

Staff Report and Findings of Fact Nomination to the Spokane Register of Historic Places

American Legion Cenotaph – Riverside Park Cemetery – 508 N Government Way

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. **SMC 17D.100.020: "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."**
 - Originally built in 1930; the American Legion Cenotaph meets the age criteria for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places.
2. **SMC 17D.100.020: The property must qualify under one or more categories for the Spokane Register (A, B, C, D, E).**
 - 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 the Spokane Register of Historic Places **Category A** 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. **SMC17D.100.090: "The property must also possess integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and association." From NPS Bulletin 15: "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."**
 - The American Legion Cenotaph retains excellent integrity in all aspects: location, design, materials, workmanship and association. While more burials have taken place around the Cenotaph over the years, the association has not changed meaningfully since it was built.
4. **Once listed, this property will be eligible to apply for incentives, including:**
 - Special Valuation (property tax abatement), Façade Improvement Grants, Spokane Register historical plaque, and special code considerations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The **American Legion Cenotaph** is eligible for listing as a structure on the Spokane Register under **Category A – Broad Patterns of Spokane History**.

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

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