

Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination

*Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office, City Hall, 3rd Floor
808 W. Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, WA 99201*

1. HISTORIC NAME

Historic Name **COOPER-GEORGE APARTMENTS &
GARAGE**

Common Name

2. LOCATION

Street & Number W. 707 Fifth Avenue
City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99204
Parcel Number 35192.5221

3. CLASSIFICATION

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both		<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> residential
	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes, restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
Site	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other
<input type="checkbox"/> moved			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

Name Cooper George LLC
Street & Number 1410 NW Kearney Street #511
City, State, Zip Code Portland, OR 97209
Telephone Number/E-mail c/o Jeb Koerner, job.koerner@gerdingedlen.com,
503-299-6000, 503-539-6204

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds Spokane County Courthouse
Street Number 1116 West Broadway
City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99201
County Spokane

6. REPRESENTATION OF EXISTING SURVEYS

Title City of Spokane Historic Landmarks Survey
Date Federal____ State____ County____ Local____
Location of Survey Records Spokane Historic Preservation Office

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7. DESCRIPTION

(continuation sheets attached)

Architectural Classification

Condition

☒ excellent

☐ good

☐ fair

☐ deteriorated

☐ ruins

☐ unexposed

Check One

☐ unaltered

☒ altered

Check One

☒ original site

☐ moved & date

8. SPOKANE REGISTER CATEGORIES & STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

(continuation sheets attached)

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

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

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method or construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory history.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bibliography is found on one or more continuation sheets.

10. DIGITAL PHOTOS, MAPS, SITE PLANS, ARTICLES, ETC.

Items are found on one or more continuation sheets.

11. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property

More than one acre (parcel measures 46,360 square feet).

Verbal Boundary Description

Amended Plat of Blocks A & B of Second Addition to Spokane Railroad Addition.

Verbal Boundary Justification

Nominated property includes entire parcel and urban legal description.

12. FORM PREPARED BY

Name and Title

Linda Yeomans, Consultant

Organization

Historic Preservation Planning & Design

Street, City, State, Zip Code

501 West 27th Avenue, Spokane, WA 99203

Telephone Number

509-456-3828

Email Address

lindayeomans@comcast.net

Date Final Nomination Heard

April 18, 2018

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88 ~~MALLEN HOUSE~~

Cooper-George Apartments

13. SIGNATURE(S) OF OWNER(S)



14. FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Date nomination application filed: 3/22/18


Date of Landmarks Commission Hearing: 4/18/18

Landmarks Commission decision: 4/18/18

Date of City Council/Board of County Commissioners' hearing: 5/7/18

City Council/Board of County Commissioners' decision: _____

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



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

4/26/18
Date



Attest:

Approved as to form:


City Clerk


Assistant City Attorney



Cooper-George Apartments 2018

SECTION 7: DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

Summary Description

Erected in 1952, the Cooper-George Apartments and Cooper-George Garage are excellent examples of its type—a modern reinforced-concrete, multi-storied, multi-family commercial apartment building and parking garage. The Cooper-George Apartments and Garage are surrounded by a busy hospital/medical center on Spokane, Washington's South Hill, one mile uphill from downtown Spokane. The 13-floor apartment building is tall, soaring 130 feet in height from a steep hillside, and reveals stylistic influence from the International tradition, a mid-century modern style popular from 1925 to 1965. The building's International-Style influence is well-displayed by its boxy geometric shape, flat roof, sleek concrete exterior walls, minimal decorative ornamentation, and symmetrically placed vertical bands of windows. Located next west of the apartment building, the two-story Cooper-George Garage was also built in 1952 as part of the

apartment complex. The parking garage mimics the boxy shape, flat roof, and smooth concrete cladding of the apartment building. In excellent condition, the Cooper-George Apartments and Cooper-George Garage retain a high degree of exterior integrity in original location, design, materials, workmanship, and association.

CURRENT CONDITION & APPEARANCE

Site

The Cooper-George Apartments and Garage are located on the amended plat of Blocks A and B in the Second Railroad Addition to Spokane at the southwest intersection corner of West Fifth Avenue and South Wall Street. Sited across from one of the city's most prominent medical centers, the Cooper-George Apartments and Garage are surrounded by numerous multi-story buildings, including hospitals/clinics/medical buildings, historic apartment buildings, and an historic school as well as contemporary commercial building infill, paved parking lots, and a directionally correct gridwork of paved city streets. The plat on which the Cooper-George Apartments and Garage are sited has an irregular "dog-leg" footprint and is a little larger than one acre with 46,360 square feet.¹ The property's north border along Fifth Avenue measures 230 feet wide, the east border along Wall Street measures 234 feet deep, and the west border measures 170 feet deep. The south border measures 140 feet wide from the southeast corner of the site, turns north for 64 feet, and then west for 50 feet to meet the west border. The parcel of land on which the apartments and garage are sited has a steep grade, which descends north to West Fifth Avenue.

Exterior of the Cooper-George Apartments

At this writing in 2018, the Cooper-George Apartments are currently under construction. The footprint for the Cooper-George Apartments is irregular as it forms a cruciform, or cross shape. The building is made of steel-reinforced concrete on a concrete foundation, has a flat built-up roof, small parapet, painted metal roof coping, and rises to a height of 130 feet. The apartment building was erected on the east half of the parcel at the intersection of Fifth Avenue and Wall Street, while the Cooper-George Garage was built on the west end of the property. The building's cross shape features identical, directionally correct wings with a north wing, south wing, east wing, and west wing. The building measures approximately 192 feet deep from the north face of the north wing to the south face of the rear south wing, and 120 feet wide from the west face of the west wing to the east face of the east wing. Each wing has full-height projecting vertical box bays. Nearly the entire apartment building is clad by taut concrete with minimal ornamentation. The face of each wing is articulated with a wide, decorative, full-height vertical panel of highly modulated vertical concrete fluting. Symmetrically aligned vertical rows of windows punctuate the building's wings and canted center core. The windows are a combination of tripartite units and smaller, single fixed-pane windows. Half of the tripartite window units include a fixed center pane and two narrow flanking fixed panes. In contrast, the remaining tripartite windows have a center fixed-pane flanked by two narrow double-hung 1/1 windows. In 2017, vinyl sash windows of a very

¹ Spokane County Assessor records, 2018. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

similar design as the previous window units replaced heavily damaged/deteriorated aluminum-sash casement windows (it is not known if the previous windows were original or were replacement windows that may have replaced the original windows during numerous remodels during the 1980s and 1992).² The Cooper-George Apartment building's strongest design feature is its easily recognizable tall, vertical massing, wings and bays, face panels of concrete fluting, and rows of multiple windows that all work together to help delineate and distinguish the building's strong vertical design emphasis.

The front entrance on the first floor of the building faces northeast from the angled canted recess between the north and east wings, and is covered with a single-story front porch canopy with a flat roof (former roof canopy was lost to advanced deterioration and damage). Like the previous canopy, the current canopy extends 15 feet forward in a northeasterly direction from the canted core of the building, forming a covered area that protects residents and guests from elements of the weather. Aluminum-sash display windows and front doors are made of safety glass with aluminum and steel frames. The current windows and doors are not original but were installed by previous owners in remodeling during the early and middle 1980s and 1992.³

On the west side of the apartment building is a rear secondary entrance located at the first floor's canted recess between the north and west wings. The entrance faces northwest, and reveals exterior doors and windows framed with a combination of steel and aluminum sash that hold picture-window glazing (installed during earlier remodels). Another secondary entrance used as a utility/service entrance is located at the first floor between the building's west and south wings, and faces southwest to a paved service courtyard. A high concrete retaining wall surrounds the courtyard to the west and south as the property's grade and paved driveway ascend. A private paved parking lot for residents and guests of the Cooper-George Apartments is located at the top of the concrete retaining wall behind the south wing. A flight of concrete steps with an iron pipe railing connects the southwest service courtyard to the uphill south parking lot. A fourth apartment entrance is located at the first floor in the angled recess between the east and south wings, and opens to a private patio and courtyard enjoyed by apartment residents.

Interior of the Cooper-George Apartments

According to the Spokane County Tax Assessor, the interior space in the Cooper-George Apartments has 10,743 finished square feet of space on each of the building's 13 floors for a total of 139,659 finished square feet throughout the building.⁴ In 2017-18, the interior of the Cooper-George Apartments was updated with a combination of repaired, rebuilt, refinished and/or replaced interior walls and ceilings, elevators, HVAC systems and fixtures, floor coverings, and electrical/mechanical systems. During construction updating, the original 1952 interior configuration of apartment suites, windows, utility closets, and public hallways was left intact and/or restored to the original footprint and

² Spokane County Assessor 2018 public records. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Spokane County Assessor 2018 public records. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

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floor plan. Nearly all first-floor exterior door and window locations and lobby/office/storage/public spaces were retained, following the building's original floor plan. When completed, the building's first floor will include painted drywall ceilings and walls, tiled floors, and new appliances as needed (bathroom and kitchenette). The unfinished basement will be partially finished with a wine cellar, dog wash, private gym, residents' bike storage and mechanical bike repair/maintenance station, miscellaneous storage, and rooms for updated/advanced plumbing/heating/mechanical/electrical systems.

Floors 2 through 13 are identical and contain 144 apartments with 41 studio, 74 one-bedroom, and 29 two-bedroom apartment suites. Public hallways and private apartments are currently 75% finished with painted 8-foot-high drywall ceilings, painted drywall perimeter and interior walls, public hallway floors covered with wall-to-wall carpet to abate noise, apartment suite floors covered with a laminate product that mimics wood plank flooring, new plumbing fixtures, new built-in kitchen and bathroom casework, quartz countertops, new kitchen appliances (gas range, refrigerator, dishwasher, microwave, washer/dryer), and a combination of original and contemporary overhead light fixtures. Interior doors are original in each apartment while front doors to each suite are plain contemporary units that meet current building and fire code requirements. Each apartment has multiple windows for natural light and ventilation; a center great room/living room; kitchen; private bathroom; and original 1952 wall heaters for steam heat refurbished and restored to working use in 2017. Each apartment suite opens from a private front entry door to public hallways that surround elevators located in the center core of the building. Two original 1952 public stairways are retained and preserved in the building.

Cooper-George Garage

The Cooper-George Garage is located adjacent next west to the Cooper-George Apartments, and was constructed in 1952 along with the apartment building. The parking garage was designed to compliment the Cooper-George Apartments and features a box-like form, smooth concrete cladding, and a repeat of the fluted concrete panel design that articulates the four wing faces on the apartment building. The garage is a two-story building with a 60-foot width, a 150-foot depth, and 9,000 square feet of interior space on each floor.⁵ The garage faces onto West Fifth Avenue and is entered by a center front roll-up aluminum door at its north facade. The building has a flat built-up roof with a small parapet and painted coping that matches the flat built-up roof, parapet, and coping on the Cooper-George Apartments. A narrow canopy over the roll-up door supports a sign with letters that spell, "COOPER GEORGE GARAGE." Above the canopy is a fluted concrete face panel that matches the face panels on the apartment building and is painted in a contrasting color. Symmetrically placed horizontal rows of original 2/2 steel-sash windows punctuate the garage at the structure's north façade and east and west faces. The parking garage follows the property's steep uphill grade, and has a second story. A paved driveway is located between the apartment building and the garage, and

⁵ Spokane County 2018 Tax Assessor records. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

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leads uphill to a second-floor garage entrance with a roll-up garage overhead door. The door opens to a large garage space on the building's second floor. The interior of the garage at the first and second floors has a combined total of 100 stalls for automobiles, and is well-preserved in excellent condition.

ORIGINAL DESIGN & SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS

Modifications to the Cooper-George Apartments have been numerous over a span of three decades from 1983-1992 and in 2017-18. Today, apartment and hallway configurations have been reversed and restored to original 1952 configurations.

A black-and-white photograph of the exterior east face of the Cooper-George Apartments was taken in 1952 when the building was erected. Over 95% of the building appears in 2018 as it does in the 1952 photograph. Difference is found in windows. Original apartment windows were aluminum sash, tripartite units with a center fixed pane flanked by two narrow casement windows.⁶ In 2017, windows with vinyl sash replaced the previous apartment windows (it is not known if the previous windows were original or replacements as there were numerous modifications undertaken in the 1980s and 1992).⁷ Instead of casement windows, the current narrow flanking windows in the tripartite units feature a combination of fixed panes as well as double-hung 1/1 panes. Even though the existing windows are replacements of the previous windows, the new windows very nearly replicate the design of the original windows pictured in the 1952 photograph.

The Cooper-George Apartments and Cooper-George Garage retain a high degree of exterior integrity in original location, design, materials, workmanship, and association that render the property easily recognized by one or many historical contemporaries.

⁶ *Spokesman-Review*, 1952.

⁷ Modifications to the building include remodels to the first floor and various apartments in July 1983, October 1983, January 1985, July 1985, November 1986, and September 1992. Spokane County Tax Assessor records. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

SECTION 8: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary Statement

<i>Areas of Significance</i>	<i>Architecture, Social History</i>
<i>Period of Significance</i>	<i>1952</i>
<i>Built Date</i>	<i>1952</i>
<i>Architects</i>	<i>Whitehouse & Price Architects</i>
<i>Building Contractor</i>	<i>Henry George & Sons</i>

Significant in the areas of Architecture and Social History, the Cooper-George Apartments and the Cooper-George Garage are eligible for listing on the Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places. The property's period of significance is the year the apartment building and garage were built in 1952. Under Category A, the property is historically significant in the area of "Social History" as a tangible expression of a popular city-wide trend in Spokane associated with the development and construction of luxury apartments during the first half of the 20th-century from 1900 through the 1950s. The Cooper-George Apartments and Garage were purposefully constructed directly across from Deaconess Hospital within a surrounding and continually growing medical complex of health clinics, medical centers, hospitals, offices, and pharmacies. Under Category C, the apartment/garage complex is significant in the area of "Architecture" as an excellent representation of the International Style. The property is further architecturally significant as the product of master architects Harold Whitehouse and Ernest Price, and accomplished Spokane contractor/structural engineer Henry George. The grand opening for the Cooper-George Apartments and Cooper-George Garage in March 1952 was attended by 16,000 people, and was a strong testament to heightened interest and awareness in luxury apartments located in and around medical centers. *Spokesman-Review* journalist Frank Bartell wrote that at that time the "Cooper-George was the *crème de la crème* of apartment dwellings" in Spokane. Even before its 144 deluxe units were leased, "there was a waiting list" and "the building's directory read like a social register."⁸

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Early Spokane

In 1872, Spokane began as a small settlement on the banks of the Spokane River near the Spokane Falls. As the town prospered and grew, it quickly became a railroad hub in the 1880s for a multitude of interurban and transcontinental railway companies, and provided the necessary transportation needed to carry regional resources from mining, lumber, agriculture, and ranching to destinations throughout the country. The city's population grew to more than 25,000 in 1900, and by 1910, had surpassed 100,000 people with the influx of hundreds and thousands of men, women, and children who came in search of

⁸ Bartell, Frank. *Spokesman-Review*, 1996.

employment and a better life. Spokane's need for housing was immediate and urgent. Hundreds of two, three, four and five-story brick buildings were quickly erected as single room occupancy hotels (SROs). SROs were initially designed with tiny, one-room apartments for a single resident, but with so many people needing housing, they were frequently over-crowded with 10, 20, or more men tightly packed into one room. Other larger, less-crowded multi-story brick buildings like the Montvale Hotel & Apartments, built in 1900 on First Avenue and Monroe Street, linked several single hotel rooms together with interior doors, thus offering multi-room suites. Conveniently located further away from the city's noisy downtown center, the apartments were commonly rented by couples and families with children. However, apartment amenities and privacy were rare. Saloons and bars frequently filled the ground floors of apartment buildings, and there were no private bathrooms in individual apartment suites. As designed and built, public bathrooms and bathing facilities were shared by apartment tenants and were located "down the hall."

Luxury Apartments & Medical Centers in Spokane

In the early 1900s in Spokane, only a few apartment buildings were built as upscale, luxury apartments—apartment suites with large formal living and dining rooms, kitchenettes, bedrooms, and private bathrooms. These apartment buildings were advertised in various Spokane newspapers, flyers, and posters as "deluxe" apartments, "upscale" apartments, "high-class" apartments, and/or "luxury" apartments—the favored description being luxury apartments.

With luxury apartments, apartment dwellers and families had the opportunity to live in safe, well-built apartment buildings, and were able to lease suites with large rooms as spacious as rooms found in single-family homes—but without the need to pay for home maintenance, repairs, and property taxes. Examples of some of Spokane's earliest luxury apartments included the San Marco Apartments and the Amman Apartments (both built in 1904). At least two luxury apartment blocks boasted private exterior front and rear entrances for each individual apartment suite—the Spokane Sash & Door Company-Gables Apartments (built in 1909) and the Cedars Apartments (built in 1911). Finished with rich ebony-hued oak and curly fir woodwork, oak floors, high ceilings, spacious rooms, and private bathrooms, the apartment buildings were located in safe residential and mixed-use neighborhoods close to the city's downtown core.

As Spokane's population aged, people's needs for hospitals and health clinics increased. Spokane's two largest and most prominent medical centers, separated by a few miles east to west, were developed in the early 1900s in Spokane and continue to operate today as Sacred Heart Hospital and Deaconess Hospital on the South Hill. Away from downtown Spokane and catering to people who could afford higher rents, a number of well-built and quiet luxury apartments were constructed around and between the two hospitals. The apartment buildings offered hard-to-find amenities, including comfortable roomy interiors, private kitchens and bathrooms, large plush lobby areas, attached private automobile garages or carports, and security features such as three sets of locked doors. The first locked door was located at the front entry door for each individual apartment

suite, and the second and third locked doors were located at the apartment building's façade with one locked door at the building's front entrance followed by another locked door in an interior entrance vestibule.

One of the first luxury apartments built on Spokane's South Hill between the two hospitals was the Kempis Apartments, constructed in 1906 on West Sixth Avenue and Washington Street, four blocks from Deaconess Hospital and seven blocks from Sacred Heart Hospital. Another early luxury apartment building was the Altadena Apartments, erected in 1909 on Sixth Avenue and Stevens Street (three blocks from Deaconess Hospital), and was reputed to be the "largest apartment house" in the city at that time. The Breslin Apartments were constructed in 1910 across the street from Sacred Heart Hospital on Eighth Avenue, and one year later in 1911, the Knickerbocker Apartments were erected on Fifth Avenue and Howard Street, just two blocks from Deaconess Hospital. Embellished in elaborate Beaux Arts styling, the three-story red brick and crème-colored terra cotta building offered one- and two-bedroom apartments with well-appointed kitchens, ceramic-tiled bathrooms, formal dining rooms, and large living rooms that looked onto a landscaped formal front-entrance courtyard and a private walled garden and fountain/reflecting pool at the rear of the building. The residential Knickerbocker Apartments were advertised as the "only apartment house of its high class in the city" in 1911.⁹

In 1929, two more high-rise, multi-storied luxury apartment blocks were built between Deaconess Hospital and Sacred Heart Hospital, and were called the Culmstock Arms Apartments and the Roosevelt Apartments. They were sited on steep north-facing hillsides near West Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Avenues where Spokane's social elite built mansions and developed landscaped grounds in the late 1890s and early 1900s. The two apartments were finished with gleaming mahogany woodwork, a combination of plush wall-to-wall carpeting and hardwood floors, spacious lobbies, multiple rooms, and a few fireplaces. In addition, the Culmstock Arms Apartments and Roosevelt Apartments were equipped with attached parking garages and carports, reflecting apartment tenants' wants and needs to shelter and protect their private automobiles.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Category A

The Cooper-George Apartments and Cooper-George Garage are historically significant for their association with the city-wide trend in Spokane for the construction of luxury apartment buildings built from 1900 through the 1950s. The trend was further defined and strengthened when clusters of luxury apartment buildings were purposefully erected around Spokane medical centers. Conveniently built across from one of Spokane's largest hospitals, the Cooper-George Apartments and Garage offered upscale living, private parking and automobile garage convenience, and surrounding medical and health center amenities.

⁹ *Spokesman-Review*, 1911.

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In 1944, Spokane investor Mary Monroe sold the amended plat for Block A and Block B in Spokane's Second Railroad Addition to James L. Cooper and his wife, Myrtle L. Cooper. James Cooper with his friend and associate, building contractor Henry George, made plans to construct and erect a luxury apartment complex with an adjacent private parking garage for apartment tenants. Cooper owned Audubon Homes Inc. and was owner/president of the J.L. Cooper & Company (725 W. Sprague Avenue), specializing in general insurance, rentals, and mortgage loans. In 1965, Cooper merged his company with four other partners to form the Commerce Mortgage Company. He retired in 1967, and sold his share of the company to the US Bank of Portland for \$1.5 million.¹⁰

In 1950, James Cooper and Henry George commissioned the prominent Spokane architectural firm, Whitehouse & Price, to design a modern, multi-story, luxury apartment complex on the southwest intersection corner of West Fifth Avenue and South Wall Street, strategically located across from Deaconess Hospital.¹¹ Post World War II Spokane was ripe for change, new construction, modern styles, and modern living. Weighing speculative risk and hoping for a successful venture, J.L. Cooper and Henry George erected the 13-floor, high-rise Cooper-George Apartments and the adjacent Cooper-George Garage, naming the luxury apartment block and parking garage after themselves.

The following anticipatory announcement was printed in the *Spokesman-Review* newspaper a few weeks before the Cooper-George apartments and garage formally opened in March 1952:

***NEW APARTMENT NEARLY FINISHED
Public to View Cooper-George Units about March 9th***

Modern in every detail, the concrete structure was built at a cost of more than \$1,750,000. City building ordinances were changed several times to accommodate the newest addition to the Spokane apartment house market.

Yet to be completed on the ground floor is the entrance, restaurant, food specialty shop, beauty parlor and...reception lobby. The apartment house is built in four wings located around a central elevator shaft. Two automatic elevators will serve tenants. [The Cooper-George Apartments is a] 144-unit structure with about 60%-70% [of the apartments] furnished with electrical appliances. The remainder are being left unfurnished to accommodate tenants with their own ranges and refrigerators. All apartments in the building have plastered walls with acoustical-treated plaster ceilings to deaden sound from other units. The living rooms in the two-bedroom units are 20-x14 feet, and the dining rooms are 14x9 feet. When finished, the building will contain about 1,700 linear yards of carpeting in the [public] hallways. The entire building will be served by steam heat and soft water. Approximately 110 cars can be accommodated in a separate

¹⁰ Wickre, 1995.

¹¹ Woodbridge, 1981.

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*garage. When the building is finished, an attendant will be on duty in the garage 24 hours a day, seven days a week.*¹²

At the grand opening on March 16, 1952, the Cooper-George Apartments and adjacent Cooper-George Garage were overwhelmed with a throng of 16,000 curious people. *Spokesman-Review* journalist Frank Bartel reported, “the Cooper-George was the *crème de la crème* of apartment dwellings in this corner of the world. All of its 144 apartments were gobbled up and there was a waiting list. The building’s directory read like a social register of Spokane at mid-century.”¹³

All 144 apartment suites in the Cooper-George were quickly leased by an eclectic mix of tenants with a 50/50 split between retirees and working professionals, some of whom were married. City directories revealed that a majority of the retirees were widows who had been married to prominent Spokane businessmen, and were listed with “Mrs.” before and/or after their names. Working professionals included representations of a plethora of occupations, ranging from owners and proprietors of investment and insurance agencies, such as Thomas Godfrey, owner and president of the T.E. Godfrey Central Agency in the Peyton Building, to attorney George Young, President of the Spokane Bar Association and Secretary of Standard Sales in the Paulsen Building. Other occupations included the owner of the Ross Printing Company; the President/Treasurer of the Federal Intermediate Credit Bank; Witherspoon Witherspoon & Kelley Attorneys at Law; the Chairman of the Board at the Old National Bank and the President of the Old National Bank Building; a desk clerk at the Victoria Hotel; a division manager for Washington Water Power Company; a proof-reader for the *Spokesman-Review* newspaper; a manager for the Pacific General Agency; and a musician, salesman, and medical physician. The most noteworthy resident of the Cooper-George Apartments was James L. Cooper, for whom the building was named. Founder and owner of the J.L. Cooper & Company (mortgage loans, general insurance, property management and rentals), Cooper lived in Suite 1308 at the top of the apartment building on Floor 13 with a panoramic view of the city.

In 1960 a few years after the apartment building was erected, the Washington State “Highway Commission announced a plan to build an east-west freeway along Third and Fourth Avenues next to [the north façade of] Deaconess Hospital.” Although the hospital and hundreds of patients would be impacted by ongoing noise/vibration and air pollution from the proposed freeway, construction of the freeway was approved and begun in 1961. After multiple discussions, decisions were made when Deaconess Hospital undertook an enormous and costly enlargement project with a “\$3 million dollar addition.”¹⁴ The hospital’s formal front entrance was reversed and moved from Fourth Avenue to Fifth Avenue—directly across from the Cooper-George Apartments and Cooper-George Garage. It was reported “the new wing made Deaconess Hospital one of the most modern hospitals in the Northwest.”¹⁵

¹² *Spokesman-Review*, 1952.

¹³ Bartel. *Spokesman-Review*, 1996.

¹⁴ Gilkey, 1996.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 45-46.

With surrounding luxury apartments and a major hospital and medical center across Fifth Avenue, the Cooper-George apartment complex was full with no vacancies. In 1953, the apartment building offered numerous resident amenities, including a guest lobby, front desk, business office, and a rooftop deck. Additional amenities were introduced when various independent businesses leased ground-floor space at different times in the apartment building for more than four contiguous decades. Businesses in 1953 included a convenient market called Cooper-George Groceries, the Harper Method Beauty Salon, Rindahl Distinctive Interiors/Interior Design, and the Phillip Youdene Drapery Company. By 1965, the business demographic in the Cooper-George Apartments had changed slightly to include a medical office (Anesthesia Associates), an architect's office (Kenneth Brooks, a prominent Spokane architect), a beauty salon, a golf equipment distribution company, grocery market, and three insurance/investment agencies. In 1975, two real estate agencies, a word processing center, and a paving contractor replaced a former architect and two insurance/investment agencies but Cooper-George Groceries remained in the building.

In 1982, after 30 successful years, the Cooper-George Apartments and Garage were purchased by Spokane financier and apartment builder, Wayne Guthrie. He described the apartment complex as "the city's finest" with 144 apartments, "each with an excellent view because of the [cruciform] shape of the [building's] wings." He recalled the property had "always been kept in first-class shape," included "good security provisions," and concluded, "there's always strong demand for quality apartments."¹⁶

In 1992, the demographic changed dramatically at the Cooper-George Apartments when new ownership remodeled and refurbished the building to accommodate a retirement and assisted-living center, called South Hill Senior Living. The apartment building further changed in 2013, when the property was again purchased and remodeled, and was leased only to people who were 55-years and older.

In 2017, the property was vacated and subsequently purchased by Cooper George LLC, a Portland, Oregon-based corporation. During 2017 and 2018, the LLC secured, restored, repaired, and repainted the apartment building and garage. Outmoded electrical-mechanical-plumbing-technological systems were updated to meet current building codes. The Cooper-George Apartments will be open for lease at market rates in 2018.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Category C

The International Style (1925-1965)

The Cooper-George Apartments and Cooper-George Garage are architecturally significant as true representatives of the International Style made popular during the mid-century modern period in the United States from 1925 to 1965. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, architects were dissatisfied with the use of non-functional period revival

¹⁶ Young. *Spokesman-Review*, 1982.

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styles. Many more architects were disillusioned by a rapidly industrializing society that built quick/economical buildings and houses. In contrast, they were energized and drawn to the development of new technologies and materials like iron, steel, reinforced concrete, and glass. In time, architectural creativity began to develop as a new modernistic approach to architecture was developed with the use of new technologies and materials.

The International Style began to grow in central Europe and spread to the United States in the 1920s and 1930s, the formative years for modern architectural expression. The style and type matured, embraced new building methods such as steel frame construction and reinforced concrete, and became the “dominant tendency in Western architecture during the 1950s and 1960s”.¹⁷ The International Style espoused boxy, simplistic, geometric shapes; cantilever construction; light/taut exterior surfaces without applied ornamentation or decoration; flat roofs usually without a ledge/coping at the roof line; and prominent rectangular ribbons or bands of windows (usually casements) with metal/steel sash set flush with the outer walls. Windows sometimes wrapped around exterior corners of buildings and helped strengthen asymmetrical façade designs. Emphasis was on volume rather than mass—walls were not used for structural support but functioned as “curtains hung over a structural steel skeleton.”¹⁸ Famed French architect Le Corbusier stressed the idea that houses and buildings were “machines for living,”¹⁹ where all superfluous ornamentation and decoration were absent, and technical perfection, excellent proportions, efficient designs, and intrinsic qualities of building materials were revered. An eclectic mix of artistic expression, function, and technology characterized the International Style, defined by some as an “austere and disciplined new architecture.”²⁰

The Cooper-George Apartments reveal modern International Style influence in its form, height, volume, exterior cladding, and 1952 built date. The Cooper-George Apartments and Garage were constructed during the style’s popular time period from 1925 to 1965. The apartment building’s form is stylistically boxy and geometric as revealed by its four prominent wings and cruciform shape. The building’s height at 13 stories demonstrates modern reinforced-concrete construction technology. The exterior of the building is distinguished with smooth, taut, light concrete cladding. Ornamentation to the building’s exterior is minimal with full-height, wide face panels that embellish each face of the building’s four wings with heavily modulated, concrete vertical fluting. Identical windows arranged in simple vertical bands accentuate the tall height of the building. The rectangular Cooper-George Garage also reveals unreinforced concrete construction, taut light concrete cladding, and minimal embellishment found in a fluted concrete face panel on the parking garage’s north façade. The face panel matches the design of face panels on the apartment building.

¹⁷ *Britannica Online Encyclopedia*. 2013. <http://www.britannica.com>

¹⁸ McAlester, Lee & Virginia. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Knopf, 1989, p. 469

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 470

²⁰ *Britannica Online Encyclopedia*.

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Whitehouse & Price, Architects

The Cooper-George Apartments and Garage were designed by one of Spokane's most prominent and respected architectural firms—Whitehouse & Price. Harold Whitehouse (1884-1974) and his business partner, Ernest Price (1881-1975), founded the architectural firm in 1914.

Ernest V. Price was a native of New York and came to Spokane from Cornell University, where he was awarded a degree in architecture. Harold Whitehouse was educated in Boston, worked in Massachusetts and North Dakota, and came to Spokane in 1907. Whitehouse initially partnered with architect George Keith, but in 1911, left the practice to study architecture at Cornell University, received a degree in architecture, and traveled extensively in Europe, becoming interested in cathedral architecture. When he returned to Spokane three years later, Whitehouse formed a business partnership with Spokane architect, Ernest Price.

Over the course of 50 years and from that time until the partnership ended in 1964, "Whitehouse & Price was one of the most prolific [architectural] firms in the Inland Northwest, designing hundreds of buildings."²¹ Projects spanned small residential dwellings to large, complex commercial buildings. Their work included some 200 schools, 16 fraternity and sorority houses, the Lincoln Building in downtown Spokane, the Benewah Milk Bottles (downtown and Garland District), Eastern Washington State Hospital in Medical Lake, Hutton Settlement Orphanage in the Spokane Valley, and Spokane's Culmstock Arms Apartments, Spokane Civic Building, Spokane Coliseum, Rosebush House, Morgan House and a plethora of other homes, lake houses, garages, residential architecture, and commercial buildings throughout Spokane and Washington State, Idaho, Montana, and Oregon.

Harold Whitehouse was especially known for his interest in ecclesiastic architecture, and designed a number of churches in the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Many have steeple and metalwork designs influenced by Gothic and Art Deco styles. For example, Manito Presbyterian Church and other similar church buildings mostly built in the 1930s-40s in Spokane have tall, pointed steeples and steeple designs with geometric and floral-motif metal work that were influenced by the Art Deco style. One of the finest Art Deco-style commercial designs rendered by Harold Whitehouse was not for a church but in contrast, was intended for the City Ramp Garage in Spokane, built in 1928.

Architect Harold Whitehouse's masterpiece remains popular as the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist (aka St. John's Episcopal Cathedral) on the north bluff of Spokane's South Hill. Seen from vantage points throughout the city, the cathedral is one of tallest buildings in Spokane and is a detailed study in Gothic architecture, rivaling Gothic cathedrals in Europe.

²¹ Eastern Washington State Historic Society. *Spokane Skyline: A Century of Architecture, 1889-1989*. Spokane, WA, 1989.

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Henry George, Contractor & Structural Engineer

Prominent Spokane building contractor Henry George built the Cooper-George Apartments and Cooper-George Garage. The firm was established in 1913 when Robert Alloway partnered with Henry George. Both structural engineers, Alloway and George practiced as general contractors and structural engineers with offices in downtown Spokane, first in the Old National Bank Building and then in the Hutton Block. When Robert Alloway died in 1940, Henry George organized a new partnership with his sons in 1946 as Henry George & Sons. Large, complex construction accomplishments for which Henry George is credited include but are not limited to the Spokane Coliseum, Joe Albi Veteran's Memorial Stadium, and the Cooper-George Apartments and Cooper-George Garage. Henry George's prominence as a building contractor is perhaps most evident in architect Harold Whitehouse's Spokane masterpiece, the Gothic Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist.

In conclusion, the design and construction of the Cooper-George Apartments and Garage by architects Whitehouse & Price and contractor Henry George surprised all when it was erected in 1952 as one of Spokane's tallest and most modern apartment buildings. The Cooper-George Apartments matched the 13-story Ridpath Hotel in height, which was built in 1952—the same year as the apartment block.²² The Cooper-George Apartments and the Ridpath Hotel were both designed in the modern mid-century International Style, and regaled as two of Spokane's most modern buildings with coveted amenities only found in luxury apartments and luxury hotels.

²² The Ridpath Hotel was listed on the Spokane, Washington State, and National Registers of Historic Places in 2013.

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Cooper-George Apartments in 2018, looking at east façade of building

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Northeast corner front façade of Cooper-George Apartments in 2018 under construction



Northwest façade corner of Cooper-George Apartments in 2018

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*Cooper-George Garage in 2018, located adjacent next east of
Cooper-George Apartments*

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Cooper-George Garage in 2018, looking north



*Cooper-George Apartments in 2018, first-floor lobby
(notice fireplace in center of room covered with protective cardboard during
construction)*

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Cooper-George Apartments, first-floor elevators in hallway in 2018, looking south



First floor, looking east along elevators and hallway in 2018

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First floor, looking east from apartment room during construction in 2018



First-floor apartment in 2018 during construction

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A nearly completed typical apartment suite in the Cooper-George Apartments in 2018 during construction, looking northwest



*Typical apartment window and restored 1952 steam-heat wall radiator,
looking northwest*

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Typical bedroom in apartment in 2018 during construction



A typical steam-heat wall radiator/heater from 1952 restored to working condition

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Typical bathroom fixtures in suites in Cooper-George Apartments in 2018

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Typical kitchen in the Cooper-George Apartments in 2018

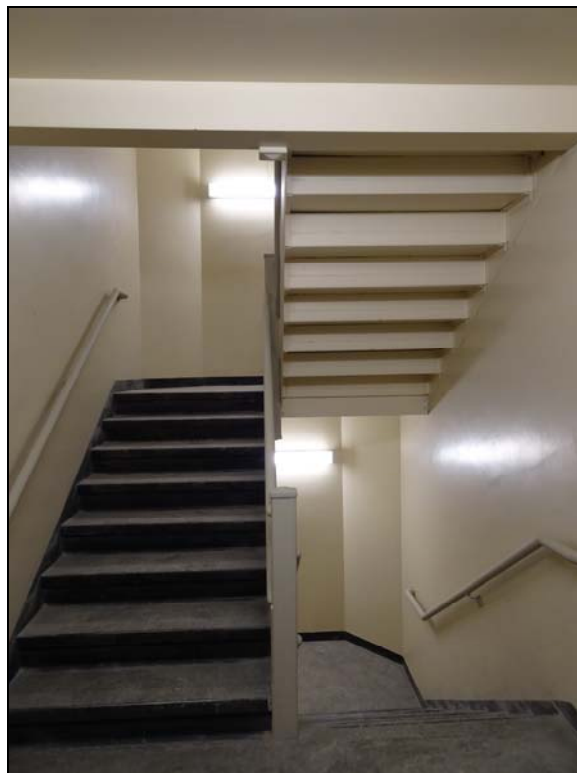


View from a north facade apartment, looking northwest in 2018

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Typical hallway in the Cooper-George Apartments in 2018 during construction



Original 1952 stairway in Cooper-George Apartments in 2018 during construction

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*Cooper-George Garage and Cooper-George Apartments
707 W. Fifth Avenue
Spokane, WA*

Source: Google Maps 2018

north ↑

[illegible]

Source: *Spokane County Assessor Records*

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Source: Spokane County Assessor Records

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1952 photograph of the east façade of the Cooper-George Apartments

Source: MAC L87-1.70565-52

NEW APARTMENT NEARLY FINISHED

Public to View Cooper-George
Units About March 9

Spokane will get a sneak preview of the new Cooper-George apartment house, Fifth and Wall, about March 9, it was announced this week.

Heavy construction on the 13-story building is completed with only finishing touches to be made on several floors, according to John Davis, manager. Some of the units are already occupied.

Modern in every detail, the concrete structure was built at a cost of more than \$1,750,000. City building ordinances were changed several times to accommodate the newest addition to the Spokane apartment house market.

2 Elevators Automatic

Yet to be completed on the ground floor is the entrance, restaurant, food specialty shop and beauty parlor. Plans call for the reception lobby to be paneled in mahogany.

The apartment house is built in four wings located around a central elevator shaft. Two automatic elevators will serve tenants.

There are 36 two-bedroom apartments, 60 one-bedroom apartments and 48 bachelor units in the 144-unit structure, with about 60 to 70 per cent furnished with electrical appliances.

The remainder are being left unfurnished to accommodate tenants with their own ranges and refrigerators, building owners said.

Approximately 110 cars can be accommodated in a separate garage, with off-street parking facilities for 40 more. When the building is finished, an attendant will be on duty in the garage 24 hours a day, seven days a week, according to plans.

All apartments in the building have plastered walls with acoustical-treated plaster ceilings to deaden sound from other units. The living rooms in the two-bedroom units are 20x14 feet, and the dining rooms are 14x9 feet. Philippine mahogany was used throughout on all doors and woodwork.

For the mathematical minded, the building, when finished, will contain about 1700 linear yards of carpeting in the hallways and more than 11,000 doorknobs. The entire building will be served by steam heat and soft water.

J. L. Cooper, investment broker, and Henry George and Sons, Spokane contractors, built the new structure. Work was started late in 1950.

COOPER-GEORGE WILL REOPEN AS APARTMENTS

After \$7.5 million renovation project, owners pitch urban high-rise lifestyle

By Nicholas Deshais
THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

The \$7.5 million transformation of Spokane's first luxury senior apartment community into "big city downtown living" is nearly complete at the Cooper-George Apartments, a mid-century high-rise at the base of the South Hill.

The 144 units in the 13-story building, which recently acted as assisted-living housing for older folks on Medicaid, will soon be available at market-rate rents,

aimed at professionals seeking an urban lifestyle.

"We're trying to promote the use of mass transportation, biking, ride shares," said Jeb Koerner, one of the building's three Oregon-based owners. "We've got Amazon lockers in the basement."

Koerner, who is based in Portland, anticipated the building would be ready for tenants in April, a delay from the original February deadline.

See **APARTMENTS, 11**



DAN PELLE/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

The Cooper-George Apartments building has been completely renovated and is due to reopen in April. It is at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Wall Street in Spokane.

APARTMENTS

Continued from 1

The building's other owners are Dave Montagne, a Salem-based developer of apartment complexes, and Kevin Ricker, of Portland. The three purchased the building at 707 W. Fifth Avenue last year for \$5.5 million, though Ricker had been a part owner of the building for a number of years.

The "head-to-toe remodel, inside, outside" has given the formerly beige, 66-year-old building an updated feel. Now, contrasting blue and gray surfaces frame gleaming new windows.

Koerner said the units have been remodeled with new flooring, cabinets and walls, fresh paint, brand new appliances and quartz counter tops. Each apartment has a gas range and a new washer and dryer.

"You're probably not going to be able to tell that these are the units we started with," Koerner said. He estimated rents would start at \$750 but said they weren't yet set.

The new Cooper-George aims at less auto-oriented tenants, Koerner said, noting that the relative lack of parking spaces is partially responsible for that goal.

"We have 100 vehicle stalls and 144 units," he said, pointing to a parking garage across the street and a surface lot out back. "We'll have space for 100 bikes downstairs."

Bike facilities in the building will include a mechanic station and bike washing station.

"We really want to pro-

mote that lifestyle," Koerner said.

The building also will have a private gym and rooftop deck reserved for tenants. A retail space on the building's first floor could house a cafe, said Koerner, and the building's owners are in talks with local hospitals for corporate apartments, to house visiting executives.

Montagne said "it was the opportunity with the building" that brought his attention as a developer to Spokane.

"It's a beautiful building," Montagne said. "When it was built, it was considered one of the nicer ones on the West Coast. We decided to bring that back, but it needed some tender loving care."

Cooper-George was designed by the renowned architectural company Whitehouse & Price. The Spokane-based firm is best known for the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist on the South Hill's Grand Avenue, but is also responsible for the Lincoln Building downtown, the Benewah Milk Bottle in the Garland Business District and Eastern State Hospital.

According to MidcenturySpokane.org, the luxury apartments, which were developed by investment broker J.L. Cooper and construction contractor Henry George, drew about 16,000 people to its March 16, 1952, grand opening.

At its opening, which preceded the construction of Interstate 90 by 15 years, the building had two dining rooms, a grocery store, dry cleaners, a beauty shop and a doctor's office.

Looking back decades la-

ter, in 1996 Spokesman-Review columnist Frank Bartel called the Cooper-George "the creme de la creme of apartment dwellings in this corner of the world." He said the "building's directory read like a social register of Spokane at mid-century."

Forty years after its opening, the Cooper-George faced a new future as it was renovated into a retirement and assisted living facility and renamed South Hill Senior Living. Its tenant population shifted toward those who received financial support from the state.

Last February, when the new owners told the state it was surrendering its license to operate a senior care facility, 94 percent of its assisted-living tenants received Medicaid benefits. The facility had 90 days to find new homes for its tenants, which was done with assistance by the state Department of Social and Health Services.

Chris Wright, a spokesman with the department's Aging and Long-Term Support Administration, said DSHS found housing "placements as close to where they want to live as possible."

At its closure, the facility's executive director, LeAne Austin, a registered nurse, said business operation and staff costs had risen significantly in the past decade. Additionally, while assisted living units were generally filled, those for independent seniors on the upper floors had more vacancies.

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