

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 *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by providing 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

KOERNER HOUSE

2. Location

street & number

1824 South Mount Street

city or town

Spokane

vicinity

state

Washington

code

Washington

county

Spokane

code

063

zip code

99223

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 and title

Date

State or Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of commenting or other official and 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 with explanation

Edson H. Beall 7/28/99

Signature of Keeper
for

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

Category of Property

Number of Resources Within Property

☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

x building(s)
 ___ district
 ___ site
 ___ structure
 ___ object

Contributing
1

1

Non-Contributing
 ___building
 ___sites
 ___structures
 ___objects
 ___TOTAL NUMBER

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register?

6. Function or Use (Enter categories from instructions)

Historic Functions

category
sub-category

**Domestic
single dwelling**

Current Functions

category
sub-category

**Domestic
single dwelling**

7. Description (Enter categories from instructions)

Architectural Classification

Materials

foundation
roof
walls

LATE 19th/EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVALS

Stone - basalt
Wood - shingle
Wood - weatherboard

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for 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 a grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

Architecture

Period of Significance

1911-1912

Significant Dates

1911-1912

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

William Bowman, Contractor

Carl Koerner, Homeowner & Designer

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

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 Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ University

☐ Other State agency

☒ Local government

☐ Other

Name of repository

Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office
808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, WA 99201

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property	Less than 1 acre.
UTM Reference	Zone 11, Easting 472220, Northing 5276000
Verbal Boundary Description	First Addition to Stilson's Washington Park Subdivision, Lots 8 through 10, Block 4, and vacated 19th Avenue south of and adjacent to Lots 8 through 10 (parcel # 35281.0456).
Boundary Justification	The nominated property includes the entire parcel and urban legal description which contains the Koerner House.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Linda Yeomans
organization/title	Consultant
street & number	501 West 27th Avenue
city or town	Spokane
state	WA
zip code	99203
telephone	509-456-3828
email	lyeomans@uswest.net
date	20 January 1999

Additional Documentation (Submit the following items on continuation sheets with the completed form)

Map	One USGS map, 7.5 series
Photo documentation	20 black and white prints (two sets) 20 color slides (one set)

Property Owner

name	Brian Westmoreland
street & number	1824 South Mount Vernon
city or town	Spokane
state	WA
zip code	99223
telephone number	509-535-0694

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section 7 Page 1 **KOERNER HOUSE**
Spokane County, WA

Narrative Description

Summary Statement

Bearing a striking resemblance to the rustic chalets of Europe's Swiss and Bavarian Alps, the Koerner House is a hallmark example of the American Swiss Chalet architectural style--an exotic revival of the domestic Swiss Bernese Oberland tradition. Sited on a steeply wooded slope, the well-preserved Koerner House was built in 1912, and retains excellent interior and exterior architectural integrity.

1998 - Current Condition and Appearance

The Koerner House is located on Lots 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 on Block 4 of the First Addition to Stilson's Washington Park Subdivision. Platted nearly three miles southeast of downtown Spokane, the neighborhood is characterized by a steep slope as the land rises to a rocky, wooded bluff. Built at the base of the bluff, the house is located on the northwest corner of South Mount Vernon Street and East Nineteenth Avenue, now vacated and used as a private drive. The house faces north and east, and fronts onto Mount Vernon at number 1824. Set on a steep, north-facing slope of cultivated lawn, terraced rock gardens, and mature coniferous trees, the Koerner House commands a panoramic view of northeast Spokane. The property measures 250 feet wide and extends 150 feet downhill in a northerly direction from Nineteenth Avenue. The Koerner House is surrounded on all four sides by homes built from the early 1900s to the 1970s.

Exterior

The Koerner House is a fine example of the American residential Swiss Chalet architectural style. Defining features of the style include a low-pitched front-gabled roof with widely overhanging eaves, scalloped bargeboard, massive decorative brackets or corbelled consoles, rough-cut wood siding, and second-floor balconies and gallery porches with flat, cut-out balustrades. Displaying excellent architectural integrity, the well-preserved Koerner House exemplifies these elements.

The two-story Koerner House forms a slightly irregular, rectangular footprint measuring approximately 26 feet by 38 feet with nearly 1000 square feet on each floor. The house features a wood-shingled, front-gabled, low-pitched roof with prominent, widely overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails supported by powerful consoles composed of massive, corbelled, square-hewn log ends. A scalloped bargeboard highlights the roofline. A four-foot wide, second-floor gallery porch embellished with a decorative, flat, cut-out balustrade of rustic rough-cut cedar is a distinguishing feature of the house, and completely encircles the home. The gallery porch is supported by corbelled log-end consoles. The exterior of the house is clad in horizontal rough-cut pine shiplap siding stained dark brown. Outer corners are embellished with false V-notched log-ends. Together, the horizontal shiplap and false corner timbering give the impression of square-hewn log construction, a typical feature of the classic Bernese Oberland chalet. The house is supported by a 12- to 18-inch thick mortared basalt rock foundation.

The primary facade of the Koerner House faces east and features a first-floor porch supported by massive, battered, basalt rock piers. The porch is enclosed by a cut-out balustrade in the same design as that of the second-floor gallery. A green canvas awning stretched over a metal frame is attached to the house and extends over the porch. Multipaned French doors open from the porch as well as from the second-floor gallery. Fenestration includes multipaned paired casement windows. The facade's gable face is defined with vertical pine-plank cladding embellished with scalloped trim along the

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lower edge. The home's secondary facade faces north and is dominated by a one-car garage set beneath the front porch. Multipaned casement windows illuminate the first and second floors, and multipaned French doors open from the second-floor gallery to second-floor bedrooms. The west elevation of the house features a gable peak clad in vertical pine-plank cladding, and a second-floor gallery porch that extends over a one-story sunporch. The sunporch projects 12 feet from the house and is illuminated by rows of multipaned casement windows. A flat roof covering the sunporch is distinguished by a scalloped cornice board and projecting, decorative, scroll-sawn rafter tails. A small, one-story bay with a shed roof projects from the west elevation next to the sunporch. The rear, south elevation of the Koerner House is dominated by a first-floor addition constructed in 1924. The addition is clad in stained pine shiplap siding, and features a multipaned bay window. The roof of the addition is flat forming a deck and extension of the second-floor gallery porch. Designed as a continuation of the second-floor gallery balustrade, a flat, cut-out balustrade encloses the deck. A window box ledge supported by decorative brackets extends from beneath a multipaned casement window next to the addition. Second-floor fenestration located on the rear, south elevation includes multipaned casement windows.

Interior

The interior space of the Koerner House comprises a sunporch, family room, living room, dining room, kitchen, three bedrooms, a full bathroom, and a powder room. Multipaned French doors open from the front porch into the home's spacious living room that measures 14 feet wide by 28 feet long. The living room and dining room are dominated by fir woodwork with a black walnut finish. The rooms' eight-foot high ceilings feature decorative crown molding, and are intersected by massive boxed beams. The focal point of the living room is an interior brick fireplace with a raised hearth and a massive, bracketed wood mantel. The base of the hearth is protected by two strips of hammered iron, and original andirons embellish the firebox. An inglenook located next to the fireplace contains a built-in seat. The north wall of the living room is illuminated by a row of divided light casement windows located above a 12-foot long, built-in window seat flanked by built-in bookshelves. The entry from the living room to the dining room is flanked by two partial-wall partitions with wood slats capped by decorative stained-glass panels. The dining room features an east-wall bay window and bracketed plate rails. The dining room opens south to an addition with a bay window, powder room, and decorative woodwork. Leaded-glass doors lead from the living room and dining room to the kitchen. Located in the southwest corner of the house, the kitchen features original painted pine cabinets, and opens to a west-wall sunporch. The sunporch floor is covered in fir planks while the kitchen, living, and dining room floors are covered in narrow strips of solid maple flooring. A turned staircase located between the kitchen and living room leads to a bathroom and three bedrooms on the second floor. Woodwork on the second floor is painted pine except for red fir-finished closet doors located in the master bedroom. Second floor ceilings measure eight feet, and part of the fir-planked floor is covered with wall-to-wall carpet. The basement features storage space, a laundry room, and a workshop area with nine-foot high ceilings. The basement floor is composed of poured cement. The original circa-1912 hot water boiler continues to warm the house with gas-fired hot water heat.

Original Appearance and Subsequent Alterations

1912 Original Design and 1924 Addition

The Koerner House is well-preserved and retains excellent integrity found in original exterior rough-cut pine shiplap siding, decorative cut-out porch and gallery balustrades, multipaned casement windows, and French doors. Black and

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white photographs taken in the 1920s depict original first-floor plan, interior woodwork, dining room wall partitions, built-in window seat and inglenook, brick hearth and fireplace, hardwood floors, and Craftsman-style ceiling lights located at the intersections of boxed ceiling beams. The photographs also reveal a glass-enclosed solarium with an interior brick floor, water fountain, and goldfish pond. The solarium was constructed in 1924 and attached to the south, rear elevation of the house.

1941 Alterations

The interior of the Koerner House was remodeled in 1941. The second-floor bathroom walls and floor were re-tiled, and the fixtures (toilet, washbasin, bathtub) were replaced with bathroom fixtures manufactured from 1930-1940. An interior wall that divided the south bedroom from the nursery located in the southwest corner of the house was removed. Wall-to-wall carpet was laid over the fir-planked floors. On the first floor, dark stained woodwork including platerails, brackets, dining room wall partitions, and built-in window seat was removed. The woodwork was replaced with painted pine featuring an "antique ivory" finish. The inglenook was removed, and the fireplace bricks and mantel were covered with 3/8-inch plywood sheeting also finished in "antique ivory." The stairway was replaced with a balustrade and newel post constructed of Swedish steel.

1950s-1970s Alterations

Due to extensive fire damage sustained in 1952, the original French doors of the garage were replaced with a paneled, electric-powered, automatic door. By 1970, the roof's original hand-sawn wood shingles had been replaced with cedar shakes. Due to damage caused by tree roots, a doorway leading to the cellar was covered with a small, one-story addition that projects slightly from the home's west elevation. The addition is covered with a shed roof and houses garden tools. In 1972, the solarium was rebuilt to serve as a library-TV room, and was finished with multipaned windows and rough-cut exterior pine shiplap that matches the home's original shiplap siding. The flat roof of the solarium was covered with built-up tar and used as a second-story deck. A cut-out wood balustrade duplicating the design of the home's original gallery and porch balustrades was constructed around the perimeter of the deck. The home's heating system was changed from coal to oil, and finally to gas-fired hot water heat before the 1980s retaining the original hot water boiler.

1990s Alterations and Restoration

Restoration of part of the home's first and second floors occurred from 1991 to 1994, and was based on the discovery of original woodwork removed from the house in 1941. The restoration was also based on black and white photographs taken in the 1920s as well as artistic interpretation of original interior architectural details that cannot be seen in the photographs. Some of the woodwork including ceiling brackets, head casing, and bookcase parts were found and reinstalled. The stairway, balustrade, newel post, inglenook, window seat, and other interior trim were reconstructed duplicating those pictured in the circa-1920s photographs. Designs for decorative partitions located between the living and dining rooms were based on artistic interpretation of what little partition detail is pictured in the photographs, and from partition footprints revealed on the floor when the carpet was removed. The brick fireplace and hearth were uncovered and restored, and the original andirons were reinstalled. Carpet and linoleum were removed, and the maple and fir floors were refinished. Walls and ceilings were refinished, and turn-of-the-century light fixtures similar to those pictured in the photographs were hung.

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The exterior of the Koerner House and the home's landscaped grounds have also undergone repair and restoration. The porch and balustrade located at the northeast corner of the home were repaired and rebuilt. A metal-framed awning covered with canvas was installed over the porch. Extensive work to repair and maintain the manicured lawns, terraced gardens, and rock walls has been started. Continuing the driveway's curve through the property, brick pavers that match the originals are being laid. Entrance gates located in the perimeter rock walls that face Nineteenth Avenue and Mount Vernon Street are being restored with the gate's original hardware found on the property.

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Significance Summary

Summary Statement

Listed on the Spokane Register of Historic Places, the well-preserved Koerner House was built in 1912, and is one of the finest homes in Spokane. An excellent example of the American Swiss Chalet architectural style, the Koerner House can be compared to chalets located in the European Swiss Alps, and to designs rendered by noted architects and designers P. F. Robinson, Andrew Jackson Downing, and Kirtland Cutter. Following plans drawn by the homeowner and his architect, the Koerner House was constructed by building contractor William Bowman for Carl Koerner, a successful Spokane accountant, and his wife Mathilda. The chalet is perched on a wooded hillside in southeast Spokane and commands a spectacular view of the city and distant mountain peaks. In addition, the Koerner House is surrounded by native basalt rock walls, terraced gardens, and curved pathways reflecting romantic landscape design elements promoted by the famed Olmsted Brothers Architectural Landscape firm. Architecturally significant in the context of the Swiss Chalet architectural style, the well-built Koerner House displays the work of an accomplished craftsman, and is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C.

Historical Context

Early Spokane

Spokane is the commercial center of an area approximately 200 miles in diameter known as the Inland Empire. Ancient, powerful, cataclysmic events produced the scenic beauty of the area's rugged topography displayed in rocky outcroppings, basalt bluffs, and massive rimrocks that overlook Spokane and the Spokane River. The city is sheltered by mountain ranges to the north and northeast, and is marked by a series of waterfalls formed by the river as it plunges in elevation. Before 1870, Spokane was a favorite fishing area for various Indian tribes. Derived from the Indian word *spokan* which means "children of the sun," the town was named Spokane in honor of the Indians who lived in the area. Drawn by the area's natural beauty and untapped resources, fur traders, frontiersmen, and pioneers settled in the town and, by 1880, Spokane's population had reached 500. Along with the river's water power, the city gained recognition as a center for mining, lumber, and agriculture. Beginning with utilization of the area's natural resources and the arrival of transcontinental rail lines in the late 1880s, Spokane experienced a period of fantastic fortune, city boosterism, and unprecedented growth with a population exceeding 100,000 by 1910. Prosperous Spokane homeowners commissioned architects and builders to design and build their custom-designed homes throughout the city. An array of home styles were constructed ranging from imposing Queen Anne and Tudor Revival style houses to simple Craftsman bungalows, vernacular gable-front houses, and a small number of houses designed in the American Swiss Chalet style—including the Koerner House.

Riverview Addition and the First Addition to Washington Park Subdivision

Previous to 1887, Riverview Addition and Stilson's Washington Park Subdivision comprised unplatted, undeveloped land at the base of a steep, wooded, rocky bluff. The landscape was characterized by basalt outcroppings and open fields with farms and orchards surrounded by thick stands of fir, spruce and pine trees. Commanding an uninterrupted panoramic vista of the city and distant mountain ranges to the north, the area offered some of the most picturesque and desirable building sites in early Spokane. The land was originally platted after 1887 as Riverview Addition, and extended north from the base of the bluff to Fourteenth Avenue, and from Crestline east to Regal Street. Lincoln Park, fronting Seventeenth Avenue, was planned as the addition's focal point, and comprises nearly a third of the area.

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In 1907, a small four-block area located in Riverview Addition's southeast corner was replatted as Stilson's First Addition to Washington Park Subdivision. The small addition is sited on a north-facing slope with lots measuring 50 feet wide and 130 feet deep. Located three miles from the town's central business district, the addition formed part of early Spokane's southeast city limit. Although somewhat remote, the area offered affordable lots with mature evergreen trees, abundant wildlife, and incredible viewsheds of the city and northern mountain peaks. The addition's picturesque setting beckoned prospective homeowners to enjoy life in the country, but also within the city and its conveniently located amenities. Following the replat, Lincoln Park was landscaped, and Franklin Elementary School was erected on Seventeenth Avenue. Roads were built, a sewer system was installed, city water and electricity were supplied, and public transportation linked the neighborhood to downtown Spokane. By 1930, the small addition was developed and settled with most of the homes representing vernacular adaptations of the Craftsman bungalow style. Distinguished from the other neighborhood houses by style, size, and setting, the Koerner House is the only Swiss Chalet style house in the First Addition to Washington Park Subdivision, and is one of the finest examples of the architectural style in Spokane.

Carl C. Koerner

Carl C. Koerner was born in Indiana on March 12, 1877. He came to Spokane and was employed as chief clerk for the North Coast Railway Company in 1910. He worked as an accountant and auditor for several Spokane businesses including the Hanauer-Graves Real Estate Company, Railway and Lumberman's Exchange, Oregon-Washington Railroad and Navigation Company, Washington Mill Company, Union Trust and Savings Bank, Weyerhaeuser Sales Company, and the Clearwater Timber Company. Carl Koerner and his wife Mathilda raised two sons--Carl, Jr. and Courtland. The Koerner family lived in their Swiss Chalet style home for 32 years until Carl's death in 1944.

Other Owners of the Koerner House

After Carl Koerner's death in 1944, Mathilda Koerner sold the property to Ellamae and William Biklen who worked as an accountant and treasurer for Spokane's *Spokesman-Review* newspaper. In 1952, the house suffered fire damage when flames ignited the garage located beneath the front porch, and the Biklens spent \$2700 to repair the damage. After 28 years, the Biklens sold the house in 1972 to prominent Spokane attorney Harve Phipps and his wife Alta. Soon after they purchased the Koerner House, the Phipps rebuilt the solarium changing its use from a greenhouse to a library and family room. The Phipps lived in the house for 19 years until 1991, when they sold it to Geoff and Kathryn Loftin, owners of Luminaria--Spokane's principle antique lighting source. The Loftins are credited with interior work to the Koerner House including the restoration of maple- and fir-planked floors, interior walls and ceilings, woodwork, fireplace, stairway, and light fixtures. Brian Westmoreland, a successful Spokane investment broker, bought the house in 1997. In addition to extensive landscaping, Brian rebuilt and continues to repair the property's brick-paved driveway, original rock walls, and wooden gates.

The Koerner House

Lured by the cliff's rugged beauty and the hillside's spectacular city views, Carl Koerner bought Lot 10 from William and Jennie Mainland in 1910 for \$550. Ten months later in August, 1911, Carl and his wife Mathilda purchased Lot 9 for an additional \$500. By 1917, the Koerners had purchased Lot 8 for \$400, and before his death in 1944, Carl bought Lots 6 and 7 west and adjacent to his property. The additional land brought the Nineteenth Avenue frontage to 250 feet.

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The warranty deeds conveyed to the Koerners for the purchase of their property contained protective subdivision restrictions designed as early land use controls. Initiated to protect and perpetuate neighborhood development and design, the deeds' covenants restricted the construction of homes costing less than \$1000. The documents stated the Koerners' house must "be of modern style of architecture" and that no "outhouses or barn shall be erected and used as a dwelling before the construction of the main dwelling house." The covenant further prohibited buildings erected for "business purposes of any kind." By the time the Koerners had finished building their Swiss Chalet style house on Mt. Vernon Street, they had exceeded the deed's minimum cost requirement by more than seven times.

Construction of the Koerner House commenced in 1911 and was completed in 1912. Working in Spokane for four years from 1910 through 1913, building contractor William H. Bowman was in charge of the project. A *Spokesman-Review* article printed January 28, 1912, pictured the newly constructed Koerner House with a headline that read,

"C. C. Koerner Builds Most Original Home on Nineteenth Avenue."

The article described the Koerner House as,

"a new home. . . which in its completeness, numerous features and absolute departure from conventional architecture is a type of home worthy of study and admiration at the same time. It is a Swiss Chalet, attractive and imposing, yet modest, and representing a reasonable expenditure of about \$7000. It is enhanced by the natural beauty of the site, one of the rarest of the many view sites in the southeast portion of the city."

The *Spokesman-Review* article also noted that "Mr. Koerner planned the detail of the house himself." According to a written account authored by the Koerner's son Courtland, Carl Koerner enlisted the help of an expert and hired an architect to help him design his house. Citing Courtland Koerner's descriptive summary, the man responsible for designing the Koerner House was one who was "educated in and who traveled extensively in Europe," and who also "understood and was especially familiar with Swiss architecture." Koerner gives the designer's surname only as Moe. *Spokane City Directories* issued from 1905 to 1920 do not list any architects by the name of Moe. However, the 1911 *Spokane City Directory*--published the same year construction of the Koerner House began--specifically lists Peter Moe as a draftsman working for prominent Spokane architect Carl Jabelonsky. Perhaps Koerner worked closely with draftsman Peter Moe whose work was overseen by Moe's employer and tutor, architect Carl Jabelonsky. In addition, Jabelonsky--an architect born and trained in Sweden--may have been the European-traveled and educated architect Koerner remembered. Jabelonsky came to Spokane in 1908 and worked in the area until 1915. His documented work in Spokane includes designs for the Wilton Hotel and Hogan Apartments as well as homes at 1722 West 11th Avenue and 527 East Rockwood Boulevard. Like the Koerner House, the house on Rockwood Boulevard (called the Turner House) was built in 1911--the same year the Koerner House was erected--and displays architectural elements reminiscent of homes found in the Bavarian Alps of Europe.

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Spokane County, WA

Architectural Significance

The Swiss Chalet Style

Adapted from the Bernese Oberland architectural tradition of the European Swiss Alps, the Koerner House is a textbook example of the Swiss Chalet architectural style popular in America during the Victorian Era's Romantic Period. In their book *A Field Guide to American Houses* (1984), Virginia and Lee McAlester describe the American Swiss Chalet style as an exotic revival of decorative ornamentation. The "very rare style" borrowed architectural elements from residential Swiss domestic practice where domesticated farm animals and people resided in the same two-story house. Built especially in mountainous regions, the style was constructed across the United States from 1835 to 1890, but was not seen in Spokane until the late 1800s. Architectural historian Lester Walker writes in his book *American Shelter: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of the American Home* (1981):

"... the genuine Swiss cottage, or chalet, was perhaps the most appealing of wood-built houses. The rudeness of its construction and its often wild and romantic site gave the Swiss Cottage Style a rustic, yet quaint aesthetic that became quite desirable in the northern part of America where snow fell. The American version, of course, neither piled large stones on the roof nor gave up the first floor to cows. But the essential character was retained with the abundant use of galleries, balconies, large windows, and rough-cut lumber as a primary building material. Roofs were allowed to project widely around the building to create deep shadows, and stone was used in a raised foundation to further rustication."

The American version of the Swiss Chalet architectural style also differs from the European Bernese Oberland prototype in its method of construction. Bernese Oberland construction is defined by horizontally laid hewn-timber walls tied by interlocking corner notching. The American Swiss chalet was usually constructed with a balloon frame sheathed in horizontal, rough-cut, shiplap siding. However, the use of false corner timbering and massive consoles of corbelled log-ends in American prototypes conveys the outward appearance of the heavily timbered Bernese Oberland model.

The site for a house built in the Swiss Chalet style was also important. Published in 1850, Andrew Jackson Downing's house pattern book *The Architecture of Country Houses* stressed the home's building site needed to "be bold, [and] mountainous if possible, on the side or bottom of a heavily wooded hill...where the spirit of the house would [not] be lost" (Walker, 1981).

The Koerner House

Due to the area's late settlement after 1870, and the town's remote geographic location before railroad travel linked it to the rest of the country, the Swiss Chalet style was not seen in Spokane until 1887. Representing a late revival of the style, the Koerner House was built three decades later in 1912 when the city peaked with good fortune and an unparalleled population surge. Spokane's rugged, rocky, wooded cliffs produced the ideal setting for the construction of a Swiss Chalet style house. Set at the base of a steep bluff among tall stands of pine and spruce trees, the Koerner House is sited in the typical Swiss Chalet tradition. The house exemplifies the American Swiss Chalet architectural style and includes the following defining features: a low-pitched, gable-front, cedar shake roof with widely overhanging eaves,

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scalloped boards, exposed rafter tails supported by massive corbelled consoles, and rough-cut wood exterior cladding with false corner timbering that resembles hewn-timber walls. Defining features also include a second-story gallery porch with a flat, cut-out balustrade, multipaned fenestration, and native basalt rock porch piers and foundation.

Compare and Contrast

The Koerner House is strikingly similar to British architect P. F. Robinson's circa-1823 design for a "Swiss cottage...bold and strong in outline" as pictured in his book *Rural Architecture*. Robinson's "Swiss cottage" featured a low-pitched, front-gabled roof with widely pronounced overhanging eaves supported by massive brackets that mimic the roof and eave design of the Koerner House. In addition, Robinson's cottage is highlighted with a second-story gallery embellished with a decorative, flat, cut-out balustrade and trim that are defining features of the Koerner House.

Elements of the Koerner House can also be seen in a house design popularized in 1850 by Andrew Jackson Downing in his pattern book *The Architecture of Country Houses*. Jackson described the Swiss cottage style as "bold and striking in outline, especially in its widely projecting roof, which is peculiarly adapted to a snowy country." Along with a low-pitched roof and decorative eave brackets, Jackson's cottage featured a second-floor gallery embellished with a flat, cut-out balustrade similar to the Koerner House gallery and balustrade.

In addition, the gable-front form and stylistic design elements of the Koerner House are amazingly similar to those depicted on the Idaho State Building from the 1893 Columbia World Exposition in Chicago. Both the Koerner House and the Idaho State Building feature dominant defining elements of high style Swiss Chalet architecture: a low-pitched roof with greatly overhanging eaves supported by massive, corbelled consoles made of hewn-log ends, and decorative galleries that encircle part of the building. Designed by famed Spokane architect Kirtland Cutter, the Idaho State Building was "pronounced by all to be the most attractive state building at the fair" (Matthews, 1998). The Idaho State Building was dismantled after the fair in Chicago, and was removed to Wisconsin where it eventually fell into disrepair and was demolished. A legacy to Cutter's exposition pavilion design, a replica of the Idaho State Building was constructed for a wealthy gentleman in Ringwood, England in 1896-97, and called "Idaho."

Locally, the Koerner House can be compared and contrasted to other homes in the area that reflect the Swiss Chalet architectural style. Many houses built in Spokane during the early part of the twentieth century are vernacular examples of the Swiss Chalet style, and feature simple, front-gabled roofs, decorative eave brackets, and small, second-floor balconies with decorative cut-out balustrades. These vernacular examples are usually considered to be Craftsman style bungalows with Swiss Chalet style ornamentation. Many bungalows were influenced by the Swiss Chalet style, and were built in America from 1905 to 1930.

High style examples of the Swiss Chalet style, however, feature widely exaggerated overhanging roof eaves supported by powerful, corbelled consoles, and second-floor galleries and balconies with decorative, flat, cut-out balustrades and trim. These landmark examples are limited to only a few chalets in the Spokane area. They include Chalet Hohenstein (built in 1887) and the Finch Caretaker's House at Hayden Lake (1904)--both demolished or destroyed. Four existing chalets include the Koerner House, the Earl Browne House at 5807 South Dearborn Road (1908), the Corbaley House at 744 West 12th Avenue (1909), and the Lang House at 1034 West 7th Avenue (1911).

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The Koerner House is remarkably similar to Chalet Hohenstein as shown in architectural renderings and historic photographs. Spokane's renowned architect Kirtland Kelsey Cutter designed his own home--Chalet Hohenstein--in the Swiss Chalet architectural style. Like Carl Jabelonsky--the architect that is, perhaps, responsible for the Koerner House design, Kirtland Cutter also studied in Europe and was exposed to Swiss Chalet design found in the Bavarian and Swiss Alps. Cutter's Chalet Hohenstein was built in 1887, and was located on West Seventh Avenue at the base of a steep rocky, wooded bluff--a setting similar to that of the Koerner House. The Koerner House was also like Chalet Hohenstein in form and detail. Chalet Hohenstein and the Koerner House were both defined by a low-pitched, gable-front roof with exaggerated, widely overhanging eaves supported by massive consoles, a porch gallery with a flat, cut-out balustrade, and by rough-cut wood shiplap siding. Sadly, Cutter's Chalet Hohenstein was demolished in the 1970s.

The Koerner House was also similar to the another chalet designed by Cutter. Built in 1904, the Finch Caretaker's House was located at Hayden Lake, Idaho, and held stylistic similarities to the Koerner House including a low-pitched roof with widely overhanging eaves, corbelled consoles, shiplap siding, cut-out balustrades, and multipaned casement windows. Like the Koerner House, the interior spaces of both Chalet Hohenstein and the Finch Caretaker's House were designed in the Craftsman tradition with walnut-finished woodwork and built-in window seats. In contrast to the Finch Caretaker's House, the Koerner House is distinguished with a dominant feature of the Swiss Chalet style--a second-story gallery that encircles the entire house. The Finch Caretaker's House had only a balcony and no gallery. As was Cutter's Chalet Hohenstein, the Finch Caretaker's House was also destroyed (by fire).

Three high style chalets exist in Spokane that are similar to the Koerner House: the Earl Browne House, the Corbaley House, and the Lang House. Like the Koerner House, all three chalets reveal low-pitched, front-gable roofs with pronounced, widely overhanging eaves supported by massive consoles. None of the three homes, however, feature a second-floor gallery like the Koerner House. All three chalets retain architectural integrity, but the original balcony is missing from the Corbaley House, and the front porch of the Earl Browne House appears to have been altered and closed in with windows. Similar to the Koerner House, the Lang House is partially clad in wood siding while the Corbaley House and the Earl Browne House are clad in stucco and brick veneer. Regarding appropriate homesites, all of the chalets are located on hillsides, but the Koerner House is sited on a particularly remote, steeply wooded slope with terraced gardens and rock walls that produce the romantic ambiance that architect Andrew Jackson Downing noted was so critical to homes designed in the Swiss Chalet style.

In summary, the Koerner House stands out as a landmark example of the American Swiss Chalet architectural style. It also demonstrates early Spokane neighborhood development in Stilson's First Addition to Washington Park Subdivision, and the community's subsequent settlement. The Koerner House is well preserved and retains excellent historic and architectural integrity in its original location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, and in its association with early Spokane. Along with historic and architectural integrity, the Koerner House reflects the work of a master craftsman, and is eligible for listing in the area of "Architecture" under Criterion C on the National Register of Historic Places.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

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Additional Documentation

Photo Documentation *

- Photo number 1: Northeast corner of north facade.
 2: North facade of house.
 3: East facade of house.
 4: East facade of house.
 5: Northeast corner of house, east facade.
 6: North facade, basement-level featuring single-car garage door beneath porch.
 7: Northwest corner of house.
 8: North facade of house with balustrade detail.
 9: West elevation featuring sunporch detail.
 10: West elevation featuring sunporch and upper deck detail.
 11: South, rear elevation of house.
 12: Sunporch interior looking southwest, first floor.
 13: First-floor living room looking northwest.
 14: First-floor living room fireplace looking west.
 15: First-floor living room fireplace looking east into dining room.
 16: First-floor living room staircase and inglenook next to fireplace.
 17: First-floor dining room looking east through window.
 18: First-floor looking south from living room through dining room into TV room.
 19: First-floor dining room French doors looking south.
 20: First-floor kitchen looking southeast.

** All photos taken in 1998 by preservation consultant and nomination author Linda Yeomans who holds original negatives.*

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KOERNER HOUSE
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Photo 1: Northeast corner of facade. Photos taken in 1999.
Photo 2: North facade of house.



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Photos 3 and 4:

East facade of house. Photos taken in 1999.



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Photo 5: Northeast corner of house at east facade. Photos taken in 1999.
Photo 6: North facade, basement level featuring single-car garage door beneath porch.



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Photo 7: Northwest corner and north facade of house. Photos taken in 1999.
Photo 8: North facade of house with balustrade detail.



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KOERNER HOUSE
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Photo 9: West elevation of house. Photos taken in 1998.
Photo 10: West elevation sunporch.



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KOERNER HOUSE
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- Photo 11: South, rear elevation of house. Photos taken in 1998.
Photo 12: Sunporch interior looking southwest.



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KOERNER HOUSE
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Photo 13:

First-floor living room looking north out windows. Photos taken in 1998.

Photo 14:

First-floor living room fireplace looking west.



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Photo 15: First-floor living room fireplace looking east into dining room. Photos taken in 1998.
Photo 16: First-floor living room - staircase and inglenook next to fireplace.



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KOERNER HOUSE
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Photo 17: First-floor dining room looking east out of window. Photos taken in 1998.

Photo 18: First-floor looking south from living room through dining room into TV room.



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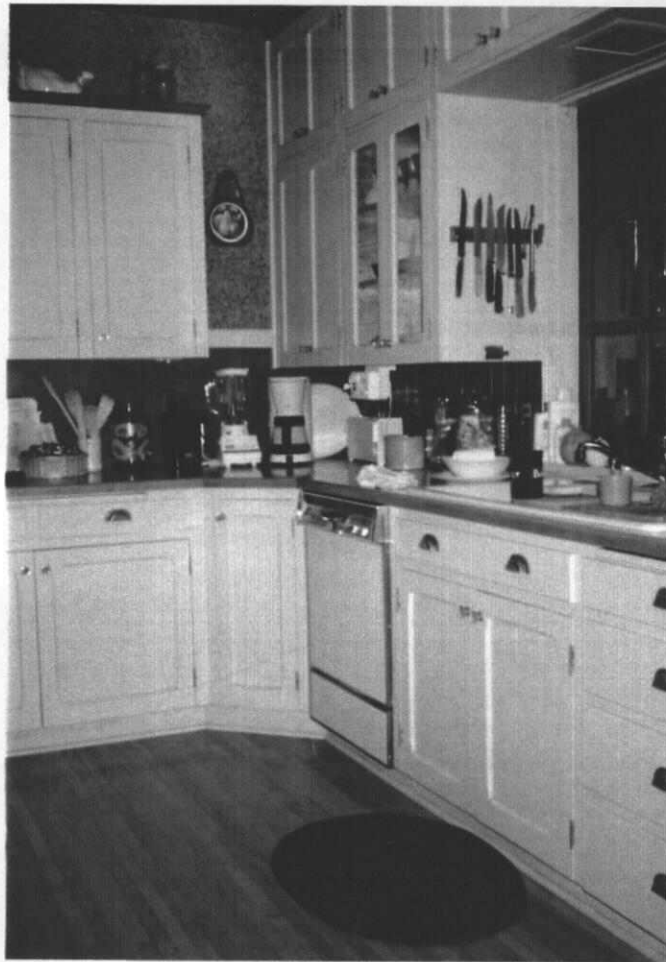
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Photo 19:

First-floor dining room French doors looking into TV room. Photos taken in 1998.

Photo 20:

First-floor kitchen looking southeast.



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Photo 21: North facade of house. Photos taken in 1998.
Photo 22: East facade and northeast corner of house.



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- Photo 23: North facade of house with basement-level garage door, first-floor porch, and second-story gallery. Photos taken in 1998.
- Photo 24: North facade of house with balustrade detail.



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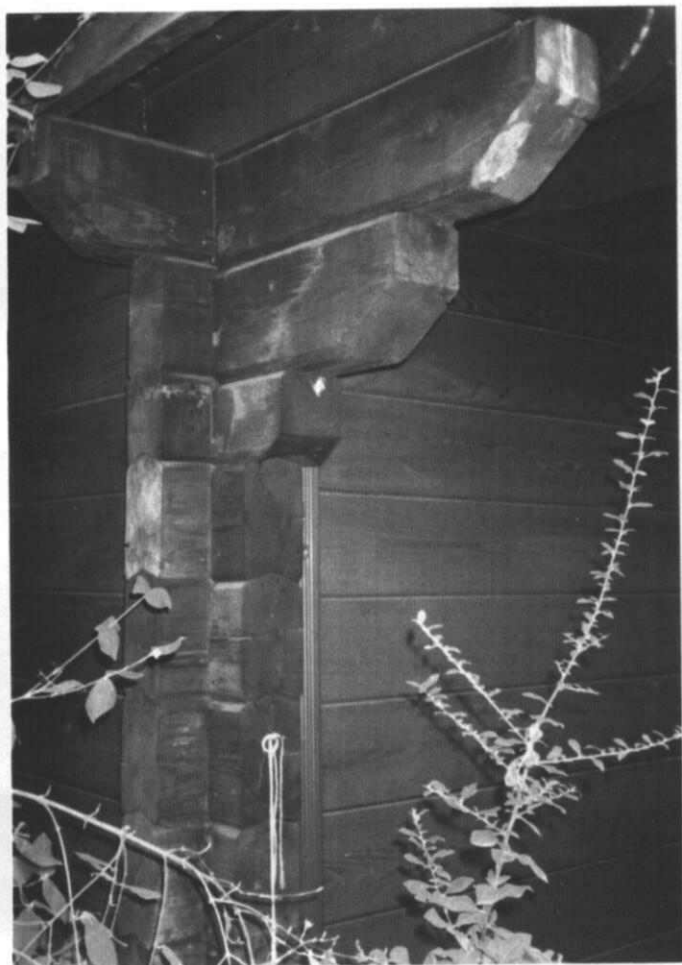
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Photo 25:

Corbelled console detail. Photo taken in 1998.

Photo 26:

East elevation sunporch and exposed rafter tails. Photo taken in 1997.



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Photo 27: First-floor living room fireplace inglenook and stairwell. Photos taken in 1998.
Photo 28: First-floor living room window seat looking north out window.



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KOERNER HOUSE
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- Photo 29: First-floor living room looking through to dining room and east-wall windows. Photos taken in 1998.
- Photo 30: First-floor interior sunporch looking southwest.

