

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

T.H. & Bessie Tollefsen House – 517 W Sound Avenue

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. **SMC 17D.100.090: "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 1910; the T.H. & Bessie Tollefsen House meets the age criteria for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places.

2. **SMC 17D.100.090: The property must qualify under one or more categories for the Spokane Register (A, B, C, D, E).**
 - The Tollefsen House is an excellent example of a one and a half story Craftsman-style bungalow and is eligible for the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Category C for high artistic values. This house represents a mix of Craftsman-era or Arts and Crafts and Tudor Revival elements, which was not uncommon in Spokane. This house, however, has specific design elements and motifs that make it stand out among other residences that combine these two styles. It additionally incorporates special features that make it stand out among other Craftsman houses of this era and in this area. It does not display all the aspects of a Craftsman bungalow that affiliate it with this style, nor does it incorporate multiple elements of a Tudor Revival house. The way it combines the elements that are present, however, make it unique.
 - Features of this house that display elements of the Arts and Crafts style include the extensive use of natural materials, including stone, brick and stucco. Details that display the craftsmanship of the home include the deep eaves and exposed rafters that articulate the dominant gable forms. The Tudor Revival elements that this house incorporates include the false half-timbering and rough stucco finishes, although the pargeted stucco finish on the upper level of the house is unique.
 - The Tollefsen House is significant and eligible for listing in the Spokane Register (it is already a contributor to the Marycliff/Cliff Park National Register Historic District) as possessing high artistic values. These include the side gable form with its dominant front and rear-facing gables; decorative false half-timbering that enhances the building features; and extensive use of highly textured natural materials, especially the unique pargeted stucco finish at the upper level.
 - The T.H. and Bessie Tollefsen House, was built by contractor James L. Morrison, who also lived in the house in 1910 and early 1911. Morrison's wife, Mary, was T.H. Tollefsen's sister.

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."**
 - Well-preserved with a very good degree of integrity in original location, design, materials, workmanship, and association, the Tollefsen House is eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places.

4. **Once listed, this property will be eligible to apply for incentives, including:**

Special Valuation (property tax abatement), Façade Improvement Grants, Spokane Register historic property plaque, and special code considerations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The T.H. and Bessie Tollefsen House is eligible for listing on the Spokane Register under Category C – Architecture for possessing high artistic values. The house is an excellent example of the Arts and Crafts style with Tudor Revival style influences that also display some unique qualities, particularly in the nature of its

materials and design, and the way the design elements are combined to convey the house's design significance.

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

Report: 2/27/2025
Site Visit: 3/6/2025
Hearing: 3/19/2025