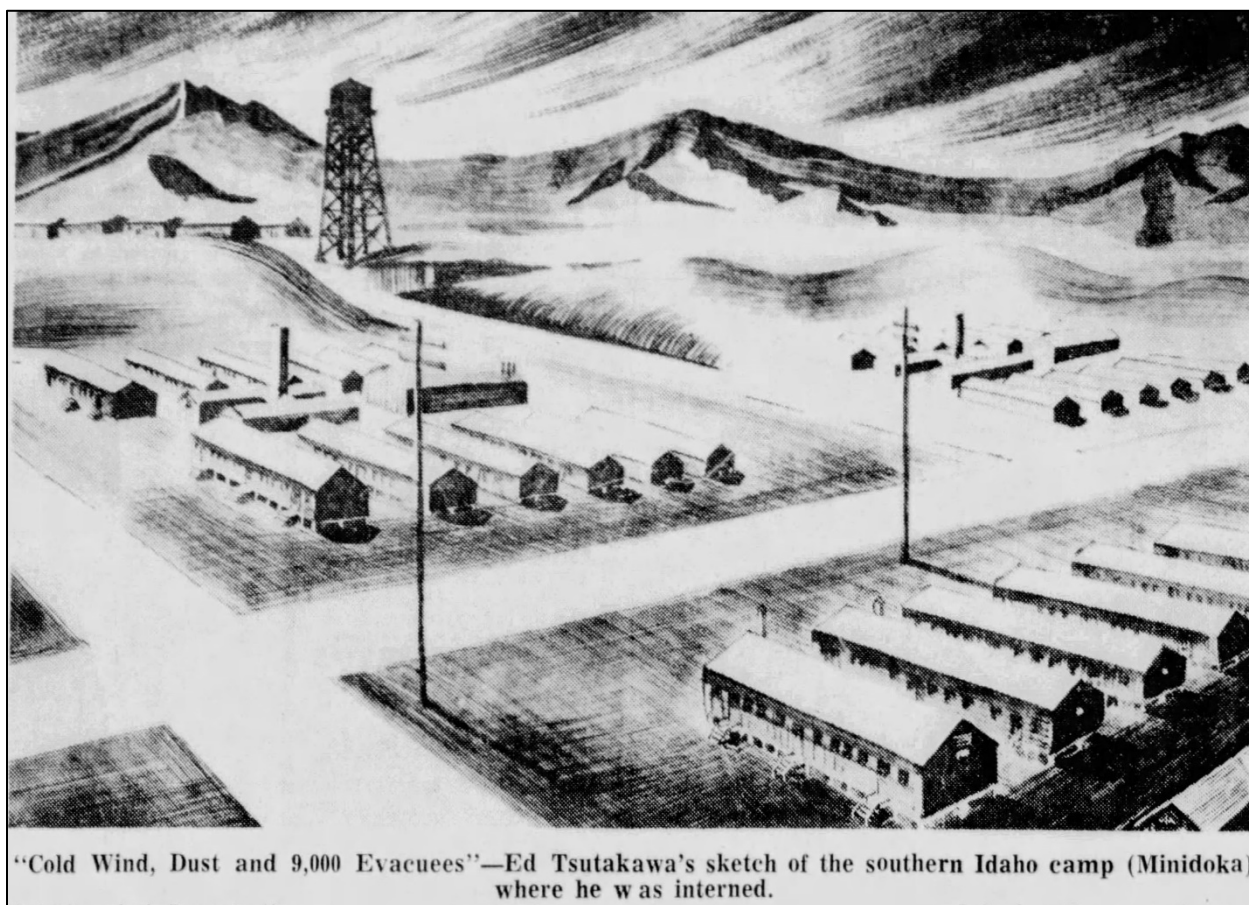
Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance maps

Figure 12: The Highland Park United Methodist Church bought the Swedish Church in 1938



Source: Sixty-Five Years in Pictures

Figure 13: Spokane's Ed Tsutakawa's sketch of the Minidoka Relocation Center



Source: The Spokesman Review, August 19, 1969

Figure 14: Rev. Shigeo Shimada mimeographing church bulletins, 1958



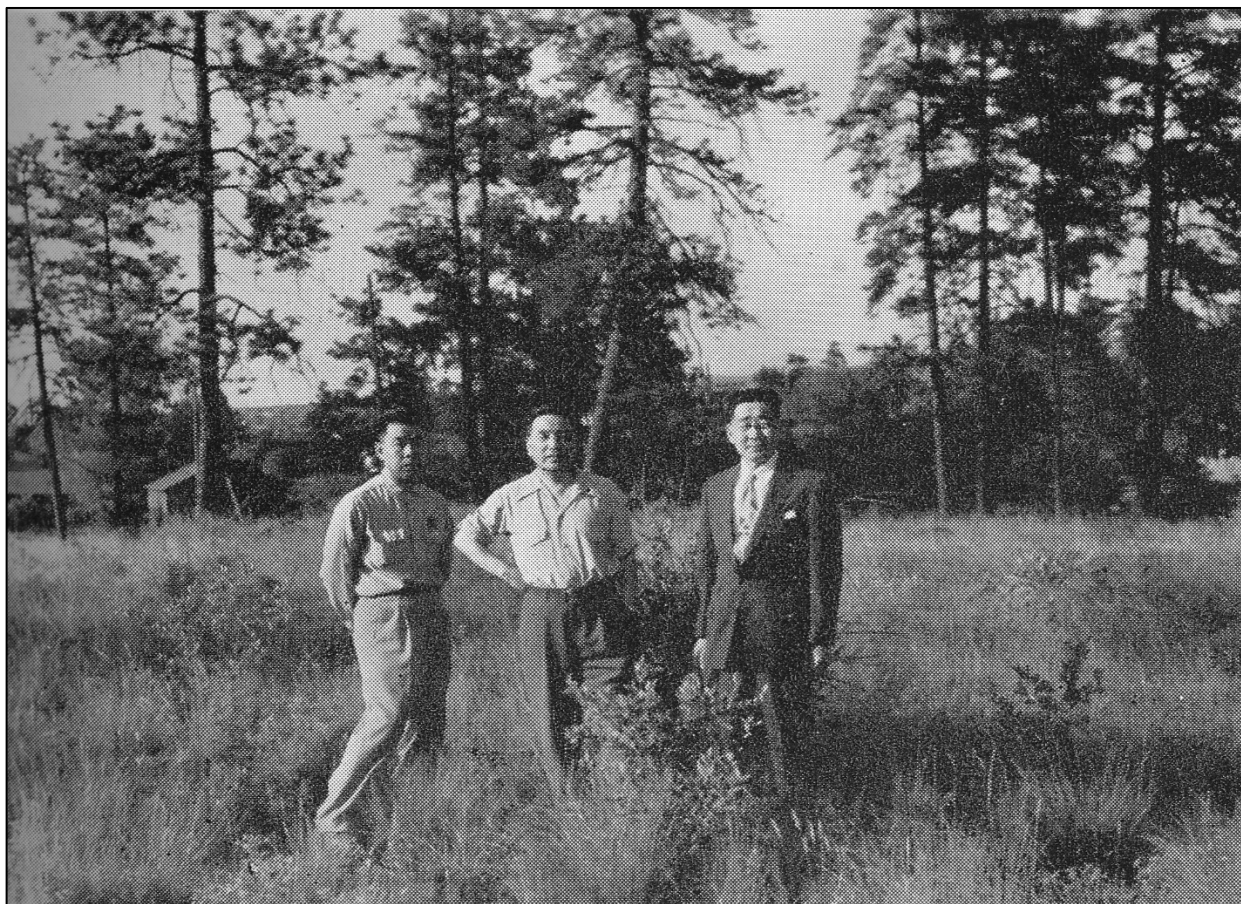
Source: The Spokesman Review, March 29, 1958

Figure 15: A rendering of the new church appeared in the newspaper on April 20, 1957



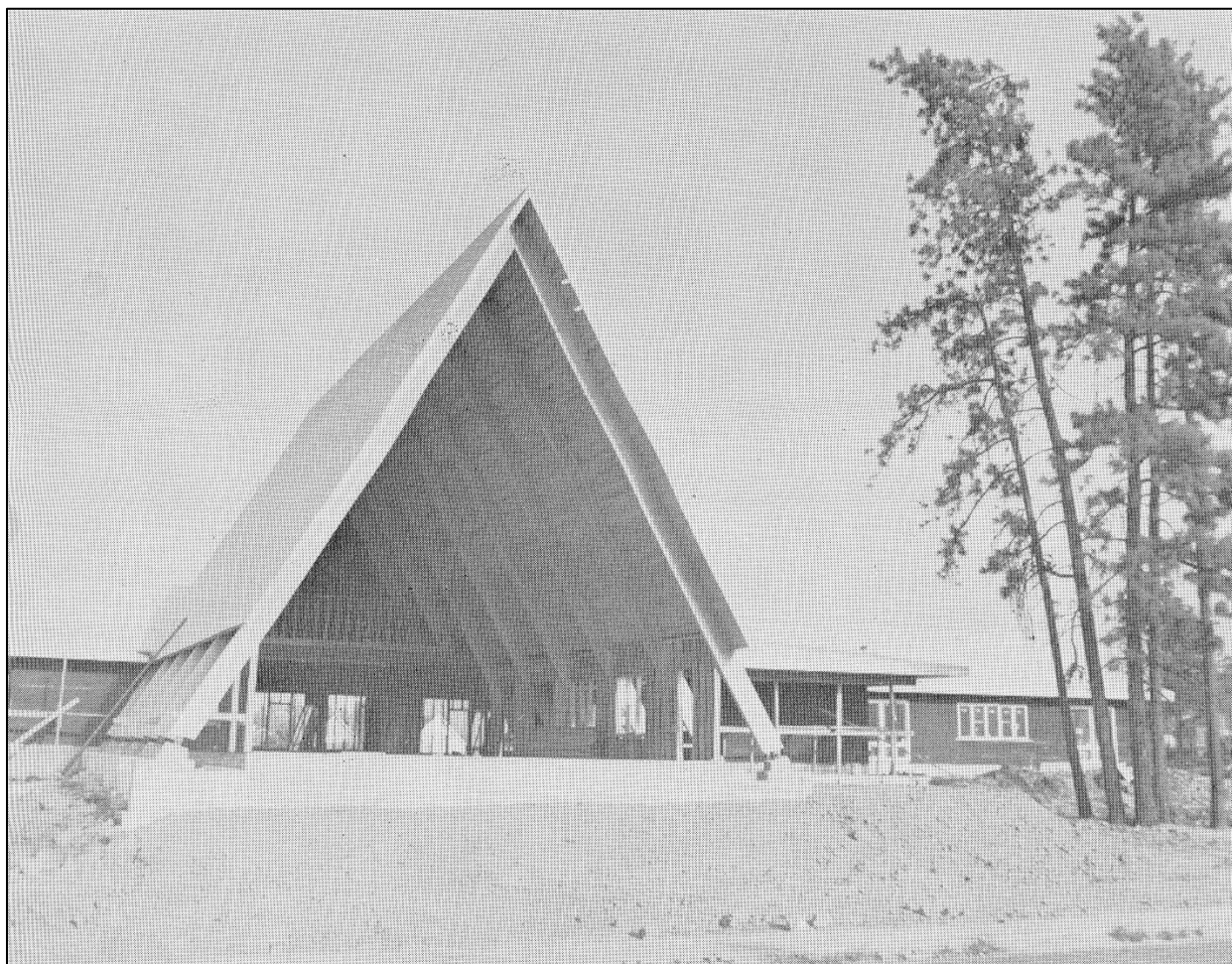
Source: The Spokesman-Review

Figure 16: Groundbreaking in April 1957 showing Frank Toribara (left), Rev. Shimada, and Nisei Building Chairman, Masuo Akiyama (right)



Source: Sixty-Five Years in Pictures

Figure 17: The Highland Park United Methodist Church sanctuary under construction




Source: Sixty-Five Years in Pictures

Figure 18: Newspaper article chronicling construction of new church in 1957



Source: Spokane Daily Chronicle

Figure 19: Highland Park United Methodist Church featured in article on tourism in Spokane in 1961



A Spokane Church in Modern Design
Highland Park Methodist shows functional beauty.

City's Many Churches of Interest to Visitors

Visitors to Spokane during Tourist Appreciation Week will be greatly impressed by the city's fine assortment of churches representing all denominations.

The Chamber of Commerce has asked all citizens to be prepared to make quick recommendations when a visitor to the city asks what Spokane has to offer that would be of interest to a touring guest.

Movie Man Will Appeal Court Ruling

Edward H. Metzgar, operator of the Garland Theater in north Spokane, will appeal to the state Supreme Court from a ruling in Superior Court here, his attorney, Joseph P. Delay, said.

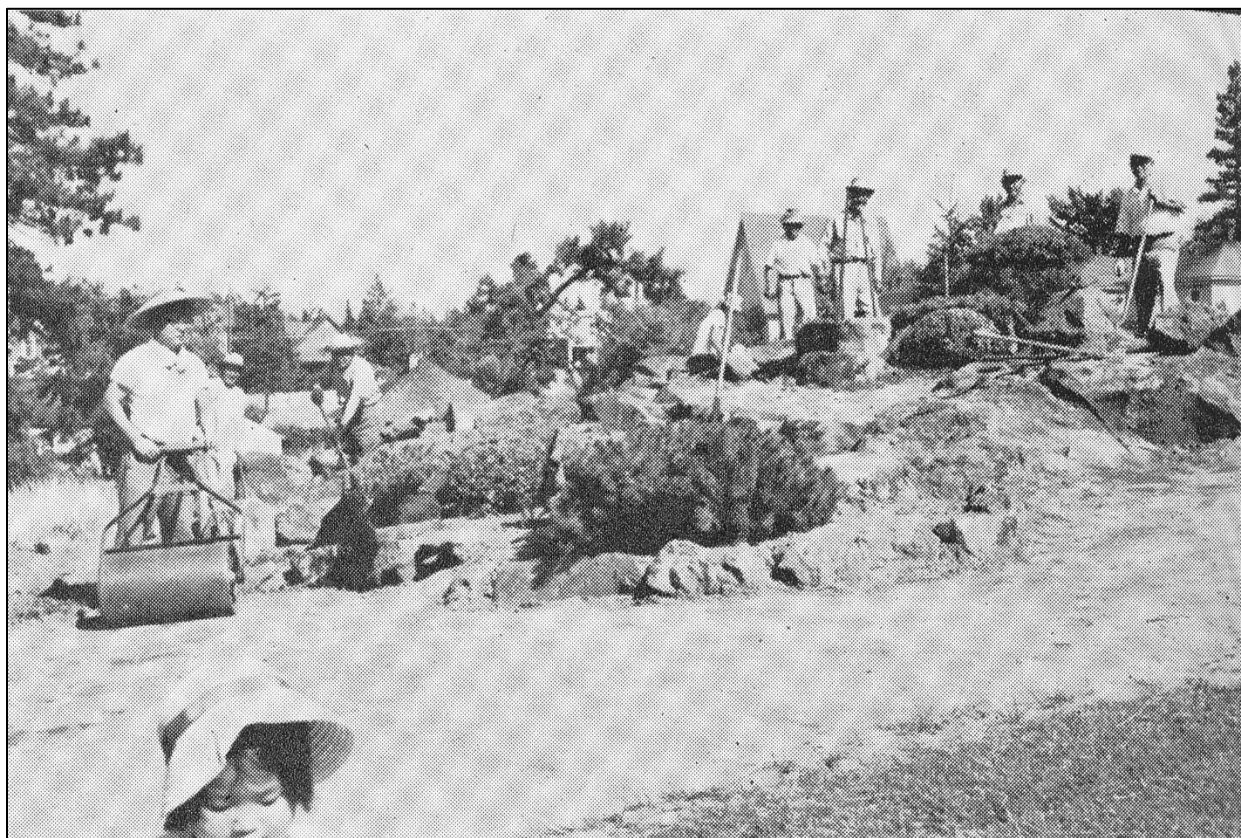
Source: *The Spokesman-Review*, May 10, 1961

Figure 20: Garden construction underway, ca 1958



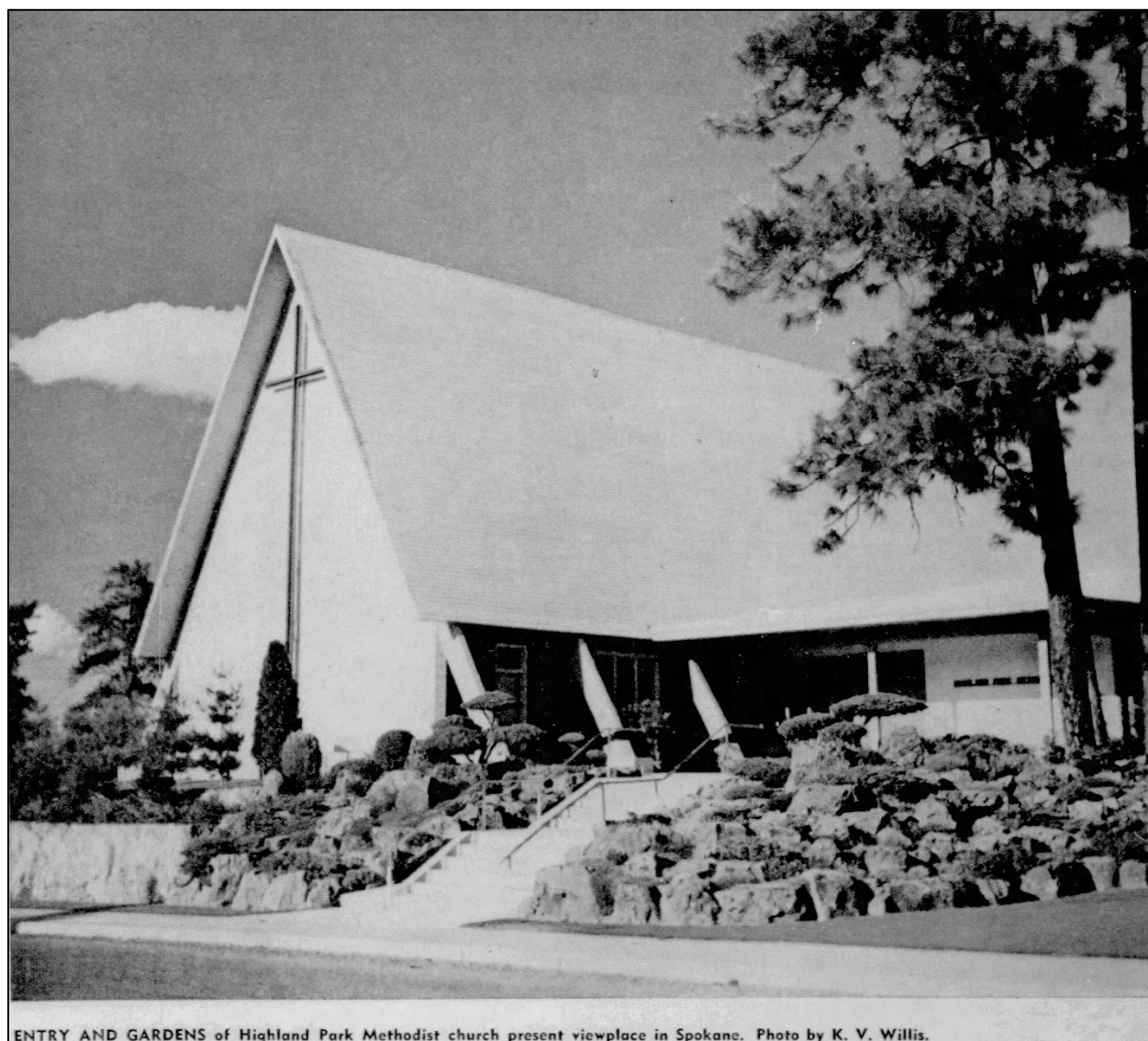
Source: Sixty-Five Years in Pictures, 1967

Figure 21: Garden construction underway, ca 1958



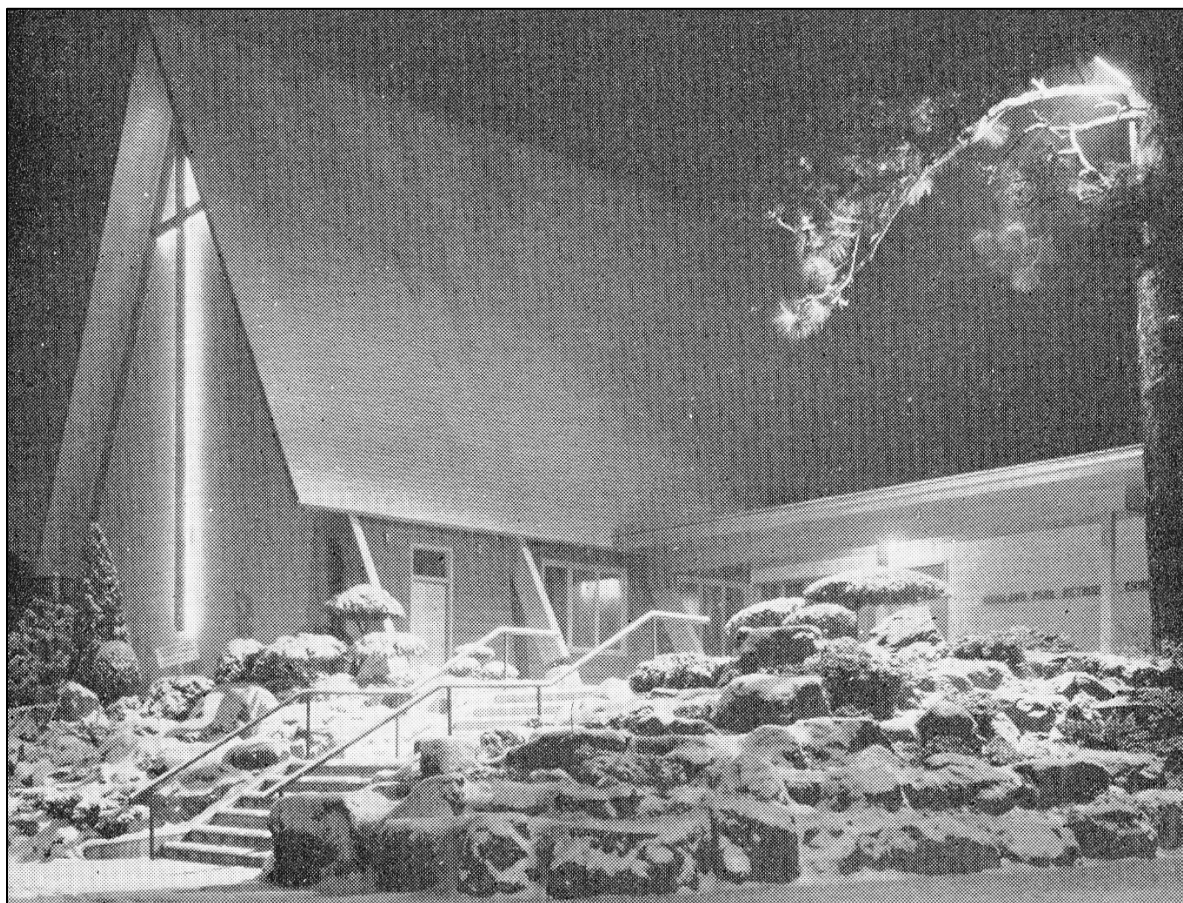
Source: Sixty-Five Years in Pictures, 1967

Figure 22: Garden completed ca 1958



Source: Sixty-Five Years in Pictures, photo by K.V. Willis

Figure 23: Rock garden portrayed at night, ca 1967



Source: Sixty-Five Years in Pictures

Figure 24: Tribute to garden designer Ryotaro Nishikawa



Figure 25: Toribara home, designed by Frank Y. Toribara in 1960



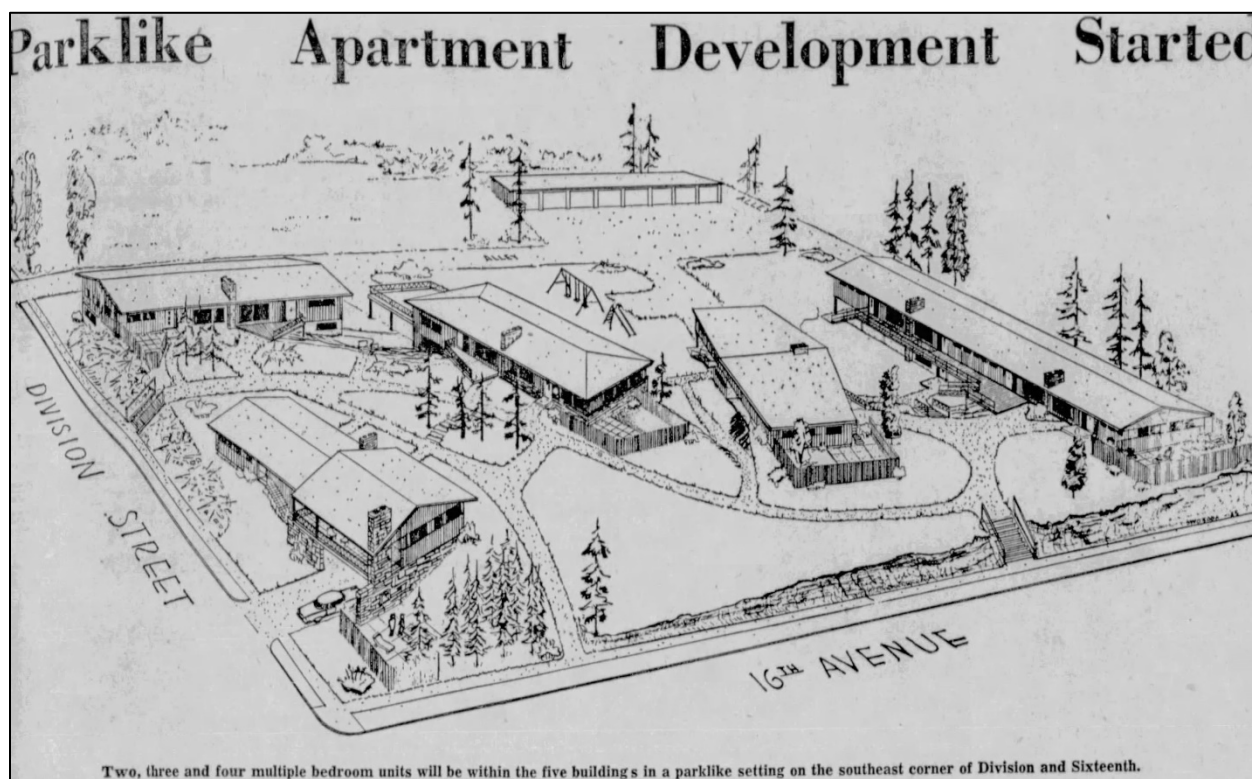
Figure 26: Trinity Greek Orthodox Church additooon, designed by Frank Toribara ca 1947



Figure 27: 1962 Tombari Dental Clinic designed by Frank Y. Toribara in 1962



Figure 28: 1962 apartment complex designed by Frank Y. Toribara



Source: Spokesman Review, July 29, 1956

Figure 29: First Unitarian Society Meeting House, Frank Lloyd Wright, Sherman Hills, Wisconsin, 1947



Photograph by Mark Hetzberg

Figure 30 Church of the Redeemer, Pietroc Beluschi, Baltimore, Maryland, 1948

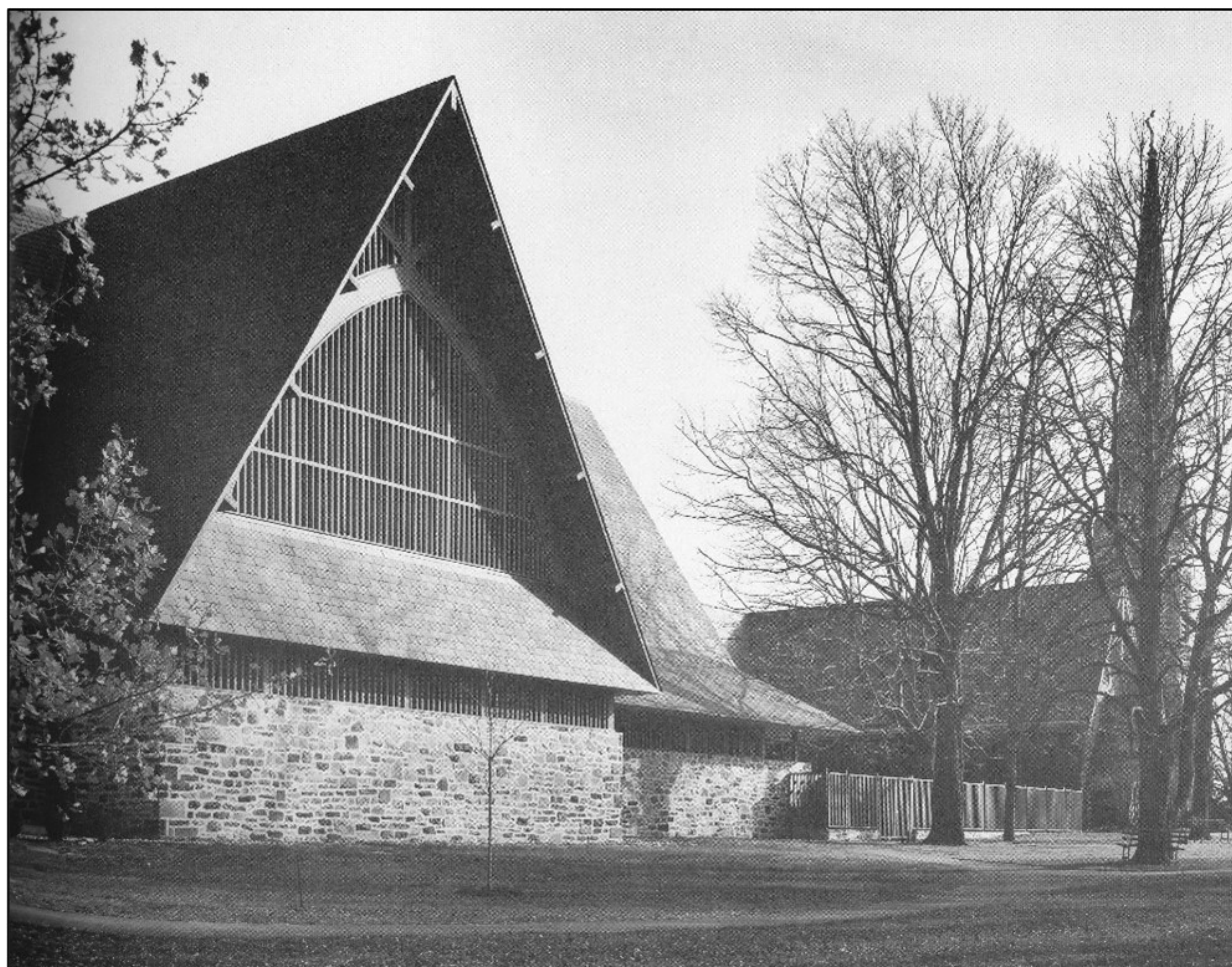
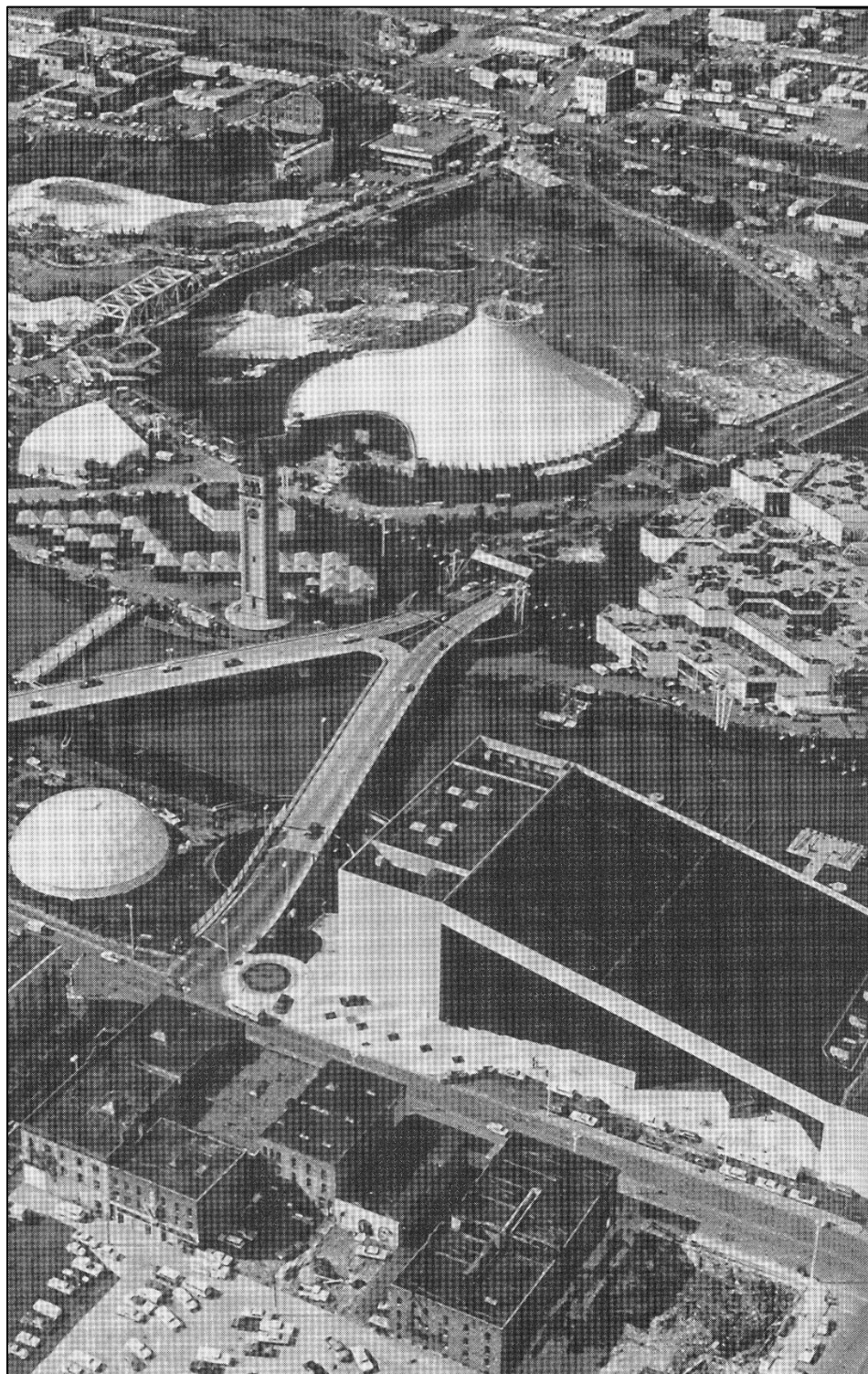


Figure 31: Lincoln Heights Congregational Church, Douglas Durkoop, Spokane, 1957



Source: Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

Figure 32: Photo of the Expo '74 fairgrounds showing the Washington State Pavilion on the lower right



Source: The Fair and the Falls