

Staff Report of Findings

Spokane City/County CLG Recommendation

National Register Eligibility –American Legion Cenotaph – Riverside Park Cemetery

Applicant/Owner: American Legion Post #9
Consultant/Nomination Author: RaeAnna Victor, Historic Preservation Chair, Jonas Babcock DAR
Hearing Date: March 20, 2024
Property Address: 508 N Government Way (a portion of the cemetery)
Property Name: American Legion Cenotaph

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Generally a building, structure, object, site, or district which is more than fifty years old may be designated an historic landmark or historic district if it has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the city, county, state, or nation (36 CFR 60).

- Constructed in 1930, the American Legion Cenotaph meets the 50-year age criteria established for listing in the National Register.

2. The property must qualify under one or more criteria for National Register eligibility (36 CFR 60): The American Legion Cenotaph is being nominated under Criteria A with Special Criteria consideration F as a commemorative property at the local level.

- The American Legion Cenotaph was constructed in 1930 by Spokane Post No. 9 in the Riverside Park Cemetery. The cenotaph was built to honor fallen soldiers in war as well as to provide a place for reflection for those left behind. Architect and American Legion member Henry Bertelsen designed the cenotaph and Julian Simonson was the builder.
- The American Legion Cenotaph is historically significant under National Register **Criteria A** and **Special Criteria Consideration F** as a structure that is directly associated with memorial events that originally centered around the recognition of soldiers who served in WWI. At the time of its construction in 1930, the citizens of Spokane were still reeling from the impact of the war and the significant loss of life and wanted a place to honor and remember those who served.
- The cenotaph is constructed of concrete and granite and contains benches along the U-shaped sides. The back wall boasts a taller arched stone panel (approx. 8' tall at its highest point from ground level) which is etched with the wording, "*In Memory of Those Who Gave their Lives for their Country in the World Wars.*"

3. The property must also possess integrity of location, design, materials, setting, workmanship, feeling and association (36 CFR 60). *Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance...it is not necessary for a property to retain all its historic physical features...the property must retain, however, the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historic identity* (National Register Bulletin 15).

- The American Legion Cenotaph retains excellent integrity in all aspects: location, design, materials, setting, workmanship, feeling and association. While more burials have taken place around the Cenotaph over the years, the setting and feeling has not changed meaningfully since it was built.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The American Legion Cenotaph is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a structure under Criteria A as well as Special Criteria Consideration F as a commemorative property.

Preservation Officer Review: Megan Duvall
Nominations Committee:
Landmarks Commission Review: Pending

Report: 3/5/2024
Site Visit: 3/7/2024
Hearing: 3/20/2024