

Staff Report of Findings

Application for Design Review – Coeur d’Alene Park Restroom

Property Address: 2111 W 2nd Avenue, Coeur d’Alene Park, Browne’s Addition
Applicant: City of Spokane Parks Department
Hearing Date: 9/16/2026
Type of Work: New construction of a restroom facility

FINDINGS OF FACT:

- 1.) The Landmarks Commission has the authority to review this proposal for a Certificate of Appropriateness under SMC 17D.100.220 - Certificates of Appropriateness – Demolition of Historic Landmarks or Contributing Resources Within Spokane Register Historic Districts.
- 2.) The certificate of appropriateness review process helps to ensure that new construction that takes place within the Browne’s Addition Local Historic District is contemporary, but compatible with the character of the historic district. The review process is conducted by the Spokane Historic Landmarks Commission.
- 3.) New construction projects in Spokane Register Historic Districts are reviewed under the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, with additional guidance provided in the Browne’s Addition Local Historic District Design Standards and Guidelines. Staff recommendation is based on the Standards as listed below.
- 4.) This staff recommendation applies to the restroom facility in Coeur d’Alene Park only and does not imply approval of any other restroom facility in a historic district location. Future restroom facilities in local historic districts will require a separate Landmarks process.

PROPOSED WORK:

The project is for a new restroom facility within Coeur d’Alene Park (at the southwest corner of the park) – within the boundary of the Browne’s Addition Local Historic District under which authority this review takes place.

STAFF COMMENTARY/BACKGROUND:

The proposed “Coeur d’Alene Park Restroom” building was submitted for review in August of 2026. A workshop was held on Wednesday, August 19, 2026 at 3:00 pm to discuss the design of the new construction with the applicants and Spokane Historic Landmarks Commission. Public comment was accepted at that meeting from three members of the public. No written public comment had been received at the time this staff report was prepared. Any additional comments received before the scheduled hearing will be provided to the commission.

THE PROPERTY/LOCATION - NEW CONSTRUCTION

The site for the new restroom facility is in the southwest corner of Coeur d’Alene Park where there is currently no structure. The site is adjacent to modern play equipment (to be replaced with new play equipment), a splash pad, equipment shed, and a historic basalt restroom building. The new restroom is sited at 146’ 4” from Spruce Street and 122’ 7” from 4th Avenue. Surrounding structures adjacent to the park in this section of Browne’s Addition include **(A) the non-contributing** 1959 church structure to the west (314 S Spruce Street); **(B) a contributing** 1950 minimal traditional apartment building (2227 W 4th Avenue); **(C) a contributing** 1924 Dutch Colonial Revival house, now multi-family (2215 W 4th Avenue); **(D) non-contributing** townhouses constructed in 2007 (2205 -2213 W 4th Avenue); **(E) a non-contributing** 1969 apartment building (2121 W 4th Avenue); and **(F) a contributing** 1898 Colonial Revival residence, now multi-family (2109 W 4th Avenue). This new building will replace the historic basalt restroom which will remain in the park and may be adaptively reused for another purpose in the future.



The Browne's Addition Local Historic District was placed on the Spokane Register of Historic Places in 2019. The nomination for the district denotes the Period of Significance as beginning in 1881 and ending in 1950 and includes 303 resources (230 contributing and 73 non-contributing). Styles present in the district include Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Mission, Tudor Revival, Arts & Crafts, Dutch Colonial Revival, Minimal Traditional and Modern amongst others. Common materials include stone and concrete foundations with wood, stone, stucco or shingle siding.

Coeur d'Alene Park is an eleven-acre park comprised of four residential blocks and, according to original plat maps, measures 675 feet on its north and south sides, and 630 feet on its east and west sides. The park is located within the Browne's Addition Neighborhood and the Browne's Addition Local and National Historic Districts. It is also listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places under the [City of Spokane Parks and Boulevards \(1891-1974\) Multiple Property Document](#). The park's topography is relatively flat and surrounded by residential development (including single-family homes and multifamily apartment buildings), a church, and a few commercial enterprises in adaptively reused historic-period homes. Contributing resources include two stone urns (ca. 1893), one granite and one Tenino sandstone, that were featured in the Washington State art exhibit of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair; a reconstruction of the original band pavilion (ca. 1891, 2013), designed with original plans; and a restroom building (1948) and drinking fountain (1948), both constructed in the distinctive blind-mortared, native basalt rubble rock style common to City of Spokane parks.

CURRENT SITE CONDITIONS:

Today, the area of the park proposed for the new restroom includes play equipment, a splash pad, the historic basalt restroom, the 1989 brick dumpster enclosure, and one of the 1983 designed "entrances"

to the park on 4th Avenue. The area immediately surrounding the proposed restroom includes a three-part playground area. The first two parts are rectangular-shaped, woodchip-filled play areas surrounded by concrete curbing. The southern play area features modern play equipment such as swings, a slide, and a modular wood play structure with climbers, ladders, decks, rings, and a slide. The southern play area is linked to the northern play area by a concrete path. The northern area contains modern play equipment for younger children such as a teeter-totter, a rocking horse, swings, a wood and plastic climbing toy in the shape of a locomotive with two open cars, and wood activity panels. Located east of the southern play area is the third part of the playground area, a splash pad with water cannons, a tower shower, basic stand hydrants, and other water-play equipment. Recreation and play areas have been associated with the southwest quadrant of the park since around 1912, when there were sand courts, a wading pool, a small play area, and a set of swings at this location. The 1948 stone restroom is constructed of blind-mortared native basalt rubble rock veneer in a style common to early City of Spokane park comfort stations. The rectangular building is aligned on an east–west axis, with a gable-front roof clad in ribbed-metal panels, wide bargeboards, exposed rafter tails, and heavy wooden brackets supporting the deep eave at the gable ends. Similar restroom buildings were constructed in Chief Garry and Audubon Parks and can be attributed to Harold T. Abbott; inclusive of the restroom at Coeur d’Alene Park, the three buildings underwent interior remodeling in 1979 and 1988.

Further away from the southwest quadrant of the park are tennis courts, a basketball court, the reconstructed band pavilion, as well as two historic objects (stone urns).

Coeur d’Alene Park maintains the same recreational characteristics, circulation, topography, plantings, spatial and visual relationships, and surroundings within the social and natural environment today as it did in the late 1800s, offering park visitors a chance to walk, play, listen, and appreciate the historic character of Spokane’s first city park (*City of Spokane Parks and Boulevards (1891-1974)*).

RELEVANT STANDARDS (Secretary of the Interior’s Standards):

Standard Number 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property (or district). The new work shall be differentiated from the old and *shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*

1. **Compatibility & Differentiation** with facing blockfronts. This proposal is inside the park itself, so doesn’t include adjacent buildings (since there are none). What will be adjacent to the restroom facility is new play equipment and sidewalks. In light of the fact that the park does reside within the Browne’s Addition Historic District, it is important to use the facing blockfronts to determine both compatibility and differentiation.
 - A. The field of historic preservation has long used the concept of “context sensitive design” but uses the term “compatible.” Designing for a ***specific site*** within the historic district allows for compatible new construction in one spot that *may not be suitable for another site* within the district.
 - B. It is important to note that “compatibility” is not “comparability.” Compatibility can be defined in terms of the absence of conflict; in more casual and visual terms, it can mean being a good neighbor in that a building “fits in.” Comparability is a very close state of compatibility, in that the two things have enough in common that they can be compared meaningfully.
 - C. The framework for context-sensitive new construction is firmly grounded in compatible contemporary design: design that is clearly of the 21st century and doesn’t try to fool the viewer into thinking that it might be historic, but at the same time, it still fits into the historic district as compatible design.

Staff commentary:

No historic materials that characterize the historic district are being destroyed or altered. This restroom is being sited in a way that does not necessitate the demolition of any existing park resources. This building is an addition to the park.

The proposed restroom does provide a contemporary, but compatible facility for park users. The building's shape is directly related to its functionality as a restroom that is inviting and safe for users due to the transparency afforded by using stainless steel mesh panels on the front and side. The use of the contemporary shed-style roof allows for more natural light to filter into the interior space since it is highest at the front elevation and affords more usable interior space. It also helps with the maintenance of the facility and surrounding area by filtering water, snow and tree debris away from the entrances. The new restroom includes durable materials like exposed basalt stone cladding metal and interior CMU walls with concrete roof structure.

Compatibility comes through the use of the basalt veneer on the exterior to tie the restroom directly to the historic 1948 stone restroom which remains close by. The restroom is relatively diminutive in size as compared to the buildings directly adjacent on Spruce and 4th Avenues. The proposed restroom's scale is similar to the historic restroom and helps maintain the pedestrian feel of the building. The building does not attempt to mimic historic buildings that surround the park, but rather maintains the scale and massing of what an institutional restroom building traditionally would be.



Left: 1959 Church on Spruce



Right: 1950 Apartment building on 4th Avenue

2. **'Invention Within' Strategy.** The proposed restroom for Coeur d'Alene Park uses "Invention Within," which is the recommended design strategy in the Browne's Addition Design Standards and Guidelines. The new restroom is not a "jumble of various elements from building types to styles." Instead, it uses materiality to complement and honor the original restroom design. The historic restroom is basalt stone with a metal roof. The new restroom utilizes a basalt stone veneer with a ribbed TPO roof that compliments the use of concrete structural roofing system while decreasing construction and maintenance costs. This allows the new restroom to complement but not compete with the other architecture in and around the park, while still maintaining the new park restroom identity. There will be one accent color on the restroom stalls, which is used as wayfinding for parkgoers to immediately recognize what the restroom is. Overall, there are 3 primary exterior materials; basalt, metal, and TPO roofing.

Additional Staff Commentary:

Because this is a utilitarian structure intended to provide a more welcoming, safe and secure facility for park users, the siting of the building near the children's playground and splash pad in the southwest quadrant of the park is appropriate. The design has been carefully contemplated to solve several issues related to the existing restroom in Coeur d'Alene Park – visibility, accessibility, and functionality.

- A. **Visibility:** the use of the shed-style roof system allows for the full visibility of the building from 4th Avenue as well as from the playground area. The stainless-steel mesh walls allow for clear sight lines to the stall doors - as well as for park rangers, neighbors and police to monitor the restroom "lobby" from the street.



- B. **Accessibility:** the proposed new restroom is fully ADA accessible with new pedestrian pathways. The design includes a conditioned family restroom that can be used longer into the season and allows for more use of the park.
- C. **Functionality:** for the ease of cleaning and maintenance, the shed roof style and material choices make sense for the restroom to stay well-maintained and useable for the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

New Coeur d'Alene Park Restroom: Staff recommends that the proposed new construction is contemporary but compatible; follows the “invention within” design strategy from the Browne’s Addition Design Standards and Guidelines; meets the Secretary Standard #9; and should be **approved**.

HPO Report – Megan Duvall
 Design Review Committee Review: Reported at Workshop
 Landmarks Commission Review: Pending

Report: 9/3/2026
 Site Visit: 8/5/2026
 Hearing: 9/16/2026