

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

SP 730

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 Property

Historic name John A. Finch School

Other names/site number Finch Elementary School

2. Location

street & number N. 3717 Milton Street not for publication

city or town Spokane vicinity

State Washington code WA county Spokane code 063 zip code 99205

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Allyn M.
Signature of certifying official/Title

11-13-13
Date

WASHINGTON 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:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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:) _____

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	
1		buildings
		sites
	4	structures
		objects
1	4	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

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

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Functions or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:

Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls BRICK

TERRA COTTA

roof ASPHALT: Built up

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.

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# _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1924-1946

Significant Dates

1924, 1926, 1946

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation**Architect/Builder**

Zittel, Julius (Architect)

Rasque, George (Architect)

Martin, F.E. (Builder)

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Museum of Arts and Culture

Spokane Public Library, Northwest Room

10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property** About 1 acre**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM References on a continuation sheet.)

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Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>Stephen Emerson</u>	(Edited by DAHP Staff)
organization	<u>Archisto Enterprises</u>	date <u>Oct. 2013</u>
street & number	<u>212 W. Dawn Avenue</u>	telephone <u>509-466-8654</u>
city or town	<u>Spokane</u>	state <u>WA</u> zip code <u>99218</u>

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 **color digital photographs and architectural drawings** 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	<u>Spokane School District No. 81, Mark Anderson (Contact)</u>		
street & number	<u>200 N. Bernard Street</u>	telephone	<u>509-354-5900</u>
city or town	<u>Spokane</u>	state	<u>WA</u> zip code <u>99201</u>

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7. Narrative Description:

John A. Finch School is located in the City of Spokane, in the northwest portion of town. It occupies the northeastern corner of Audubon Park, fronted by Providence Avenue on the north and Milton Street on the east. The park and the adjoining neighborhood is distinguished by numerous tall ponderosa pines and well-tended lawns. The residential neighborhood is occupied by an eclectic mix of historic houses and is likely eligible for placement on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as a historic district, with the school as the anchoring property. The original, central portion of the school, facing Milton Street, was constructed in 1924. It was the initial phase of what was planned to be a one-story, U-shaped building. The original structure was extended to the north and south by 1926, with the additions to serve as the corners of the future U shape. The north and south, west-trending wings were not completed, however, until 1946. This was probably a result of financial difficulties brought about by the Great Depression and the subsequent world war. The original brick building is currently accompanied by a number of one-story wood frame, portable structures with either shallow-pitched gabled roofs or flat roofs. There are four such buildings. One is a rectangular structure attached to the west wall of the gymnasium. Another is a T-shaped structure situated in the central courtyard. Another two portables are placed south of the main building. A paved parking lot is located south of the school, while much of the school's surrounding grounds contain play spaces with either asphalt, dirt, or grass surfaces. To the west and south, the grounds of Finch School segue into those of Audubon Park, without barriers or obvious markers.

John A. Finch School is a one-story brick building with a U-shaped plan. The front façade faces to the east, while north and south wings form the sides of the U. The auditorium, located at the northwest corner of the U, has a higher roof than the rest of the structure, containing a gymnasium that requires a higher ceiling. All portions of the building have poured concrete foundations. The roof is covered with built-up asphalt and has short, flat parapets with terra cotta coping. A brick chimney stack, with a square profile, rises from the north wing, adjacent to the auditorium. Also on the roof are various utility facilities, including plumbing vents and HVAC installations.

The primary elevations of the building, facing outward, are the east, north, and south exterior walls. The east wall is considered the front façade, with its central main entry. The primary elevations are similarly arranged from top to bottom. Just below the coping is the parapet wall, clad with red brick laid in common bond. Below this is a string course, or cornice, of terra cotta blocks, with ornamental blocks alternating with plain blocks. The ornamental blocks feature bas relief ornamentation consisting of paired X figures with a central Celtic knot design. Below the string course is another level of brick laid in basket weave bond. Below this is the primary level of common bond brick into which the windows are placed. This level extends downward to a row of soldier bricks that are mounted on the concrete foundation. Other than these commonalities, each primary elevation is different, and will be described one at a time.

The front (east) elevation is distinguished by the elaborate central entry. At the top, above the parapet coping is a terra cotta pediment, with floral and scroll-work décor, featuring a central cartouche with an open book design in the center. Incised into the terra cotta base of the pediment are the words "EDUCATION IS THE APPRENTICESHIP OF LIFE." Below the parapet is a terra cotta entablature with the incised words "JOHN A. FINCH SCHOOL." The entablature is supported by brick pilasters and terra cotta Tuscan columns. The brick pilasters have terra cotta

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capitals and feature a rectangular brick panel design created by header and soldier bricks, with decorative terra cotta appliqué at the corners. At the center of the panels are small plastic lights that cover the space where two original wrought iron electroliers were once mounted. The columns are constructed of terra cotta blocks with smooth, unfluted walls, slightly battered toward the top, and with plain bases and capitals that feature an egg and dart and quatre foil design. The columns are placed at each end of a poured concrete porch with three steps. The floor of the porch is lined with red tile.

The main entry is recessed. Double-hung wood sash windows, with terra cotta sills, face inward. The entry contains four heavy-duty wood doors with multiple-pane windows and brass hardware. Above the doors are large, multiple-pane transoms with wood muntins arranged to form sunburst patterns. Banks of wood sash, double-hung windows stretch to the north and south from the central entry. Their arrangement is almost, but not quite symmetrical. To the right of the entry, the banks are placed in sets of two, five, four, five, and one. To the opposite direction, beginning again from the entry and moving left, the banks are placed in sets of two, five, four, one, and five. The windows have terra cotta sills, joined within each set. Each set is surrounded by a row of header and soldier bricks, with rectangular terra cotta appliqué situated at the upper right and left corners of the set. At both the north and east ends of the front façade is a plain brick wall, extended slightly to the front, that contains an ornamental rectangular panel delineated by soldier bricks along the sides and by square terra cotta appliqué at the corners.

The north wall of the building is a primary elevation as well, and retains many of the same characteristics as the front, including parapets, belt course, brick designs, and banks of double-hung windows with terra cotta sills and appliqué at the upper corners. There are several entries. To the left side is the primary north entry. Although it lacks the elaborate terra cotta ornamentation of the front, it retains the heavy duty wood doors (two instead of four) with multiple-pane windows and the upper starburst design multiple-pane transom. Further to the right are two secondary entries containing wood panel doors, one with multiple-pane windows.

To the right (west) of the primary north wall just described is the front façade of the gymnasium/auditorium, which occupies the western end of the north wing of the U-shaped building. As noted above, the primary roof of the gymnasium has a higher roof line than the rest of the school. This structure has several 1-story attachments, including an extension along the west side that contains locker rooms, a 1-story extension on the south end of the east side that adjoins with the school building proper, and the front entry vestibule on the north elevation. The latter is a two-tiered structure, with the central portion about three quarters of the height of the main gymnasium building, and flanking structures at about the one story level. Like the school proper, all roofs of the gymnasium have flat, built-up roofs, with flat parapets and terra cotta coping. In general, the walls are clad with common bond brickwork, rising above relatively high poured concrete foundations. The north (front) elevation features the central entry vestibule that contains the main entrance to the building, consisting of double wood doors with multiple-pane windows. The doors are paced within a terra cotta surround. Above them is a flat canopy that is suspended by torsion bars attached to the building from above. The entry is flanked by two plastic light fixtures. Directly above the central entry is a large fixed wood sash, multiple-pane window replete with a terra cotta surround. To either side of both the front entry and the window above it are wood sash double-hung windows with multiple-panes. Like many other windows of the primary elevations, they are distinguished by terra cotta sills and square terra cotta

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appliques at the upper corners, and further set off by a framework of soldier and stretcher bricks. Similar, but smaller, windows are singularly placed on the east and west sides of the gymnasium entry vestibule. The entry is approached by poured concrete steps with threaded pipe railings and a wheelchair ramp of similar materials.

The west elevation of the main gymnasium building features the top portions of brick pilasters with terra cotta capitals. The lower part of the wall is obscured by the attached locker room extension. At the north and south ends of the locker room extension are pairs of wood sash, double-hung windows, the one on the north with terra cotta ornamentation like other primary elevations windows, the one on the south with plain brick sills and lintels. Above the locker room extension are banks of unadorned wood sash, double-hung windows. Similar banks of windows originally placed below these have either been removed or obscured by the attachment of a wood frame addition to the west end of the gymnasium. This wood frame, 1-story addition is not part of original construction and is scheduled to be removed as part of a scheduled renovation effort. Centered on the south elevation of the primary gymnasium building is a bank of six wood sash, double-hung windows with brick sills and lintels. On the gymnasium's east wall are the upper portions of terra cotta capped pilasters, like those of the west wall, that rise above the 1-story portion of the gymnasium structure. On the east wall of this part of the gymnasium, facing into the central courtyard, is a secondary entry with a double set of wood doors with multiple-pane windows. Above this entry is a horizontally narrow, multiple-pane transom window. Above is a plastic light fixture. The entry is approached by poured concrete steps with threaded pipe hand rails. To either side of the entry is a double set of wood sash, double-hung windows, unadorned.

The secondary, south elevation of the north wing features banks of unadorned wood sash, double-hung windows, arranged singly or in sets of six. Like all of the non-primary elevation windows, they have brick sills and lintels. The west wall of the east wing, opposite of the school's primary elevation, has a similar appearance, except for the added central entry, which is recessed. It contains a double set of wood panel doors with glass windows. Above it is a large transom window featuring muntins arranged in a star burst fashion, like those of the front main entry. The door is approached by poured concrete steps and wheelchair ramp, both with threaded pipe hand rails. The north elevation of the south wing is similar in appearance to the other walls that face the interior courtyard, the main difference being the window wells placed in half-daylight position within the high concrete foundation. Visible in the wells are the wood sash double-hung windows of the basement. The south wing of the building is the only portion of the structure that contains a basement. The window wells are guarded by threaded pipe hand rails.

At the west end of the south wing is a semi-primary wall that replicates the high parapet, terra cotta coping, and the Celtic knot-themed belt course of the other primary elevations, but lacks the basket weave brick work below the belt course. The remaining portions of the wall are common bond brick, without windows. The poured concrete foundation is high, due to the presence of the basement beneath the south wing. An entry is recessed into the center of the wall. It contains double wood doors with windows and a transom window above with muntins arranged in a star burst design. The recessed entry is framed by soldier and stretcher bricks, with square terra cotta appliques in the upper corners. The entry is framed by soldier and stretcher bricks with terra cotta appliques at the upper corners. This entry is approached by poured concrete steps with concrete retaining walls. Beneath these steps are two sets of steps that lead to an exterior entry to the basement. These steps are protected by threaded pipe hand rails.

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The south elevation of the south wing mostly replicates the appearance of the other primary elevations, with terra cotta coping along the parapet wall, the terra cotta ornamental belt course, the basket weave brick work beneath the belt course, and the wood sash, multiple-pane, double-hung windows with terra cotta sills and decorative terra cotta appliques in the upper corners. The poured concrete foundation is high, due to the presence of the basement beneath this wing. Basement windows are wood sash, double-hung. They are not placed in wells, as on the reverse elevation of this wing, but are protected by wire cage coverings. The most remarkable component of this elevation is a canted bay window towards the western end. It has a flat roof with short enclosed eaves. Two wood sash, double-hung windows face outward, while a single such window is present in the canted sides. These windows have terra cotta sills, but no other ornamentation. To the right of the bay window is a recessed entry containing a double set of wood panel doors with multiple-pane windows and a narrow multiple-light transom above. This entry is approached by poured concrete steps with concrete retaining walls. Another primary entry is placed near the middle portion of the south elevation. It is recessed and contains a double set of wood panel doors with multiple-pane windows, surrounded by multiple-pane transom and side lights. Additionally, the panel above the entry contains a panel of basket weave brickwork with terra cotta appliques at the upper corners. It is approached by poured concrete steps and wheelchair ramp, both protected by threaded pipe hand rails.

The interior room configuration of John A. Finch School remains intact, both for the original design and from the later expansions. The central east-facing half of the current building retains the original arrangement, as designed by Julius Zittel, of a central vestibule, with reception and auxiliary rooms flanked by a classroom to either side. The original wood work of door, window, and transom trim are original, including the ornate star burst designs. The north-south hallway replicates the original corridor that connected these rooms. The doors along the east side of the hallway likely date to the 1940s addition. The two recessed former fire hose storage areas of to the north and south of the central hall entry are original. The room placement of the 1926 south and north additions also mostly retain their original configuration, with three classrooms in the south addition and two in the north, making them not quite symmetrical. At the inside corners of each addition are filled in entries that correspond with the location of the original canted secondary entries to the rear of the building. The rest of the room configuration, including the length of the north and south wings and the gymnasium/auditorium, as well as the rooms west of the front central hallway, is also the same as originally designed by George Rasque in 1946. Several secondary entries feature decorative wood trim, multiple-pane wood sash windows, and starburst transoms. Some of these were re-located from other positions in the earlier renditions of the building. The classrooms are distinguished by wood sash double-hung multiple pane windows, oak shelving and cabinetry. The blackboards have been replaced by white board, but retain their oak framing and chalk trays. Some classrooms have small kitchenettes, with sinks, cabinets and counters. Classroom floors, as well as those of the hallways are clad with faux terrazzo vinyl. The classrooms have drop ceilings that area canted upwards to allow the high windows to remain visible. Several unique classroom details demand mention. The library features a brick fireplace with tile cladding that displays storybook designs. It has a wood mantel and a tile floor, as well as a pointed arch recess above. Also in the library are built-in wood shelving, and a recessed area that accommodates the exterior bay window. Bathrooms have tile walls and floors that may be original, and modern stalls and plumbing fixtures. Another fireplace, brick clad, is located in the basement. The basement, positioned beneath the south wing, was originally a large room, but has been sub-divided to provide further classroom space. It still retains the poured concrete floor, however, which was historically used for roller skating. The boiler room, which was originally located below the south end of the front (east) wing, was relocated

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in 1946 to beneath the west end of the north wing. The gymnasium/auditorium is attached to the west end of the south wing. The main room contains a large hardwood gymnasium floor and has a high ceiling. At the south end of this room is an elevated stage, with a staging area behind curtains. Boy's and girl's locker rooms and restrooms are located in an attached wing to the west of the gymnasium/auditorium. Some of the most intact features of the Finch School interior are contained in the entry vestibule attached to the north side of the gymnasium/auditorium. Entry into the vestibule is granted through the exterior double-doors. At the center of the vestibule is a ticket booth flanked by doors which allow entry into the gymnasium/auditorium proper. The ticket booth is constructed of wood. It has a canted bay, above which are canted windows with payment slots at the bottom. To either side of the interior doors are wood cabinet doors. Further to either side are wood doors through which entry is gained to small bathrooms. The entry vestibule retains its original 1946 plan and the wood construction, doors, and trim are probably original.

Also on site are four wood frame, portable structures that may have been moved to the site from other locations. One is a rectangular structure attached to the west wall of the gymnasium which serves as a lunch room. Another is a T-shaped structure, detached and situated in the central courtyard. Another two rectangular portables are detached and placed south of the main building. Although the buildings have slightly varying plans they all share the following characteristics: Wood frame, shallow-pitched roofs, short eaves, composition shingle roofs, fixed wood sash windows, concrete foundations, wood panel siding with batten boards, wood panel doors with concrete steps, and wood frame wheel chair ramps.

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8. Narrative Statement of Significance:

John A. Finch School is eligible for NRHP placement, under Criterion A, for its contribution to the history of education in Spokane, Washington. It had its beginnings in the 1920s, when the City was making significant strides in expanding its elementary school opportunities, and was appropriately expanded several times as the population of the district it served increased. It continues to serve its originally intended purpose.

John A. Finch School is also eligible for NRHP placement, under Criterion C, at the local level, as an outstanding example of early public school architecture in Spokane. It is one of relatively few elementary school structures that have survived largely intact. The exterior and interior of the building retains excellent integrity of its historic appearance and original construction materials. Despite undergoing two major renovations, the design motifs and construction materials have been maintained throughout the changes. Furthermore, the room configuration of the interior has changed very little since the final major renovation in 1946. And many of the more distinguished interior design features have been retained as well, including original doorways, transoms, and windows. Some original chalkboard frames and cabinets remain as well. The Period of Significance begins in 1924, the date of completion of the original portion of the building, and extends to 1949, the year the last major alteration took place to the building.

Finch School is the design of two of Spokane's most influential and prolific architects, Julius Zittel and George Rasque, both whom achieved praise and admiration for their devotion to the design of educational institutions. Zittel developed the initial Neo-classical design elements of the building, seen most strikingly in the central front entry, with its ornamental pediment, entablature, and columns. The lavish use of expensive terra cotta construction materials, begun by Zittel and faithfully continued by Rasque, is an indication of the School District's desire to create a lasting and monumental structure dedicated to the education of the City's northwest neighborhoods, comparable to those of the more pretentious south side. Although the final structure was not fully completed until over twenty years after it was envisioned, the result is an outstanding example of early Twentieth Century institutional architecture created by two of the area's most talented architects.

Historic Context: The first school in Spokane was opened by Spokane Garry, a Spokane Indian, in 1870, near the site Drumheller Springs, on the north side. This school was eclipsed, in 1875, when Protestant missionary, Henry T. Cowley, came to serve as the first white school teacher in what is now Spokane. Cowley's school marked the beginning of public school education in the town.

The arrival of Henry Cowley in Spokane coincided with the organization of the first Spokane school district in what was then Stevens County. This district, designated school district number eight, covered a large territory between Hangman Creek and the Spokane River. The superintendent of Stevens County schools at the time was James Monaghan, who later became a prominent Spokane businessman and was father to war hero John R. Monaghan, whose statue stands in downtown Spokane. The school founded by Henry Cowley became part of the new school district. When Spokane County was created out of the southern part of Stevens County, in 1879, early local

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inhabitant J.J. Browne was appointed superintendent of newly designated Spokane School District No. 41. In the first Spokane County election, held in 1880, Mrs. Maggie M. Halsell was elected to succeed Browne.

The year 1889 was a momentous one for Spokane. Washington achieved statehood, much of downtown Spokane was destroyed by a fire, and schools in Spokane were reorganized as School District No. 81. David Bemis, a Canadian with extensive experience in school administration, was hired as superintendent of Spokane Public Schools in the fall of 1889. Mr. Bemis, who remained as superintendent for ten years, is largely credited with bringing Spokane's school system out of its temporary malaise. He pushed through a local bond issue that provided \$250,000.00 to improve the school system in Spokane and, subsequently, the original Spokane High School and six elementary schools were built.

The new high school was completed in 1891. Rapidly increasing enrollment prompted the 1908 construction of a second high school, North Central, the first one to serve the north side of Spokane. The original high school then became South Central High School. The school bond levies of 1907 and 1909 provided the funds to greatly improve public educational facilities in the city of Spokane. But the District received a terrible blow when South Central High School burned to the ground on June 21, 1910. Spokane citizens responded by passing another bond issue to rebuild the destroyed school, resulting in the present Lewis and Clark High School. The first decade of the Twentieth Century was a period of booming population growth for Spokane. Other bond issues were passed to support the construction of elementary schools as well as high schools.

By 1899, Spokane had at least eleven elementary schools. Among them were Irving, Lincoln, Bryant, Bancroft, Franklin, Edison, Washington, Logan, Longfellow, Whittier, and Emerson schools. By 1902, the District had added Garfield, Grant, Hawthorne, Holmes, Stevens, and Webster schools. J.A. Tormey became superintendent in 1903, after which several more schools were added, including McKinley and Field schools. The district was guided through the post-WWI years and the depression by Superintendent Orville C. Pratt, who served from 1916 to 1943, the longest tenancy of anyone in that office.

Bids for the construction of what was called the "First Unit" of John A. Finch School, were accepted on July 23, 1923. Twelve contractors vied for the contract. It was awarded to the F.E. Martin Company, which placed the lowest bid, an amount of \$34,169.00. The heating plant contract went to the James Smyth Company, and the plumbing contract was granted to the Standard Plumbing Company. The total of all bids was \$42,270.00.

It was under Pratt's guidance that John A. Finch School opened on Monday, January 28, 1924. It was tiny, and incomplete, but its grandiose columnar entry suggested a greater future, and was indicative of plans that would not be realized for over 20 years. Four days later, a photograph of the school appeared in the *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, illustrating the full-length of the front of the one-story building. The central entry is visible, flanked to either side by three banks of windows, totaling eleven to each side. The header above the photograph announced "New School Is Model of Up-To-Date Construction." The caption below stated: "Fifty-two students enrolled in various classes opened the new John A. Finch grade school last Monday. The new School building, shown above, is located in the northwest part of the city near Audubon Park. Situated among the pine trees, the new school is one of the most attractive and finest in Spokane's system of public educational institutions. While the building is not complete, it

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has a new type of architecture assuring the greatest degree of safety to the students against fire, as it is planned to have all rooms on the ground floor through the construction of a U-shaped building. Miss Margaret Richardson is the principal." The interior of the school featured a large entry vestibule at the center, a receptionist's office, the principal's office, a supply room, a multi-purpose room, and two large restrooms, but only two class rooms. A short notice in the newspaper, issued at the beginning of the 1924 fall term, indicated that the school only had two teachers, Margaret Richardson, the principal, and Gladys M. Smith. It is possible that the school, at that time, was only meant to augment other schools, while awaiting its expansion. Plans for the expansion of Finch school became apparent on July 8, 1926, when the *Spokane Daily Chronicle* announced that bids would soon be accepted for the project, with costs expecting to amount to about \$20,000. Work commenced shortly afterward. Each wing of the east-facing building was extended to the north and south. These additions would serve as anchors for the planned U-shape. Plans for further expansion were announced in the *Spokane Daily Chronicle* as early as January 8, 1937, at a projected cost of \$40,000.00. Similar plans were announced in the same newspaper on May 15, 1941. The final phase of that scheme, however, was not completed until 1946, when the building assumed the foot-print it has today. The most obvious cause for the delay was the considerable distraction brought about by World War II.

Plans for an addition to Finch School were finally authorized by the Spokane school board on February 14, 1945. It was noted that the school was using portable buildings to alleviate crowding at that time. An architect, however, had not yet been selected. The next month, preliminary plans drawn by architect George Rasque, were approved by the school board. The existing school was described as consisting of a seven classroom building and four portable units. The expansion of the main building would replace the portables and add a gymnasium equipped with "stage, kitchen, and lavatory facilities." The plans also called for replacement of the old heating plant. In early August, the proposed construction project was opened to contractors for bids. General contractor Roy L. Blair submitted the low bid for the building construction project. The low bid for heating and plumbing was submitted by H.L. Lewis, while Maxwell's Inc. came in with the low bid for the electrical component. The total bids, however, were nearly double the money that had actually been allotted for the project. A new call for bids in late August did not result in cost reductions. Contractors blamed the problem on rising expenses for labor and material. In early September, all bids for the project were rejected. The only hope for the school board was to ask for aid from state or federal funding sources. If such aid was not forthcoming, it was even suggested that the school be only partially completed once again. School superintendent John A. Shaw opposed such an idea, noting that the population in the Finch district had already exceed estimates for which plans were designed. None the less, calls went out for bids not just for the building as designed, but for a building without one wing. In October state financial aid had been secured and costs had been adjust downward through modifications of locker and shower room facilities. Subsequently, the portables were moved to park department property and excavation was begun for the new addition. Construction was in full swing by July, 1946, with the adjusted costs finally estimated at \$284,000, much higher than the original allocation of about \$158,000. On July 24, superintendent Shaw announced that although the school was not "perfect," the project was "working out exactly as planned and its classrooms are ideal."

The new school was named in honor of John Alyard Finch, a scion of Spokane's mining-industry wealthy families who had gained a reputation in life as one of the community's most generous philanthropists. Mr. Finch was born in Cambridgeshire, England, in May, 1854, and moved with his family to Youngstown, Ohio, when he was eight years old. He later became knowledgeable of the mining trade while working in Leadville, Colorado. In 1887, he

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partnered with future Spokane capitalist Amasa B. Campbell, and invested in Coeur d'Alene district mining interests. Together they developed several mines in north Idaho and British Columbia, but their biggest strike was with the Hecla Silver Mine, which became one of the most profitable operations in the country. His new-found wealth allowed him to become president or an officer in numerous other business ventures. In 1891, he was elected to the Idaho State Senate. In 1896, he married Spokane debutante Charlotte Swingler and thereafter immersed himself in the civic affairs of the city. He became the president of Spokane's first country club and donated land for Saint Luke's Hospital and the Spokane Children's Club. When he died in 1915, he left a little more than half of his estate to his wife, but set aside the rest to charity and to the public good of the city. The physical legacy of his enterprising and generous life is present today in his opulent Browne's Addition Mansion, the John A. Finch Memorial Arboretum, and John A. Finch School.

The main building of John A. Finch School underwent three separate primary phases of construction. The first and second, occurring in 1924 and 1926, were designed by Julius Zittel, while the third phase, conducted in 1946, was designed by George Rasque. Both men were prominent architects who specialized in school design. Julius Zittel was born in Germany in 1869, and came to America at the age of thirteen. He briefly studied architecture in Chicago before moving to Spokane in 1887. There, at the age of eighteen, Mr. Zittel initiated a rapid rise to local prominence. Only six weeks after entering the architectural firm of Herman Preusse, he was admitted as a partner. Preusse and Zittel operated until 1910, during which time both men established enduring reputations. Among their accomplishments together are St. Aloysius' Church and most of the older buildings of the Gonzaga University campus, including the Administration Building. From the beginning of Governor John R. Rogers' administration, in 1897, Julius Zittel served off and on as a designer of state structures and, in 1912, Governor Ernest Lister officially appointed him State Architect. Twelve years later, when Roland Hartley replaced Lister as Governor, Democrat Zittel became a Republican, and remained as State Architect throughout the next administration. He remained active until his retirement in 1934, after which he retired from architecture. At the time of his death on May 7, 1939, he was manager of the Spokane Hotel. He was also well known as a founder and president of the Citizen's Savings and Loan Society. Among the many Spokane buildings he designed during both his public and private career are the Carnegie Library, Old City Hall, the Auditorium building, and the Jamieson building. The campus of Eastern Washington University contains the largest unified complex of Zittel designed buildings in the state, including the Central Heating Plant, Showalter Hall, Monroe Hall, Senior Hall, Sutton Hall, and the President's House.

After the retirement of Julius Zittel, Washington State often turned to George M. Rasque. Although Rasque never held an official title as had Zittel, he built so many public buildings in Eastern Washington that he was informally regarded by many of his clients as State Architect for the area. Rasque was born in 1890 in Boscobel, Wisconsin. Soon after learning architecture from a correspondence course he moved to Spokane. Rasque formed his own firm in the 1920s, and was eventually licensed to practice in four northwestern states. Around 1936, his son and only child George W. Rasque joined the firm, and for a time father and son practiced together. Unfortunately, the younger Rasque was killed during the Battle of Okinawa, in the south Pacific. The heart-broken but still busy father continued to do business under the name George M. Rasque and Son for many years after the war, as credited on his drawings for John A. Finch School. Mr. Rasque retired ca. 1970, and died in Spokane on October 20, 1977. A list of the public buildings he designed would require many pages. His creations, especially schools, literally dot the

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landscape of Eastern Washington. The best assemblages of Rasque buildings can be seen at the State Penitentiary at Walla Walla, Eastern State Hospital, Lakeland Village, and Eastern Washington University.

The careers of Zittel and Rasque both emerged out of time-honored traditions often referred to as Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals, based on ancient Classical ideals. Finch School is an example of such designs. Although initiated at Finch by Zittel, Rasque competently followed the older man's lead. Zittel's adherence to the revivalist designs can be seen in many of his buildings, including the Spokane Carnegie Library (1904, with Preusse), the Benewah County Courthouse, in St. Maries, Idaho (1924), and four of his buildings on the Eastern Washington University campus – Showalter Hall (1915), Monroe Hall (1915), Senior Hall (1920), and Sutton Hall (1923). But there are many examples of Zittel's work that indicate that his talent could allow him to venture into other avenues of architectural inspiration. Some examples are the Commercial Style/Chicago School design of the Old Spokane City Hall (1912), the Late Gothic Revival/Collegiate Gothic of Mount St. Michaels seminary (1915), Finch Lodge at Cowles Boy Scout Camp at Diamond Lake, a Craftsman design (1923), and the Colonial Classical/Georgian style of the President's House at Eastern Washington University (1929). When Rasque arrived on the scene in the 1930s, the classical revivals were still strong, but the world was turning to modern forms, which Rasque embraced, but often intermixed with the more traditional idioms. In the new Eastern State Hospital Administration Building (1933) he added Art Deco design motifs, including chevrons and zig-zags, to more traditional elements. In the design of Roosevelt Hall (1935), also at Eastern State Hospital, he stuck with more traditional Tudor Revival characteristics. A few years later, with Hargreaves Hall at the Eastern Washington University campus, he combined traditional Romanesque Revival design with strikingly modern Art Deco ornamental elements. By the late 1940s he had fully turned his attention to modernistic designs, a trend well illustrated in his collaboration with John Graham Jr., of Northgate Mall and Space Needle fame, in the design of the Spokane Veterans Medical Center (1948). Together, the works of Zittel and Rasque run the gamut of architectural design in the first half of the 20th Century.

A careful study of the construction design drawings produced by the two primary architects of John A. Finch School, Julius Zittel and George Rasque, reveal the several steps involved in building the school. The first Zittel rendition of the building occurred in 1924. It was a simple rectangular building oriented to face the east. The front appearance was symmetrical, with an ornate central entry flanked to either side by banks of windows arranged, from the center outward, in sets of two, five, and four. Decorative features such as the terra cotta trim of the parapet coping, the belt course with Celtic knot detailing, and window trim are identical to today's appearance. Terra cotta ornamental details of the entry, such as the central pediment and cartouche, incised lettering of the pediment and entablature, as well as the flanking columns with egg and dart and quatre foil detailing in the capitals, are all intact. Also retained are the four wood and glass entry doors and the elaborate starburst transoms above them. An historic photograph available at the Museum of Arts and Culture, undated but obviously quite early, reveals that the appearance of the entry has been retained except for one small detail – the former wrought iron electroliers that were centered in the brick panels to either side of the entry columns had been replaced by plastic light fixtures. Zittel's floor plans indicate that from the central area one passed into a large entry vestibule. To the left was a receptionist office, the principal's office, with a small toilet room, and a supply room. To the right of the vestibule was a teacher's lounge with a small toilet room. Going forward from the entry vestibule led to the main hall corridor, which traversed the building from north to south. Each wing held one of a total of two classrooms, and toilet areas for students, one for boys at the south end and one for girls at the opposite end. Each classroom had its own

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wardrobe area. At each end of the hall corridor, and at the center rear, were secondary entries. All three had starburst design transoms and flat canopies suspended by chains. Otherwise, ornamental elements of the rear (west) elevation were more muted than the front, although the terra cotta belt course with Celtic knot design and the basket weave brick work below it was present, wrapping around the entire building. Zittel's basement and foundation plans indicate that a boiler room and a fuel storage room were tucked beneath the south end of the building, accessible from the interior by steps leading to a sub-surface door. The chimney stack extended through the classroom above, in a space that also served as a janitor's closet, and rose above the buildings south end. An historic photograph from the local newspaper, printed only a few days after the initial opening, indicates that this was indeed where the stack was in the beginning.

The first major alteration of the Finch School, also designed by Julius Zittel, occurred in 1926. This extended the school to the north and south, but still did not fulfill the initial plans for a U-shaped building. Both additions were L-shaped and intended to anchor the north and south ends of the building, probably in anticipation of the eventual completion of the U-shaped plan. They were similar in scale, but differed in their interior composition. The exterior décor of the original building was carried on, including parapet ornamentation and window appearance. The original entries to the north and south ends were removed to make way for the additions. The relocated entries were placed in "kitty corner" fashion at the interior crook of the L. The central hall corridor was extended, making a right angle turn to accommodate the L-shaped additions. The north wing addition contained three classrooms, each with wardrobe space, while the south wing contains two classrooms, of larger size, also with wardrobes.

Following the 1926 construction of the additions designed by Julius Zittel, America and the world plunged into the Great Depression, followed by the calamitous years of WWII. Finch School was just one of many projects put on hold, in Spokane and elsewhere. The seven classrooms were not a full complement of rooms for an elementary school, and some short cuts were probably necessary. The school still lacked a gymnasium, and perhaps kids were shuffled about, or merely sent outside, to satisfy the physical education element of their schedule. Finally, in 1945, George Rasque designed the complete structure that had been envisioned at the beginning. The result was a complete U-shaped building, with the western end of the north wing anchored by the gymnasium. Utilizing the original central hall corridor designed by Zittel, Rasque added rooms along the west side of the original building, creating more classroom space. Two new hallways were constructed extending to the west of each wing, with the hall in the north wing leading to an entry of the gymnasium. New classrooms were added to either side of the east-west halls. The canted entries to the rear of the original Zittel design were covered over. The original star burst design of the entry transoms was replicated in the new entries designed by Rasque. A unique Rasque addition was the distinctive bay window of the south elevation of the south wing. A particularly ingenious move by Rasque was to salvage all of the terra cotta belt course and basket weave brick of the parapet of the original south wall and apply them to the parapet of the north and south elevations of the new wings, which gave the primary elevations of the renovated building an appearance that was homogenous to the original Zittel design. Rasque's additions created sufficient classroom space for an elementary school, as well as all purpose rooms, a kitchen, and a gymnasium with a stage area so that the space could be converted into an auditorium. Boys and girls locker rooms were attached to the gymnasium. Rasque also added a large room in the basement space beneath the south wing, which for many years was a large area with a concrete floor that could be used for roller skating. He also relocated the boiler room to a large basement space beneath the north wings which was capable of providing heat to the much larger school.

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The new classrooms were lavishly furnished with oak frame chalk boards, and oak cupboards and shelving. Another element that distinguished Rasque's design was the installation of two working fireplaces with mantels and hearths. When Rasque was finished, the building, although the work of two architects, had the appearance of a unified whole, and one with enough space and facilities to serve its educational purposes, as well as one that makes an elegant and stylish addition to the Audubon Park neighborhood.

9. Major Bibliographical References:

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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary of John A. Finch School is the south side of Providence Avenue, on the north, the west side of Milton Street, on the east, a line extending westward from the route of Gordon Avenue, on the south, and a line extending southward from the route of A Street, on the west.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary corresponds to the boundary of parcel 25013.0026, in Section 01, T25N, R42E.

11. Photographs

John A. Finch School

W. 212 Dawn, Spokane, WA

Spokane County, Washington

All photos by Stephen Emerson – May & Nov – 2012

- 00001. East (front) entry, looking west
- 00002. Terra cotta ornamentation on east (front) entry, looking southwest
- 00003. East (front) elevation, column capital detail, looking south
- 00004. East (front) elevation, cartouche detail, looking west
- 00005. East (front) elevation, windows to left of entry, looking northwest
- 00006. East (front) elevation, windows to right of entry, looking northwest
- 00007. East (front) elevation, windows to right of entry, looking northwest
- 00008. East (front) elevation, belt course detail, right of entry, looking northwest
- 00009. East (front) elevation, windows to right of entry, bank detail, looking northwest
- 00010. North elevation, looking southwest
- 00011. West elevation, gymnasium entry vestibule, looking southwest
- 00012. North elevation, gymnasium entry, looking south
- 00013. North elevation, secondary entry, looking south
- 00014. West elevation of gymnasium, looking northeast
- 00015. East and south elevations of gymnasium, looking northwest

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- 00016. Chimney stack at west end of north wing, looking northwest
- 00017. West elevation of east (front) wing, looking northeast
- 00018. West elevation of east (front) wing, entry detail, looking northeast
- 00019. North elevation of south wing, looking southeast
- 00020. West and south elevations of south wing, looking northeast
- 00021. West entry of south wing, looking east
- 00022. South elevation of south wing, looking northeast
- 00023. South elevation of south wing, bay window and western entry details, looking northwest
- 00024. South elevation of south wing, eastern entry detail, looking north
- 00025. South elevation of south wing, eastern end, looking northwest
- 00026. Front entry vestibule, wood work, looking southeast
- 00027. Front entry vestibule, reception area, looking southwest
- 00028. Front entry vestibule, from hallway, looking southeast
- 00029. Doors to reception area, looking southeast
- 00030. Secondary entry vestibule, wood work, looking southeast
- 00031. Typical hallway, looking east
- 00032. Hallway lockers, looking southeast
- 00033. Typical classroom with kitchenette, looking southwest
- 00034. Typical classroom windows, looking southwest
- 00035. Classroom window, detail, looking west
- 00036. Bay window in library, looking south
- 00037. Library fireplace, looking northwest

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- 00038 Basement fireplace, looking north
- 00039 Former canted entry, filled in, looking to the northwest
- 00040 Former fire hose recess, looking northeast
- 00041 Basement hallway, looking west
- 00042 Typical restroom, looking north
- 00043 Typical restroom, tile, looking west
- 00044 Gymnasium/Auditorium, looking south
- 00045 Ticket booth, looking southwest

ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

- 00046 Milton Street Elevation, Zittel - 1923
- 00047 Floor Plan, Zittel - 1923
- 00048 Ornamental Details, Entry, Zittel - 1923
- 00049 Ornamental Details, Cornice, Zittel - 1923
- 00050 Elevations for Additions, Zittel - 1926
- 00051 South Addition Floor Plan, Zittel - 1926
- 00052 North Addition Floor Plan, Zittel - 1926
- 00053 Elevations, Rasque - 1946
- 00054 Floor Plan, Rasque - 1946
- 00055 Gymnasium/Auditorium Plan, Rasque - 1946
- 00056 Current Floor Plan, Ressa Zeck - 1983

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Finch School, 1924. *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, February 1, 1924:13.

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Undated, but early, photograph of the main entry to Finch School. Museum of Arts and Culture vertical files.

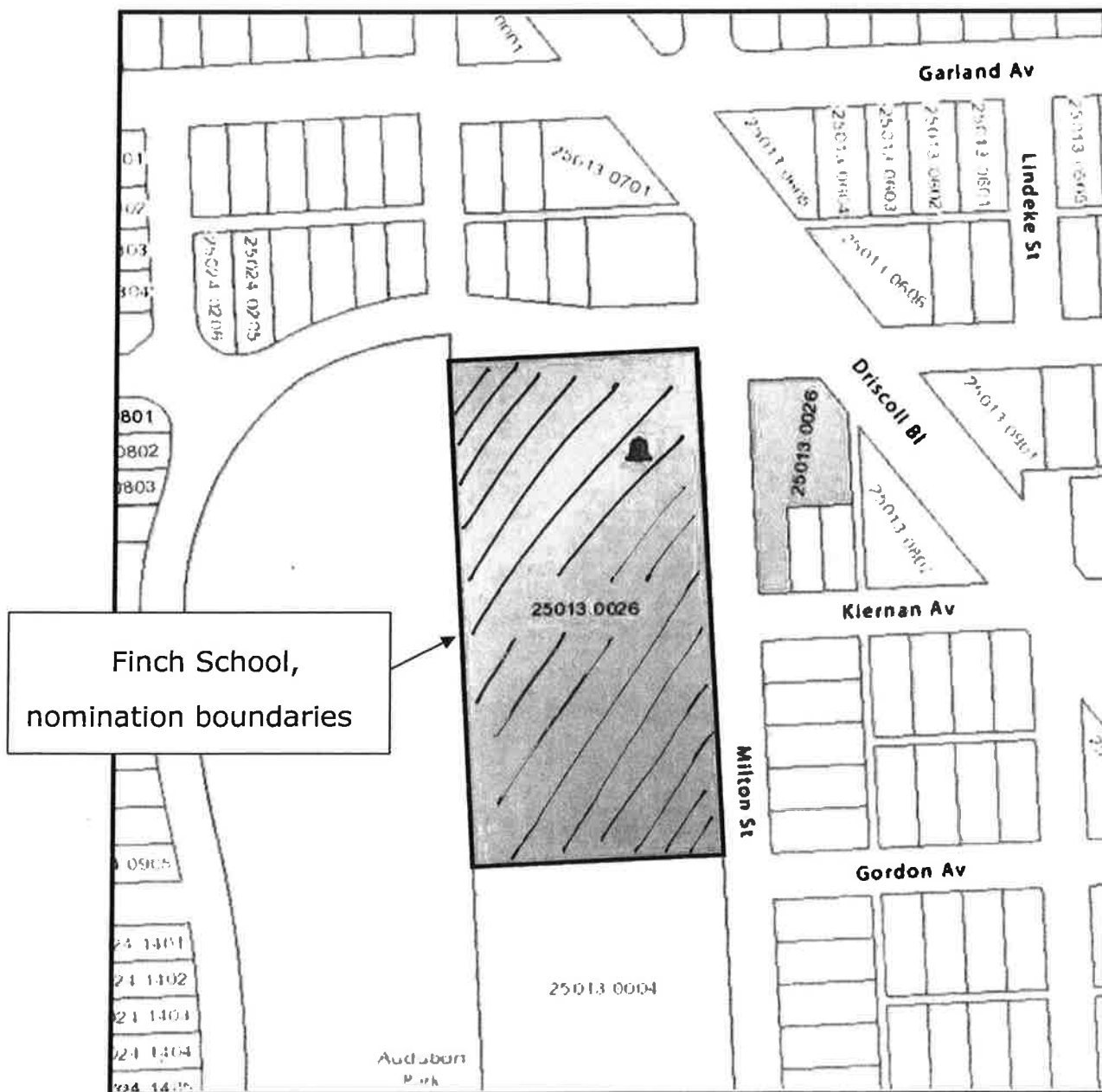
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Parcel Map of John A. Finch School. Boundaries outlined in black.

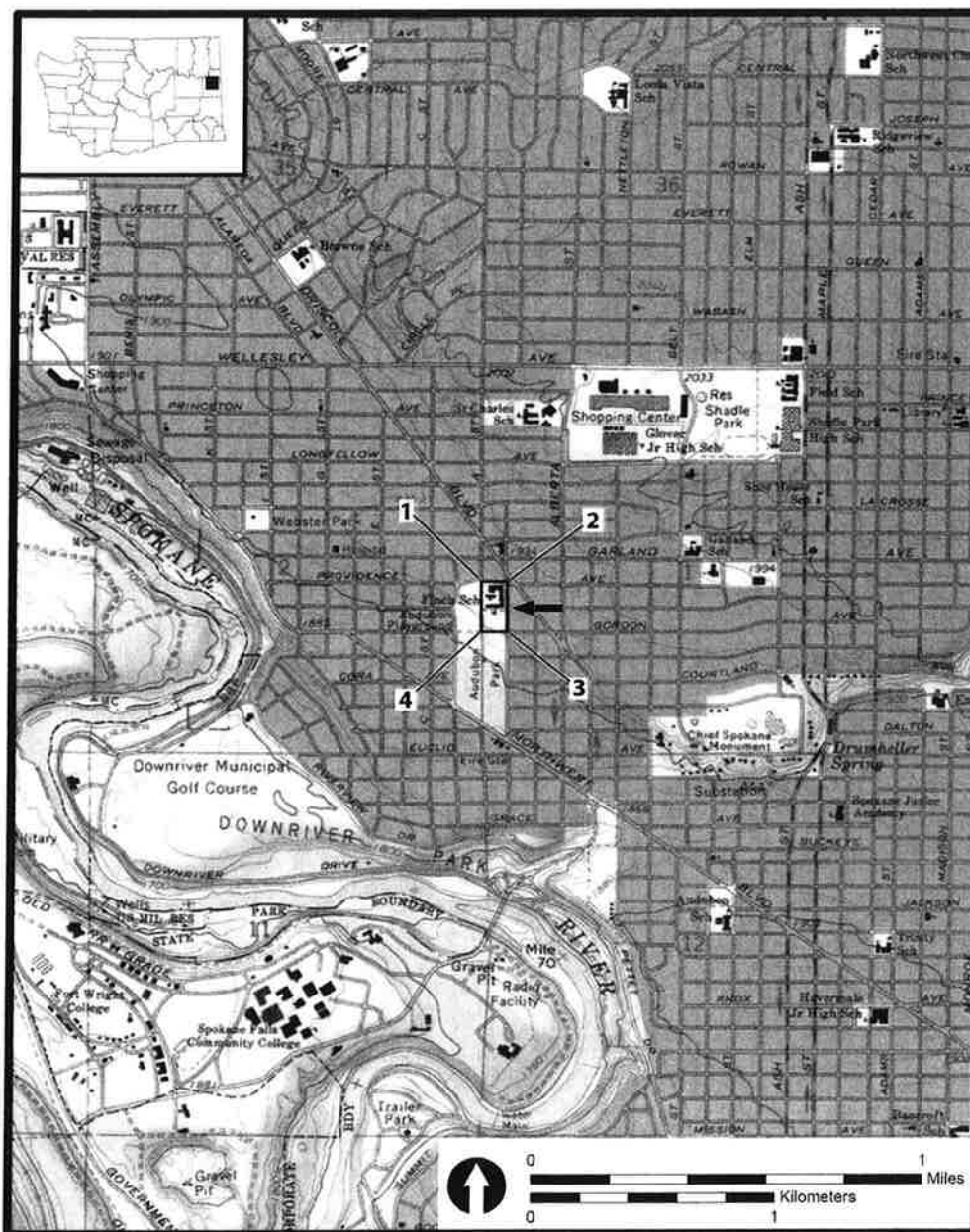
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Location of Finch Elementary School (adapted from Spokane NW 7.5' series USGS topographic quadrangle). Large numbers indicate UTM locations for property corners.



