

Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination

*Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office, City Hall, Third Floor
808 Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, Washington 99201-3337*

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Webster Building
And/Or Common Name: Stowell Drug & Assay

2. Location

Street & Number: 415 W. Sprague Avenue
City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA 99201
Parcel Number: 35191.2102

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

Name: B & H Enterprises, LLC Number 1
Street & Number: 1420 E. Overbluff
City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA 99203
Telephone Number/E-mail: 509-981-3358; jheath@Watrust.com

5. Location of Legal Description

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds	Spokane County Courthouse
Street Number:	1116 West Broadway
City, State, Zip Code:	Spokane, WA 99260
County:	Spokane

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Title: East Downtown Historic District National Register Nomination
Date: 2003 ☒ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local
Depository for Survey Records: Spokane Historic Preservation Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Condition

- ☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair
☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check One

- ☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check One

- ☒ original site
☐ moved & date _____

Narrative statement of description is found on one or more continuation sheets.

8. Spokane Register Criteria and Statement of Significance

Applicable Spokane Register of Historic Places criteria: 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 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 history.

Narrative statement of significance is found on one or more continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography is found on one or more continuation sheets.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than 1

Verbal Boundary Description: RAILROAD ADD E1/2 OF N 80 FT L2; N 80 FT OF L3 B10

Verbal Boundary Justification: Nominated property includes entire parcel and urban legal description.

11. Form Prepared By

Name and Title: Jim Kolva

Organization: Jim Kolva Associates, LLC

Street, City, State, Zip Code: 115 South Adams Street, Suite 1

Telephone Number: 509-458-5517

E-mail Address: jim@jimkolvaassociates.com

Date Final Nomination Heard:

12. Additional Documentation

Additional documentation is found on one or more continuation sheets.

13. Signature of Owner(s)

14. For Official Use Only:

Date nomination application filed: _____

Date of Landmarks Commission Hearing: _____

Landmarks Commission decision: _____

Date of City Council/Board of County Commissioners' hearing: _____

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

Date

Attest:

Approved as to form:

City Clerk

Assistant City Attorney

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Rising from a brick and concrete foundation, the two-story Webster Building is an unreinforced brick building. Built in 1893 with stores on the ground floor and a single room occupancy hotel above, and remodeled in 2018-19, the building is midblock along the south side of Sprague Avenue between Washington Street and Stevens Street. The front façade is symmetrically-arranged, divided into four equally-spaced commercial bays, two bays on each side of a centered single-door entry that provides access to the second floor. On the second floor, over each of the commercial bays are three equally-spaced window bays. Square brick piers divide the bays and define each corner. The narrow flat-ached window bays are topped with voussoired brick soldiers. Double brick string courses above the first floor transoms, at the second floor sill line, and above the brick arches provide horizontal elements to the façade. Detailing is provided by brick corbel dentils on the cornice terminating the parapet wall of the flat-roof building.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY – CURRENT CONDITION AND APPEARANCE

The two-story front façade faces north along Sprague Avenue. The Webster Building is flanked by an asphalt parking lot to the east and the six-story City Ramp Parking Garage (1928, SRHP, NRHD) to the west. A single-story commercial bay is between the two buildings. Historic Fire Station #1 (1890, NRHD) is to the rear (south) of the Webster Building fronting on First Avenue. The building is 75-feet wide and 65 feet in depth on a lot of 75 feet by 80 feet.

Constructed of painted red brick in common bond, the building is relatively plain, symmetrically-arranged, and divided into four commercial bays separated by square brick piers. The brick piers flanking the center second floor entry and the piers at the corners extend from a corbeled base on the sidewalk grade. The two original piers dividing each half of the façade are a composite of original brick piers that extend between the juncture of the first and second floors and the cornice; and brick-clad cast iron posts that support the second story piers (cast iron posts wrapped with brick in 2020 renovation). These piers, the centered entry bay to the second floor, and the second-floor string courses, cornice, and window bays represent the original configuration of the building. The storefronts have been altered significantly over the years but remain divided into four commercial bays.

The existing building has recently been remodeled and retains four basic divisions. The easterly bay is divided into four bay segments, a pedestrian door in the east corner, and three equally-divided storefront bays. Four fixed-glass panel transom windows are above and correspond to the storefront pattern. A 12-inch wood beam extending across the façade separates the storefront and transom windows (beam was required for structural support). A low bulkhead wall with recessed panels corresponding to the storefront pattern rests on a concrete foundation and runs along the entire façade. Flat wood mullions divide the window panels. The second bay is divided into three bay segments, two windows and one entry in the westernmost corner. The transoms are likewise divided into three segments corresponding to the storefront. The entry to the second floor is a recessed and single-door. The third bay is divided into four storefront segments with four transom windows above. The fourth, and western-most bay, is also divided into four storefront segments, three windows and one entry in the west corner.

East and West Façades

Adjacent to a one-story commercial bay of the six-story City Ramp Parking Garage, the west façade is against the party wall of the building to the west.

Likewise, the blank east façade is a flat brick wall without detail aside from at least four embedded window arches from windows that have been filled in with brick. Two large billboards cover a portion of the upper north half of the wall and looms over the rooftop. The parapet wall steps down from the front cornice to the rear (south) end. A white sheet metal coping covers the top of the wall.

Rear Façade

The rear elevation opens south to what was originally an open court between the subject building and adjacent buildings to the south, east and west. The flat brick elevation is composed of two stories—the first floor is partially below grade and has been essentially removed, with only the bricked-in upper portions of the original segmental arch window openings remaining. The second story is intact with six window openings on each side of a chimney that extends above the flat featureless parapet wall. The segmental-arch window openings are formed by vertical brick soldier voussoirs and brick header sills. The windows are new, double-hung one-over-one wood sash.

A one-story concrete block addition is in the rear southwest corner and fills in the gap between the adjacent buildings (Fire Station #1 and City Ramp Garage). One door opening, with a flat metal slab door, is in the east wall.

Interior

The first floor was completely gutted down to bare earth and a new concrete floor and foundation walls have been poured.

The second floor was gutted to the studs and sub floor and four new apartment units were constructed. The central stairway ascends to a vestibule from which the units, one in each quadrant are entered. Each unit has a kitchen, full bathroom and two bedrooms.

ORIGINAL APPEARANCE & SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS

Below are two historic 1928 images of the building from the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture's Ferris Digital Image Collection (L87-1.36817-28 and L87-1.37981-28). The storefronts have been altered numerous times over the past one hundred years, including cladding two cast iron columns with brick. Likewise, the second floor window sash was originally double-hung one-over-one wood, was plywood for years, single-panel glass for several years, and is now back to an approximation of the original configuration. The building has been painted several colors over its life, including a dark blue, that has been recently been repainted a beige color.



SECTION 8: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Area of Significance: A – Broad Patterns of Spokane History
Significant Dates: 1893, 2019
Period of Significance: 1893
Architect: Unknown
Building Developer: Edgar J. Webster
Building Contractor: unknown

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Significant under Category A – Broad Patterns of Spokane History

The 1893 Webster Building is eligible under Category A because it was constructed during the frenzy to rebuild downtown Spokane after the devastating 1889 fire. Its construction, unfortunately, coincided with the economic Panic of 1893 and subsequent depression, one that left almost a five-year gap in Spokane's rebuilding, and changed the composition of building ownership in downtown Spokane. The Panic of 1893 slowed new construction which would not begin again until 1898 with the construction of the Peyton Building. The Webster Building is one of approximately fifteen brick buildings built in the immediate post-fire era (1889 to 1893) that remain extant in downtown Spokane. It thus remains as a significant physical manifestation of the pivotal period in the city's early development.

Built as a single room occupancy hotel (SRO) in the commercial vernacular style, the Webster Building was a foundational property type in downtown Spokane during the decades flanking 1900. The Webster Building was one of many such hotels and apartment buildings that filled the downtown blocks on the east, south, and west of the business core. E. J. Webster, the building's developer, was a prominent figure in Spokane's early growth beginning in the early 1880s with real estate development and legal practice, and continuing in the post-fire period with new brick buildings during the post-fire period, including the Genesee Block.

Included as a contributing resource within the East Downtown Historic District boundary, the Webster Building meets the characteristics of the building types and uses included and described within that district and that nomination as cited below.

Architecture

The two-story brick building is a good example in the downtown of a mid-block vernacular commercial building with residences above, however is not being nominated under Category C for Architecture. With commercial use on the ground floor and apartments above, the building operated as a single room occupancy hotel (SRO) into the mid-1950s. Its basalt rubble and brick foundation, symmetrical brick façade, brick piers dividing commercial bays, voussoired flat-arched window bays, brick string courses, and corbeled cornice provide detailing characteristic of its era.

The window configuration on both the front and rear facades is somewhat unique in Spokane. Although narrow in comparison to other buildings of its type, the four bays of three windows each gave prominence to the pattern of the openings and allow an abundant supply of light to the residences within.

The building, however, has been altered over the years, like most downtown buildings, by an ever-changing storefront, especially over the past twenty years. The second floor configuration and openings are unaltered, and new double-hung wood sash windows have replaced the fixed single glass panels that had previously occupied the openings (having replaced plywood years before). In spite of the first floor alterations, the building retains the façade elements described in the East Downtown Historic District National Register Nomination. The building retains the character defining elements of its original construction: the brick structure and form, the four major ground floor bays divided by brick piers with each bay composed of bulkhead wall, storefront windows, and transom windows, the original centered second floor entry bay with original transom window, brick string course, and the original second floor window openings—three narrow openings within each pier division, brick string course, and terminating corbeled parapet cornice.

The Webster Building is included in the nomination (Site ID #: 079) with a classification of “Historic Contributing.” The building (as it appeared in 2003) and some of its uses are described in the nomination:

Piers divide the primary, northern elevation of this two-story, square brick building into four bays. The original, narrow, one over one, double hung wood windows openings on the second story are intact but boarded up. A brick stringcourse runs below the second story windows. The cornice is adorned with corbeled brick dentils. On the ground level, the original storefronts have seen extensive alterations. The building's piers define four distinct commercial spaces. The original red brick appears only on the most obscured rear façade of the building, where a single-story cinderblock addition has been made; the east façade is painted white, the north a tan color.

Cultural Data: Early city directories list this building as the Webster, with lodging space on the second floor and commercial space below. The upper floor is currently vacant, as it has occasionally been over the past decades. Commercial spaces on the ground floor have housed a variety of businesses, most notable has been Stowell Drug which occupied the space from 1912 to 1960. Sartori and Wolff, manufacturing jewelers, were early occupants in the eastern part of the building. Currently, this site houses a tavern, as it has, by and large, since the 1930s.

Historical Context

The historical context for Spokane has been included in several National and Spokane Register nominations, including the East Downtown National Historic District (Woo, 2003) and National Historic Register multiple-property listings: Single Room Occupancy Hotels in the Central Business District of Spokane, WA 1900-1910 (Holstine, 1993); thus the Spokane historic context discussion is abbreviated.

The Spokane River and its falls had long been a gathering place for Native American tribes. It also attracted white settlers, J.J. Downing and family, and S.R. Scranton who established a claim at Spokane Falls in 1871. James N. Glover and Jasper Matheney soon followed and purchased the claims of 160 acres and the sawmill from Downing and Scranton. Early industry used the water power for milling and sawing lumber and to generate electrical power. The settlement grew slowly until the coming of the railroad.

The Northern Pacific Railroad arrived in Spokane Falls in 1881, the year of Spokane's incorporation, and with the connection of the eastern and western branches in 1883, transcontinental service through Spokane Falls was established. Spokane continued to grow as a regional shipping and distribution center through the 1880s. Between 1886 and 1889 the population increased from 3,500 to 20,000 people. Although suffering a set back by the fire of August 4, 1889, which destroyed approximately thirty-two blocks of the business district from the railroad tracks to the river and from Lincoln Street to Washington Street, the city quickly rebounded as new brick buildings rose after clearing of the ashes debris. The devastation wrought by the fire resulted in a city ordinance to reduce fire hazard, leading to brick and terra cotta becoming the dominant building materials of the rebuilt downtown.

East Downtown National Historic District

According to the nomination (Woo, 2003), the period of significance for the East Downtown Historic District begins in 1890 with the construction of the Northern Pacific Depot and ends in 1953. Approximately two-thirds of the existing buildings in the district were built in the first decade of the twentieth century during Spokane's first significant era of economic and population growth. The nomination describes typical characteristics of the district's extant buildings:

The East Downtown Historic District is located on the fringe of downtown. Building heights range from one-story to eight stories, with most averaging two or three stories in the industrial area adjacent to and south of the tracks. Most of the buildings in the district are commercial vernacular in style and clad in brick. Foundations are stone, brick, or concrete. Typically, the ground floor is occupied by small businesses while the upper floors are used for offices or hotels/residential apartments.

The East Downtown Historic District contains many of the city's SROs, a specific type of working-class housing that was developed to house the itinerant workers who came to Spokane in great numbers. Mostly constructed between 1900 and 1910 to meet the housing demand the itinerant workers created, the SRO in Spokane was typically two to four stories in height with ground floor commercial/retail space and hotel rooms on the upper floors. The businesses on the ground floor catered to the residents of the hotel as well as the general population.

Buildings within the district varied in use but generally fell into the following categories: transportation; commercial; industrial; and single room occupancy hotels (SROs). The diversity of businesses allowed for a community to live and thrive in downtown. The Webster Building was similar to the typical SRO in that it had small, undefined rooms (simple rooms that could be used as living or bedrooms), some of which were combined by a common interior door, with no separate kitchen and a shared bathroom down each hall.

The Year 1890

On August 5th, 1890, the Spokane Falls Review surveyed the phenomenal rebirth of the city by listing all the buildings that had been constructed in and near the downtown.

SIX MILLIONS ... A Grand Record of a Year's Growth ... Brick and Granite ...
Over 150 Brick Buildings Since the Fire ... A Mighty Faith in Spokane ...
Magnificent Blocks Cover All the Old Fire Ruins of a Year Ago

The Review today gives a complete record of the tangible results of the energy and confidence of the citizens of Spokane. It has been the aim of the Review in this building article to give a list of all the buildings that have been erected in the business portion of the city since the great fire of August 4, 1889. It is an anniversary edition, and the scope of this article has been confined exclusively to within the fire limits of a year ago, at the same time showing the natural growth of business beyond those boundaries.

...

Spokane has spent in round numbers six millions of dollars in business blocks since last August and is even now preparing for even greater expenditures in the same line.

In the face of so many buildings being thrown open at about the same time it is a noticeable fact, and a most encouraging sign of the times, that all of them are rapidly filling up with tenants. No sooner is a building declared ready for occupancy than the rooms and stores are immediately rented.

In a recapitulation of the investment touted in the August 5th article, the following table lists streets and expenditures on their frontages:

Riverside Avenue	\$2,607,000
Main Street	\$1,424,500
Sprague Street	\$ 816,000
Howard Street	\$ 402,400
First Street	\$ 264,000
Front Street	\$ 95,000
Second Street	\$ 93,500
Other streets	<u>\$ 181,000</u>
Total	\$5,975,400

In a similar vein, writer Nelson Wayne Durham reported in his *History of The City of Spokane and Spokane County, Washington* (1912), the birth of a new Spokane: By January 1, 1891, he noted, "a new and imposing business district had taken the place of that leveled by flame. The census of June had given Spokane nearly 20,000 population, but that count embraced only people living within the old city limits, two miles square. Population with the annexed territory gave a true total of nearly 25,000, and by January 1 the newspapers claimed 28,000.

Durham also describe the city's economic recovery with a typical abundance of figures: "Real estate transfers for 1890 were totaled at \$18,000,000. The assessed valuation of city property was \$18,790,000. The flour mills had a daily capacity of 700 barrels, and the year's lumber cut was 30,000,000 feet. Eleven banks had \$5,000,000 on deposit. The year's post office receipts were \$52,705, as against \$19,612 in 1888. A census of manufacturing interests showed 223 concerns employing hands. The railroads that year had carried in and out of Spokane 257,500 tons of freight. The telephone system had 410 subscribers, and thirty four miles of street railway were in operations. The city had nine public school buildings, valued at \$425,000; forty-three teachers and 2,500 pupils. There were thirty churches. As revealing the growth of a decade, the Review contrasted these figures with the showing of 1880, when the town had a population of 350, an assessed

valuation of \$50,000, real estate transfers of \$25,000, a milling capacity of ten barrels daily, an annual lumber cut of 500,00 feet, and a payroll of twenty-five hands.

Although the Webster Building was not constructed until 1893, it is at the premature close of the post fire building boom that likely would have continued had it not been squelched by the Panic of 1893.

Development of the Webster Building block

The Webster Building is Block 10 of Railroad Addition to Spokane bounded by Sprague Avenue on the north, Washington Street on the east, First Avenue on the south and Stevens Street on the west. The block is 300 feet long (east-west), and narrow, approximately 150 feet wide, with no alley.

The 1888 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map indicates that the block was divided into four parcels all occupied by a wood frame dwellings and accessory sheds and outbuildings that fronted along Sprague Avenue. In addition, in the northeast corner, with a dwelling on the southeast corner, was a frame "Public School."

The 1889 Sanborn Map depicted the same pattern as in 1888.

In 1890, however, the site had been divided, with the same dwelling from 1888 on the subject site, and to the south, fronting along "E. 1st ST." was "Steam Fire Eng. Ho," a vacant shed, and a frame building labeled "Chinese." A three-story brick building was being built on the Sprague Avenue frontage with a dwelling and a "Chinese Laundry" on the southern half of the lot. The "Arlington New Stables" occupied the east end of the block.

The 1891 Sanborn depicts essentially the same building pattern as 1890 but a new brick building, the Erie Building, had been constructed on the northwest corner of the block. The dwelling that had been on the site remained for one more year.

In 1902, the subject site was occupied by the two-story brick Webster Building. A two-story brick block was adjacent to the west, and brick buildings, two-story in the middle and one-story on the southwest corner, filled the frontage along Stevens Street and wrapped the corner of First Avenue. A vacant lot was between the corner building and Fire Station No. 1. East of the Webster Building was a vacant lot with a three-story brick building in the northeastern corner of that lot. The New Arlington Stables remained at the east end.

By 1910, Sanborn shows that the block was entirely built out. Filling the gap between the corner building and Fire Station No. 1 was a one-story brick building. A one-story brick building also filled in the east side of the Webster building, abutting the three-story brick building in the northeastern corner of that lot. The New Arlington Stables had been replaced by a one-story brick building fronting on Sprague Avenue, and a one-story brick building fronting on Washington Street. A one-story brick building, fronting on First Avenue, filled in the remainder of the block except a narrow eight-foot lane along the east side of the Fire Station.

In 1928, the entire block was filled with brick buildings with the six-story concrete City Ramp Parking Garage (1928, SRHP, NRHP) anchoring and dominating the west end of the block. Fire Station No. 1 and the Webster Building occupied the remainder of the west half of the block. In the east half, brick buildings, single-story commercial buildings and a three-story "Lodgings"

filled in the block. Two clothes cleaning businesses, an office, a printing shop, and a creamery with testing room occupied those buildings.

Career of E.J. Webster and Edgar Webster, businessman in 19th century Spokane

Edgar J. Webster arrived in Spokane Falls in 1882 bringing his law practice from Oakland, California. He quickly invested in Spokane real estate, buying property in the burgeoning downtown and outlying properties in northeast and northwest quadrants of the city, properties that would become Fairmount Memorial Park (1888) and Minnehaha Park. He became involved in Spokane affairs -- school board meetings were held in his office building on Sprague, he was elected to the city freeholder committee that drafted the city charter, he was a founder and served as president and majority owner of Fairmont Cemetery, he owned the land out of which Minnehaha Park was formed, and was an owner and president of the Ross Park Electric Railway Line. He made a fortune in real estate and mining and was one of Spokane's early millionaires.

The June 9, 1883, *Spokesman-Review* displays an advertisement for "E. J. Webster, Attorney at Law, and Chas. A. Webster, Life and Accident Ins. Agent, and Webster Brothers Real Estate Agents, Spokane Falls, Washington Territory." On the same page and article captioned "Dinna Ye Hear the Slogan?" extolls Spokane's future as a solid and prosperous city and lists the buildings underway, including that of E. J. Webster: "E.J. Webster is building a new frame business house on his lot on the south side of Riverside avenue between Howard and Stevens streets. The structure will be one story, 30x40, with two rooms, one for a store and the other to be occupied by the firm of Webster Bros., as a law, insurance and real estate office."

The following February, *The Spokesman-Review* reported that a new law firm was joining the growing business ranks of Spokane: "One of the latest addition to our law firms is that of Webster & Miller. The senior partner is E. J. Webster, who has led an active life in our midst during the past year as an attorney and dealer in real estate, and who has done exceedingly well in all of his ventures. The new man is Eugene C. Miller, who stopped at the Falls on his way to Portland, which act insured to use a new and most desirable citizen. Mr. Miller is a member of the bar of Butler county, Pa., where he has practiced law since 1876. ..."

In March 1884, *The Spokesman-Review* reported that E. J. Webster was building a two-story addition to the rear of his business on Howard Street.

The mining business was also one of Mr. Webster's endeavors as reported in the *Spokane Falls Review* of February 24, 1886. The article included a list of some fifteen sales of mining property made by E. J. Webster in the past thirty days. On October 5th, the *Review* reported that Webster and Dr. Burch planned to build an immense three-story brick at the southeast corner of Riverside Avenue and Howard Street. Dr. Burch owned a large frontage on both streets, and Webster's property joined on Burch's east. "The building will be a magnificent structure, and with Carson's new building on the corner of Sprague and Howard, it will make that block almost solid."

E. J. Webster was one of Spokane's businessmen who took up the hammer in building Spokane's Exposition Building while the carpenters were on strike. As reported in the *Spokane Falls Review* on November 13, 1890:

A very remarkable sight was witnessed at the exposition building yesterday afternoon, and one that will probably never be paralleled and certainly never has been, even in this free and glorious Pacific Northwest

It was a scene long to be remembered. Gray-headed bankers in silk hats and Prince Albert coats, wealthy mine owner, prosperous merchants and retire capitalists, with hammer and saw were at work on the roof of the new exposition building, which must be ready for opening fourteen days hence.

The carpenters' union thinking that it had the ship hand, struck and refused to work.

The citizens of Spokane, many of whom had made their start in life at the carpenter's bench, at once went to the building and, amid the awed silence of the striking workmen, pulled off their coats and began to work.

E.J. Webster, the millionaire real estate owner, was the first to nail a shingle, and he worked for six long hours, and with F.B. Chandler, C.G. Betts, and the city engineer, Oskar Huber, finished over 800 square feet of work during the afternoon.

The *Spokane Chronicle* reported on February 20, 1891, that E.J. Webster had been granted a street railroad franchise by the county commissioners. He was authorized to construct and operate an electric road beginning at the east end of the Ross Park street railroad to Minnehaha Park. Webster was a stockholder and, at that time, president of the line. He also owned and had a summer home at Minnehaha Park, discovered a mineral water spring on the property, and turned the area into a spa (Rebstock, 2020).

On March 14, 1891, the *Spokane Chronicle* published final certificate for city charter for the City of Spokane Falls. E. J. Webster was among the esteemed group of fifteen freeholders who had framed the charter; others included David P. Jenkins. A. M. Cannon, H. E. Houghton, I. S. Kaufmann, Frank a Bettis, James N. Glover, and George H. Leonard.

The *Spokane Chronicle* reported in its October 28, 1891 edition that Webster had recently purchased the Tidball Block in downtown Spokane. He traded 145 acres of land, and \$750 cash and assumed a \$30,000 mortgage for the four-story brick building (Rand and Dow, 1891, razed).

On February 4, 1892, *The Spokane Review* reported the sale of the Ross Park streetcar line to Spokane Street Railway. "The Ross Park line, that has just been sold, was built about three years ago at a cost of \$200,000. It was the first electric road in the city. Taking it all in all, it was supposed to be the staunchest built road, as to mechanism, etc., to be found in the county. It was built and operated by G. B. Dennis, who was its president for the first two years. He was succeeded by E. J. Webster, who was president for one year, Mr. Webster in turn being replaced by H. N. Belt, its present president. The present stockholders of the road are H. N. Belt, E. J. Webster, and several others."

Demonstrating his "substantial" generosity, Mr. Webster gave a boost to Mr. J. J. Hill's Great Northern Railroad as it sought a route through Spokane. As reported by the *Spokane Chronicle* on February 12, 1892: "Mr. E.J. Webster was next called upon he said: 'So mild, rosy and acceptable a proposition was never received by the citizens of Spokane before from any railroad. I have agreed to give my Hill the right of way across my property, which measures over a mile, and a tier of lots on each side into the bargain, and I hope the property owners of the west side of the city will deal as generously by him when it comes their turn.' Mr. Webster's statement was vociferously applauded.

Construction of the Webster Building

A news article in the May 1893 edition of the *Spokane Review* indicated that E. J. Webster and Eugene Miller were planning to erect a two-story brick on Sprague Avenue. (According to the Spokane County Assessor Field File, the Webster Building was constructed in 1890, but the East Downtown National Register District nomination provides a date of 1892.) Webster had purchased the property on which he would build his new building in February 1889. He invested a sum of \$20,000 for the premises, a frame dwelling on the north eighty feet of the east half of lot 2 and in the north eighty feet of lot 3, both in block 10 of Railroad Addition to Spokane. Three months later, on May 11th, Ida L. Webster conveyed her interest in that and several other properties to E.J. Webster, her husband. But June 20, 1890, "Judge Blake granted E. J. Webster a decree of divorce from his wife, Ida L. Webster." The 1889, 1890 and 1891 Sanborn Insurance maps shows a frame dwelling on the site.

Optimism glowed in the *Spokane Review*'s May 8, 1893 edition: "Architects and contractors predict a building boom this summer. Many of the former have all the work they can attend to, and the contractors are busy making estimates on a variety of small jobs. ... The building of business blocks has been delayed on account of the scarcity of brick. The news report listed the drivers of Spokane's growth: Dr. J.E. Gandy, F.M. Tull, C.F. Clough, Peter Costello. L. B. Whitten, James Holman, Millard Hartson, Eugene Hyde and Rollin Hyde were building new two and three-story brick business blocks along Sprague, Riverside, and Main. As stated: "E.J. Webster and Eugene Miller will build a two-story brick 75x75, two stories, on Sprague avenue, adjoining the Erie Block." (In the same month, by Warranty Deed, Edgar J. Webster (unmarried) conveyed to Eugene G. Miller one-half interest in the property). The article ended by observing that "The above list is only a fraction of the buildings in course of erection and to be erected this summer. It is safe to say that there will be business blocks and residences enough built in Spokane this year to take a good-sized town if put off by themselves, but Spokane is now so big, and is growing so rapidly, that the effect will hardly be noticeable."

May 1893 proved to be pivotal in the history of the Webster Building, it was constructed, but as it was being built, the U.S. economy was crumbling. In May 1893, a financial panic struck the nation. In the ensuing trans-Atlantic depression banks and businesses failed, credit froze, railroads went bankrupt, unemployment, and loss of homes, savings, and buildings devastated rich and poor alike. The financial implosion hit the stock market for the first time on May 3, 1893, when a massive sell-off caused share prices to tumble. The market crash accelerated, and the Panic of 1893 was in full bloom and would last to August of 1893. The ensuing depression would last several years. The severity and duration of the economic disaster would only be surpassed by the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Meanwhile in Spokane some forty new buildings had arisen in the commercial district following the devastation of 1889. And as reported above, as the economy was collapsing, new brick edifices were being erected and planned for downtown Spokane. Almost all of these buildings, including the new building of Webster and Miller, had been mortgaged to finance construction; more than thirty of these would be lost to foreclosure during the initial panic and the following depression. (Caldbeck, 2019)

Nine banks failed in Spokane, a significant percentage of municipal funds was held in banks that had suspended operations and was inaccessible, hundreds of families and individuals lost much or all of their savings, homes were foreclosed, unemployment soared, and the rich did not get richer. Indeed, many lost all, including pioneer banker Anthony M. Cannon (1839-1895) who

opened the first bank in Spokane in 1879. His Bank of Spokane Falls was the third in the state to fail, on June 6, 1893. According to historian John Caldbick, within 24 hours, two other Spokane banks that were financially entwined with Cannon shut their doors, and a third closed after a run by its depositors. Cannon died two years later in New York. James N. Glover (1837-1921), another of the city's most prominent developers, built an opulent 12,000-square-foot mansion in 1888. In July 1893 he lost much of his fortune when the city's First National Bank, of which he served as president, failed. The mortgage on his mansion was foreclosed, and Glover was forced to sell it two years later to satisfy his debts.

Concurrently, the Panic of 1893 had its impact on the Webster Building as the case with numerous other downtown Spokane buildings. As discussed by historian Holly George (2016) in telling of the failure of the Auditorium Theater, the economic impact was widespread.

The story began four years earlier, after the 1889 fire that destroyed so much of downtown Spokane. In a flurry of civic pride Spokanites declared that their city would arise from the fire bigger and better than before. And it did, at a price. Before 1889 Inland Northwesterners had dealt with a Dutch investment firm called the Northwestern and Pacific Hypotheek Bank. In order to rebuild, Spokane borrowed heavily from the Hypotheek Bank, which by the end of 1892 had loaned more than \$4.8 million on urban properties.

Then came the Panic of 1893, when a burst railroad bubble and a precipitous drop in the gold supply conspired to plunge the United States into depression.

Institutions and fortunes throughout the nation failed in the panic, a contagion from which Spokane was hardly immune. Indeed, as the distress spread to the Northwest, it soon became evident that many leading Spokanites had badly overextended themselves.

Two years after construction of the building, in May 1895, Webster conveyed his remaining interest by Quit Claim Deed to Eugene G. Miller.

On October 24, 1896, the foreclosure of Edgar Webster, Eugene G. Miller, Spokane Savings Bank, Fred B. Grinnell as Receiver of the Spokane Savings Bank, et al. was recorded in the Spokane County Deed books. *The Spokesman-Review* would report "Judge Moore has made an order, on petition of Blake and Post, attorneys for the Northwestern and Pacific Hypotheekbank, authorizing the latter to join Fred B. Grinnell, receiver of the Spokane Savings bank, in its suit against E.J. Webster, Eugene G. Miller and others for foreclosure for a mortgage (for \$17,000).

In June 1897, Webster offered to donate Minnehaha park to the city. According to the *Spokane Chronicle* (June 8th), Hypotheekbank held a \$6,500 mortgage on which the bank was willing "to throw off \$2,000 if the city will pay the balance."

On November 30, 1897 by Sheriff's Deed 18902 (C. C. Dempsey, Sheriff) Sheriff sale 21,792.60, the plaintiff, the Northwestern and Pacific Hypotheekbank (Northwestern and Pacific Mortgage Company) received title to the Webster building on the steps of the Spokane County Courthouse.

Hence, the history of the Webster Building property mirrored that of many others in downtown during the 1890s.

R.L. Polk Directory Information – 415-417-417-1/2-419-421 West Sprague Avenue

The first listing in the Spokane City Polk Directory (Polk) for the building, 415-423 Sprague Avenue was in 1895 for the W.D. Knight Co. bookbinder, and later through 1899, printers and binders. Hotel Webster was listed in 1905 at 415-1/2 Sprague, and in 1910 at 417-1/2 Sprague. The Hotel Vera appeared in 1915, the Hotel King in 1917 and 1918, and the Plains Hotel in 1920 through 1930, the Model Hotel in 1936, Dixon Hotel in 1940, and back to the Webster Hotel and Apartments in 1945, and Webster Apartments in 1956. The year 1956 was the last year that 417-1/2 was listed as being occupied. At times during this period, Polk listed the names of the tenants by room number. The 1945 Polk Directory listed fifteen residents in fifteen numbered units through the number 21. No units were listed under 4, 13, 15, or 18, 19, 20. It is likely that some of the units were combined. As building declined in the 1950s, the number of residents slipped to seven in 1955 and 1956, and some of those occupied two or more numbered units. In 1956, four units were listed as vacant, and eight numbers were combined into four units.

According to 1910 U.S. Census enumeration, 417-1/2 Sprague contained twelve lodgers listed in eleven households. One was a man and wife; one other was a woman. Occupations included: farm laborer, farmer (2), machinist, blacksmith, none, laborer (2), barber, and sales lady.

A sampling of ground floor businesses is included below. Bars, cafes, restaurant, and lounges occupied the 415 address from 1914 or before through 2018.

415 West Sprague

1895-96 – W.D. Knight Co., bookbinder at 415-423 Sprague
1897-98 - W.D. Knight Co., bookbinder at 417 Sprague
1897-98 - W.D. Knight Co., bookbinder
1899-1900 - W.D. Knight Co., bookbinder at 415-421
1913-1914 – Good Eat Café; electrical permit issued, 5/12/1913
1915 – M & R Lunch
1919 – 1926 White Front Café, electrical sign permit, 1/16/1926
1930 - Blue Bird Cigar Store
1935 – Senate Café and on 11/23/1935, the Senate Beer Parlor, electrical permits 1935-1937
1938 – Senate Beer Parlor, building permit to alter store front
1940 - Senate Beer Parlor
1946 – 1965 - Senate Tavern, various owners, storefront permits & electrical permits, 1946-1954
1966-1970 - GoGo Tavern
1973 – Merchant's Tavern
1974-Intrepred Fox Restaurant
1975 – Robby's Tavern
1979 – Little Hofbrauhaus
1983 -1985– Mister 'Zs' Restaurant
1990 – Cut Above Restaurant
2000 – Our Place Restaurant
2006 – address not listed

2010 – 2017 – Irv's (lounge)

2018 - Stray

417 West Sprague

1898 – Fremming & Gabriel home furnishing and furniture (415-417)

1930 – Brodie Sales Co. bottlers supplies

1935 – vacant

1940 – 1946 – address not listed

1950 - Chas. J. Lay Real Estate

1955 - vacant

1960 - 1961 – Gene's Pizza

1970 to present – address not listed

417-1/2 West Sprague

A variety of hotels listed vacant after 1905 through 1956 after which the second floor was vacant.

419 West Sprague

1890 -1891 – New York Tea Company

1900 – The Farnsworth-Herald Col

1903 – 1905 – A.C. Thompson for Pierce Bicycles and Automobiles (419-421)

1905 – Stutes Printing Company

1930 – Boundary Line Realty Co.

1935 – 1940 - Jas. E. Thompson Real Estate 1950 – 1960 Real Estate Companies

1956-46 – Amos Hill, watchmaker

1950 – 1955 – Ruell J. Burrill and Alfred Shaw, Real Estate

1961– 1965 – vacant

1966 - 1990 – Meyers Cleaners

2000 – not verified

2010 to present – not listed

421 West Sprague

1912 – Stowell Drug Company

1929 and 1938 and 1943, 1960 - – Stowell Drug Company

1960 – 1965 – vacant

1967 – 1990 Remington Rand, Lesco's Shaver Service, Northwest Shaver

2000 – Michael Ankney – Fusion Hair Styling salon

2006 to present – address not listed

Edgar J. Webster, World Traveler

Mr. Webster was a noted world traveler and *The Spokesman-Review* reported his adventures in the Australian region on February 23, 1905. In recounting a letter sent from Hobart, Tasmania to a Spokane friend, Webster told of his experiences and that he had visiting Porto Rico [sic], Hawaii, and parts of Asia. He wrote: "I am at the extreme end of my journey and can go no farther in this direction, so day after tomorrow I sail for southern New Zealand." He had been in and enjoyed Australia for a month and extolled its people and climate.

Mr. Webster continued his travels, and on June 13, 1919, *The Spokesman-Review*, declared: "The world's champion globe-trotter is a Spokane man." The article recounted the 71-year-old's experiences as a globe trotter and his close calls in faraway places -- in the Himalaya Mountains,

Persia, Russia, and the Balkans. He spoke of small countries with no flags and in which his passports were not good and, thus, he had not visited. "Anyway," he stated, "it would have taken an army to get into them, and there is no telling just how you would get out." But he had seen them from above, up in the Himalaya Mountains where he could look down on those countries. His next project was to add illustrative stories to the great many pictures he had taken. He still had twenty more years to travel until his death in 1939.

On May 24, 1931, Spokane welcomed home one of its most adventurous pioneers and told the story of E. J. Webster, Civil War veteran, lawyer, developer, and one of the city's "most widely traveled and picturesque citizens."

E.J. Webster passed away in Pasadena, California on May 8, 1939 and *The Spokesman-Review* published his death notice on May 11, noting his service in the Union Army, his engagement in the real estate, his investments in the growth of Spokane, and the broader impact of his civic involvement.

Eugene G. Miller, partner in Webster Building

Eugene Miller was born in 1853 in Shreveport, Louisiana and graduated at Centenary College. He studied law in Pennsylvania and became a lawyer there in 1877, he was admitted to the bar and practiced for about seven years. He arrived in Spokane, formed a partnership with E. J. Webster in February 1884, and was admitted to the bar in April 1884. After a year, he moved to Minneapolis where he practiced law until returning to Spokane in 1887. In July 1892, Miller became engaged in city politics when he was sworn in as a member of the board of city commissioners as Police Commissioner. Shortly thereafter, in November of 1892, the Honorable Eugene Miller resigned that position after he had been elected by Spokane voters as judge of the municipal court. After his service as a judge, Miller returned to his legal practice and ended his career by working for the Spokane Chronicle until 1926. He resided with his wife Bessie initially at 2006 First Avenue in Browne's Addition in 1900, then moved to the South Hill on Monroe and 24th where he was residing at his death. Eugene passed away as a widower in Spokane in 1938 at age 87, was cremated with his ashes scattered to the Montana winds.

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- . "Final Certificate." 3/14/1891. P7:7.
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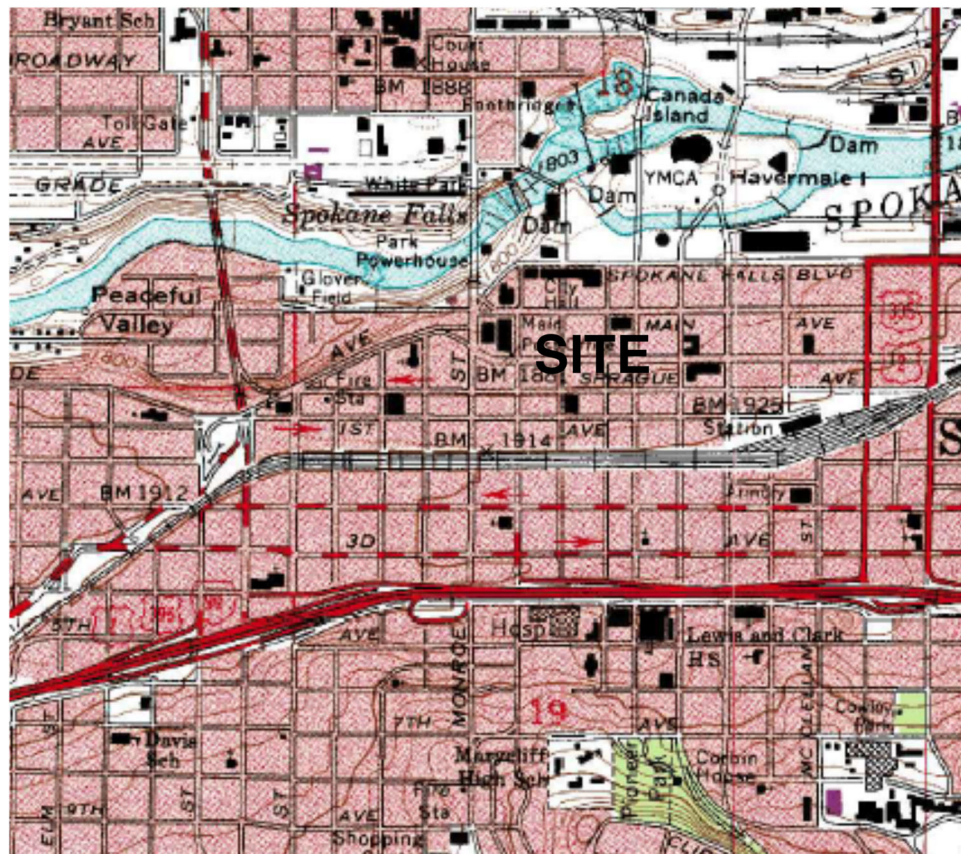
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Maps, Drawings, and Photographs



USGS 7.5-Minute Quadrangle. Spokane NW, Wash. 1974. Photorevised 1986

WEBSTER BUILDING - 415 WEST SPRAGUE SITE LOCATION

N
1' = 2000'



Spokane City Map – 11/23/19

WEBSTER BUILDING - 415 W. SPRAGUE
SITE AERIAL

N
1' = 2000'

ASSESSOR FIELD FILE SKETCH AND PHOTO

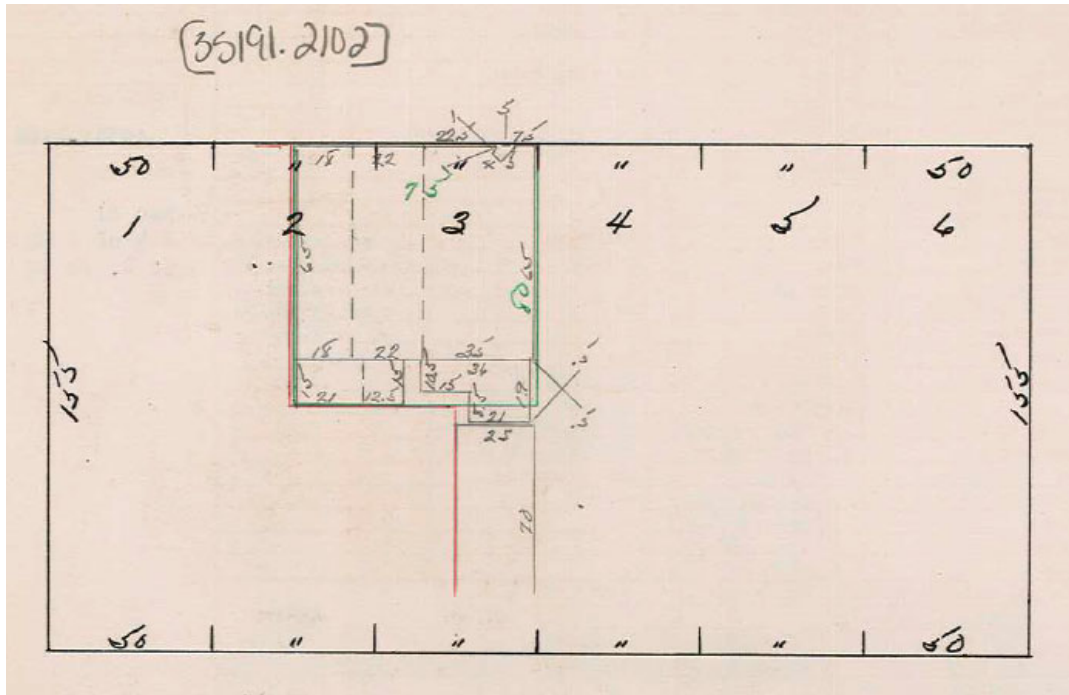


Photo and files, ca. 2004

ADDRESS/BLDG. NAME		W. 415 to 421 Sprague Avenue							
BUILDING #	TYPE-USE-QUALITY	EXT. WALLS	BASEMENT	EXTRA FEATURES	YEAR	LAND VALUE	BLDG. VALUE	APPRSR.	DATE
1	Apartment	Brick	Full	Margones	1910	120,000	53,500	J.D.	4-10
2	Office	Stone	Size	Canopy	1914	150,000	53,500	D.W.	4-10
3	Warehouse	Concrete	Finished	Balcony	1915	150,000	50,000	R.W.	8-17-17
4	Gas Station	Siding	Utility	Insulation	2004			R.C.	2-10-14
5	Motel	Con. Blk.		Cold Storage					
6	Garage	Ceiling Panel	HEATING	Sound Proofing					
7	Store		Hot Air						
8	No. Stories		Hot Water	INT. WALLS					
9	No. Rooms		Air Cond.	See Below					
10	No. Apts.		Gas						
11	ANNUAL GROSS INC.		Electric	INT. PARTITIONING					
12	DATE		Oil Burner	Lin-Fest					
13			Coal Stoker	ELEVATOR					
14			Steam	Kind					
15			Central	Stops					
16	CONSTRUCTION			APPLIANCES					
17	Frame		Toilets	RG & OV					
18	Steel Frame		Tubs	HF					
19	Reinf. Conc.		Basins	DW					
20	Brick		Sinks	Washer					
21	Con. Blk.		Reinf. Conc.	Dryer					
22			Conc. Slab	Reinf. Conc.					
23	FOUNDATION		Reinf. Conc.	Reinf. Conc.					
24	Con. Stone Blk.		Reinf. Conc.	Reinf. Conc.					
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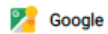
LEGAL DESC:
 Spo 81 Railroad Addition
 E 1/2 of N 80 Ft of Lt 2 & N 80 Ft of
 Lt 3, Bk 10

Google Maps 414 W Sprague Ave



Image capture: Jul 2017 © 2019 Google

Spokane, Washington



Street View - Jul 2017

Google Street View Photo of 415 West Sprague Avenue, 2017



1. Webster Building context along Sprague Avenue, looking southeast



2. Webster Building context along Sprague Avenue, looking west



3. Northwest corner and front facade, looking southeast



4. Northeast corner and front facade, looking southwest



5. Front Facade, looking south



6. Southeast corner, showing east and south facades, looking northwest



7. Bay 2 – Details of second floor and cornice, looking south



8. Front façade - Entry bay to second floor apartments, looking south



9. Looking south upstairs to apartments



10. Second floor - stair landing/vestibule to apartments, looking east



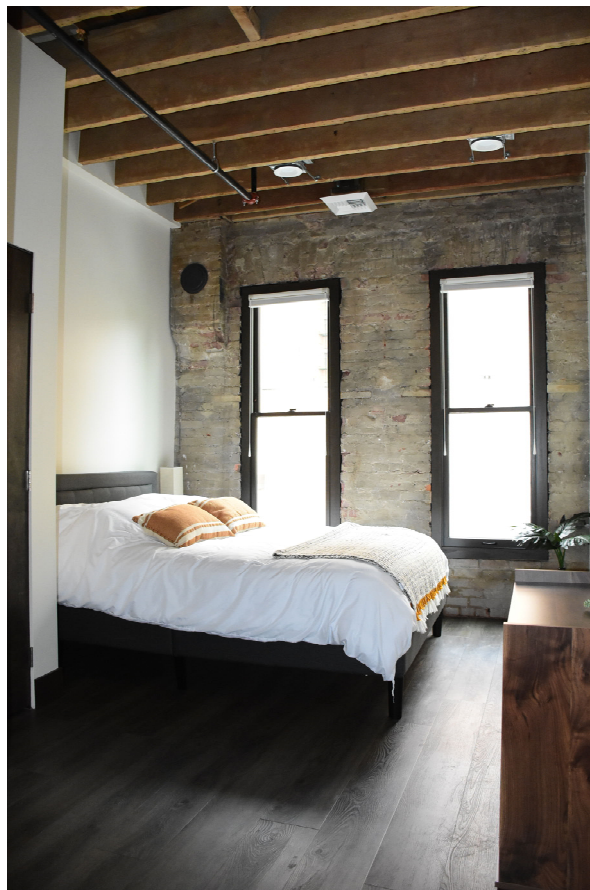
11. Apartment No.1 - living/dining/kitchen, looking northeast



12. Apartment No. 1 - guest bathroom, looking north



13. Bedroom No. 1, dining, living areas, looking northeast



14. Bedroom No. 1, looking north



15. Bedroom No. 2, looking northeast



16. Bedroom No. 2 - Bath - vanity, sink, shower,
looking southeast



17. Bedroom No. 2 - Bath - vanity, sink, toilet



18. Laundry, utility room, looking east



19. Dining area and kitchen, looking southwest



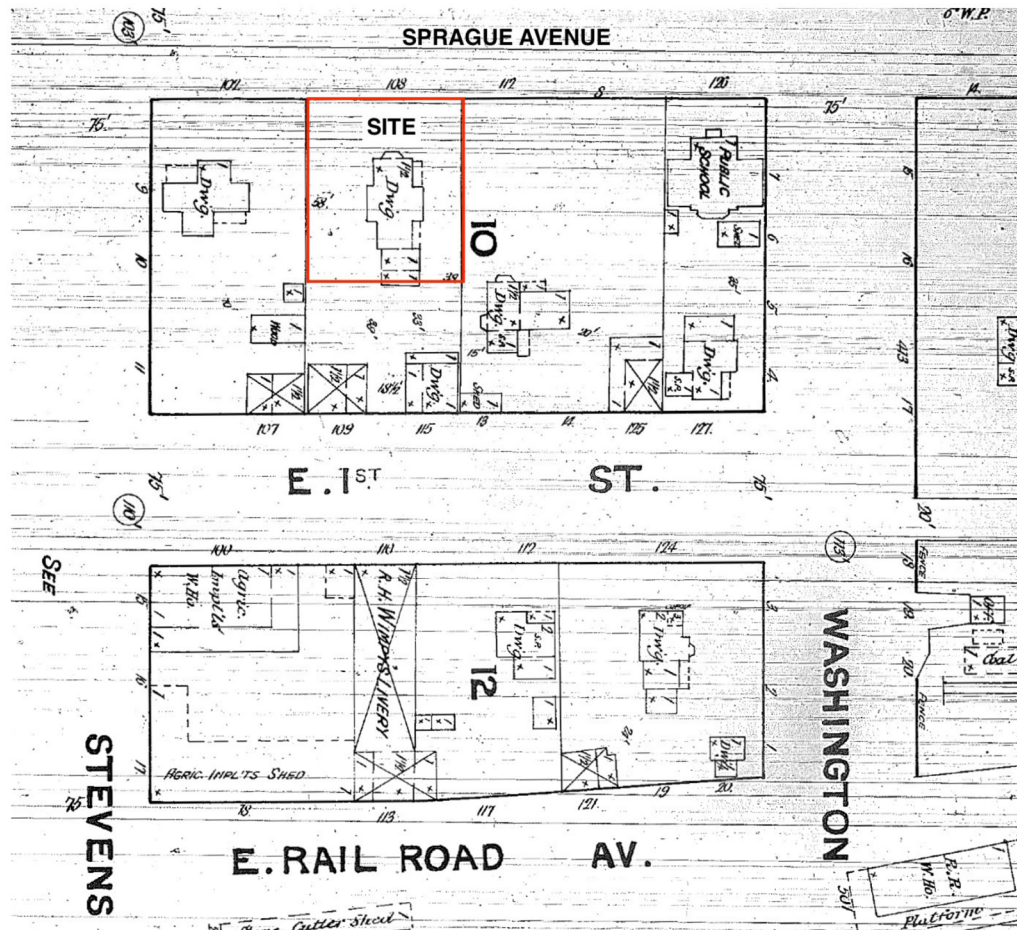
20. Living room, looking north



15. First floor - east commercial bays looking north



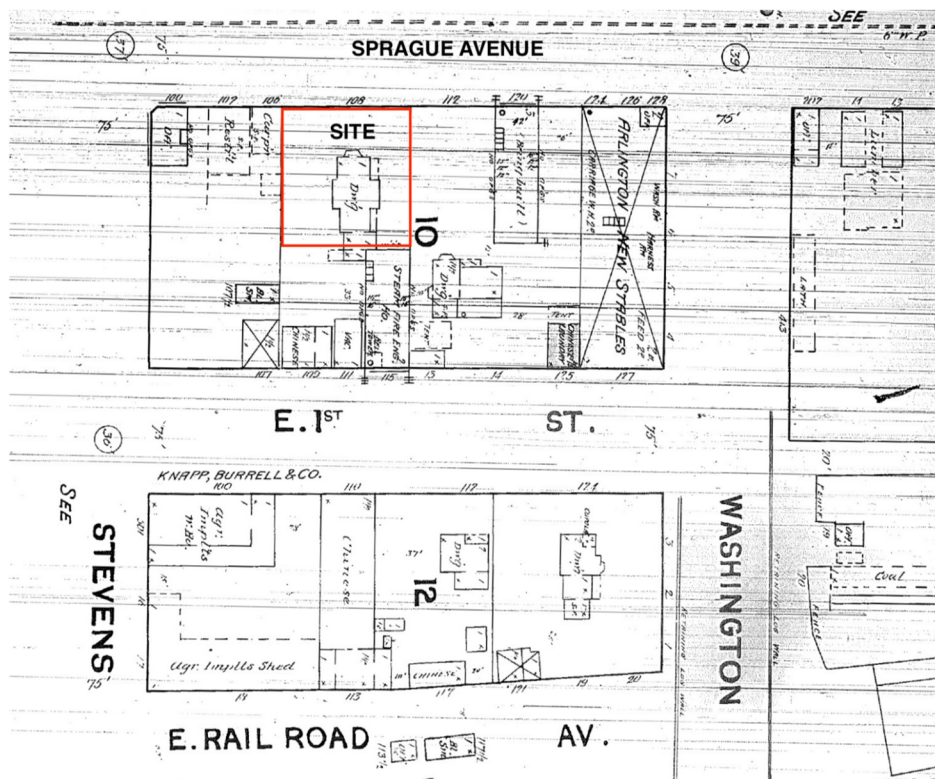
16. First floor - west commercial bays looking northwest



Sanborn Insurance Map – 1889 – page 7

415 WEST SPRAGUE AVENUE
1889 SANBORN MAP

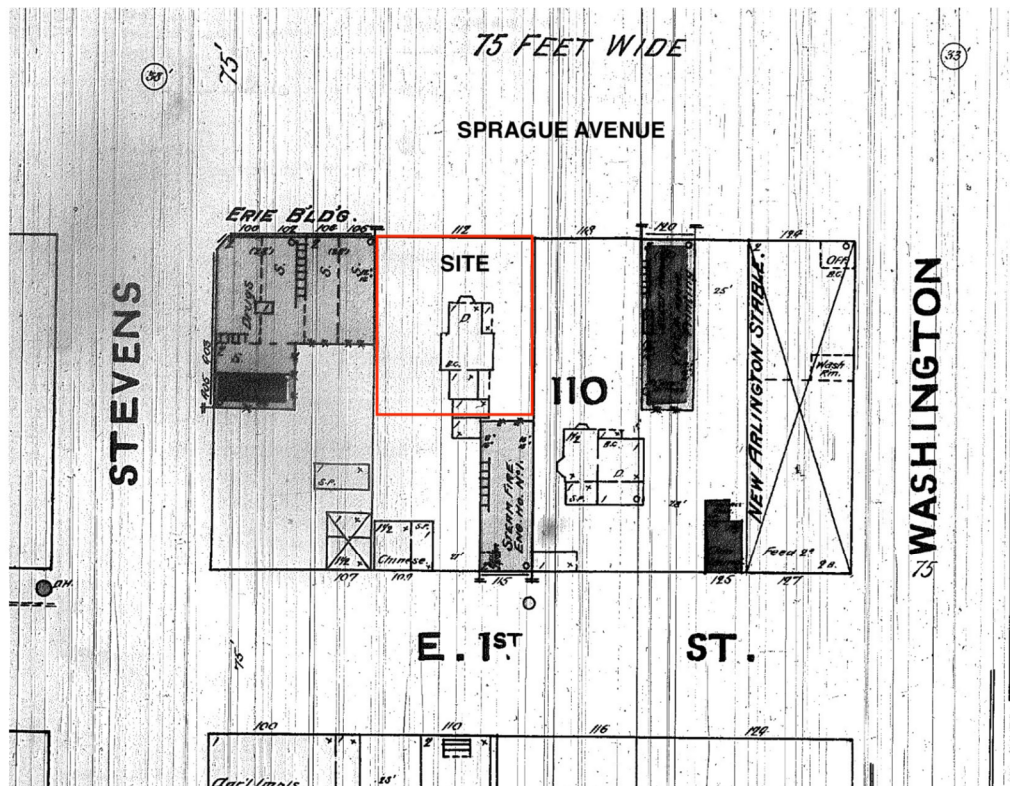
N
1' = 100'



Sanborn Insurance Map – 1890 – page 7

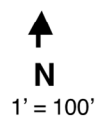
415 WEST SPRAGUE AVENUE
1890 SANBORN MAP

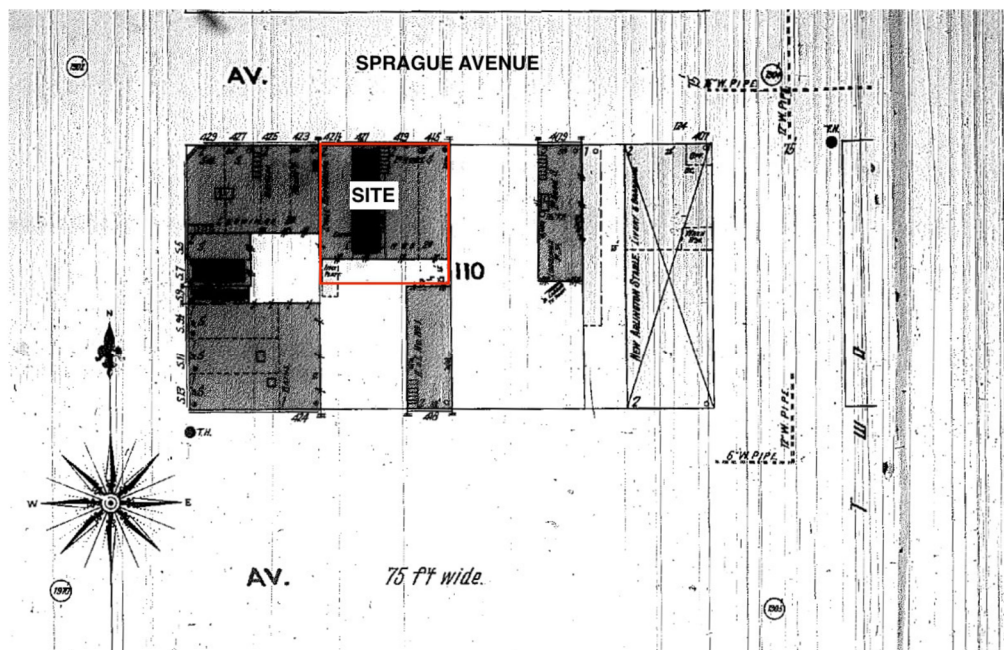
N
1" = 100'



Sanborn Insurance Map – 1891 – page 9

415 WEST SPRAGUE AVENUE
1891 SANBORN MAP

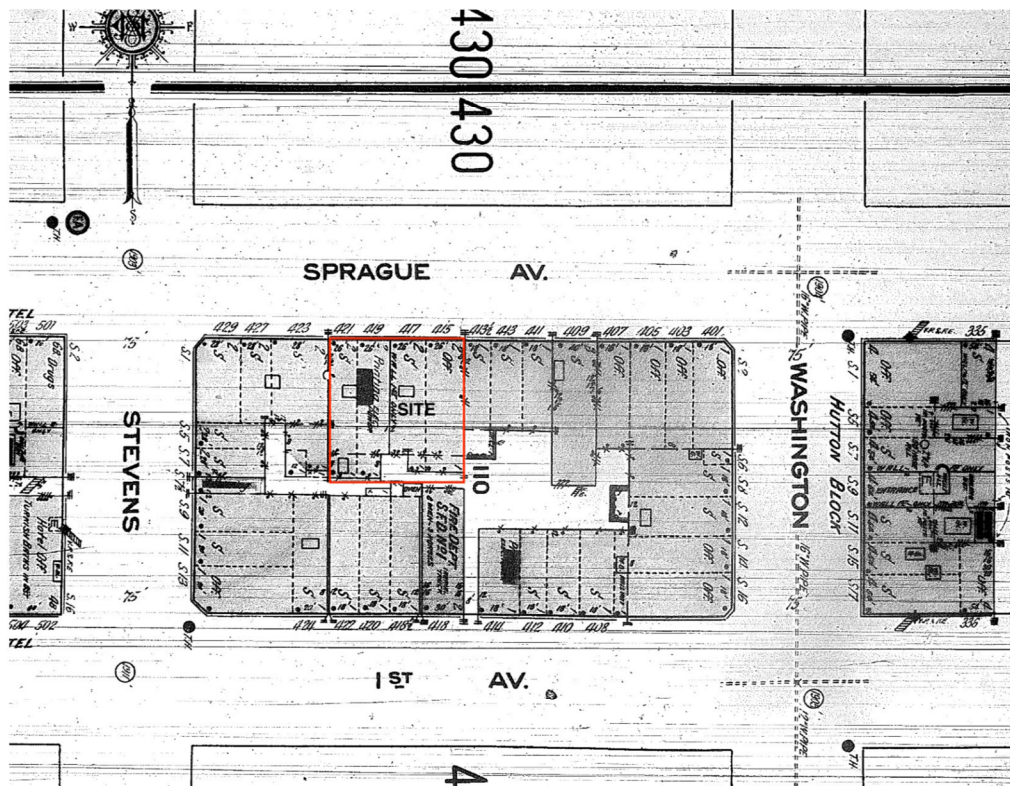




Sanborn Insurance Map – 1902 – page 9

415 WEST SPRAGUE AVENUE
1902 SANBORN MAP

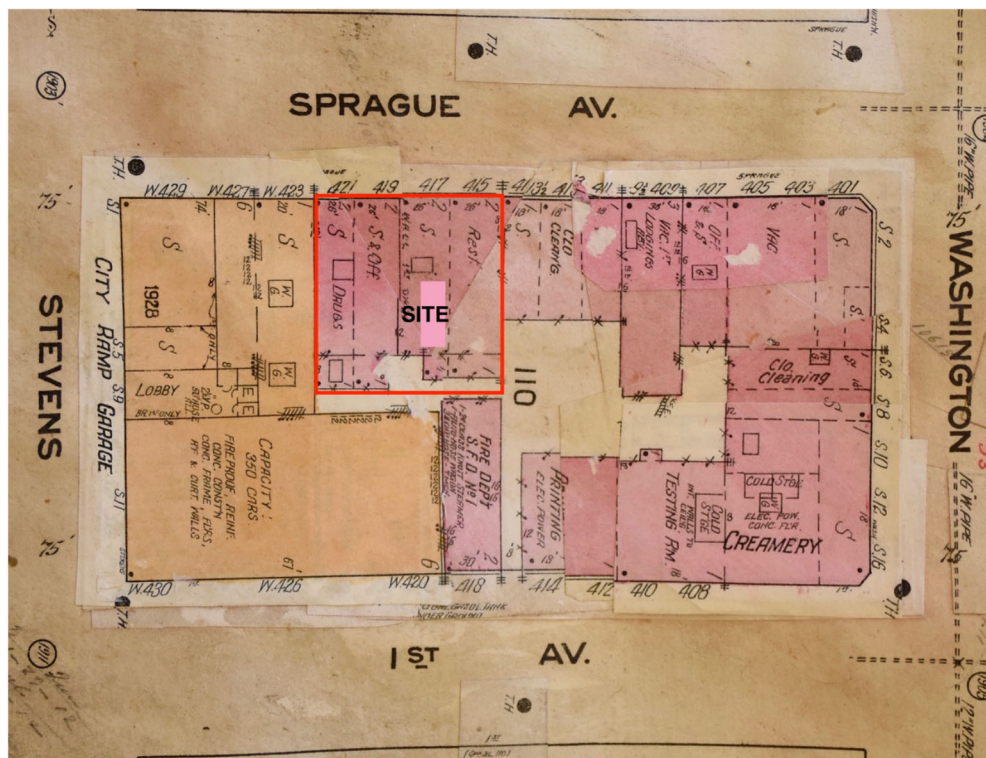
↑
N
1' = 100'



Sanborn Insurance Map – 1910 – page 430

**415 WEST SPRAGUE AVENUE
1910 SANBORN MAP**

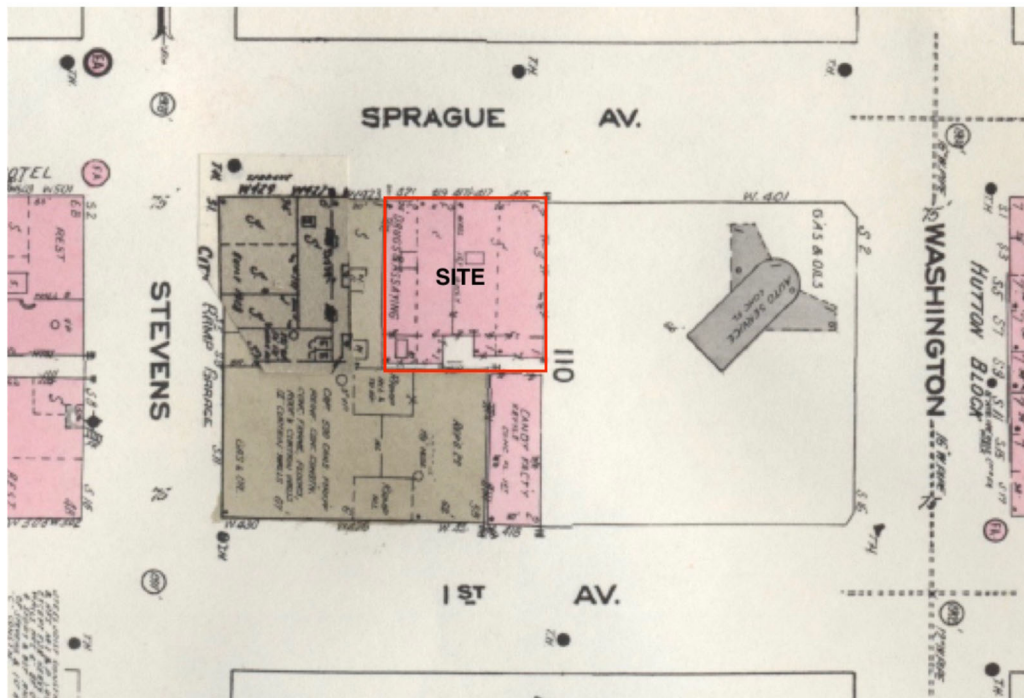
N
1' = 100'



Sanborn Insurance Map – 1910 updated to 1928– page 430

415 WEST SPRAGUE AVENUE
1910 SANBORN TO 1928

N
 1' = 100'



Sanborn Insurance Map –1958– page 430

**415 WEST SPRAGUE AVENUE
1958 SANBORN MAP**

N
1" = 100'

Always a complete stock of
Patent Medicines and Toilet Articles.
W. L. Turner, Druggist and Apothecary.

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—AND—	
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*Houses to Rent, Loans Negotiated, Rents Collected, and Management of Property
 for Non-residents made a Specialty. References—Bank of
 Spokane Falls, and First National Bank.*

SPOKANE FALLS, " " " " WASHINGTON TERRITORY.

The Spokesman Review 7/14/1883

MRS. R. A. OUGH, recently from Quincy,
 Ills., and who for the past few months
 has been visiting friends in Spokane, has de-
 cided to open millinery here with the assist-
 ance of Mrs. N. M. Barnard. Mrs. Barnard's
 former customers and friends will be pleased
 to learn that she has engaged with Mrs.
 Ough as trimmer and saleslady. Opening
 days, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday,
 Sept. 28th, 29th and 30th. Fine millinery a
 specialty. Millinery parlors in E. J. Web-
 ster's block, on Riverside avenue, east of
 Howard street.

4w

Spokane Evening Review. 9/17/1885

ASH., TUESDAY., JULY 25, 1893.

FREE! FREE!! FREE!!!

Do not Drink River Water when you can get Carbonated

Minnehaha Water Without Charge

By Simply calling at Schafer & Co.'s Drug Store, Carleton
Block, on Main Avenue.

As all lakes, wells, rivers and ponds are known to be impregnated with disease germs, our only safety is to drink a mineral water in which there is no organic matter. With this end in view, a Depot has been opened at Schafer & Co.'s Drug Store, Carleton Block, Corner Main and Howard Streets, where the celebrated Minnehaha Water will be dispensed to the public free. This water is pronounced by the leading physicians the most marvelous and purest water in the world—not only for table use, but as a cure for many of the ills that flesh is heir to.

I manufacture from the above water at MINNEHAHA PARK (where the public are always welcome to inspect the plant, and sample the goods) the following line of goods: Siphons, \$1.75 per dozen; Table Water, quarts, \$1.75 per doz. \$6.00 per case (50); Table Water, pints, \$1.00 per doz. \$3.75 per case (50); Ginger Ale, pints, \$1.50 per doz; Champagne Cider, pints, \$2.00 per doz; Imperial Tonic, quarts, \$3.00 per doz; Sarsaparilla, quarts, \$2.00 per doz; Orange Soda, quarts, \$2.00 per dozen; Banana Soda, quarts, \$2.00 per dozen; Chocolate Soda, quarts, \$2.00 per dozen; Lemon Soda, quarts, \$2.00 per dozen; Birch, quarts, \$2.00 per dozen; Ginger Fruit, quarts, \$2.00 per dozen.

The above goods are also kept on ice at the depot and are dispensed by the glass, so the ladies and the public can become familiar with the different flavors and be able to make their orders to delivery wagon according to their preferences. My wagon will deliver at your residence or place of business any of the above line, at the above prices, which does not include bottles. I have spared no time or money in bringing these goods to a high state of perfection.

Try them and Satisfy Yourself. Respectfully,

MINNEHAHA SPRINGS.

Telephone 148.

E. J. WEBSTER, Proprietor.