

# 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: Tollefsen, T.H. and Bessie, House  
And/Or Common Name: 517 W. Sound Avenue

## 2. Location

Street & Number: 517 W Sound Avenue  
City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, Washington 99204  
Parcel Number: 35194.0508

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> residential
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input 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: Steve S. and Sybil A. MacDonald  
Street & Number: 517 W. Sound Avenue  
City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, Washington 99204  
Telephone Number/E-mail: macdonaldsteve2021@gmail.com;  
smacdonald@spokanecity.org

## 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: Historic Property Report – 517 W. Sound Ave

Date: 11-1-2002 ☐ 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: < 1 acre

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary is the extent of the parcel on which the house and garage are located.

Verbal Boundary Justification:

Nominated property includes entire parcel and urban legal description.

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name and Title: Diana J. Painter, PhD, Principal Architectural Historian

Organization: Painter Preservation

Street, City, State, Zip Code: 3518 N C Street, Spokane, Washington 99205

Telephone Number: 707-763-6500

E-mail Address: dianajpainter@gmail.com

**Date Final Nomination Heard : March 19, 2025**

**12. Additional Documentation**

*Additional documentation is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

**13. Signature of Owner(s)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**14. For Official Use Only:**

Date nomination application filed: 2/21/2025

Date of Landmarks Commission Hearing: 3/19/2025

Landmarks Commission decision: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of City Council/Board of County Commissioners' hearing: \_\_\_\_\_

**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**  
**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:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Assistant City Attorney

## SUMMARY STATEMENT

The T.H. and Bessie Tollefsen House at 517 W. Sound Avenue is a one-and-one-half story house with a rectangular footprint and a moderately pitched side gable roof, with front and rear-facing gables and moderate eaves. The eaves for the side gable roof extend to nearly the belly band between the main and upper levels of the house and display exposed rafters. A full-width porch extends across the building frontage, accessed via nine concrete steps enclosed by a two-step stone cheekwalls of the same design as the building foundation and capped by a concrete coping. The porch itself is defined by openings with elliptical-shaped arches and a wood balustrade with rectilinear and diagonal elements. At the upper level is a recessed opening topped by a slightly peaked lintel, below a projecting panel under the gable end supported by corbels and featuring a round-arched, louvered vent. Within the recessed opening is a long, horizontally oriented, three-part window. The house is clad in smooth stucco at the main level and heavily textured, pargeted stucco at the upper level. Additional materials that contribute to the Arts and Crafts character of the house are the clinker brick chimney and the uncoursed mosaic pattern of the stone foundation and the cheekwalls at the front steps. Windows are primarily wood frame and window and door surrounds typically display splayed lintels with a slight peak and slightly tapered side casings. A common treatment is a double-hung window with three or four lights in the upper, shorter frame. The roof is finished in composition shingles. The Craftsman house was constructed by builder James L Morrison beginning in 1910. Morrison lived in the house with his wife and family until he sold it to T.H. and Bessie Tollefsen in 1911.

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

### **Location and Setting**

The house 517 W. Sound Avenue is located within the south-central portion of Spokane's National Register-listed Marycliff-Cliff Park Historic District in the Cliff Cannon neighborhood of Spokane's South Hill. It is approximately 225' west (the fourth house) of the historic district's Cliff Park, on the south side of Sound Avenue, among a row of regularly spaced houses of approximately the same vintage that are set back on their lots. The street itself accommodates two lanes of traffic with parking on each side and mature Maple trees within the planting strip on the curb side of the sidewalk. The block itself is irregular in shape, bounded by W. Sound Avenue on the north; S. Stevens Street on the east; W. 13<sup>th</sup> Street on the south; and S. Wall Street on the west. The block to the immediate north is rectangular in shape with a more uniform development pattern, with the exception of the modern split-entry house and the vacant lot at 508 S Sound across the street from the subject property.

The 2,380 square foot house with a 1,296 square foot basement is sited on a 7,950 square foot lot (0.18 acre) faces north. Nearby is the 4.2-acre Cliff Park, a nearly round park that is best known for its giant basalt outcropping. Edwidge Woldson Park and the Corbin Art Center are four blocks to the north.

### Exterior Description

Front (north) façade. The front façade of the house displays a deep, full-width porch accessed via a central stair made up of nine broad concrete steps and enclosed by stepped cheekwalls of the same material as the stone foundation, with a concrete coping and a metal balustrade on the left side. The front porch, which has wood finishes on the floor and ceiling, displays shallow, elliptical-arched openings across the frontage and on the ends. The openings are spanned by wood balustrades made up of narrow boards placed in rectilinear and 'X' shaped patterns. The posts themselves are tapered and finished in rough-textured stucco.



Photo 1: Front and west side facades

The entry door is placed slightly right (west) of center. It features an oval window with beveled glass and is set within a simple broad surround with a splayed lintel with a slight peak in the center and tapered casings on the sides. This is typical of most door and window surrounds throughout the house. To the left (east) of the entry is a three-part focal window with a broad fixed light in the center, flanked by narrow, one-over-one-light, double-hung windows, the top sash being about half the height of the bottom sash. To the right is a broad, three-over-one-light, double-hung window. Visible below the porch is the rough, uncoursed basalt rock in the mosaic pattern that characterizes the foundation of the house. To each side of the stairs are large, arched openings that are infilled with narrow vertical slats that ventilate the area under the porch.



Photo 2: Front (north) gable

At the upper level of the house is a large, centered, gabled dormer that extends about half the width of the upper level of the house. It has a moderately pitched roof with moderate eaves and exposed rafters. The gable is clad in the unique parge-stucco finish that characterizes the exterior throughout the upper level of the house.<sup>1</sup> In this case, the two layers of stucco are composed of rounded, lozenge-shaped, three dimensional pieces set a

<sup>1</sup> Cyril M. Harris, editor, *Dictionary of Architecture and Construction*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1975: 349. The magnesite stucco finish was introduced before World War I. One popular brand was Kellastone, which was advertised for its weather-proof and elastic qualities. The application is referred to as parge-stucco in this document, defined as ornamental plasterwork in low relief by Harris.

slight curving pattern in a smooth stucco base. Fields within this treatment are separated by decorative false half-timbering.

Centered within the gable is a large, recessed opening within which is a three-part, horizontally oriented window with a large central fixed light flanked by two smaller lights within a vinyl frame. Above the recessed area an overhang is supported by a row of corbels. Below is decorative half-timbering that imitates the appearance of a balcony with sawcut balusters. Under the gable end is a narrow louvered vent within a round-arched opening. Visible on the left side of the roof is a chimney for the endwall chimney on the east façade, which extends through the roof.

*West side façade.* The west side façade displays the main side gable for the house, whose eaves with their exposed rafters extend nearly to the bottom of the upper floor and are supported by knee brackets. The main level is finished in smooth stucco, while the raised foundation has the same rustic, uncoursed stone seen throughout the house, punctuated with two-part sliding windows. At the main level is a nearly centered entry door with two lights in the upper portion, accessed via an open stoop with three concrete steps. To its immediate right is a three-lights-over-one-light, double-hung window with a similar surround as other windows on the house. To the left, toward the front of the house, is a similar three-over-one-light window. The main level of the house is separated from the foundation by a wide bellyband with crown molding and the main level is separated from the upper level by a wide bellyband made up of three narrow boards.

At the upper level, centered under the gable end, is a shallow square bay topped by a shed roof with exposed rafter tails. This bay displays three single light windows and is flanked by three-over-one-light, double-hung windows with vinyl frames. Above this bay, a projecting panel under the gable is supported by corbels and displays the same treatment as seen elsewhere on the upper level of the house, which is decorative false half-timbering infilled with a textured stucco finish. On the right (south) side of this façade the addition to the house can be seen, which encloses the original rear porch. It has a shed roof with one knee bracket and is clad in smooth stucco.

*Rear (south) façade.* On the main floor on the north, rear façade is the enclosed portion of the rear porch which is finished in smooth stucco. On the left side is a four-part opening with a double door of full-height glass flanked by broad sidelights; this ensemble is topped by three transom windows. Like other openings on the house, the sides of the wood surround here are slightly tapered and the top or lintel is splayed. To the right, centered on this façade, is a single door of full-height glass with narrow sidelights, topped by a transom window. To its right is a four-over-one-light window, that is similar to the three evenly spaced windows on the upper level. The roof overhang here is deep, sheltering the deck that extends across the full width of this facade. The deck is enclosed with a wrought iron rail and is accessed from the back yard by six wood steps. The area below the deck is enclosed with wood lattice. The upper gable on this facade is similar to the gable on the front of the house, with a projecting panel supported by corbels, a round-arched louvered vent under the gable end, and the same stucco cladding with false half-

timbering. Visible on the left side, within the side gable portion of the roof, is the clinker brick kitchen chimney.



*Photo 6: Upper east side facade*

*East side façade.* The east side façade closely matches the west side façade in terms of building form and finishes. Differences are as follows. A clinker brick endwall chimney is located toward the front (north end) of this wall. Flanking the chimney at the main level are two horizontally oriented, single light windows aligned with the belly band. To the left (south) is a broad, three-over-one-light, double-hung window, also aligned at the top edge with the belly band, which is a

plain board with crown molding. At the upper level are two, four-over-one-light, double-hung windows, flanked by two diamond shaped windows. The uppermost level, under the gable, displays the same treatment as on the west side façade, with the half timbering describing a half circle with curved elements radiating outwards. The foundation stonework on the east side façade matches the stonework visible on the west and front facades.

### **Interior Description**

*Materials.* Floors are typically hardwood, with a narrow border of dark wood. An exception is the kitchen, whose floor is patterned tile. Walls are lath and plaster. Wainscoting, where it occurs, is a simple board-and-batten design. The ceilings are also plastered; the living and dining rooms display wood boxed beams as well. Fixtures are original or period appropriate. A number of the windows, particularly the single-light windows, have obscure glass that is window film in a diamond pattern. Windows and doors are typically of the same design as exterior windows and doors, with tapered sides and splayed lintels with slight peaks. Interior openings and doorways are various with round arches, flat arches, and flat arches with slight curves at the corners (also referred to in this document as elliptical arches). The opening between the living room and dining room has a pocket door. The original radiators are intact and heat the house.



Main floor. The entry to the house opens onto a central hall that extends through the house to the back (south) wall of the kitchen, with its double entry door. Inside the front door is a small vestibule. To the right, off the central hall, is the office. Two doors on the south wall of the office lead to a closet and a five-step stair to the landing at the door on the west side of the house (this half stair is matched to the south with another half stair from the kitchen to this landing). Traveling south, the next opening has a stair to the second floor, which displays a straight run of twelve steps to a landing and another two steps that terminate at the upper hall. The final room, at the end of the hall, is the kitchen, which is oriented north-south and includes an addition that takes in a former back porch. Within the kitchen is a long, free-standing island. Between the kitchen and dining room is a passageway and north-south counter within a broad opening. In the southeast corner of the kitchen is a mud-room containing a small sink, separated from the rest of the room by a sliding door.

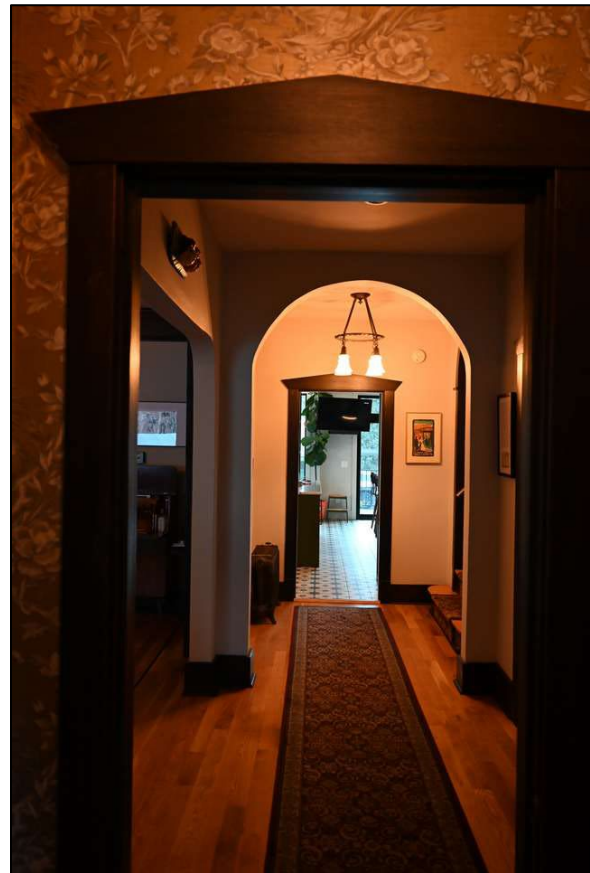


Photo 7: Main hall, looking south

To the left of the entry vestibule, through a broad opening, is the living room. Straight ahead within this room on the east wall is the fireplace, which is finished in stone in an uncoursed, roughly squared pattern.<sup>2</sup> To the left is the window overlooking the front porch. To the right is another broad opening, which leads to the dining room. Straight ahead within the dining room, on the south end, is a broad, built-in buffet with cabinetry. It is flanked by two single-light casement windows. Beyond the window on the right is the rear portion of the kitchen; the window to the left looks over the rear yard. To the left within the dining room is the broad, three-



Photo 11: Dining room, looking south

<sup>2</sup> The American Institute of Architects, *Ramsey/Sleeper Architectural Graphic Standards* (Seventh Edition). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1981:223.



over-one-light window with obscure glass, which looks onto a driveway for the neighboring property to the east .



Photo 13: Balustrade at upper hall

Upper floor. The stair to the upper floor terminates at a short hallway, which displays its original balustrade of square balusters and a square newel post. To the immediate right is a small powder room that overlooks the driveway to the west. The hall winds to the east and then north, towards the upstairs office. At about the center of the north-south portion of the hall is a built-in cabinet to the left, and the entry to the master bedroom to the right. On entering the master bedroom, the two windows straight ahead overlook the

neighbor's driveway to the east. To the south of the master bedroom is a series of small rooms/spaces that contain a shower, a toilet, a vanity area, and two closets. Continuing along the north-south hall, to the left, on the west side of the house, is a second small bedroom. Straight ahead is the upstairs office, which occupies the front gable of the house and includes a long, horizontal, three-part window that overlooks Sound Avenue to the north. A large storage room is on the east side of the office.

Basement. The basement is accessed via the eight steps that extend from the landing at the exterior door on the west façade. Off the stairs is a 'rec room' (as it is called in the 1959 permit) with a second fireplace. Also in the basement is a bedroom with a bathroom, a furnace room, a laundry room, and storerooms.

Changes over time. The 1919 photograph of the house shows the front and side façades to be virtually unchanged today (an exception is the window configuration for the main upper window on the north elevation). In 2023, a 237 square foot addition was constructed on the rear (south side) of the house, that enclosed what had previously been a rear porch (this porch was not original to the house), which extended the kitchen and added a mud room. Other interior changes were also made on the second floor, primarily a reconfiguration of the rooms to the south of the master bedroom which are the master bathroom and closets. The basement rec room was finished in 1959 (permit records).

### Landscaping and Site

The landscaping for the property at 517 W. Sound Avenue is relatively simple. In the front yard, a lawn dominates the main portion of the yard, with a path of pavers from the public sidewalk to the front stairs. Planting beds are outlined with individually placed stones, as are accent points. The shared driveway to the property (between 517 and 521 W. Sound) is also finished with pavers and defines the west side of the front lawn. A driveway belonging to the neighboring property at 511 W. Sound Avenue borders the east side of the subject property. The back yard is also primarily planted in lawn with stone

borders. A wood fence and trellis provides screening from neighboring yards on each side. A flagstone path extends from the back steps of the house to the 2010 one-and-one-half story garage and storage space at the rear of the lot, which has a 576 square foot garage on the ground floor and 240 square feet of space on the second floor.

The house at 517 W. Sound Avenue retains excellent integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and association and is in excellent condition. See p. 12 for a full integrity analysis.

## SUMMARY STATEMENT

The house at 517 W. Sound Avenue, the T.H. and Bessie Toleffsen House, was built by contractor James L. Morrison, who also lived in the house in 1910 and early 1911. The house is a singular expression of the Arts and Crafts style with Tudor Revival elements, seen particularly in its use of natural materials, including the unique pargecast stucco treatment on the upper part of the building, and its combination of design elements that showcased the stone, stucco, and brick of the building. The house is significant and eligible for listing in the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Category C, as possessing high artistic value. Its area of significance is Domestic, single dwelling. Its period of significance is 1910, the year the house was constructed.

### **The Marycliff/Cliff Park Historic District**

The T.H. and Bessie Tollefsen House at 517 W. Sound Avenue is located within the Marycliff/Cliff Park National Register Historic District, in the Cliff Cannon Neighborhood on Spokane's lower South Hill. It is sited directly west of Cliff Park on the east-west Sound Avenue and faces north, overlooking Sound Avenue. The 1910 house was constructed toward the end of Spokane's explosive period of growth from about 1900 to 1912, as were most of the houses in the immediate vicinity of this house.

*The Founding of Spokane.* James N. Glover, who is credited with founding Spokane, platted Spokan Falls, as it was known, in 1878. Spokane became a railroad hub with the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1881, followed by completion of the transcontinental link in 1883. The young city, which also had a fortuitous source of waterpower in Spokane Falls, became a regional center for the mining, timber harvesting, and agricultural industries. Glover would eventually sell half his interest in the 22-block town site to John J. Browne and A. M. Cannon. Their additions, which became known as Browne's Addition and Cannon's Addition, were the first exclusive residential enclaves in the city.<sup>3</sup>

Spokane's first growth spurt occurred in the decade from 1880 to 1890. In 1880 the city's population was 350. By 1890 it was 20,000 within the corporate limits. This made it the largest inland city west of Minneapolis and north of Salt Lake City. The population nearly doubled again by 1900 and then rose to 104,000 by the time of the 1910 census. This paralleled a strong growth trend throughout the Pacific Northwest and spurred the rapid expansion of residential neighborhoods. The Spokane fire of 1889 drew settlers to Spokane, which stimulated the economy and kicked off the city's most prolific period of

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<sup>3</sup> Diana J. Painter, *Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination – Kemp, Charles J. and Maud, House*, May 23, 2022:Section 8 Page 2.

growth – the post-fire years of 1890 to 1912 – which resulted in the patterns seen in the city's urban form today.<sup>4</sup>

*The Clarke-Cooke Company.* The property on which the subject lot is located was originally owned by the Northern Pacific Railway. It was sold to the Clarke-Cook Company, a real estate development firm in Spokane, who had it platted as the Cliff Park residential neighborhood.<sup>5</sup> By 1905 Harl J. Cook and Charles W. Clarke, founders of the Cook-Clarke Company in the 1890s, were boasting about what was now the Resurveyed Cliff Park Addition in the *Spokesman-Review*:

*CLIFF PARK  
Scenic Addition of Spokane*

*We have petitioned the city to grade every street in the addition. It is our intention to have all improvements made at the earliest possible date, so that those contemplating building in the early spring will find the streets graded, [side] walks down, and water in front of their houses as soon as they are completed. If you want a choice lot in the choicest addition to Spokane, select it now and get the benefit of the advance in values which is sure to come.*<sup>6</sup>

The Cliff Park neighborhood was regarded as one of the "up-and-coming" neighborhoods on Spokane's South Hill. Building sites were advertised from \$900 to \$2,000, and most house prices ranged from \$2,500 to \$8,000 to \$14,000, with some of the most desirable sites, like the view lots along Sumner Avenue reaching \$30,000. By the end of 1912, most of the neighborhood had been developed with single-family homes displaying a mix of building forms, sizes, and styles. These included Tudor and Colonial Revival, and French and Spanish Eclectic styles, and both large and more modest dwellings interpreted in the Craftsman tradition.<sup>7</sup>

The Cook-Clarke Company wrote protective covenants to control the architectural development of the Cliff Park neighborhood and attached the covenants to warranty deeds for each lot sold in the area. These included:

- the dwelling house shall cost more than \$2,500 exclusive of all other improvements,

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<sup>4</sup> Donald Meinig, "Spokane and the Inland Empire: Historical Geographic Systems and a Sense of Place," in David H. Stratton's *Spokane and the Inland Empire*, Pullman, WA: Washington State University Press, 1991.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Schmeltzer, "How to Hunt Down House History," *The Spokesman Review*, September 21, 1987:13, 16.

<sup>6</sup> Liinda Yeomans, *Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination – Richard & Jessie Nuzum House*, April 9, 2012:Section 8, Page 2.

<sup>7</sup> Op. cit., Yeomans, 2012:Section 8, Page 3.

- all barns, woodsheds, and outbuildings shall be constructed to conform in architectural and exterior appearance and finish to the said dwelling house,
- said dwelling shall be set in at least 25 feet from front of said lot.<sup>8</sup>



Figure 6: Advertisement for Cliff Park

The protective covenants implemented in the Cliff Park neighborhood illustrated a city-wide trend towards architectural control in the early 20th-century development of residential neighborhoods in Spokane. Other residential neighborhoods in Spokane that initiated protective covenants in the early 1900s include the Manito Park neighborhood, the Cannon Hill Park neighborhood, and the Rockwood neighborhood.<sup>9</sup>

The Cliff Cannon Neighborhood. The Cliff Cannon Neighborhood encompasses Cannon's Addition and Cliff Park, according to the city's profile. The profile notes that Cannon's Addition was named for and originally platted by Anthony McCue Cannon in 1883, and that by the late 1800s, the northern portion had evolved into an elite neighborhood.<sup>10</sup>

Edwidge Woldson Park (previously, Pioneer Park) and the houses along W. Sumner Avenue are among the special features of this area, which is also known for its expansive views. The upper (southern) portion developed around Cliff Park, which is known for the basalt outcropping that is the centerpiece of the park and has been prized for its views since before Spokane's settlement by Euro-Americans. In contrast to the lower portion of the neighborhood, residential development here was more oriented towards middle and upper middle-class residents.

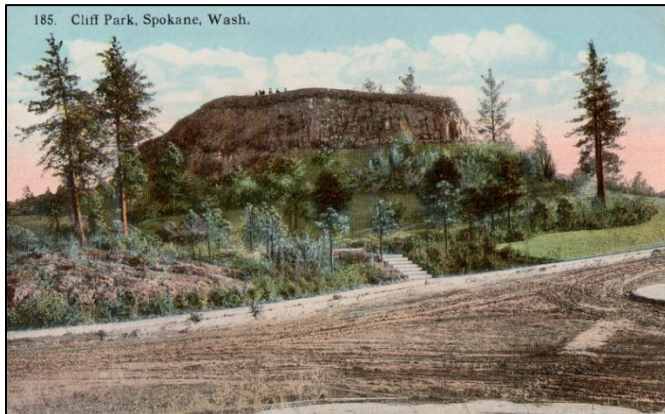
Cliff Park. The land for Cliff Park was donated to the city by real estate developers Harl Cook and Charles Clarke of the Clarke-Cook Company in 1904. The park was formed in 1908, when minimal improvements were made, including steps, paths, benches, and a

<sup>8</sup> Op. cit., Yeomans, 2012:Section 8, Page 2.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> "Cliff Cannon," *Shaping Spokane*,

<https://static.spokanecity.org/documents/shapingspokane/neighborhood-profiles/cliff-cannonneighborhood-profile.pdf>, accessed February 2025:1.



drinking fountain. The design of the park was commented on in the 1908 Spokane Parks Report prepared by the Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, MA. Spokane Park Superintendent John W. Duncan, who was selected by the Olmsteds for this position, authored a report in 1913 that included the recommendations from the 1908 report and further improvements that had been undertaken. At that

time a planting plan had been prepared for Cliff Park.<sup>11</sup> The park itself can be seen from the house at 517 W. Sound Avenue, although the basalt outcropping is obscured today by mature trees.

*The Marycliff/Cliff Park Historic District.* The house at 517 W. Sound Avenue is located within the Marycliff/Cliff Park National Register Historic District, which was nominated to the National Register in 1979. This historic district is within the Cliff Cannon Neighborhood, and centrally located on the east side, and encompassing Edwidge Woldson Park and Cliff Park. The subject house is contributing to the historic district, which means it is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The neighborhood developed in two distinct phases that span the years 1889 to 1941.<sup>12</sup> The Marycliff section was described in 1979 as, “. . . originally designed by Kirtland Kelsey Cutter to resemble English country estates in a scaled down version. Originally, these ‘in city estates’ were built on five to seven acres of land with the basaltic rock found on the land used in the construction of the homes, walls and landscaping.”<sup>13</sup> The upper (southern) portion has been described as having a greater orientation toward the middle class. “On the extreme southern border of the district, the lots are of a standard city lot size of 50’ by 95.5’.” The nomination continues: “On Sound, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, there are many houses designed along the bungalow lines that use the half-timbering as a decorative feature. The carry over of elements of Cutter’s designs adds a note of aesthetic consistency to the district.”<sup>14</sup> This is consistent with the house at 517 W. Sound Avenue, which has a bungalow form and features half-timbering.

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<sup>11</sup> Joan Hockaday, *Greenscapes, Olmsted’s Pacific Northwest*. Pullman, WA: Washington State University Press, 2009:152.

<sup>12</sup> Claire Bishop and Sara Patton, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form, Marycliff/Cliff Park Historic District*, 1979:Section 7, Page 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Op. cit., Bishop, 1979:Section 7, Page 3.

The Marycliff/Cliff Park National Register nomination does not specifically call out all the residences in the district. Rather, it discusses a few examples as they represent a style or building form found in the district. The following description is largely accurate for the house at 517 W. Sound Avenue. With respect to the “Bungaloid,” the nomination notes:

*Homes exhibiting Bungaloid tendencies were the middle class response to the large homes on Sumner and Cliff Drive. . . .these modest homes used decorative features found in the Tudoresque/Jacobethan homes to dress up their houses. These homes also show some of the very nice decorative features commonly associated with bungalows. . . .Following bungaloid lines, the gable is steep with an interesting cross gable or dormers. Rafters, ridge beams and purlins extend beyond the walls and roof. The lower gable usually covers an open porch or screened porch and a large gable covers the main portion of the house. Chimneys are of rubble cobblestone, or rough-faced brick. The exterior finish is generally shingle, brick or stucco.<sup>15</sup>*

The nomination speaks not only to the architectural styles present in the district, but also the residents over time. “The Marycliff/Cliff Park District of Spokane has been the residential area for many prominent and influential people throughout Spokane’s history. From its earliest development in the late 1880’s to the present day, the area’s residents have included the leading citizens of Spokane, bankers, senators, businessmen, mining and lumber entrepreneurs, as well as prominent doctors, lawyers, and architects. As is often the case where the wealthy live, the area rapidly became a showplace of architectural styles; a number of homes having been designed by Spokane’s leading architects.”<sup>16</sup>

### PREVIOUS OWNERS

The property on which the subject lot is located was originally owned by the Northern Pacific Railway. The land was sold to the Clarke-Cook Company of Spokane, who had it platted as the Cliff Park residential neighborhood.<sup>17</sup>

James L. Morrison, an independent building contractor, bought the lot (Cliff Park Resurvey, Block 14, Lot 8) at 517 W. Sound Avenue in 1909 as raw land (he also purchased the adjacent lot addressed as 521 W. Sound today). He built the house in 1910 and he and his wife Mary T. Morrison lived there with their three children until March

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<sup>15</sup> Op. cit., Bishop, 1979:Section 7, Page 4. Note that although the residence at 517 W. Sound Avenue is unique generally fits within the description noted in the nomination, it is a unique house, with its side gables, broad gabled dormers, and unique stucco finish. Note also that this nomination is nearly 50 years old and some of the houses listed as examples of the style have changed.

<sup>16</sup> Op. cit., Bishop, Section 7, Page 1.

<sup>17</sup> Schmeltzer, 1987:13, 16.



1911, when the house was sold to T.H. and Bessie Tollefsen. Mr. Tollefsen was Mary Morrison's brother. T. H. Tollefsen had the sewer and water for the property hooked up in March and April 1910, respectively. In 1915 they sold the property to Rasmus and Marie I. Sollid. Thereafter, the house turned over in ownership numerous times until 1962, when it was purchased by Melvin M. and Joyce L. Schaff. One resident that lived in the house in the late 1980s and 1990s is Michael Schmeltzer, who worked at *The Spokesman-Review* and wrote an article about the house that also included information on researching historic houses in Spokane.<sup>18</sup> The house was most recently purchased in 2021 by the present owners. The following is a list of known owners and the dates that they owned and/or occupied the house.

**List of Previous Owners<sup>19</sup>**

1909 – Land was purchased by James L. and Mary T. Morrison<sup>20</sup>

1910 – House was completed in April of that year

1911 – The house was sold to T.H. and Bessie Tollefsen and the utilities were hooked up

1915 - The house was sold by Tollefsen to Rasmus and Marie I. Sollid

1919 – The house was sold by Tollesen to R. Collins (note discrepancy)

1920 – The house was sold by Sollid to Blanche M. Hagenbuch, et al

1921 – The house was sold by Hagenbuch to Fred A. and Maude Shore

1922 – The house was sold by Shore to Albert F. and Charlotte H. Grazer

1926 – Grazer died

1927 – Ward K. and Cecillia Newcomb were living in the house

1929 – The house was sold by Grazer to Edward D. and Jessie R. Lacy (note discrepancy)

1931 – The house was sold by Lacy to John S. and Mary Clara Anderson

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<sup>18</sup> Schmeltzer, 1987:13, 16. He also wrote about Spokane's architecture and planning history.

<sup>19</sup> Note that this list was compiled primarily from deeds supplied by the Spokane County Assessor. Some information was taken from newspaper articles.

<sup>20</sup> Schmeltzer, 1987:13, 16.

1936 – Mr. and Mrs. James Leonard were living in the house

1938 – Duncan Cowgill was living at the house

1938 – The house was sold by the New World Life Insurance Company to Duncan S. and Lena R. Cowgill

1938 – Bethaline A. Lewis (nee Cowgill) was living at the house with her parents

1949 – Bethaline Lewis, executrix of the estate of Duncan S. Cowgill, sold the house to Douglas R. and Vivienne L. MacIntyre

1951 – The house was sold by MacIntyre to Donald G. and Lucile B. Dewey

1962 – The house was sold by Dewey to Melvin M. and Joyce L. Schaff

1984 – The house was sold by Schaff to Michael C. and Joann Moore

1986 – A real estate open house was held at 517 W. Sound Ave

1987– House was sold to Michael Schmeltzer, who lived there in 1990 (permit records)

2010 - Wendy Hise Corbin owned the house

ca 2017 – Lisa Huffnagel owned the house

2021 – The present owners, Steve and Sybil MacDonald, bought the house.

### ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

#### **The Arts and Crafts Style**

The house at 517 W. Sound Avenue is designed in the Arts and Crafts style, which emerged in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as a counterpoint to the highly ornate Queen Anne style of the late Victorian era. The style was an architectural departure from earlier styles but also made a social statement. It represented – at least symbolically – a return to first principals and simplicity of architectural expression.<sup>21</sup> In contrast to the Queen Anne style, for example, simplicity can be seen in the overall Bungaloid form of this house and Craftsman-era houses like it. Also seen in this house in particular is the way the design aesthetic is conveyed by the use of materials and combination of features and textures that display a new concept of complexity, in contrast to building form and architectural detailing.

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<sup>21</sup> Painter, *Kemp*, 2022:Section 8, Page 8.

This house represents a mix of Craftsman-era or Arts and Crafts and Tudor Revival elements, which was not uncommon in Spokane and is seen in particular in the residential work of the firm of Cutter and Malmgren, particularly in the upper portion of the Marycliff/Cliff Park Historic District.<sup>22</sup> This house, however, has specific design elements and motifs that make it stand out among residences that combine these two styles.

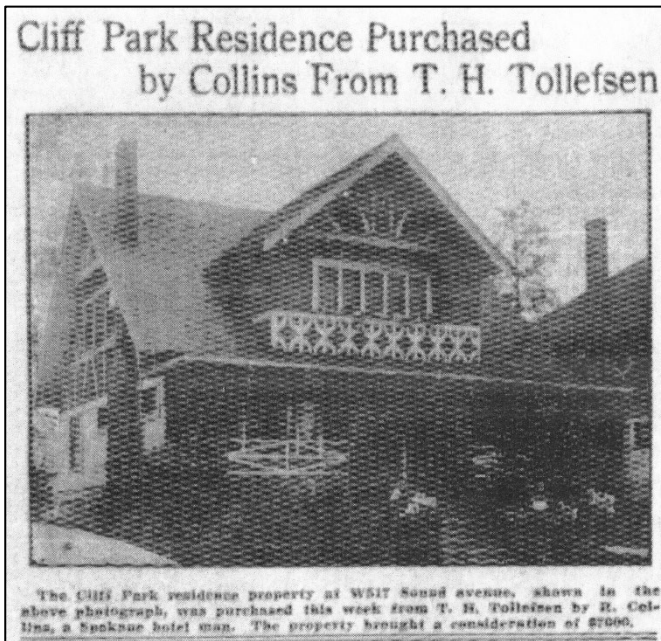


Figure 11: 517 W. Sound Ave in 1919

### The Arts and Crafts Movement.

The Arts and Crafts Movement began in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century England in reaction to the Industrial Revolution, the urbanization that accompanied it, and resulting changes in the workplace and methods. Artists, artisans, architects, philosophers, and social critics banded together in reaction to shoddily-made industrial goods, the degradation inherent in mass production techniques, and widespread social and technological changes that were affecting all of society. The movement gained followers on the east coast of the United States following several key exhibitions in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>

centuries. The movement as interpreted in the design professions was popularized and disseminated in the United States by the writings of Gustav Stickley, a designer, author and publisher best known for his magazine, *The Craftsman* (1901-1916), and embodied in the design of the iconic 1907-09 Gamble House by the brothers Greene and Greene in Pasadena, CA.<sup>23</sup>

The Arts and Crafts house is characterized by philosophical influences of the Arts and Crafts Movement in built form, which includes a return to hand craftsmanship and simplicity, and an expressed relationship to nature and the outdoors. The expression of

<sup>22</sup> Lawrence Kreisman and Glenn Mason, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Pacific Northwest*. Portland, OR: Timber Press, 2007:146. Kreisman attributes the strong influence of the Arts and Crafts aesthetic to the influence of Malmgren, whose house was located in this area.

<sup>23</sup> Cyril M. Harris, *American Architecture, An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998:15.

structure was influenced by the value placed on honesty or authenticity in the built form and the concurrent interest in Japanese architecture.<sup>24</sup> Other ideals relating to hygienic living and the importance of home and family were expressed in the interiors or the interior's relationship to the exterior, including outdoor living rooms and sleeping porches, open interiors with a relationship to the outdoors, cleanly finished details, 'modern' kitchens, and the importance of the fireplace and hearth.<sup>25</sup>

*Attributes of the Arts and Crafts Style.* General characteristics of an Arts and Crafts house often include a horizontal aspect, expressed by deep eaves and shallow-to-moderately pitched roofs; an expression of structure with extended (sometimes false) beam ends, exposed rafter tails, knee braces and specialty brackets, and open structures on exterior features; the use of 'natural,' typically heavily textured materials such as shingles, river rock and clinker brick; and outdoor living areas such as deep front porches, pergolas, and courts. Interiors featured an extensive use of wood. Leaded or beveled glass and complex window compositions embellished the interior as well.<sup>26</sup>

Features of this house that display elements of the Arts and Crafts style include the extensive use of natural materials, including stone, brick and stucco. Details that display the craftsmanship of the home include the deep eaves and exposed rafters that articulate the dominant gable forms. Defined outdoor spaces are limited to the full-width front and rear porches, which are nonetheless important outdoor spaces. The house displays interior materials and features that are indicative of the style as well.

It is not uncommon for Craftsman homes in Spokane to also include Tudor Revival elements that contribute to its overall effect. The Tudor Revival elements that this house incorporates include the false half-timbering and rough stucco finishes, although the stucco finish on the upper level of the house is unique. Other features that characterize a Tudor Revival house that are not seen here include a steeply pitched roof, narrow eave overhangs, large and/or articulated chimneys, and complex window designs or groupings, often with narrow windows. The treatment of these features on the house at 517 W. Sound Avenue affiliates it more strongly with Arts and Crafts influences.

### **Builder James L. Morrison**

The builder of the house was James L. Morrison (1872-1941), who also built the house next door at 521 W Sound Avenue. Morrison (38) had a wife, Mary (32) and three young children when he lived in the house at 517 W. Sound Avenue in 1910. Early in his career

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<sup>24</sup> Note that while house does not illustrate any references to Japanese culture, Jones' Tokyo Apartments in Spokane (no longer extant) called out as a particularly good representation of this influence in Kreisman's *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Pacific Northwest*, 2007:113.

<sup>25</sup> Diana J. Painter, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Nettleton's Addition Historic District. Prepared for the City of Spokane. Prepared by Painter Preservation & Planning, February 2005.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

he listed his profession as a contractor or plasterer in the city directories.<sup>27</sup> In 1917 and 1918 he listed himself as a salesman. Thereafter, he referred to himself as being in real estate.<sup>28</sup> Newspapers articles at the time referred to real estate transactions he was involved in for a variety of property types.

### RESPONSE TO SPOKANE ELIGIBILITY CATEGORIES

The following is an evaluation of the house at 517 W. Sound Avenue according to the possible categories identified for listing in the Spokane Register of Historic Places (Section 17D.100.020 Historic Landmarks and Districts – Designation).

1. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the city, county, state or nation; or

*The house at 517 W. Sound Avenue is part of the residential development that occurred in Spokane's South Hill neighborhoods, particularly in the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, creating the large residential enclaves that exist there today. However, there is nothing particularly significant about the house's historical role in this development; it is one of many houses that were part of it. The area did not play an early role in forming outlying residential neighborhoods, unlike Browne's Addition, nor was it particularly unique in its role in development patterns.*

2. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in the history of the city, county, state or nation; or

*The property at 517 W. Sound Avenue is not known to have been associated with the lives of persons significant in the history of Spokane, Washington State, or the nation. The house has had many owners over time, the first one being the contractor who built it. None have stood out as having made particular contributions to our history.*

3. 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; or

- a. Represents a type, period, or method of construction

*The house at 517 W. Sound Avenue represents the bungalow form, which was most popular in the first three decades of the 20th century, and like most bungalows in the Pacific Northwest, is wood frame construction. These qualities do not necessarily make the house stand out for its association with these criteria. In this sense, it is not unlike a large percentage of the houses in the Cliff Cannon*

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<sup>27</sup> R. L. Polk, Spokane City Directories, 1910-1954.

<sup>28</sup> The last listing found in the city directories is 1932.

*Neighborhood as well as other early 20th century neighborhoods throughout Spokane.*

- b. Represents the work of a master, or  
*The house was not found to be the work of a master. The contractor who built (and likely designed) the house, while incorporating some unique elements, did not continue in this line of work in his career. There is not a body of work that represents his contribution.*
  - c. Possesses high artistic values, or  
*The house at 517 W. Sound Avenue is significant and eligible for listing in the Spokane Register (it is already a contributor to the National Register Historic District) as possessing high artistic values. It is an Arts and Crafts residence with Tudor Revival elements. It additionally incorporates special features that make it stand out among other Craftsman houses of this era and in this area. It does not display all the aspects of a Craftsman bungalow that affiliate it with this style, nor does it incorporate multiple elements of a Tudor Revival house. The way it combines the elements that are present, however, make it unique. These include the side gable form with its dominant front and rear-facing gables; decorative false half-timbering that enhances the building features; and extensive use of highly textured natural materials, especially the unique pargeted stucco finish at the upper level.*
  - d. Represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.  
*This criterion is intended for historic districts of largely vernacular buildings, where none particularly stand out as individually eligible, but that collectively represent a time, place, or other signifying factor.*
- 4. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history; or  
*This criterion typically focuses on archaeological resources and is not relevant to this nomination.*
  - 5. A property that 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.  
*This criterion typically focuses on resources that are not eligible under the traditional built environment categories of 1 through 3 and is not directly relevant to this nomination.*

In addition to meeting one or more of the above categories, a property must also possess integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship and/or association to be considered

eligible for listing in the Spokane Register. The following is a response to these aspects of integrity for the house at 517 W Sound Avenue.

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

*The property is sited in its original location.*

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

*The house, which has excellent integrity, easily conveys the reasons for its significance. The design of the front and side facades are virtually unchanged; an addition is located on the rear where a back porch was formerly located. It follows the same form as the earlier porch. The house conveys a unique and balanced combination of elements, including its form, materials, and stylistic elements, that project its unusual design aesthetic.*

**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 materials of the house are intact, including the pargeted stucco finish on the upper level of the house, the smooth stucco on the main level, the stone foundation, and clinker brick chimneys. Most of the windows are wood frame, as they were originally, although some have been replaced with vinyl units over time.*

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

*The workmanship displayed on the building is intact, including the unique stucco treatment on the upper level. Most windows are also intact, which means that their workmanship is original as well. The foundation is intact and conveys its original workmanship.*

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

*The house at 517 W. Sound Avenue retains excellent design integrity, conveying its association between its historic use and appearance and its use today as a single-family house in the Marycliff/Cliff Park National Register Historic District.*

#### SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The house at 517 W. Sound Avenue is significant under Category C for its architecture, as possessing high artistic values. The house is an excellent example of the Arts and Crafts style with Tudor Revival style influences that also display some unique qualities, particularly in the nature of its materials and design, and the way the design elements are combined to convey the house's design significance. In addition to meeting this criterion



for individual listing in the Spokane Register of Historic Places, the house is listed in the National Register of Historic Places by virtue of it being a contributor to the Marycliff/Cliff Park National Register Historic District.

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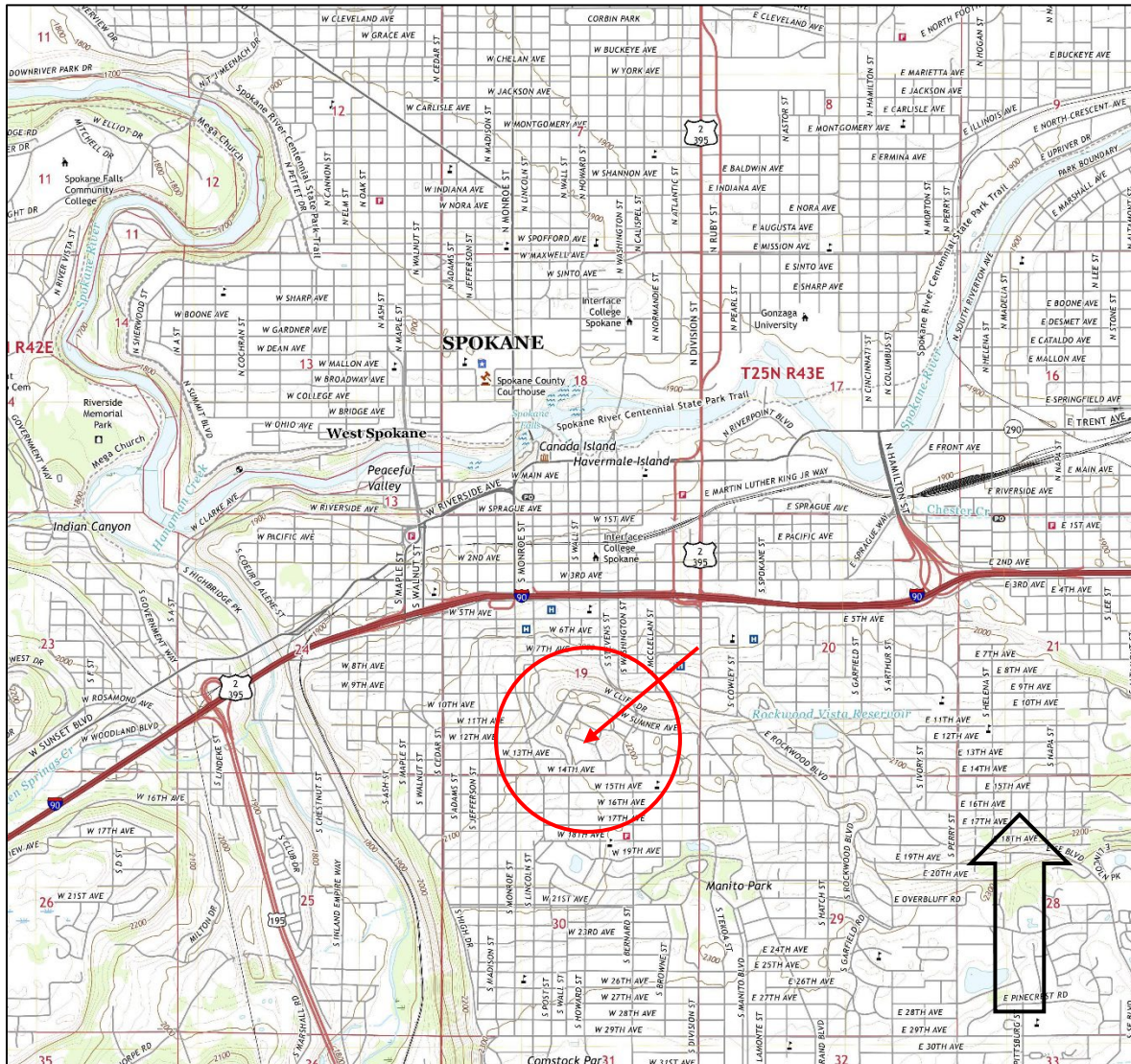
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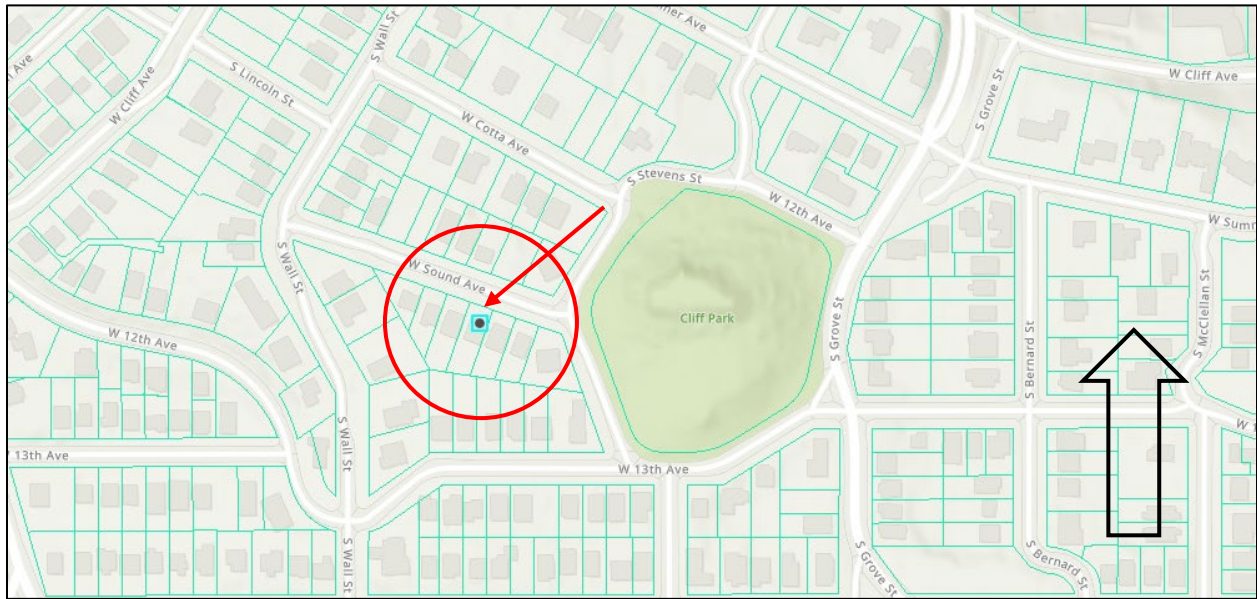
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Figure 1: Site location map



Source: Spokane NW 7.5 minute quadrangle

**Figure 2: Site parcel map**



*Source: Spokane County Assessor*

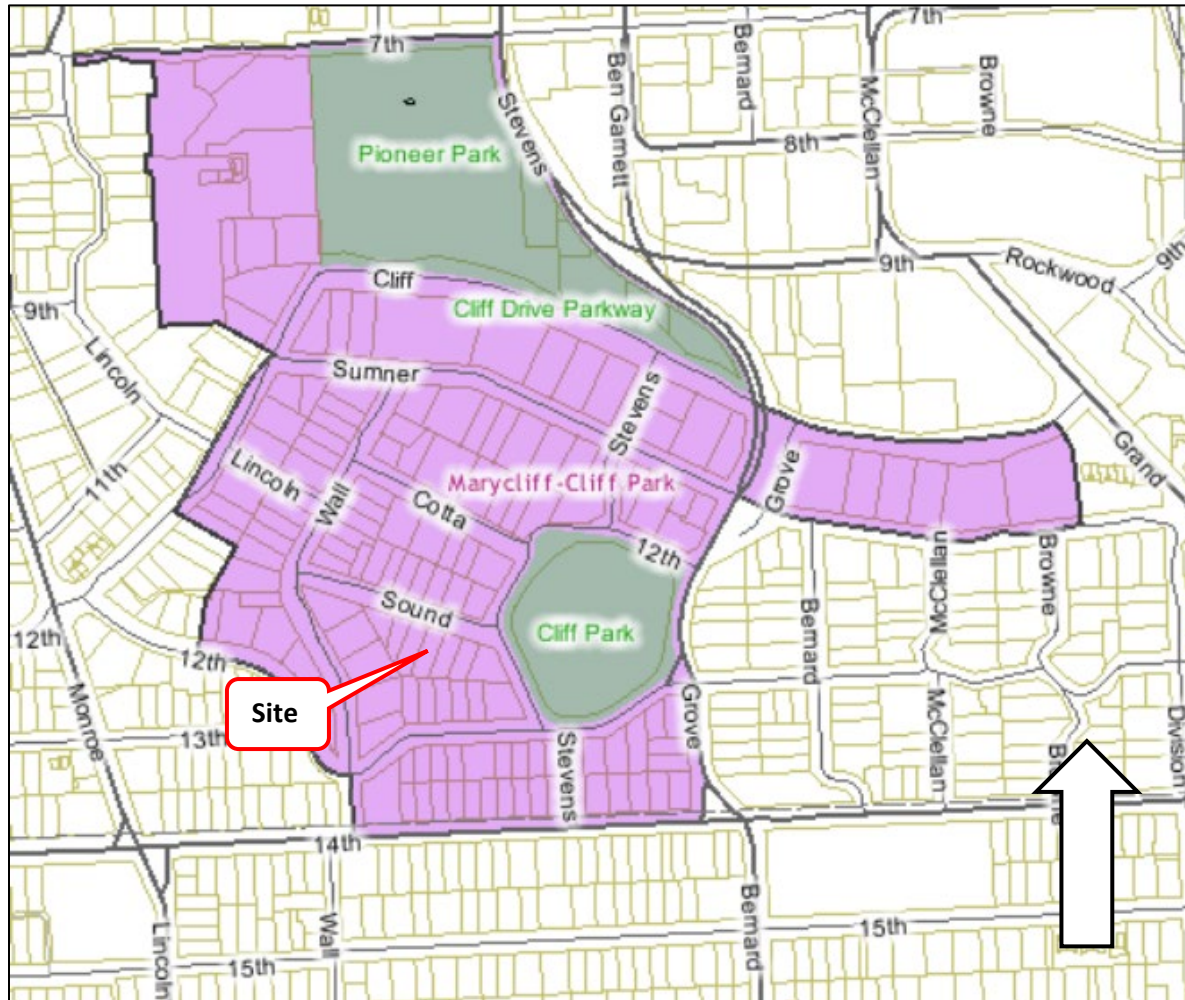


**Figure 3: Aerial site plan**



*Source: Google maps*

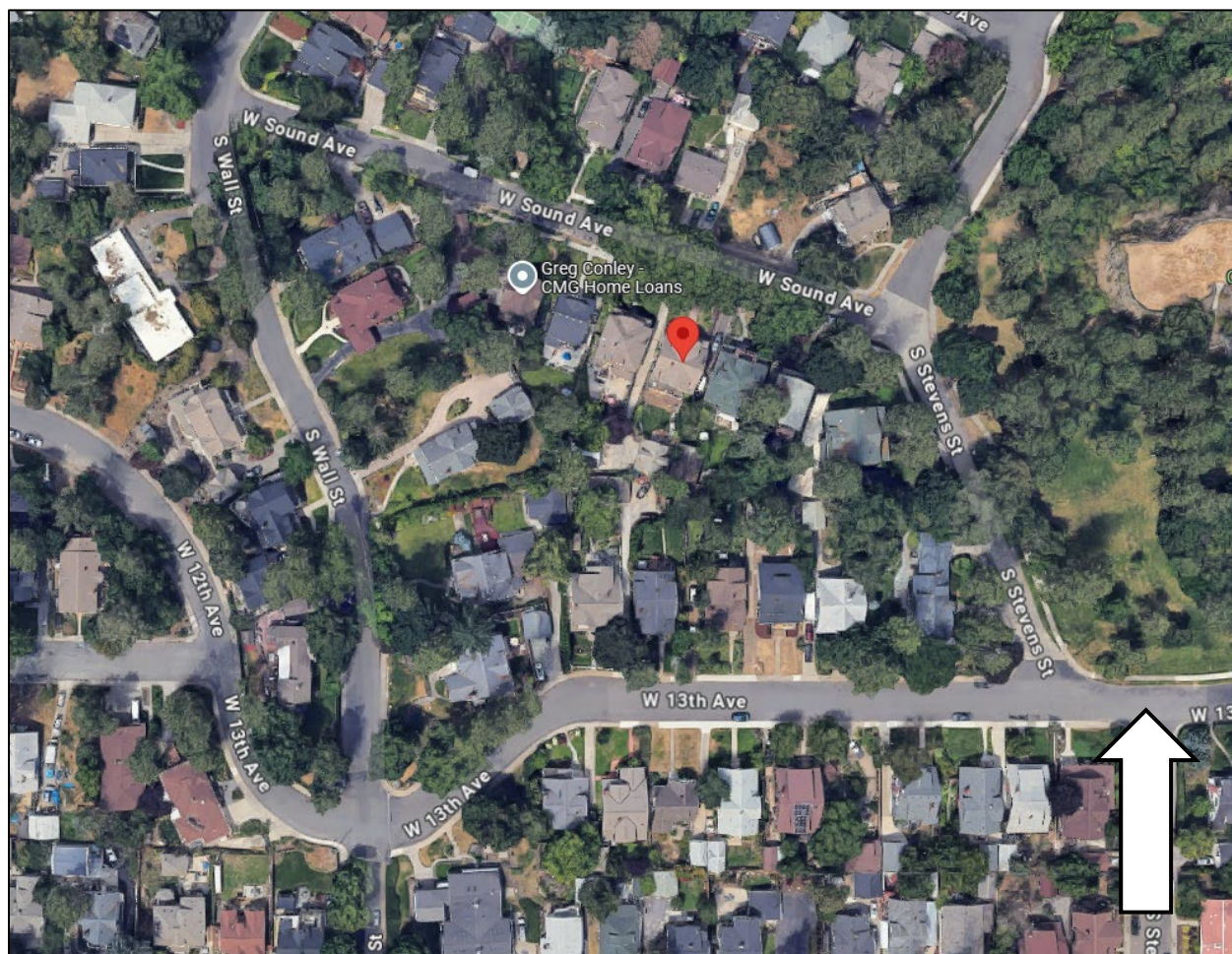
**Figure 4: Marycliff/Cliff Park Historic District**



*Source: City of Spokane*



**Figure 5: Neighborhood context**



*Source: Google maps*

Figure 6: Advertisement for Cliff Park, 1905

**CLIFF PARK**  
Scenic Addition of Spokane

**CLIFF PARK**  
Scenic Addition of Spokane

# Cliff Park

**Offers Every Advantage for a Permanent Home, or It Affords a Splendid Opportunity for a Good Investment**

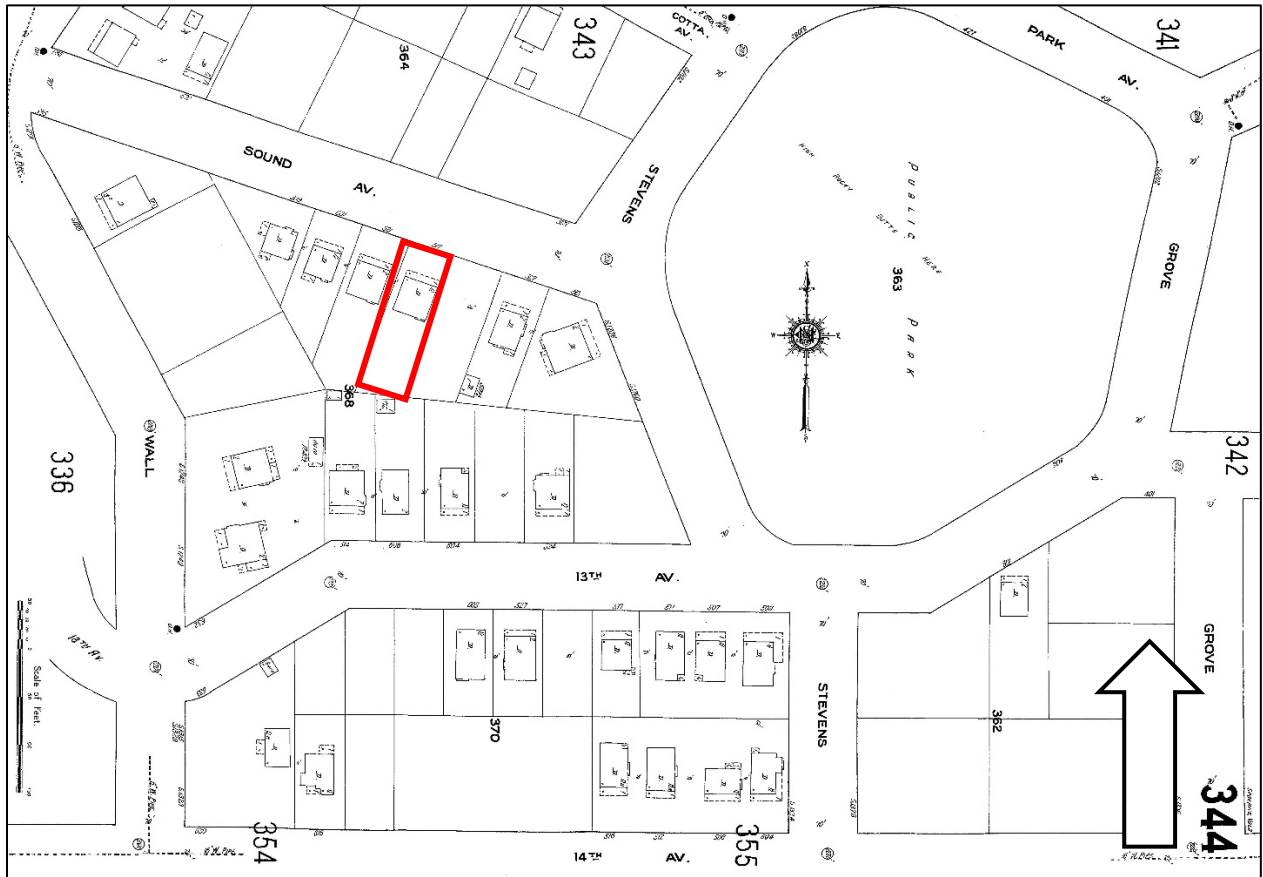
This property, being almost entirely within the mile circle, and offering both scenic and sanitary advantages not obtained elsewhere in the city, is bound to increase in value more rapidly than any other residence property on the market. This fact makes it an exceptionally good investment in case one should not want to use it for a home. But if you want an ideal place for a home, this property will simply delight you with its scenic beauty and other natural advantages. The choicest locations, of course, are being rapidly taken, so you should not delay much longer if you would get the best. This property is now offered at a remarkably close figure, and terms can be had if desired.

**The COOK-CLARKE CO.**  
124 Wall Street. Phone Exchange 20.

**CLIFF PARK**  
Scenic Addition of Spokane

**CLIFF PARK**  
Scenic Addition of Spokane

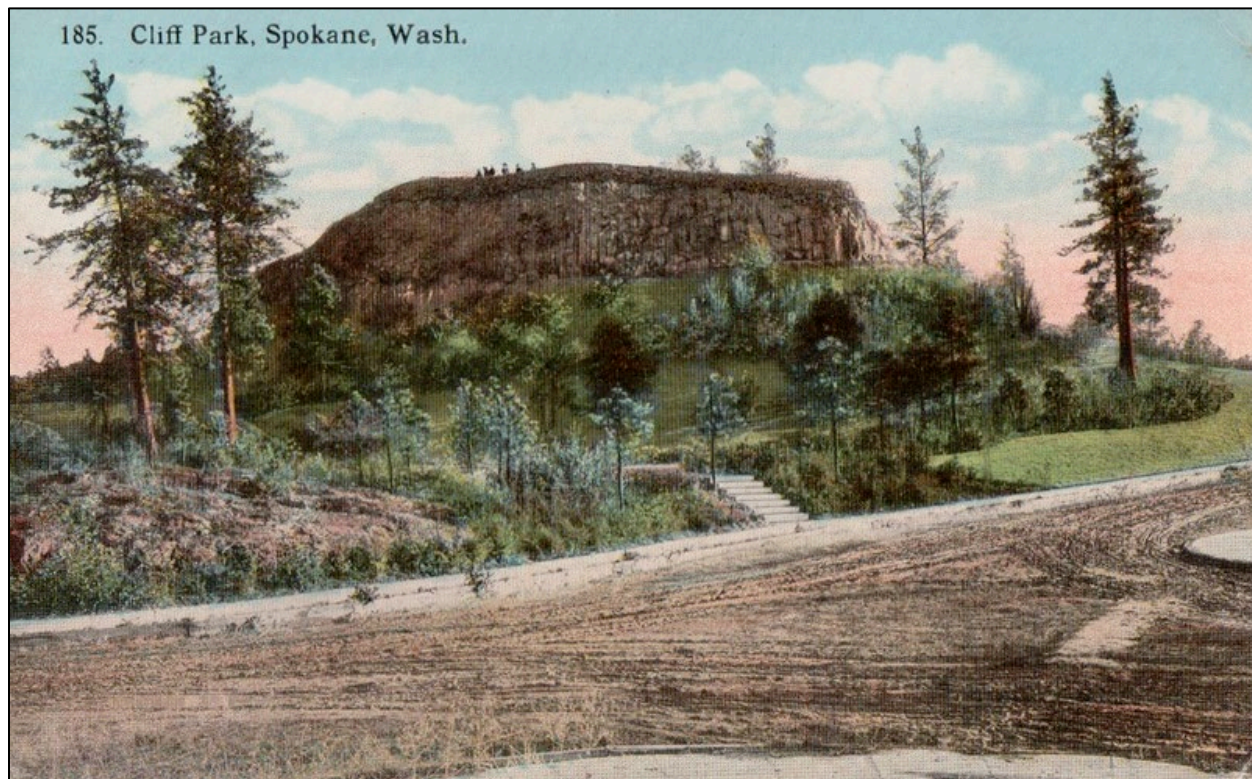
**Figure 7: Sanborn Fire Insurance map showing house in 1910**



*Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map company*



**Figure 8: Cliff Park shown in postcard image, ca 1910**




*Source: Ray Fisher Postcard Collection, Northwest Room, Spokane Public Library*

Figure 9: Advertisement for Kellastone stucco, 1917

OCTOBER, 1917 BUILDING AGE 25

# KELLASTONE

IMPERISHABLE STUCCO



**REDUCE BUILDING COSTS BY USING**  
**KELLASTONE**  
**MAGNESITE STUCCO**

Get the high cost of building materials, yet improve the quality by using **Kellastone**.  
Build for permanence, yet at the same time increase the beauty—use **Kellastone**.  
Build a home that is FIREPROOF and WATER-PROOF—no other stucco than **Kellastone** will accomplish this.

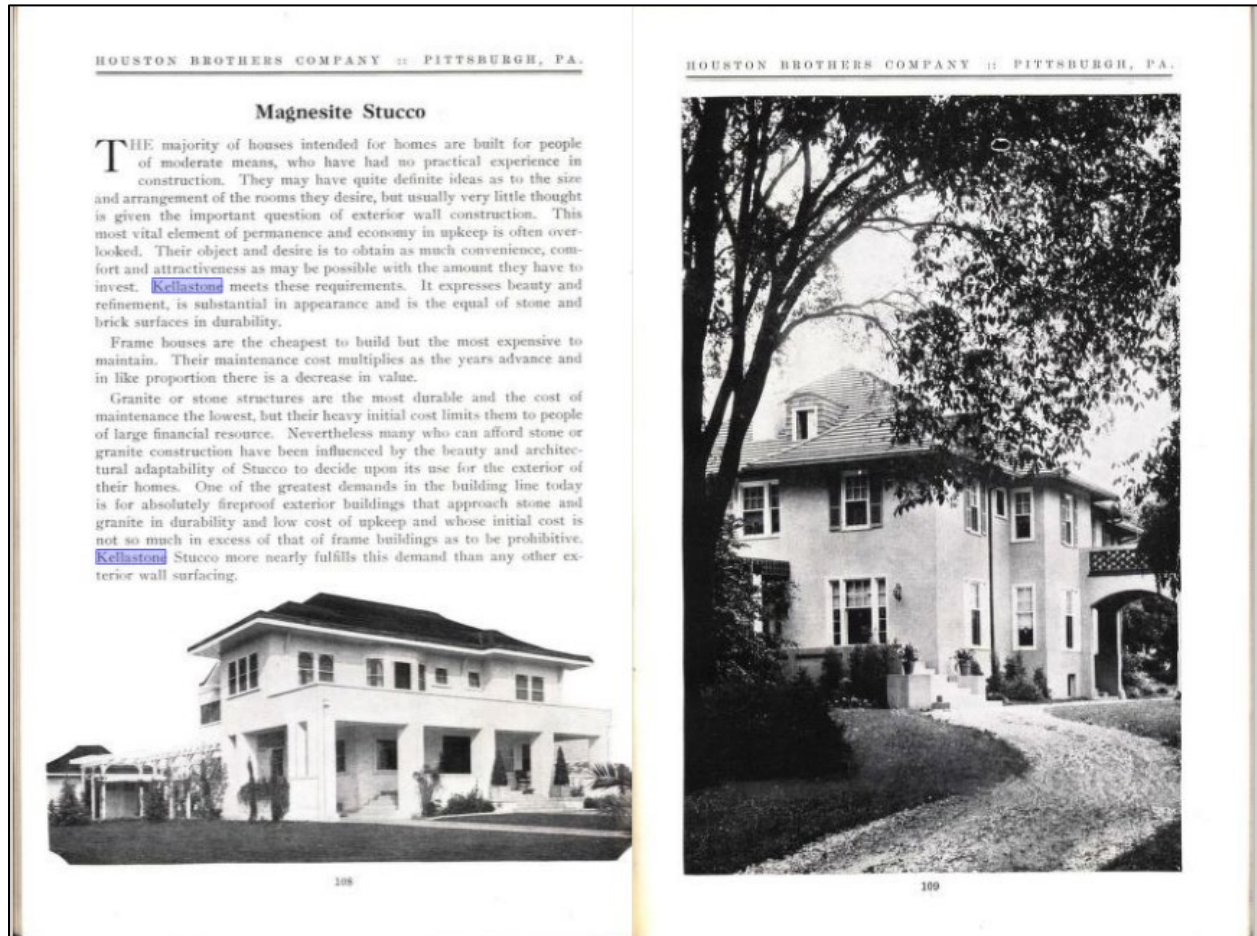
**Kellastone Absolutely Will Not Freeze**

If you are interested in learning about one of the greatest and most wonderful building materials in existence, the only stuccoing material in creation that may be termed **CRACK FREE**—  
WRITE FOR BOOKLET No. 25, which tells about **Kellastone**—a remarkable MAGNESITE STUCCO.

**THE NATIONAL-KELLASTONE CO.**  
1317 MALLERS BUILDING, CHICAGO ILL.

Please quote BUILDING AGE when writing to advertisers

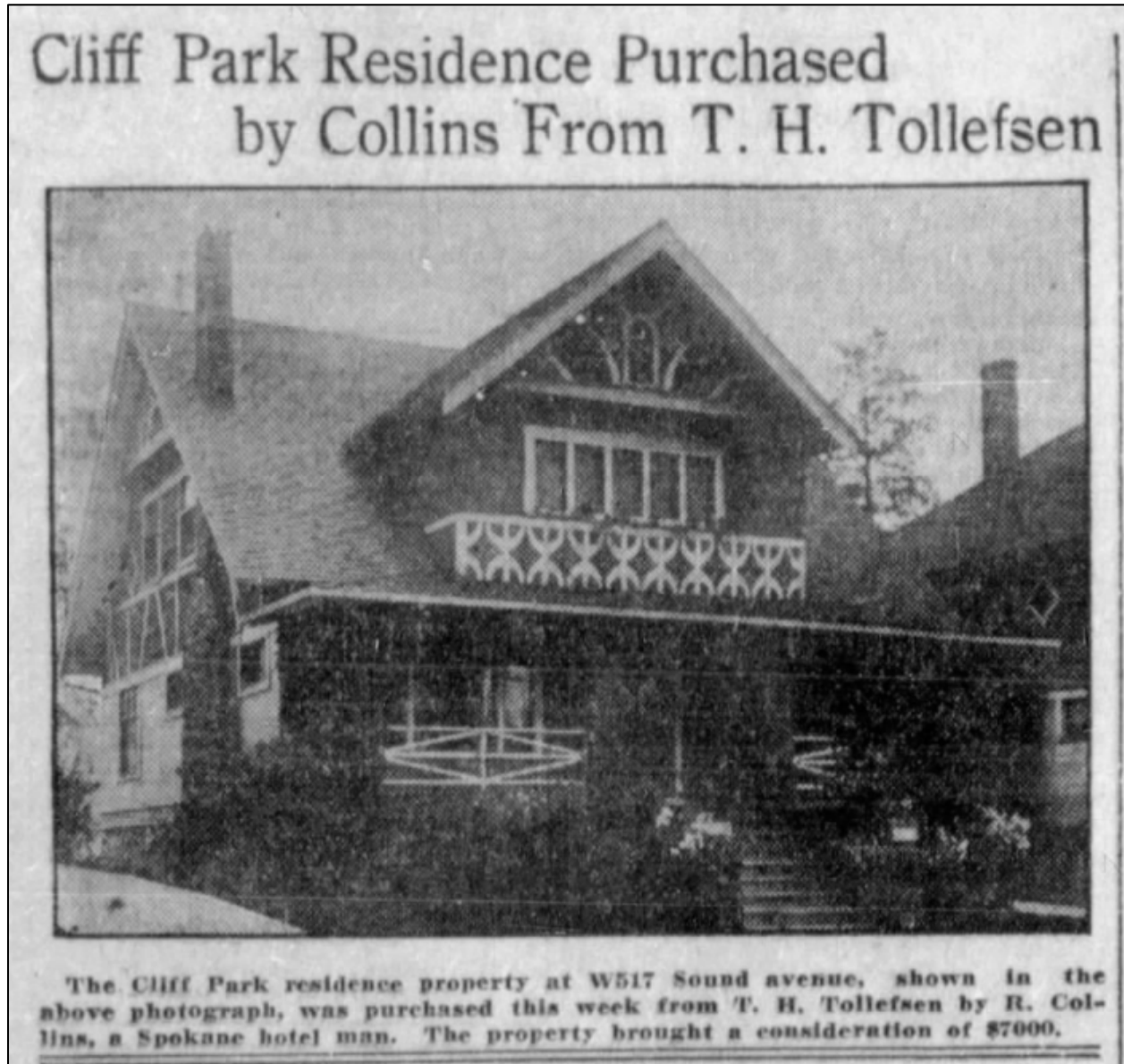
**Figure 10: Article on Magnesite Stucco**



*Source: Houston Brothers Company, Pittsburg, PA*



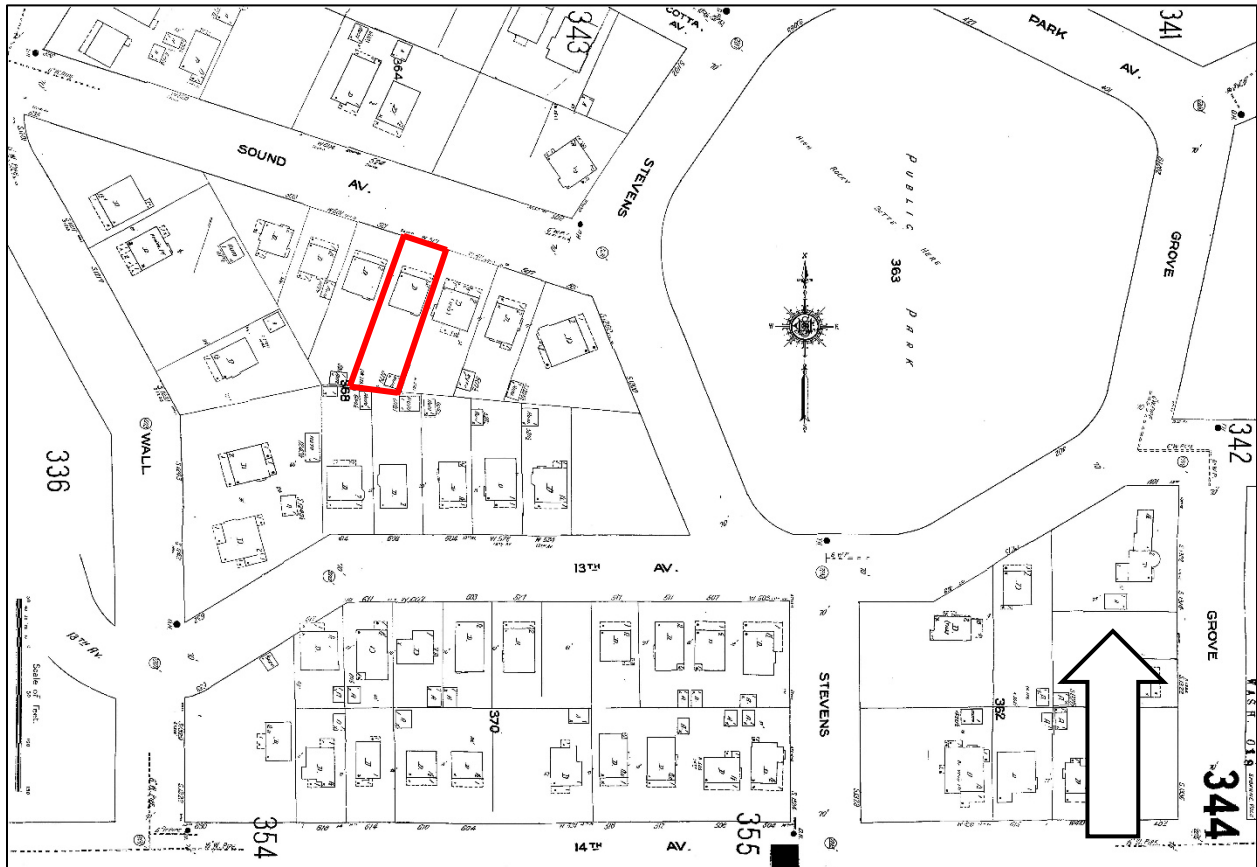
**Figure 11: House at 517 W Sound Avenue, 1919**



*Source: Spokesman Review, June 8, 1919*



**Figure 12: Sanborn Fire Insurance map showing house in 1950**



*Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map company*

**Photo 1 of 17: Front (north) and west side façade, looking southeast**



**Photo 2 of 17: Gabled dormer on north (front) façade, looking south**





**Photo 3 of 17: West side façade, looking northeast**



**Photo 4 of 17: West side façade, shared driveway, and trellis, looking northeast**





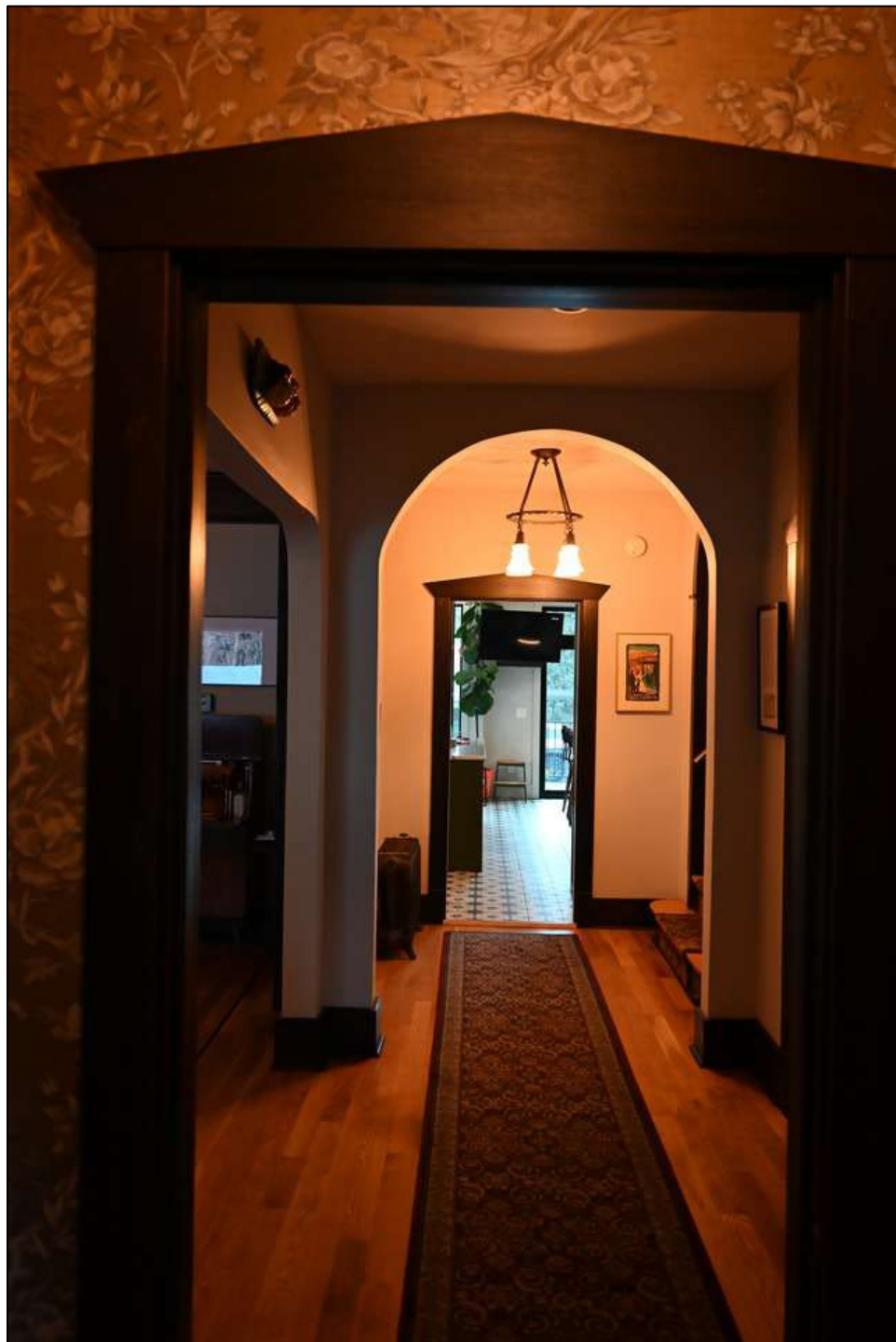
**Photo 5 of 17: Rear (south) façade, looking north**



**Photo 6 of 17: East side façade, upper portion, looking west**

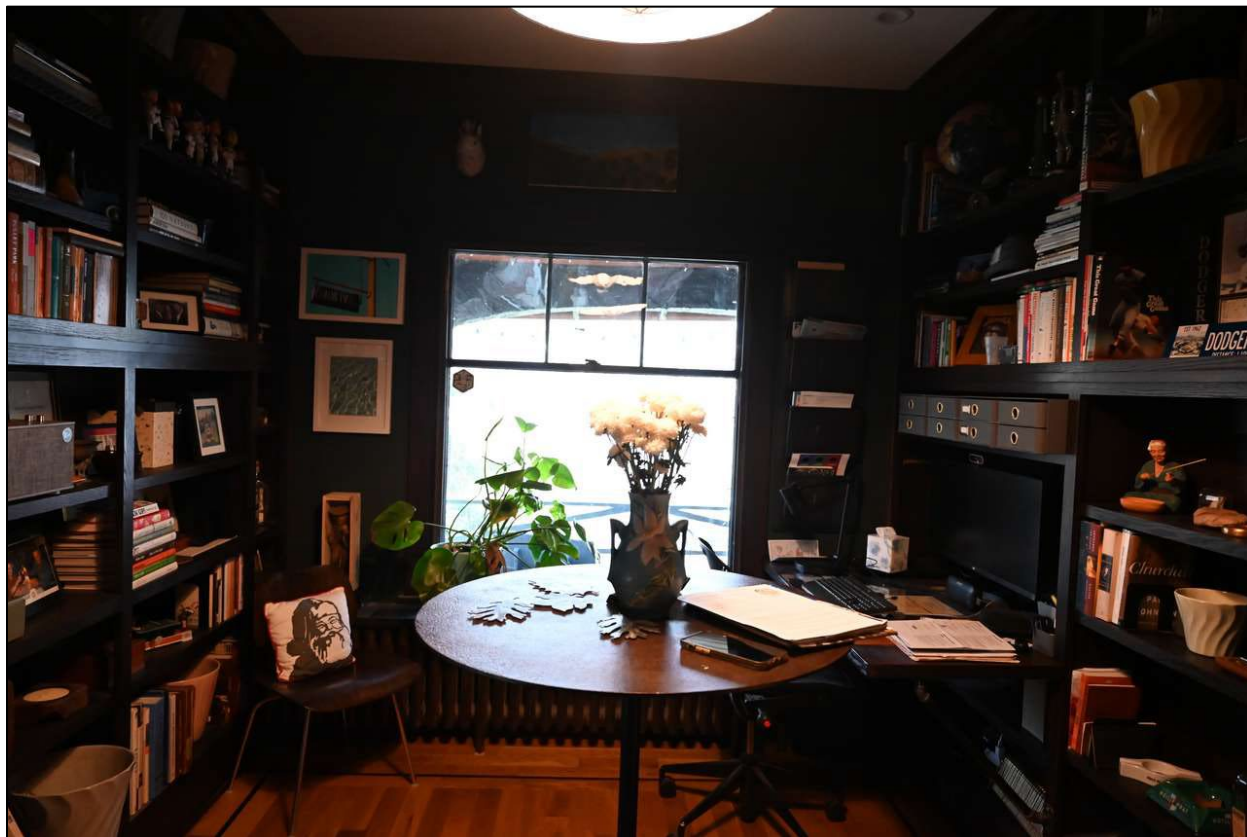


**Photo 7 of 17: Main entry hall, looking south toward kitchen**





**Photo 8 of 17: Office on main floor, looking north**



**Photo 9 of 17: Living room, looking east**



**Photo 10 of 17: Living room, looking south toward dining room**



**Photo 11 of 17: Dining room, looking south; kitchen to right**

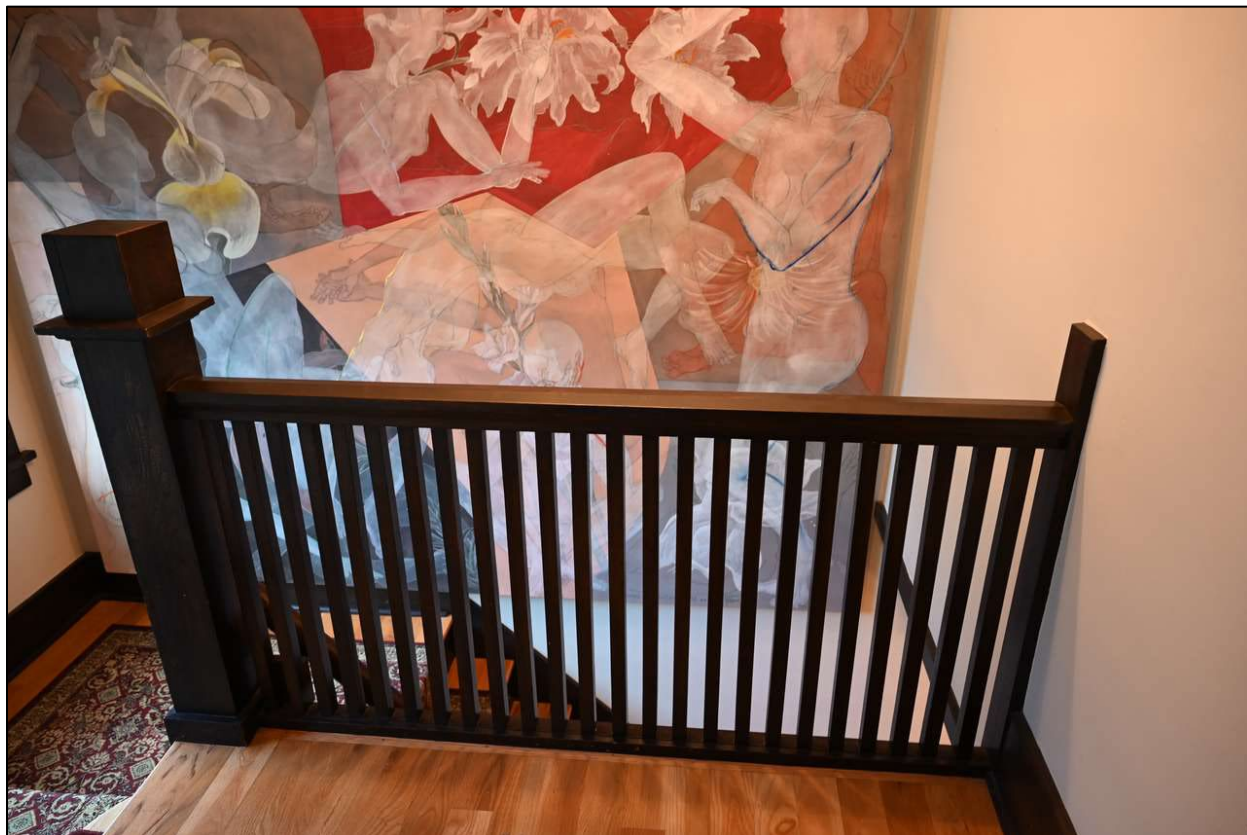




**Photo 12 of 17: Kitchen as viewed from dining room, looking southwest**



**Photo 13 of 17: Upstairs Craftsman style balustrade, looking at stairs to main floor**



**Photo 14 of 17: Master bedroom, looking east**



**Photo 15 of 17: Second floor office, looking north toward Sound Avenue**





**Photo 16 of 17: Basement 'rec room,' looking east**



**Photo 17 of 17: Front yard, looking northeast toward Sound Avenue**

