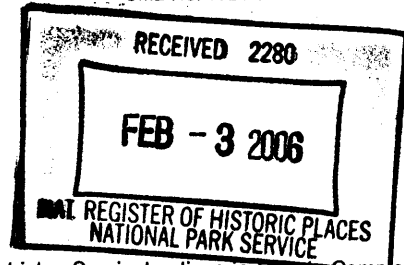


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name WILBUR, RALSTON & SARAH, HOUSE  
Other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 2525 East 19th Avenue not for publication \_\_\_\_\_  
city or Spokane vicinity \_\_\_\_\_  
town \_\_\_\_\_  
State Washington code WA county Spokane code 063 zip code 99223

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 1-31-06  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

WASHINGTON STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

- I, hereby certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] 3.15.06  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not incl. previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Non-Contributing	
3		buildings
		sites
		structures
2		objects
5		Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> & Early 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS:

Craftsman

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: basalt

walls STONE: basalt

WOOD: shingle

roof ASPHALT

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X 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 or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1916

Significant Dates

1916

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Cutter & Malmgren, architects

B & S Contracting, builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property.) SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.) SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
#
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record#

Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
X Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreeage of Property**      4.04 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM References on a continuation sheet.)

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)      See continuation sheet.

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)      See continuation sheet.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Linda Yeomans, Consultant Planner  
organization Historic Preservation Planning & Design      date 10 October 2005  
street & number 501 West 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue      telephone (509) 456-3828  
city or town Spokane      state WA      zip code 99203

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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**Property Owner** (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

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name Mark E. & Diana L. Graham  
street & number 2525 E. 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue      telephone (509) 455-6079  
city or town Spokane      state WA      zip code 99223

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet –

WILBUR, RALSTON & SARAH, HOUSE  
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### NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Built in 1916, the Ralston & Sarah Wilbur House, garage, caretaker's cottage, and designed basalt rock landscape features constitute a landmark example of the American Arts & Crafts style. The property is located three miles uphill and southeast from downtown Spokane, Washington on a natural rocky basalt terrace that projects from the side of a steeply wooded, rocky bluff. The result of ancient cataclysmic events and catastrophic erosion precipitated by a succession of great floods,<sup>1</sup> the bluff runs east and west along a massive basalt ridge that characterizes the south hill area of Spokane. The ridge and its steep bluff face north and command sweeping views of north Spokane and distant mountain peaks. Sited in the center of 4.04 acres, the Wilbur House hugs the side of the bluff and is built at multiple levels. The home's multi-level design and natural building materials render it organically integrated to its building site. The house is clad with native black basalt rock and split cedar shingles. Crisp white paint accentuates exterior trim and multi-paned fenestration, producing a stark contrast to the black basalt. Illustrative of the ground-hugging horizontal emphasis of the house, the dwelling has a low-pitched roof with widely overhanging eaves, wide barge boards with pointed cut ends, exposed rafter tails and extended purlins, and a full-width arcaded porch with a plain balustrade. Massive battered porch piers made of black basalt rock support the covered porch. The interior of the home features an open floor plan with an expansive great room, basalt fireplaces, and honey-colored natural wood paneling and woodwork. A basalt stone-clad caretaker's cottage and stone garage are built into the rocky hillside at the rear entrance of the property behind the house. The home, garage, and caretaker's cottage are surrounded by manicured lawn, Ponderosa pine trees, rocky basalt outcroppings, and designed landscape features made of basalt rock. These include a two-tiered rock fountain, rock retaining and garden walls, stone steps and stairways, and rocky pathways. The Wilbur House, garage, caretaker's cottage, and designed basalt stone landscape features retain excellent architectural integrity in original location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association as an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century single-family residence built in Spokane, Washington.

### CURRENT APPEARANCE & CONDITION

#### *Site*

The Wilbur House, garage, caretaker's cottage, and grounds are sited on a steep hillside in the Riverview and Spokane View Additions in southeast Spokane. The property covers an irregular-shaped area totaling 4.04 acres and is roughly located between East Seventeenth and Nineteenth Avenues (north and south) and between South Cook and Mt. Vernon Streets (west and east). The property is identified as Spokane County tax parcel number 35281.0330 (land only in front of the house) and number 25281.0333 (land with improvements).<sup>2</sup> The house has an irregular footprint and measures approximately 85 feet wide and 55 feet deep. A two-car-plus garage is located a few feet behind the house to the south and measures 43 feet wide

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<sup>1</sup> Reynolds, Sally and Linda Yeomans. *Moore-Turner Garden National Register Nomination*, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Spokane County plat map, 2005. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

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and 28 feet deep. A caretaker's cottage is located adjacent west of the garage and measures 22 feet wide and 26 feet deep.<sup>3</sup> The house, garage, and caretaker's cottage are built on a steep north-facing slope and are framed by a natural wooded hillside and basalt bluffs to the south, and by manicured lawn, pine trees, basalt outcroppings, and designed basalt rock landscape features (rock walls, stairs, fountain) to the east, west, and north as the hillside descends around the house down a steep slope to Seventeenth Avenue. A prominent four-foot-high basalt rock wall parallels the front of the property along the sidewalk at East Seventeenth Avenue for 125 feet. Through an opening at the east end of the wall, a concrete driveway runs uphill from Seventeenth Avenue along the eastern edge of the property to the back of the house. The driveway is in poor condition due to severe erosion below the concrete surface and is no longer used. The house and garage are accessed from Nineteenth Avenue and from a paved driveway at the rear of the property which is located at the terminus of Nineteenth Avenue. The Wilbur House and the 4.04-acre estate on which it is sited is located in a residential section of southeast Spokane and is surrounded to the north, east and west by at least three other large estates and by outlying residential blocks developed with smaller single-family homes that were built mostly between 1900 and 1940. Left in a natural state, the majority of the steeply wooded and rocky hillside behind the Wilbur House is an extension of Lincoln Park and is owned by the City of Spokane's Parks & Recreation Department.<sup>4</sup>

### *House Exterior*

The Wilbur House is a frame dwelling with a basalt rock foundation and is almost entirely covered by a twelve-inch-thick veneer of black basalt rock which is a rubblemix of both vesicled and non-vesicled basalt. Part of the house at the gable peaks and at the east elevation is clad in split cedar shingle siding. The house is one and one-half stories with a full daylight basement which, due to the steeply sloped building site, is exposed at the north elevation. The house is extensive and rambling with a low-pitched roof and multiple cross which are built at varying levels. The roof is covered with composition shingles and has deeply overhanging eaves, exposed rafter tails, and extended decorative purlins. The eaves produce an overhang with a depth from four to six feet, and cast wide shadows across the planar wall surface of the house. Fenestration is asymmetrical and includes a combination of original fixed plate-glass picture windows and multi-paned casement windows with wood sashes.

### *North Elevation*

The front of the home faces north with a wide view of north Spokane, the surrounding neighborhood, and the steep hillside lawn that descends down to Seventeenth Avenue in front of the house. Sheltered by massive rocky basalt outcroppings at the northeast and northwest corners of the house, the home's north face is only partially visible from the street along Seventeenth Avenue. The north façade of the house is

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<sup>3</sup> Spokane County Tax Assessor Records. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

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marked by a low-pitched front-facing cross gable and a lower front-facing cross gable that extend over a full-width front porch. The gable eaves have wide bargeboards with decorative cut ends, and are supported by extended purlins. The gable peaks are clad with split cedar shingles while the first floor, daylight basement, and foundation are clad with black basalt rock. A ten-inch-wide string course separates the gable fields of the two front-facing cross gables from the first floor. The two gables are an extension of the principal roof and extend over the planar wall surface of the house, forming a covered porch. Due to the steep slope of the hill on which the house is built, the porch has two levels—one on the first floor and one at grade which reveals an exposed, daylight basement. The porch features an arcade design with a series of arches at both the first floor and basement level, and is supported by tapered columns. The tapered columns are massive in girth and are made of black basalt rock. They are full height and extend from grade up to the string course that separates the columns from the gable fields (see nomination photos #1 and #2). The double-level arcaded porch is embellished with radiating basalt voussoirs, and a plain wood balustrade at the first floor veranda. The ceiling of the porch at both levels is covered with tongue-in-groove wood boards. Circa 1916 Chinese pagoda-like wrought-iron & brass lanterns hang from the porch ceiling. Fenestration on the north facade is original and features mostly arched multi-paned casement windows.

### *South Elevation*

The rear, south elevation of the house faces the garage, caretaker's cottage, driveway area, and wooded hillside which are located behind the home. Because public access to the home is only available from East Nineteenth Avenue (which terminates at the Wilbur House), the south elevation of the property is considered a secondary façade. Except for the southeast corner, the south elevation of the house is mostly clad in basalt rock. The southeast corner and the east elevation are covered with split cedar shingles which are stained medium taupe. Fenestration on the south elevation is asymmetrical and original, and includes mostly multi-paned arched casement windows (an exception is a fixed multi-paned window just east of the back door at the southeast corner of the house). Radiating voussoirs made of basalt rock accentuate the arched windows. A wood window box designed to hold potted plants highlights a window in the center of the south elevation on the first floor.

### *East & West Elevations*

The east elevation of the house is clad in split cedar shingles on the first and second floor. The foundation (basement level) is partially exposed due to the steep hillside and is made of black basalt rock. A row of multi-paned casement windows illuminate the daylight basement at the east elevation. The west elevation of the house is entirely clad in basalt rock and features asymmetrical fenestration patterns with multi-paned windows. An arched window with a window box, a small first-floor porch door with true divided lights, and a curved porch wall at the northwest corner of the house are focal points of the west elevation.

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### *House Interior*

Made of solid oak with true divided lights, a multi-paned door at the west end of the south elevation is used as the front entrance because it opens into a large formal reception hall. The reception hall has a vaulted ceiling with exposed wood beams. Seven-foot-high honey-colored paneled oak wainscoting encircles all four walls of the room. The floor is made of solid oak planks. Six-panel solid oak doors open west to a library/den and east to a coat closet. Built on the east wall of the reception hall, a staircase with a cut-out balustrade descends to a partially finished basement (daylight level at grade). The reception hall opens west to a library/den which is located in the southwest corner of the first floor of the house. It is dominated by a large basalt rock fireplace with an arched basalt rock surround. Original wrought iron andirons and fireplace screen protect the opening to the fireplace. A thick oak mantel with decorative brackets caps the basalt fireplace surround and extends past both ends of the fireplace to form the top shelf of twin flanking built-in bookcases. The fireplace hearth is made of irregularly shaped black slate. The floor in the library/den is made of solid oak planks. An oak door on the south wall opens to a bathroom. The bathroom has an original herringbone-design, white glazed ceramic tile floor and original porcelain fixtures, including an oval-shaped pedestal wash basin with nickel-plated faucets.

An entryway on the north wall of the front reception hall opens to a large living room, called a “great room,” which measures approximately 40 feet long and 24 feet wide, and spans the north half of the first floor from the west wall to the center of the house. The great room has a vaulted wood-beamed ceiling and opens to the east half of the first floor. The east half of the first floor has a dining room, a kitchen, and a center open staircase that rises to the second floor and descends to the basement. The great room and the dining room/kitchen are encircled with a continuation of honey-colored wood wainscoting that also encircles the interior of the front reception hall. Like the reception hall, the wainscoting is seven feet high and is hand-rubbed to a mellow patina. In contrast, the wood wainscoting in the reception hall is made of oak while the wood wainscoting in the great room/kitchen/dining room is made of mahogany. A large fireplace with a basalt surround and slate hearth is the focal point of the living room and is located on the west wall. Identical to the design of the fireplace in the library/den, the living room fireplace also has a thick oak mantel that extends past both ends of the fireplace, forming the top shelf of twin flanking built-in bookcases. Except for the kitchen, the floor in the great room is made of solid oak planks. Regarded as another focal point of the interior, the entire north wall of the great room, dining room, and kitchen is distinguished with multiple rows of multi-paned casement windows and two doors with multi-paned lights. The doors open to a covered front porch at the first floor. Original wrought iron radiators are located under the rows of windows and are covered with custom-made oak window seats. Located at the east end of the first floor, the kitchen has a glazed ceramic tile floor and built-in cupboards and cabinets which were installed in the 1990s. A door in the center south wall of the great room opens to the master bedroom *en suite* with a bathroom and walk-in closet.



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The open, “floating” staircase in the center of the great room has a plain square-cut balustrade with incised square newel posts. With no landings, the staircase rises straight to the second floor which has a central hallway, one bathroom, and three bedrooms. Two of the bedrooms have built-in linen cabinets. Behind and under the staircase at the first floor, a flight of stairs descends to the basement and a central hall. The hall opens north to a small TV room which opens north to a hallway, a bedroom, a bathroom, and an unfinished portion of the basement. The TV room is finished with paneled oak wainscoting like that in the first-floor front reception hall. In the northeast corner of the basement is a large recreation/billiards room. It has a raised oak plank floor and is illuminated by horizontal rows of multi-paned casement windows on the north and east walls. A door in the southeast corner of the room opens to the exterior. The ceiling height in the basement is 7.5 feet while the ceiling height in the dining room, kitchen, and first and second-floor bedrooms is eight feet. The vaulted ceilings in the reception hall, great room, and library/den measure 14 feet high.

### *Garage*

Built in 1916, a two-car-plus garage with 1,364 square feet of interior space and storage area is carved into a cave-like space in a blasted and bored-out area in the solid basalt rock bluff behind the house.<sup>5</sup> Arches with radiating basalt rock voussoirs cap two garage doors which are made of wood. The doors face east onto the driveway (see nomination photo #6). Small horizontal tripartite windows with flanking multi-paned casement windows are located between and next to the garage doors. The windows are also arched with radiating voussoirs made of basalt rock. The rocky hillside and basalt outcropping in which the garage is carved has a flat deck which has been covered with protective layers of built-up tar and poured concrete. The garage retains its original 1916 design and materials with no modifications.

### *Caretaker's Cottage*

A small 572-square-foot single-story caretaker's cottage was built in 1916 along with the house and garage.<sup>6</sup> It is located adjacent southwest to and slightly uphill from the garage. The caretaker's cottage is built into a dug-out portion of the basalt rock hillside and is completely clad with basalt rock. It has a very low-pitched side gable roof with a lower front-facing cross gable on its north face. The roof has widely overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails and extended decorative purlins, and is articulated with wide bargeboards that have decorative cut ends. A front door is located in the north façade of the caretaker's cottage and opens to one large L-shaped room which serves as a small kitchen/dining area and a bedroom (in the southwest corner). A bathroom with an original clawfoot porcelain bathtub and wall-mounted porcelain wash basin is located in the northwest corner of the cottage. The cottage interior is finished with kitchen cupboards installed in the 1960s, painted Celotex walls and ceilings installed in the 1920s-1930s

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<sup>5</sup> Spokane County Tax Assessor's Records. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

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over original plaster walls (perhaps installed as an insulative material), and wall-to-wall carpet which covers an oak plank floor. The bathroom and the oak plank floor, painted woodwork, and floor plan are original.

### *Designed Landscape Features*

Identified as two "contributing objects" of the property on the nomination form for the Wilbur House, a rock wall and a rock fountain/birdbath were built in 1916 at the same time the house was built. Well-preserved, the basalt rock wall is a prominent feature of the property and is located at the north boundary along Seventeenth Avenue. It spans a width of 125 feet along the street and is four feet high. A basalt rock fountain/birdbath is located in the center of the driveway behind the house (south elevation). It is circular in design with two tiers that are supported by a single pedestal. The lower tier is larger in circumference than the top tier. A metal pipe protrudes from the top of the fountain and when operational, produces a shower of water. A low basalt rock wall encircles the fountain and provides a space between the fountain pedestal and the wall which was dedicated for planting flowers.<sup>7</sup>

Other designed landscape features on the property include basalt rock walls and stairs that are extensions of the house (see nomination photos #3, 4, 7, and 8), and remnants of rocky pathways that traverse the hillside around the home. A long paved driveway leads uphill from Seventeenth Avenue along the east boundary of the property to the northeast corner of the house. The driveway is in a deteriorated, unsafe condition and is not useable at this time.

### **ORIGINAL APPEARANCE & SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS**

#### *House Exterior*

The original exterior design, materials, and workmanship of the house, garage, and caretaker's cottage remain unchanged and intact since 1916. It is assumed that the original roof of the house was made of wood shingles (which was one of the most popular roofing materials in the Spokane region in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century). During the last 89 years, the roof was probably recovered at least four times. The two most recent installations (1960s and 1980s) were with composition shingles.

#### *House Interior*

The interior of the house was first remodeled in 1916 just three months after it was built. According to a *Spokesman-Review* newspaper article,<sup>8</sup> the interior was remodeled with mahogany wainscoting on the first floor (great room and dining room), and with Chinese wood panels that were embellished with mother-of-

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<sup>7</sup> The plumbing for the fountain is currently not working and will be restored in the future.

<sup>8</sup> "Home May Drop Saga of Sorrow." *Spokesman-Review*, 29 May 1945, p. 6. The "marble walls" referred to in the article have never been found.

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pearl inlays. These panels were attached to the wall above the fireplace and around the doors in the great room and are visible in historic photographs taken in 1929 (see copies of historic photos submitted with nomination). The kitchen was remodeled in the 1940s-1950s and a wall (sheetrock) was built around the hanging staircase which is located between the great room and the dining room on the first floor. In the 1970s, the wall around the staircase was removed. In 1992, the staircase, wainscoting, and oak floors were refinished, the interior of the house was repainted, and the kitchen and bathrooms in basement and second floor were remodeled. In 1995, the Chinese panels were removed from the wall and door surrounds and put in storage, and the interior and exterior of the house was re-painted. In 2005, the master bathroom was remodeled.

In summary, the Wilbur House, garage, and caretaker's cottage retain excellent interior and exterior architectural integrity with few changes over the course of 89 years. Along with original basalt rock landscape designs, the house, caretaker's cottage, and garage convey popular early 20<sup>th</sup>-century American Arts & Crafts-style designs, materials, and workmanship found in original location, setting, feeling, and association as a single-family residence built during the early 1900s in Spokane, Washington.

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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Located in Spokane, Washington, the Ralston & Sarah Wilbur House is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion “C” as an excellent example of the American Arts & Crafts tradition. The property embodies high artistic values and is a product of Cutter & Malmgren, one of Spokane’s most celebrated architectural firms.<sup>1</sup> Achieving importance in a period of significance defined as the year it was built in 1916, the Wilbur House and its garage and caretaker’s cottage are significant in the areas of significance, “architecture.” The property was described in local newspapers as “beautifully landscaped,”<sup>2</sup> a “palatial” and “sumptuous” residence<sup>3</sup> with “a magnificent view.”<sup>4</sup> The property was built at a reported cost of \$75,000 for Sarah Peterson “Hecla” Smith Wilbur and her husband, Ralston “Jack” Wilbur.<sup>5</sup> At that time Sarah Wilbur was noted as the first female director, the largest individual stockholder, and millionaire heiress of the famed Hecla Mining Company.<sup>6</sup> She was one of the wealthiest women in the Pacific Northwest with dividends that paid \$11,000<sup>7</sup> to \$30,000<sup>8</sup> a month. Uniquely sited along a steeply wooded and rocky basalt bluff on Spokane’s South Hill, the Wilbur House conveys popular building materials and construction practices that were characteristic of the early 1900s in Spokane and is one of the best-preserved homes in the area. The property retains excellent integrity in its original location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association as an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century single-family residence, and continues to be regarded as one of Spokane’s finest and most eclectic historic landmarks.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Before they were platted in 1887 and 1890 respectively,<sup>9</sup> the Riverside and Spokane View Additions on Spokane’s South Hill were characterized by rugged, rocky, wooded bluffs and steep hillsides—a topography that challenged easy travel and convenient home construction but one that offered spectacular views of Spokane and northern mountain peaks. Located three miles southeast from downtown Spokane, the area was remote, largely uninhabited, and had only two major roads, East Seventeenth Avenue and an Indian trail that would eventually become Southeast Boulevard.

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<sup>1</sup> “Dr. Hahn Home Sold for \$21,000.” *Spokesman-Review*, 21 June 1945. Previous homeowner, trial attorney Patrick Stiley, has a copy of the original 1916 blueprint on which is printed, “Cutter & Malmgren, Architects.”

<sup>2</sup> “Historic Mansion Bought for Aged.” *Spokesman-Review*, 25 Nov 1945.

<sup>3</sup> “Room Shows Fierce Fight Took Place: Diamond and Money Missing.” *Spokesman-Review*, 7 Aug 1946, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> “Historic Mansion Bought For Aged.” *Spokesman-Review*, 25 Nov 1945.

<sup>5</sup> “Room Shows Fierce Fight Took Place: Diamond & Money Missing.” *Spokesman-Review*, 7 Aug 1946, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> “Cupid Too Much for Rich Widow.” *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Sept 1916, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Fahey, John. *Hecla: A Century of Western Mining*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990, p. 43.

<sup>8</sup> “Cupid Too Much for Rich Widow.” *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Sept 1916, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Spokane County records. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

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Twenty years later in 1910, Spokane's population had mushroomed to more than 100,000 people. European and Canadian immigrants and Americans from other parts of the United States were flocking to Spokane for jobs and a new chance for a better life. Downtown hotels and suburban homes were built at a rapid rate, with residential suburbs being created almost overnight in areas that surrounded the city. Development spread southeast up wooded hillsides to the Riverside and Spokane View Additions which were in the vicinity east of Southeast Boulevard along East Seventeenth Avenue. Streets were laid; public services such as water, sewer and electricity were installed; and neighborhood churches and Franklin Public School were built. Numerous small, affordable vernacular bungalows were erected throughout the neighborhood on 50-foot-wide lots. In addition, a few larger architect-designed, custom-built homes were constructed on multi-acre estates which were located at the base of and along the steep slopes of a rocky bluff and wooded ridge that traversed the area from east to west. The custom building sites all had tremendous views of the city and were developed with homes that were built for such Spokane luminaries as the Warsinskes, Huttons, Koerners, and Wilburs. Realtor & vice president of the Spokane Sunrise Land Company, Gustav Warsinske, and his wife, Minnie Warsinske, built the first large home in the area on two acres at 1723 South Cook Street along the bluff's steep hillside in 1910. Levi & May Arkwright Hutton, who made millions overnight through their claims in the Hercules Mine, erected a gracious Neoclassical-style mansion at 2206 East Seventeenth Avenue. As civic benefactors extraordinaire, the Huttons spearheaded Washington State's suffrage movement, built Spokane's largest orphanage, and donated land along East Seventeenth Avenue for use as a city park, now called Lincoln Park.<sup>10</sup> Erected just two years earlier in 1912, the Karl & Mathilda Koerner House was built on the steep bluff at the corner of Mt. Vernon Street and Nineteenth Avenue (1824 S. Mt. Vernon), just east of the Hutton and Warsinske homes. The design for the home was attributed to homeowner, Karl Koerner, and Carl Jablonsky, a noted Spokane architect. A landmark example of the Swiss Chalet style, the property affords a panoramic view of the city and is one of the finest of its type in the area.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Ralston & Sarah Wilbur House***

On June 3, 1916, Ralston "Jack" Wilbur, a bachelor who sold mining equipment in Spokane, bought the west half of Lot 2, Block 3 in the Riverside Addition for \$800. The building site was located at the terminus of East Nineteenth Avenue a few hundred feet west of the Koerner House. He applied for a building permit from the City of Spokane a few weeks later on June 20<sup>th</sup> and set about clearing the site for the erection of a dwelling. To design the house, Wilbur contacted his friend, G. A. Pehrson, who worked at that time as the lead draftsman & architect for the Spokane architectural firm, Cutter & Malmgren.<sup>12</sup> The blueprints for the house were printed with the firm's name at the bottom of the plans so it is not known if

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<sup>10</sup> Yeomans, Linda. *Levi & May Arkwright Hutton House National Register Nomination, 2001.*

<sup>11</sup> Yeomans, Linda. *Karl & Mathilda Koerner House National Register Nomination, 1998.*

<sup>12</sup> "Home May Drop Saga of Sorrow." *Spokesman-Review*, 29 May 1945, p. 6.

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the actual design for the house was rendered by Kirtland Cutter (Cutter & Malmgren), or by his lead draftsman/architect, G. A. Pehrson.

The construction cost of the home was recorded on Spokane building permits at \$2,500 and the address was listed as 2525 East Nineteenth Avenue.<sup>13</sup> During construction, Wilbur continued to purchase adjoining land especially to the north and west of the property. The additional cost exceeded \$4,000 and gave him four acres of steep hillside with breathtaking views.<sup>14</sup> Finally the house was completed, and three months later on September 2, 1916, Ralston Wilbur wed Sarah Peterson “Hecla” Smith, millionaire heiress to the Hecla Mining Company.

### ***Ralston “Jack” Wilbur & Sarah Peterson “Hecla” Smith Wilbur***

Sarah Peterson, a public stenographer and director of a Chicago secretarial school, was married, widowed, married again, and divorced all in a short span of ten years. In 1908, she married James R. “Hecla” Smith, a director of the Hecla Mining Company which owned the Hecla Mine, “one of the oldest continuously producing [lead & silver ore] mines in the Coeur d’Alene [mining] district.”<sup>15</sup> From her lucrative Chicago holdings, Sarah loaned James money to purchase thousands of shares of Hecla Mining Company stock, enabling him to become the principal shareholder of the company.<sup>16</sup> In the prime of his life in 1908, Smith was “hospitalized with pneumonia complicated by Bright’s disease. As he worsened, he and Sarah were married hastily on September 25<sup>th</sup> by a hospital chaplain. At 6:30 that evening Smith expired. He left no will. To Sarah passed his 92,000 shares of the Hecla Stock.”<sup>17</sup> An overnight millionaire, Sarah Peterson “Hecla” Smith became the largest single stockholder of the Hecla Mining Company.

At the time of James Smith’s death, the Hecla Mining Company employed no women, and females rarely attended stockholder’s meetings. That changed when Sarah was elected as a director of the Hecla Mining Company’s board in November 1908. “Sarah Smith was a familiar member of Hecla’s board, relishing the deference paid her as the largest shareholder. During her two weeks or more in the Coeur d’Alenes each year, she discussed mining with the managers and engineers of other companies who treated her courteously and respected her quick mind.”<sup>18</sup> Although some managers of the Hecla disagreed with her

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<sup>13</sup> Spokane Building Permit #7414, dated 20 June 1916. Spokane City Hall, Spokane, WA.

<sup>14</sup> Spokane County public records and warranty deeds. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

<sup>15</sup> Hart, Patricia and Ivar Nelson. *Mining Town: The Photographic Record of T.N. Barnard & Nellie Stockbrdige from the Coeur d’Alenes*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984, p. 40.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Fahey, John. *Hecla: A Century of Western Mining*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991, p. 32.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 42.

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position and politics, she was well-liked by many other Hecla board members and successful mining men, and was a powerful force in the company.

During her tenure on the Hecla's board of directors, Sarah Smith met Ralston Wilbur. Ralston "Jack" Wilbur "came to Spokane in 1909 as the northwestern superintendent of the Thompson-Starrett Company [construction equipment] and as such, directed the erection of the Old National Bank building [on West Riverside Avenue]. Subsequently he joined the Hallidie Machinery Company [mining equipment] as a partner and salesman and...made his home in Spokane."<sup>19</sup> As reported the day after their wedding in the September 3, 1916 edition of the *Spokesman-Review*, Wilbur was previously noted a "famous right tackle for Yale [University], champion hammer thrower...president of the Class of '95 at Stanford University, and member of the American Society of Mathematical Engineers and the American Mathematical Society" before he arrived in Spokane. Alluding to his "picturesque" personality, the newspaper article noted that Wilbur was involved "in many sensational escapades at Stanford" which were apparently not acceptable to the university, and so completed his education at Yale.<sup>20</sup>

The relationship between Ralston Wilbur and Sarah Smith was anything but serene. Ralston was described by noted Spokane historian, John Fahey, as "a tall, athletic, dark-haired womanizer and prankster who...rushed [Sarah Smith] into marriage."<sup>21</sup>

"Our marriage at this time was quite unpremeditated on my part," said Mrs. Wilbur...  
"It was my intention to leave for Chicago...with the object of closing up my business affairs there, and returning to Spokane to get married and make my home here. Mr. Wilbur would not consent to this program and insisted...that we be married today. I really did not have anything to say about it. He just rushed me over to the courthouse and secured a license. The wedding followed in such quick order that the [Davenport] Hotel people do not even know that we have been married. Mr. Wilbur has just built a bungalow, I understand, but we shall probably build a more suitable home here later on."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> "Cupid Too Much for Rich Widow." *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Sept 1916, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> "Wilbur Had Picturesque Career." *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Sept. 1916, p. 1. In his book, *Hecla, A Century of Western Mining*, author John Fahey elaborated on the newspaper article and explained that Ralston Wilbur attended both Stanford University and Yale University. During his years at Stanford, he was involved in "escapades" (Fahey's word) that seemed to end his educational pursuits at that university. He then attended Yale where he was noted as an accomplished athlete. The quote about his life is taken directly from the newspaper article, dated 3 September 1916 as noted in this footnote.

<sup>21</sup> Fahey, John. *Hecla: A Century of Western Mining*. Seattle: University of Washington, 1991, p. 43.

<sup>22</sup> "Cupid Too Much for Rich Widow." *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Sept 1916, p. 1.

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Describing the bungalow that Ralston Wilbur had just built at East Nineteenth Avenue, the newlyweds affectionately called the dwelling “their love cottage.”<sup>23</sup> Within a few weeks after their marriage however, Sarah wanted to modify the house to suit her own needs and desires, so she gave Ralston \$130,000 to remodel the bungalow. A *Spokesman-Review* newspaper article reported the following:

Previously Mr. Wilbur had acquired the grounds and erected a small cottage...[which was] designed by architect G. A. Pehrson with whom he became friends during the Old National [Bank] construction. After his marriage, [Wilbur] told Pehrson the sky was the limit and lavish additions were made with marble walls, and the interior [was] paneled with mahogany inlaid with mother-of-pearl imported from China.<sup>24</sup>

As noted in the newspaper article the home’s interior was remodeled with mahogany wainscoting and marble walls; the marble walls have never been found anywhere on the property. It is not known what changes were made to the exterior or to the structural components of the house but it seems that perhaps the second floor and the hanging staircase were added at this time.<sup>25</sup>

The house was designed to hug the hillside’s steep topography. It was built with low-pitched gables, widely overhanging eaves, exposed rafter tails, extended purlins, and was completely covered with a twelve-inch-thick veneer of black basalt rock. The rock was quarried from an area by Fort George Wright (west of Spokane) and was also culled from the rocky building site. The exterior wood trim around doors and windows was painted a crisp white in contrast to the black basalt rock. Flower boxes for red, white and pink geraniums were built under some of the windows, and red-painted pagoda-like lanterns were hung from the porch ceiling.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to the house, a small two-room, basalt stone caretaker’s cottage, a cave-like garage which was carved into the rocky hillside, and a driveway accessed by Nineteenth Avenue were constructed behind the house. The wild, rocky hillside surrounding the home was transformed into gracious groomed grounds when landscape gardener, Charles Balzer, and master stone mason, Domenico Peirone, were retained. Remnants of their handiwork exist today as a prominent rock wall along the north border of the property, a

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<sup>23</sup> “Home May Drop Saga of Sorrow.” *Spokesman-Review*, 29 May 1945, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Trial attorney and previous owner, Patrick Stiley, has copies of the floor plans for the remodeled house. The plans were dated 1916 and signed, “Cutter & Malmgren, Architects.”

<sup>26</sup> “Historic Mansion Bought for Aged.” *Spokesman-Review*, 25 Nov 1945.



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rock fountain/birdbath, and rock stairways and pathways that are extensions of the house (see nomination photos 3, 4, 7, and 8).<sup>27</sup>

After it was remodeled, the home was described as a “sumptuous residence...built on three [plus] beautifully landscaped acres”<sup>28</sup> with a “magnificent view.”<sup>29</sup> General contractors and carpenters, Otto Blomquist and Alfred Sylvander (B & S Contracting), built the house, garage, and carriage house. John Smythe (Smythe Plumbing & Heating) was responsible for the home’s plumbing and heating systems. The Dixon and McGoldrick lumber companies in Spokane provided lumber, and the Holly-Mason Hardware Company and Spokane Woodworking Company provided necessary building materials. The total cost of the remodeled home, garage, caretaker’s cottage, basalt rock landscape features, and the groomed grounds exceeded \$75,000.<sup>30</sup>

Sarah Wilbur, however, was still not pleased with her new home and its remote location in southeast Spokane. The *Spokesman-Review* newspaper reported that “Mrs. Wilbur did not entirely approve of her husband’s choice in neighborhood and sneered when he took her to the finished home. As a result [Ralston] Wilbur’s feelings were so crushed that he rushed alone to San Francisco, rented the second floor of the St. Francis Hotel, and staged a pajama party for 30 couples that drew notice in the San Francisco press.”<sup>31</sup>

The Wilbur marriage began to unravel almost before it began. While Sarah saw to her duties as a member of the board and the first female director of the Hecla Mining Company, Ralston Wilbur spent his time in the company of women other than his wife. Within months after the Wilburs moved into their remodeled home on East Nineteenth Avenue, Sarah sued for divorce. Spokane historian John Fahey noted that “Ralston Wilbur chased women—‘vile women,’ Sarah called them—and although he sweet-talked her once out of separating, she soon sued again and was granted an uncontested divorce in September, 1918.”<sup>32</sup> In 1919, Sarah sold the property to Sadie Bell & William T. Whitlock, owners of Whitlock’s Pharmacy in Spokane.

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<sup>27</sup> Balzer’s name appeared on building permits as an “agent” for Wilbur, and Peirone’s name appeared in Spokane County records when he initiated a contractor’s lien on the property in 1917.

<sup>28</sup> “Room Shows Fierce Fight Took Place: Diamond and Money Missing.” *Spokesman-Review*, 7 Aug 1946, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> “Historic Mansion Bought for Aged.” *Spokesman-Review*, 25 Nov 1945.

<sup>30</sup> Spokane County warranty deeds reveal contractors’ liens which were initiated in 1916-1917 and placed on the property for non-payment of services rendered. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

<sup>31</sup> “Home May Drop Saga of Sorrow.” *Spokesman-Review*, 29 May 1945, p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> Fahey, John. *Hecla: A Century of Western Minng*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991, p. 43.

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Five years later in 1924, William Whitlock sold the property to Rudolph A. Hahn and his wife, Sylvia D. Hahn, for \$11,000.<sup>33</sup> Previously employed as a barber and educated as an “electro-therapeutic technician,” Rudolph Hahn called himself “Dr. Hahn,” explaining that “his medical diploma and license to practice medicine...were earned after he took a correspondence course.”<sup>34</sup> Even though he was never registered in Washington State as a medical doctor, Hahn made a small fortune in his electro-therapy practice. In the Wilbur House, the Hahns were raucous and loud, dedicating their lives to extravagant pranks and parties. “During the Roaring Twenties, nights were rare when there wasn’t a loud party going on, attended by at least 50 people. The well-to-do guest list included flying ace, Jimmy Doolittle, who stayed in the house for a week during a 1926 air show” and flew planes above and around the house, frightening guests and neighbors with his acrobatic stunts and dives.<sup>35</sup> Prohibition meant nothing to the Hahns “who frequented speakeasies and let the liquor flow generously” during festivities on their property. During one party, it was said that “Hahn drove his car into his swimming pool [in front of the house] and later had it filled with dirt so it wouldn’t happen again.” After that he let his race horses graze on the lawn in front of the home where the pool had been.<sup>36</sup> As if the parties and planes weren’t enough to drive his neighbors mad, Hahn’s love of loud radio finally sent neighborhood residents complaining to Spokane City/County code enforcement officials. Next to his garage, Hahn installed multi-story “radio towers over which he received world-wide radio broadcasts.” In addition to the towers, he mounted large speakers in the tall pines behind his house and boomed his radio from early morning to well past midnight.<sup>37</sup>

In 1945, Olga Marquardt, a wealthy Coeur d’Alene mining widow, bought the Wilbur House for \$21,000.<sup>38</sup> Just before she purchased the property, Spokane County tried to buy it for use as a retirement center for “40 old-age pensioners”<sup>39</sup> but county zoning requirements could not be met, and the transaction was aborted.

The property was sold again in 1947. It changed hands several times after that and was eventually left vacant and unprotected which resulted in vandalism, damage and deterioration. In 1992, Dr. Frank Ditto, a Spokane physician, and his wife, Stephanie Ditto, bought the property for \$181,000. The Dittos spent \$115,000 for remodels to the house and for reversing the effects of damage and deferred maintenance to the house, garage, caretaker’s cottage and grounds. Their commitment to the property and the efforts of their

<sup>33</sup> Spokane County warrant deed #779647, dated 14 Nov 1924, indicates the cost of the property was \$11,000. An article in the *Spokesman-Review* (“Historic Mansion Bought for Aged, 25 Nov 1945) reported the cost of the sale was \$17,000.

<sup>34</sup> “Room Shows Fierce Fight Took Place; Diamond and Money Missing.” *Spokesman-Review*, 7 Aug 1945, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Clark, Doug. “For Sale: Spooky South Mansion with a Wild, Bloody Past.” *Spokesman-Review*, 3 March 1991.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> “Home May Drop Saga of Sorrow.” *Spokesman-Review*, 29 May 1945, p. 6.

<sup>38</sup> “Dr. Hahn Home Sold for \$21,000.” *Spokesman-Review*, 21 June 1945.

<sup>39</sup> “Historic Mansion Bought For Aged.” *Spokesman-Review*, 25 Nov 1945.

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contractor (Dave Bell) earned them an “Award of Merit” in the category of historic restoration in the *Spokesman-Review’s* Inland Northwest Home Awards contest for 1992. In 1995, Mark Graham, senior vice president of Smith Barney, financial securities & investments, and his wife, Diana Graham, bought the property. The Grahams and their four children currently make their home in the Wilbur House.

### ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1916, the Wilbur House and its garage, caretaker’s cottage, and designed rock landscape features achieved importance in the area of significance, “architecture.” The property is a dramatic example of the American Arts & Crafts tradition, embodies high artistic values, and is the product of master professionals, Cutter & Malmgren architectural firm, E. C. Balzer (landscape gardener), and Domenico Peirone (stonemason).

#### *The American Arts & Crafts Tradition*

Homes built in the American Arts & Crafts tradition were designed to harmonize with nature and the environment. Heavily influenced by the 19<sup>th</sup>-century English Arts & Crafts Movement which rejected the mass reproduction and mediocre designs associated with the Industrial Revolution, the American Arts & Crafts tradition was developed in rebellion to the more elaborate Victorian styles that preceded it. Traditional handcraftsmanship and the use of natural materials such as native fieldstone or basalt rock, irregularly textured clinker brick, hand-split wood shingles, and smooth-finished hand-rubbed woodwork were revered and used. Identifying features of the style include broad low-slung roof forms with wide gables, widely overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails and purlins, massive knee-braces and beams, deep covered porches, and thick porch piers, posts and columns that all worked together to form the illusion of a ground-hugging house that appeared to emerge out of its building site.

With its low-pitched gable-front roof form, widely overhanging eaves, exposed rafter tails, covered front porch, basalt cladding, and wood shingle siding, the Wilbur House is a fine example of the American Arts & Crafts aesthetic. Perhaps the strongest and most dramatic stylistic features of the Wilbur House are depicted in the extensive use of hand-rubbed natural oak and mahogany woodwork in the interior, a 40-foot-long vaulted great room in the center of the house, the overall use of indigenous basalt rock on the exterior, and the home’s natural hillside setting. Cleverly sited among rocky outcroppings on a steeply wooded bluff, the Wilbur House is clad mostly in natural basalt stone and seems to grow out of the rocky ground on which it is built. This is especially evident in the design and construction of the massive battered basalt rock porch columns at the north façade of the house. The house is surrounded by a garage, caretaker’s cottage, and designed landscape features that are also made of basalt rock. The total effect renders the property organically integrated to its rocky hillside site, depicting the American Arts & Crafts mantra, “back to nature.”

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The style spread quickly throughout America from about 1900 to 1930 via builder's pattern books, pre-cut house packages, and home design magazines like Gustav Stickley's publication called *The Craftsman* (1901-1916). Numerous Arts & Crafts-styled homes were built throughout Spokane during the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some were constructed from pre-cut packages or from house plans available in house plan books or magazines but a few homes, like the Wilbur House, were designed by prominent architects and are landmark examples of the style.

### ***Kirtland K. Cutter, Architect (1860-1939)***

As printed on the plans for the property, the Ralston & Sarah Wilbur House was designed by the architectural team of Cutter & Malmgren. It is widely thought that Cutter rendered the designs for buildings and houses while his partner, Karl Malmgren, engineered them. Cutter was born in Ohio, studied at the Arts League of New York, traveled to Europe where he studied drawing, painting, and sculpture, and came to Spokane in 1887 to work for his uncle at the First National Bank. Drawn to architecture instead of banking, Cutter began designing homes and commercial buildings in earnest for his uncle's wealthy friends after the devastating "Spokane Fire of 1889" which destroyed 31 blocks in the city's central business district. He practiced with fellow architect, J. C. Poetz, for a short time and partnered later with Karl G. Malmgren. Cutter's designs, alone and with partners, include some of Spokane's most unique residences and buildings: the Davenport Hotel, the Steam Plant, the Sherwood Building, the Fairmont Cemetery Chapel, the F. Lewis Clark House & Gatehouse, Glover House, Humbird House, J.P. Graves House (Waikiki), and the Wilbur House.<sup>40</sup>

### ***Karl G. Malmgren (1862-1921)***

Karl Malmgren was born and educated in Sweden, received further education in Germany, and practiced architecture in Europe for eight years before coming to America in 1888. He arrived in Spokane in 1889, worked for architect, John Poetz, and upon Poetz's retirement in 1894, partnered with architect, Kirtland K. Cutter. The architectural firm of Cutter & Malmgren (1894-1917) were responsible for numerous Spokane buildings such as the Washington Water Power Substation, Steam Plant, Davenport Hotel, Spokane Club, First Church of Christ Science, Robertson and Sherwood buildings, and many prominent Spokane homes. Malmgren designed his own house at 709 W. Sumner Avenue in Spokane (contributing property in the Marycliff-Cliff Park National Register Historic District).

### ***G. A. Pehrson, Architect (1884-1968)***

Gustav Albin Pehrson was born in Sweden, studied architecture at Upsala University and Oxford University, and arrived in Spokane in 1913. He worked for the architectural firm of Cutter & Malmgren as

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<sup>40</sup> Eastern Washington State Historical Society. *Spokane Skyline: A Century of Architecture, 1889-1989*. Spokane: EWSHS, 1989, p. 38.

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their lead draftsman & architect from 1913 to 1917. In February 1917, he left Cutter & Malmgren and established his own practice in the Old National Bank building in downtown Spokane. Pehrson proved to be one of Spokane's most prolific architects, responsible for the designs of hundreds of homes and buildings in Spokane and Eastern Washington. Some of these included the Chronicle Building, Paulsen Medical & Dental Building, Culbertson's Department Store (now Macy's), the Catholic Chauncery, Rookery Block, the Greek Orthodox Temple, the Davenport Hotel (in collaboration with Cutter) and the Roosevelt Apartments.<sup>41</sup>

According to a 1945 *Spokesman-Review* newspaper article, Pehrson met Ralston Wilbur while employed at Cutter & Malmgren's architectural firm in Spokane. The article reported that Wilbur chose Pehrson to first design {and then remodel} a house for Wilbur in 1916. Pehrson's name, however, does not appear on the blueprints for the house—Cutter & Malmgren's name is printed on the plans. Pehrson drew the plans while employed by Cutter & Malmgren but perhaps he was given a voice in the design {since he was Wilbur's friend} and was allowed to draw the plans *in collaboration* with his employers, Kirtland Cutter and Karl Malmgren.<sup>42</sup>

Whether it be a singular or collaborative design, the architect(s) expressed the American Arts & Crafts aesthetic that espoused "inherent beauty in natural materials and simple construction."<sup>43</sup> Built predominately of split cedar shingles and indigenous basalt rock, the Wilbur House is similar in design to the Cutter-designed Fairmont Cemetery Chapel and F. Lewis Clark Gatehouse in Spokane. Like the chapel and the gatehouse, the Wilbur House is made of "rough-hewn basalt...that proclaims the quality of volcanic rock as it is found nearby on the cliff faces and outcroppings of the Spokane River canyon." All three structures were clad in stone, showed simplicity in building, and were rooted to the ground on which they were built. Noted architectural historian, Henry Matthews, explained that Cutter's designs were a "synthesis of many ideas...he preferred to offer his own interpretations of old and new themes. Among his strengths...was the ability to plant a house in the landscape so that it appeared to belong there."<sup>44</sup> Evident in the Wilbur House, architects Cutter and Pehrson worked in the same idiom to convey a rustic simplicity. Their design for the Wilbur House is one of the finest American Arts & Crafts-style renditions in Spokane, embodying high artistic values.

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<sup>41</sup> Pehrson Collection. Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture, Spokane, WA.

<sup>42</sup> "Home May Drop Saga of Sorrow." *Spokesman-Review*, 29 May 1945, p. 6.

<sup>43</sup> Matthews, Henry. *Kirtland Cutter: Architect in the Land of Promise*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998, p. 74.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 74-84.

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#### *E. Charles Balzer, Landscape Gardener (1877-1953)*

A prominent landscape gardener, E. Charles Balzer was Spokane's first park superintendent (1902 to 1909), a German-born immigrant who was employed as "the city florist" in Spokane in 1900 before being appointed park superintendent.<sup>45</sup> Previous to his arrival in Spokane, Balzer had studied horticulture, park development, and rose culture in Germany and France, and had worked for the park department in St. Louis, Missouri. In Spokane, he was responsible for the initial design and development of Manito Park, an extensive 92-acre public park that included manicured lawn, floral sculptures, flower and rock gardens, rock walls, rock arches, rock bridges, a pond, a pavilion and bandstand, and a zoo with wild animals. After his tenure as park superintendent, Balzer owned and operated Balzer Nursery, located at 2302 East Sprague Avenue. A circa 1915-1920 photograph taken when the Wilbur House was built pictured painted signage on Balzer's truck which advertised "tree roses, shrubbery, all kinds of fertilizer and black dirt."<sup>46</sup> A printed advertisement for Balzer Nursery noted that Balzer was the designer of "Manito, Corbin, Coeur d'Alene, Glass & Byrne Parks" in Spokane. Like Cutter and Pehrson, Balzer appreciated the steep hillside topography surrounding the Wilbur House. Rather than artificially terracing the hillside or flattening the rocky basalt outcroppings, he used them as landscape advantages. A rocky basalt haystack in front of the house became a rock garden with rocky steps that climb to the top of the outcropping. Exposed basalt bedrock was transformed into rocky pathways and rocky stair steps that curve around the house on the hillside. Basalt rock was used in a prolific manner for rock paths, rock walls, and a rock fountain/birdbath. The rock wall on Seventeenth and the rock fountain/birdbath are identified as "contributing objects" in the nomination form for the Wilbur House.

#### *Domenico Peirone, Stonemason (1880-1956)*

Domenico Peirone was responsible for all of the stonework associated with the Wilbur House, garage, caretaker's cottage, and basalt rock designed landscape features. Peirone was born in Italy, married Caterina Lantermino, and came to Spokane in 1911. He built a basalt rock house for his sister and her husband, and a basalt rock house for himself and his wife in the Garden Springs neighborhood of West Spokane. According to his family, Peirone learned his stonemason skills in Italy and was responsible for stone work in Spokane at Fairmont, Riverside and Holy Cross cemeteries (arches, chapels, walls), the Louis Davenport House (listed in the 1912 city directory at "Eighth Avenue on the northwest corner of Division Street"), the Victor Desert House (1520 S. Rockwood Boulevard), and rock walls, bridges, and designed landscape features in Manito and Cannon Hill Parks in Spokane. He also built a basalt rock grotto on the hillside in front of the F. Lewis Clark House (601 W. Seventh Avenue), and stone benches and grottos at

<sup>45</sup> Bamonte, Tony & Suzanne. *Manito Park: A Reflection of Spokane's Past, Centennial Addition*. Spokane: Tornado Publishing Company, 2004, p. 86.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, p. 97.

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Sacred Heart Hospital (rock features demolished). His decades-old stonework is precise, sturdy and long-lasting as evidenced by his well-preserved commissions in Spokane.<sup>47</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

In summary, the Ralston & Sarah Wilbur House is a high-style example of the American Arts & Crafts tradition as expressed in the design for the house, garage, caretaker's cottage, and the designed basalt rock landscape features that surround the home. Architecturally significant, the property retains excellent integrity in location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association as an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century single-family residence built in Spokane, and is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion "C".

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<sup>47</sup> Personal interview with Jeanne Peirone McGregor, granddaughter of Domenico Peirone, 2005.

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McGregor, Jeanne Peirone. Personal interview, 2005.

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Spokane County public records: warranty deeds, tax assessor records, plat maps.

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"Cupid Too Much for Rich Widow." *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Sept 1916, p. 1.

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"For Sale: Spooky South Mansion with a Wild, Bloody Past." *Spokesman-Review*, 3 March 1991.

"Hahn Home Is Sold to Mining Operator." *Spokesman-Review*, 21 June 1945.

"Hahn Homestead to Be County Home for Aged." *Spokesman-Review*, 29 May 1945, p. 6, photo.

"Historic Mansion Bought for Aged." *Spokesman-Review*, 25 Nov 1945.

"Home May Drop Saga of Sorrow." *Spokesman-Review*, 29 May 1945, p. 6.

"Preserving History: Restoring 'Ghostly' House Requires Lots of TLC." *Spokesman-Review*, 30 Oct 1992.



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### GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreeage of property: 4.04 acres.

### Verbal boundary description:

Spokane View and Riverview Additions: Spokane View lot 11 block 1 together with west ½ of south 210 feet of lot 2 and west 25 feet of south 185 feet of east ½ of lot 2 block 3 Riverview. Also portion of lot 1 block 3 Riverview, beginning at SE corner of lot 1 then north along east line 210 feet then west 200 feet then north 80 degrees 55 minutes west 51.65 feet midline to west line of said lot 1 said point being 382 feet south of NW corner of lot 1 then south 16 feet then south 84 degrees 51 minutes east 63.5 feet then south 27 degrees 2 minutes east 86.8 feet then south 82 degrees 24 minutes east 66.13 feet then south to south line of lot 1 then east 85 feet to point of beginning also lots 12 to 15 block 1 of Spokane view Addition together with that portion of vacated strip north of and adjacent to north line of said lots lying between the extended west line of said lot 15 & east line of lot 2 block 3 of Riverview extended south except east 100 feet of said portion of vacated strip as described and except that portion of lot 15 lying southwesterly of a line drawn from the SE corner of said lot 15 to a point in west line thereof 57 feet of NW corner thereof.

### Boundary justification:

Nomination property includes the entire parcel otherwise known as Parcel No. 35281.0330. The nominated property contains the Wilbur House, garage, caretaker's cottage, and basalt rock wall and fountain/birdbath.

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### PHOTOGRAPHS

#### Ralston & Sarah Wilbur House

2525 East 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Spokane, WA Spokane County

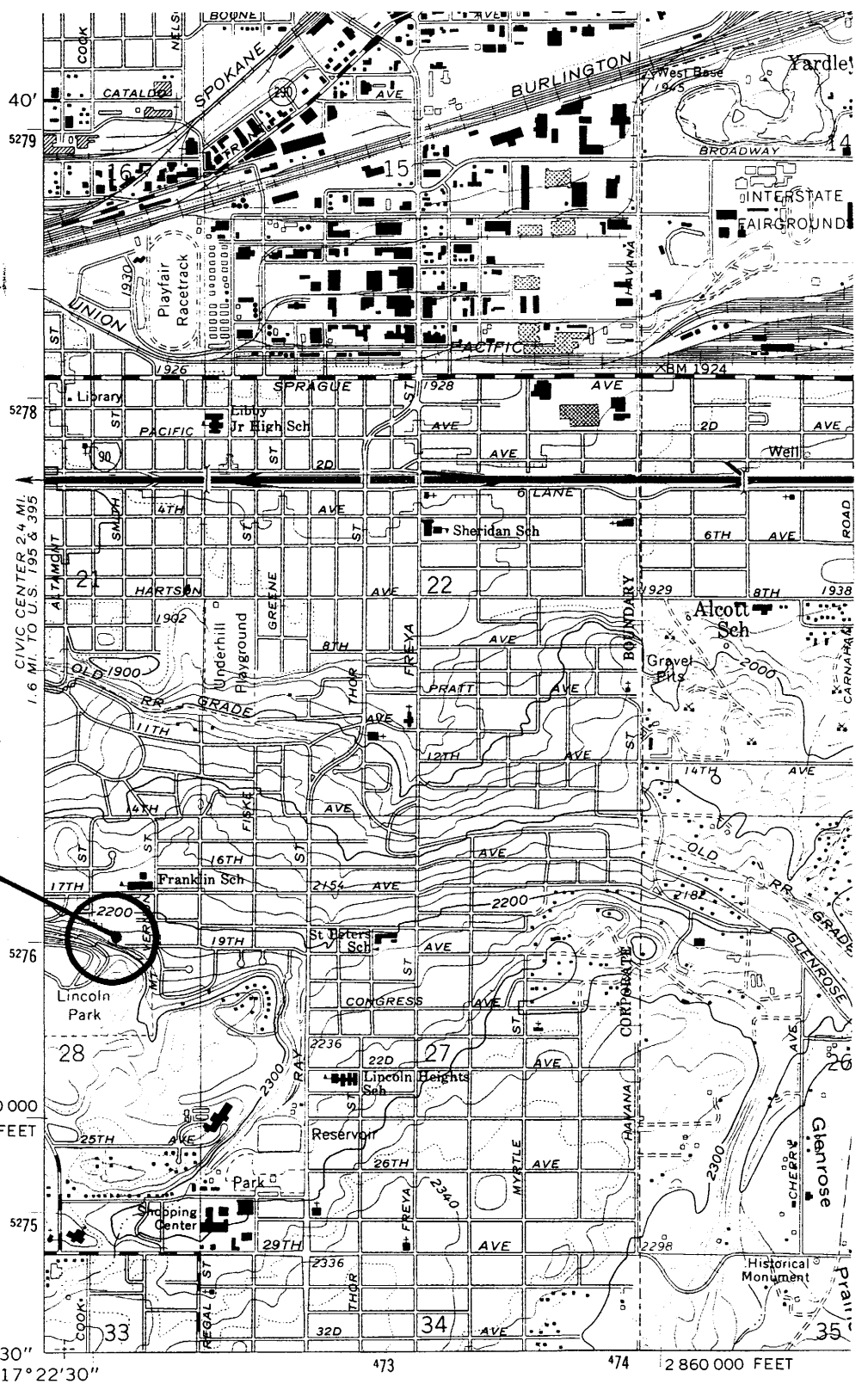
Photographer Linda Yeomans

October 2005

Photo 1	North façade of house.
Photo 2	Northeast corner of house.
Photo 3	Northwest corner of house.
Photo 4	Northwest corner of house, looking northeast.
Photo 5	Original c. 1916 metal lantern on front porch.
Photo 6	South elevation at rear of house, looking northwest from driveway.
Photo 7	South elevation at rear of house, looking at back door.
Photo 8	South elevation at rear of house, looking at window box.
Photo 9	East façade of caretaker's cottage, looking southwest.
Photo 10	Front reception hall, looking south.
Photo 11	Original oak door, looking south.
Photo 12	Fireplace in den, looking west.
Photo 13	View of great room, looking southwest.
Photo 14	View of great room, looking northwest.
Photo 15	Great room staircase, looking east.
Photo 16	First-floor bathroom, looking south.
Photo 17	Basement billiards room, looking northeast.
Photo 18	View of fountain/birdbath, looking _____.
Photo 19	View of rock wall along Seventeenth Avenue, looking east.

RALSTON & SARAH  
 MILBURN  
 HOUSE  
 SPOKANE CO, WA  
 2525 E. 19 AVE.  
 SPOKANE, WA.

47° 37' 30" N  
 117° 22' 30" W



(SPOKANE SW)  
 2579 III SW

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1946 and planetable surveys 1950. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1972. Field checked 1973

Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Washington coordinate system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic)

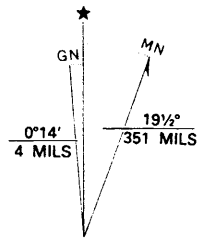
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 11, shown in blue. 1927 North American Datum

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 16 meters north and 80 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines

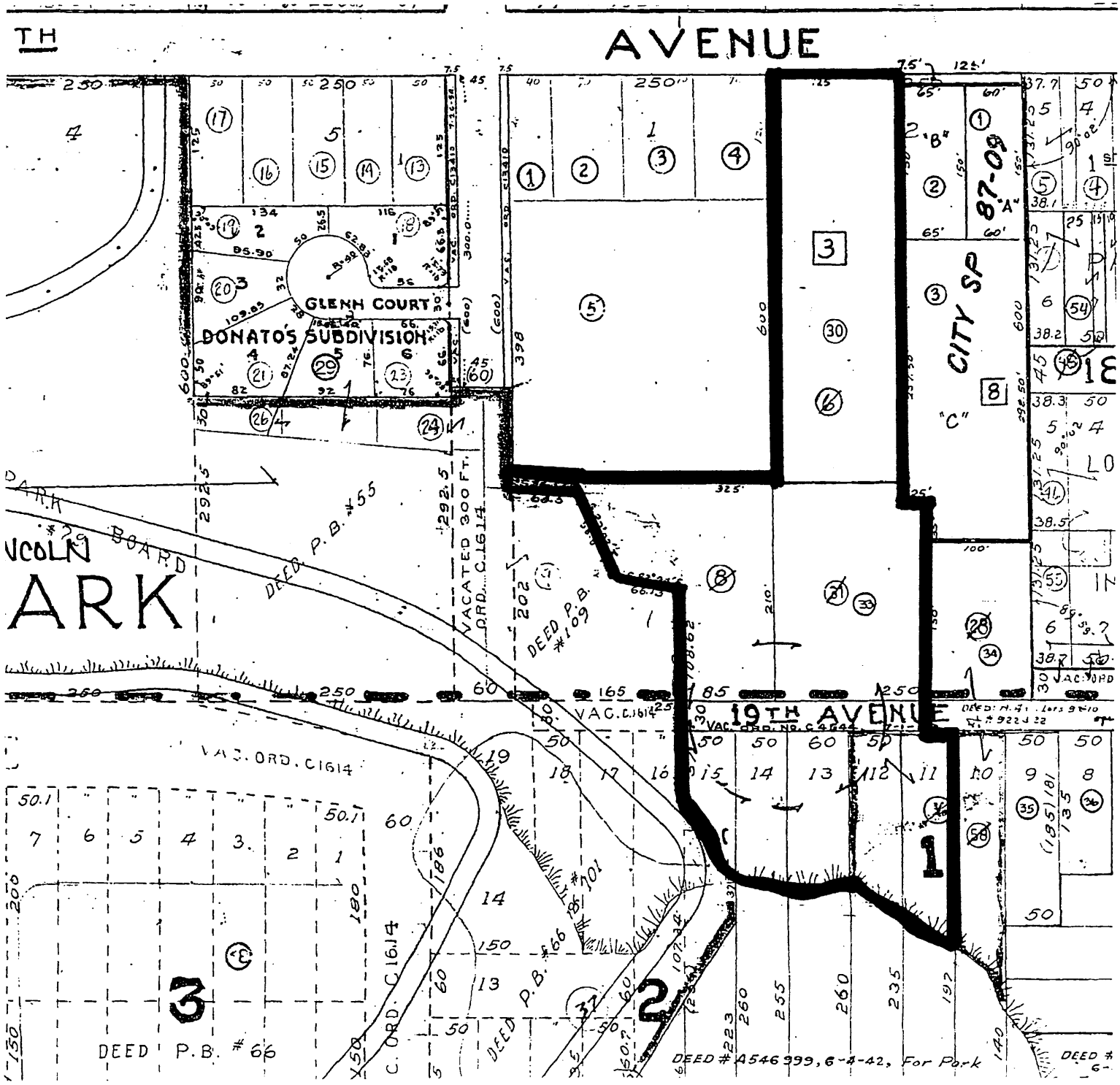
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map



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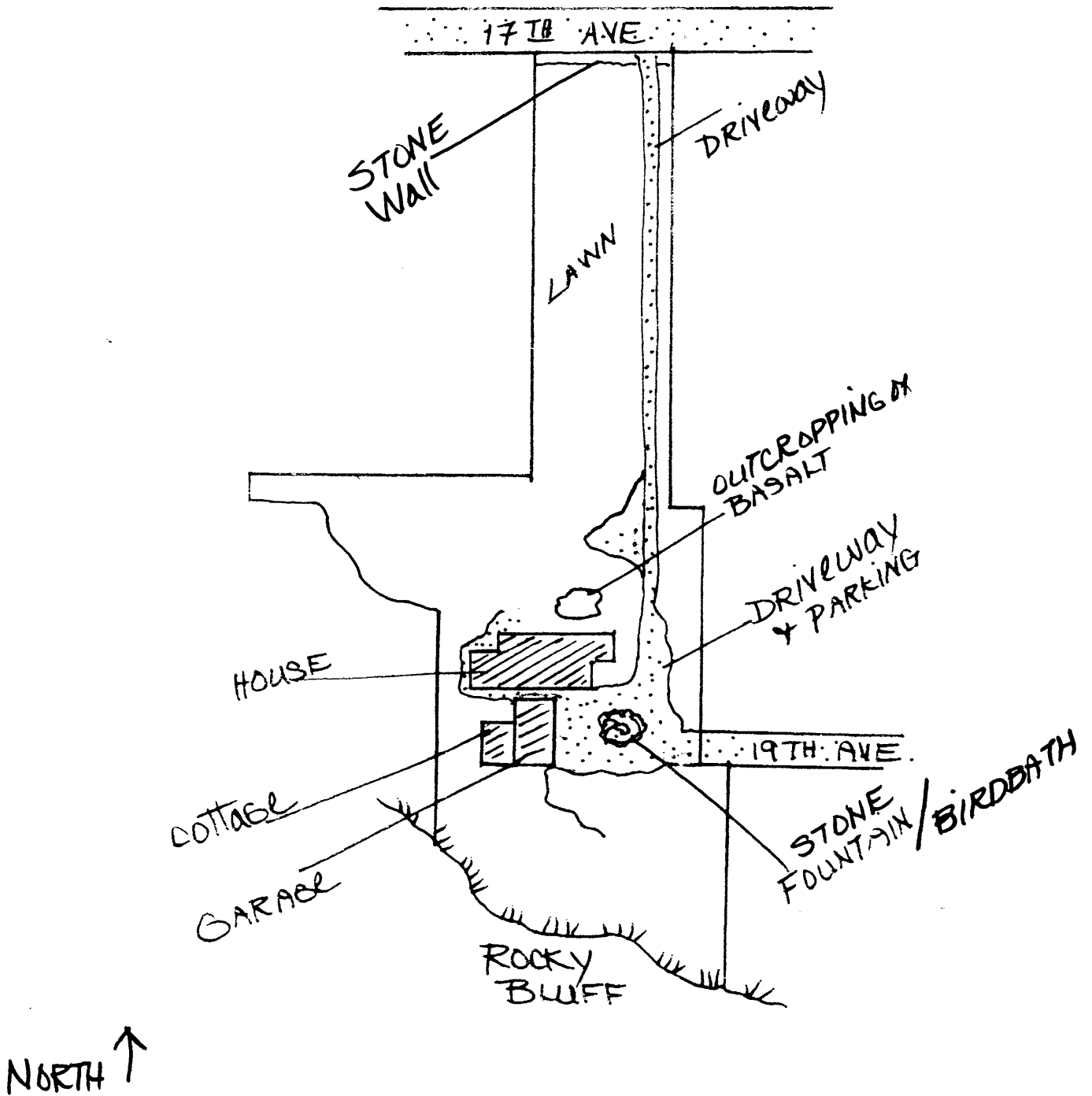
**Ralston & Sarah Wilbur House**  
 2525 East Nineteenth Avenue  
 Spokane, WA 99223

2005 Spokane County, WA plat map of property



**Ralston & Sarah Wilbur House**  
2525 East Nineteenth Avenue  
Spokane, WA 99223

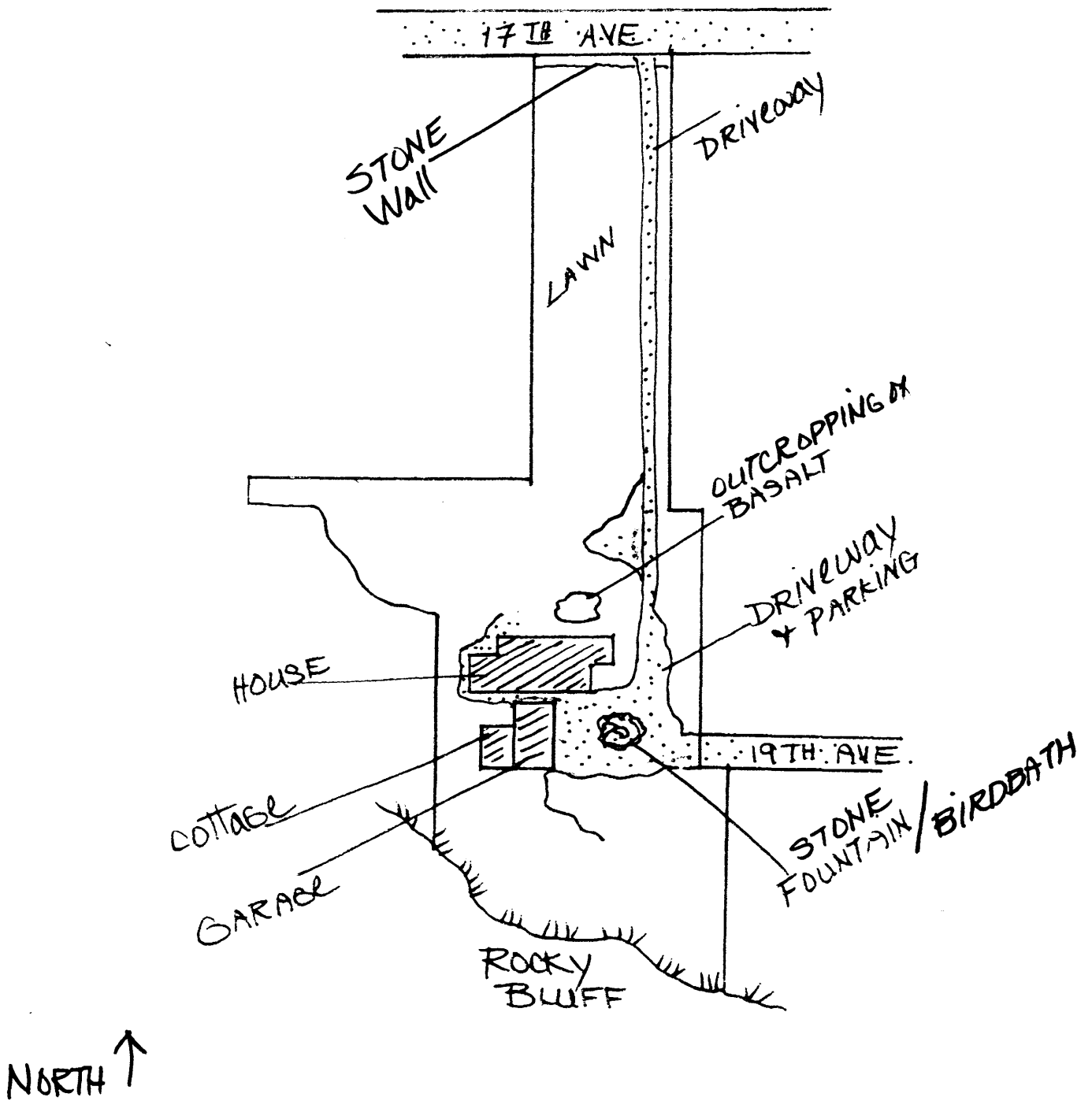
Site plan of property in 2005 (not to scale)



**Ralston & Sarah Wilbur House**

2525 East Nineteenth Avenue  
Spokane, WA 99223

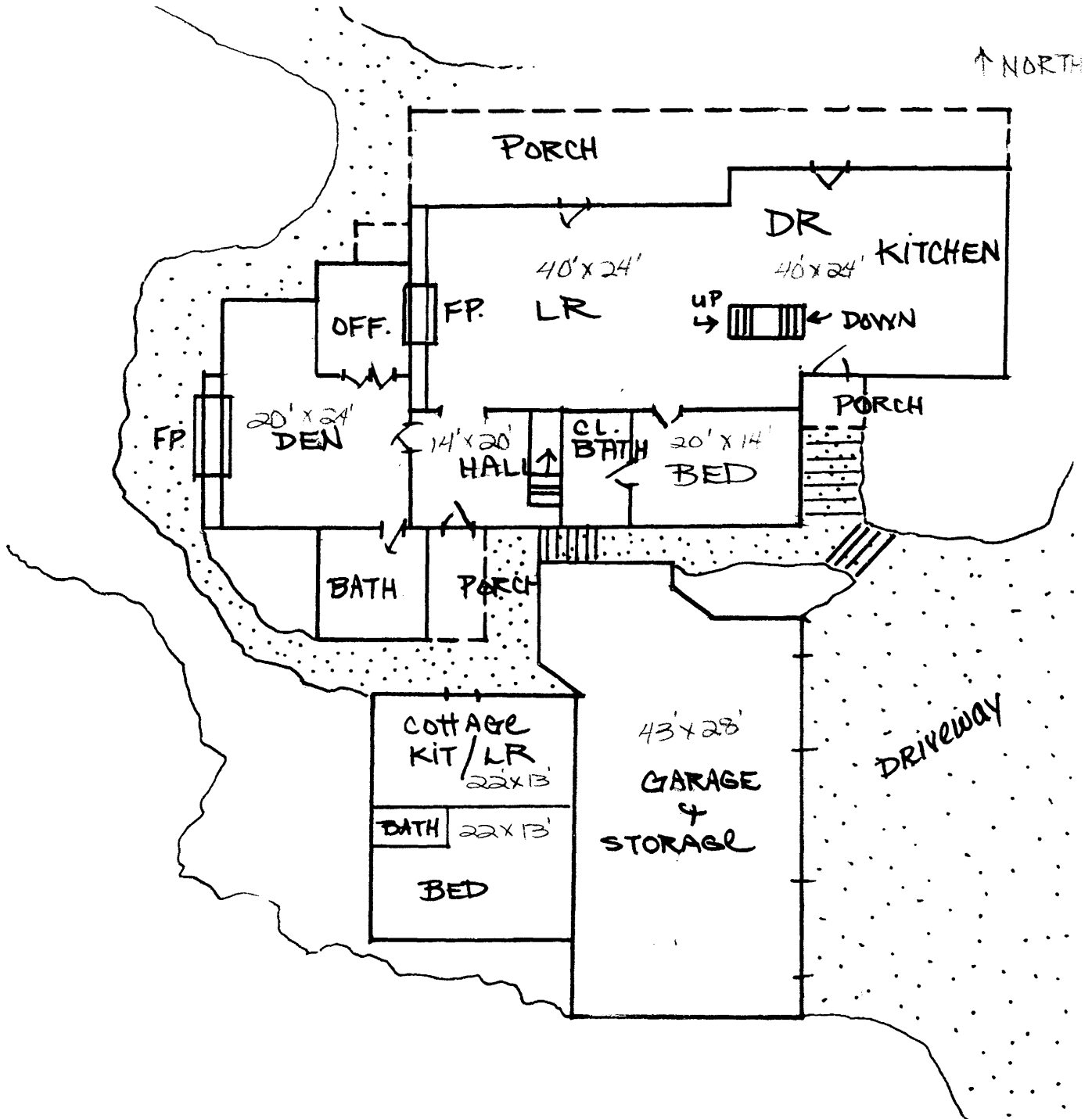
Site plan of property in 2005 (not to scale)



# Ralston & Sarah Wilbur House

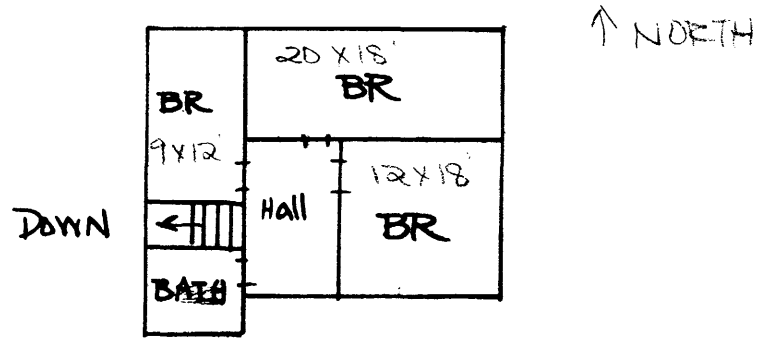
2525 East Nineteenth Avenue  
Spokane, WA 99223

First floor house plan (not to scale) in 2005



**Ralston & Sarah Wilbur House**  
2525 East Nineteenth Avenue  
Spokane, WA 99223

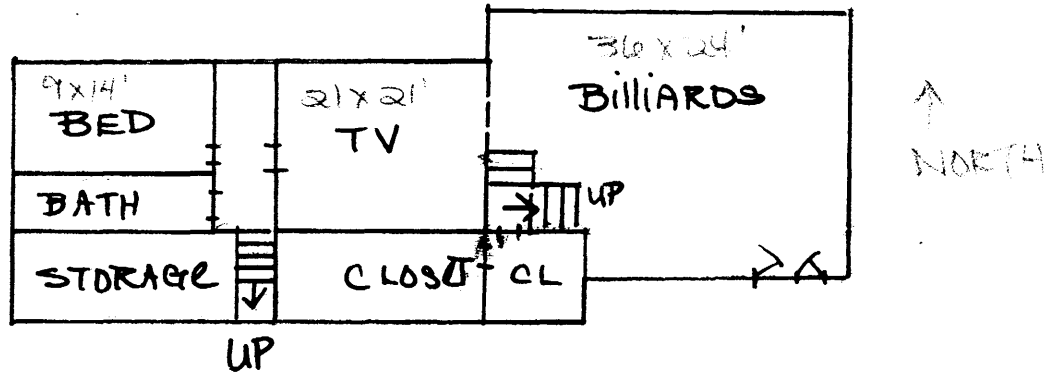
Second floor house plan (not to scale) in 2005





**Ralston & Sarah Wilbur House**  
2525 East Nineteenth Avenue  
Spokane, WA 99223

Basement level house plan (not to scale) in 2005



**Ralston & Sarah Wilbur House**  
2525 East Nineteenth Avenue  
Spokane, WA 99223

"Cupid Too Much for Rich Widow." *Spokesman-Review*,  
3 September 1916, p. 1.

## CUPID TOO MUCH FOR RICH WIDOW

Mrs. S. E. Smith and Ralston  
Wilbur Wed—Surprise  
to Friends.

"HE JUST RUSHED ME"

Bride Is Chief Stockholder in  
Hecla—Bridegroom, Engineer,  
Has Thrilling Career.

Mrs. Sarah E. Smith of Chicago, a director in the Hecla Mining company and its largest individual stockholder, whose income from the mine is said to be at least \$20,000 a month, was married yesterday to Ralston Wilbur, who for the last five years has been a partner in the Hallide Machinery company.

### Courtship Was Romantic.

They were married in the parsonage of the First Methodist church by the Rev. F. B. Short. The wedding followed a brief and romantic courtship, which had its origin in a business acquaintanceship due to Mr. Wilbur's profession being that of a mining and mechanical engineer.

Mr. Wilbur came to Spokane in 1909 as northwestern superintendent of the Thompson-Starrett company and as such directed the construction of the Old National bank building. Subsequently he joined the Hallide Machinery company as partner and salesman and has ever since made his home in Spokane, his residence of late being a suite of apartments at the Clode Inn.

He is a member of the Spokane and University clubs and the Shrine.

At the outbreak of the Boxer rebellion in China he was engaged in mining near Peking and joined the United States Legation as a volunteer, being attached to the Ninth Infantry as an engineer with the temporary rank of captain.

### Bride Knew Large Income.

Mrs. Wilbur was the widow of James R. Smith, until his death president and controlling stockholder of the Hecla Mining company. Since the death of her first husband Mrs. Wilbur has taken an active interest in the conduct of the affairs of the Hecla company. Her real estate and other investment interests in Chicago are of nearly equal importance to that of her mines and she has hitherto maintained her residence there. Both she and Mr. Wilbur have mining interests in the Conour d'Alene aside from her Hecla holdings.

Mr. Wilbur's father is among the largest land and cattle owners in California, being a partner in the firm of Miller & Wilbur, formerly Miller & Luz.

### Rushed Bride to Courthouse.

"Our marriage at this time was quite unpremeditated on my part," said Mrs. Wilbur yesterday afternoon. "It was my intention to leave for Chicago as soon as the railroad situation was settled, with the object of closing up my business affairs there and returning to Spokane to get married and make my home here. Mr. Wilbur would not consent to this program and insisted, since he could not get away from his business, that we be married today. I really did not have anything to say about it. He just rushed me over to the courthouse and secured a license. The wedding followed in such quick order that the hotel people do not even now know that we have been married."

### Will Build Home in Spokane.

"We shall make our home for the present at the Davenport, I suppose, as I must leave in a few days to attend to business affairs in Chicago. Mr. Wilbur has just built a bungalow. I understand, but we shall probably build a more suitable home here later on. We have known each other but a short time, so I presume the news of our marriage will be a surprise to all our friends."

### Wilbur Had Picturesque Career.

SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 2.—Ralston T. Wilbur, who was married today in Spokane, has had a picturesque career, one feature of which was his being sued for divorce in 1909 by Helen Clifford Wilbur, dramatic critic of the New Haven Register and well known contributor to the smart magazines.

Wilbur, in the course of his life, has been a famous right tackle for Yale, champion hammer thrower of the world, president of the class of '96 at Leland Stanford university, member of the American society of mechanical engineers and of the American Mathematical society. He figured in many sensational escapades at Stanford and finally went to Yale to finish his college course.

Returning to San Francisco after leaving Yale, Wilbur made columns of newspaper copy by conducting a bogus funeral along Market street in the wee small hours of the morning. Fifty cabs, picked up at all the cab stands in the city, were formed in procession, led by Wilbur, wearing the solemn mask of an undertaker. This performance, seen only by the early milkmen, is said to have cost the joker several hundred dollars.

Wilbur made a tempestuous love to Helen Clifford, who is a direct descendant of a noble English family and an intimate friend of Maude Adams, the actress.



1929 photograph of great room in Ralston & Sarah Wilbur House, looking west.



1980

1930 photograph of great room in Ralston & Sarah Wilbur House, looking west.