

Union Block

220 N. Howard Street



Charles Libby Collection, Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture, 1937

Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination

**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: Union Block
And/Or Common Name: Same

2. Location

Street & Number: 220 N. Howard Street
City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA 99201
Parcel Number: 35184.1904

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

Name: Kevin Edwards,
Street & Number: 225 W. Main Ste. 200
City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA 99201
Telephone Number/E-mail: 509-939-8828; k.edwards@me.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: Enter previous survey name if applicable
Date: Enter survey date if applicable ☐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: < one acre

Verbal Boundary Description: RES & ADD SPOKANE FALLS PTN OF LT 4-5 BLK 10 DAF: S55FT OF W48.25FT OF LT 4 & S55FT OF LT 5 TOG W/ W1/2 OF VAC ALLEY LYG ELY & ADJ TO

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

11. Form Prepared By

Name and Title: Diana J. Painter, PhD, Principal Architectural Historian
Organization: Painter Preservation
Street, City, State, Zip Code: 3518 N. C Street, Spokane, WA 99205
Telephone Number: 707-763-6500
E-mail Address: dianajpainter@gmail.com
Date Final Nomination Heard :

12. Additional Documentation

Additional documentation is found on one or more continuation sheets.

13. Signature of Owner(s)

14. For Official Use Only:

Date nomination application filed: _____

Date of Landmarks Commission Hearing: _____

Landmarks Commission decision: _____

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

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

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

Date

Attest:

Approved as to form:

City Clerk

Assistant City Attorney

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

Summary statement

The 1890 Union Block is a three-story building with a rectangular footprint and a flat roof with a short parapet. It has a basement that includes both storage and crawl space within its rectangular footprint. The property line for the building is commensurate with the building footprint on the front (west) side, extending to behind the public sidewalk; extends to the halfway point between the subject building and the Bennett Block to the south, splitting the available space within this alley with the building next door; extends slightly beyond the rear (east) façade of the building; and forms a partywall with the neighboring Coeur d'Alene Plaza Apartments to the north.¹

The building faces west, overlooking N. Howard Street. The building accommodates 5,722 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor and 11,772 square feet of residential space on the second and third floors. The parcel on which it is located is 7,215 square feet in size, which includes the dining patio on the south side of the building. Three primary entries, including the entry to the upper stories, are located on the front (west) façade. Secondary entries are located on the south and east facades, both accessing outdoor eating areas from the Steelhead Bar & Grill on the south and Atticus Coffee on the east. The ground floor businesses are accessed directly from the front sidewalk, while the upper floor residential units are accessed from a shared hallway.



Front (west) façade and south façade, looking northwest

¹ Note that the Spokane County Assessor uses the address of 218 N Howard St; and the addresses on the street are 218, 220 and 222 N. Howard Street. The building itself is signed as 220 N. Howard Street.

The exterior is finished in the original brick with sandstone accents on most of the building, with the exception of the ground floor of the front façade, which was renovated in 1972 and is now finished in brick veneer in the same stretcher bond pattern as the upper stories. The foundation and basement walls are rubble basalt and the roof is built up. Window and door frames are dark-colored anodized aluminum with the exception that the cast iron mullions between the windows on the upper floor on the front façade have been retained. The main character-defining features seen throughout the building are the arches above the various openings, including the four bays at the ground floor, added in 1972, that repeat the elliptical arches in the bays on the third level. Individual window openings are topped with segmental arches; the windows have brick sills.



Front (west) façade, window detail

Unique features are the flat arches with rounded corners that spring from the pilasters on the upper floor, and the projecting square panel with a round-arched insert that marks the central double pilaster on the building front. Other features at the cornice are a row of depressed panels and a dentil course. Historically, windows on the building had one-over-one lights on the upper levels and side and rear facades, and display windows on the ground floor of the front façade. The individual windows throughout the building today have three lights, with the exception of the windows on the upper level on the front façade, which have single lights. The building retains its

display window configurations on the ground floor of the front façade from 1972. Window and door frames are dark colored anodized aluminum. The building, designed by prominent Spokane architect Herman Preuss, displays elements of the Richardsonian Romanesque style and was constructed in 1890, immediately after the Great Spokane Fire of 1889.

Location and setting

The Union Block at 220 N Howard Street is located in the heart of Spokane, immediately south of the Coeur d'Alene Hotel (now the Coeur d'Alene Plaza Apartments), which is at the southeast corner of Spokane Falls Blvd. and N. Howard Street. The block within which the building is located is bounded by N. Howard Street on the west, Spokane Falls Blvd. on the north, N. Stevens Street on the east, and W. Main Avenue on the south. South of the Union Block is a 10' east-west alley that has always divided the block here. To the south of the alley, on the N. Howard Street face, is the 1890-1892 Bennett Block, which is composed of three buildings and was listed in the Spokane Register of Historic Places in 2015. To the east of the Bennett Block is the ca. 1924 Ritz Theater. To its east is a small, 1891 building that was remodeled in 1987. The remainder of the block to the east is surface parking.

To the north of Spokane Falls Blvd is Riverfront Park, historically the grounds for Expo '74. Where Howard Street terminates here is a major entrance to Riverfront Park, marked with a monument sign and the 2005 Rotary Fountain by artist Harold Balazs and landscape architect Bob Perron. To the west of N. Howard Street is N. Wall Street which borders the east end of the two-block River Park Square, a modern in-city shopping center constructed in 1974. To the south of W. Main Street is the modern ten-story, 1967 Parkade parking garage, listed on the Spokane Register of Historic Places in 2023 and soon to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The block east of the subject block is mostly in surface parking. At the southeast corner is the 1908 four-story Kemp & Herbert Building, which was historically a department store and whose main tenant now is Aunties Bookstore. It is listed in the Spokane and National Registers. In the southwest corner is a small, one-story commercial building built in 1908 and remodeled in 1993.

Downtown Spokane in this area is a mix of historic, modern, and contemporary buildings, the oldest of which were constructed after the Spokane Fire of 1889. The closest historic district is the National Register-listed East Downtown Historic District, which is south and east of the subject property and block. Despite the mix of low- and mid-rise buildings in this area and the mix of historic and non-historic (or remodeled) buildings, the area is a compatible, urban mix, marred primarily by the presence of large surface parking lots, some of which were cleared for parking for Expo '74.



Setting, Union Block to left, Bennett Block in center, Parkade to rear

Exterior facades

Front (west) façade. The front façade of the Union Block is organized in four bays. At the ground floor are four segmental-arched openings, which cover flush display windows or recessed entries and display windows. Six pilasters (two in the middle) rise from the ground to the third-floor level, accented with regular bands of sandstone. The second floor level is composed of eight tall, one-over-one-light windows under a transom, each under shallow-arched openings, within anodized aluminum frames. The third level has four three-part windows within segmental-arched openings, with single lights and solid panels in place of transom windows. The upper level has a dental course below a band of paneled openings, below a parapet. In the center is a recessed, arched opening that surmounts the central pilasters.

At the ground level, the second and third bays (counting from the left or north) are recessed, leading to the entries to three spaces. The canted entry to 222 N. Howard leads to Atticus, a gift and coffee shop that occupies the two bays on the north side of the building. The entry to the upper floors is centered and parallel to the front façade. The canted entry to 218 N. Howard leads to the Steelhead Bar & Grill, which occupies two bays on the south side of the building. Each bay on the ground level features a segmental-arched opening behind the sidewalk. The first bay on the left side has anodized aluminum-frame display windows for Atticus, which consists of a three-part window with a transom, above a bulkhead. The entry itself, which is typical, is also framed in anodized aluminum and consists of a centered door with full-height glass, wide one-over-one-light sidelights, and a transom window under an arched opening. The windows within the north bay that open onto the Steelhead Bar & Grill are similar to the windows on the south bay.



West entry alcove looking at central entry

South façade. Around the corner on the south side of the building, is a smaller doorway under an arch that leads to the walkway that parallels the south façade of the building, which in turn leads to the east-west row of tables in an outdoor eating area. The south façade fronts on the alley between this building and the Bennett Block to the south, features single, paired, and grouped windows at the second and third levels that match the windows on the second level on the front façade. At the ground level is the previously mentioned door under an arched opening at the southwest corner. Toward the rear is another arched opening with a door with full-height glass, two-light sidelights, and transom windows, all within anodized aluminum frames. The two doors allow access to the outdoor patios from the Steelhead Bar & Grill. Other previous openings on this façade are bricked in.



Rear (east) façade, looking west

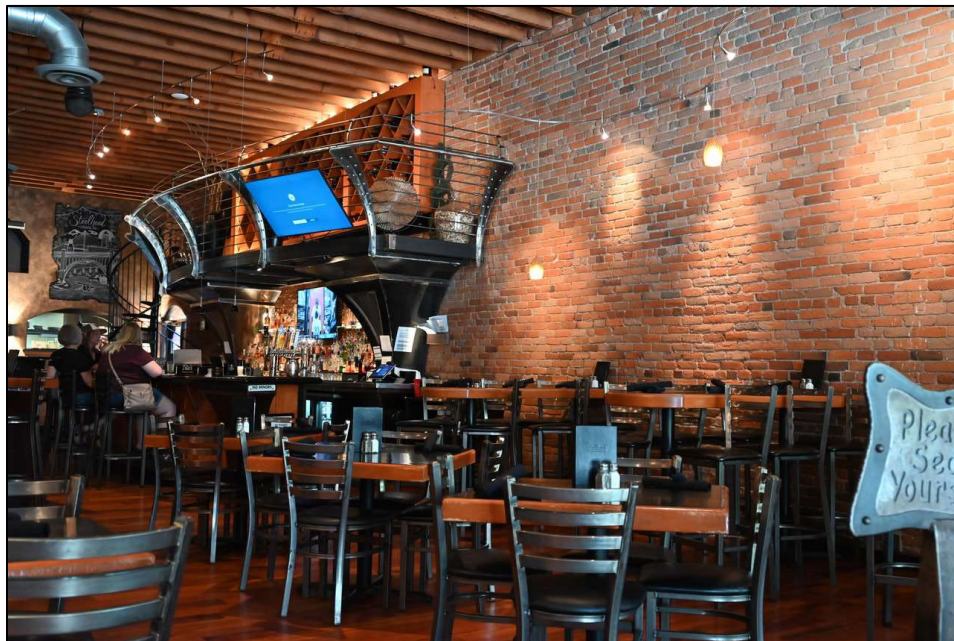
East façade. The rear (east) façade of the building has four bays with two individually placed, double-hung windows with transoms per bay. The windows are each within the same shallow-arched openings as seen on other windows on the front and north facades. At the ground level near the center of the building is a flush metal door below a solid panel under an arched opening. Other openings on this façade include windows and doors that serve an outdoor eating area for the Atticus coffee shop. All have anodized aluminum frames. The main door has full-height glass, a tall transom window, and narrow, full-height sidelights. The other windows here are narrow, under round arches, with brick planters below. To the left is a wood fence of horizontal wood that encloses HVAC equipment.

Modifications. The main changes to the Union Block occurred in 1972, which can be seen by comparing this façade to the 1937 photo of the front façade. The building front was likely changed before that, as the north and south facades at the front ground floors do not match, but concrete evidence was not found for this. The 1972 changes involved creating three recessed entries on the front façade, in place of the central flush entry and the recessed entries at the center of the north and south storefronts. The most recent change to the building exterior is the replacement windows, which were added throughout about 2023, when the wood windows were

removed and new anodized aluminum windows were installed. As a result, the proportions and degree of enclosure for the sash are changed.

Interiors

Ground floor. The ground floor of the Union Block has two primary spaces and the entry to the upper floors. All three entries are located in the centered recessed vestibule, which displays the anodized aluminum window and door frames seen elsewhere on the building and brick veneer finishes. The vestibule is lit with suspended globe fixtures. The entry to the stairs is directly behind the central panel on the front entry, whereas the entries to the north business, Atticus, a gift and coffee shop, and the south business, Steelhead Bar & Grill, are on canted faces within the vestibule. The stairway to the second floor is on the left side, while an enclosed area on the right side contains mechanical equipment. Atticus is primarily a large open space, with a restroom, walk-in cooler, and secondary stair to the basement. An exit on the rear facade leads to an outdoor patio. The main open space for the Steelhead Bar & Grill contains the dining room and a bar. To the rear of the space is a kitchen and restrooms and a back stair to the upper floor. An exterior entry on the south side leads to an outdoor eating patio. A rear entry leads to the rear walkway and HVAC site.



Steelhead Bar & Grill, looking southeast

Second and third floors. The second floor of the building contains four apartments. A centered hall has doors to three units while an additional hallway toward the front (west) side of the floor accesses the fourth unit and a stair to the ground floor and the third floor. The third floor contains a centered hall which accesses an additional four units. The stair to the second floor here is on the west end of the hall.



Apartment, kitchen and dining area, typical

Basement. The basement is accessed via a stair on the front (west side) of the building and two stairs on the rear (east side), one on each side of the central structural wall. The basement includes small and large storage spaces, and a walk-in freezer. A crawl space occupies the southwest quarter of the basement. The entire west side is about 2' lower than the north side.

Modifications. Few changes have taken place to the ground floor of the building. The stair to the second floor is new, and a mechanical space was added. The second and third floor are all new spaces – the historical SRO (single room occupancy) units were demolished. On the second floor the back stair to the ground floor was removed. No substantial changes were made to the basement.

INTEGRITY

The configuration of the Union Block displays good exterior integrity to its 1972 renovation, in which the ground floor of the front (west) façade was altered and interior finishes on the ground floor removed. The exterior of the building was altered in 2023, when windows and doors were replaced throughout. Beginning in 2021, the two upper floors of the building, which were historically in residential uses, were renovated but retain the residential uses, with eight apartment units in a new layout and with new materials.

The following analysis discusses the integrity of the building. A property must possess integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship and association to be considered eligible for listing in the Spokane Register. The following is a response to these aspects of integrity for the Union Block.

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.

The building is in its original location.

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.

The front façade of the ground floor of the building was altered in 1972, and the windows and doors on the east façade were altered in 1974. Both changes are over 50 years old. They have therefore achieved significance in themselves. The design of the building has been altered more recently, in 2023, with the addition of new windows and entries in anodized aluminum. While the design of the windows has been changed, they are within their historic openings and therefore retain a degree of integrity.

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.

Materials that have been added to the building include the brick veneer at the ground floor on the front façade. This change occurred in 1972 however, so is over 50 years old. The windows and doors have been changed from the original wood to anodized aluminum. The current windows and doors were added in 2023; research did not reveal the dates for earlier changes, if they occurred, with the exception of the east façade windows and doors, which were replaced in 1974.

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.

The workmanship of the building is intact. The brick veneer on the front ground floor façade differs in craftsmanship from the brick masonry construction of the main building, but this occurred over 50 years ago. The anodized aluminum window and door frames differ in workmanship from what may have been there historically, which was likely wood. It is not known whether aluminum frames were installed in the 1972 remodel.

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

The association of the building is intact. The building was historically used for commercial and residential uses, and this continues to be the case today.

Summary

The Union Building retains integrity of location, materials, workmanship, and association. The renovation of the ground floor occurred in 1972 or over 50 years ago and has gained significance in itself. The building retains its overall form. The design of the building has been altered to a degree with the addition of replacement windows, which are nonetheless in their historic location and openings. While detracting from the pre-2023 appearance of the building, they retain sufficient integrity to support the overall design of the building.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The 1890 Union Block building is significant and eligible for listing in the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Category A in the area of Commerce for its association with the group of commercial or commercial/residential buildings that were constructed immediately after Spokane's 1889 Great Fire to serve the needs of Spokane's citizens and business owners in the downtown core. One of the reportedly ten remaining buildings from this period, it continues to serve as a commercial space on the ground floor with residential uses on the upper floors, as it did historically.² The building is also significant under Category C in the area of the work of a master, for its association with the prominent Spokane architect, Herman Preusse. The period of significance is 1890, based on the initial construction date for the property (C) and the period of rebuilding immediately after Spokane's Great Fire of 1889 (A); to 1972, the date of a renovation of the building after a fire, which is over 50 years ago and has achieved significance in itself (C).

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The block on which the Union Block building is located was historically at the heart of the city of Spokane. A walking tour map showing historic sites (no date) marks the "Four Corners" here, which is the intersection of Spokane Falls Blvd. (Front Street on historical maps) and Howard Street. On the historical map, the buildings that are noted here are Glover & Gilliam Livery Stable in the northwest corner; California House in the northeast corner; Glover's First Separate Dwelling in the southeast corner, where the subject building is located; and James N. Glover's Store, 1873, in the southwest corner. Also noted is the Coeur d'Alene Hotel, which can also be seen on the 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance map as the Coeur d'Alene Theatre (see Figure 13).³

Early Spokane

Spokane got off to a slow start as the regional hub it would become later. A saw mill was established in 1873 and a grist mill followed a few years later. The promise of the Northern Pacific railroad led to the town being platted in 1878, but Spokane did not witness substantial growth until the discovery of gold in the Coeur d'Alene mining district, attracting prospectors, speculators, and petty capitalists, according to cultural geographer Donald Meinig.⁴ About this time the population in the vicinity of Spokan Falls was 350 people.⁵

² Twelve extant buildings that were constructed in 1889 and 1890 in Spokane are listed as having historic significance in Tony and Suzanne Bamonte's book *Spokane, Our Early History, Under All Is The Land*, based on Spokane's first historic survey and Hyslop's *Building Blocks*. Tony and Suzanne Bamonte, *Spokane, Our Early History, Under All Is The Land*. Spokane, WA: Tornado Creek Publications and Spokane Association of Realtors Centennial, 2011:297-300.

³ This map is on p. 28 of Tony and Suzanne Bamonte's *Spokane, Our Early History*, It is called, "Map of the walking tour of early Spokane from Barbara F. Cochran's book, *Exploring Spokane's Past, Tours to Historical Sites*, published by Ye Galleon Press, 1979. The site was occupied by the Loewenberg Block in 1891k the Coeur d'Alene Theatre in 1902, and the Hotel Coeur d'Alene in 1910, based on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps. It was occupied by the Union Block in April 1888 and February 1889, pre-fire years.

⁴ Donald W. Meinig, "Spokane and the Inland Empire: Historical Geographic Systems and a Sense of Place.," David H. Stratten, editor, *Spokane & the Inland Empire*. Pullman, WA: Washington State University Press, 1991:13.

⁵ Spokane was initially called Spokan Falls.

A colorful portrait of early Spokane was presented in a 1933 newspaper article that presented the Union Block and the downtown core, covering the years of 1878 to 1883, the latter date being the date of the first fire that affected the Union Block. As noted in the article, 1881 was quite a momentous year for Spokane, marked by incorporation, the coming of the Northern Pacific railroad (the Northern Pacific would be connected to the transcontinental railroad in 1883), and the founding of today's Gonzaga University.⁶ Business development began the following year with the establishment of the Echo flour mill and the First National Bank at Front and Howard streets. The fire that burned the Union Block and nearby business blocks occurred on January 19, 1883.⁷

As described in the article, the author notes that in these early days, "The buildings were almost entirely of frame construction, with little paint. A busy little sawmill with its small circular saw turned out material for the wooden structures springing up on every hand. There were a few business houses in 1883 along Riverside as far west as Post Street, but most of them clung tenaciously to the vicinity of Front, Main and Howard. . . . With the exception of perhaps a dozen two-story buildings, the business houses were rows of unpainted, one-story frame structures, many with false fronts." ⁸

The author continues with a description of the people: "The streets were crowded with a picturesque frontier throng of prospectors lured by the discoveries of gold in the Coeur d'Alenes; cowboys from the Big Bend ranges; Canadian Boatmen from the upper Columbia buying merchandise; Chinese selling fine gold from the sands of the Columbia; and lumberjacks and ranchers. Indians gathered for their powwows or to catch and smoke fish at their favorite rendezvous. Curley Jim and his tribesmen among the Spokanes had campgrounds in Peaceful Valley and in Indian Canyon. Garry, chief of the Spokanes, the friend of the white man, who kept peace among reds and whites, was a familiar figure on the village streets."⁹

The fire of 1883 started at the Union Block, burning the F.R. Moore & Co. building from Front Avenue south to the alley on Howard: "It wiped out several stores, the post office and a restaurant or two." Rebuilding involved replacing twelve buildings. Five, including the Union Block, were rebuilt in brick. By the end of 1883 the town of 1,500 boasted two newspapers, six law firms, eight physicians, a dentist, a college president, six teachers and six real estate and insurance offices.¹⁰

⁶ "Spokane Falls Lusty Infant in 1883," *The Spokesman-Review*, July 22, 1933:23.

⁷ Another source notes February 27, 1882 for the date of the fire (or possibly another fire). "Scooped Water from the River to Fight Fires," *Spokane Chronicle*, February 29, 1924:3.

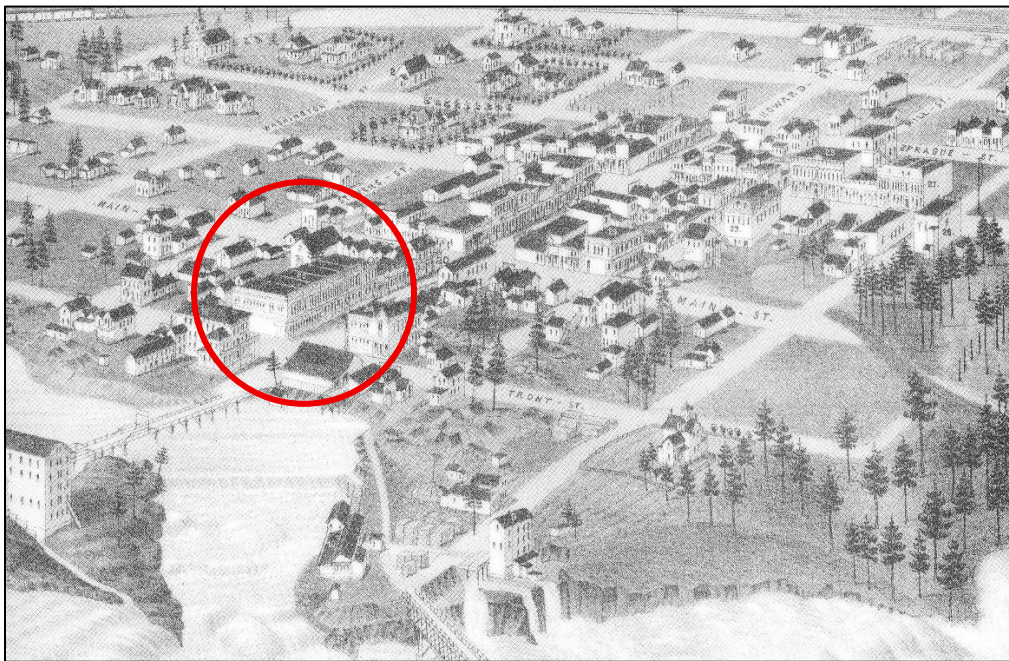
⁸ "Spokane Falls Lusty Infant in 1883," *The Spokesman-Review*, July 22, 1933:23.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Before the Great Fire

The subject city block was built up gradually between the time it was rebuilt after the fire of 1883 and the fire of 1889, which burned the entire block again (see Figure 8 for the rebuilt block in 1884). The Sanborn Fire Insurance map of 1884 that shows the block face on the east side of Howard Street between Front and Main streets contained the subject property (on the north half) and that it developed with partywall structures, but the block as a whole does not display a great deal of density. This block face had a general merchandise store on the north corner, a saloon with a printing shop on the second floor to the south, and a grocery store and wholesale liquor store on the subject lots (see above). Within the half block behind these shops were freestanding buildings arranged in a somewhat random pattern that included one Chinese business and a Chinese wash house on Front Street.



Bird's-eye view of the Union Block in 1884

Two additional Sanborn Fire Insurance maps that were published from the period immediately before the Great Fire show the area becoming more dense. About a year before the fire, in April 1888, this entire block face was called the Union Block (see Figure 8). It was composed of five lots with four businesses; the two subject lots held a dry goods and notions store and a liquor store. The businesses within the rest of the half block to the east included two female boarding houses, four Chinese businesses, a hotel, plus numerous sheds. The February 1889 map was much the same, dominated by Chinese businesses, female boarding houses, and one hotel.¹¹

Downtown Spokane as a whole was quite built out before the Great Fire of 1889. As can be seen on the 1888 map (see Figure 9), many of the buildings on the subject block were wood,

¹¹ For an illustration of the building types, see Figure 14. The building burned again in 1971 when it served as the Howard Hotel, a residential hotel. "Blaze Hits City Hotel," *Spokane Chronicle*, January 9, 1971:19.

although the buildings on the half block facing Howard Street between Front Street and the alley between Front and Main streets were brick, with the exception of one stone building. The largest of the new 1884 buildings was the Union Block (see Figure 11).¹² Built by I.T. Benham & Sons, it was two stories in height and 140' x 80' in size. The building was estimated to cost \$35,000 to build and sported cast iron columns and large display windows. It was developed by local business and professional men Moore & Goldsmith, E.G. Hyde, R.W. Forrest and Dr. J.E. Gandy.¹³ Loewenberg Brothers, who sold general merchandise, and the Pantheon Saloon were among the well-known tenants (see Figure 10).

The Great Fire and rebuilding

By the year of Great Spokane Fire, the population of Spokane had increased to 20,000, fueled by mining, timber, agriculture, and water power resources. Businesses in the downtown included six banks, 12 blacksmiths, 15 barbers, four cigar factories, ten lunch counters, 16 restaurants, three theaters, 30 groceries, 30+ real estate offices, and more than 40 saloons.¹⁴ Fire broke out on August 4, 1889 beginning in a row of frame buildings adjacent to the Northern Pacific tracks; it destroyed 32 city blocks of the downtown business district.¹⁵

Historians have repeatedly remarked on how quickly Spokane rebuilt after the 1889 fire.¹⁶ In the souvenir booklet for Spokane's 1890 Northwest Industrial Exposition just a year after the fire, the authors bragged that about 100 new elaborate brick, masonry, and terra cotta commercial buildings had been constructed in the downtown, many designed by prominent architects.¹⁷ Despite or maybe because of its rapid recovery from the fire, Spokaneites were wildly optimistic about the city's future: "Real Estate Transfers in 1889 were \$18,507,525, which far exceed Portland, Seattle or Tacoma. This year [1890] the realty market promises to be still better. Many millions of dollars will be expended during this season in improvements, and everything points to the fact that 1890 will be the greatest year ever known in our history."¹⁸

The first map Sanborn Fire Insurance map created in the post-fire era is dated January 1890 and shows the present Union Block, which occupied the same two lots that it does today (see Figure 13). The only other buildings on the half block were a four-story building at the corner of Howard and Front streets and a small, three-story shop facing Front. The next map, dated 1891, shows that Spokane was still making fast progress on rebuilding. The three story, two-lot Union Block housed wholesale goods. At the southeast corner of Front and Howard streets was the four-story Loewenberg Block, which was a wholesale dry goods business. To the rear of the two buildings was the Alliance building, which contained nine shopfronts, three facing Front Street, three facing the north-south alley in back of the Union and Loewenberg blocks, and three facing

¹² "Downtown was made of building blocks," February 11, 1988:49.

¹³ *The Spokesman-Review*, January 5, 1884:5. "Built First Brick Block in Spokane," *Spokane Chronicle*, October 29, 1929:3.

¹⁴ Linda Yeomans, *Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination, Bennett Block*, January 21, 2015:11, quoting William Stimson in *A View of the Falls: an Illustrated History of Spokane*.

¹⁵ Craig Holstine, *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, Single Room Occupancy Hotels in the Central Business District of Spokane, WA, 1900-1910*, September 14, 1993:Section E, Page 4.

¹⁶ Laura Arksey, "Great Spokane Fire (1889)," *HistoryLink.org*, March 20, 2006.

¹⁷ "Spokane History," *Downtown Spokane Heritage Walk*, <https://www.historicspokane.org/HeritageTours/downtown/history.html>, accessed July 2025.

¹⁸ "Real Estate Transfers," *The Spokesman-Review*, August 5, 1890:11.

the rear east-west alley just south of the Union Block. At this time, the south half of the subject block, across an alley and facing onto Riverside Avenue, is a row of single-lot shops that make up the Bennett Block, the Varsity Theatre, an unnamed building, and the "Real Estate Block."

20th century Spokane

The recovery from the 1889 fire had been financed to a large extent by Dutch bankers and the Hypotheek Bank, who foreclosed on many buildings during the Panic of 1893. The Dutch sold out to new local investors, who soon began a second building spree after the post-fire building spree.¹⁹ Developers were able to rebuild with funds gained from the mines, which they invested in real estate and commercial development.²⁰ Between about 1900 and about 1912, "a great flurry of construction created a modern urban profile of office buildings, banks, department stores, hotels, and other commercial institutions concentrated in an area between the Spokane River to the north and the original Northern Pacific tracks at the base of South Hill."²¹ By the end of the boom Spokane had a population of 104,402, triple its population of 36,848 in 1900. However, the following decade, from 1910 to 1920, the Spokane population only gained 35 people.²²

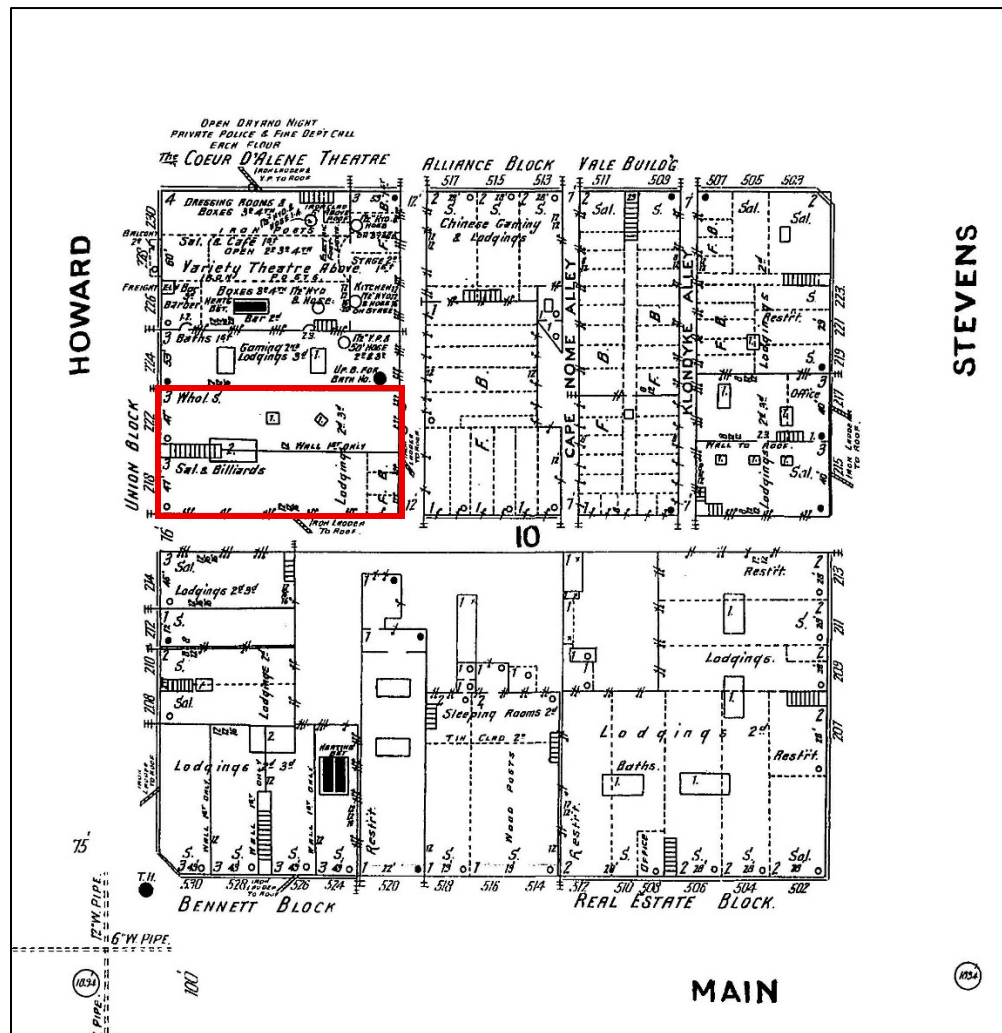
By the date of the next Sanborn Fire Insurance map, which was 1902, the entire block on which the Union Block is located was densely developed (see Figure 14). At that time the block was defined by Howard Street on the west (as it is today), Front Avenue on the north, Stevens Street on the east, and Main Avenue on the south. An east-west alley separated north and south halves of the block (as it does today), and three additional alleys ran north-south within the north half of the block. The two easterly north-south alleys were named Cape Nome Alley and Klondike Alley; they were only 7' wide. The four-story Coeur d'Alene Theatre was located at Howard Street and Front Avenue and faced north (see Figure 14).

¹⁹ Meinig, "Spokane and the Inland Empire," 39.

²⁰ Meinig, "Spokane and the Inland Empire," 39.

²¹ Meinig, "Spokane and the Inland Empire," 19.

²² "Demographics," *Spokane, Washington*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spokane, Washington#Demographics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spokane,_Washington#Demographics), accessed July 2025.



The 1890 Union Block in 1902

The subject property housed a wholesale business on the north ground floor and a saloon and billiards on the south ground floor (addressed as 222 and 218, respectively); the top two floors contained lodgings. The remainder of the block was made up of “Chinese gaming” and “female boarding” lodgings in two-story buildings with the exception of an office, restaurant, and saloon facing onto Stevens Street. The south half of the block was also densely developed, mostly with shops and saloons on the ground floor and lodgings above. The block to the north (where the Rotary Fountain is today) contained Spokane’s 1894 Romanesque Revival City Hall, City Fire Department, and City Jail.

The 1910 Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows that the block on which the subject building is located was very densely developed, as were neighboring blocks. The six-story Coeur d’Alene Hotel (two floors had been added) was located at the corner of Front Avenue and Howard Street. The subject building had two 47’ wide shops on the ground floor addressed as 218 and 222, separated by a narrow frontage addressed as 220 Howard Street that led to the stairs to the upper floors. Most of the buildings on the block were two stories in height. In addition to

shops and lodgings (and one Japanese hand laundry), two moving pictures houses were located on the block.

The last two available Sanborn maps are dated 1950 and 1953. They show that both the north and south halves of the subject block were densely developed. In 1950 the south half of the subject building housed the "Military Police Headquarters (see Figure 17)." There was a shop in the north half. The six-story Hotel Coeur d'Alene to the north was still in place. Another use on the north half of the block was the American Volunteers Social Center and Library. Many of the other uses on the half block were shops and restaurants in two- and three-story buildings. There was only one north-south alley.

Today the three-part building on the south half of the block that faces onto Howard Street is the Bennett Block, which is listed in the Spokane Register of Historic Places.²³ The adjacent building to the east of the Bennett Block is the ca. 1924 Ritz Theater. The small building adjacent to the Ritz Theater is dated 1891 but was remodeled for a modern appearance in ca. 2014. The east half of the entire block is vacant and used for surface parking.²⁴

The Union Block in 1937

The earliest detailed photograph of the 1890 Union Block found in the course of research is dated 1937.²⁵ Although the building suffered another fire in June 1971, the upper stories on the front façade remained intact as built, based on this photograph, until 2021, when interior demolition work on the upper two floors, followed by window replacements in about 2023, was undertaken on the building. The ground level frontage as shown in 1937 likely reflects its early appearance, although the storefronts on either side of the entry are different, which may indicate a change before 1937. The centered entry to the upstairs is within a shallow-arched opening under an enclosed gable, finished in clay tile and surmounted by paired, two-over-two-light windows. The double doors have eight lights in each leaf.

The storefront to the right (south) in this photo has a centered, recessed entry. To each side are large display windows above a low bulkhead. The storefront ensemble is surmounted by a six-light transom window. Cast iron columns with ornate capitals frame the entry and form divisions within the transom. The storefront to the left (north) also has a centered recessed entry. Large display windows flank this entry, with "Café" spelled out on the left window and "Wine" spelled out on the right side. The bulkhead is higher here and appears to be tiled. The transom is made up of 18 lights.

²³ Linda Yeomans, *Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination, Bennett Block*, January 21, 2015.

²⁴ A significant amount of new surface parking was created to serve Expo '74.

²⁵ Building at 220 N Howard, Libby Studio Photograph Collection, Museum of Art and Culture, L87-1.111947-37, date taken: June 5th, 1937. No commensurate photos are available for the side and rear facades.



The 1890 Union Block in 1937

The Union Block in 1971

In 1971 the Union Block building housed the Howard Hotel. In June 1971 a fire at the hotel began in the “Fat Jack Tavern” in the southwest corner of the building and traveled to the third floor. At this time, the ground floor of the Howard Hotel also served as a dining room for the Coeur d’Alene Hotel next door. The upper floors served as sleeping rooms and had 26 occupants the night of the fire.²⁶

In 1972 the building was sold for under \$100,000, according to a February 20, 1972 newspaper article.²⁷ At this time the upper floors appeared as they had earlier, as did the entry to the upper floors. The storefront on the left, however, was flush with the building façade and included a double, aluminum-frame door with full-height glass (the storefront on the right was not visible in the photograph).

²⁶ “Blaze Hits City Hotel,” *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, June 9, 1971:19.

²⁷ “Downtown Building Sold,” *The Spokesman-Review*, February 20, 1972:51.



The Union Block ca 1972

A May 1972 article announced that the building was being remodeled to reflect “the elegance of the past with the efficiency of the present,” and the remodel would cost \$200,000.²⁸ The south side of the building would be a Taco Time and the north side would house Myke’s West, a men’s clothing store. The wood beams and brick walls of the ground floor were exposed at this time for “a better interior atmosphere” and to offer “a touch of the past.”²⁹ The upper floors were to contain offices; the architect was E. Norman Sylvester Associates. A rendering of the new building façade was published in the May 4, 1972 issue of the *Spokane Chronicle*. The proposed ground floor had the same appearance as it does today (see Figure 18).³⁰

Summary

While the appearance of the Union Block has remained largely the same until its recent renovation in 2023, the commercial uses at the ground floor of the Union Block building have changed over time. Atticus, a gift store and coffee shop at 222 N. Howard on the north side of the building, has been in place since 2009. The Steelhead Bar & Grill, a restaurant at 218 N. Howard on the south side of the building, has been in place since at least 2006, about the time Taco Time moved out. One interesting business that was in place at 222 N. Howard for several years beginning in 1982 was the Four Seasons Coffee Co, owned by Tom Hutchison. This business introduced espresso coffee, coffee roasting, and culinary classes to Spokane in the

²⁸ “Remodeling of Old Hotel Under Way,” *Spokane Chronicle*, May 3, 1972:10.

²⁹ “Woman to Head New Restaurant,” *The Spokesman-Review*, August 3, 1972:5.

³⁰ “Building Redecorated,” *Spokane Chronicle*, May 4, 1972:10.

1980s. An interesting fact about the building in 1984 is that murals dating from when the basement of the building was a speakeasy in the 1920s still existed and was one of the few traces from this era left in Spokane.³¹

The most recent sale of the building occurred in 2021.³² The ground floor of the Union Block appears today as when it was remodeled in 1972. The two upper floors of the interior were remodeled in 2023 with the addition of eight apartments in place of the former Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units. New windows were added throughout the building ca. 2023.³³ For a detailed description of the building's current appearance, see Section 7.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The Richardsonian Romanesque style

The Union Block displays elements of the Richardsonian Romanesque style, which according to some architectural historians followed on the Romanesque Revival style, although the names of the styles are also sometimes used interchangeably.³⁴ Spokane's 1894 City Hall, Fire Station and Jail, built just a half block north of the Union Block (the site of the Rotary Fountain today) is perhaps Spokane's most spectacular example of the Romanesque Revival style. Designed by prominent architect Willis A. Ritchie, it was unfortunately demolished in 1913 to make way for Union Station.³⁵

The Richardsonian Romanesque style was popular in the US from 1880 to 1900 and beyond. It was often seen in civic buildings and churches, but as can be seen in Spokane's downtown buildings from the post-fire rebuilding era in these vernacular commercial buildings.

Overall, a Richardsonian Romanesque building will have a simpler form than a Romanesque Revival building, and simpler architectural details, relying on the use of materials, colors and textures for embellishment, whereas a Romanesque Revival building might have a more complex form, complex roof forms, and towers and similar features. In contrast to a freestanding building, the Richardsonian Romanesque commercial buildings in Spokane had flat roofs and partywalls. Windows often have one-over-one-lights and may be individually placed, placed in pairs, or grouped, and were vertically aligned.

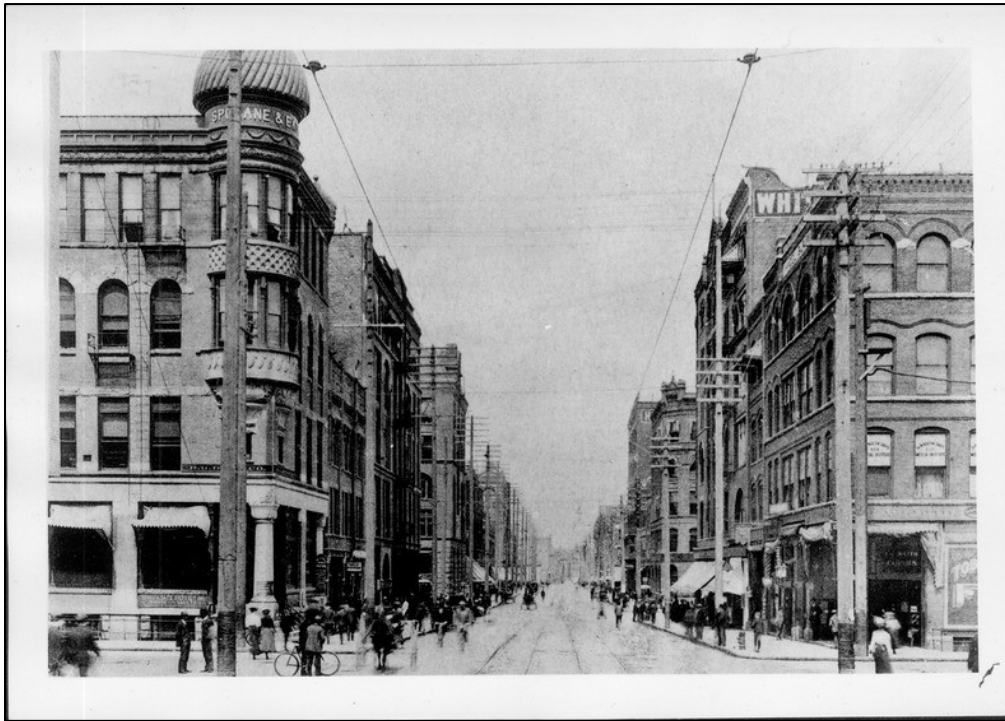
³¹ "The seamy side of old Spokane," *The Spokesman-Review*, March 4, 1984:60. These murals are still extant.

³² A previous sale occurred in 2009.

³³ Windows and doors on the east side of the building had previously been replaced in 1974.

³⁴ See for example, Cyril M Harris, *American Architecture, An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998:276.

³⁵ Note that Ochsner and Anderson refer to this building as Richardsonian. Jeffrey Karl Ochsner and Dennis Alan Andersen, *Distant Corner, Seattle Architects and the Legacy of H.H. Richardson*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2003:276.



Vernacular commercial buildings, Howard Street, ca 1890-1900

The most easily recognized element seen in both the Romanesque Revival and Richardsonian Romanesque style is the use of round-arched (or semi-circular arched) openings for doors and windows or round arches in combination with flat arches on building facades (see for example the Bennett Block at 530 W. Main Street). The use of this element, as well as other arched openings, can be seen in the buildings that make up Spokane's downtown streets that were rebuilt after the 1889 fire, including the Union Block, although the Union Block makes use of segmental (or curved) and elliptical arches, rather than round arches.³⁶

Spokane's buildings that were designed and constructed after the 1889 fire might be called vernacular commercial buildings with some Richardsonian Romanesque details (see Figure 19). They are typically brick with stone detailing, often using rusticated stone to add visual weight to the building, although the Union Block, which is a brick masonry building, utilizes smooth sandstone as an accent.

The Union Block is distinctive for its use of elliptical arches and the way in which the pilasters and (nearly) flat arches reinforce the four window bays. The tall cornice with its row of recessed panels above the dentil course is also distinctive, as is the emphasis on the central entry, which is reinforced by the centered detail at the cornice and the double pilasters. Historically, before 1971-72, the ground floor level with its two retail bays contrasted with the upper two levels. After the remodel, elliptical arches and brick cladding repeated the elements of the upper level at the ground level and carried the line of the pilasters to the ground. This creates a different appearance to the building but it is not uncommon for the ground level of a building with retail

³⁶ Note that the use of segmental arches is common in brick masonry buildings contribute to the structural integrity of the building.

uses at the ground floor to see changes over time. The three part windows at the second level and the single-light windows at the third level of the building contrast with the one-over-one-light windows that were in place on the building historically and that are typical of commercial buildings of this era. These are not character-defining features.

Architect Herman Preusse (1847-1926)

Herman Preusse, the first professional architect to practice in Spokane, was the designer of the 1890 Union Block.³⁷ Preusse was born in 1847 in Hanover, Germany. After his early education, when he studied engineering, he gained architectural experience working for his stepfather, well-known architect Wilhelm Mehl, for three years. He then (about 1894) took on his studies in architecture at the College for Applied Science and Art in Holzminden, Germany, Germany's first school of architecture.³⁸

Preusse's university recommended him for his first professional project, to supervise the construction of the Bessemer steel works at Osnabruck, Germany.³⁹ After completing this project he immigrated to New York at the age of 23, arriving in June 1870. He then traveled to Chicago, where he worked for the North Chicago Rolling Mills, which supplied the railroad industry in the 1870s and 1880s, at about the time they installed a Bessemer furnace.⁴⁰ He left Chicago in 1871 for health reasons, after the Great Fire of 1871, then worked for a period of time in San Bernadino, California. And after making stops in San Francisco, Sterling, Kansas, and Kansas City, Missouri, Preusse ventured to Spokane in 1882 to further his career.⁴¹

In 1883, when the Northern Pacific Railroad successfully constructed a line that connected Spokane with Chicago and beyond, Spokane's officials sought an architect to assist with the design of new downtown commercial buildings that would boost its image as 'a progressive and prospering city.'⁴² Fortuitously, they found assistance in achieving their goals in Herman Preusse.

Preusse had a successful career in Spokane before the Great Spokane Fire. He was credited in the 1912 *History of the City of Spokane and Spokane County Washington* as 'contributing perhaps more largely to the upbuilding of Spokane in his line of business than any other one man.'⁴³ When a fire destroyed buildings at the location of the future 1884 Union Block, the site was rebuilt into the largest commercial block in downtown at that time and Preusse moved his office into the building (see Figure 11). At the time the newspaper said of him, "He has

³⁷ Lisa Kalhar Melton, "Herman Preusse, Spokane's First Architect: His Commercial and Public Buildings," M.A. Thesis, University of Oregon, June 2001:2.

³⁸ Herman Preusse (Architect), Pacific Coast Architecture Database, <https://pcad.lib.washington.edu/person/3448/>, accessed July 2025.

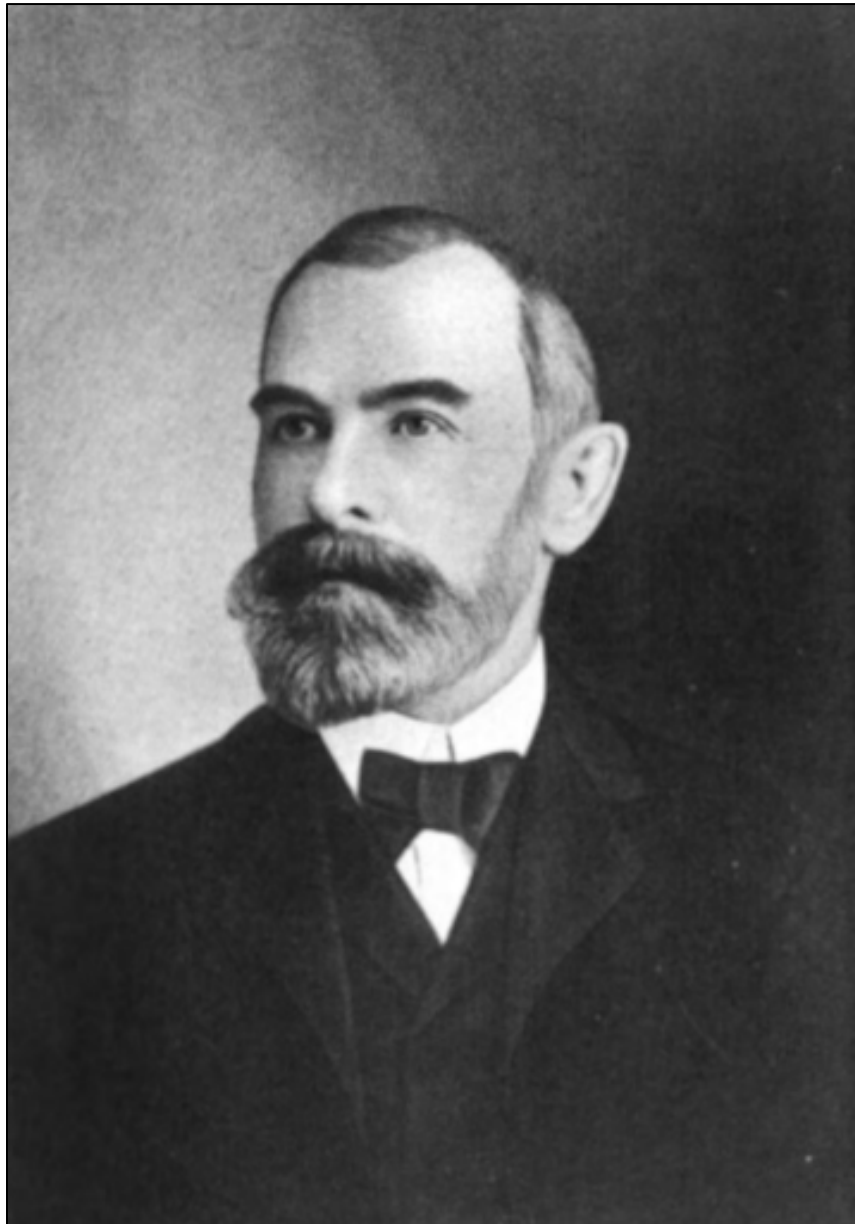
³⁹ "Herman Preusse," *Spokane and the Spokane Country Pictorial and Biographical De Luxe Supplement*, Vol 1. Spokane, WA: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1912:261.

⁴⁰ Herman Preusse (Architect), Pacific Coast Architecture Database, <https://pcad.lib.washington.edu/person/3448/>, accessed July 2025.

⁴¹ "Herman Preusse," *Spokane and the Spokane Country* . . . 261.

⁴² Stefanie Pettit, "Landmarks: Spokane's first architect left mark on city," *The Spokesman-Review*, June 5, 2014. See also Lisa Kalhar Melton, "Herman Preusse, Spokane's First Architect: His Commercial and Public Buildings," M.A. thesis, University of Oregon, June 2001:2.7.

⁴³ "Herman Preusse," *Spokane and the Spokane Country Pictorial and Biographical De Luxe Supplement*, Vol 1. Spokane, WA: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1912:261.



Herman Preusse, architect for the 1890 Union Block

supintended [sic] the construction of some of our finest blocks, which stand as evidence to his proficiency."⁴⁴

Most, if not all, of Preusse's downtown buildings were destroyed in the 1889 fire, which left 32 blocks of the downtown area in rubble. Despite this setback, he went on to hold the distinction of

⁴⁴ [H. Preuss], *The Spokesman-Review*, March 8, 1884:3.

undertaking more contracts for buildings in the years directly after the fire of 1889 than any other architect in the city.⁴⁵

Preusse entered into a partnership with Julius Zittel in 1893. From this point on, Preusse continued to design buildings on his own and with Zittel, who also served as the Washington State Architect in this time frame. It is from this post-fire era of his career and his partnership with Zittel that we know the most about his architectural production.

In his 1926 obituary and in the 1912 profile of Preusse in *Spokane and the Spokane Country Pictorial and Biographical De Luxe Supplement*, buildings by Preusse were noted as the Auditorium Building, the Jamison Block, the Blalock Building, the Fernwell Block (SRHP, listed in 1986), the Granite Building, the Ziegler Building, and the Victoria and Pacific hotels, among others.⁴⁶

Naturally Preusse's works constructed after the 1889 fire are the most available for study, as his own work and his and his partner Julius Zittel's buildings from this era are more likely to have survived.⁴⁷ Another good source of information on Preusse's works is the Pacific Coast Architecture Database (PCAD), which includes detailed histories of some individual buildings and demolition dates when known.⁴⁸ This resource also has the advantage of listing buildings in locations outside of downtown Spokane, such as the Carnegie Library in Ritzville, and other resource types, such as residences.

Additional sources of information about buildings by Preusse or Preusse and Zittel are found in Sally Woodbridge and Roger Montgomery's *A Guide to Architecture in Washington State*⁴⁹ and Lisa Kalhar Melton's M.A. thesis from the University of Oregon entitled, "Herman Preusse, Spokane's First Architect: His Commercial and Public Buildings."⁵⁰ The following is a brief description of some of his most noteworthy commercial, educational, and religious buildings in Spokane and beyond.

Preusse designed three buildings on today's Washington State University campus for the Agricultural College, Experiment Station and School of Science (no longer extant).

Preusse was named the architect for Gonzaga University, a Jesuit university. He designed Saint Aloysius Church on the Gonzaga campus and the Cathedral of Our Lady of Lourdes for the Roman Catholic Dioceses of Spokane. Both are still extant. The cathedral is in the Riverside Avenue National Register Historic District. He also designed Holy Names Academy, which is

⁴⁵ Linda Yeomans, Linda, *Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination, Bennett Block*, January 21, 2015:18, quoting EWSHS, *Seattle Skyline* . . . 42.

⁴⁶ "Herman Preusse, Architect, Dies," *The Spokesman-Review*, December 11, 1926:1. Op cit, "Herman Preusse, *Spokane and the Spokane Country* . . . 262. Note that some of these buildings are no longer extant, and some are known by other names today.

⁴⁷ Note that works that are listed in the 1912 *Spokane and the Spokane Country* . . . history or in his 1926 obituary may no longer be extant or may be known by other names now.

⁴⁸ "Herman Preusse (Architect)," Pacific Coast Architecture Database, <https://pcad.lib.washington.edu/person/3448/>, accessed July 2025.

⁴⁹ Sally B. Woodbridge and Roger Montgomery, *A Guide to Architecture in Washington State*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1980.

⁵⁰ Lisa Kalhar Melton, "Herman Preusse, Spokane's First Architect: His Commercial and Public Buildings," M.A. thesis, University of Oregon, June 2001. Note that the University of Oregon has the most respected historic preservation program in the Pacific Northwest.

close to Gonzaga and listed on the Spokane Register. Finally, he designed the James Monaghan House, which now serves as the music building on the Gonzaga campus. Monaghan was an important pioneering historic figure in Spokane and surrounding communities.

In addition to Our Lady of Lourdes Cathedral, Preusse's Chamber of Commerce building and his Carnegie Library are also in the Riverside Avenue National Register Historic District.

Spokane's Temple Emanu-El, designed by Preusse in 1892, was the first Jewish synagogue built in the State of Washington, beating Seattle's Ohaveth Sholom by just days.⁵¹ A wood-frame building, it was used until a new temple was built in the 1920s.

Today's Peyton Building was designed by Preusse as the Great Eastern Building and constructed in 1890, shortly after the Great Fire of 1889. In 1898 the building burned, leaving only its exterior walls and some charred interior columns. It was purchased by Colonel Isaac N. Peyton in 1898 with the intention of rebuilding it. Today's Peyton Building retains the building's 1898 exterior façade, which actually dates back to the 1890 Great Eastern Building, as it was rebuilt reusing the original walls of the early building by Preusse.⁵² It therefore reflects the original design by Preusse in the Romanesque Revival style.⁵³ The Peyton Building and the Peyton Annex are listed as one building in the National Register and Spokane Register of Historic Places and are currently undergoing a conversion from office use to housing.

Several of Preusse's commercial buildings in downtown Spokane have been lost to redevelopment, including buildings where the STA Plaza is located today as well as the Thomas S. Foley United States Courthouse. Others have been lost to parking lots, including the Hazel-Merton Block at 2 N. Howard Street, demolished in 2004. The Fernwell Building at 503 W. Riverside is an example of a Preusse building that is still extant but has lost its built context to parking lots, which compose the rest of its block today.

Preusse buildings in proximity to the Union Block are the Lockhardt Building and the Star Hotel Building, both directly south of the Union Block across the alley. The Lockhardt Building's predecessor, the Rima Block, also by Preusse, was lost in the 1889 fire. Both the Lockhardt Building and the Star Hotel are listed in the Spokane Register of Historic Places as part of the Bennett Block today.

Herman Preusse was Spokane's first professional architect and its longest practicing architect at the end of his career. He made his name in the city before the Great Fire of 1889 and again after the fire, helping to rebuild the city along with his partner Julius Zittell. Although some of his buildings have been lost over time, many of his most important structures remain. The Union Block, along with the Lockhardt Block and Star Hotel (both part of the Bennett Block), are centrally located on N. Howard Street between W. Main Avenue and W. Spokane Falls Blvd.

⁵¹ Jim Kershner, "The first synagogue in the state, Spokane's Temple Emanu-El, is dedicated on September 14, 1892," *Historylink.org*, May 2, 2008.

⁵² The building exterior was rebuilt and the interior redesigned by the firm of Cutter & Malmgren.

⁵³ The adjacent Peyton Annex, designed by in the Commercial Style, was constructed in 1908. Michael Sullivan and Eugenia Woo, Artifacts, *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Peyton Building and Peyton Annex*, Section 8, Page 4, October 13, 2004.

and are all recognized by listing in the Spokane Register of Historic Places, making this an important and representative cluster of Preusse's work in downtown Spokane.

SUMMARY

The 1890 Union Block building is located in the historic heart of downtown Spokane, on N. Howard Street between what is today Spokane Falls Blvd. and Main Avenue. Located on the north half of the block and facing west, the three-story building forms a partywall with the historic Coeur d'Alene Hotel (now the Coeur d'Alene Plaza Apartments) to the north. The three-story, brick masonry structure, designed by architect Herman Preusse, has a flat, built-up roof, and a rubble stone foundation, which is typical of the post-Great Spokane Fire buildings with which it shares a legacy. It is one five historic structures on the west side of the block, while the east side is occupied by surface parking lots. One of the buildings, the Bennett Block (adjacent to the south), was historically made up of three buildings, two of which were also designed by Herman Preusse in the post-fire era. The Bennett Block is listed in the Spokane Register of Historic Places.

The west side of the north half of the block suffered a fire in 1883 and was re-built as the half-block-long Union Block, within which architect Herman Preusse, Spokane's most prominent and only technically trained architect at the time, had his office. This building burned in the Great Spokane Fire in 1889. Today's 1890 Union Block occupies two lots on the south end of what was originally the half-block Union Block. It was at this time that the building took on its present form and uses, with commercial space on the ground floor and residential spaces on the upper two floors. The building suffered another fire in 1971. The ground floor was renovated in 1972, taking on its present appearance. The building was renovated again beginning in 2021, when windows were replaced and the upper two floors remodeled on the interior. The ground floor retains largely the same appearance that it had in 1972. The building also retains the same uses.

The 1890 Union Block building is significant and eligible for listing in the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Category A in the area of Commerce for its association with the group of commercial or commercial/residential buildings that were constructed immediately after Spokane's 1889 Great Fire. The building is also significant under Category C in the area of the work of a master, for its association with the prominent Spokane architect, Herman Preusse. The period of significance is 1890, based on the construction date for the property (C) and the period of rebuilding immediately after Spokane's Great Fire of 1889 (A), to 1972, when the building underwent a renovation of the ground floor, evident mainly on the front facade. The building displays good integrity, retaining integrity of location, materials, workmanship, and association. It retains integrity of design to the date of the 1972 renovation, with the exception of the recent window replacements. Nonetheless it is one of approximately ten buildings in Spokane that reflect the important period of rebuilding after the 1889 and is set among buildings of the same era, which helps convey its significance.

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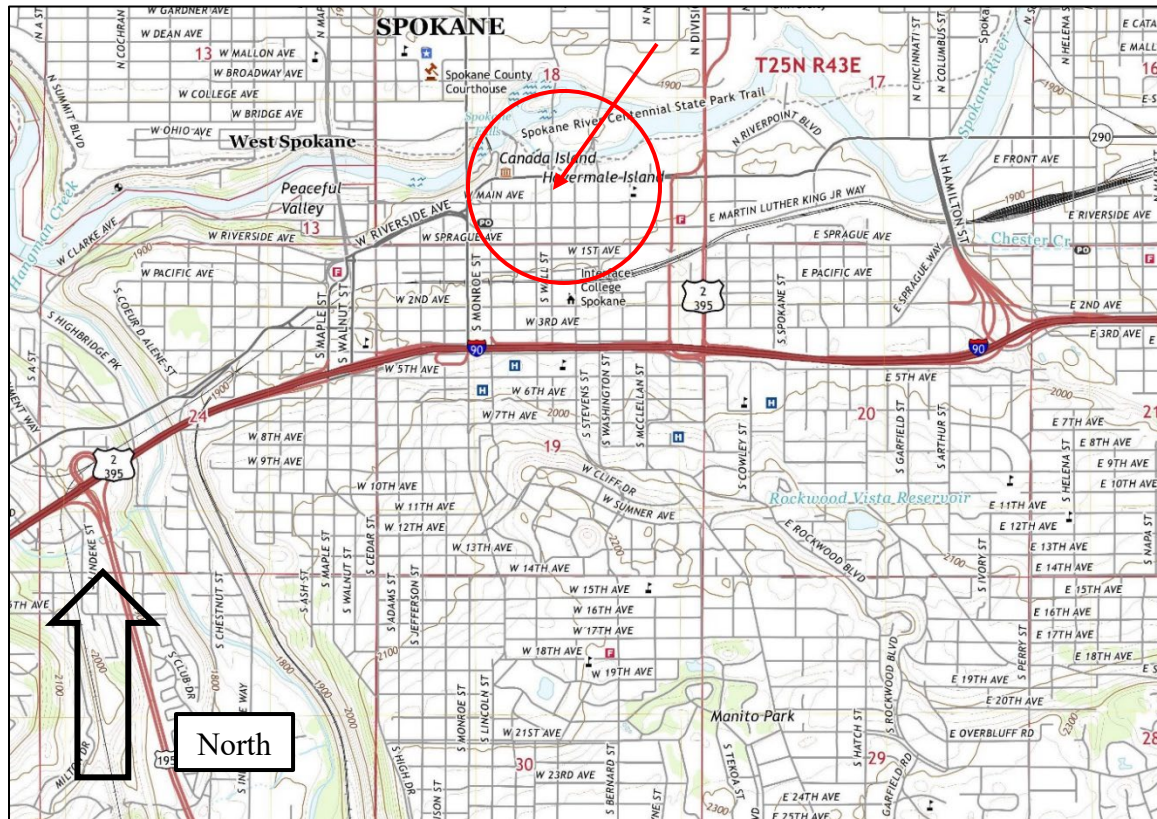
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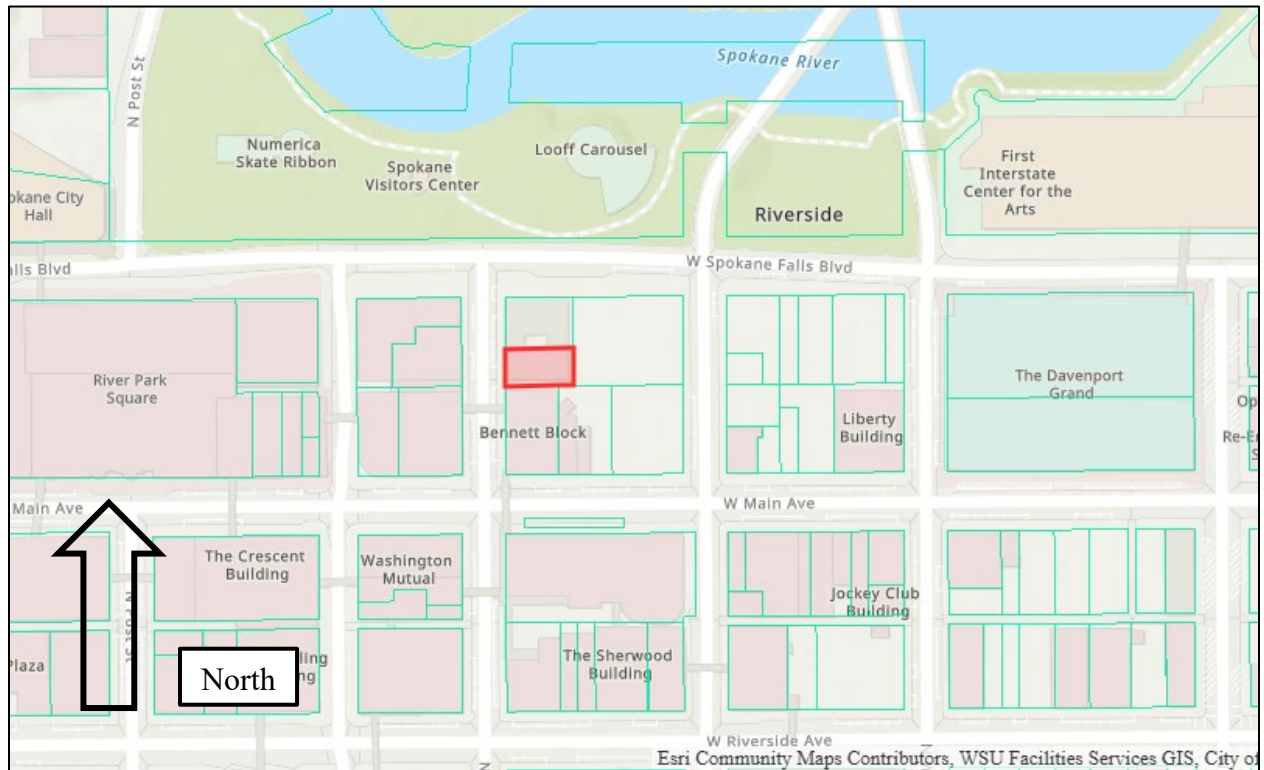
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Figure 1: Site location map, Spokane NW 7.5 minute quadrangle



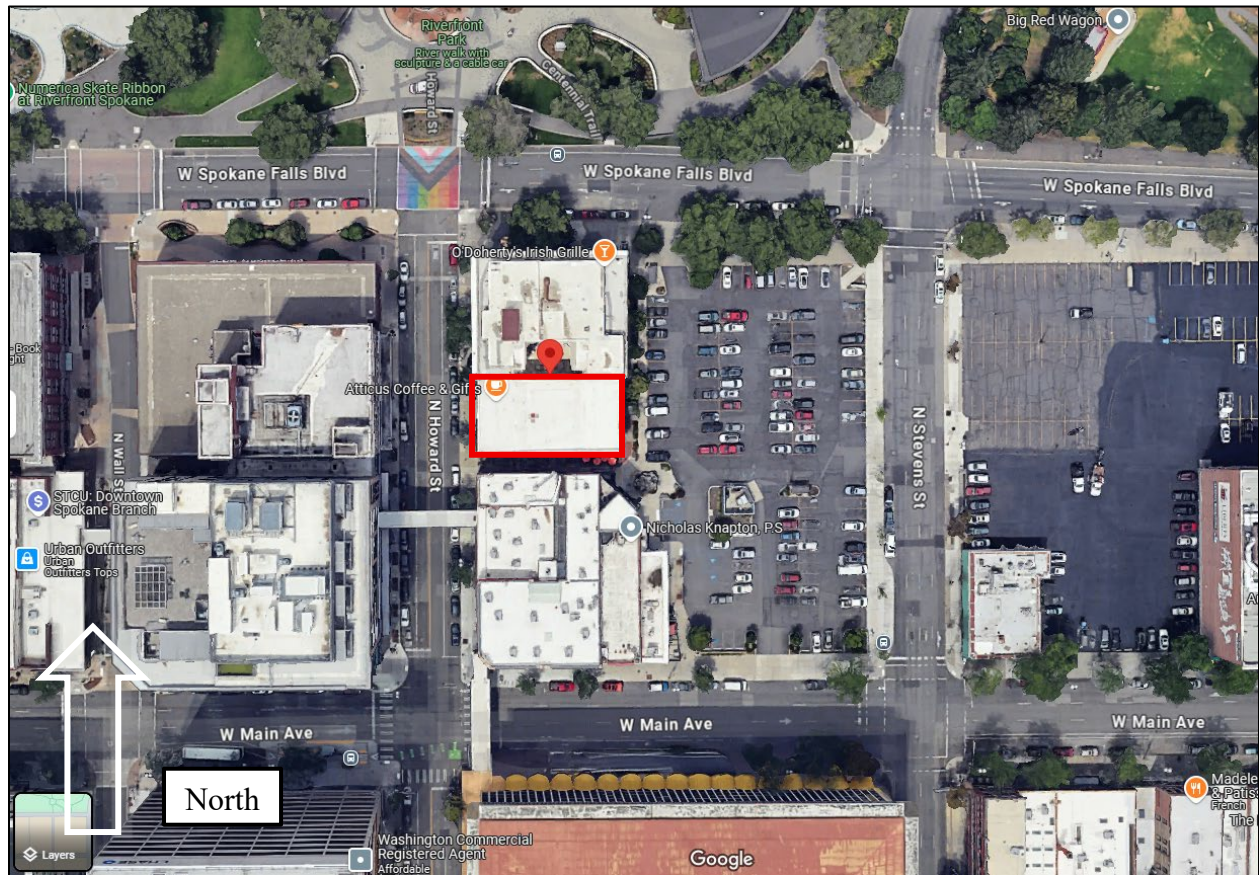
Source: USGS topographical map

Figure 2: Site parcel map



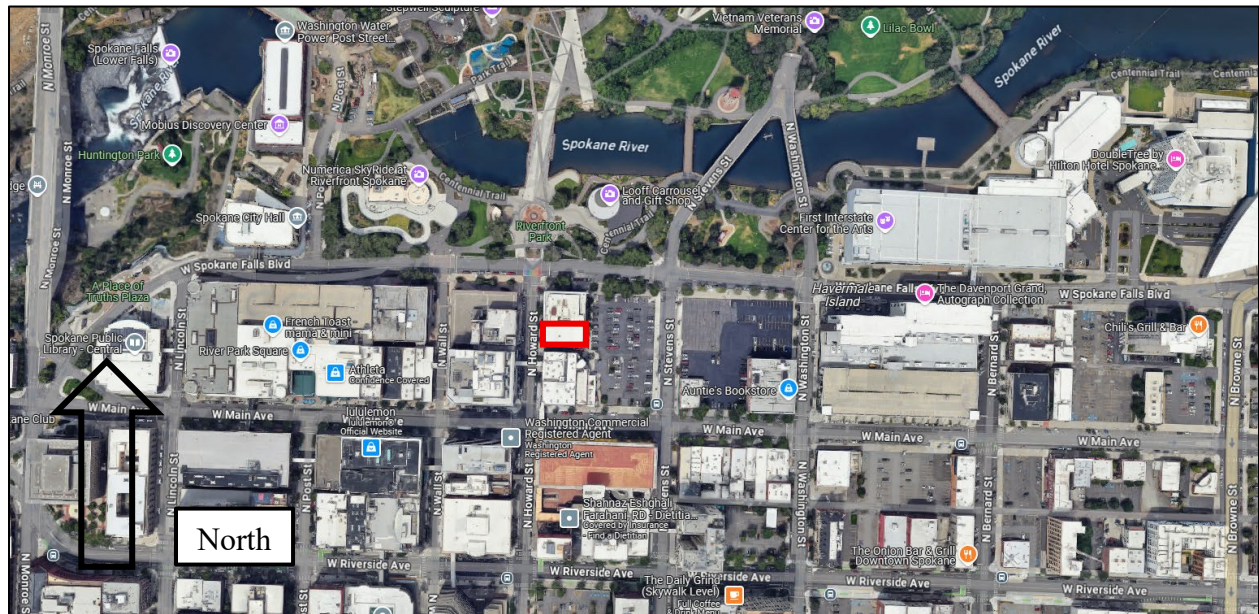
Source: Spokane County Assessor

Figure 3: Aerial site plan



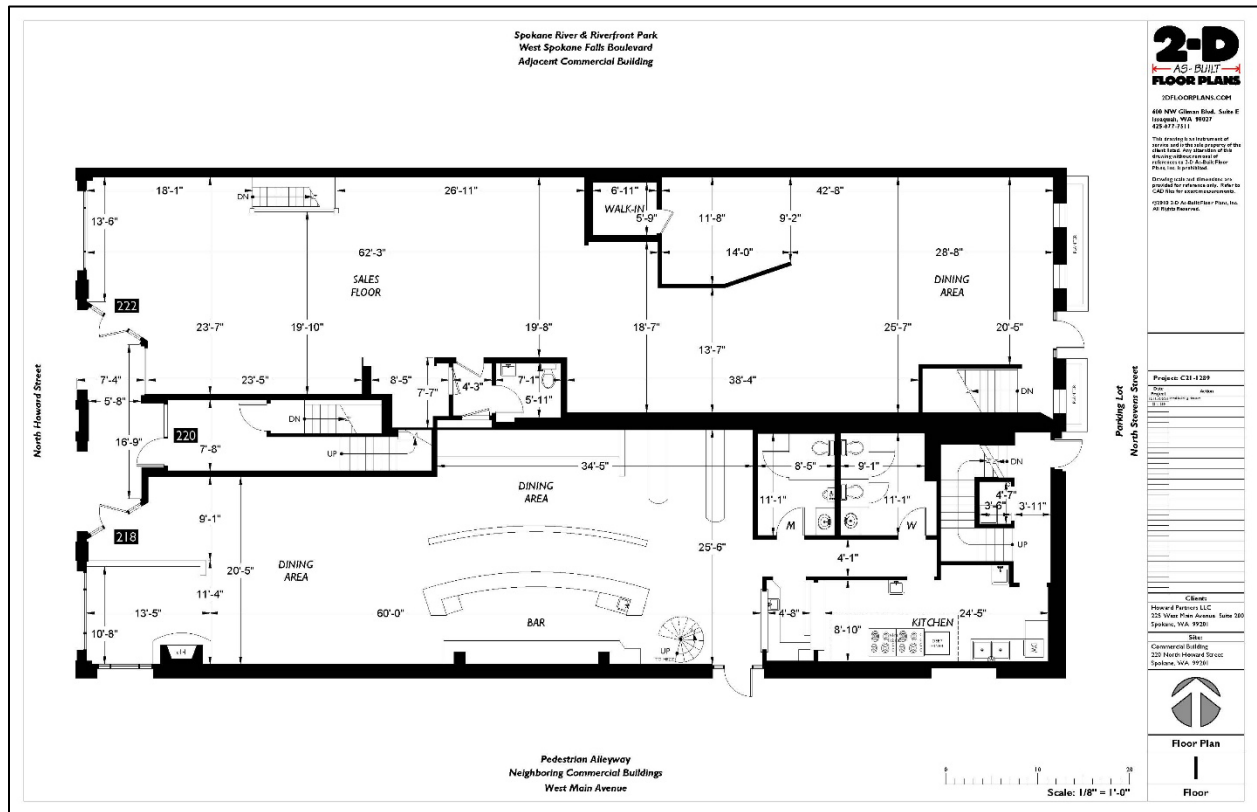
Source: Google maps

Figure 4: Neighborhood context



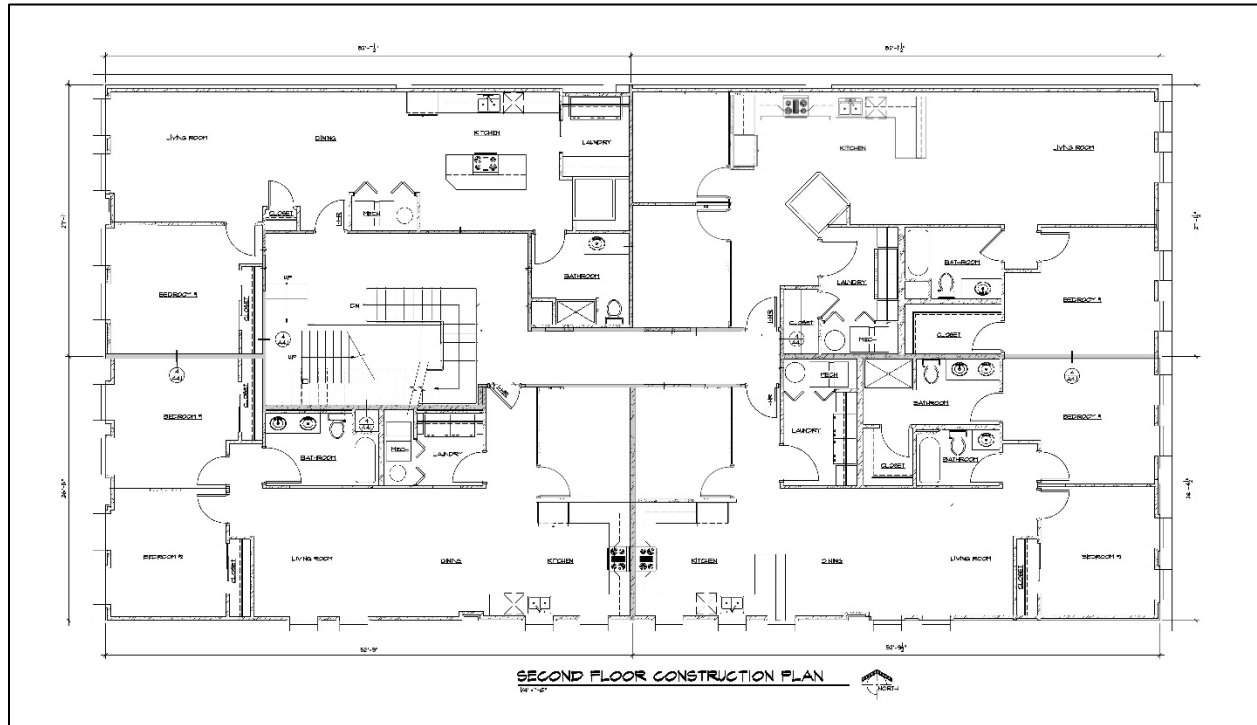
Source: Google maps

Figure 5: Ground floor of Union Block, 2021



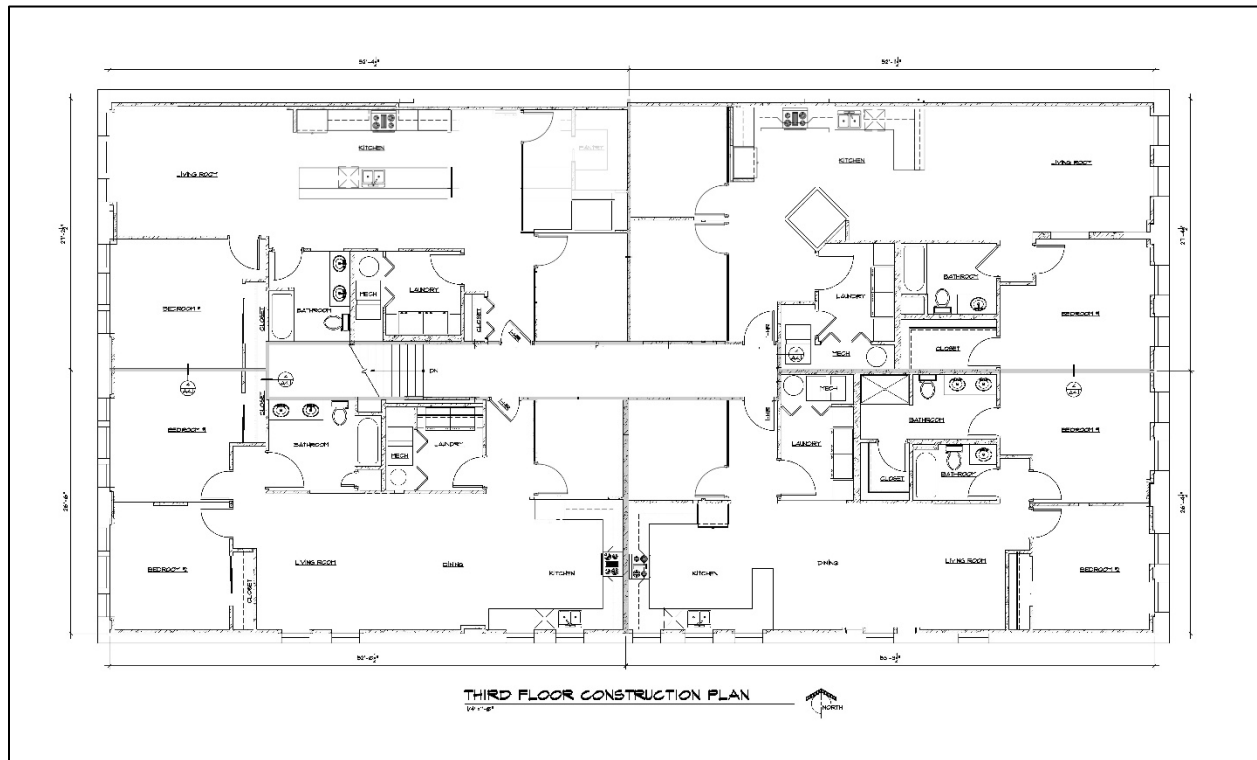
Source: Hawkins Edwards, Inc.

Figure 6: Second Floor Plan, 2024



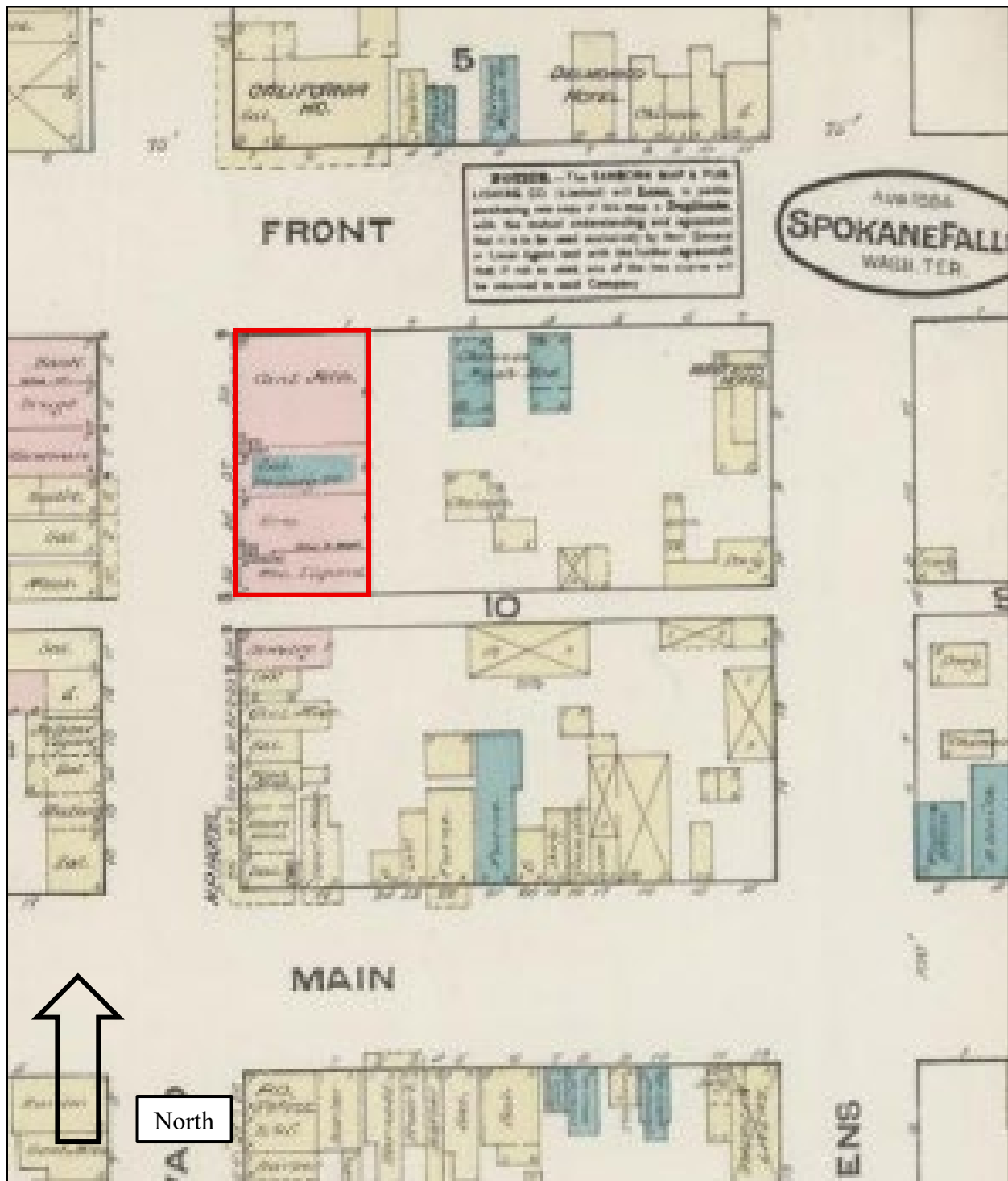
Source: Hawkins Edwards, Inc.

Figure 7: Third Floor Plan, 2024



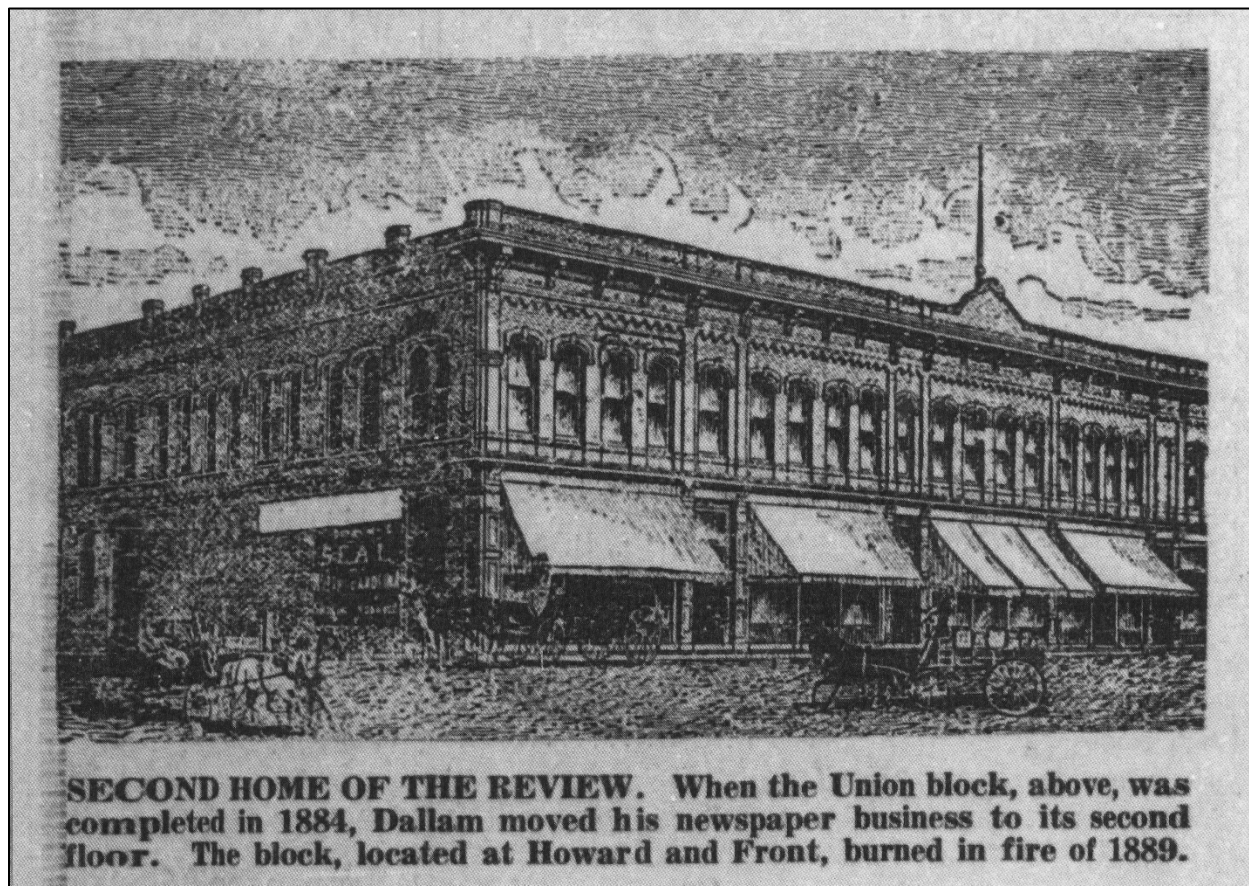
Source: Hawkins Edwards, Inc.

Figure 8: Sanborn Fire Insurance map reflecting rebuilt Union Block in 1884



Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance map, 1884

Figure 9: Illustration of the 1883 Union Block



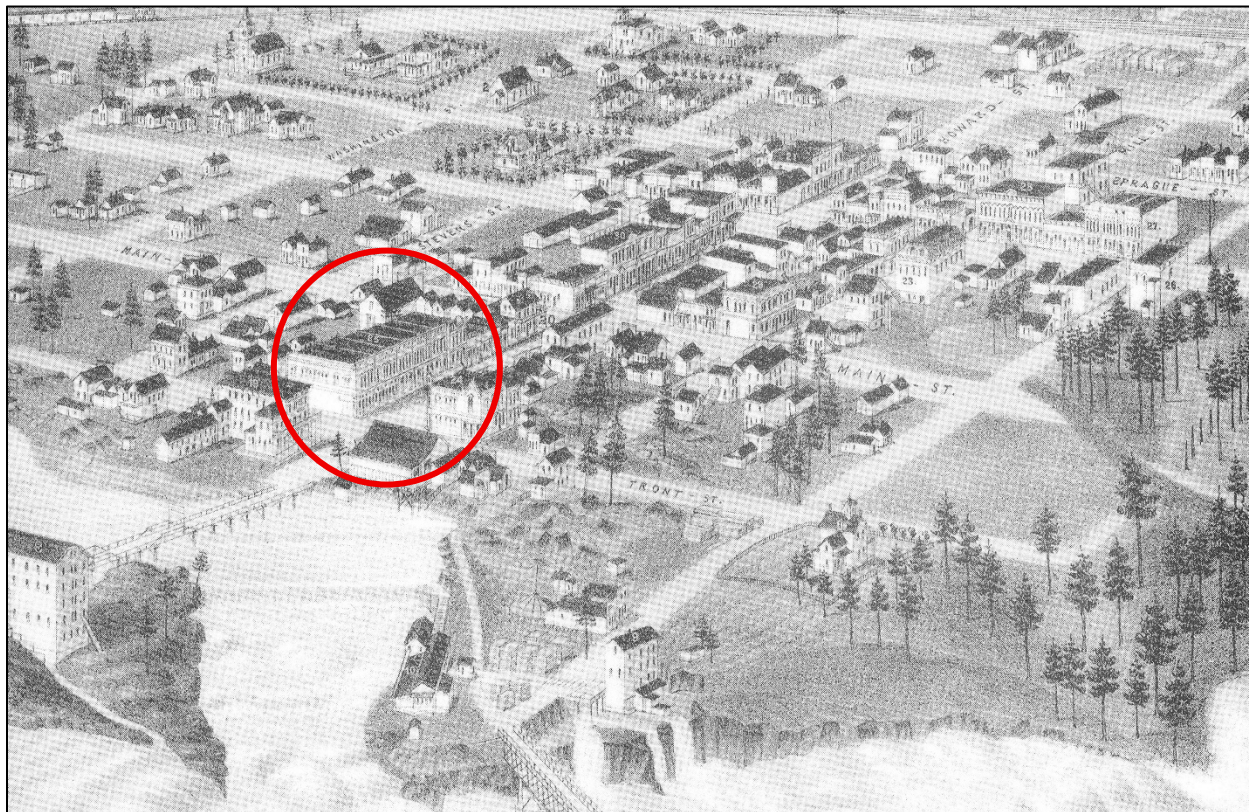
Source: *The Spokesman-Review*, October 24, 1951

Figure 10: The Pantheon Saloon located in the 1883 Union Block

PANTHEON
SALOON,
UNION BLOCK,
SPOKANE FALLS, - - - W. T.
C. H. DUNCAN & CO.
WILL BE OPEN ON OR ABOUT THE 15TH OF NOVEMBER, WITH
The Finest Brands of Wines, Liquors and Cigars,
SAN FRANCISCO, SACRAMENTO, PORTLAND, ST. PAUL, CHICAGO, AND
NEW YORK DAILY PAPERS ALWAYS ON FILE.
MR. C. H. DUNCAN AND AL. SOMERS
PRESIDING AT THE BAR, WILL BE GLAD TO WELCOME ALL OF
THEIR OLD FRIENDS.
Call and See Us. We Will Do You Good.
The following daily papers will be on file: St. Paul Pioneer Press, New York
Herald, Chicago Daily Times, Daily Oregonian, Portland Standard, S. F. Chronicle, S. F.
Examiner, Sacramento Record Union.
Weekly papers: S. F. Argonaut, Police News, Frank Leslie's Weekly, Harper's
Weekly, S. F. News Letter, S. F. Wasp, Sunday Oregonian.

Source: *The Spokesman-Review*, November 10, 1883:2.

Figure 11: Bird's-eye view of the Union Block in 1884



Source: *Spokane, Our Early Years*, Bamonte

Sanborn Fire Insurance map, August 1888

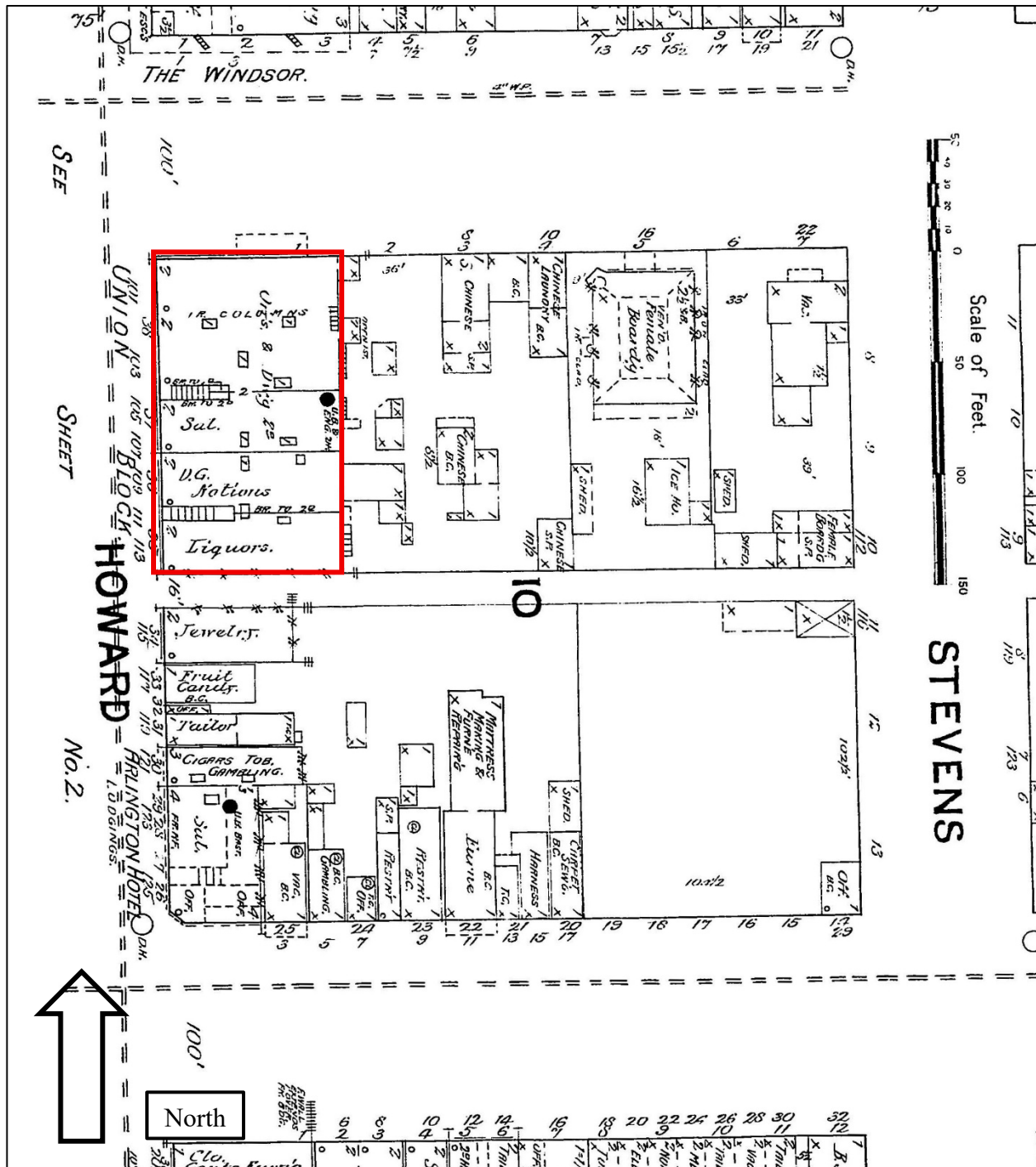
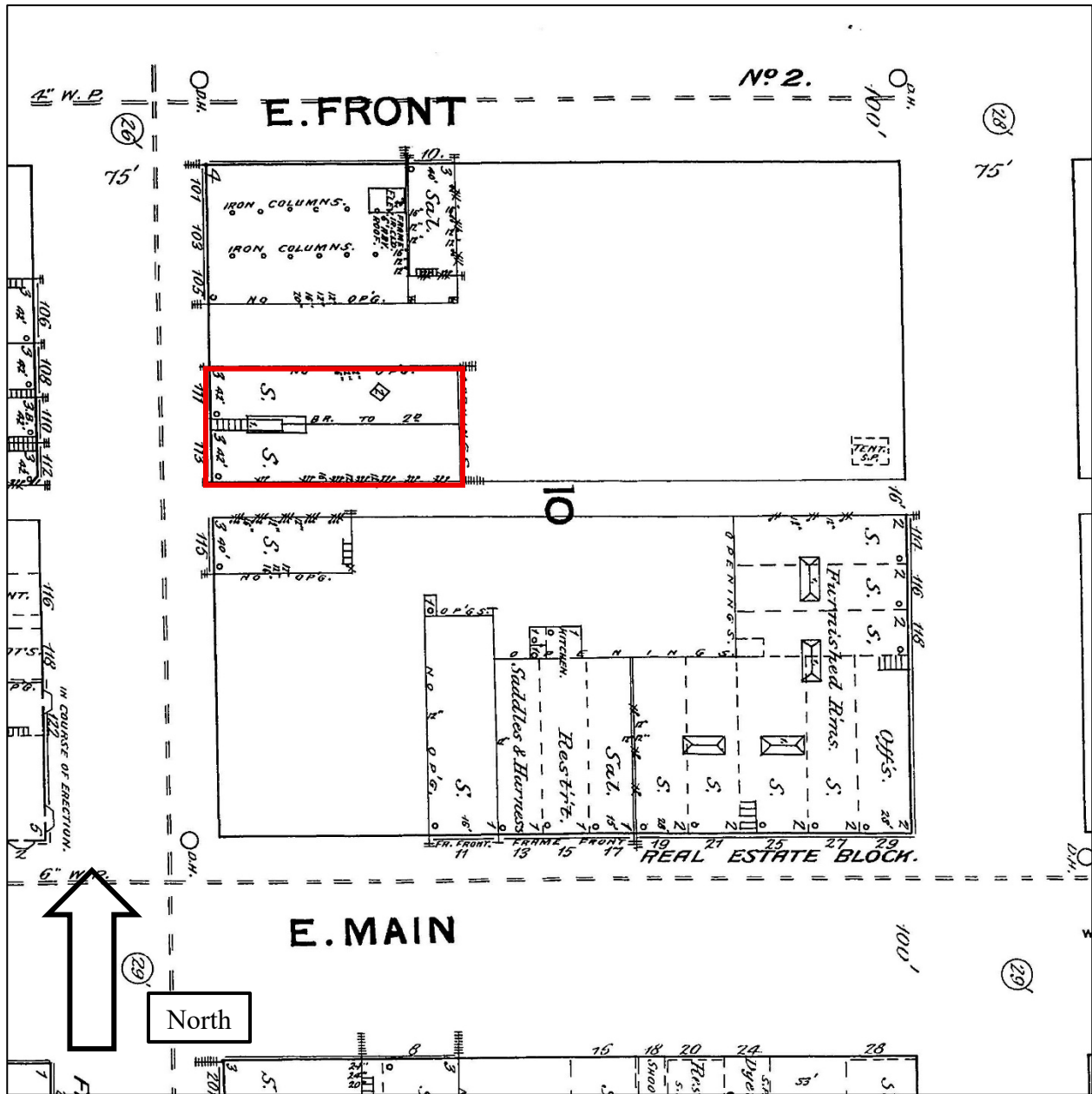
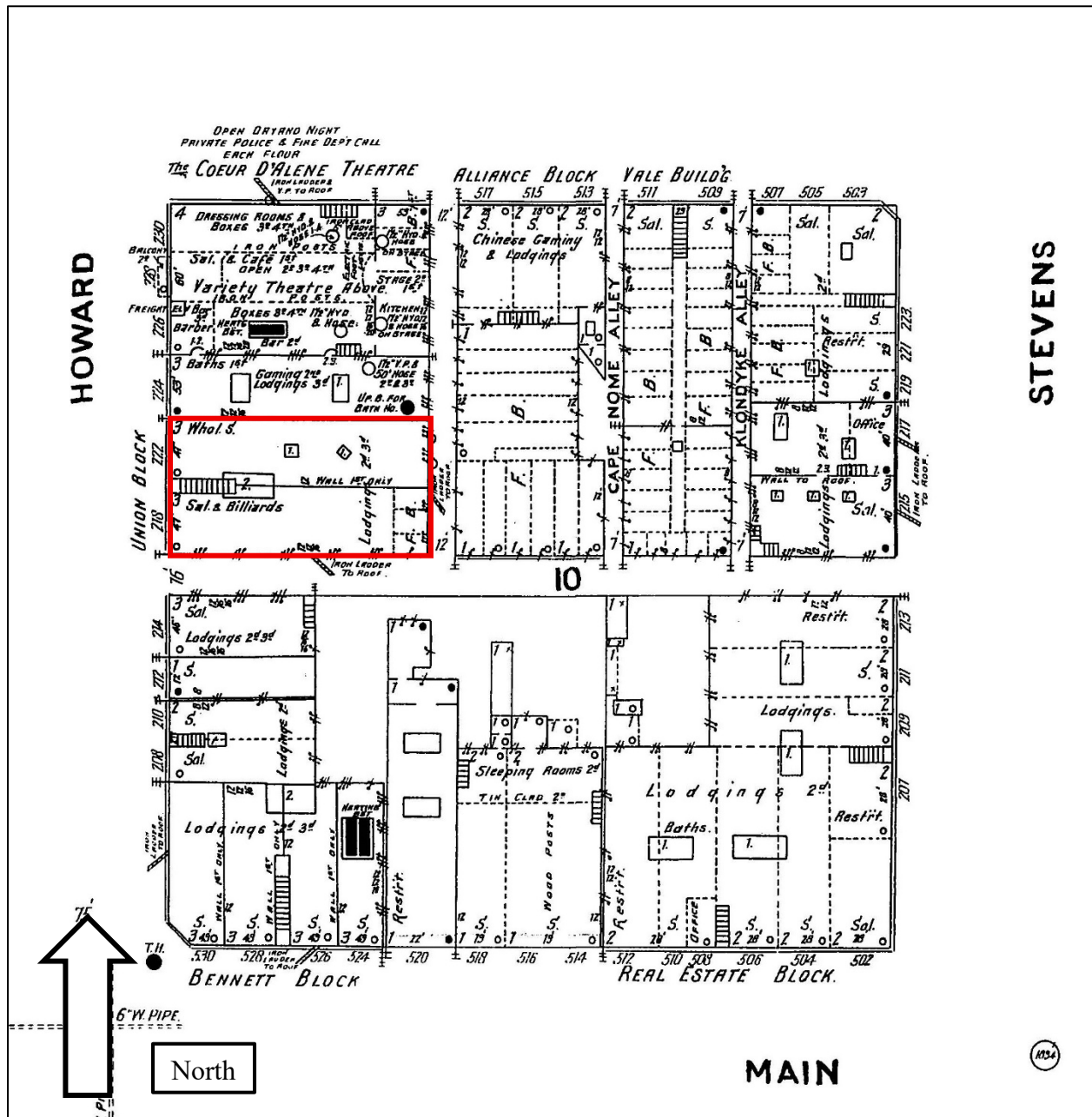


Figure 13: The 1890 Union Block as rebuilt after the 1889 Spokane Fire



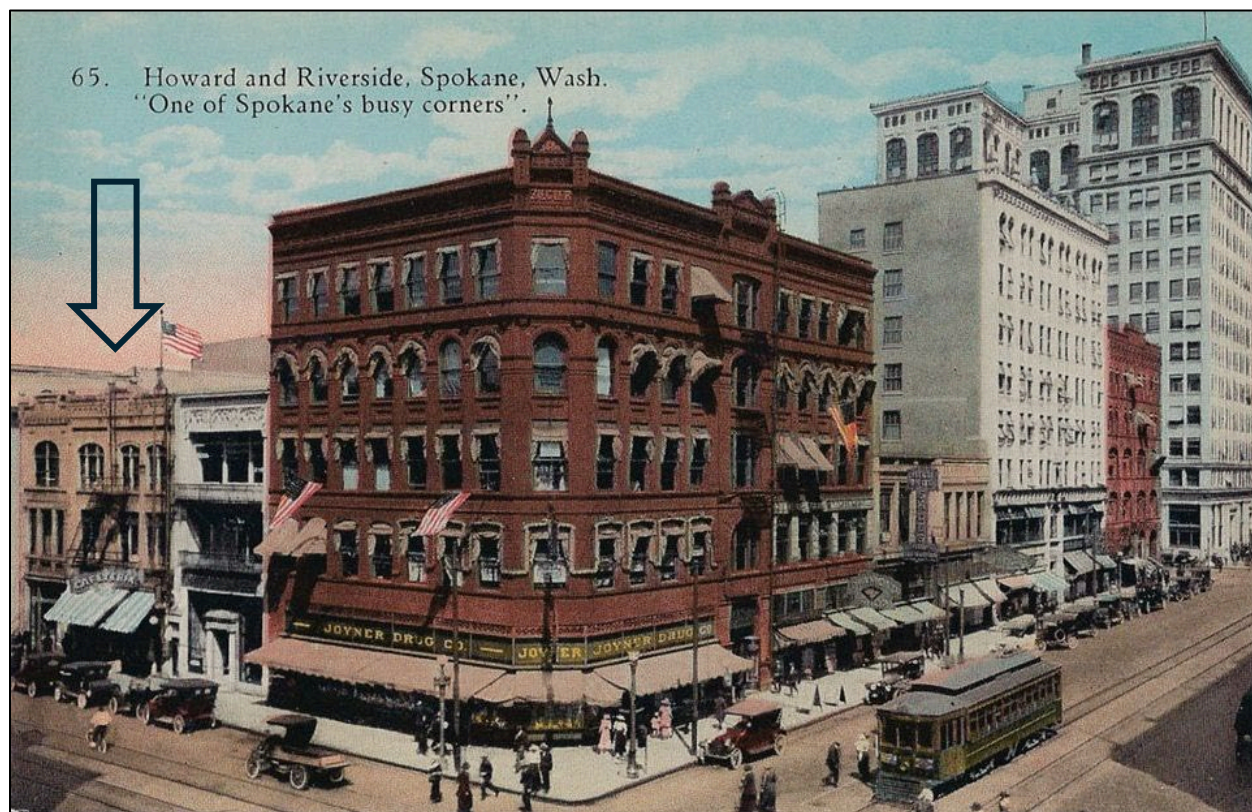
Sanborn Fire Insurance map, January 1890

Figure 14: The 1890 Union Block in 1902; note the Chinese Gambling and Lodgings and multiple female boarding houses along 7' alleys on the east side of the half block



Sanborn Fire Insurance map, 1902

Figure 15: N. Howard Street and W. Main Avenue in the streetcar era



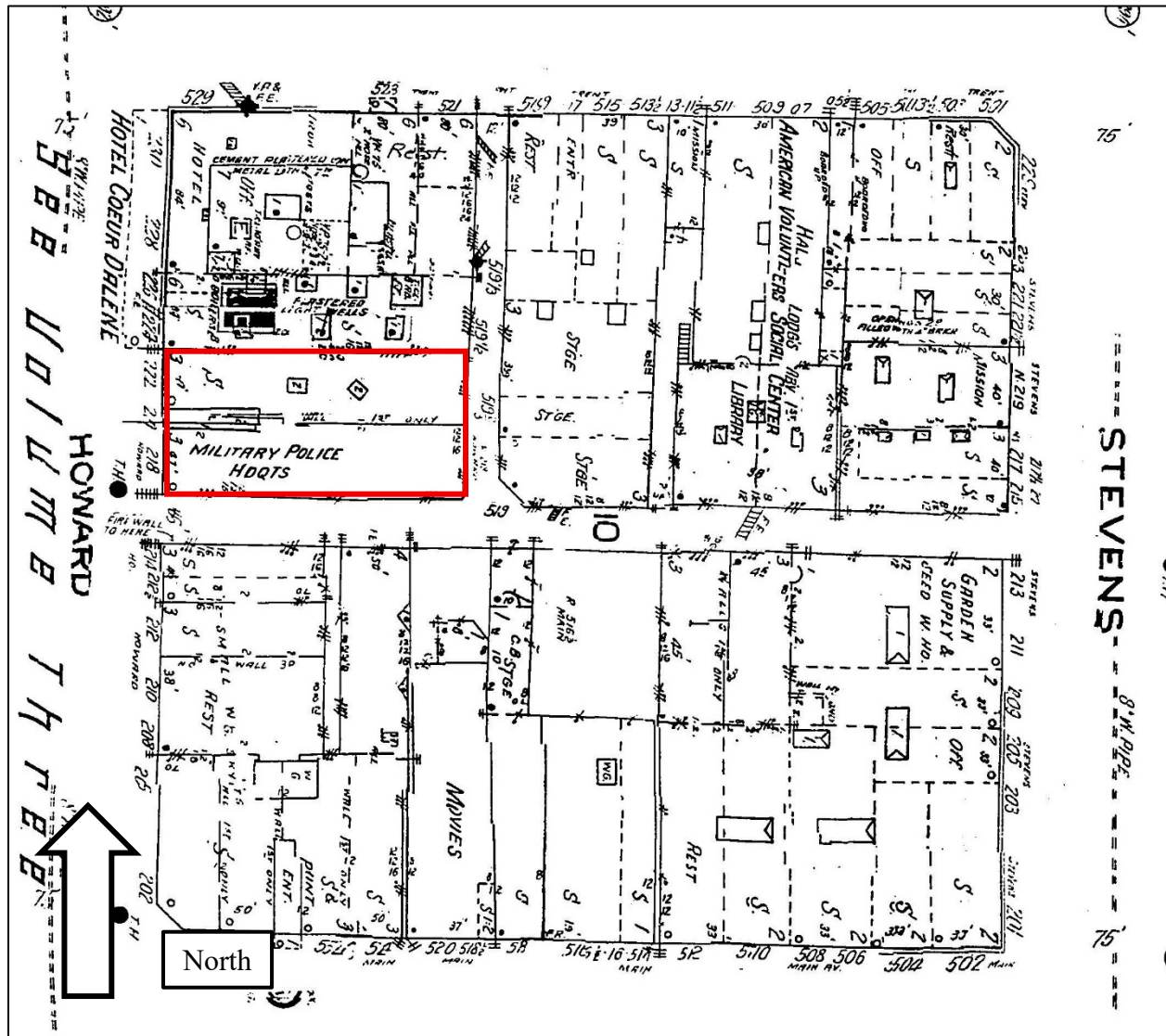
Source: Zachary Wnek, "Streetcars in Browne's Addition" (no date)

Figure 16: The 1890 Union Block in 1937



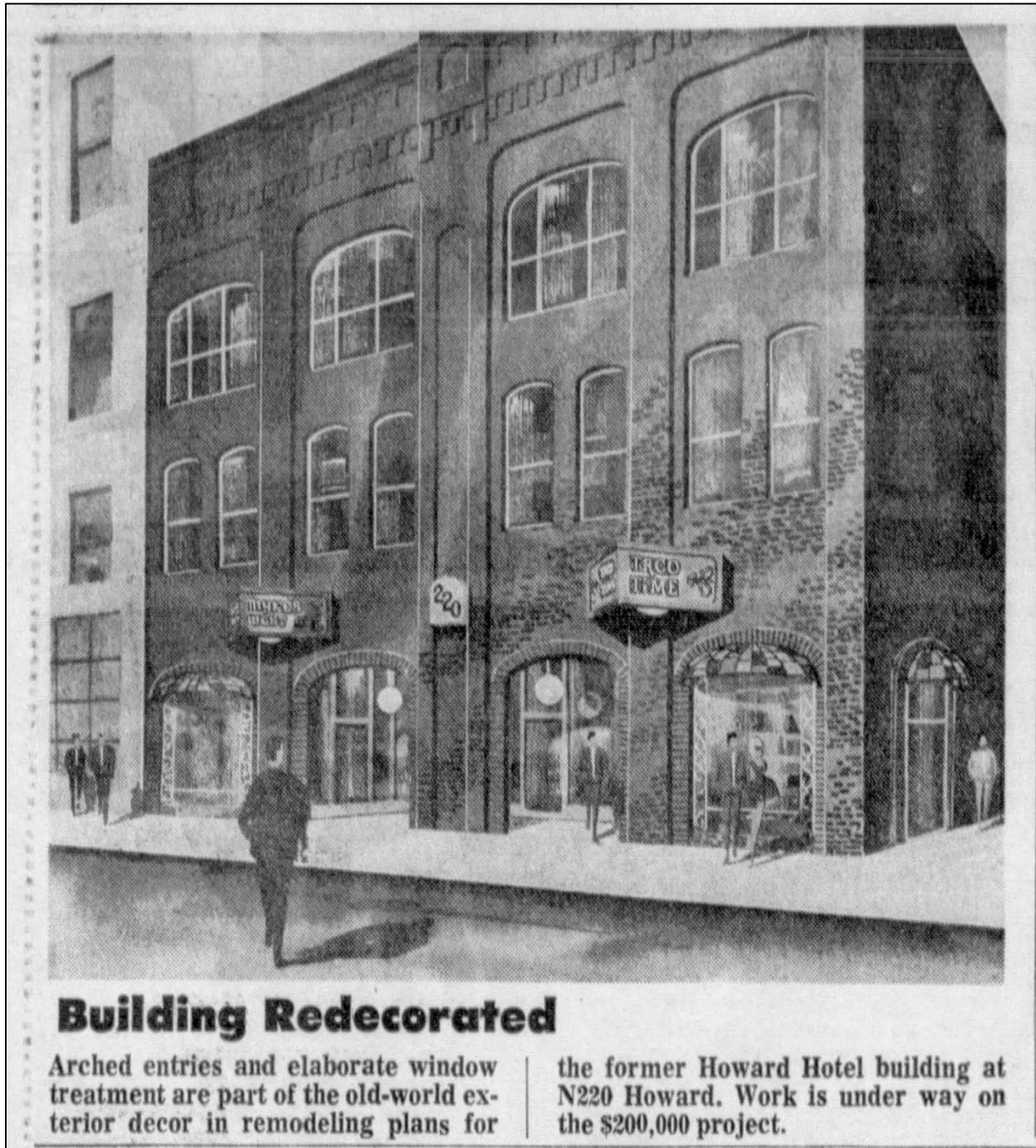
Source: Charles Libby Collection, Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture

Figure 17: The 1890 Union Block in 1950



Sanborn Fire Insurance map, January 1950

Figure 18: Planned renovation of the Union Block, 1972



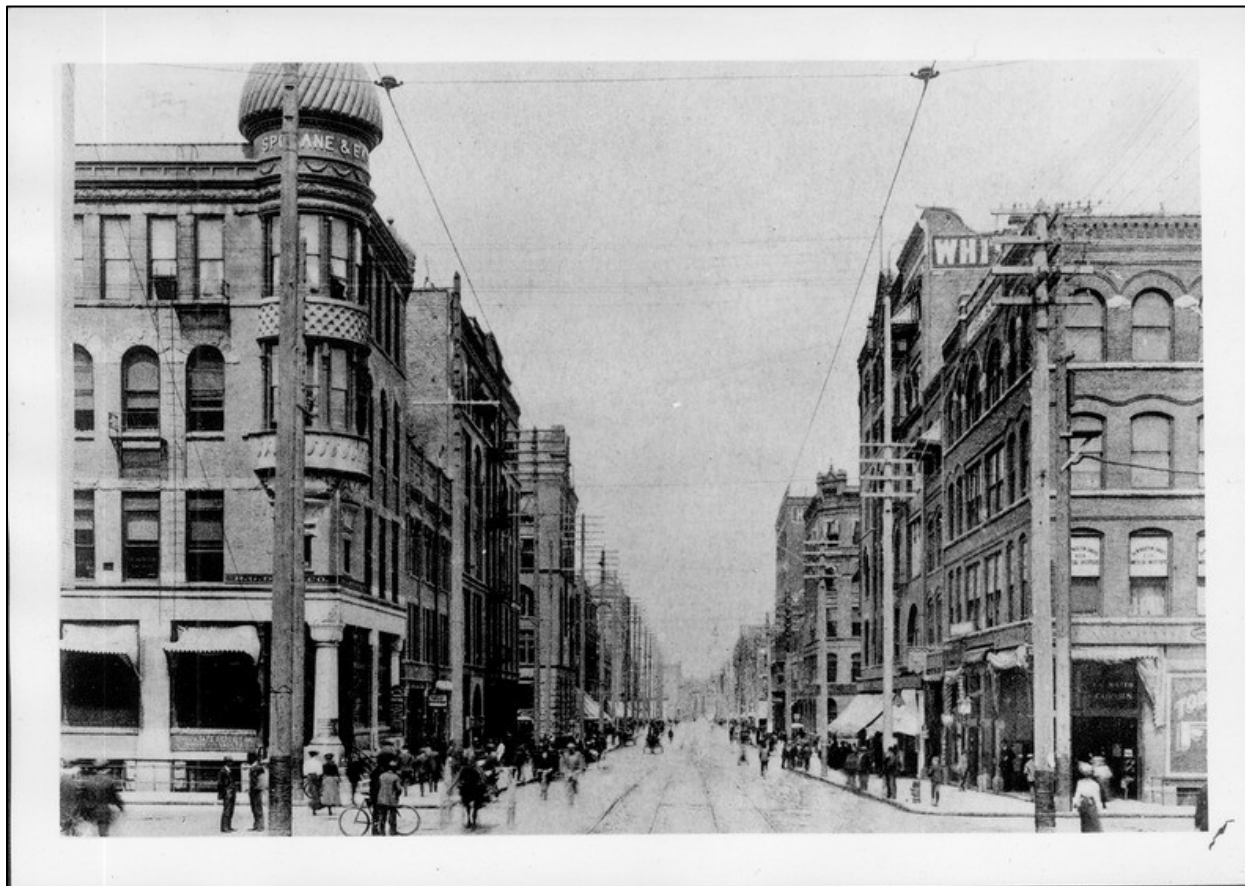
Source: *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, May 4, 1972

Figure 19: The Union Block ca 1972



Source: Historic Property Report, Union Block, WISAARD

Figure 20: Vernacular commercial buildings, Howard Street, ca 1890-1900



Source: Spokane Public Library, Northwest Room

Figure 21: Spokane's most important Romanesque Revival building in 1909



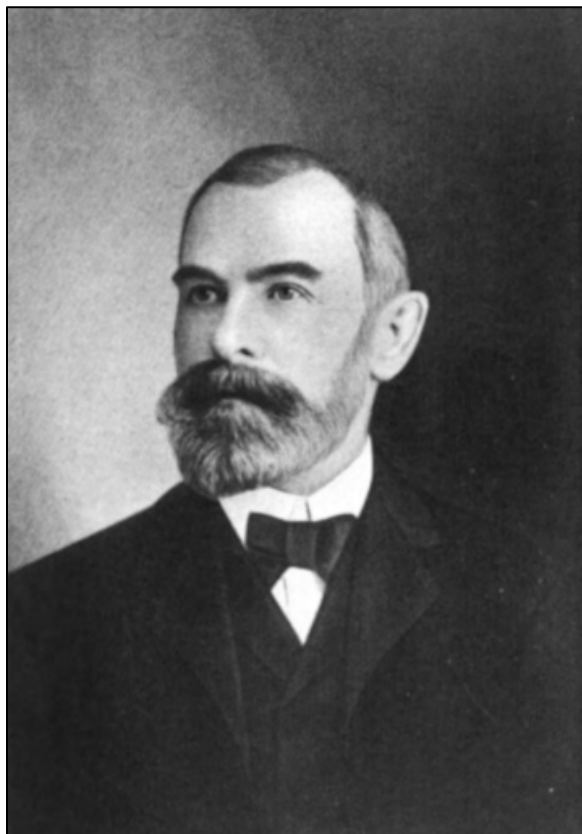
Source: Northwest Museum of Art and Culture, Libby Studios Collection

Figure 22: The Coeur d'Alene Hotel, site of the former Union Block, in 1924, current Union Block noted



Source: *The Spokesman Review*, March 12, 2018

Figure 23: Herman Pruesse, architect of the Union Block Architects for the 1890 Union Block



Herman Pruesse, 1847-1926