

Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination

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

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Briggs Apartments
And/Or Common Name: The Briggs Apartments

2. Location

Street & Number: 225 South Wall Street
City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA,
Parcel Number: 35191.3147

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

Name: M5x2 Fund III, LLC
Street & Number: 6811 North Eastern Road
City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA 99217
Telephone Number/E-mail: 202-643-1349/matt@m5c7.com

5. Location of Legal Description

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

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Title: N/A
Date: N/A ☐ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local
Depository for Survey Records: Spokane Historic Preservation Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Condition

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

Check One

- ☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check One

- ☒ original site
☐ moved & date _____

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

8. Spokane Register Categories and Statement of Significance

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

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Spokane history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory history.
- ☐ E Property represents the culture and heritage of the city of Spokane in ways not adequately addressed in the other criteria, as in its visual prominence, reference to intangible heritage, or any range of cultural practices.

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography is found on one or more continuation sheets.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 0.19 acres
Verbal Boundary Description: Railroad Addition, Block 33, Lot 6
Verbal Boundary Justification: Nominated property includes entire parcel and urban legal description.

11. Form Prepared By

Name and Title: Kelsey Doncaster
Organization: Doncaster Consulting, LLC
Street, City, State, Zip Code: P.O. Box 1611, Choteau, MT 59422
Telephone Number: (509) 571-5362
E-mail Address: doncaster@3rivers.net
Date Final Nomination Heard:

12. Additional Documentation

Additional documentation is found on one or more continuation sheets.

13. Signature of Owner(s)

14. For Official Use Only:

Date nomination application filed: _____

Date of Landmarks Commission Hearing: _____

Landmarks Commission decision: _____

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

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

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

Date

Attest:

Approved as to form:

City Clerk

Assistant City Attorney

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The 1909 Briggs Apartments are located at 225 South Wall Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues in Spokane, Washington. It is a rectangle shape (57 ½ feet x 81 feet), four-story, brick, 36-room apartment building with a basement, a cobblestone foundation, and a parapet flat roof. It is a stripped-down Italianate style on the west and north elevations, while the south and north elevations are unadorned. The entrance to the building is on the west elevation on the southwest side accessed by stairs to the 1st floor. The Briggs Apartments have a majority of one-over-one metal anodized aluminum windows in the original fenestration pattern. On the west elevation there are also smaller one-over-one windows on the 1st-4th floors between the second, third, sixth and seventh windows. Windows are all singles except for the V notch on the east elevation which has paired one over one windows on the 1st-4th floors. All exterior doors today are modern metal solid doors. The front façade (west) faces Wall Street, while the north elevation faces an alley, the east elevation faces a parking lot today, and the south elevation faces a small vacant portion of the parcel between the building and the corner of 3rd Avenue and Wall Street.



Oblique view of north and west (front) elevations Briggs Apartments, looking southeast.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

The Briggs Apartments is a rectangle shape (57 ½ feet x 81 feet) four-story 36-unit apartment building with a basement and a cobblestone foundation. It is 48 feet from the

street level to the top of the building. It is clad in stretcher bond brick with an Italianate style cornice on two sides. The primary façade is on Wall Street with a brick and concrete



Oblique view of south and east (rear) elevations, looking northwest.

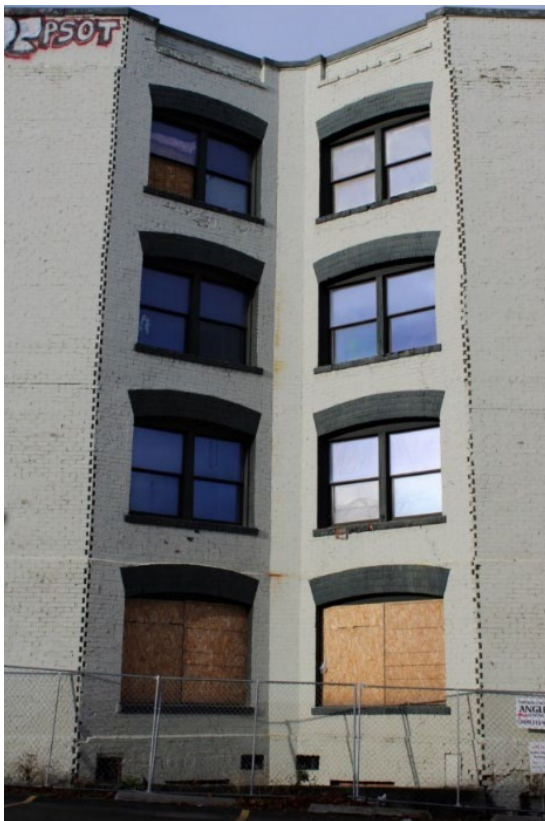
cornice. The south elevation also has a continuation of this cornice, except for where the four-story metal fire escape is located in the middle.

While the south and east elevations are not clad with a cornice, they have insets in the brick work at the top where the 5th floor windows would be located. This pattern in the brick work for the window locations is also on the west and north elevations above the cornice. This feature shows how it was planned to be a much bigger building from the start. On the east elevation north side, there is a brick chimney. On the south elevation, there are a series of 10 notches/keys on the southwest side for where the building would be extended and enlarged. There is a modern concrete block elevator shaft on the south elevation.



Detail of keys on south elevation on the west side of the building.

The building today has an overwhelming majority of anodized aluminum metal windows (92) and one visible wood window which are all one over one in fenestration, with a vertical brick header and sill, except for the west and north elevations which have a concrete sill and all the basement windows which have no decorative brick header. There are two 1st floor, one 2nd floor, and three basement windows on the north elevation that have been bricked in with concrete blocks with the wood window sealed up behind the blocks.¹ The window openings on the west and north elevations have square openings, while the east and south elevations have low arched openings. On the west elevation there are also smaller windows, approximately half the size of the other windows, on the 1st-4th floors between the second, third, sixth and seventh windows. On the east elevation there is a V notch which has a



Detail of V notch on east (rear) elevation.

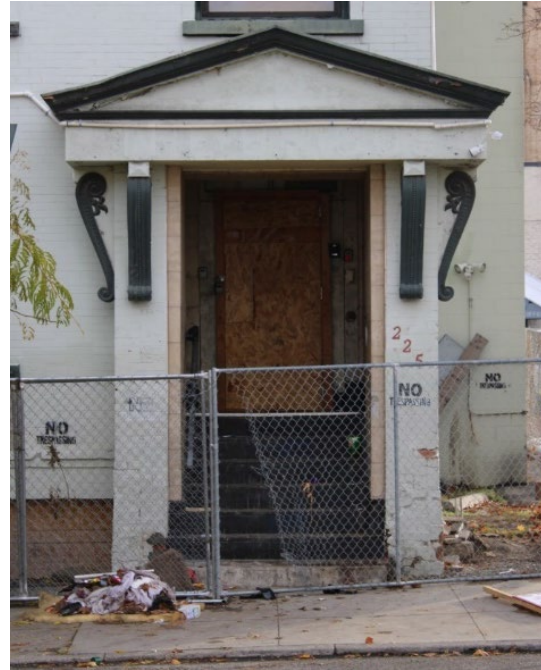


View of north elevation looking southeast showing windows blocked in by stairs for fire escape.

¹ L. Phillips, personal communication November 18, 2025.

set of paired one over one windows on floors one through four with a set of single one over one windows in the basement. One of these single windows in the V notch on the north side in the basement is the only visible wood window.

The exterior doors are all modern solid metal doors. The entrance to the building is composed of brick with a gable roof, classical sheet metal cornice, entablature, and architrave with brick columns that have a pair of sheet metal consoles on the sides and seven steps for stairs. The interior floor of the entrance is now covered in modern tile. Above the entrance door there is a wooden split transom and there are sidelights on either side of the door, currently covered over. There is a four-story fire escape on the north elevation with a ladder on the 4th floor to the roof and stairs which lead down to the 2nd floor to the alley. The 1st floor has a separate fire escape exit to the alley.

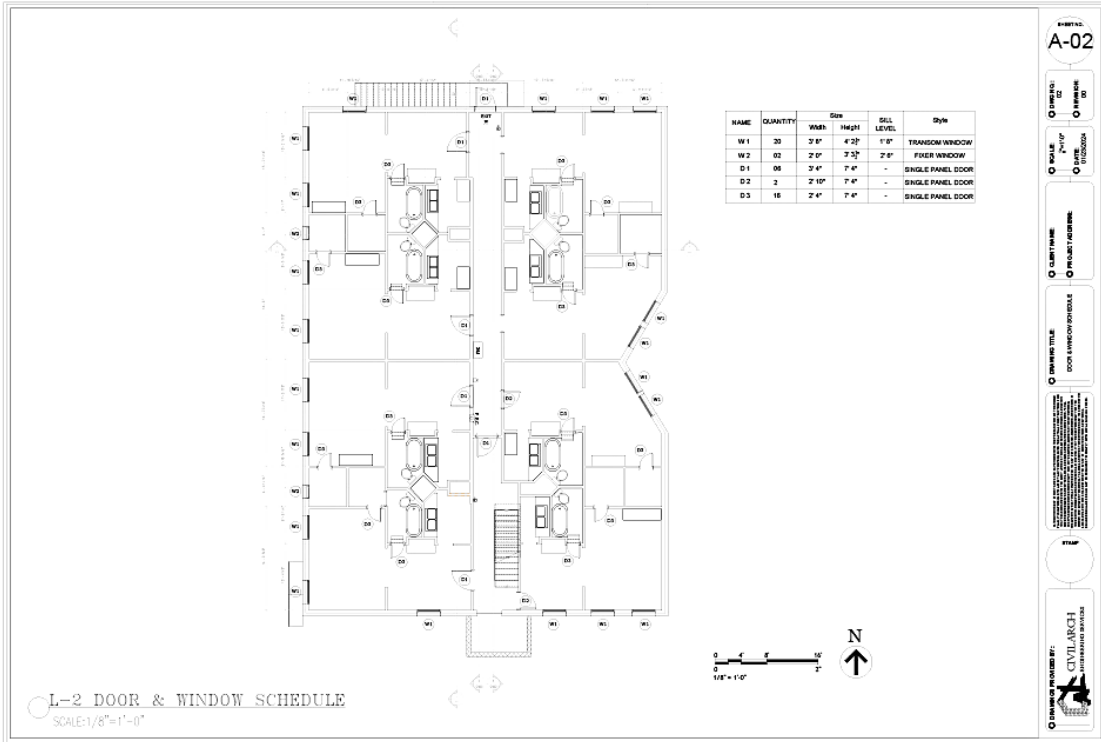


Entrance on Wall Street.



Detail of sheet metal consoles on the entrance.

There are 36 apartments in the building which vary from 530 to 580 square feet.² There are eight apartments on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Floors, while the basement has only four apartments. In the basement, the apartments are only on the west side (Wall Street), and the boiler room, storage and other utility rooms are on the east side. The east side rooms have been heavily remodeled. Each apartment has the same design which shares a common wall, so they are a mirror of the other apartment in layout. The exception is the manager’s office/apartment on the 1st floor which was heavily remodeled in c. 2023 so it does not resemble the adjoining apartment.



Drawing of current apartment rooms/layout on the 2nd floor in 2024.

² L. Phillips, personal communication November 18, 2025.

All apartments have cove ceilings with walls in metal lath and plaster, wood baseboards, and rooms are accentuated in places with chair railings. Door openings all have classical treatments with a simple entablature and wood surrounds.



View of 2nd floor apartment looking east in dining room toward hallway.

In each apartment the first room from the hallway is the dining room with a built-in piece of furniture separating the kitchen from the bathroom. This furniture is part of an original disappearing bed sideboard with cupboards, which have glass doors, that originally had a bed below the sideboard portion which was removed years ago. As the building is undergoing renovations currently, the kitchens do not have any original cupboards or appliances as they were replaced/removed decades ago. The kitchen is accessed via an opening where a door had been at floor level with an original dumbwaiter door of various sizes (2 panel or 3 panels) inside. Some kitchens have two dumbwaiter doors. Unlike the kitchen, the bathroom is up three steps (approximately 2 feet) and is accessed via an original three-panel wood/glass door. The bathroom floor is above the height of the no longer extant disappearing bed. The bathrooms have retained their original cast iron claw foot tubs, but everything else in the bathroom has been removed in the



View of kitchen, bathroom and original built-in sideboard with cupboard.

remodel. The original sinks and toilets were replaced years ago when the apartments were updated. There are small built-in shelves, like a medicine cabinet in each bathroom. There is a very small original wooden five panel door between the bathroom and the 13-foot-long closet in the living room. Within the dining room some apartments have a beadboard closet, which most likely contains the five-panel door which used to be for the kitchen.

The living room is accessed from the dining room via a large open classical entrance with simple wood boards as pilasters and an entablature. The floor is at normal height, but the 13-foot-long closet at either the north or south end of the living room where each unit is adjoining has a raised floor to accommodate the location of the disappearing bed that was in the living room. This closet is accessed via three steps (approximately 2 feet above the floor) through an original wood five-panel door. When the Briggs Apartments were built, they advertised a closet where clothes can be “aired out” and that still exists today in the apartments on the Wall Street side. These apartments have a much smaller anodized metal one over one windows to allow for air circulation in the closet space.³ Some apartments on the 1st and 2nd Floors have original built in cupboards with shelves in them.

There are between one and two anodized aluminum one over one windows in the living room depending on each individual unit. Each living and dining room has c. 1975 electrical heaters which replaced the original steam radiators years ago. All light fixtures in the apartments are new replacements.



Bathroom showing original tub at right and built in shelves at left.



Door to raised closet in living room.

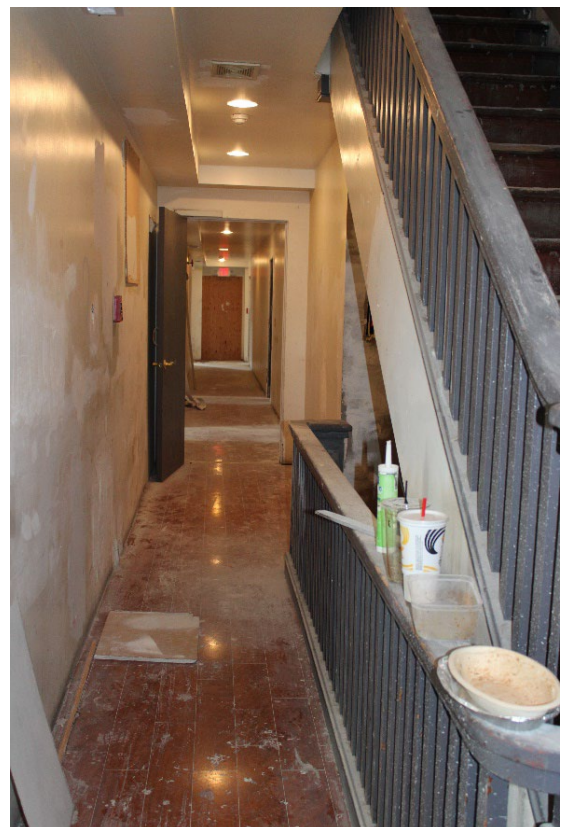
³ “Briggs’ Apartment House to Be Built at Third and Wall”, *The Spokesman-Review*, July 11, 1909, 25.



2nd floor apartment looking west at windows in living room.

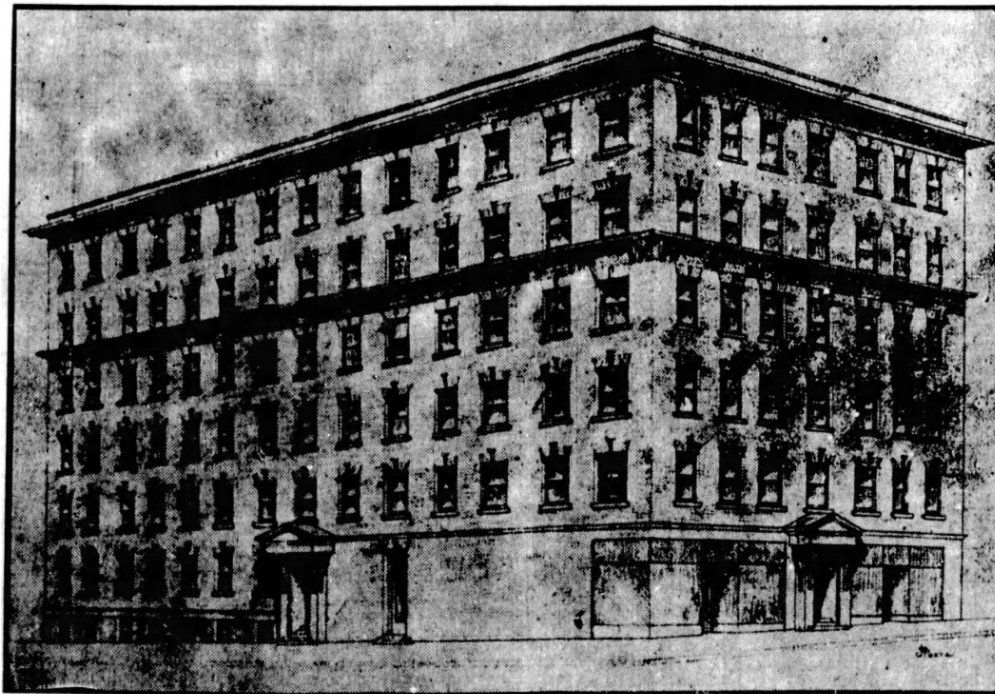
The Briggs Apartment building has retained its original simple wood staircase, with square balusters, which extend from the basement to the roof of the building. As of November 18, 2025, the flooring within the hallways still had layer upon layers of modern vinyl flooring on floors 2, 3 and 4. The 1st floor has half modern vinyl flooring on the north side with tile on the south side near the entrance and manager's office. The hallways have new sheetrock, recessed can lighting and a fire wall midway between each floor with a metal door. The basement still has asbestos-tile on the floor.

The boiler room is on the northeast corner and is accessed via an original metal sliding fire door. The room is very deep with a wooden platform and stairs to the bottom. The building in this portion has a large cobblestone foundation below the brick walls with visible large posts and beams. There is also an original metal sliding fire door on the ground floor of the boiler room. This door is for an accessway which goes the length of the building underneath the hallway above. It still has its mining rails in place where coal was brought down from the 3rd Avenue side of the building to the boiler room.



Hallway on 2nd floor looking north with staircase at right.

Briggs' Apartment House to Be Built at Third and Wall



Briggs Apartment House to be Built at Third and Wall.

Conceptual drawing of what the apartments would look like when fully built out (Spokesman Review, July 11, 1909)

ORIGINAL APPEARANCE, SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS

An article in *The Spokesman-Review* from 1909 stated that the Briggs Apartments would cost \$125,000 and would be the largest apartment building in Spokane when built. It would be 57 ½ feet by 142 feet and six stories tall. It would have two entrances – one on Wall Street and the other on 3rd Avenue. There would be a full basement with two storerooms 25 feet by 60 feet and 90 suites above with three and four rooms each. It would be heated by steam heat. The exterior would be “buff pressed brick with trimmings of artificial stone” with tiled entrances.⁴ The interior colors would be light blue tinted walls and ceilings with white wainscoting. Floors would be white maple while finishing in the individual apartments would be slashed grain fir that was stained light oak. The kitchens and baths would be painted delft blue and white enamel. Kitchens were to have a seven-burner gas range and built in cupboards. Both the kitchen and bathrooms would be lit by a light well. A dumb waiter would be in each kitchen where tenants could bring up items from the storage rooms in the basement. Each room would have a 13-foot-long closet with an outside ventilator that would “provide through airing for wearing apparel suspended in the closets and for the bed clothing of the wall beds”.⁵ There would be an in-house telephone system that would connect with the janitor’s room. Finally in each apartment dining room there was to be a built-in buffet. The Briggs Apartments were

⁴ “Briggs’ Apartment House to Be Built”, 25.

⁵ “Briggs’ Apartment House to Be Built”, 25.

built with safety in mind with 18-26-inch-thick walls with metal lath, instead of wood, and waterproof deadening paper between floors. The columns and girders within the building would be made of heavy iron or wood. The boiler room would be sunken while enclosed in brick and cement walls. The building would be built in sections with the first section being 57 ½ feet x 81 feet and four stories in height. This first section would only have 36 rooms and cost about \$45,000.⁶



Briggs Apartment in 1914 (Spokane Chronicle November 9, 1914, page 1).

⁶ "Briggs' Apartment House to Be Built", 25.



Briggs Apartments in 1972 (Sheridan, 1972).

The Briggs Apartments had retained all of its exterior design and appearance until the 1980s when the new owner, Associated Apartments, had to make code adjustments.⁷ In 1980 the fire escape was redone with a new staircase to grade from the 2nd floor. A new



Briggs Apartments in c. 1990. (Spokane Assessor Record)

stair for the 1st floor to the alley was added. Also, during this time two 1st floor, one 2nd floor, and two basement windows on the north elevation were bricked in with concrete blocks. However, these wood windows are still extant having been sealed up behind the concrete blocks.⁸ In 1981 a cinder block elevator shaft was installed on the south elevation.⁹ This elevator modified the openings for

⁷ Bernice Strouf. 1980. *Warranty Deed for Lot 6, Block 33, Railroad Addition to Spokane Falls now Spokane, Washington*. Deed Book 895, page 1122. Spokane: Spokane County.

⁸ L. Phillips, personal communication November 18, 2025.

⁹ City of Spokane Building Permit, S. 225 Wall Street, June 26, 1981.

the existing door/window arrangement for the elevator doors for each floor. During this time the exterior of the Briggs Apartment was painted white with gray detailing in the window openings, header, and sill covering over its natural buff brick color. By c. 1996, the tar paper roof was replaced with a geo-membrane roof and the large skylight over the staircase was removed and the light wells for the kitchens and bathrooms closed off. In c. 2000, 92 of the original wood windows were replaced with anodized aluminum windows, but they have retained the same fenestration and design of originals.

The interior has experienced more changes than the exterior. Those changes have occurred in the hallways and rooms. When viewing the historic interior photograph in the *Spokesman Review* from 1909 it appears that the current apartments do not match any of the original arrangements show in the article. The current entrance of apartment doors is different and access to the bathroom and kitchens on either side of the sideboard is not what was shown in 1909. Although, this photograph could have been of just one different apartment. The listings of the Briggs Apartments in 1945 and 1959 show that there were two apartments which may have been half the size with the numbers 12 ½ and 22 ½ for their apartment numbers.¹⁰



Briggs Apartment interior in 1909 showing the living room with its disappearing bed in sideboard (Spokesman Review December 26, 1909, page 26).



View of 2nd floor apartment looking east in dining room toward hallway. Digital photograph by LeeRoy Phillips on January 20, 2025.

¹⁰ R.L. Polk & Co., Inc. 1949. *Spokane City Directory*. Los Angeles, California, R.L. Polk & Co., Inc., 1237-1238; Polk, 1959, 392.



Briggs Apartments room No. 403 living room showing disappearing bed on right intact with dining room, kitchen and bathroom at left. Digital photograph by Ian McKibben July 29, 2024.



Briggs Apartments room No. 403 looking from dining room to living room. View shows disappearing beds furniture fixtures (sideboard in dining room & living room). Digital photograph by Ian McKibben July 29, 2024.

Based on the current cove ceilings there was a remodel of the apartments with the past 90 years as the original coffered ceilings are no longer there. Originally the kitchens and bathrooms were lit by light wells until c. 1980.¹¹ By the c. 1980s, the disappearing beds in the apartments between the bathroom and kitchen were removed and partially covered over, but the built-in sideboard with cupboard above was retained. There is one apartment which lost its built-in sideboard with cupboard completely and it was replaced with beadboard shelving. Also, during this time, the original front door was replaced with a solid metal door, along with the fire escape doors and all of the interior apartment doors. A metal fire door was also added in each hallway. The maple has been covered over with tile or vinyl flooring multiple times flooring over the past 40 years has been covered over with tile or vinyl flooring multiple times. In c. 1950, asbestos tile was added to the basement for further fireproofing. In c. 2023, more remodeling occurred on the interior for the manger's apartment/office, hallways, stairwell to the roof (which was closed off) and one of the storage rooms in the basement that was partially remodeled into an apartment but unfinished. In 2024, the remaining writing desks with disappearing beds in the living rooms were removed and the openings were covered over, although the sideboards with cupboards were retained.



Detail of a disappearing bed in a living room showing bedframe. Digital photograph by LeeRoy Philips October 15, 2024.



Living room where the disappearing bed was located (see missing baseboard). Digital photograph by Megan Duvall November 18, 2025.

¹¹ F. Dale Taylor, Letter to Inland Reality Company, July 18, 1980. City of Spokane Building Permits. The Sanborn maps only show two light wells on the east so it's unknown if they could light all sides of the building or if only two were built and the rest of the kitchens and bathrooms were lit by electricity instead.

CURRENT APPEARANCE & CONDITION

In 2024, the Briggs Apartments were sold to the current owner, M5x2. Today the building is in good to excellent condition. The new owner has spent much time cleaning up the apartments of prior tenant's personal items after the City of Spokane forced closure of the building for safety concerns in 2023.¹² The new owner is trying to retain as much of the original components in the interior as possible, such as the original staircase, while renovating the building to bring it up to code. Portions of the interior, such as the hallways, which were left unfinished by the prior owners are being completed. Apartments have been repainted, including the built-in fixtures. New heating equipment will be installed in the boiler room as the current modern system is not functioning. New reproduction, historically appropriate five panel fire resistant doors will be installed in each apartment's entrance along with new appliances in the kitchen and bathroom. Extant sideboards will have their missing drawers or glass in cupboard doors replaced in kind. Most of the flooring, which is covered in layers of vinyl plank, will be restored if possible or covered over with modern materials, except for the asbestos tile in the basement which will remain (and be encapsulated). There are a few broken bricks in the cornice which will be replaced.¹³ Many of the basement and other windows are covered with chipboard for protection due to being broken. The glass will be fixed when the building interior is done.

¹² Nathan Hyun, "Back in the same situation – Former Wall Street Apartments tenant continues housing search after sudden closure", <https://www.krem.com/article/news/local/wall-street-apartment-closed-spokane-tenants-housing/293-be32b396-1eba-4e5b-b96b-8b2f4e1cc40b>. Accessed on January 26, 2026.

¹³ L. Phillips, personal communication November 18, 2025.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Briggs Apartments meets the Spokane Register Category A & C. It is eligible under Category A for its association with the need for housing and the building boom for apartments in the Central Business District of Spokane from 1900-1910. Spokane experienced its greatest period of growth during this time with a tremendous need for housing the massive number of new residents of the city, including a single person, couples, and families.¹⁴

The Briggs Apartments meets Category C for its design by J.C. Poetz and its unfinished state, which tells the story of the apartment boom in Spokane. Exterior details show how it was to be a much bigger building from the start. These details are located above the cornice on the west, north and at the top of the east and south elevations, along with the keys in the south elevation and the simple side entrance on Wall Street. The Briggs Apartments was the first building in Spokane with a smokeless furnace and disappearing beds. While the current building does not have a majority of its original wood windows. The Single Room Occupancy (SRO) National Register nomination states that wood window replacement, if they are replaced with metal in the same design, does not impact the historic integrity of a building, and that is what has happened to the Briggs Apartments.

The Briggs Apartments building has retained its location, design, setting, association, feeling and still retains a majority of its materials and workmanship on the exterior and portions of the interior, such as the stairs in the hallway, along with sideboards and original wood doors in the apartment interiors that are extant.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

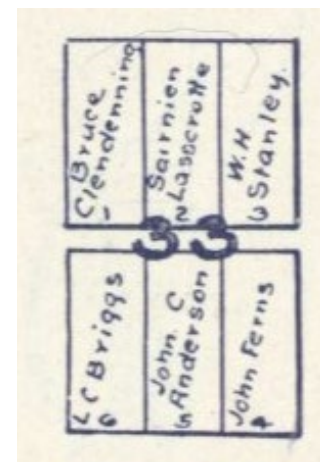
The Briggs Apartments are located within Spokane's Central Business District (CBD). The CBD was rebuilt after the disastrous fire of August 4, 1889, with more fire-proof buildings, with over 500 alone in 1890. This pace slowed down with the financial panic of 1893. The re-building and expansion of the city languished for the next several years, until 1900 when an enormous immigration boom started. Each year during the next decade more and more buildings were built in the CBD. For example, there were 675 building permits in 1900, and by 1908, there were almost 3,000 permits issued for construction in Spokane. From 1900-1910, Spokane's population increased from 36,848 to 104,402 with a large percentage being single men (Holstine, 1993, E 4). Spokane, as the largest city in Eastern Washington, was the hub of the Inland Empire and was affected enormously by this immigration boom. As stated in the SRO National Register Nomination, "Spokane was affected because:

¹⁴ Craig Holstine, 1993, Single Room Occupancy Hotels in the Central Business District of Spokane, Washington, 1900-1910. National Register of Historic Places Nomination. Spokane City/County Office of Historic Preservation, E 14 & F 19.

1. [P]roximity to industries in rapid expansion, such as mining, lumbering, and agriculture
2. [P]roximity to extensive tracts of unsettled lands suitable for homesteading
3. [D]evelopment of manufacturing, brokering, and commercial activities within the city
4. [T]he number of rail lines, both local and transcontinental, serving the city facilitated movement of freight and passengers in and out of the area.”¹⁵

The first wave of buildings to address these new immigrants were boarding houses, lodging houses, hotels and single room occupant apartments. Between 1907-1910, construction soared in Spokane with a plethora of multi-story single room and multiple-unit facilities appearing on virtually every block of the CBD. SRO hotels were typically clad in red or buff bricks with sparse architectural detailing and double hung wood sash windows for the rooms.¹⁶ In the later 1900s, more apartment buildings were being built in the CBD with more privacy for the growing working class. In 1909, there were 25 “flats” under construction in Spokane and at least two “family hotels” being built in the CBD, some of which were single room apartments “with running water and closets in every room”.¹⁷ The Briggs Apartments were one of those new multi-room apartments and even called the “Fine Flats on Third”.¹⁸ By 1910, there were 97 apartments listed in R.L. Polk’s Spokane City Directory, which was a dramatic increase from only 19 listed in 1905.¹⁹

Prior to the Briggs Apartments, Block 33, Lot 6, was from a Spokane Sheriff Sale on May 7, 1896 by Hugh M. Stanfield.²⁰ On December 7, 1897, this lot was sold again by Hugh M. & Hannah S. Stanfield to William C. Rogers.²¹ Rogers kept the lot for a few more years, but sold it back to Hannah S. Stanfield and Geroge Diefenthaler on March 2, 1900.²² Then, on March 19, 1906, Leontine Briggs bought this lot from Diefenthaler and then purchased the quick claim deed Hannah S. Stanfield had in it on May 20, 1906.²³ In 1909 Leontine’s husband Robert announced



1908 Union Trust Company Map showing Block 33

¹⁵ Holstine, E 5.

¹⁶ Holstine, F 17.

¹⁷ Holstine, E 5 & E 15.

¹⁸ “Fine Flats on Third”, *The Spokesman-Review*, June 6, 1909, 10.

¹⁹ Holstine, E 11 & E 15.

²⁰ Spokane County Sherrif. 1896. *Contract for Sale for Lot 6, Block 33, Railroad Addition to Spokane Falls now Spokane, Washington*. Deed Book 67 page 245. Spokane: Spokane County.

²¹ H.M. Standfield. 1897. *Warranty Deed No. 18698 for Lot 6, Block 33, Railroad Addition to Spokane Falls now Spokane, Washington*. Deed Book 86 page 298. Spokane: Spokane County.

²² William C. Rogers. 1900. *Contract for Sale for Lot 6, Block 33, Railroad Addition to Spokane Falls now Spokane, Washington*. Deed Book 104 page 263. Spokane: Spokane County.

²³ George T. Diefenthaler. 1906. *Warranty Deed No. 139227 for Lot 6, Block 33, Railroad Addition*. Deed Book 166 page 463. Spokane: Spokane County; Hannah S. Standfield. 1906. *Quick Claim Deed No. 139356 for Lot 6, Block 33, Railroad Addition to Spokane Falls now Spokane, Washington*. Deed Book 166 page 473. Spokane: Spokane County.

he was going to build the Briggs Apartments. Robert Briggs hired J.C. Poetz in the spring of 1909 to design a large apartment building to be built in phases on this lot. The first phase of the building would cost \$45,000, with the additional phases costing another \$80,000. Through the Fred B. Grinnell Company Leontine secured financing of \$45,000 at 6 percent interest for five years from Fidelity Mutual Life Insurance Company.²⁴ It was to have 36 three and four-room apartments with buffet kitchens and wall beds, hardwood floors (maple or oak) and finished with fir.²⁵



Briggs Apartment in 1909 (Spokesman Review, December 14, 1913).

Construction of the Briggs Apartments began in the summer of 1909. Originally it was forecasted to be completed by October 1, 1909, but construction took longer.²⁶ The date of opening was to be in January 1910, but apartment rental was advertised as early as

²⁴ "Six Per Cent Loan on Third, *The Spokesman-Review*, August 29, 1909, 16.

²⁵ "It's to Adorn Third Avenue", *Spokane Chronicle*, June 4, 1909, 1; "Fine Flats", 10.

²⁶ "Briggs' Apartment House to Be Built", 25.

December 17, 1909.²⁷ The apartments were advertised as a “3-room suite with all the advantages of five rooms; 2 disappearing beds, not wall beds, built-in sideboard and writing desk, gas range, vacuum cleaning service, dumb waiter service, hardwood floors, steam heat, hot and cold water and other modern features”.²⁸ Apartments cost \$25 per month.²⁹ In 1914, the income from the 36 apartments totaled “about \$15,000 per year rent”.³⁰ While not mentioned in this rental advertisement, the Briggs Apartments were heated by a Herbert smokeless boiler. This boiler, the first of its kind in Spokane, was invented by M.E. Herbert of the Herbert Boiler Company of Chicago, Illinois.³¹

The first manager of the Briggs Apartments was Clarence Robert Briggs, the son of Robert and Leontine. Clarence was a teacher and the head of the department of history and economics at South Central High School in Spokane. He had taught for four years when he resigned his position on January 10, 1910, to assume his new role as full time manager of the Briggs Apartments. He also became the Inland Empire agent for the Holmes disappearing bed company which started making beds in Spokane. Up until this time, these beds were made in Seattle or Los Angeles, so now Clarence was in charge of 10 men making these beds in Spokane which were installed in the Briggs Apartments, and also F.B. Simonton’s new building at 3rd and Adams Street.³² When the Briggs Apartments were sold to a new owner in the summer of 1910, Clarence and his parents moved to Seattle.³³



The Evening Chronicle May 30, 1910, page 23.

²⁷ “Notices – Bankruptcy” *Spokane Chronicle*, December 17, 1909, 34.

²⁸ “For Rent – Apartments”, *The Spokesman-Review*, December 29, 1909, 15.

²⁹ “To Rent – Apartments and Flats – Continued”, *Spokane Chronicle*, April 23, 1910, 22.

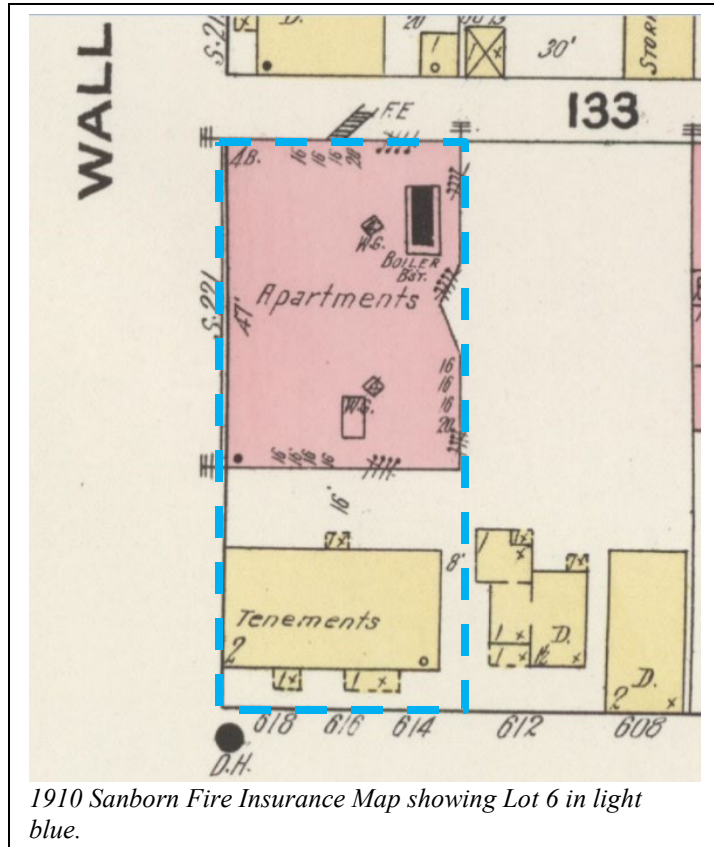
³⁰ “\$165,000 Takes Briggs Apartments”, *The Spokesman-Review*, March 14, 1914, 13.

³¹ “Eats Smoke, Burns Ashes”, *The Spokesman-Review*, November 27, 1909, 8; “Herbert Believes in Future Spokane”, *The Spokesman-Review*, November 24, 1909, 3; “Burns the Smoke Quick Steamer Fuel Saver”, *Spokane Chronicle*, December 7, 1909.

³² “History Instructor Resigns”, *The Spokesman-Review*, January 11, 1910, 8; “Disappearing Bed Is Being Made Now in One Spokane Shop”, *Spokane Chronicle*, May 30, 1910, 23.

³³ “Moved to Reno County”, *The Hutchinson News*, April 4, 1916.

On July 21, 1910 the Briggs Apartments were sold to Samuel L. Thomas for \$154,000.³⁴ Although the deal was not solely in cash, as only \$35,000 of it was, while the remaining was 2,640 acres of land in Michigan Prairie near Hatton.³⁵ Selling CBD buildings for land within the Inland Empire instead of for cash was a common occurrence during this time in Spokane.³⁶ Thomas was a farmer who was buying and selling land as early as 1900 in Ritzville, and by 1903, had a farm near Hatton.³⁷ Thomas also assumed the \$35,000 mortgage from the Briggs, that in 1909 was a five-year building loan at 6 percent from the Fidelity Mutual Life Insurance Company.³⁸ This property also came with a two-story frame building on Lot 6 (the northeast corner of Wall and 3rd Avenue), but it was not the planned brick addition to the south or the additional floors above the existing building per the original plan. It was a wooden two-story tenement with nine apartments on the corner of 3rd and South Wall Street which was there when the Briggs Apartments were being built.³⁹ In 1898, it was owned by the Prescott Brothers.⁴⁰ Its name then is unclear, but after the Briggs Apartments were built it became known as the Briggs Annex Apartments.⁴¹ This wooden tenement would stay until 1933 when it was demolished and by 1940 there was a used car lot in its



1910 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing Lot 6 in light blue.

³⁴ Leontine Briggs. 1910. *Warranty Deed No. 289184 for Lot 6, Block 33, Railroad Addition to Spokane Falls now Spokane, Washington*. Deed Book 264 page 600. Spokane: Spokane County.

³⁵ "Quarter Million Deal is Closed", *The Spokesman-Review*, July 17, 1910, 9.

³⁶ Craig Holstine, 1993, *Single Room Occupancy Hotels in the Central Business District of Spokane, Washington, 1900-1910*. National Register of Historic Places Nomination. Spokane City/County Office of Historic Preservation, E 14.

³⁷ "Ritzville Notes", *The Spokesman-Review*, May 20, 1900, 15; "Settled by Best Kind Of People", *The Spokesman-Review*, November 22, 1903, 9.

³⁸ Leontine Briggs; "Six Per Cent Loan on Third", *The Spokesman-Review*, August 28, 1909, 16.

³⁹ "Quarter Million", 9; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company. 1910, 300. *Spokane Washington*. (Accessed on October 19, 2025) <https://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps/>; "Briggs' Apartment House to Be Built", 25.

⁴⁰ City of Spokane, South 225 Wall Street - Side Sewer Permit, April 22, 1898.

⁴¹ Polk, 1929, 1035. From 1918-1922 the Briggs Annex Apartments are advertised for rent in the *Spokesman-Review*. In 1933 there is no listing of the Briggs Annex Apartments at that location.

place with an office/garage on the east side.⁴²



View North Along Center of Wall Street, 1940. Note used car lot where tenement was on corner of 3rd Ave and S. Wall Street south of Briggs Apartments Libby Photography Studio, Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture. Photo #L87-1.17667-40.

On Saturday December 13, 1913, Thomas sold the Briggs Apartments to J.W. Greene for \$125,000.⁴³ Greene sold the apartments on November 9, 1914, to Guaranty Loan & Investment Company for \$150,000.⁴⁴ Guaranty Loan & Investment Company sold the apartments to James Strouf on April 6, 1917 and Farmers & Mechanics Bank sells their interest on April 14, 1917.⁴⁵ James Strouf was a farmer and orchardist in Stratford.⁴⁶ It appears that James and Pauline Strouf at times lived in the Briggs Apartments, such as

⁴² "Gets Elsbree Apartments", *The Spokesman-Review*, March 6, 1932, 23; "View North Along Center of Wall Street, 1940". Photograph No. L87-1.17667-40 from the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, Spokane, Washington.

⁴³ "Briggs Apartment House Sold for \$125,000", *The Spokesman-Review*, December 14, 1913, 5.

⁴⁴ "Briggs Apartments Sold For \$150,000", *Spokane Chronicle*, November 9, 1914, 18.

⁴⁵ Guaranty Loan & Investment Company. 1917. *Warranty Deed for Lot 6, Block 33, Railroad Addition to Spokane, Washington*. Deed Book 353 page 66. Spokane: Spokane County; Farmers & Mechanics Bank. 1917. *Quick Claim Deed for Lot 6, Block 33, Railroad Addition to Spokane Falls now Spokane*. Deed Book 351 page 108. Spokane: Spokane County.

⁴⁶ "James Strouf Buys 330 Acres, 1916, *The Spokesman-Review*, May 14, 1916, 43"; "Own Cost \$365; W.W.P. Levy \$700", *The Spokesman-Review*, May 24, 1933, 10.

when their son died in 1919, but their primary residence was Stratford.⁴⁷ In the 1930s James Strouf was operating the 500 Stratford Orchard Company in Stratford.⁴⁸ James and Pauline Strouf owned the Briggs Apartments for 20 years and then transferred ownership to their daughter, Bernice, on January 6, 1937.⁴⁹ In 1930, James Strouf turned over management of the apartments to Rogers & Rogers which continued over the decades.⁵⁰ Bernice Strouf, unlike her parents, as the owner never lives there. Rogers & Rogers continues management of the property into the 1960s.⁵¹ Bernice owns the Briggs Apartments for over 43 years until finally selling it in 1980 to Associated Apartments, Michael McDowell and Christopher Sawyer.⁵²

The first few years of the Briggs Apartments the owner or owner's son (Clarence Briggs) were the caretaker and manager. But starting in 1914 the subsequent owners did not live permanently in the apartments. In 1930, Rogers & Rogers take over the management of the Briggs Apartments for James Strouf.⁵³ With this change managers are listed in Spokane City Directories and many live in apartment Number 9. Managers were Mrs. Janet Nehring (1930), Merlyn S. Fort (1931-1932; 1934-1943), Mrs. Vina J. Sandberg (1945-1946), Josiah W. True (1947-1953), Harry O. Wagner (1954), and Austin H. Lockhart (1955-1961) during the Briggs Apartments period of significance.⁵⁴ As with any apartment, there were residents who stayed for long periods of time and those who were in and out within a few months or year. In the Spokane Polk Directories, of 1936, 1945, and 1959 there is a list of the tenants at the Briggs Apartments. In 1950, the U.S. Census recorded those who were living at 225 South Wall, and we get a glimpse in the tenants, ethnicity, and occupation. Forty years after the Briggs Apartments were built, they were still housing people from not just Washington State, but all across the United States such as Iowa, Kansas, Wyoming, Nebraska, California, Indiana, Idaho, Wisconsin, North Dakota, Missouri, Minnesota, Illinois, and Montana. There were also people who were from abroad, like Norway. The jobs of those living at the Briggs Apartments were varied and included painters, hotel clerk, dressmaker, bookkeeper, waitress, long distance phone operator, candy maker, saleswoman, estimator, presser, secretary, mail order clerk, and auto mechanic.⁵⁵ Since the Briggs Apartments were in the CBD many of those who lived there did so because of the proximity to their job. Such

⁴⁷ "James Strouf Buys", 43; "Own Cost", 10; "Deaths - Strouf", *The Spokesman-Review*, March 6, 1919, 7.

⁴⁸ "Own Cost", 10.

⁴⁹ James & Pauline Strouf. 1937. *Quick Claim Deed for Lot 6, Block 33, Railroad Addition to Spokane Falls (now Spokane), Washington*. Deed Book 472 page 35. Spokane: Spokane County.

⁵⁰ "Gets Elsbree", 23.

⁵¹ City of Spokane Building Permit, Repair & replace front step South 225 Wall Street, April 11, 1969.

⁵² "Deaths - Mrs. Strouf", *The Spokesman-Review*, January 30, 1969, 7; Strouf, 1980, Deed Book 895, page 1122. City of Spokane, Building Division - repair & replace front step, April 11, 1969.

⁵³ "Apartments Well Filled", *The Spokesman-Review*, March 2, 1930, 7.

⁵⁴ Polk, 1930, 136; Polk, 1931, 86; Polk, 1932, 84; Polk, 1933, 84; Polk, 1934, 103; Polk, 1935, 106; Polk, 1936, 110; Polk, 1937, 115; Polk, 1938, 100; Polk, 1939, 96; Polk, 1940, 96; Polk, 1941, 97; Polk, 1942, 95; Polk, 1943, 96; Polk, 1945-1946, 114; Polk, 1947, 132; Polk, 1949, 136; Polk, 1950, 134; Polk, 1952-1953, 134; Polk, 1954, 114; Polk, 1955, 111; Polk, 1956, 97; Polk, 1957, 65; Polk, 1958, 87; Polk, 1959, 88; Polk, 1960, 94; Polk, 1961, 92.

⁵⁵ U.S. Department of Commerce - Bureau of the Census, "1950 Census of Population and Housing", E.D. No. 41-159, Briggs Apartments, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 7 & 8.

was the case of Ernest A. Sandberg and his wife Vina J. Sandberg. Mr. Sandberg was an auto mechanic at Buchanan Chevrolet which was directly across the street from the Briggs Apartments. The Sandbergs lived there from 1945-1949 and Vina was apartment manager for two years during their stay.⁵⁶ Some even had businesses within the Briggs, such as in 1959 the Walters sisters lived in different apartments (Number 25 & Number 36), but Martha Walters also rented apartment Number 5 for a beauty shop.⁵⁷

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Briggs Apartments is significant for its association (Category A) with the need for housing and the building boom for apartments in the CBD of Spokane from 1900-1910. Spokane experienced its greatest period of growth during this time from a population of 36,848 to 104,402, with a great need to house the massive number of new residents, including single persons, couples, and families. By 1909, there was a shift into larger multi-room apartments in Spokane, such as the Briggs Apartments, for families. Its unfinished architectural state also represents the drop off in growth and housing demand starting in 1911. The Briggs Apartments were planned for as a much larger building, but the additional floors were never built.⁵⁸

The Briggs Apartments meets Category C for its design by J.C. Poetz and its unfinished condition which tells the story of the apartment boom in Spokane (1900-1910) from the exterior details of how it was to be a much bigger building from the start. These details are located above the cornice on the west, north and at the top of the east and south elevations along with the keys in the south elevation and the simple side entrance on Wall Street. The Briggs Apartments was the first building in Spokane with a smokeless furnace and disappearing beds. While the current building does not have all of its original wood windows, the SRO National Register nomination states that wood window replacement, if they are replaced with metal in the same design, does not impact the historic integrity of a building. This is the case at the Briggs Apartments.

The Briggs Apartments building has retained its location, design, setting, association, feeling and still retains a majority of its materials and workmanship on the exterior and portions of the interior, such as the stairs in the hallway, along with sideboards and original wood doors in the apartment interiors that are still extant.

The Briggs Apartments period of significance would be from 1909-1960. This time period covers the years of its most importance to Spokane in its design, function and use for housing before and after the two world wars and when most of the major changes occurred to the interior, such as the remodel of the apartments coffered ceilings to cove ceilings (unknown date, however, likely prior to 1950) and removal of the smokeless boiler which would be by 1960 or before when it was worn out.

⁵⁶ Polk, 1945, 832; Polk, 1947, 938; Polk, 1949, 942.

⁵⁷ Polk, 1959, 392.

⁵⁸ Holstine, E 4, E 14-15 & F 19.

Architect: J.C. Poetz designed the Briggs Apartments in 1909.⁵⁹ Poetz was born in St. Paul, Minnesota on June 23, 1859, learned his trade in the construction of buildings in Minneapolis and St. Paul starting at 18 years old. In 1880, he began training under H. Sackville Trehern in Saint Paul, and then in 1884, he started his own architectural practice in Minneapolis. After 1886, he left Minnesota for Los Angeles, California. In 1888, Poetz moved to Spokane and formed a partnership with Kirtland Cutter where they designed multiple buildings in Spokane, such as the Exchange National Bank, Rookery Building, and the gold medal award winning Idaho Building at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. Poetz & Cutter were in partnership until 1894 when they split. Poetz continued to do solo work in architecture in residential and commercial buildings until the early 1920s and was also involved in a plumbing venture with a patent for an automatic faucet in 1902, and the McCaffrey Plumbing Company in the 1920s.⁶⁰ Some of the residences Poetz designed in partnership or on his own in Spokane were the J. M. Moore house, F. Lewis Clark house and the J.N. Glover Mansion.⁶¹ Beside the Briggs Apartments, Poetz also designed apple packing warehouses: C.W. Wilmeroth Fruit Warehouse (1914) in Wenatchee, North Pacific Fruit Distributors Warehouse (1914) in Olds Station and Cashmere Fruitgrowers Union Warehouse (1915) in Cashmere.⁶² In 1920, Poetz was architect for the Idaho Gold and Ruby Company in Lenia, Idaho where there was a large company town. Later Poetz returned to Spokane, where he lived at 2351 North Jefferson, and died on August 8, 1929, of secondary anemia brought on by a gastric ulcer, at Sacred Heart Hospital.⁶³

Owner/Builder: Research has not indicated who specifically built the Briggs Apartments. However, it was built for Robert Briggs (1839-1916) as he did not build it all on his own. Robert Briggs was a Civil War veteran. Briggs served in the Union Army in various battles from 1861-1865, including being taken prisoner twice: once when he was shot in the leg by Confederate forces in Lexington, Missouri in 1861, and at the Battle of Harpers Ferry in 1862. Both times Briggs was paroled and returned to battle throughout the war, as a scout in Kentucky, and eventually became a part of General Burnside's 23rd Army Corps that joined Sherman's march to Atlanta and the sea. By the end of the war, he was promoted to first lieutenant at Greensboro, North Carolina.⁶⁴ After the war was over, Briggs moved to Algona, Iowa. In 1876, he married Leontine C. Cotton and over the next few years they moved to various towns in Kansas: Hutchinson in 1877, and Partridge in 1883, where he was a farmer. Then in 1888, they moved to Aurora,

⁵⁹ "Briggs' Apartment House to Be Built", 25.

⁶⁰ "Bury Pioneer Architect", *The Spokesman-Review*, August 10, 1929, 6; Pacific Coast Architecture Database, John C. Poetz, Jr. (Architect) (Accessed on December 31, 2025) <https://pcad.lib.washington.edu/person/2232/>; "Representative Men – Spokane Falls – 1890, Biography Poetz, J.C." On file at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, Spokane, Washington; U.S. Patent Office. 1902. "Faucet Patent No. 697881", Washington, D.C.: U.S. Patent Office.

⁶¹ "Death Claims John C. Poetz", *Spokane Chronicle*, August 9, 1929, 13.

⁶² "Distributors Plan Building", *The Spokesman-Review*, June 25, 1914, 10; "Warehouse to Cost \$18,000", *The Spokesman-Review*, June 26, 1915, 8.

⁶³ "Death Claims", 13; Pacific Coast Architecture Database, John C. Poetz; M. Duvall, Personal Communication, January 14, 2026.

⁶⁴ "Spokane's War Veterans", *The Spokesman-Review*, September 30, 1911, 4.

Missouri, returning to Hutchinson in 1893. They had two sons, Clarence and Henry. In 1905, Robert and Leontine moved to Spokane to be closer to their son Clarence. After selling the Briggs Apartments, Briggs moved to Seattle in 1910 and was visiting family in Carthage, Missouri when he died of pneumonia in 1916.⁶⁵

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⁶⁵ “Moved to Reno County”, U.S. Census Bureau, 1880, “Inhabitants in Hutchinson, in the County of Reno, State of Kansas”, S.D. No. 2, E.D. No. 284, Briggs Apartments, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau.

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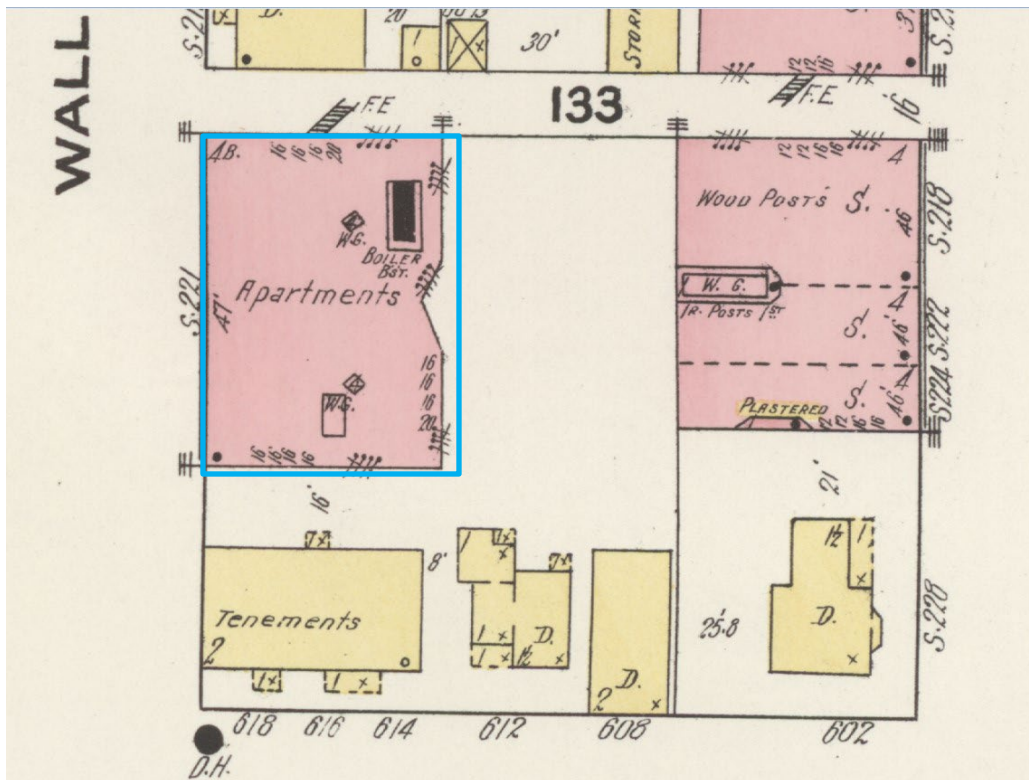
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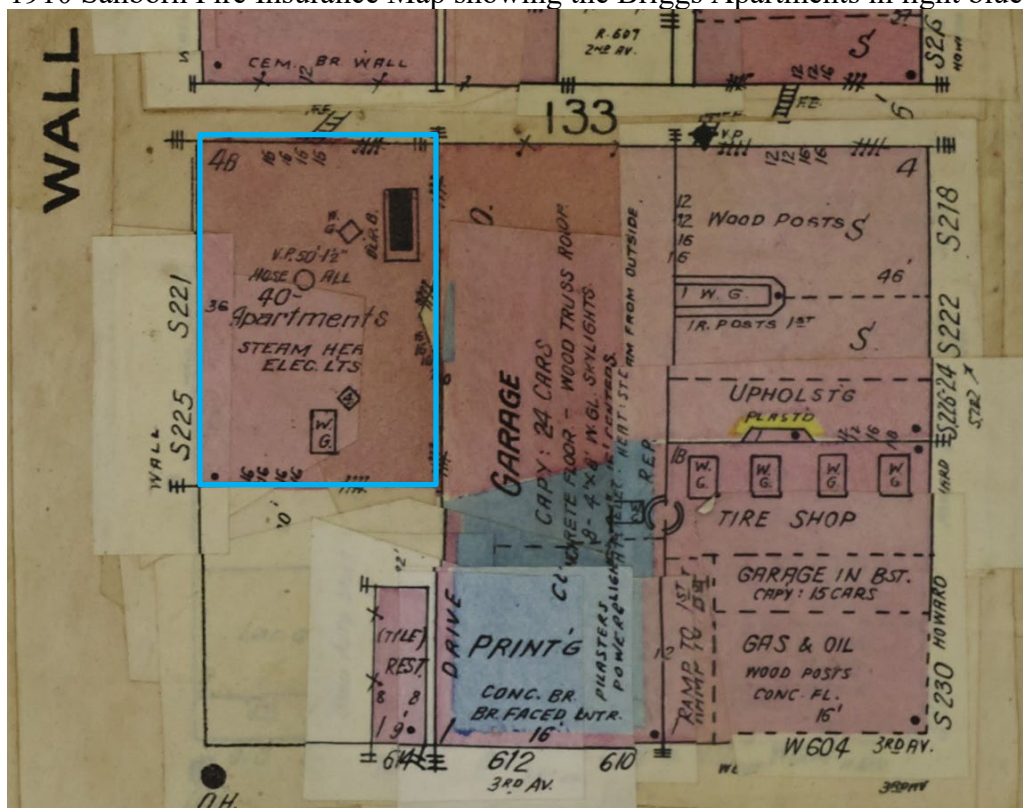
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"View North Along Center of Wall Street, 1940". Photograph No. L87-1.17667-40 from the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, Spokane, Washington.

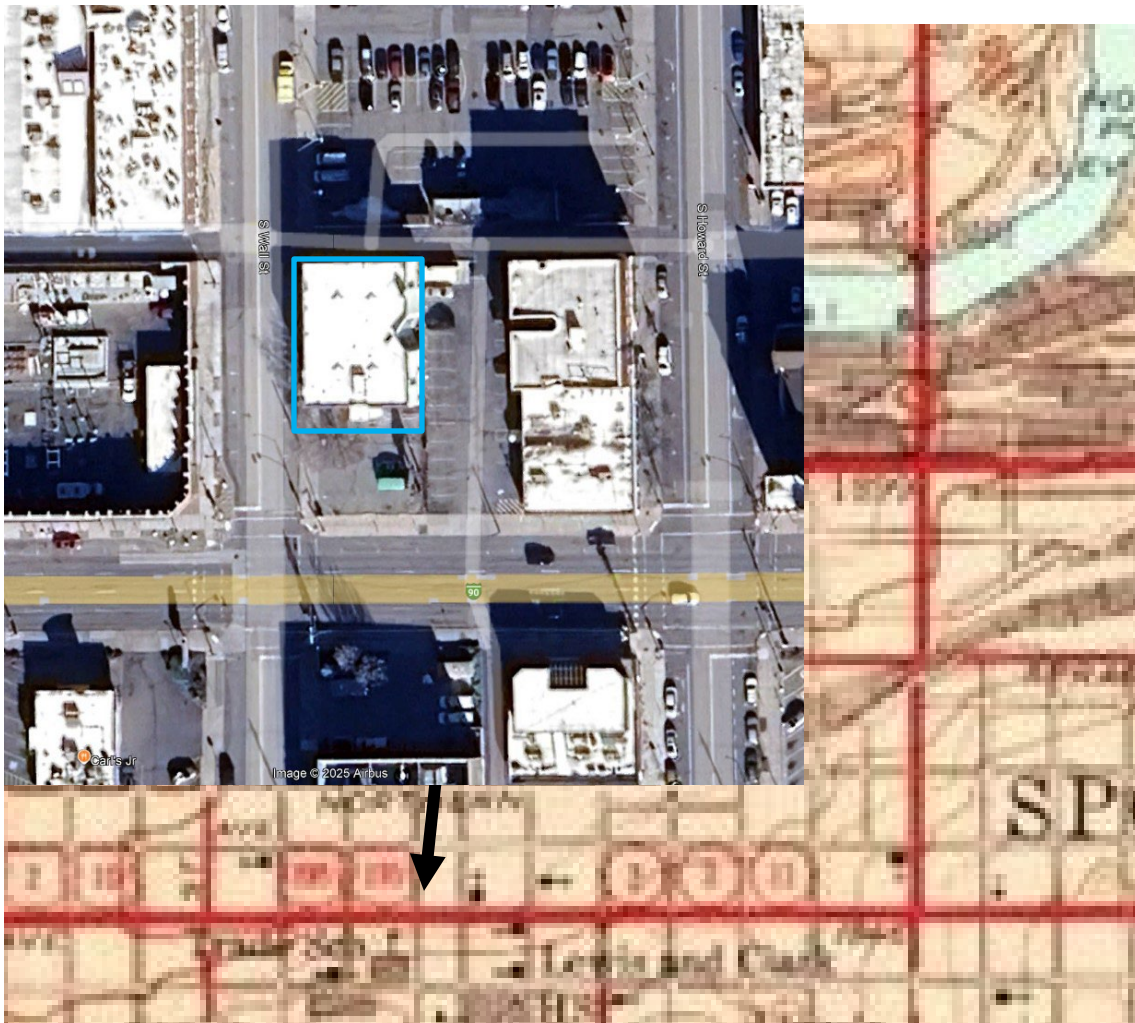
"Warehouse to Cost \$18,000", *The Spokesman-Review*, June 26, 1915.



1910 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the Briggs Apartments in light blue.



1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the Briggs Apartments in light blue.



Aerial View of 225 South Wall Street (in light blue rectangle) on March 5, 2025, from Google Earth showing location of Briggs Apartments on Spokane USGS Quadrangle Map.

All Briggs Apartments digital photographs taken by Kelsey Doncaster on November 18, 2025, unless noted.

1. Oblique view of west (front) and south elevations, looking northeast.
2. South elevation looking north.
3. Oblique view of south and east (rear) elevations, looking northwest.
4. Oblique view of north and east (rear) elevations, looking southwest.
5. Detail of V notch on east (rear) elevation.
6. North elevation looking south.
7. Oblique view of north and west (front) elevations, looking southeast.
8. Detail of entrance at 225 South Wall Street.
9. Detail of keys on south elevation on the west side.
10. Looking northeast at oblique view from 3rd Ave intersection.
11. Looking west at entrance from the interior. Digital photograph by LeeRoy Phillips on June 25, 2024.
12. Original stairs on 1st floor looking northeast and hallway. Digital photograph by LeeRoy Phillips on November 22, 2024.
13. View of 2nd floor apartment looking toward hallway. Digital photograph by LeeRoy Phillips on January 20, 2025.
14. View of another 2nd Floor apartment looking west. Digital photograph by LeeRoy Phillips on January 27, 2025.
15. View of kitchen, bathrooms and original built-in sideboard with cupboard. Digital photograph by LeeRoy Phillips on January 9, 2025.
16. Detail of apartments of dumbwaiter in kitchen.
17. View of bathroom. Digital photograph by LeeRoy Phillips on January 3, 2025.
18. View of living room looking south at location of former desk w/ disappearing bed at left and closet at right. Digital photograph by LeeRoy Phillips on January 9, 2025.
19. Detail of closet door in an apartment showing elevated floor and small door to bathroom in apartments.
20. Detail of built-in cupboard. Digital photograph by Megan Duvall November 18, 2025.



1. Oblique view of west (front) and south elevations, looking northeast.



2. South elevation looking north.



3. Oblique view of south and east (rear) elevations, looking northwest.



4. Oblique view of north and east (rear) elevations, looking southwest.



5. Detail of V notch on east (rear) elevation.



6. North elevation looking south.



7. Oblique view of north and west (front) elevations, looking southeast.



8. Detail of entrance at 225 South Wall Street.



9. Detail of keys on south elevation on the west side.



10. Looking northeast at oblique view.



Briggs Apartments in 1972. (Sheridan, 1972) .



11. Looking west at entrance from the interior. Digital photograph by LeeRoy Phillips on June 25, 2024.



12. Original stairs on 1st floor looking northeast and hallway. Digital photograph by LeeRoy Phillips on November 22, 2024.



13. View of 2nd floor apartment looking east in dining room toward hallway. Digital photograph by LeeRoy Phillips on January 20, 2025.



14. View of another 2nd floor apartment looking west. Digital photograph by LeeRoy Phillips on January 27, 2025.



15. View of kitchen, bathrooms and original built-in sideboard with cupboard. Digital photograph by LeeRoy Phillips on January 9, 2025.



16. Detail of apartments of dumbwaiter in kitchen.



17. View of bathroom showing original tub at right and built in shelves at left. Digital photograph by LeeRoy Phillips on January 3, 2025.



18. View of apartment living room looking south at location of former desk w/ disappearing bed at left and closet at right. Digital photograph by LeeRoy Phillips on January 9, 2025.



19. Detail of closet door in an apartment showing elevated floor and small door to bathroom.



20. Detail of built-in cupboard. Digital photograph by Megan Duvall November 18, 2025.