

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name BELL, DR. ROBERT & JESSIE, HOUSE
Other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 917 S. Lincoln Street _____ not for publication
city or town Spokane _____ vicinity
State Washington code WA county Spokane code 063 zip code 99204

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not incl. previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Non-Contributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2		Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th & EARLY 20th CENTURY
 AMERICAN MOVEMENT: Craftsman

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: basalt
 walls WOOD: weatherboard
 roof ASPHALT
 other STUCCO, CLINKER BRICK

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our 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 or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1908 - 1912

Significant Dates

1908, 1912

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Grover, Alonzo J. (architect)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property.) SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.) SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record# _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM References on a continuation sheet.)

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Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.) See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.) See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Linda Yeomans
organization Historic Preservation Planning & Design date 12 November 2004
street & number 501 West 27th Avenue telephone (509) 456-3828
city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99203

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Cynthia Hahn
street & number 917 S. Lincoln Street telephone (509) 456-4610
city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99204

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Dr. Robert & Jessie Bell House
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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Built in 1908, the Dr. Robert & Jessie Bell House is a fine example of the American Foursquare tradition with Craftsman-style influence. The design of the home features a two-story box with a low-pitched hip roof and widely overhanging eaves, a dominant horizontal cornice line, symmetrical fenestration patterns, and a covered front porch on the first floor that spans the entire width of the home's facade. Exterior Craftsman-style elements are found in the indigenous black basalt rock porch wall, battered porch piers and window surrounds, bracketed eaves, and hobnailed clinker brick chimneys. The house is clad in wood siding which was installed in 1908, and retains original windows, doors, interior fir and mahogany woodwork, wall sconces, bathroom fixtures, and a first-floor plan that is typical of the American Foursquare house type. The property is located on Spokane's lower South Hill and faces west along South Lincoln Street. The home is well preserved and retains excellent integrity in original location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association as an early 20th-century single-family residence.

CURRENT (2004) APPEARANCE & CONDITION of PROPERTY

Site

The Bell House is sited on a wedge-shaped parcel that fronts 75 feet along South Lincoln Street and extends back in a northeasterly direction for 170 feet to an eastern border that measures 54 feet. The parcel contains part of Lot 3 and all of Lot 4 in Block 3 of the Hillside Addition to Spokane. The house is located on a steep west-facing slope and is surrounded by a manicured lawn, trees, and shrubs. A paved driveway runs uphill from Lincoln Street to the back of the parcel beside the house. A wood-frame garage is located at the end of the driveway. The neighborhood is composed of single-family homes and two apartment buildings built from 1908 to 1940, and multi-family apartment blocks and condominiums erected during the 1950s-1980s. More than half of the area's single-family homes have been altered and converted for use as multi-family apartments.¹

House Exterior

The Bell House is a two-story platform frame dwelling that follows a slightly irregular square footprint, which measures 36 feet wide and 37 feet deep. A full-width covered wrap-around front porch extends 50 feet across the front of the house, returning at the front corners. The house has a low-pitched, clipped hip roof that is mostly covered with composition shingles; the flat, clipped top of the roof is covered with a vinyl roof membrane. A clinker brick chimney extends past the roof on the south elevation of the house. Another chimney, also constructed of clinker brick, extends past the roof on the east elevation of the house. Boxed roof eaves form a wide overhang and reveal tongue-in-groove beadboard soffits with decorative scroll-sawn brackets. A wide cornice accentuates the eaves. The first floor of the house is clad in eight-inch-wide wood bevel siding while the second floor is clad in two-inch-wide narrow-width wood clapboard siding. A ten-inch-wide horizontal wood string-course separates the first floor from the second floor. Fenestration includes

¹ Spokane County Tax Assessor Records, Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

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symmetrical placement with a combination of original casement, fixed, and 1/1 double-hung wood-sash windows, and metal-framed screen/storm windows (c. 1980s), which are installed over the original windows. Battered moldings, which taper from six inches to eight inches, frame all of the doors and windows of the house on the first and second floors. The foundation of the house is constructed of black basalt rock and measures up to three feet thick below grade.

The most dominant feature of the Bell House is the symmetrically balanced west façade and full-width front porch. The porch is one story and is covered with a very low-pitched hip roof. The roof has wide overhanging eaves and is covered in composition shingles that match those on the roof of the house. Reflecting materials used on the house, tongue-in-groove beadboard and decorative scroll-sawn brackets accentuate the boxed porch eaves. The porch is supported by massive, battered wood porch piers that are anchored to a black basalt rock porch wall. The porch deck measures ten feet deep and is made of painted fir planking. It is enclosed with a solid balustrade clad with eight-inch-wide wood bevel siding that matches the siding used on the house. Nine wood porch steps form a steep rise to the porch deck and are flanked by wood railings. The railings are anchored by square newel posts with flat caps, and new wood balusters with star-shaped cut-out designs. A Craftsman-style light fixture is attached to the top of the southwest newel post. The covered porch protects the front door, which is made of high-quality quarter-sawn, honey-colored solid oak with a stained-glass window in the upper leaf. The door reflects the Craftsman style and features vertical panels capped by a meeting rail that is embellished with decorative mortise-and-tenon joinery. Above the front porch is the home's three-ranked second story.

The south elevation of the house parallels a paved driveway that leads to the back of the property. The south elevation features symmetrical fenestration, a clinker brick chimney that rises past the edge of the roof, and a second-floor covered balcony at the southeast corner. The north elevation of the house has a wood deck that is attached to the rear, northeast corner of the house about four feet below the level of the first floor. The east, rear elevation of the house has a small, first-story covered porch with a very low-pitched hip roof. The porch is supported by two square columns and protects a fixed stained-glass window and an adjacent double back door, which is glazed and framed in wood.

Garage

Built in 1912, a single-car, wood-frame garage is located behind the house at the end of the driveway. Reflecting the design of the house, the garage has a low-pitched hip roof with wide overhanging boxed eaves and composition shingles, wide wood bevel siding, multi-paned windows with battered surrounds, and a single garage door made of metal. The metal garage door was installed sometime during the 1980s. Craftsman-style lanterns (made and installed in the 1990s) flank the garage door.ⁱⁱ

ⁱⁱ Spokane County Assessor Records, Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

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House Interior

Spokane County records report a total of 1,128 square feet on the first floor of the house.ⁱⁱⁱ Identical to the footprint of the first floor, the second floor also contains 1,128 square feet. The front door of the home opens to a small vestibule, which leads to a large central reception hall. The reception hall is flanked by a formal dining room to the north and a living room to the south. Both rooms are accessed by multi-paned pocket doors that slide open from the reception hall. The dining room is accentuated with a boxed beam ceiling, a corbelled plate rail, wood battens, and a ribbon of five windows that form a buffet window (also called a piano window) along the north wall. The five small windows are wood-framed casement units with original decorative leaded-glass. The leaded-glass design depicts the outline of a house with a front gable roof. Across the reception hall, the focal point of the living room is a fireplace, which is located on the south wall. The fireplace features a mahogany-paneled upper mantel, a wood corbelled lower mantel that returns to the wall at the corners, a hand-crafted hammered copper fireplace hood, and a fireplace surround and hearth covered in matte-finish glazed ceramic tiles. The reception hall leads to an enclosed staircase located in the center of the house, and to a den, powder room, and kitchen, which are all located at the back of the house on the first floor. The den has a brick fireplace and inglenook on the east wall. Made of ebony-finished oak, the inglenook is distinguished with a paneled back and deep window seats that open for storage. The inglenook flanks the fireplace and wraps around the inside corners of the room, extending to a portion of the north and south walls of the den. Leaded-glass casement windows on the south wall, and original metal wall sconces designed in the Craftsman style illuminate the room. Two French doors with leaded-glass upper lights open from the south wall of the den to a small, enclosed back porch. The porch measures twelve feet long and five feet deep. An exterior door is located on the east end of the porch. The ceiling height of the first floor is eight feet in the kitchen and back enclosed porch, and nine and one-half feet in the vestibule, hall, living room, dining room, den, and powder room. The woodwork is made of mahogany in the vestibule, reception hall, living room, dining room, and stairwell. The den is finished in ebony-finished oak, and the kitchen is finished in a combination of cherry wood and painted pine. Except for the enclosed back porch and the powder room, the floors of the first floor are made of solid oak. The powder room floor is ceramic tile, and the enclosed back porch floor is vinyl.

The second floor has three bedrooms, one bathroom, and an open-air balcony, which is located on the southeast corner of the house. The master bedroom is located in the southwest corner of the house and has a pressed brick fireplace with a matte-finish glazed ceramic tile hearth. The hearth tiles are colored in dark sage green, are shaped like subway tiles, and resemble tiles made by the Grueby Tile Company. The floors in the hallway, bedrooms, and closets are made of fir. The house has an unfinished full basement with storage and laundry areas and heating facilities. The house retains its original cast iron radiators that were designed to transport steam heat. Once fired by wood, then coal followed by oil, the steam heat is currently generated by a gas-fired boiler installed during the last 40 years.^{iv}

ⁱⁱⁱ Spokane County Tax Assessor Records, Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

^{iv} Spokane Building Permits, Spokane City Hall, 3rd floor, Spokane, WA.

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ORIGINAL APPEARANCE & SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS

A newspaper article in the July 26, 1908 edition of the *Spokesman-Review* described the exterior and interior of the Bell House:

Rough, narrow siding is used for the exterior walls, stained dark brown. Across the entire front and returning at each side is a 10-foot [deep] veranda, covered with an independent roof, which is supported by massive square piers, tapering at the top. These piers and all the exterior trimmings are painted white. Rustic native rock is used for the foundation and also for the approaches of the veranda.

Through a vestibule with adjoining coat closet, the [front] entrance is into a large central reception room, or hall, connecting on the right with the living room and on the left with the dining room. At the back end of the hall are the stairs to the second floor...

The hall and stairs are finished in red birch-stained mahogany. The living room is entered through a 10-foot sliding door. This room is also finished in red birch-stained mahogany and the walls are hard plaster, treated gray-tan.

Sliding doors separate the dining room from the hall. This room is finished in select curly fir and has a cross-beamed ceiling. Below the plate rail, the walls are treated in burlap panels of brown-green, the panels done in squares. Above the plate rail, the walls are tinted tobacco brown, merging into a brown-tan shade on the ceiling.

In...[the living room], the hall, the dining room, and den, the floors are quarter-sawed white oak.

The den is to the right of the back end of the hall. It is done in red panels of burlap... Four casement windows admit light to the room through leaded panes of glass.

In the second story are two main [bed] chambers, the maid's room, sewing room, sleeping balcony, and two bathrooms. All of the chambers are finished in ivory enamel, with floors of dressed fir, oiled and waxed. The walls are tinted hard plaster. In the main chamber is a large fireplace, and this chamber opens into an

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alcove chamber, which may be used for a dressing room.^v

Except for a few modifications, the property retains many of the original features, finish, and floor plan which are described in the article. The southeast, rear corner of the house, however, differs slightly from the 1908 plans which were printed in the newspaper article. The 1908 plans pictured a back porch on the first floor and a sleeping porch/recessed balcony above it on the second floor at the back of the house on the southeast corner. According to a footprint of the property on a 1910 Sanborn Fire Insurance map^{vi}, the area that was originally planned to accommodate a recessed back porch was instead enclosed and built as a den sometime between 1908 and 1910. The second-floor recessed balcony/sleeping porch, however, remained open as shown on the 1908 house plans.

Sometime during the 1930s-1940s, the home's original "cooler" (a small room where ice was stored which was used to refrigerate food) was remodeled into the existing powder room, which is located between the den and kitchen on the back, east wall of the house. A toilet and wall-mounted wash-basin were installed. Later, in the 1970s-1980s, the oak floor in the powder room was recovered with glazed ceramic tile.^{vii}

In the 1970s-1980s, the kitchen and original pantry were remodeled into one kitchen, the dining room was stripped of some of its original woodwork, the inglenook in the den was removed, the second-floor bathroom in the northeast corner of the house was replaced with a closet, the second-floor sleeping porch at the southeast corner of the house was enclosed for use as a closet, and a small enclosed first-floor porch and a small second-floor recessed balcony were built on the side of the house at the south elevation.

When the kitchen was remodeled, the back door was replaced with a double-width metal-framed slider, and the adjacent south original 1/1, double-hung window was replaced with a fixed, stained-glass unit. An enclosed porch addition was built next to the den on the south elevation of the house on the first floor. It is clad in eight-inch-wide pressed-wood exterior bevel siding that matches the original eight-inch-wide wood bevel siding on the house. On the second floor, a recessed balcony was built above the porch addition. It is clad in narrow-width wood clapboard siding that matches the original narrow-width wood clapboard siding on the house. The balcony is supported by square wood posts and is covered with a very low-pitched hip roof covered in composition shingles. The balcony's roof eaves match those of the house, including beadboard soffits (the beadboard design produced by mitered corners on the original soffit in relationship to mitered corners on the balcony's soffit reveals the juncture between the original roof eaves and the balcony addition). Original light fixtures throughout the house were replaced with modern fixtures. Metal-framed storm windows and metal-framed screens were installed over the home's original windows.

^v "Dr. Bell's Home is American Type." *Spokesman-Review*, 26 July 1908, p. 6 (photo & plan drawing).

^{vi} *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1910*. Spokane Public Library, Spokane, WA.

^{vii} Personal interview with the current homeowner of the Bell House, Cynthia Hahn.

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From 1993 through 2003, the current homeowner was responsible for restorative and remodeling changes to the interior and exterior of the property. The dining room was restored with fir battens and a plate rail that matched the shadows left when the original plate rail and battens were removed in the 1970s-1980s. The kitchen was remodeled again, this time with contemporary-compatible cherry wood cabinets, a double wood-framed back door that replaced the 1970s-1980s slider, and an oak floor. The fireplace in the living room was remodeled with a copper fireplace hood and glazed ceramic tile surround and hearth, all designed in the Craftsman style. Missing pocket doors to the living room were built and installed to match the multi-paned pocket doors of the dining room. Missing original light fixtures were replaced with period-appropriate fixtures throughout the interior and exterior of the house. In the den, the oak inglenook was rebuilt and restored based on existing original parts and pieces found in the basement of the house. Interior walls and ceilings were repainted, floors were refinished, and wallpaper was hung in the dining room, stairwell, kitchen, and powder room. On the second floor, the wall and closet that separated the master bedroom from the sewing room were removed and the sewing room became an extension of the master bedroom. French doors were installed to the second-floor balcony. The southeast corner closet and the northeast corner closets were completely lined in cedar. The upstairs bathroom at the top of the stairs was remodeled with new ceramic wainscot, an antique claw foot bathtub, and period lighting. The bathroom's original windows, ceramic tile floor, wash basin, fixtures, and built-in cabinets remain intact.

On the exterior of the house, an enclosed wood deck with a hot tub was built in the 1990s and attached to the northeast corner of the north elevation (the deck is accessed from the back yard only and cannot be seen from the street). In 2001, a composition roof was installed on the house and garage. At the time of the install, it was discovered that the roof of the house was covered with three layers of composition shingles over the home's original 1908 wood shingles. All four layers of old roofing material were removed, repairs were made, and the new roof was installed along with replacement copper rain gutters that match the original gutters. Wood stairs were rebuilt on the front of the house, and new wood railings with cut-out balusters were installed on either side of the steps. The balustrades reflect the Craftsman style and were designed by the home's owner, Cynthia Hahn. The exterior of the house and garage were re-painted in shades of sage green with cream-colored trim.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary Statement

Erected in 1908, the Bell House and its single-car, 1912 garage are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as a property that embodies identifying features of the American Foursquare and Craftsman traditions. The home was built for Dr. Robert Bell and his wife, Jessie Robertson Bell. The home was showcased in a July 26, 1908 *Spokesman-Review* newspaper article that featured a photograph of the house, floor plans of the interior, and a detailed description of the property. The article touted the home's design as "an attractive example of the modern American house," a "distinctive style of architecture" built in the "American type."^{viii} The Bell House was designed by Spokane architect Alonzo J. Grover and conveys building trends, which incorporated styles and designs along with materials and construction methods that were popular during the early 20th century in Spokane. The period of significance begins in 1908, the date of construction for the home, and ends in 1912, the date of construction for the garage.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Platted in 1883, the Hillside Addition is located one mile from downtown Spokane on the slope of a steep, west-facing wooded bluff. The irregularly shaped Hillside Addition is roughly bounded by Seventh and Ninth Avenues to the north, Twelfth Avenue to the south, Monroe Street to the west, and Cliff Avenue to the east. Prior to 1883, the rugged, hilly area was unplatted and undeveloped land dotted with Ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, basalt rock outcroppings, and steep bluffs. By the early 1900s, economic real estate potential had been discovered in the fine panoramic vistas afforded by the steep hillside lots, which sparked development plans for the area. Infrastructure was built when sewers and roads were laid, street car lines were installed, and public schools were erected in the area. Prospective landowners and homebuyers were enticed to "move up the hill" to the new neighborhood. A July 6, 1906 advertisement in the *Spokesman-Review* promoted the natural amenities and real estate potential of "The Hill," a socially prominent area which was located adjacent north of the Hillside Addition. The article encouraged buyers to purchase property on "The Hill...at Lincoln Hill...and Monroe Hill...overlooking the city...the natural scenic effect of which is unsurpassed in American home grounds..."^{ix} Responding to the real estate commercial, Spokane's affluent elite bought lots in the "The Hill" neighborhood and the adjacent Hillside Addition. Architects and builders were commissioned to design and build houses that depicted a wide variety of sizes and styles ranging from Queen Anne, Tudor and Colonial Revival, to American Foursquare and Craftsman. The 1910 *United States Census* listed residents of the community as engineers, stock brokers, real estate agents, newspaper reporters, lumber manufacturers, merchants, bankers, doctors and dentists. Cooks, maids, butlers and other domestic help were employed by the area's new homeowners.^x Reflecting these demographic trends, the Dr. Robert & Jessie Bell House was one of the first homes built in the Hillside Addition.

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OMB No. 1024-0018

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^{viii} "Dr. Bell's Home Is American Type." *Spokesman-Review*, 26 July 1908, p. 6 (photo & plan drawing).

^{ix} "The Hill." *Spokesman-Review*, 6 July 1906.

^x *United States Census Report for 1910*. United States Government, Spokane Public Library, Spokane, WA.

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Dr. Robert Bell and Jessie Robertson Bell

Dr. Bell is first listed in the *1906 Spokane City Directory*. At that time he lived at 2124 W. Second Avenue and practiced as a pediatric dentist in Room 208 in the Fernwell Building in downtown Spokane. In 1907 he moved to 623 S. Adams, and in 1908, he lived at 1021 W. Eleventh Avenue. Later in 1908, he moved into the Bell House at 917 S. Lincoln Street. Dr. Bell married Jessie Robertson and together they raised two daughters, Roberta and Margaret, and a son, Alex. In 1911, Dr. Bell moved his pedodontics dentistry practice to offices at 410-411 in the Paulsen Building. He practiced in Spokane for 42 years until he retired in 1948.

On February 26, 1907 Dr. Bell purchased all of Lot 4 and part of Lot 3 in Block 3 in the Hillside Addition. The cost of the property was \$1,500 and included a restrictive covenant tied to the warranty deed. Written as an early subdivision land use control, which was created to maintain critical levels of residential development in the neighborhood, the covenant stipulated the following requirement: "...as a past consideration of this deed, the party...agrees not to erect a building costing less than \$5,000..."^{xi}

The Bells commissioned Alonzo J. Grover, a Spokane architect, to design a house, which was to be built on their new hillside lots. Construction commenced and the house was completed the following year. Prominently featured, the Bell House was pictured in a July 26, 1908 *Spokesman-Review* article and was described as the "fine American residence of Dr. Bell." The article's headlines read:

DR. BELL'S HOME IS AMERICAN TYPE
Attractive Design Follows Distinctive Style of Architecture
Built at Cost of \$12,000
On Lincoln Between Ninth and Tenth Avenue—One of Finest
New Homes on South Hill^{xii}

With a \$12,000 price tag, the house more than met the minimum \$5,000 construction cost requirement mandated in the warranty deed's protective covenant, exceeding the minimum requirement by more than two times the required cost. Dr. Bell and his family lived in the house for ten years from 1908 to 1918.

Subsequent Homeowners

In May 1918, Claude D. and Mabel K. Randall bought the Bell House. Claude Randall was a Spokane attorney who partnered and practiced in the firms White & Randall and Randall & Danskin. The Randalls owned the property until 1942 when they sold it to salesman and mining engineer Ernest E. Eddy and his wife, Blanche A. Eddy. After the Eddys sold the property in 1956, it changed ownership seven times until

^{xi} *Spokane County Warranty Deed #165250*. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

^{xii} "Dr. Bell's Home Is American Type." *Spokesman-Review*, 26 July 1908, p. 6 (photo & plan drawing).

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Dr. Cynthia Hahn bought it on July 27, 1993. A Chicago native, Dr. Hahn currently practices in Spokane, specializing in neurosurgery.^{xiii}

SIGNIFICANCE (Criterion C)

The Bell House is architecturally significant for its ability to convey residential design, construction materials, and building practices that were popular during the early part of the 20th century. The house is an excellent example of the American Foursquare type with Craftsman-style influence, and was designed by Spokane architect Alonzo J. Grover.

Alonzo J. Grover, Architect

To date, the professional training and background of Alonzo J. Grover is not known. He is first listed in the 1908 *Spokane City Directory* as a professional architect in partnership with prominent Spokane architect Alfred Jones.^{xiv} They shared an office in Room 312 in the Mohawk Block, which was located on West Riverside Avenue in downtown Spokane. According to subsequent city directories, Grover's partnership and affiliation with Alfred Jones was short-lived, but he remained listed in the city directories as an architect through 1910. In 1911, Grover apparently changed professions and became the manager of the Spokane Scenic Theater Co. By 1913, he was listed as a salesman for the McCrea & Merryweather Store, for which he remained employed until 1916. The 1916 city directory lists Grover as a real estate agent, and even boasts an advertisement by his business in the sidebar of the directory. The next year however, Grover had moved on to yet another profession as the Secretary/Treasurer of the Efanjay Gold Mining Co. While Grover's profession is not listed in the 1918 or 1919 directories, he returned to his former occupation as a salesman by 1920.^{xv} After 1924, Grover is no longer listed in any Spokane city directories and it is unclear if he moved away from the city or died.

Grover designed at least two homes in Spokane: a house at 1332 S. Division and the Dr. Bell House at 917 S. Lincoln Street. He may have designed other Spokane homes, but no documentation has been found to substantiate this idea to date.

American Foursquare

The design for the Dr. Bell House was described in a 1908 newspaper article as "conspicuously individualistic...an attractive example of the modern American house, which follows independent lines..."^{xvi} The article stated:

Perhaps the most noticeable features of both the exterior and the interior are the unbroken lines throughout and the absence of

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^{xiii} *Spokane County Warranty Deeds*. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

^{xiv} Polk, R. L. *1908 Spokane City Directory*. Spokane, WA, p. 572.

^{xv} Polk, R. L. *1921 Spokane City Directory*. Spokane, WA, p. 416.

^{xvi} "Dr. Bell's Home Is American Type." *Spokesman-Review*, 26 July 1908, p. 6 (photo & plan drawing).

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ornamentation. Simplicity marks the finish as well as the plan of construction.^{xvii}

This early description of the home conforms to distinguishing characteristics of the American Foursquare type, of which the Bell House is an excellent example. Described in Lee and Virginia McAlester's book, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, the American Foursquare tradition is distinguished as a principal subtype within the context of the Prairie style of domestic architecture. Originated by acclaimed architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, and a group of creative architects and designers in Chicago from 1900 to 1920, the Prairie style emphasized simple horizontal lines and gave rise to the vernacular subtype called the American Foursquare, or Prairie Box. The American Foursquare tradition was spread widely by house pattern books and popular magazines, and was commonly built in early 20th-century suburbs across the country.^{xviii} By 1915 and World War I, America's foursquare house form had faded from fashion, but the "open floor plan, clean lines, and human scale associated with the style made a permanent mark on American architecture."^{xix}

Identifying features of the American Foursquare tradition include a symmetrical design; a low-pitched hip roof with widely overhanging eaves; two stories with one-story porches supported by massive porch piers; clapboard siding; wide belt courses or wood bands that separate one story from another; eaves, cornices and façade detailing emphasizing horizontal lines; and a front entrance that is a focal point of the home's façade. Interior design is focused around "four squares," which are four, first-floor rooms built around a central hall. The four rooms are usually designed as a living room, a dining room, a den/library, and a kitchen.^{xx}

American Foursquare elements found on the Bell House include the home's two-story formal massing in the shape of an almost square box, a low-pitched hip roof, wide overhanging boxed eaves, a symmetrical design with a full-width single-story covered front porch and central front door, massive porch supports, wood clapboard siding, and a wide wooden band that separates the first story from the second story. The first floor plan of the Bell House follows the American Foursquare plan.

The Bell House also contains strong Craftsman-style elements. On the exterior of the house, these include decorative scroll-sawn brackets found under the eaves, tapered porch piers, battered window and door surrounds, basalt rock foundation and porch wall, and the use of rough-textured, multi-colored, hobnailed

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^{xvii} "Dr. Bell's Home Is American Type." *Spokesman-Review*, 26 July 1908, p. 6 (photo & plan drawing).

^{xviii} McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Publishers, 1989, p. 439-440.

Note: the McAlesters call American Foursquare a subtype of the Prairie style.

^{xix} Carley, Rachel. *The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture*. New York: Henry Holt Publishers, 1994, p. 203.

Note: Carley calls American Foursquare a residential architectural style.

^{xx} McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Publishers, 1989, p. 439-451.

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clinker brick on the home's two chimneys. Craftsman elements found on the interior of the house include the liberal use of hand-rubbed oak, fir, and mahogany woodwork and floors, metal wall sconces, a built-in inglenook, and built-in closets and cupboards.

In summary, the Bell House is a fine, typical example of the American Foursquare house form embellished with Craftsman-style details. In the contest of Spokane homes, it is one of the best-preserved examples of the American Foursquare house type with Craftsman-style embellishment. In the smaller context of Spokane's lower South Hill neighborhood, an area where more than half of the neighborhood's late 19th-century and early 20th-century single-family homes have been either converted for use as apartment houses or demolished and replaced with modern condominiums or commercial infill, the Bell House stands out as one of the finest examples of its type and style, and as one of a few examples of a dwelling that is still being used as a single-family home.

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