

# Staff Report and Findings of Fact Nomination to the Spokane Register of Historic Places Wolfe-Trunkey House – 415 East 12<sup>th</sup> 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 1912; the Wolfe-Trunkey 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 Wolfe-Trunkey House meets the Spokane Register under Category A for its association with two of Spokane's successful businessmen in the first half of the twentieth century, Conrad Wolfle and Harvey Trunkey.
  - Conrad Wolfle, who bought the house for \$30,000 from contractor A.T. Johnson at its completion, was best known for his ownership of mines in the Chewelah area, although he was involved in a number of other ventures in his lifetime.
  - The second owner, Harvey Trunkey, was one of the most successful wholesale grocery owners in Spokane. Over the years he beat out fierce competition to be the longest-running wholesale grocery owner by 1950. The McClintock-Trunkey Annex Building at 125 South Stevens Street was listed on the Spokane Register of Historic Places in 2018.
  - The Wolfe-Trunkey House meets the Spokane Register under Category C for architecture as an excellent and early example of Prairie Style in Spokane; as well as its association with master architect, Earl W. Morrison and notable builder Amil T. Johnson.
  - Earl W. Morrison, (1889-1955) known as the "boy architect" in Spokane, had the unique distinction of designing large homes for prominent people in Spokane while he was still in high school and college. Morrison designed dozens of houses, including some of the most impressive homes on Spokane's South Hill, including in the Cliff Park, Ninth Avenue and Rockwood neighborhoods, still some of Spokane's most prestigious areas. These large and distinctive homes shape the character of these neighborhoods to this day. After starting his career in Spokane, he went on to have a decades-long career designing both modest and grand houses, residential apartment buildings, high rises, commercial projects, schools, and more, primarily in Washington State.
  - Amil Theodore Johnson was a prolific builder in Spokane in the years from approximately 1905 to 1913, when he worked with some of the most popular architects in the city in this busy period. He often built Morrison's works, including some of his most well-known houses.
  - The Wolfe-Trunkey House is an outstanding example of Prairie School design by a young, yet experienced, student from Spokane who was studying architecture in Chicago in the years from 1910 to 1913, during the high point of the Prairie School's genesis. Earl Wilson Morrison, who studied Prairie School design at the prestigious Art Institute of Chicago and the Armour Institute of Technology, was among those who introduced the style to Spokane. The 1912 Wolfe-Trunkey house was his first residence in the style, designed while he was still a student.
  - As the first Prairie Style home built by Morrison in Spokane, the elements of that unique design aesthetic are particularly strong in this home's symmetrical layout, natural materials, quality woodwork, and window designs.
  
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 Wolfe-Trunkey House has retained its location, design, setting and association, and still retains most of its materials and workmanship on the exterior and interior. As a result of its overall integrity, it 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**

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**The Wolfe-Trunkey House is eligible for listing on the Spokane Register under Category A** due to its association with Conrad Wolfe and Harvey Trunkey **and under Category C** in the area of architecture for its design by Earl W. Morrison and as an excellent and early example of the Prairie Style in Spokane.

Preservation Specialist Review: Logan Camporeale  
Nominations Committee: Completed  
Landmarks Commission Review: Pending

Report: 4/9/2026  
Site Visit: 4/2/2026  
Hearing: 4/15/2026