

Staff Report and Findings of Fact Nomination to the Spokane Register of Historic Places

Turner Hall (German-American Society) - 25 W. Third Avenue

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. SMC 17D.100.090: "Generally a building, structure, object, site, or district which is more than fifty years old may be designated an historic landmark or historic district if it has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the city, county, state, or nation."

- Completed in 1897; Turner Hall meets the age criteria for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places.

2. SMC 17D.100.090: The property must qualify under one or more categories for the Spokane Register (A, B, C, D, E).

- The building is eligible under Category E – Intangible heritage and cultural practices. The German-American Society Hall – historically known as Turner Hall - represents the culture and heritage of Spokane by its visual prominence, intangible German heritage, and a broad range of German cultural practices. Turner Hall is historically significant as the oldest surviving ethnic meeting house in Spokane, and has been continually used for more than eleven decades by the German-American Society who built it in 1897. Originally constructed with large spaces specifically designed to hold a variety of events and large congregations of people, Turner Hall is a testament to the preservation of the German culture and its importance placed on gymnastics, athletics, music, choirs, education, and German social events that were held in the German hall.

3. SMC17D.040.090: "The property must also possess integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and association." From NPS Bulletin 15: "Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance...it is not necessary for a property to retain all its historic physical features...the property must retain, however, the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historic identity."

- Turner Hall retains fair to good exterior and interior architectural integrity after 122 years of continual use. The exterior of Turner Hall has retained its basic form since construction, although enlargements and a rear addition have expanded the space; additionally, many changes to the façade material and replacement or removal of the original windows do impact the building's integrity. While the integrity has been compromised, Turner Hall is eligible for listing due to its association as a cultural institution for German-Americans in Spokane since 1897.

4. Once listed, this property will be eligible to apply for incentives, including:

Special Valuation (property tax abatement), the City of Spokane's Historic Preservation Façade Improvement Program, Spokane Register historical marker, and special code considerations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The **Turner Hall (German-American Society)** qualifies for eligibility under Spokane Register Category E.

Preservation Officer Review: Megan Duvall
Nominations Committee: Shockley, West, Rast, Cebula
Landmarks Commission Review: Pending

Report: 7/4/19
Site Visit: 7/10/19
Hearing: 7/17/19