



Historic Property Inventory Report

Location

Field Site No. 32JLS 406

DAHP No. 32-00489

Historic Name: First German Baptist Church

Common Name: Arthur Street Baptist Church, St. Matthew's Institutional Baptist Church

Property Address: 630 S Arthur St, Spokane, WA 99201

Comments:

Tax No./Parcel No. 35201.5432

Plat/Block/Lot

Acreage .25

Supplemental Map(s)

Township/Range/EW	Section	1/4 Sec	1/4 1/4 Sec	County	Quadrangle
T25R43E	20			Spokane	SPOKANE NW
T25R43E	20				

Coordinate Reference

Easting: 2405476

Northing: 860007

Projection: Washington State Plane South

Datum: HARN (feet)



Historic Property Inventory Report

Identification

Survey Name: LEGACY DATA Date Recorded: 01/01/1950
Field Recorder:
Owner's Name:
Owner Address:
City: State: Zip:
Classification: Not Identified
Resource Status: Comments:
Within a District? No
Contributing?
National Register:
Local District:
National Register District/Thematic Nomination Name:
Eligibility Status: Not Determined - SHPO
Determination Date: 1/1/0001
Determination Comments:

Description

Historic Use: Unknown Current Use: Unknown
Plan: Unknown Stories: Structural System: Unknown
Changes to Plan: Unknown Changes to Interior: Unknown
Changes to Original Cladding: Unknown Changes to Windows: Unknown
Changes to Other:
Other (specify):
Style: Cladding: Roof Type: Roof Material:
Foundation: Form/Type:

Narrative

Study Unit	Other
Date of Construction:	Builder: Engineer: Architect:

Property appears to meet criteria for the National Register of Historic Places: No
Property is located in a potential historic district (National and/or local): No
Property potentially contributes to a historic district (National and/or local):
Statement of Significance: 4



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Description of Physical Appearance:
Major Bibliographic References:
Chalet



Historic Property Inventory Report

Photos



Historic Property Inventory Report

Identification

Survey Name: LEGACY DATA Date Recorded: 01/01/1900
Field Recorder:
Owner's Name:
Owner Address:
City: State: Zip:
Classification:
Resource Status: Comments:
Within a District?
Contributing?
National Register:
Local District:
National Register District/Thematic Nomination Name:
Eligibility Status: Not Determined - SHPO
Determination Date: 1/1/0001
Determination Comments:

Description

Historic Use: Current Use:
Plan: Stories: Structural System:
Changes to Plan: Changes to Interior:
Changes to Original Cladding: Changes to Windows:
Changes to Other:
Other (specify):
Style: Cladding: Roof Type: Roof Material:
Foundation: Form/Type:

Narrative

Study Unit	Other
Date of Construction:	Builder: Engineer: Architect:

Property appears to meet criteria for the National Register of Historic Places:
Property is located in a potential historic district (National and/or local):
Property potentially contributes to a historic district (National and/or local):
Statement of Significance:



Historic Property Inventory Report

Description of
Physical
Appearance:
Major
Bibliographic
References:



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Photos



Historic Property Inventory Report

Identification

Survey Name: Assessors Data Project: Spokane Commercial Date Recorded: 06/01/2011
Field Recorder: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.
Owner's Name: REYES, ANGEL THOMAS & LOURDES M
Owner Address: 616 CEDAR ST
City: WALLACE State: ID Zip: 83873
Classification: Building
Resource Status: Comments:
Survey/Inventory
Within a District? No
Contributing?
National Register:
Local District: No
National Register District/Thematic Nomination Name:
Eligibility Status: Not Determined - SHPO
Determination Date: 1/1/0001
Determination Comments:

Description

Historic Use: Unknown Current Use: Religion - Religious Facility
Plan: Unknown Stories: 1 Structural System: Unknown
Changes to Plan: Changes to Interior:
Changes to Original Cladding: Changes to Windows:
Changes to Other:
Other (specify):
Style: Cladding: Roof Type: Roof Material:
Unknown Unknown Unknown Unknown
Foundation: Form/Type:
Unknown Church

Narrative

Study Unit	Other
Architecture/Landscape Architecture	
Date of Construction:	1909 Built Date Builder:
	Engineer:
	Architect:



Historic Property Inventory Report

Property appears to meet criteria for the National Register of Historic Places: Unable to Determine

Property is located in a potential historic district (National and/or local): Unable to Determine

Property potentially contributes to a historic district (National and/or local): Unable to Determine

Statement of Significance: Data included on this historic property inventory form (HPI) detail stemmed from County Assessor building records imported by the Washington State Department of Archaeology of Historic Preservation (DAHP) into WISAARD in 2011. This upload reduces data entry burden on community volunteers and historical societies participating in the survey and inventory of their communities. The intent of this project is directed specifically to facilitating community and public involvement in stewardship, increasing data accuracy, and providing a versatile planning tool to Certified Local Governments (CLGs).

Currently survey and inventory projects at the local level produce a field form for each property surveyed and include digital photographs. Volunteers doing the survey track down and manually enter all the owner, parcel, and legal data manually. Manual data entry diminishes accuracy and quantity of resources volunteers can survey. Recognizing this, DAHP uploaded building data for each Certified Local Government (CLG) on properties that were built in or before 1969 to provide an accurate and comprehensive baseline dataset. Volunteers doing survey work need only to verify data, add in photographs and extent of alterations and architectural style data, as well as expand upon the physical description and significance statement as new data is collected. For planning purposes, the attrition rate of properties built in or before 1969 can start to be measured to guide stewardship priorities.

Project methodology entailed use of the University of Washington's State Parcel Database (<http://depts.washington.edu/wagis/projects/parcels/development.php>) to provide the base parcel layer for CLGs. Filtering of building data collected from each county trimmed out all properties built after 1969, as well as all current, previously inventoried properties. Translation of building data descriptors to match fields in HPI allowed the data upload. Calculation of point locations utilized the center of each parcel. Data on this detail provides a snapshot of building information as of 2011. A detailed project methodology description resides with DAHP. Project team members: Historic Preservation Northwest, GeoEngineers, and Artifacts Consulting, Inc. (project lead).

Description of Physical Appearance: The building at 630 S Arthur Street, Spokane, is located in Spokane County. According to the county assessor, the structure was built in 1909 and is a religious facility. Also according to the county assessor, the structure was remodeled in 1929. The church building is a 1-story structure.

Major Bibliographic References:



Historic Property Inventory Report

Photos



Historic Property Inventory Report

Date of Construction: 1928 Addition Builder:
 1908 Built Date
 1929 Remodel

Engineer:
Architect:

Property appears to meet criteria for the National Register of Historic Places: Yes

Property is located in a potential historic district (National and/or local): No

Property potentially contributes to a historic district (National and/or local): No

Statement of Significance:

According to the Baptist Home Monthly Mission, the German Baptist Church began with a single German sister and many Germans who could not understand English. Rev. F. J. Reichle, who arrived in Spokane around 1904 having been sent by the Home Missionary committee of the German Baptist Church of North America, discovered that the single German woman was the only member of the church. After organizing a church in nearby Colfax, Reichle established the First German Baptist Church in Spokane in 1906 and became its first minister. The congregation quickly swelled to seventy members and the church wrote that they had purchased land, a plot on the corner of Hartson Avenue and Arthur Street, in Spokane in 1907 to build a church. In 1908, the land was worth \$2,000 and the church was built. The building was expected to cost no less than \$5,000. In 1911, the church property was valued at \$10,000, according to Reichle.

On May 8, 1911, the Spokesman-Review reported that Rev. Reichle resigned from his pastorate at the German Baptist Church. The Spokane papers credit this departure to him receiving calls for ministry work in Montana and Oregon. However, the Morning Oregonian, a paper based out of Portland, from July 4, 1912 paints a different picture. According to the 1912 article, Reichle resigned due to an "investigation into his treatment in his home of Christina Lexa, a domestic employed by a Spokane society woman." Reichle, 42, was "ousted for romantic developments" with Lexa, 25. However, their love conquered all and one year after the scandal, the two married.

On Sunday, October 8, 1911, the new pastor of the First German Baptist Church, Rev. Max Leuschner, gave his first sermon. By 1928, Rev. C. E. Panke was leading the congregation and it was during this time the addition to the front of the church was built. R. E. Reschke, the minister during the 30s, was succeeded by Rev. N. A. Christensen, the former pastor of Odessa Baptist Church, on April 16, 1939. At this point, the church was still giving two sermons on Sundays: one in English and one in German. It wasn't until the 1940s that that church would transition to English.

Between 1945 and 1947, Jim Halbert became pastor for the newly named "Arthur Street Baptist Church" which belonged to the "North American Baptist Convention" (formerly the German Baptists). Halbert was succeeded by Rev. F. W. Bartel by 1950 and Rev. Walter F. Berkan was pastor in 1953. According to a 1960 article from the Spokane Daily Chronicle, the Arthur Street Baptist Church became Terrace Heights Baptist Church after 1953 and relocated to a building on the corner of 21st Avenue and Myrtle Street with Berkan remaining as pastor.

Between 1953 and 1957, the church once again changed names and affiliations. By March of 1957, the religious building on the corner of Hartson and Arthur began serving a different minority population in Spokane. Instead of catering services to the German-speaking locals, the church became the new home for the St. Matthew's Baptist Church congregation, a prominent black church in Spokane. Before moving, St. Matthew's was located on the corner of Dean Avenue and Ash Street and was led by the Rev. D. H. Griggs. Griggs was also president of the "General Baptist Convention of the West" which in 1951 was an association made up of nineteen black congregations across the Pacific Northwest.

It was in the 1950s and 60s that the Civil Rights Movement became a powerful, pulsing beat that drove the nation forward. The St. Matthew's Institutional Baptist Church, in its new location, acted as a place of worship and also as a meeting hall and platform for civic change. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People frequently met at the church from the 1950s onward and even screened films, like a "Walk to Freedom" and "The Life of Booker T. Washington" to help further the cause.

On July 21, 1963, Dedication Services were held at the church to welcome the new pastor, Rev. Samuel L. Singleton. The church celebrated with refreshments and an open house at the home of the new reverend. The following decade, Rev. Leon T. Garcia, former pastor of Calvary Baptist Church and treasurer of the General Baptist Convention of the Pacific Northwest, led the St. Matthew's congregation. Rev. Eugene Singleton would be the last pastor to serve his congregation from the building on Hartson and Arthur. In 2006, the church building had fallen into disrepair and the current, small congregation could not afford the steep repair bills. At the same time, the Sunset Baptist Church congregation who worshiped at 2815 W. Sunset Blvd. had just disbanded. It was decided that it was in everyone's best interest for the St. Matthew's congregation to move to the Sunset location. That left the building at 630 S. Arthur vacant.

Description of
Physical
Appearance:

Despite its massiveness, the church building on the corner of Arthur and Hartson is easy to miss. Vacant for years, the homespun Carpenter Gothic church was once a lively venue of worship and social life. Its steeply pitched roofs, tower and emphasis on the vertical are markers of the Gothic style. Originally, decorative truss-work filled in the gable ends but they were removed by 1928. Nonetheless, the severe lack of ornamentation by 1928, besides the minute detailing of the bargeboards and decorative eave brackets, paints a story of a new church more concerned with having a space of their own than making an architectural statement.

The First German Baptist Church was originally a two story, cross-gabled structure with horizontal wood siding, stone foundation and large basement. The original entrance appears to be on the northeast corner of the building (with the 1928 addition, the main entrance was moved to the east façade).

The north, south and east gable ends mimic each other with a ribbon window of four one-over-one and one-over-two windows on the main level and a ventilation opening placed high in the gable. The only variation is found on the east gable end and features three solid fixed windows between the ventilation opening and other windows, which look into the large second story room.

The south façade, which remains unaltered, features a brick chimney and bump-out with two one-over-one windows which housed the rooms utilized by the pastor during service.

The 1928 addition radically changed the appearance of the church. A large tower with pyramidal roof and overhanging top section was added to the southeast corner of the church. The tower acted as the new entrance to the church with steps leading from the street level to the tower which connected to the main floor of the church. It appears that the church was then remodeled the following year, and a larger two-story tower with faux gables was built on the site of the previous tower. This larger tower enclosed the stairs and created an addition room at the top. The original roof and the 1929 remodel were eventually connected, giving the odd roofline seen today. The south façade of the tower possess a collection of three fixed windows on the second floor and a series of four, descending windows on the first and street level. The east façade of the tower features three, elongated lights looking into the second story of the tower, a series of decorative panels and the new main entrance. A small awning extends over the entrance.

The main entrance leads up a small set of stairs to the main floor. The first floor interior features an open foyer on the east side of the building and a large open room for the congregation occupies the rest of the floor. The baptismal font, or immersion tank, is located under removable floorboards behind the pulpit (which faces east). Steps lead down into the metal tank which could be filled or drained via a system of pipes in the basement. Two small rooms are located off the baptismal area which were utilized by the pastor and other clergy during services.

The second floor consists of two smaller rooms used for bible study. Pivotal windows on the second floor originally looked down onto the worship space below. However, the ceilings have been lowered at least two times over the past century and the windows now look down onto beams and insulation. The original curved ceiling was very lofty, extending two stories.

A well-furnished kitchen is located in the extensive church basement.



Historic Property Inventory Report

Major Bibliographic References:

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- "Members to See 2 Films at Meet," Spokane Daily Chronicle, March 25, 1957.
- "New Pastor of German Baptist Church and His Family," Spokane Daily Chronicle May 20, 1939.
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- Reichle, F. I. "Field Notes." Baptist Home Mission Monthly 30, no. 1 (January, 1908): 458.
- "Rite Pending for Minister," Spokane Daily Chronicle, April 28, 1981.
- Spokesman-Review, October 9, 1911.
- "Mooch Says:," Spokane Daily Chronicle, September 27, 1928.
- Washington State University. St. Matthew Institutional Baptist Church. Pullman, Wa: Washington State Historic Preservation Inventory Project, October, 1974.
- "Wed 50 Years," Spokane Daily Chronicle, January 14, 1960.
- "Week's Services Planned," Spokane Daily Chronicle, April 19, 1958.

Photos



Looking northwest at the intersection of Arthur and Hartson. Photo courtesy of the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture. Southeast corner 1928



View of the second floor interior of 1928 addition. Photo taken May 29, 2015. Second Floor Interior 2015



The Rev. F. J. Reichle. The first minister of the First German Baptist Church. Courtesy of the Spokesman-Review, May 8, 1911. Rev. F. J. Reichle 1911



These large paneled doors, could be stretched out (like the picture) or be folded back like an accordion depending on the need. Photo taken May 29, 2015. Interior Doors 2015



The Rev. Leon T. Garcia

Rev. Garcia served as pastor of St. Matthew's from 1977 to 1981. From April 28, 1981 edition of Spokane Daily Chronicle.
Rev. Leon T. Garcia
1981



View from inside the front entrance in the 1928 addition showing original woodwork. Photo taken May 29, 2015.
Addition Interior
2015



View of the back of original church. Photo taken May 29, 2015.
Southwest Corner
2015



View of original church from Hartson Avenue. Photo taken May 29, 2015.
Southwest Corner
2015



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View of original church from Hartson Avenue. Note where addition meets original portion of church. Photo taken May 29, 2015.
South Facade
2015



The ceiling of the church was lowered several times. Here, the original curved ceiling is seen along with the first lowered portion. Photo taken May 29, 2015.
Ceilings
2015



This interior window on the second floor of the 1928 addition shows what would have been the roof of the original church. Looking west. Photo taken May 29, 2015.
Interior Window of Addition
2015

Photo taken sometime between 1908 and 1928. Church is on left at end of street.
Looking north down Arthur Street
1928

**MEMBERS TO SEE
2 FILMS AT MEET**

Two films will be shown at the meeting of the Spokane branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People at 8 tonight at St. Matthew's Baptist church, Hartson and Arthur, James M. Sims, president, said today. They are "Walk to Freedom," which recounts the bus segregation fight in Montgomery, Ala., and "The Life of Booker T. Washington."

Newspaper clipping from the March 25, 1957 edition of the Spokane Daily Chronicle advertising the NAACP meeting taking place at the church.
1957 Newspaper Clipping
1957

New Pastor of German Baptist Church and His Family



Left to right: Oliver, 13; Mrs. Christensen; Myrtle, 10; Rev. Mr. Christensen; Wesley, 11. Christensen became pastor of the church on April 16, 1939. Courtesy of the Spokane Daily Chronicle, May 20, 1939.
Rev. N. A. Christensen and Family
1939



Cornerstone shows original construction date (1908) and date of large front addition (1928). Northwest corner of Arthur and Hartson. Photo taken May 29, 2015.

Cornerstone of Addition

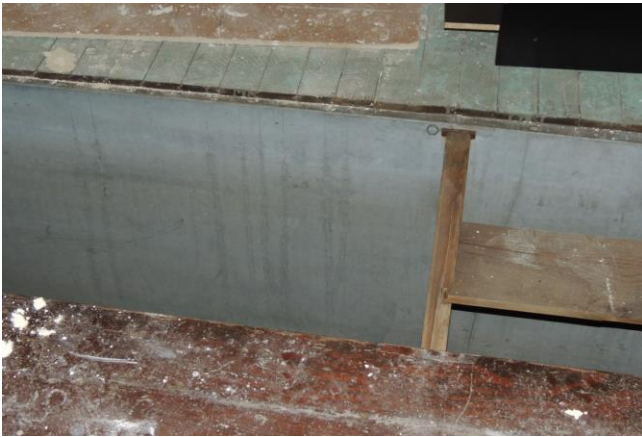
2015



The east facade faces Arthur Street. The main entrance to the church is just to the left, through the 1928 addition. Note decorative bargeboard. Photo taken May 29, 2015.

East Facade

2015



The baptismal font, or immersion tank, is located under removable floorboards behind the pulpit. Steps lead down into the metal tank which could be filled or drained via a system of pipes in the basement. Photo taken May 29, 2015.

Baptismal Font

2015