

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name CITY RAMP GARAGE

Other names/site number _____

2. Locationstreet & number 430 West First Avenue _____ not for publicationcity or town Spokane _____ vicinityState Washington code WA county Spokane code 063 zip code 99201**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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

Signature of certifying official/Title_____
DateWASHINGTON STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE_____
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title_____
Date_____
State or Federal agency and bureau**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet determined eligible for the
National Register. See continuation sheet determined not eligible for the
National Register. removed from the
National Register. other (explain:) __________
Signature of the Keeper_____
Date of Action

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

☐ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☒ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Non-Contributing	
		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Functions or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: Road-Related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: Road-Related

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls CONCRETE

roof CONCRETE

other

Narrative Description

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1928

Significant Dates

1928

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Whitehouse & Price (Architects)

Alloway & Georg (Builder)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office

10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM References on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>11</u> Zone	<u>4</u> <u>68</u> <u>591</u> Easting	<u>52</u> <u>78</u> <u>035</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> Northing
2	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> Northing	4	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated area is located in Section 19, of Township 25, Range 43, in Spokane Caounty Washington and is legally described as Lot 1 and parts of Lots 2 and 3 in Block 10 of the Railroad Addition to Spokane. It is otherwise identified as Tax Parcel #35191.2101 at the said location.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property encompasses the entire parcel and urban tax lot that is occupied by the City Ramp Garage.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Linda Yeomans, Consultant
organization Historic Preservation Planning & Design date August 1, 2012
street & number 501 West 27th Avenue telephone (509) 456-3828
city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99203

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

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

Additional items

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

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

name City Ramp Garage, ATTN: Jack Heath
street & number 430 West First Avenue telephone (509) 624-1313
city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99201

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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The City Ramp Garage in downtown Spokane, Washington was built in 1928 is a six-story-and-basement fireproof reinforced, concrete structure with a flat roof, a large recessed drive-in garage lobby, gasoline pumps and pump islands, and parking stall spaces in the basement and upper floors. It was originally constructed to house more than 350 automobiles. A fine illustration of the Art Deco style, the garage is architecturally prominent with a robust use of curved and vertical rectilinear geometric designs, multi-colored terra cotta ornamentation/rinceau patterns, and a shaped parapet with tall pilasters and finials that extend past the parapet's upper-most edge. The building's exterior has a vertical emphasis with tall concrete pilasters interspersed by recessed bays which are clad with tan-colored brick veneer. The brick veneer walls are punctuated by multi-paned steel-sash windows which are arranged in vertical rows. The City Ramp Garage retains a high level of exterior and interior architectural integrity in original location, design, materials, workmanship, and association as a parking garage.

CURRENT APPEARANCE & CONDITION

Site

The City Ramp Garage is located in the Railroad Addition to Spokane on all of Lot 1 and part of Lots 2 and 3 in Block 10. The property is identified by Spokane County as tax parcel number 35191.2101. The garage has two primary facades at its southwest corner with one facade facing west at South Stevens Street and one facing south at West First Avenue in downtown Spokane. The property's footprint assumes an "L" shape with the longer part of the L running in a north-south direction along Stevens Street, and the shorter, foot of the L running east-west along First Avenue. The property measures 155 feet along South Stevens Street from Sprague south through Block 10 to First Avenue, 125 feet along First Avenue, and 75 feet along Sprague Avenue. The L-shaped footprint of the City Ramp Garage comprises a six-story structure, but also includes a small one-story "wing" at the east wall of the garage at the northeast corner. The one-story garage wing is 25 feet wide at its north face (part of the garage structure's 75-foot-long east-west face along Sprague Avenue), and 80 feet deep as it extends south from Sprague Avenue along part of the east side of the six-story garage structure. A two-story brick building (415 W. Sprague Avenue) built in 1890 is located adjacent to and shares a common wall with the small one-story garage wing at the wing's east exterior wall. Another two-story brick building (418 W. First Avenue), also built in 1890, is located adjacent to and shares the south half of the east wall of the six-story garage at the garage building's southeast corner. Eight-foot-wide paved sidewalks separate the garage from the road at Stevens Street, First Avenue, and Sprague Avenue.

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Exterior

The six-story City Ramp Garage faces west along Stevens Street. The façade is separated by seven pilasters and six recessed vertical bays which are located between the pilasters. The pilasters are made of reinforced concrete, extend vertically for more than six stories from grade past the top of a shaped parapet, and culminate in finials constructed of molded concrete fashioned as pyramidal points.¹ The vertical concrete pilasters are symmetrically interspersed with recessed vertical bays, which are clad in brick veneer. Vertical rows of windows punctuate the vertical recessed bays. The windows are industrial type units made of fixed multi-paned, steel-sash with up to 16 divided lights each. The windows pivot open at each sash. Each window sill is made of terra cotta. In the corner bays, terra cotta spandrel panels articulated with rinceau ("an ornamental band of undulant and recurring plant motifs"²) are located between each window. The shaped parapet protects a flat roof which is surfaced with concrete and is used as additional parking space for cars. A first-floor recessed garage lobby is located under the southwest corner of the second floor and is accessible through a center west front garage/driveway entrance, a south face garage/driveway entrance, and open bays at the southwest corner of the building. The west and south front entrance driveways are 22.3 feet wide, one story high, and lead into the recessed, drive-in garage lobby at the building's first floor. Small ceramic tile pent roofs are located over the driveway entrances. The pent roofs help mark the driveway entrances into the garage lobby and are articulated with black-painted words the read, CITY RAMP GARAGE, etched in concrete above the tile roofs. The west face of the City Ramp Garage has street level storefronts that are located just north of the center west garage driveway entrance. The storefronts have plate glass display windows, canted entrances, and bulkheads at street level which are located under each window. The bulkheads are covered with tan, gold, and blue-colored glazed ceramic tile. Original multi-paned wood transom windows exist above storefront display windows.

The *south facade* of the City Ramp Garage faces First Avenue and is considered another primary façade of the structure. Like the west façade, the south face of the building has symmetrical fenestration patterns and reveals six stories which are separated vertically by eight pilasters made of reinforced concrete. Vertical recessed bays covered with tan-colored brick veneer are located between the pilasters and are punctuated with windows at each floor. The windows are separated by a combination of decorative brickwork and terra cotta panels that are distinguished with rectilinear geometric designs. Windows are multi-paned steel-sash pivot units and are anchored with terra window sills. The parapet is shaped, and like the parapet at the west façade, is accented with eight pilasters that extend vertically through the parapet wall. The top of each pilaster culminates in a finial designed in the shape of a pyramidal point, all made of molded concrete.

¹ Harold Whitehouse, the architect for the 1928 City Ramp Garage, refers to the pilasters as "piers" in his 1928 drawings of the structure. Historic Preservation Office, Spokane, WA.

² Harris, Cyril M. *Dictionary of Architecture & Construction*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000, p. 769.

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Multi-colored gold, tan, and blue terra cotta panels with rinceau patterns are located between each pilaster in the parapet.

The *north face* of the building fronts Sprague Avenue as it abuts a paved sidewalk, is 75 feet wide, and is separated symmetrically by tall pilasters that divide the building's face into three full-height bays. The walls and pilasters are made of reinforced concrete. The pilasters are concrete while the recessed bays above street level between the pilasters are clad with tan brick veneer which is punctuated with multi-paned steel-sash pivot windows. Decorative brick veneer separates the windows in the center bay while tan, gold, and blue-colored terra cotta panels separate the windows in the flanking bays. The parapet is shaped and accented like the parapets at the west and south facades, and has pilasters that extend vertically past the parapet wall and terminate in molded concrete finials. The parapet is further ornamented with tan, gold, and blue-colored terra cotta rinceau patterns. The north face of the building at street level is marked by three bays with commercial storefronts. The three bays each have canted entrances with glass doors and metal door frames. The windows are plate-glass with a combination of original wood and 1960s metal sash. Beneath the glass windows are bulkheads which are clad with tan, gold, and blue-colored glazed ceramic tile. Above the storefront display windows are original multi-paned wood transom windows with wood sash.

As previously mentioned, a small single-story wing (425 W. Sprague Avenue) is located at the northeast corner of the six-story garage and was built as part of the structure. It has a prominently shaped parapet with parapet designs and embellishment that mimic the prominently shaped parapets on the north, west, and south faces of the building. A storefront with a canted entrance, plate glass display windows, multi-paned wood transom windows, and a glazed ceramic tile bulkhead are located at street level at the north face of the single-story wing. In contrast the rest of the building, the bulkhead tile on the building's northeast wing is black. The black tile may have replaced original tan, gold, and blue-colored ceramic tiles in the 1940s.

The *east rear face* of the six-story parking garage looks east onto an adjacent paved parking lot and the flat roofs of two adjacent buildings which share common walls with the garage. The garage's east wall is plain, made of painted reinforced concrete, and has a plain parapet wall with no embellishment. Fenestration patterns are symmetrical with multi-paned steel-sash windows.

Interior

According to Spokane County tax assessor records, the interior of the City Ramp Garage has six floors and a basement with 13,581 square feet of interior space. Although covered by the second floor of the building, the first floor is open to the elements in a recessed drive-in garage lobby located under the southwest corner of the building's second floor. The first-floor drive-in garage lobby reveals exposed, reinforced concrete

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beams and joists, a concrete floor, and a pump island with gasoline pumps. A garage office with a waiting room and restrooms, an interior elevator hallway, and three automatic electric elevators are located on the north wall of the lobby. One of the three elevators is an industrial-type open man-lift which is located in a circular shaft made of concrete, and was built for use by employees when the garage was erected. A small wood-and-metal platform designed to hold one person at a time is attached to a vertical metal pole which is propelled up and down from the basement to the sixth floor by an electric motor. In contrast, automatic twin, electric-powered, enclosed pedestrian elevators, designed in 1928 by the Otis Elevator Company, are located next to the man-lift. The twin elevators are made of steel and brass with steel accordion-style doors, and were designed to accommodate patrons of the garage as well as service personnel.

In the first-floor drive-in garage lobby, a 20-foot-wide concrete automobile ramp ascends in a circular manner to a parking level which is located between the first and second floors. The ramp continues in a circular fashion to the second floor, and so on to the sixth floor of the parking garage. The garage is divided into two vertical sections at the interior: the west section contains six floors of parking space with the majority of cars parking along the west wall and the north wall of the garage. The east section of the garage features floors placed half way between west-section floors with the majority of parking stalls along the east wall. With the ramps rising a half story at a time instead of a full story, ramp length is reduced by one half. The ramp system offers a high space economy for the garage and was a cutting-edge design during 1928 when the City Ramp Garage was built. A garage door opens from the sixth floor to parking space on the roof of the building. Descending to the basement, a concrete ramp from the first-floor garage lobby leads down to lower level parking stalls, car wash space, car repair and maintenance areas, and storage/mechanical/electrical rooms. The interior garage walls are made of unfinished, reinforced, poured concrete which reveals "slip form" concrete construction. Ceiling beams and joists are exposed and are made of reinforced concrete. Each floor is supported by large reinforced concrete columns which are square. The square columns support concrete beams. The north-south running beams support east-west running floor joists which support each floor. Garage amenities throughout the building include an office, storage rooms, mechanical rooms, running water, restrooms, elevators, electric lighting, gasoline pump stations, and parking for more than 350 cars. Interior spaces in storefront bays located at the west and north faces of the garage have a single-story each and have been remodeled several times since 1928 for and/or by various leaseholders. No original design, fabric, or finish exists in any of the commercial bay interiors.

ORIGINAL APPEARANCE & SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS

The original exterior and interior appearance of the City Ramp Garage is recorded through a collection of remarkably well-preserved documents that include a chronological series of black and white construction photographs and newspaper/magazine articles that described the construction of the building.

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The existing footprint of the building matches the original footprint which is illustrated on a Sanborn Fire Insurance map. Copies of original 1928 plans and elevation drawings for the building are retained by the property owners, resulting in excellent documentation of the original design and materials used for the building.

The exterior design of the garage remains unaltered except for the street-level commercial storefronts located at the building's west and north faces. The storefronts and commercial bays were remodeled at the exterior and interior several times since the building was built. The interior of the garage remains untouched except for the first floor garage office, restrooms, and elevator hall which have been remodeled and repainted at least three times during the last 80 years.

Modifications to the City Ramp Garage are minimal and include information from garage records, city building permits, historic building photographs, newspaper articles, and recollections of previous and current building owners and tenants. Modifications to the garage include:

- 1930-1990s: Interiors of all commercial bays remodeled several times since the building's construction in 1928.
- 1954: Three gasoline pumps installed (replaced earlier pumps).
- 1966: Aluminum and glass storefronts were installed (a few remnants of original materials exist as wood sash with braided/twisted rope designs around storefront windows).
- 2010-2012: Garage office, restrooms, and elevator hall repaired/ remodeled; ceiling joists and beams repaired; interior lighting (fluorescent tube) installed in parking spaces on all six floors; terra cotta panels and roof repaired; building exterior repainted; building interior repainted in parking floors, office, garage lobby (storefront commercial bays *not* repaired/remodeled/repainted).

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary Statement

The multi-storied City Ramp Garage in Spokane, WA is historically significant under Criterion A as a property that is directly associated with the broad patterns of commercial development in downtown Spokane. The garage is also significant under Criterion C as a property that embodies the distinctive characteristics of its type (a parking garage utilizing the d'Humy Motoramp System), period of construction (the late 1920), and method of construction (slip form concrete). Additionally, the garage is also notable as a resource that represents the work of the noted local architectural firm of Whitehouse & Price.

The period of significance for the City Ramp Garage begins and ends in 1928, the year the garage was built. Note that in 2003, the property was listed on the National Register as a contributing historic resource of Spokane's East Downtown Historic District.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

By the mid-1920s when the popularity of private motorized automobile transportation was growing at a cataclysmic rate, available curbside street parking and dedicated parking lots for public use in downtown Spokane were scarce. Public transportation was available but more and more people preferred transportation via their own private automobiles as evidenced by robust auto sales, the erection of private residential "car barns" and garages, and the construction of state and national highways. W.J. Kommers, vice president and trust officer of the Old National Bank and Union Trust Company, stated that "as in all growing and progressive cities, the parking of automobiles in Spokane developed into a very serious problem and...was particularly true in the downtown office building section" in Spokane's central business district.¹

The City Ramp Garage

In order to help solve the downtown parking problem, the owners of three high-rise neighboring office buildings located within an area of three city blocks in the center of downtown Spokane formed a corporation for the purpose of constructing a parking garage and acquiring a suitable site. The building owners were the August Paulsen Estate represented by Joel Ferris, the Levi Hutton Estate represented by Charles Gonser, and the Old National Bank represented by W. J. Kommers. The men pooled their resources but needed additional money for the expensive project. To gain needed financial help, they sold bonds at a rate of return of 5.5%. "More than half of the \$225,000 issue of...first mortgage bonds of the

¹ Kommers, W. J. "Building Owners Join Forces to Provide Parking Facilities for Their Tenants." *Buildings and Building Management*, 17 Dec 1928.

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City Ramp Garage were sold in the first day of the offering... The high character of the security and the interests backing the project are believed to have stimulated the demand.”²

A site along the east side of Stevens Street was chosen which included all of Lot 1 and part of Lots 2 and 3, Block 10, an the Railroad Addition to Spokane. The site extended through an entire city block from Sprague Avenue south to First Avenue—a short walk from banking and merchant activity at Riverside Avenue in the center of Spokane’s central business district. In April 1928, the City Ramp Garage, Inc. purchased the building site for \$173,134.³

The City Ramp Garage was to be Spokane’s first ramp-type parking garage and generated much public interest in 1928. One of the first of a flurry of various advertisements, photographs, newspaper features, and professional journal and magazine articles about the proposed garage appeared on May 13, 1928 in the *Spokesman-Review* with the following headlines:

BIG MODEL OF CITY RAMP GARAGE HELPS SOLVE BUILDING PROBLEMS

*Study of Miniature Structure Has Already Saved Thousands for Owners
Will Invest \$500,000*

Plans for 6-Story and Basement Building Being Drawn—Excavation Started⁴

At a ratio of one-half inch to one foot, an architectural model of the proposed parking garage was made by W.M. Broberg and H.C. Bender, civil engineers with the Washington Power Company, to help “enable the builders to study the building preliminary to construction, and [to help] prospective patrons visualize and select parking spaces with a view for leasing.”⁵ Small toy cars at a size to scale with the model were also used. The architectural model cost \$500 to make and was displayed in public lobbies throughout Spokane and the surrounding region, including the Old National Bank Building in downtown Spokane and the Coeur d’Alene Hardware & Foundry Company in Wallace, Idaho.

The proposed high-tech, cutting-edge City Ramp Garage was the “talk of the town” in 1928. At least 200 of the 350 parking stalls were reserved for “exclusive occupancy by tenants leasing on a monthly basis” weeks before construction of the parking garage was completed.⁶ Praise and accolades were abundant

² “Grab Ramp Garage Bonds.” *Spokesman-Review*, 2 Nov 1928.

³ Spokane County public records. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

⁴ “Big Model of City Ramp Garage Helps Solve Building Problems.” *Spokesman-Review*, 13 May 1928

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ “Big Garage Soon to be Occupied.” *Spokesman-Review or Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 1928

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surrounding the new proposed parking garage, its design, its materials, and its intended use in Spokane. A Portland Cement Association manager stated the following: "Spokane may well be proud of its City Ramp Garage...There is no concrete work on the west coast surpassing that in the new City Ramp Garage in quality and workmanship...Consequently the downtown garage is coming into popular favor."⁷ The manager of the Four Stores Garage, a similar Seattle parking structure, said the plans for the City Ramp Garage in Spokane "present the most advanced in construction of this kind...We thought our garage was about the last word when we built it, but the City Ramp Garage has it over us in many respects."⁸ Mr. Charles Bennett, the man chosen to manage the City Ramp Garage, expressed his appreciation for the building's decorative exterior and called the garage a "hotel for automobiles."⁹

Some of Spokane's most accomplished and most prominent professionals were employed to design and build the City Ramp Garage. The Spokane architectural firm of Whitehouse & Price, designed the building and oversaw construction of the project. Spokane contractors, Alloway & Georg, excavated the site and built the garage. Subcontractors included James Smyth Plumbing & Heating and Brown-Johnston & Co (electric wiring). A series of black-and-white construction photographs were taken from excavation through project completion, and remain on site at the parking garage. The total construction cost for the City Ramp Garage and its building site exceeded \$500,000.¹⁰

Construction of the parking garage utilized the latest technology by Ramp Buildings Corporation of New York, the d'Humy Motoramps system. The system, patented in 1919, offered an efficient parking garage design based on ramps that joined floors at intermediate levels to allow for smooth and convenient movement of automobiles between floors. Contractors Alloway & Georg declared the City Ramp Garage "one of the most extraordinary pieces of construction" throughout their experience. They exclaimed that "after months of study we found it necessary to scrap entirely the original plans prepared by a New York firm of engineers. The patented [d'Humy Motoramp] ramp feature was all that was retained."¹¹ Harold Whitehouse, explained that "in designing the building, we consulted, together with the owners, everyone we could contact who had had experience in garage construction and operation. We feel that we have evolved a combination plan built on the experience of others that will give Spokane one of the finest structures of this type in the west."¹²

⁷ "Ramp Garage Praised." *Spokesman-Review or Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 1928

⁸ "Lauds Features in Ramp Garage." *Spokesman-Review or Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 1928

⁹ "Garage Man." *Spokesman-Review or Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 1928

¹⁰ "Award Contract on Ramp Garage." *Spokesman-Review*, 1928

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

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Construction of the garage commenced, and advertisements in newspapers and magazines were printed about the City Ramp Garage and its many amenities. The November 1928 edition of the *Intermountain Motorist* read:

SPOKANE'S FIRST RAMP GARAGE

*City Ramp Garage, Inc. is pleased to announce the following low rates for parking in
Spokane's first ramp garage, Sprague and Stevens.*

RESERVE YOUR LOCATION NOW

*The demand for parking space in the new Ramp Garage is keen. Promptness in selecting your space is
desirable.*

Monthly rates were \$8-\$15, and hourly rates began at 25-cents for two hours, 30-cents for three hours, and so on to a maximum of 50-cents for one day or one night. In addition to low rates, the parking garage offered "full service" with "storage, washing, greasing, gasoline, oil, accessories, brake service, U.S. Tires, and complete repair services."¹³

To serve and accommodate patrons of the garage and the general public alike, street level commercial bays were incorporated into the design of the building, and were located at 425, 427, and 429 W. Sprague Avenue at the north face, and 3, 5, and 7 S. Stevens Street at the west façade of the building. The commercial spaces proved popular and were leased over 80 years by a plethora of businesses. The first two leaseholders in 1928 were the Ramp Food Shop at the northwest corner of the building at 427 and 429 W. Sprague, and Nim's Café at 425 W. Sprague Avenue (the café occupied the small single-story wing of the City Ramp Garage). The Ramp Food Shop featured food and wares from the A&K Meat Market, Burgan's Grocery, the Model Bakery, and Mike Scaler's fruit and vegetables. After Nim's Café no longer leased the commercial space at 425 W. Sprague Avenue, it was occupied at different times by the Paulsen Linoleum Shop, Inland Floor Covering, Russell Floor Covering, Western Union Telegraph Company, and the Standard Blue Print Company. The space leased at the northwest corner of the building by the food market was eventually rented and occupied at different times by the Spokane Bottle Supply, the Ramp Beer Parlor, Joseph Murphy Beer Parlor, Merrill's Tavern, Blue Note Tavern, Merrill's Palace of Sweets Restaurant, Dahnken's wholesale merchandise, Beeman's Catalogue Warehouse, and Patti's Accent on Flowers. Today in 2012 the corner space is leased by the Satellite Diner & Lounge, and the space at 425 W. Sprague Avenue is occupied by the Satellite Grill. Just after construction was completed in 1928, the commercial bay closest to the garage entrance at Stevens Street was used as a customer waiting room. It and an

¹³ *Spokane City Directory*, 1935.

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adjacent north commercial bay were later occupied at different times by the Ramp Barber Shop, Spokane Ladies & Gents Tailors, Marugg's Clothes Shop for Men, South Seven Jewelers, All About Nails Beauty Shop, and Beacon Cleaners & Laundry.

The City Ramp Garage opened the last week of November 1928 with a swirl of activity. Fliers and advertisements paid homage to the new parking garage and invited the public to experience the new building:

*FORWARD SPOKANE WITH THE NEW PARKING GARAGE!
A Remarkable Achievement Celebrated by a Memorable Opening Event!*

*In planning and construction, the City Ramp Garage blazes new trails. New problems have been met with ingenuity and skill. Ideas unique in motor garages have been developed and perfected. Standards of garage service higher than heretofore known have been set. In this notable institution, the community will enjoy the service of a modern, metropolitan "hotel for automobiles."*¹⁴

Public and private tours and programs were held in the building, and manufacturer's materials and products were displayed in exhibits throughout the garage. The Ramp Food Shop, located in commercial bays at the northwest corner of the parking garage at Stevens and Sprague, attracted customers with free hams, free hot coffee, free French pastries, and free shopping bags. Band music filled the building while new automobiles from various dealers throughout the city were parked in stalls on the sixth floor of the parking garage, "giving an accurate idea of just how the new 'automobile hotel' uses its 'guests.'"¹⁵

One year later in 1929, interest in the garage spread to a nation-wide level. The *Spokane Daily Chronicle* reported that national attention was given to the City Ramp Garage by an organization of professional building owners and managers in their nation-wide journal, *Buildings and Building Management*, published in Chicago. Newspaper headlines read:

*CITY'S AUTOMOBILE "HOTEL" WINS NATIONAL RECOGNITION
Ramp Garage is Basis for Stories in Chicago Magazine*

The [City Ramp] Garage was...designed to encourage tenants to drive their own cars to parking stalls... The garage is the first building of its kind in the United States built by surrounding building owners as a convenience for their tenants, and also the

¹⁴ *The Spokane Press*. 28 Nov 1928, p. 3

¹⁵ "Here's How New 'Automobile Hotel' Will Look When in Actual Use." *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 26 Nov 1928.

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first garage of its kind to sell all [of] its permanent parking space in advance.¹⁶

In 1973, Spokane businessman, George P. Prekeges, bought the garage for \$475,000 from the Old National Bank and the Paulsen and Hutton estates and interests. Prekeges was born in Spokane and graduated with a degree in Business Administration from the University of Washington. In 1961 he established an Airways-Rent-A-Car franchise which he located in the City Ramp Garage. In 2008, Prekeges sold the garage and two adjacent 1890 brick buildings (415 W. Sprague Avenue and 418 W. First Avenue) to the current owners.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The construction and success of the City Ramp Garage eventually helped set a pattern for the future construction of parking garages throughout the city of Spokane. However the subsequent construction of additional high-rise parking structures in Spokane took another 20+ years. Well-known examples in Spokane from the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s include the Pay Less Store Parking Garage (1954), the 17-story Sixth Avenue Medical Building parking garage (built in 1964), the multi-level Parkade Plaza (built in 1967), and Riverpark Square Parking Garage (built in 1974). Like the City Ramp Garage, the Parkade Plaza and Riverpark Square parking garages were designed utilizing the d'Humy system with multiple parking levels and ramps that lead to each level, and commercial bays at street levels.

D'Humy Motoramp System

At the time of construction the d'Humy Motoramp System was well publicized. An article in the September 1921 edition of *The Architect and Engineer* explained the compactness and "high space economy of the d'Humy Motoramp System," which was obtained "by virtue of the fact that the ramps are merely connecting passages."¹⁷

The notable features of the d'Humy System are obtained by the use of a staggered floor building in which the structure is divided into two vertical sections, the floors in one section being placed half-way between the floors of the other section. Because of this modification, the ramps rise a half story at a time instead of a full story. This...is an important advantage because it reduces the ramp length by one-half...¹⁸

A February 1921 article in *Engineering World* further explained:

¹⁶ "City's Automobile 'Hotel' Wins National Recognition." *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 4 Jan 1929

¹⁷ "Inclined Driveways for Garage and Factory Buildings." *The Architect and Engineer*, Sept 1921, pp 100-101.

¹⁸ Ibid.

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The economy of the system lies in the fact that since the floors are staggered, ramps of half the usual length are required for transportation from floor to floor. Long ramps are clumsy and awkward to handle in most buildings, but by reducing the length by half, the flexibility of arrangement is enormously increased... The convenient method of arranging the d'Humy ramp is to place the ramps one over the other so that a vehicle in passing up or down describes the path of helix.¹⁹

D'Humy garage ramps were installed in the City Ramp Garage which was built of fireproof reinforced concrete construction, strong enough and large enough to hold more than 350 cars. To construct the building, a slip-form type of construction was used. While this was a more expensive method it saved time. And in fact, the garage took less than six months to build. The slip form method is described as a process where "a [greased] form [is] designed to move upward slowly, supported by the hardened concrete of the wall section which was poured previously."²⁰ The slip-form concrete construction had not been employed previously in Spokane before the City Ramp Garage was built in 1928 but proved successful.²¹

Art Deco Style

In addition to the implementation of the d'Humy Motoramp System and the slip-form type of concrete construction, the City Ramp Garage was planned to be architecturally compatible with upscale commercial buildings in Spokane's central business district. In fact, the design for the garage depicts one of the finest Art Deco-style facades in Spokane and was praised for its decorative appearance.²² A newspaper article recalled that because the garage was to be built in downtown Spokane among architecturally prominent commercial buildings, "many thousands of dollars were spent on exterior decoration." Reportedly the garage owners did not want a "drab, warehouse-type building" but instead preferred something that would "harmonize with the rest of the neighborhood."²³ Accolades mounted and a December 17, 1928 edition of the professional journal, *Buildings and Building Management*, praised the City Ramp Garage as having "more the appearance of a fine hotel than that of a parking garage."

The garage is an early example of Art Deco style. The style is an outgrowth of the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes* exhibition held in Paris in 1925. At the

¹⁹ Blanchard, Harold F. "Inter-Floor Transportation by the d'Humy Motoramp System." *Engineering World*, Sept 1921, pp. 105-106.

²⁰ Harris, p. 844.

²¹ <http://mariettasilos.com/slipform>

²² *Buildings and Building Management*, p. 31-33.

²³ "Garage Solved Parking in 1928." *Spokesman-Review*, 27 Nov 1953.

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exhibition a new “modern” tradition of decoration that used abstract, floral, cubist, and geometric-inspired forms was developed. Quickly the new style was embraced world-wide for all types of buildings including banks, retail stores, motion picture theaters, apartment houses, service stations, and residential homes.

Author Marcus Whiffen identifies elements of the Art Deco style in his book, *American Architecture Since 1780*, as building built from about 1920 to 1940, that are vertical in form, have stepped massing, tall piers or pilasters, pinnacles and finials at the roof, articulated and embellished parapets, smooth wall surfaces (stucco and/or concrete), geometric motifs such as zigzags and chevrons, floral and exotic motifs, polychromatic effects achieved by the use of terra cotta and glazed ceramic tile, and ornamentation that is mostly rectilinear with secondary geometric curves.²⁴ Art Deco style features at the City Ramp Garage include the building’s tall, six-story, vertical form; geometric curved and rectilinear designs and ornamentation; vertical piers and pilasters that extend past the roof parapet; parapet ornamentation; polychrome detail as glazed ceramic tiles and multi-colored terra cotta ornamentation; and reinforced concrete exterior walls.

Other early Art Deco examples in Spokane which have a flora motif include the Montgomery Ward Store (1929), Sear & Roebuck Store (1929), the Paulsen Medical & Dental Building (1928), the Kress Department Store (1930) and the Pay ‘n Takit Store (1932).²⁵

Whitehouse & Price, Architects

Harold Whitehouse (1884-1974) and his 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 took a partner, Spokane architect George Keith. In 1911 Whitehouse left his practice with Keith, studied architecture at Cornell University, received a degree in architecture, and traveled extensively in Europe where he became interested in cathedral architecture. He returned in 1914, and formed a new partnership with 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. These include some 200 schools, 16 fraternity and sorority houses, the Lincoln Building, Hutton Settlement (orphanage), Culmstock Arms Apartments, Civic Building, Spokane Coliseum, the Rosebush House, the

²⁴ Whiffen, Marcus, pp. 235-240.

²⁵ Emerson, Steven. “John R. Rogers High School” National Register nomination, 2010. Spokane City/County Office of Historic Preservation, Spokane, WA.

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Morgan House, and various homes, lake houses, garages, and buildings throughout Spokane and Washington State, Idaho, Montana, and Oregon.

Whitehouse was known for his interest in ecclesiastic architecture, and designed a number of churches in the 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 and geometric and floral-motif metal work that were influenced by the Art Deco style. However, Whitehouse's most important commission that involved the Art Deco style was the City Ramp Garage, built in 1928. It is one of finest Art Deco-style buildings in the city of Spokane.

Alloway & Georg, Contractors

Prominent Spokane contractors, Alloway & Georg, built the City Ramp Garage. The firm started in 1913 when Robert Alloway partnered with Henry Georg(e). Both structural engineers, Alloway and Georg 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 Georg organized a new partnership with his sons in 1946 as Henry George & Sons. Construction accomplishments for which Georg(e) is credited include the Spokane Coliseum, Joe Albi Veteran's Memorial Stadium, St. John's Episcopal Cathedral (Whitehouse was the architect). Alloway & Georg's prominence and abilities as structural engineers and general contractors rendered them experienced contractors to build the City Ramp Garage.

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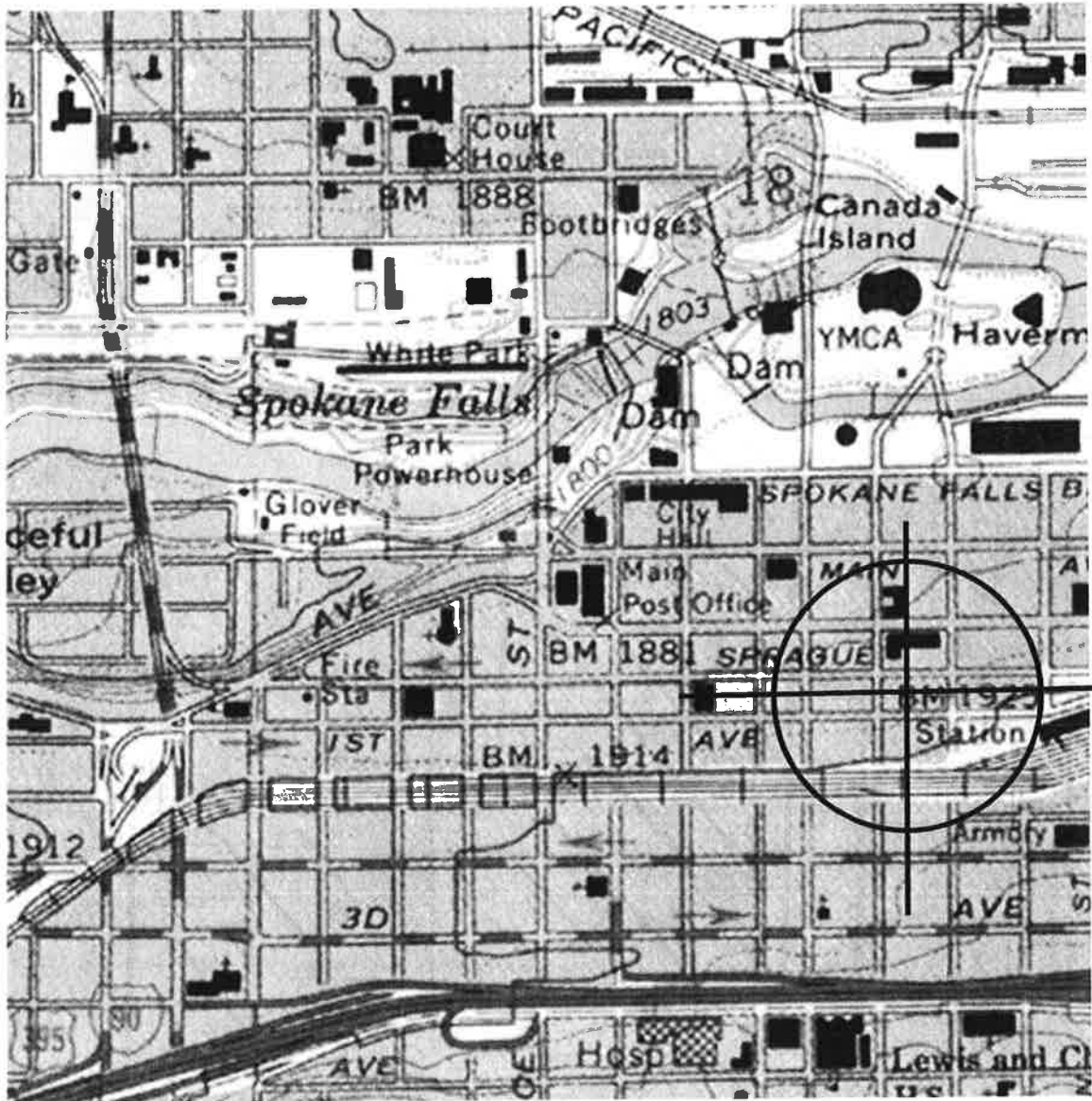
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- "Big Garage Soon to be Occupied." *Spokesman-Review or Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 1928.
- "Big Model of City Ramp Garage Helps Solve Building Problems." *Spokesman-Review*, 13 May 1928.
- "City's Automobile 'Hotel' Wins National Recognition." *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 4 Jan 1929
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USGS Quad Map - Spokane, WA

City Ramp Garage

430 W First Ave
Spokane, WA 99201

11

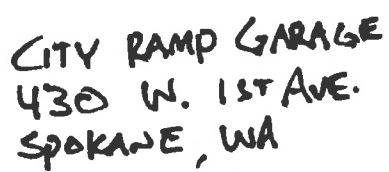
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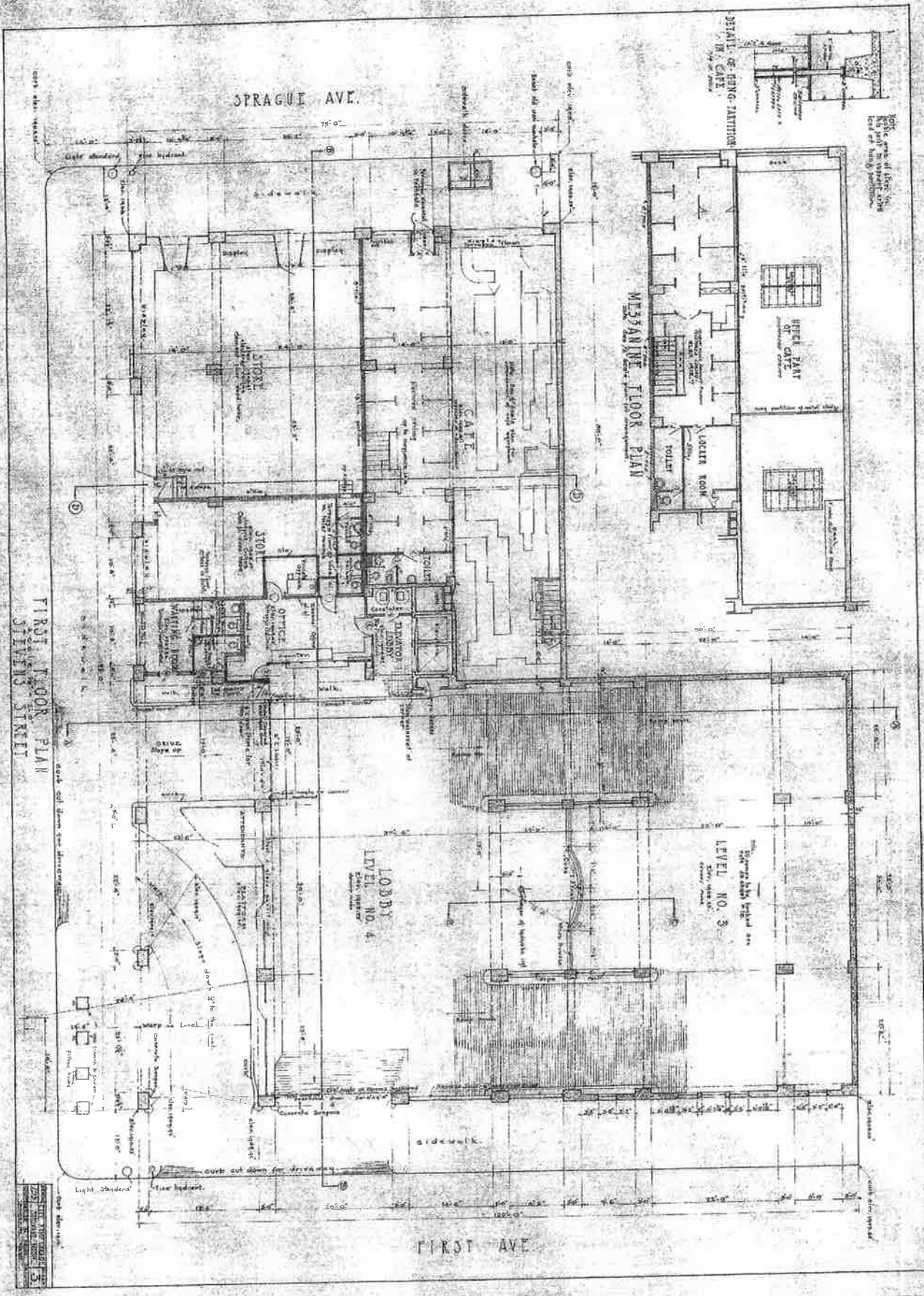
4	68	595
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Easting

52	78	050
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Northing





SPRAGUE AVE.

DETAIL OF ELEVATION
W. CASE

MECHANICAL FLOOR PLAN

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SPRING STREET

LOBBY
LEVEL NO. 4

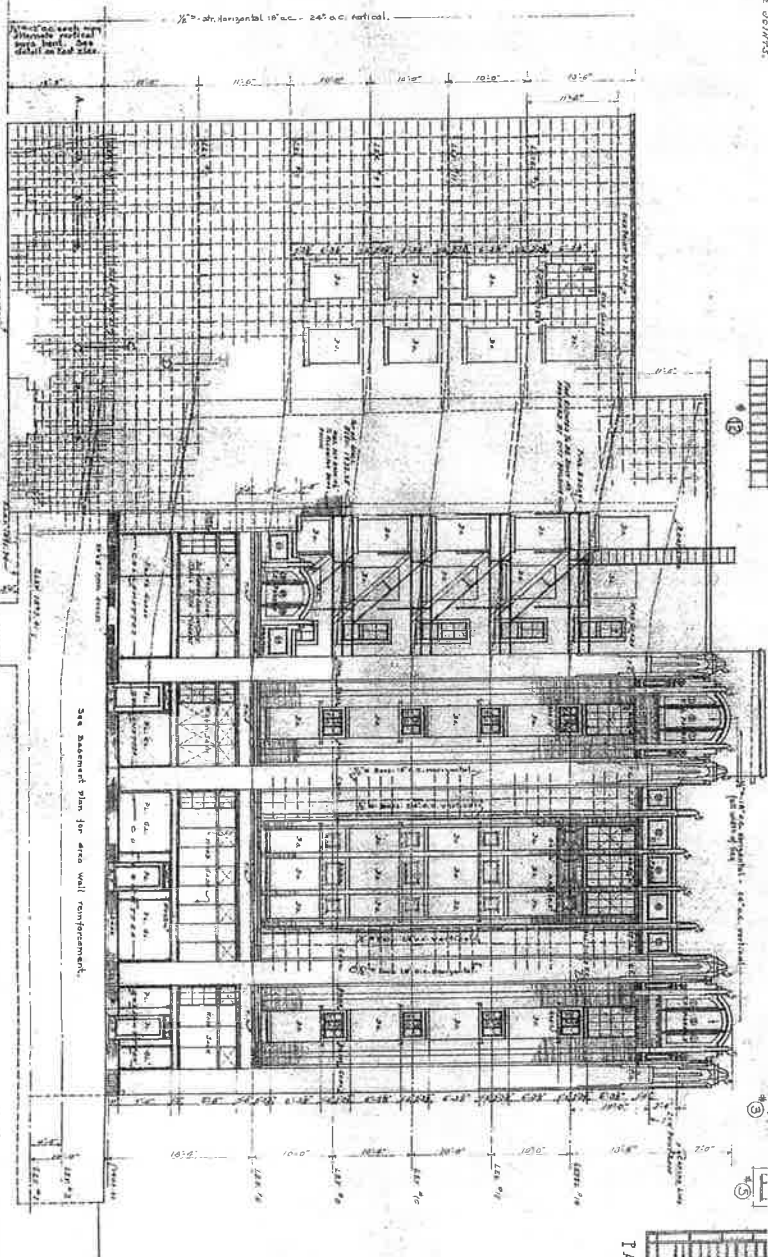
LEVEL NO. 3

FIRST AVE

NOTE - NO ALLOWANCE FOR JOINTS.

COL. 41 - SECTION A-A
Scale 1/2" = 1'-0"

COL. 33 & 37 - SECTION B-B
Scale 1/2" = 1'-0"

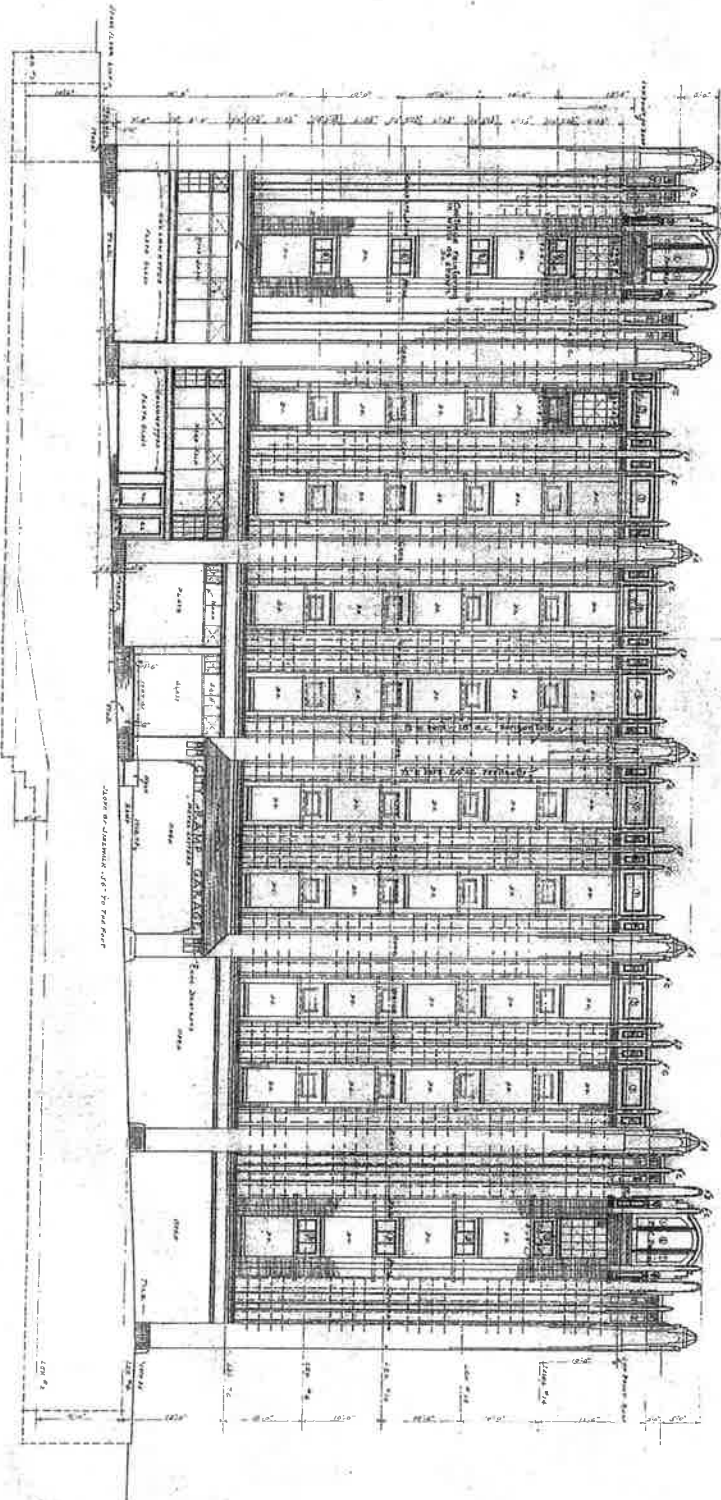


NORTH ELEVATION

See Basement Plan for area wall reinforcement.

PANEL 2

PANEL 1

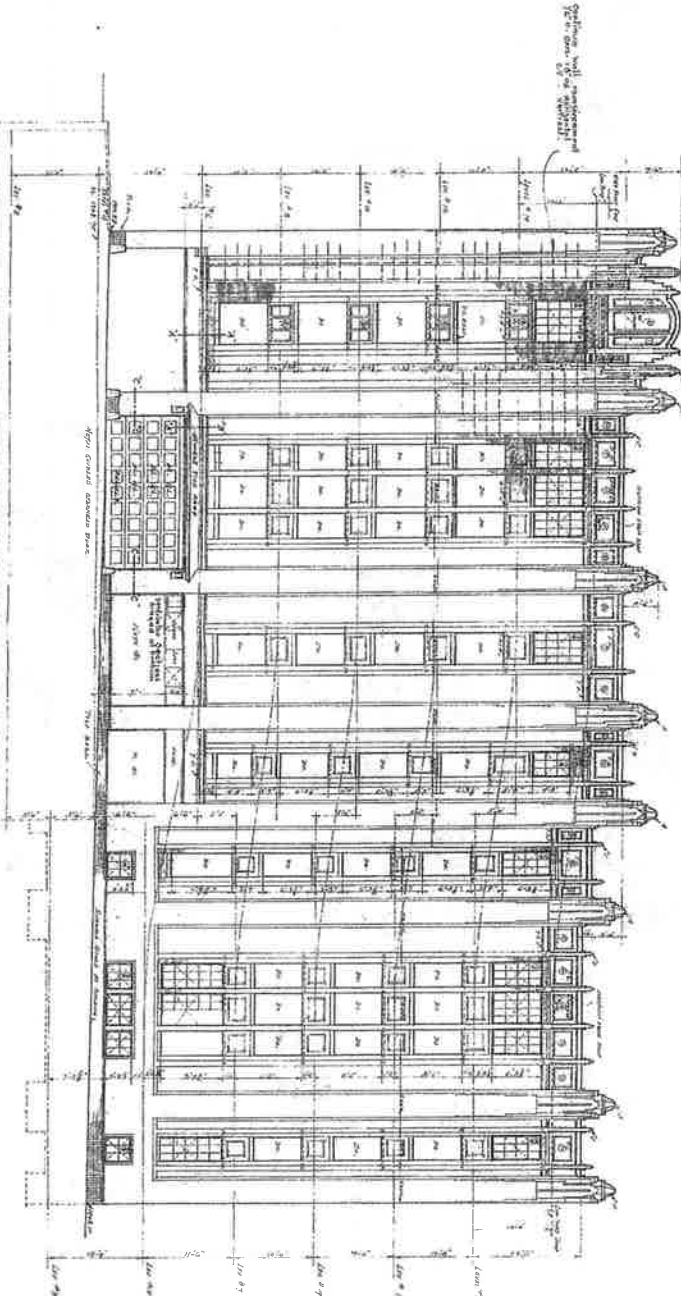


WEST ELEVATION

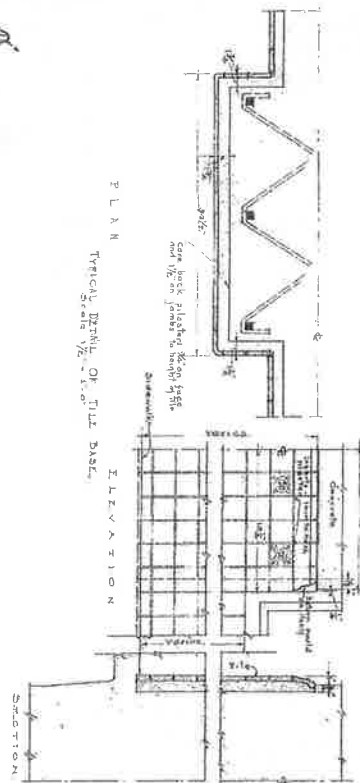
100' 0" x 30' 0" x 30' 0"
 100' 0" x 30' 0" x 30' 0"
 100' 0" x 30' 0" x 30' 0"

SOUTH ELEVATION

See note
 Item 1. Masonry Masonry to be stone with dark surface finish.
 Sections of 1/2" panels on steel bar.



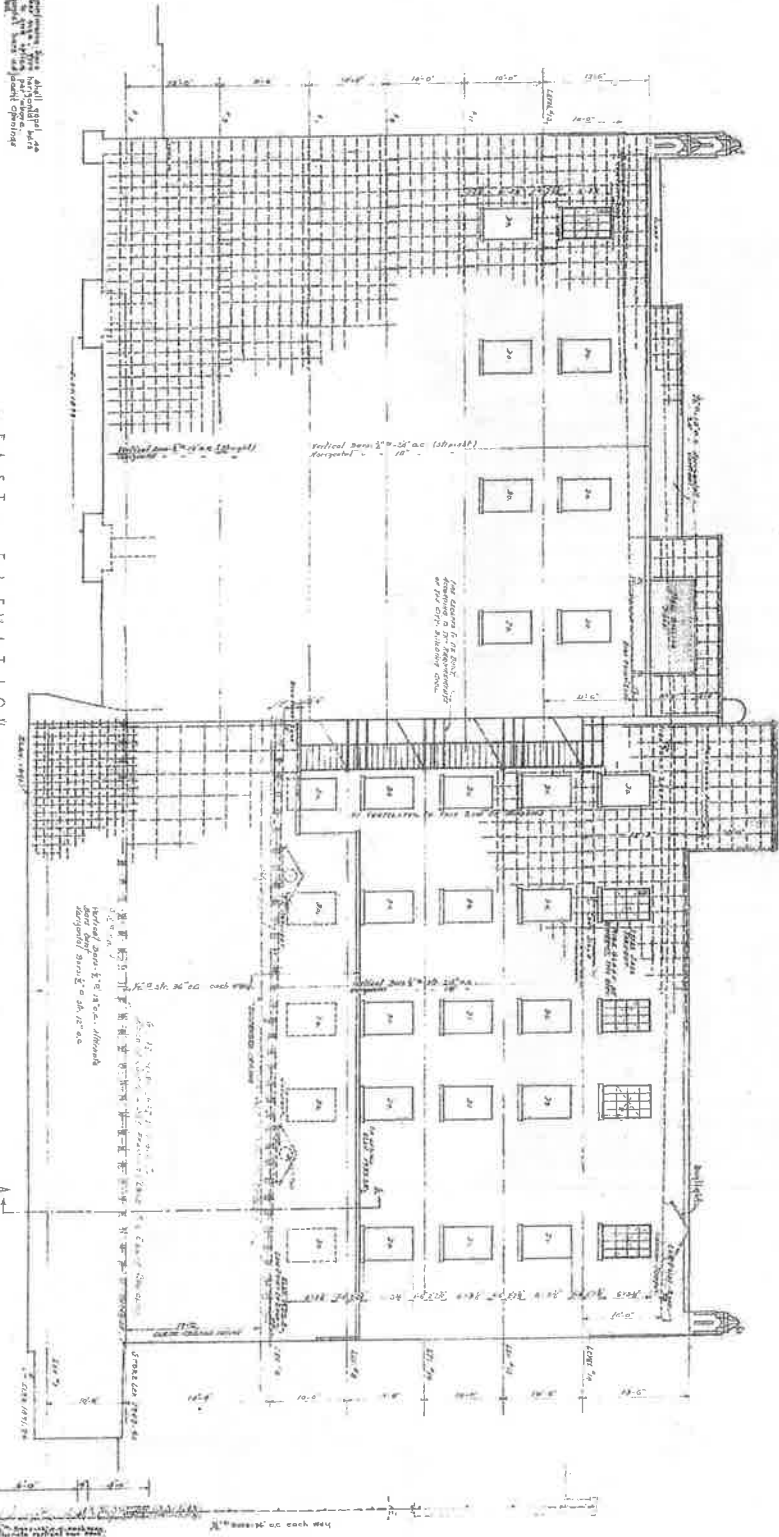
PLAN TYPICAL DWELLING OF TILL BASE



Notes:
 1. All dimensions are in feet and inches.
 2. All dimensions are to the center of the member unless otherwise noted.
 3. All dimensions are to the finished surface unless otherwise noted.
 4. All dimensions are to the center of the member unless otherwise noted.

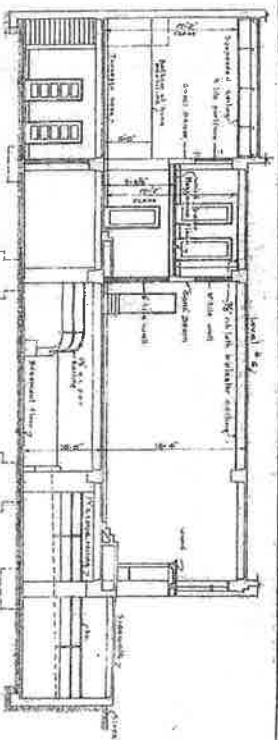
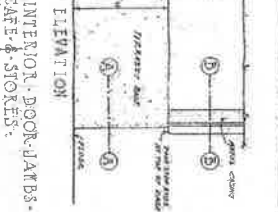
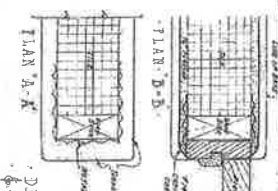
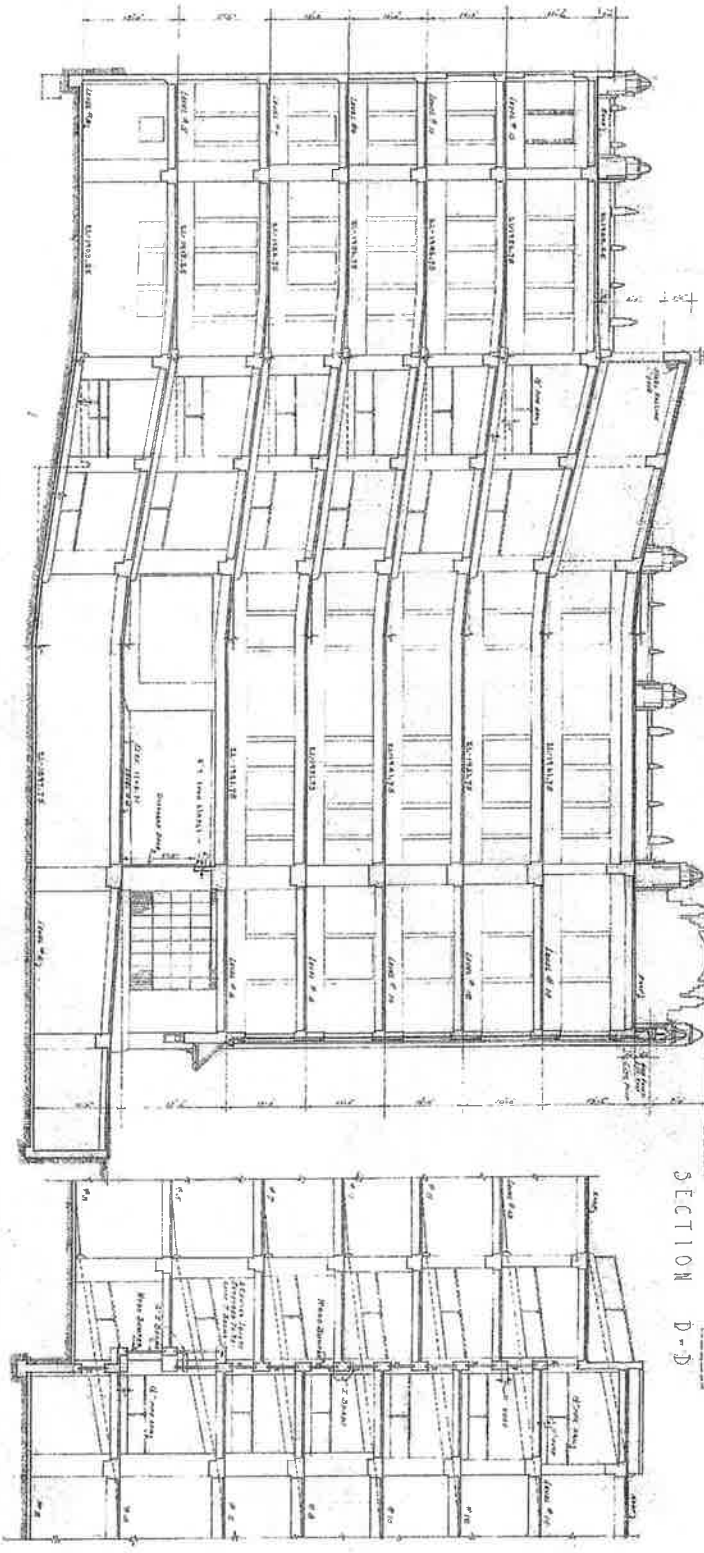
EAST ELEVATION

Architect: J. H. Smith
 Engineer: J. H. Smith
 Structural Engineer: J. H. Smith



SECTION A-A

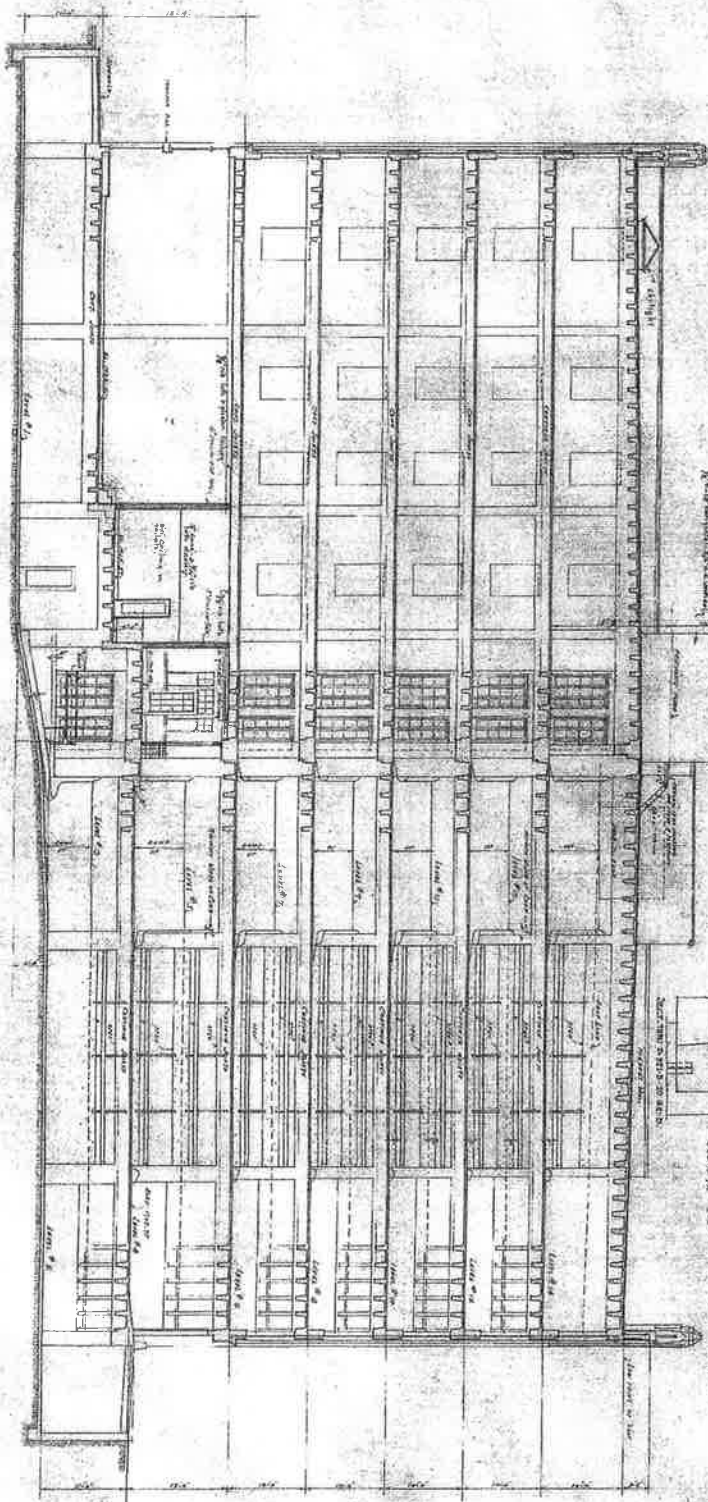
SECTION C-C



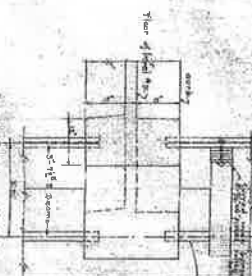
SECTION B-B.

Scale 1/8" = 1'-0"

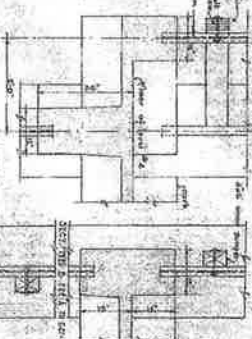
See Note on sheet 4 for location of masonry



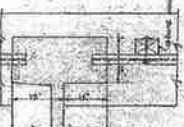
SECTION A-A (12' 6" x 12' 6")



SECTION B-B (12' 6" x 12' 6")



SECTION C-C (12' 6" x 12' 6")



SECTION D-D (12' 6" x 12' 6")



SECTION E-E (12' 6" x 12' 6")



SECTION F-F (12' 6" x 12' 6")



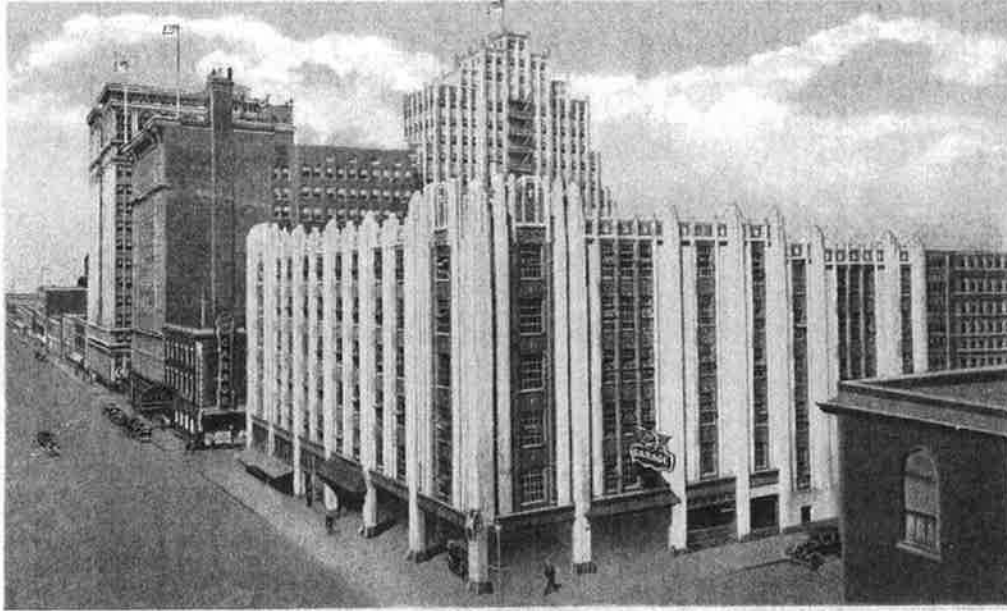
City Ramp Garage – Spokane
HISTORIC IMAGES



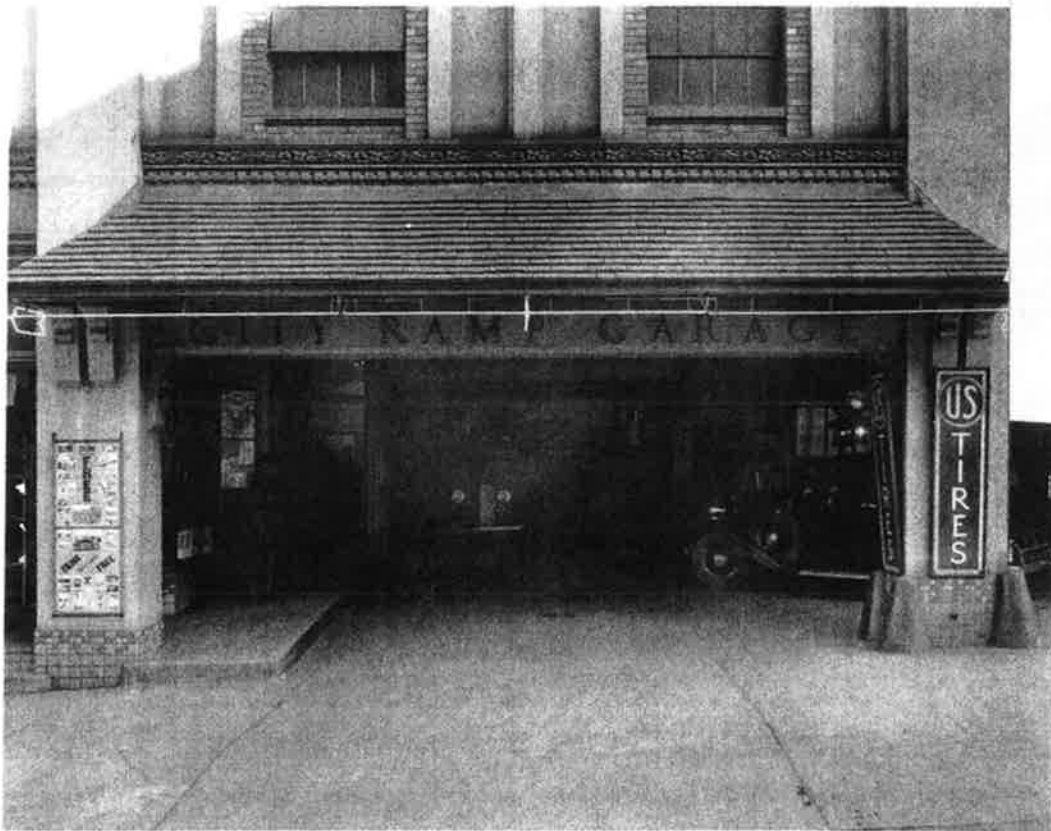
City Ramp Garage, Southeast corner, c.1930



City Ramp Garage, Northeast corner, c.1930



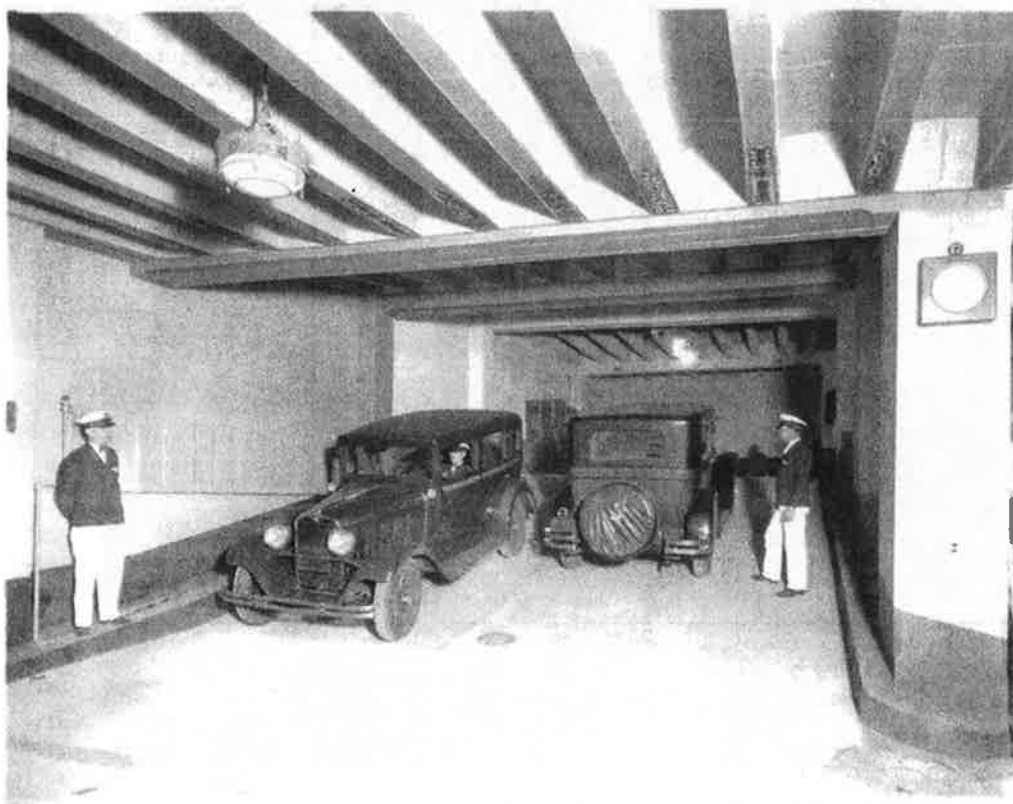
City Ramp Garage, postcard, c.1935



City Ramp Garage, Main Drive-in Entrance, c.1930



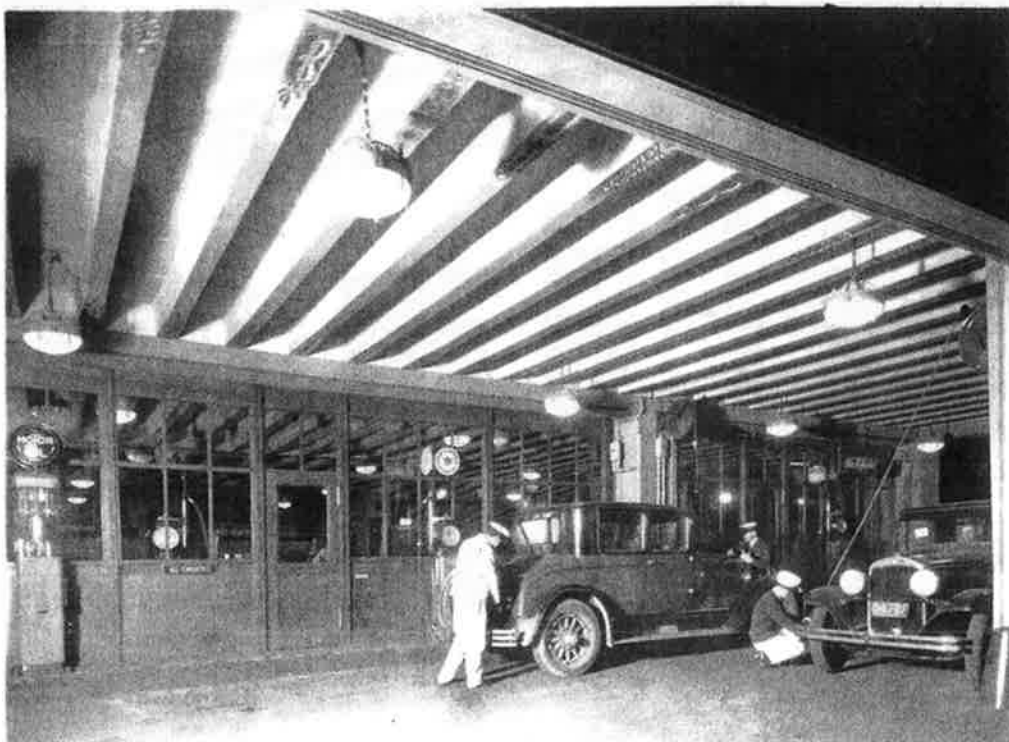
City Ramp Garage, Construction, c.1928



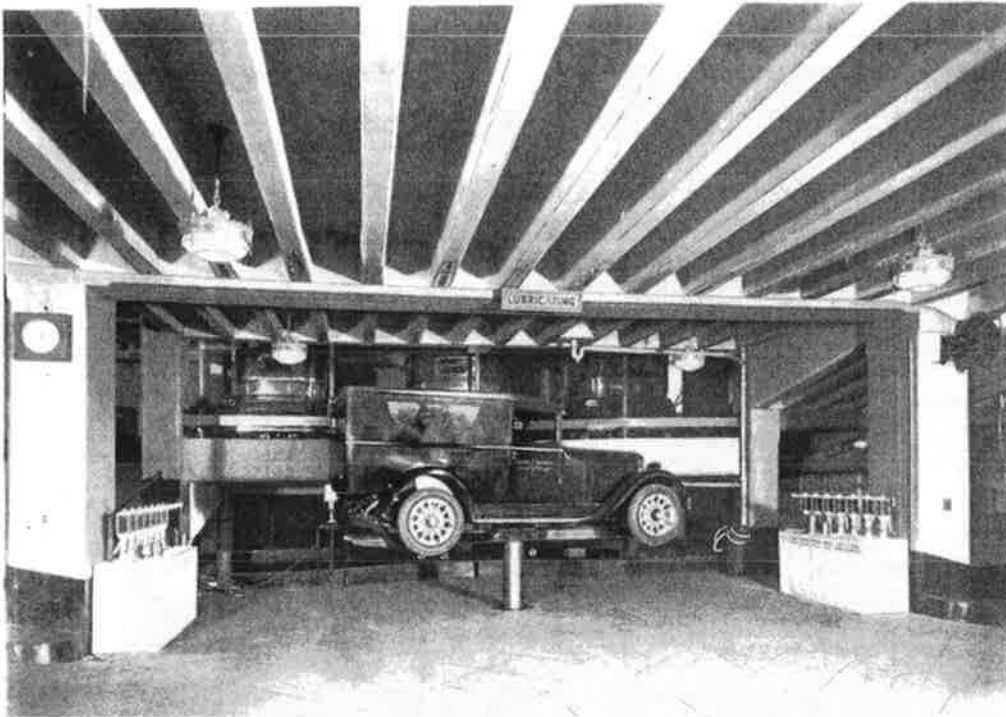
City Ramp Garage, Parking attendants, c.1930



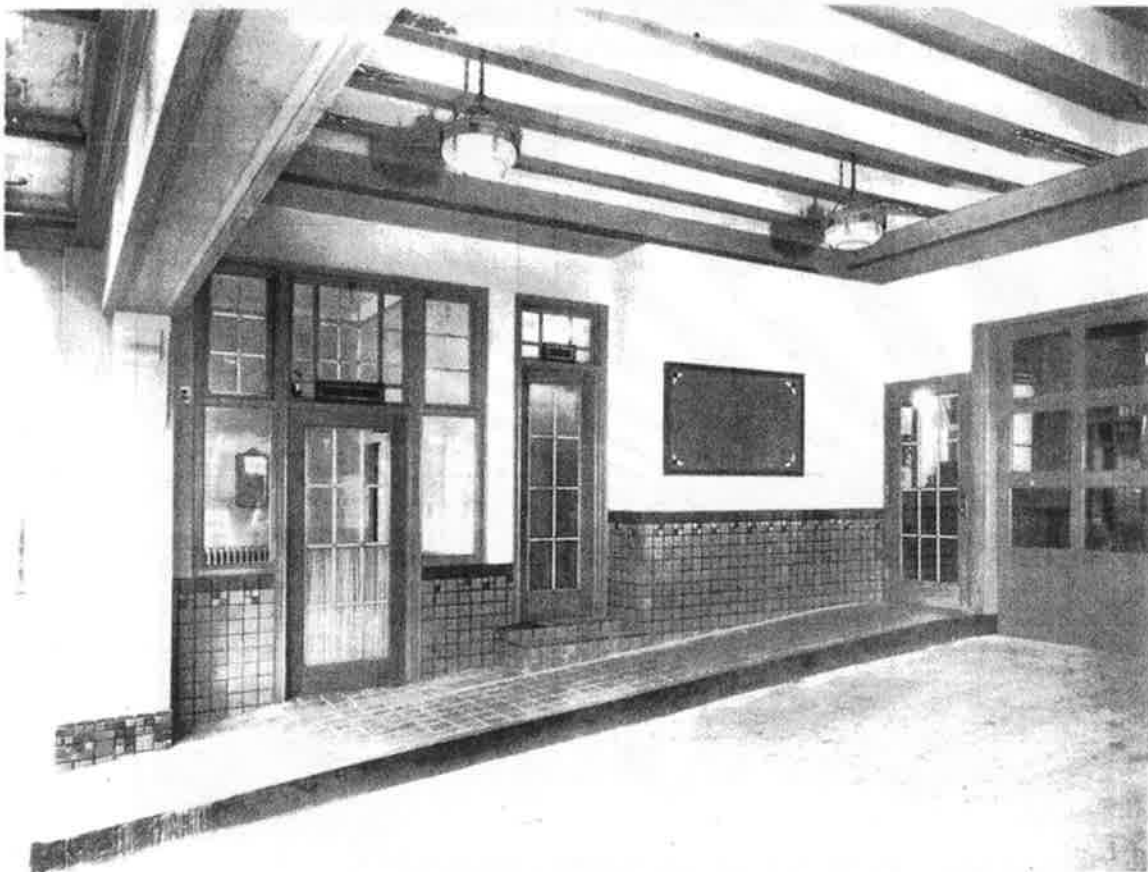
City Ramp Garage, Manager's and Cashier's Office, c.1930



City Ramp Garage, Public Gas and Oil Service Station, c.1930



City Ramp Garage, Service area, c.1930



City Ramp Garage, Elevator Lobby Entry, c.1930



City Ramp Garage, Elevator Lobby with man lift in foreground, c.1930



City Ramp Garage, Man Lift, c.1930

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PHOTOGRAPHS

The City Ramp Garage, 430 W. First Avenue, Spokane County, Spokane, WA is the subject of the following photos. Except for photos 1 and 2, all photos were taken by nomination author, Linda Yeomans, in 2012.

- Photo 1 City Ramp Garage, northwest corner at Sprague Ave & Stevens Street, 1929 photo, Libby & Co photographer, archive collection of City Ramp Garage, owner of bldg
- Photo 2 City Ramp Garage, southwest corner at First Ave & Stevens Street, c. 1940 photo, archive collection of City Ramp Garage, owner of bldg
- Photo 3 City Ramp Garage, northwest corner at Sprague Ave & Stevens Street, 2012 photo
- Photo 4 City Ramp Garage, north face of building on Sprague Ave, 2012 photo
- Photo 5 City Ramp Garage, north face of building on Sprague Ave, 2012 photo
- Photo 6 City Ramp Garage, north face of building on Sprague Ave, 2012 photo
- Photo 7 City Ramp Garage, north face of building on Sprague Ave, 2012 photo
- Photo 8 City Ramp Garage, southwest corner at First Ave & Stevens Street, 2012 photo
- Photo 9 City Ramp Garage, south face of building at First Avenue, 2012 photo
- Photo 10 City Ramp Garage, east rear of building and attached buildings, facing parking lot, 2012 photo
- Photo 11 City Ramp Garage, north face of building at Sprague Avenue, streetscape, 2012 photo
- Photo 12 City Ramp Garage, west face of building at Stevens Street, commercial bay, 2012 photo
- Photo 13 City Ramp Garage, looking southwest from inside parking garage "car lobby," 2012 photo
- Photo 14 City Ramp Garage, looking northwest from parking garage "car lobby" at north wall of building

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet -

CITY RAMP GARAGE
SPOKANE COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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- Photo 15 City Ramp Garage, looking northeast from parking garage “car lobby” at north wall of building
- Photo 16 City Ramp Garage, looking northeast at pedestrian elevators in “car lobby”
- Photo 17 City Ramp Garage, looking south at ramp as it ascends from “car lobby” first-floor at grade to second floor
- Photo 18 City Ramp Garage, looking southwest at ramp as it ascends from half-way to second floor
- Photo 19 City Ramp Garage, looking east at ramp as it descends to parking stalls located half-way between first and second floors
- Photo 20 City Ramp Garage, looking southwest at ramp as it ascends to third floor from second floor—representative of all floors
- Photo 21 City Ramp Garage, looking north at third-floor parking stalls—representative of all floors
- Photo 22 City Ramp Garage, looking east at pedestrian elevators and man-lift behind door at left-hand edge of photograph
- Photo 23 City Ramp Garage, looking north and down through glass in door at man lift
- Photo 24 City Ramp Garage, looking northwest at roof of building
- Photo 25 City Ramp Garage, looking east at roof of building

