

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property		
		contributing	noncontributing	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)			
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1	-	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	-	-	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	-	-	structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	-	-	objects
		1	-	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing).
 Single Room Occupancy Hotels in the Central Business District of Spokane, WA, 1900-1910

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions).

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions).
 Commercial Style

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions).
 foundation: Poured concrete
 walls: Brick

roof: Built up
 other: Metal frame windows

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets).

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.
- 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).

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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions).

ARCHITECTURE
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1911-1948

Significant Dates

1911

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Cowley and Rigg

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets).

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual eligibility
(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 Buildings
Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Specify repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property: Less than one acre

UTM References:

1 11 467920 5278010
zone easting northing
2

3
zone easting northing
4

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet).

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet).

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Stephen Emerson

organization: Archaeological & Historical Services

date: May, 1998

street & number: MS-168, Eastern Washington University, 526 5th

telephone: (509) 359-2239

city or town: Cheney

state: WA

zip code: 99004

Additional Documentation

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 SHPO or FPO for any additional items).

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

name: Otis Housing Association

street & number: 1115 W. First Avenue, Ste. 220

telephone: 509-747-3277

city or town: Spokane

state: WA

zip code : 99204

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number _____ Page 1

Otis Hotel
Spokane County, Washington

7. Narrative Description

Present Exterior Appearance

The Otis Hotel, built in 1911, is a fine example of the brick commercial style which was popular in the early decades of the twentieth century. Such buildings often featured classically inspired details in the cornices and other decorative structural elements. This inclination is demonstrated in the Otis Hotel by the overhanging corona and modillion block decor of the cornice.

The Otis Hotel is a five story wood frame structure with a red brick facade. The foundation is poured concrete except for one small section where an old basalt foundation was utilized. The roof is flat and protected by built-up tar. A small box-like structure on the roof contains the machinery for the elevator. The building is located on the south west corner of an intersection of city streets. The primary facades face east and north, and feature decorative elements such as a cornice and string courses which are not displayed on the secondary sides, which face west and south. The Hotel lobby entrance is on the east side and various shop entries are located on both primary facades.

At the top of the east facade is a straight brick parapet, with metal coping, which surrounds the entire structure. Beneath this is the metal modillion block cornice, which is featured on the east and north sides. Below this is a row of fifth floor windows which is set off from the lower floors by a concrete string course which connects the windows and serves as a sill. The windows are metal sash double-hung and feature brick jack arches above them. The brick veneer between the windows is given artistic relief by evenly spaced rectangular panels created by slightly recessed placement of the bricks. Below the top row of windows are three more rows of windows. Another concrete string course acts as a sill for the lower row of windows and separates the upper portion of the building from the storefront level. The windows of these three rows are also metal sash double-hung and feature jack arches. The windows of the third and fourth level, which do not sit above a string course, have concrete sills. Decorative relief is provided for the brick walls by the projecting placement of brick, creating quoins at the corners and panels between the windows.

The east side storefront level of the Otis Hotel features the hotel lobby entry and several shop entries. The brick walls of this level are characterized by horizontal striations, an appearance created

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Otis Hotel
Spokane County, Washington

7. Narrative Description (Continued)

by recessed placement of intermitant rows of brick. The hotel lobby entry is situated just left of the center of the building. Above this entry is a flat metal canopy supported by chains attached to the wall behind it. On the lower side of the canopy are two decorative wrought iron brackets featuring a french curve design. Brown and white tiles laid in a checkerboard pattern flank the entry. The newer glass entry doors are bordered by intact glass transoms and sidelights. To the left of the hotel lobby entry are the lobby windows, consisting of newer picture windows set in wood frames which appear to be original. The original transom openings above them have been covered. The space between the windows and the sidewalk below is decorated with brown and white tiles laid in a checkerboard pattern.

To the south of the hotel lobby entry is a storefront with a recessed entry. The recessed bay is supported by a central wood beam. The bay accesses two wood and glass doors with glass transoms above. The display window to the south has been replace with boards and a newer, smaller window. To the north, the large display window is probably not original. Above both display fronts is a mostly intact row of square glass transom windows. Just to the north of the lobby entry is a small renovated storefront with a picture window and a wood and glass door. To the south of this entry is a service entrance which consists of a narrow door with a covered transom space above it. To the north of this, completing the description of the east facade, is a storefront display window space with transom spaces above, all covered with wood.

The north facade of the Otis Hotel exhibits much the same characteristics as the east, including the metal cornice, two concrete string courses, decorative brick quoins and paneling, metal sash double-hung windows and shop storefronts on the first level. The appearance of the upper levels differs from the east facade only in the presence of metal fire escape stairs with a retractable counter-balanced exit ramp. A similar fire escape is attached to the south facade. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps indicate that fire escapes were situated in these locations as early as 1928. Considering their appearance, those on the Otis Hotel are likely the original fixtures. Attached to the northeast corner of the building is a three story metal and neon sign displaying the words "The Otis Hotel." An historic photograph dated 1947 indicates that this sign is likely a modification of a similar sign which appears in the picture, when the hotel was called the Milner.

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Otis Hotel
Spokane County, Washington

7. Narrative Description (Continued)

The first level of the north facade originally contained five storefronts but has since been extensively renovated. The three westernmost commercial spaces are now occupied by a restaurant. The original recessed entries have been removed and replaced by brick veneer and windows framed with wood entablatures and square column-imitation buttresses. A large metal sign is located above the newer glass and steel entry doors. To the east of the restaurant are two storefront spaces in their original configuration. Their newer glass and steel entry doors are accessed by a recessed entry bay with central wood beam support, similar to the previously described storefront on the south side of the east facade. The metal framed display windows are newer. Painted brick above and below them may cover transom window openings and original decorative elements, possibly tile.

The west and south sides of the Otis Hotel are secondary facades which display similar characteristics, including rows of metal sash double-hung windows with brick jack arches and sills, various street level service entries, and the lack of a cornice, string course, or any decorative brick work. Much of the west facade is not visible because it is attached to the adjacent Commercial Hotel building. Prominently visible, however, are the openings to the two interior air and light passages which provide ventilation to the building's interior rooms. These openings feature segmental brick arches and brick sills. The south side has a metal fire escape similar to that of the north facade.

Window Alterations

In 1988, the window frames of the upper four floors of the Otis Hotel were replaced with thermally efficient steel sash double-hung windows. The original wood sash double-hung windows had deteriorated and were not considered to be adequate protection for hotel occupants. This represents a major departure from the original materials used in construction of the Otis Hotel. There are, however, two mitigating factors concerning these new windows. First, the metal frames of the windows are near replicas of the original wood sash frames and were designed to fit into the same fenestration template as the previous frames. Thus, they could be easily replaced with more authentic wood sash frames. Secondly, the exterior appearance of the Otis Hotel is practically unaffected by the presence of the new windows. Comparison of the present appearance of the north facade with a photograph dated 1947 reveal a remarkable similarity. The divided rectangular appearance of the double-hung windows is preserved, and the dark brown color of the metal frames mimics that of the darkly painted sashes visible in the 1947 photograph.

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Otis Hotel
Spokane County, Washington

7. Narrative Description (Continued)

Present Interior Appearance

The shop space interiors of the Otis Hotel have been largely renovated. As indicated above, there were originally five storefronts on the north facade. The westernmost three of these have since been consolidated into a restaurant with one entry. The interiors of the other five shop spaces of the building's north and east facades retain their original entry configurations and floor spaces but none of their original appearance. Changes to these storefront interiors is largely unavoidable because of the largely transient nature of such small businesses, leading to a large turnover of function and use. A study of local directories, maps, and photographs indicate that this was indeed the case with the Otis Hotel.

Although most of the first floor interior of the Otis Hotel has been extensively altered, the hotel lobby itself is remarkably intact. It occupies a roughly "U" shaped space, wrapped around both a new and an old elevator shaft. The lobby is entered, from the east, through an enclosed alcove with newer double sets of glass entry doors on each side. These are framed by original glass transoms and side lights, with multiple-pane leaded glass windows. The floor of the alcove is decorated with tile placed in a checkerboard pattern. The high ceiling is lit by a hanging glass globe lamp.

The lobby of the Otis Hotel is furnished with large wood frame chairs with vinyl cushions. It features a tile floor, laid in a checkerboard pattern, a high ceiling, and plaster walls which are trimmed in a copious display of ornamental wood work and built-ins. The wood is currently covered with layers of dark varnish. The use of this wood is seen in numerous finishings. These include round pillars on pedestals, ceiling beams, wainscoting, and mantles above two large radiator heating units. Above both mantles are multiple-frame leaded glass mirrors. One features a wood mounting for a clock; the clock currently in place is a replacement for an earlier, larger clock. The new elevator entry has a metal imitation wood frame, while the old elevator entry is framed with wood similar to the rest of the lobby wood work. Around the corner from the new elevator entry are the stairs to the rooms in the upper floors. The stairs leading to the stair well entry are terraced in curves. At the back (west) end of the lobby is the hotel office and check-in desk. The wood and glass dividing wall, with postal niches, separates the office from the lobby proper. At the back of the office area is a wooden mantle, with leaded glass mirrors, that is similar to those of the lobby.

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Otis Hotel
Spokane County, Washington

7. Narrative Description (Continued)

The basement of the Otis Hotel is accessed through a door facing the entry alcove. The door is of dark varnished wood with a glass transom light above. Next to it is an old metal post office receptacle. The basement stairs are made of poured concrete. The floor at the base of the stairs is covered with hexagonal white tiles framed in a border of checkerboard patterned tile. The same kind of floor is visible in an adjacent room which once served as the hotel laundry. Another opening at the bottom of the stairs leads to the various spaces of the basement proper. The old elevator shaft, with the car reportedly still inside, is partially visible, as is the concrete block new elevator shaft housing. Most of the basement is vacant, with heating equipment being the primary component. The building was once heated with coal and the old coal bunker occupies the southwest corner of the basement. The poured concrete foundation is apparent everywhere, except in a short section of the west wall, where an old basalt foundation was utilized. Sanborn maps indicate that this was probably from the foundation of a brick building which once occupied part of the site of the adjacent Commercial Hotel.

The upper floors of the Otis Hotel exhibit a plain appearance compared to the elaborate decor of the lobby. As is typical with SROs, the rooms are mostly small. Most of them have wash basins, but bathrooms are largely communal. The long narrow hallways reveal a dilapidated environment of doorways of variable age and condition. Interior metal sash double-hung windows look into two air and light passages. These upper floor halls and rooms retain most of their original configuration as designed for use as a Single Room Occupancy (SRO) facility.

8. Narrative Statement of Significance

Historical Context

The Otis Hotel was built in 1911 as designed by local Spokane architects Arthur Cowley and Archibald Rigg (see below). The undertaking was financed by Dr. Joseph E. Gandy who, arriving in 1880, was one of the earliest residents of Spokane. He quickly became involved in civil affairs and building operations, serving as the first president of the Spokane City Council and erecting a number of buildings in the Spokane central business district. Mr. Gandy died in 1934, having resided in Spokane for 47 years, serving as a community leader, medical doctor, and businessman.

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Otis Hotel
Spokane County, Washington

8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

The Otis Hotel was originally called the Willard Hotel. It was designed as a Single Room Occupancy facility with the intention of profiting from an influx of itinerant workers who streamed into Spokane during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Although the building boom which the town had been experiencing since 1900 was winding down in 1911, there was still a need for SRO hotels such as the Willard. Each of the upper floors contained about 40 rooms, most of them served by common bathrooms. Despite minor changes, the building still exhibits much of its original room configuration on the upper floors.

In 1921, the Willard changed hands, becoming part of an expanding chain of hotels established by Spokane investor and hotelier Victor Dessert. The name of the Willard was changed to the Atlantic Hotel, probably as a counter-point to Dessert's already successful Pacific Hotel. Ads found in Polk City Directories of the 1920s characterize the two hotels as "another name for home." Victor Dessert later financed the Dessert Hotel, another major Spokane hotel which was razed in ca. 1970.

During the 1930s, Spokane came upon hard times like the rest of the country and cheap lodging was in demand. By 1941, when economic recovery was interrupted by American involvement in WWII, the Atlantic Hotel had become the Milner Hotel. A photograph taken in 1947 indicates that at that time the building retained features of the upper floors that are still visible today, including the large sign at the northeast corner. Storefronts of the north facade still retained their original configuration of five separate shop spaces with recessed entry bays and glass display windows. Advertising and veneering, however, were already evident, and would eventually significantly alter the appearance of the storefronts.

In 1948, the Milner became the Earle Hotel and, finally, in 1956 the name was changed to the current one, the Otis Hotel. During these later years, the hotel deteriorated, largely because its clientele became increasingly to consist of elderly and physically challenged tenants who relied on fixed incomes. Throughout this period, however, much of the original appearance of the hotel lobby has been maintained, with the biggest change being the addition of a new elevator in 1957. The Otis Hotel is still in use, mostly inhabited by single people who often pass the time sitting on the vinyl cushions of the lobby chairs.

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Otis Hotel
Spokane County, Washington

8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

Otis Hotel as an SRO

The Otis Hotel was a late comer, as SROs go in Spokane, being constructed shortly after the decade (1900-1910) during which most of them were built. But the Otis is an SRO nonetheless, fulfilling the requirements for such structures as set forth by Craig Holstine in his Multiple Property Documentation "Single Room Occupancy Hotels in the Central Business District of Spokane, Washington, 1900-1910." The Otis Hotel was built with the same purpose as earlier SROs, namely to provide lodging, often temporary, for single workers on the move in a rapidly developing western American environment. The Otis Hotel retains a number of characteristics common to SROs, which are defined in the MPD as "unreinforced masonry structures of two or more stories, with commercial bays on the ground or street level, and the upper floors consisting primarily of single rooms without baths, with a limited number of rooms with baths."

The Architects

The Otis Hotel was the creation of two prominent Spokane architects, Arthur Cowley and Archibald Rigg, who formed a brief one year partnership in 1911, the year the hotel was built. The Otis is the finest achievement of this short-lived collaboration. The only other known examples of their work are two Spokane residences (1220 S. Division [Dr. Cunningham residence] and 730 E. Highland). Arthur W. Cowley, was the only son of Henry Cowley, who was one of the earliest white settlers in Eastern Washington. The Cowley family came to Spokane at an early date and, in 1878, Arthur was born there. He received his early education locally, attending the old South Central High School. He attended Oberlin College and later earned a degree in civil engineering from the University of Wisconsin. Returning to Spokane, Mr. Cowley at first worked as an electrical engineer and, in this field, developed his skill as a draftsman, working for the Great Northern Railroad and with the City of Spokane engineering department. In 1909, he first advertised himself as an architect and, with two short periods of absence, devoted his career to designing buildings in Spokane. He retired in the 1930s and died in 1949. His creations can be seen at several locations in the city. In addition to the Otis Hotel, these include three former Spokane Fire Department stations, the Altadena Apartments, and a number of private residences. One of the hotels he designed, the Gandy, named for the man who financed the Otis Hotel, was razed in 1982.

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Otis Hotel
Spokane County, Washington

8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

Archibald G. Rigg was born in Ontario in 1878. He attended several universities, including the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. He first worked as an architect in Danville, Illinois but soon headed west, reportedly for health reasons. After arriving in Spokane in about 1900, he developed his skills working for prominent local architects with already established reputations. In 1903 he was a draftsman for Albert Held and, two years later, he was listed as an architect with the firm of Cutter and Malmgren. The next year his father fell ill, and Mr. Rigg returned to the east, where he practiced architecture, designing a number of state financed buildings in Indianapolis. He came back to Spokane in 1911 and, collaborating with Arthur Cowley, built the Otis Hotel. Following that, Mr. Rigg practiced with Julius Zittel, who designed many local building, including structures at Eastern Washington University, Gonzaga University, and Mount St. Michael's. In 1920, Archibald Rigg teamed up with Roland Vantyne, creating a firm which would design some of Spokane's most visually appealing structures, including the Symons Building, the old Shriners Hospital, the Masonic Temple, Edgecliff Sanatorium, and the Hutton School. Mr. Rigg died in 1959.

National Register of Historic Places eligibility

The Otis Hotel is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion A for its association with early SROs in the Spokane Central Business District and the social phenomenon of rapid town growth and the migratory population spawned by it. Unlike most former SROs, the Otis Hotel still functions as such, with a largely intact lobby and upper room configuration.

Additionally, the Otis Hotel is NRHP eligible under Criterion C as a surviving SRO with excellent integrity in both its exterior and interior appearance. It satisfies the requirements for such architecture as set forth by the MPD, including intact interior room and lobby configuration and intact exterior appearance. Although the first level storefronts have been seriously compromised due to extensive renovation over the years, this is to be expected with such properties and should not affect eligibility, as stated in the MPD.

Beyond its individual NRHP eligibility, the Otis Hotel is a contributing element of a potential West First Avenue Historic District. Although exact boundaries for this district have not yet been drawn,

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Otis Hotel
Spokane County, Washington

8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

it would most likely include, at the least, both sides of First Avenue between Monroe Street and Cedar Street. Many historic period buildings are located within this corridor, some of which have already been placed on the NRHP, including the Otis Hotel's neighbor to the west, the Commercial Building, another SRO. Properties along this row include a near-contiguous assortment of early SROs, as well as a number of transportation related buildings dating back to the early days of automobile consumerism in Spokane. Other commercial ventures are also represented in this district. The brick commercial style is dominant among these structures, but classical and art deco elements are also present. Because of the number of significant historic period properties within this locale, the best way to document them would be through their inclusion in an NRHP district.

9. Major Bibliographic References

City of Spokane. *Historic Landmarks Survey*. Spokane: City Plan Commission, 1979.

Durham, N.W. *History of the City of Spokane and Spokane County, Washington*. Spokane, Chicago, Philadelphia: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1912.

Eastern Washington State Historical Society. Historic photograph, dated 1947, on file at the Cheney Cowles Museum, Spokane.

Holstine, Craig. "Single Room Occupancy Hotels in the Central Business District of Spokane, Washington, 1900-1910". Multiple Property Documentation. On file at the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Olympia, 1993.

Hyslop, Robert. *Spokane's Building Blocks*. Spokane: Standard Blueprint Company, 1983.

Polk, R.L. *City Directories*. Spokane. Various issues.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. Spokane Public Library, 1902 and 1910 (updated to 1928).

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Otis Hotel
Spokane County, Washington

9. Major Bibliographic References (Continued)

Spokane County Assessor's Office. Assessment sheets. Spokane: County Courthouse.

Spokesman-Review. "Dr. Gandy Tells of Early Days." August 25, 1927:7.

Spokesman-Review. "Death Beckons to Dr. J.E. Gandy." June 3, 1934:7.

Spokesman-Review. "Death Takes Architect, 80, at His Home." February 19, 1959:n.p.

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The Otis Hotel occupies the southwest corner of the intersection of First Avenue and Madison Street. The legal description of the property is: Spokane, Railroad Addition, Block 19, Lots 5 and 6.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries described above were chosen because the legal description of the Otis Hotel property corresponds with the location of the National Register of Historic Property (NRHP) eligible property described in this nomination.

11. Photographs

1. Otis Hotel
Spokane County, WA
Stephen Emerson
May, 1998
W. 212 Dawn, Spokane, WA
East facade, looking northwest

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Otis Hotel
Spokane County, Washington

11. Photographs (Continued)

2. Otis Hotel
Spokane County, WA
Stephen Emerson
May, 1998
W. 212 Dawn, Spokane, WA
Hotel lobby entry, looking west
3. Otis Hotel
Spokane County, WA
Stephen Emerson
May, 1998
W. 212 Dawn, Spokane, WA
Storefront and lobby entry, looking southwest
4. Otis Hotel
Spokane County, WA
Stephen Emerson
May, 1998
W. 212 Dawn, Spokane, WA
North and east facades, looking southwest
5. Otis Hotel
Spokane County, WA
Stephen Emerson
May, 1998
W. 212 Dawn, Spokane, WA
North facade, looking southeast

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Otis Hotel
Spokane County, Washington

11. Photographs (Continued)

6. Otis Hotel
Spokane County, WA
Stephen Emerson
May, 1998
W. 212 Dawn, Spokane, WA
Recessed storefront entry on north side, looking southwest
7. Otis Hotel
Spokane County, WA
Stephen Emerson
May, 1998
W. 212 Dawn, Spokane, WA
Sign at northeast corner, looking northwest
8. Otis Hotel
Spokane County, WA
Stephen Emerson
May, 1998
W. 212 Dawn, Spokane, WA
Hotel lobby entry, detail, looking southwest
9. Otis Hotel
Spokane County, WA
Stephen Emerson
May, 1998
W. 212 Dawn, Spokane, WA
Recessed storefront entry on east side, looking northwest

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Otis Hotel
Spokane County, Washington

11. Photographs (Continued)

10. Otis Hotel
Spokane County, WA
Stephen Emerson
May, 1998
W. 212 Dawn, Spokane, WA
South and west facades, looking northeast
11. Otis Hotel
Spokane County, WA
Stephen Emerson
May, 1998
W. 212 Dawn, Spokane, WA
Lobby entry alcove, looking northeast
12. Otis Hotel
Spokane County, WA
Stephen Emerson
May, 1998
W. 212 Dawn, Spokane, WA
Lobby, mantle and clock, looking southwest
13. Otis Hotel
Spokane County, WA
Stephen Emerson
May, 1998
W. 212 Dawn, Spokane, WA
Lobby, looking east