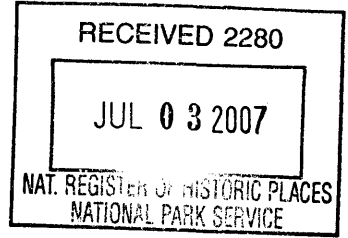


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

831



# 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 SOLBY, WILLIAM & MARGARET, HOUSE  
Other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 1325 East 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue not for publication  
city or town Spokane vicinity \_\_\_\_\_  
State Washington code WA county Spokane code 063 zip code 99203

### 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] 6-26-07  
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] 8/16/07  
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	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		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**

None \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Functions or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> & EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

REVIVALS: Tudor Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls STUCCO

roof WOOD SHINGLES

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.
X 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

ART

Period of Significance

1926-1928

Significant Dates

1926

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Solby, William J.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Bertelsen, Henry (Architect)

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:

Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM References on a continuation sheet.)

UTM grid with 4 columns (Zone, Easting, Northing) and 2 rows (1, 2). Values include 11, 4, 706, 82, 527, 602, 0, 3, 4.

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

Form with fields for name/title (Linda Yeomans, Consultant), organization (Historic Preservation Planning & Design), date (April 1, 2007), street & number (501 West 27th Avenue), telephone ((509) 456-3828), city or town (Spokane), state (WA), zip code (99203).

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 the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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

Form with fields for name (Richard D. Steele & Karen Dorn Steele), street & number (1325 East 20th Avenue), telephone ((509) 536-6259), city or town (Spokane), state (WA), zip code (99203).

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### NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Built in 1926, the William & Margaret Solby House is an excellent example of the Tudor Revival style. It is a one-story home with a steeply pitched roof with two prominent front-facing gables, original hand-troweled stucco cladding, metal multi-paned casement windows, and a unique false-thatch roof with rolled edges. The interior of the house reflects the Tudor Revival style with original walnut-finished oak woodwork, original wrought-iron door handles and light fixtures, original molded concrete fireplace, and original handcrafted leaded and tinted bottle-glass windows. The property is sited in the Rockwood Terrace Addition, a middle- to upper middle-class residential neighborhood with tree-lined streets and 50-foot-wide lots on the South Hill in Spokane, Washington. The house is located on a wide corner at the intersection of East Twentieth Avenue and South Perry Street, and is built on the crest of a hillside that slopes northward down to a back yard behind the home. Mature evergreen trees, shrubs, manicured lawn, original basalt rock terraces, and original basalt rock steps surround the home. A driveway leads from Perry Street to a garage built beneath the first floor at the east elevation. Well-preserved with remarkably few alterations, the property retains excellent architectural integrity in original location, design, materials, workmanship, and association as a single-family home built in Spokane during the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century.

### CURRENT APPEARANCE & CONDITION

#### *Site*

The Solby House is sited at the northwest corner of East Twentieth Avenue and South Perry Street on the east eleven feet of Lot 22, and on all of Lots 23-24 on Block 1 in the Rockwood Terrace Addition, a residential neighborhood located at the top of and just below a high basalt bluff that runs east and west across Spokane's South Hill. The two-plus lots measure 111 feet wide and 150 feet deep and reflect a steep downhill, northward slope from East Twentieth Avenue. The house is built in the southeast corner of the property and has an L-shaped footprint. The basement at the north elevation of the house is exposed at grade due to the steep slope of the property. Remnants of an original basalt rock wall at the west and north property borders, and original basalt rock terrace walls exist behind the house. A custom-made rock/concrete birdbath is located at the west end of a terrace wall nearest the back of the house. Basalt rock steps wind up through the terrace walls from the backyard and around the west elevation of the house, past a rock-lined reflecting pool to a first-floor side entrance. The landscape design, by landscape gardener J.B. Knight, was featured in the local newspaper with an extensive list of plantings. The Solby House is surrounded by paved tree-lined streets platted to a directionally correct grid, residential homes built between 1905 and 1940.

#### *Exterior*

According to Spokane County Tax Assessor records, the L-shaped Solby House measures 46 feet wide and 18 to 49 feet deep. Sited on a steep slope, the house has a daylight basement which is accessible at the rear

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(north elevation) and a garage which is built beneath the northeast corner of the home. The single-story house reflects a cross-gable plan and an unusual steeply pitched rolled-edge false-thatch roof. The original composition roof is made of Zonolite, "a non-metallic mineral mined near Libby, Montana" which was molded to resemble thatched roofs found in Great Britain and northern Europe.<sup>1</sup> In the 1940s, most of the Zonolite roof was covered with wood shingles, leaving the original rolled edge at the rake exposed below the wood shingles. The exterior walls of the house are clad in thick hand-troweled stucco which was applied with large circular swirl patterns over hollow-core ceramic tile blocks (structural clay tile).<sup>2</sup> All of the windows in the house are original multi-paned metal casement units. The foundation is made of poured concrete. Architectural details that embellish the house include original wood-paneled window shutters, an original wood-paneled garage door, and custom-made bottle-glass sidelight windows.

The *façade of the house faces south* along East Twentieth Avenue. It is dominated by an asymmetrical design, a steeply pitched wood-shingled gable end roof, and two front-facing cross-gables. The walls are clad with stucco and the windows are multi-paned metal casement units. A front entrance is located in the ell formed by the cross-gable plan of the house. The entryway is embellished with a slightly recessed curved and corbelled entrance. The main half light entry door features a custom designed stain glass window of a Viking ship and Danish flag. Sidelights flank the upper half of the front door and are made of leaded, tinted roundels of bottle-glass (the round bases of bottles). An original black metal letterbox is attached to the wall next west of the door. An original black wrought-iron lantern is located above the letterbox and illuminates the front entrance. Original metal house numbers are located above the front door.

The *east elevation* of the house faces east along South Perry Street. It features a steeply pitched side gable roof and an asymmetrical design with stucco cladding, multi-paned metal casement windows, and a wood-paneled garage door. The garage door opens to a single-car garage which is located beneath the first floor at the northeast corner of the house. Due to the steep northward-sloping grade around the house, the basement is partially exposed at the east elevation, including the garage entrance.

The *west elevation* also reveals the property's steep slope and part of the basement at the northwest corner of the house. The west elevation features an asymmetrical design, a gable end roof, stucco cladding, and a small porch stoop which is partially enclosed with a short curved, stepped porch wall. The porch wall is clad with hand-troweled stucco like the house and flanks three concrete steps that rise to a porch deck. A

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<sup>1</sup> "Zonolite Roof is First of Kind." *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Oct 1926.

<sup>2</sup> Spokane County Tax Assessor Records. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

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recessed arched entrance is located at the porch and holds an oak door which opens to the kitchen. An original wrought-iron porch lantern hangs from the wall next to the entrance. A multi-paned metal casement window is located next north of the side entrance.

The *north elevation* is located at the rear of the house and is dominated by a projecting cross-gable with a steeply pitched roof, stucco cladding, symmetrically placed casement windows, and an open-air covered balcony/sleeping porch which was built on the first floor at the northwest corner in the ell produced by the cross-gable plan for the house. The balcony/sleeping porch is supported by large square wood pillars and covers a concrete patio which is located beneath the balcony at grade (basement level). At the first floor, the exterior wall of the balcony is clad in six-inch-wide vertical wood boards which have a scalloped design at the lower edge. A row of screened windows wrap around the northwest corner of the balcony above the scalloped vertical board cladding. Inside the screened-in fresh-air balcony/sleeping porch, multi-paned French doors open into the house, and a metal casement window opens into the kitchen.

### *Interior*

The interior of the Solby House has 1,608 finished square feet on the first floor, and 738 unfinished square feet in the basement.<sup>3</sup> Made of oak with a stained-glass light in the upper leaf that pictures a Viking sailing vessel, the front door opens into a center reception hall. The reception hall has a red glazed ceramic tile floor, original lathe-and-plaster walls, and a barrel-arched ceiling. The hall opens east to two bedrooms and a bathroom, west to a dining room and kitchen, northwest to a sun room and balcony/sleeping porch, and northeast up two steps to a large living room. A corbelled entry opens to the dining room, and an arched entrance that mimics the barrel arch at the ceiling in the reception hall opens to the living room. The living room, located in the northeast corner of the house, is spacious at 16 feet deep and 28 feet wide.<sup>4</sup> It has a glazed red ceramic tile floor, hand-plastered lathe-and-plaster walls, and a 12-foot-high vaulted ceiling with walnut-hued oak beams. A molded concrete fireplace is set flush on the south wall. An arched built-in bookcase is located next east of the fireplace. The dining room opens north through French doors to a sun room and west to a kitchen. The sun room opens west to a small covered balcony/sleeping porch at the northwest corner of the house. An exterior door in the kitchen opens to a side porch at the west elevation. Remodeled in 1973,<sup>5</sup> the kitchen has built-in casework and a vinyl floor. Woodwork on the first floor is walnut-colored oak, interior doors are paneled walnut-colored oak with hand-forged black wrought-iron door latches, and the reception hall chandelier and various wall sconces are original wrought-iron fixtures.

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

<sup>4</sup> "Thatched House With Pink Walls." *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Oct 1926.

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

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The basement is exposed at grade at the north elevation. It is unfinished with a mechanical/furnace room, storage room, and laundry room. A single-car garage, located beneath the first floor at the northeast corner of the house, exits to a driveway at the east elevation that leads to South Perry Street. The home is heated by gas-fired forced air heat.

### ORIGINAL DESIGN & SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS

The 80-year-old Solby House is remarkably intact and well-preserved. A unique design that illustrates unusual building materials and construction methods (ie: false-thatch rolled-eave Zonolite roof, swirled stucco cladding, handcrafted bottle-glass windows), the custom-designed Solby House was featured in the *Spokesman-Review* newspaper on October 3, 1926 with photographs, site plan, floor plans, and detailed descriptions of the home and its features. The home was also featured in the May 1927 edition of *Good Housekeeping Magazine* with black and white photographs of the home's exterior and interior.<sup>6</sup>

The *Spokesman-Review* gave the following account:

The old English farm house is the type Mr. Solby's residence will approximate. The thatched roof...will have rough top lines and rounded corners. The [exterior] walls will be stucco of Italian texture, finished in mellow pink. The two bedrooms will be in a wing divided from the rest of the house.

One will enter this unique dwelling by an old-type oak door with an art glass panel of a Viking ship. The door opens into a vestibule at the end of which is an arch and two steps, the entrance to the living room. The 16x28 living room will have a sloping ceiling 12 feet high at the maximum, two very large steel sash windows facing the city, a fireplace of ornamental stone, and a bookcase set in under an arch, duplicating the entrance arch. The walls will be Italian travertine... The trim in the living room, dining room, and vestibule will be oak of antique finish. Lighting fixtures will be wrought iron. The dining room will be entered from the vestibule and will have treatment similar to the living room. Facing the city will be two large French doors, opening on a balcony over which will be an orange and blue awning. The kitchen, off the dining room, will have nothing of the antique about it. Finish will be white enamel and the equipment will be completely modern, including an electric range and electric refrigerator.

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<sup>6</sup> Corbett, Josephine Gilmer. "A Houseful of Color." *Good Housekeeping*, vol. 84, May 1927: 74-75, 201.



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The full basement will contain a garage, heating plant, laundry, fruit, and fuel rooms.<sup>7</sup>

The Solby House has had very few modifications since it was built in 1926. Modifications include:

- *1940s-1950s* Original sunroom enclosed as library/den, and screened balcony/sleeping porch constructed at northeast corner of first floor adjacent to library/den.
- *1940s* Cedar shingles installed over original Zonolite roof (original rolled roof eaves left exposed).
- *1973* Kitchen and bathroom remodeled.<sup>8</sup>

The Solby House retains its original form, exterior design, rolled-edge Zonolite roof (under 1940s wood shingles), hand-troweled stucco cladding, wood-paneled shutters, wood-paneled garage door, metal casement windows, bottle-glass sidelight windows, stained-glass front door, oak interior and exterior doors, wrought-iron light fixtures and door handles, red glazed ceramic tile floors, plaster-and-lathe wall/ceiling construction, ceiling beams, oak woodwork, French doors, fireplace, and exterior landscape features, including original basalt rock walls, basalt rock steps, basalt rock-lined reflecting pool, and basalt rock/concrete birdbath. The home is in excellent condition and well conveys early 20<sup>th</sup>-century building materials and building practices, and its original location, design, and association as a single-family home built in the 1920s in Spokane, Washington.

### Solby House Contractors and Suppliers:

- Jones & Dillingham – Entrance door stained glass
- McGoldrick Lumber Co – Structural lumber, floors
- Monk & Disotell – Heating system
- O.N. Wolff & Co. – Cast stone fireplace
- Tull & Gibbs – Draperies
- Inland Empire Co. – Interior woodwork
- Brown & Johnston – Custom Light Fixtures
- Maxwell & Franks – Electrical wiring

<sup>7</sup> "Thatched House with Pink Walls." *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Oct 1926.

<sup>8</sup> Spokane County Tax Assessor Records. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The William & Margaret Solby House in Spokane, Washington is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criterion "C" as a dwelling that embodies the distinctive characteristics of its type (Tudor Revival), and represents the work of noted Spokane architect Henry Bertelsen. The home is also significant under criterion "B" as a property that is best associated with the work of interior designer, decorator and artist, William J. Solby. The period of significance begins in 1926, the date of construction of the home and ends in 1928, the year William Solby passed away.

Designed in the Tudor Revival tradition, the Solby House is embellished in a particularly whimsical and picturesque manner. Often referenced as the "Storybook style", the term is used to describe those cottage-like Tudor Revival-style homes that mimic thatch-roofed farmhouses associated with nursery rhymes and storybooks. The Solby House was constructed "to show how a model small house could be built."<sup>1</sup> The home was custom-designed by Solby and Henry Bertelsen, a prominent Spokane architect and fellow Dane, and was reportedly built to resemble the "old-fashioned North European type of farm house remembered by Solby" from his childhood in Copenhagen.<sup>2</sup> With a unique golden-hued false-thatch rolled-edge roof, hand-troweled soft pink stucco walls, and turquoise blue window shutters, the Solby House was a colorful embodiment of the Storybook-style aesthetic when it was built in 1926, and was described at that time as "not like a house in real life, but one of those enchanting hunting lodges in the wood, the cottage where Red Riding Hood went to see her grandmother..."<sup>3</sup>

With fan fair, the house was featured on a three-page spread in the *Spokesman-Review* just after it was erected. The Spokane newspaper venerated Solby as "a recognized expert on decoration" and touted the home's "distinctive old English" design with photographs, site plan, floor plan, and numerous articles that described the property's unique building site, exterior/interior design, architectural features, interior furnishings/fixtures, and decorative thatch-like roof.<sup>4</sup> According to newspaper articles and interviews with William Solby, the roof design was called "Solby's Thatch,"<sup>5</sup> a design developed by William Solby through "a secret process he devised"<sup>6</sup> to specifically resemble the look of thatched roofs constructed on cottages and farmhouses in England and northern Europe. The Solby House was additionally showcased in a May

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<sup>1</sup> "Charming European Farm Cottage Reproduced in Rockwood Forest." *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Oct 1926

<sup>2</sup> "Publicity for Spokane Home." *Spokesman-Review*, 24 April 1927.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> "Zonolite Roof is First of Kind." *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Oct 1926.

<sup>6</sup> "Solby's Home to New Owner." *Spokesman-Review*, Dec 1934.

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1927 *Good Housekeeping Magazine* story with descriptive narrative and photographs of the home's exterior and interior.<sup>7</sup>

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

#### *Rockwood Terrace Addition*

The Solby House is located in the Rockwood Terrace Addition located 1.5 miles southeast and uphill from Spokane's downtown central business district. Platted in 1910, the addition contains three long city blocks and is bounded by East Nineteenth Avenue to the north, Overbluff Road to the south, South Perry Street to the east, Arthur and Syringa Streets to the west. The addition was developed by the Robert W. Grinnell & Company, one of the developers of the Rockwood National Register Historic District which is located adjacent next west of the Rockwood Terrace Addition.

When it was platted, the Rockwood Terrace Addition was a wild tangle of grasses, shrubs, and tall pine and fir trees that grew along steep slopes at the base of an east/west-running basalt bluff just below Overbluff Road. By the time the Solby House was built in 1926, the small Rockwood Terrace Addition had been developed with paved roads and sidewalks, underground sewer and water service, street lights, and oversized lots with views of the city. The addition's developer, Robert Grinnell, claimed:

"The lots have the same advantages as the homes higher up on the rimrock [at Overbluff Road], plus good soil. The view is broken by trees on some of the tracts but in most cases that makes the view even prettier."<sup>8</sup>

To regulate the architectural development of the Rockwood Terrace Addition, Robert Grinnell penned early land use controls which were implemented as warranty deed restrictions and protective covenants. The restrictions and covenants stated that:

- 1) residences shall be erected at a minimum cost of \$4,500,
- 2) "residences shall be of modern style of architecture,"
- 3) "no outhouse, barn or garage shall be erected and used as a dwelling before the construction of the main dwelling house,"
- 4) "no building shall be erected less than 35 feet from the front line of lot on street which building shall face,"

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<sup>7</sup> Corbett, Josephine Gilmer. "A Houseful of Color." *Good Housekeeping Magazine*, vol. 84, 1927, 74-74, 201.

<sup>8</sup> "Picks Fine Site for His Cottage." *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Oct 1926.

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- 5) "no building shall be erected less than five feet from side lines of lot,
- 6) no apartment house, tenement house, flat building, lodging house or hotel shall be erected upon this lot,"
- 7) "nor shall any building constructed thereon be used for business purposes of any kind."<sup>9</sup>

The covenants were made to run with the land in perpetuity. Their creation and implementation resulted in the erection of the Solby House and other homes in the neighborhood which are now tangible demonstrations of developer Grinnell's initial intentions for planned development and architectural control in the Rockwood Terrace Addition.

To entice prospective investors and homebuyers to the Rockwood Terrace Addition, Grinnell and his real estate development company paid for several newspaper advertisements with maps and site plans which were printed in the *Spokesman-Review* and the *Spokane Daily Chronicle* in 1926:

*"Twentieth Avenue in Beautiful Rockwood Terrace is going to be  
'One of the Show Places of Spokane'  
judging from the hundreds of people who visited these sites yesterday and the number who made  
out applications for one of these residence tracts.  
Robert W. Grinnell & Co."<sup>10</sup>*

Sales were robust in the Rockwood Terrace Addition. The *Spokane Daily Chronicle* reported that "many homes will be started this year and more next spring on the Rockwood Terrace homesites sold...by Robert W. Grinnell & Co. Thirty-six sites brought \$33,640. The prices were low for this class of property and according to the Company, there were more applications for lots than could be filled."<sup>11</sup>

Rockwood Terrace Addition was developed as middle and upper middle-class residential community. Neighborhood residents included people employed in mostly professional positions such as merchants, businessmen, bankers, lawyers, doctors, mining engineers, and investment entrepreneurs, but also included other positions such as postal clerk, shop clerk, seamstress, and grocer. Most of the homes in the neighborhood were designed and built by noted Spokane architects, home designers, and builders, and many of the homes represent fine examples of various styles, including Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival,

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<sup>9</sup> Spokane County warranty deed #851221, book #420, page #394, dated 2 June 1926. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

<sup>10</sup> *Spokesman-Review*, 24 May 1926.

<sup>11</sup> *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 18 May 1926.

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Italian Renaissance, Spanish Eclectic, and the Arts & Crafts tradition expressed in both small bungalows and larger two-story houses. Except for a few, most of the homes in the Rockwood Terrace Addition were erected during the decades following World War I from 1920 to 1945.<sup>12</sup>

On June 2, 1926, William & Margaret Solby purchased the east eleven feet of Lot 22, and all of Lots 23 and 24 on Block 1 in the Rockwood Terrace Addition.<sup>13</sup> The cost of the transaction was \$1,250. A May 18, 1926 newspaper article reported that the Solbys “had plans prepared for a home to be constructed at once. It will embody the home decoration ideas which Mr. Solby has developed during his long experience in that line of business...[and] is intended to be a model of its kind.”<sup>14</sup>

### ***William J. Solby, Homeowner and Designer, Decorator, Artist, Businessman***

William J. Solby was born in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1882. According to an obituary<sup>15</sup> and several newspaper articles written about him in Spokane newspapers and *Good Housekeeping Magazine*, Solby studied art privately in Europe and at the Royal Academy of Copenhagen where he learned the profession of scenery painting. He immigrated to Chicago when he was 20 years old and worked there as a successful scenery artist. He then came to Spokane around 1919, and founded the American Paint & Wall Paper Company in downtown Spokane which was regarded as “one of the leading establishments of its kind in the northwest.”<sup>16</sup> Located at the corner of West First Avenue and South Post Street, Solby’s shop specialized in “interior decorating, paper hanging, imported & domestic wallpaper,” and was a jobber for Sherwin & Williams paints and a distributor for Kyanize Enamels & Varnishes.<sup>17</sup> Solby was noted as a professional “interior decorator of fine taste” in Spokane and “was called upon by the leading architects [in the city] for his opinion on some of the large building construction contracts” in the area. These included the Union Railway Station (demolished), Auditorium Building (demolished), Gonzaga University, Old National Bank Building, and the Chronicle Building as well as large, expensive homes.<sup>18</sup> Involved in both performing and fine arts in Spokane, Solby directed several amateur theatrical productions, taught classes in furniture painting, and was a recognized landscape oil painter and art adjudicator. He served in many fraternal and philanthropic organizations in Spokane, including the Danish Brotherhood, Elk’s Lodge,

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<sup>12</sup> Spokane County Tax Assessor Records. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

<sup>13</sup> Spokane County warranty deed. Spokane County Courthouse, Spokane, WA.

<sup>14</sup> Advertisement for Rockwood Terrace Addition by Robert W. Grinnell & Company, *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 18 May 1926.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> *Spokane City Directory, 1919-1931*.

<sup>18</sup> “W. J. Solby Dies of Heart Attack.” *Spokesman-Review*, 11 Sept 1928, p. 1.

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Moose Lodge, and Rotary Club. In addition to his obituary in the *Spokesman-Review*, William Solby was paid tribute at his death by well-known Spokane artist and socialite, Bertha Ballou. She wrote an article to the editor of the *Spokesman-Review*, praising Solby as a man who was “known and highly respected among the leading businessmen of the town... He was a person of broad sympathy and understanding, always ready to lend moral support...always keen to help others to shine, laboring untiringly to produce results.”<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps Solby’s most significant contribution to the Spokane community however was his home at 1325 East Twentieth Avenue in the Rockwood Terrace Addition on Spokane’s South Hill. According to Solby, he built the house to be a demonstration of “how a model small house could be built.”<sup>20</sup> The construction process, building materials, products, and contractors involved in the construction of Solby’s home, and his talent and success as an artist, inventor, interior designer, and decorator were applauded and featured in a succession of 12 articles which were printed in a three-page spread in the *Spokesman-Review* on October 3, 1926. Solby, his home, and his work were further featured in the May 1927 edition of *Good Housekeeping Magazine*. The Solby House is a tangible perfection of Solby’s highest achievements and accomplishments in Spokane, and his home proved to be the quintessential canvas that showcased his abilities as a “recognized expert on decoration.”<sup>21</sup> Although Solby’s life in his home at East Twentieth Avenue was cut short by his untimely death in 1928 (just two years after construction of the house was complete), the significance of the property in association with Solby is not diminished. Solby’s most productive period in Spokane is illustrated from 1926-1928 in the style, design, decoration, and construction of the Solby House, and with the unusual amount of local newspaper and national magazine coverage and documentation that occurred as a result of the home’s construction.

### ***Henry C. Bertelsen, Architect (1888-1963)***

The Solbys commissioned Henry C. Bertelsen, a noted Spokane architect, to design their home. Born in Denmark and educated at the Chicago Institute of Fine Art, Henry Bertelsen came to Spokane in 1905 at the age of 17. He apprenticed briefly with architect Howard Hals and in 1909 began work as a draftsman for the prominent architectural firm of Cutter & Malmgren. Known as a “capable and genial” he eventually became responsible for managing the drafting room, and completed many of the firm’s final architectural drawings. Upon the death of Cutter’s associate, Karl Malmgren in 1921, Cutter continued to employ Bertelsen as his assistant, but was unable to continue paying his wages in Spokane’s declining economy. When Cutter decided to leave Spokane for Santa Barbara in 1923, in lieu of back wages, he was left the

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<sup>19</sup> “Pays Tribute to W. J. Solby.” *Spokesman-Review*, 11 Sept 1928, p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> “Charming European Farm Cottage Reproduced in Rockwood Forest.” *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Oct 1926.

<sup>21</sup> “Thatched House with Pink Walls.” *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Oct 1926.

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contents of Cutter's office.<sup>22</sup> Bertelsen continued to practice in Spokane, and joined the older and more experienced, William A. Wells in a short lived partnership. He acquired his architectural license (L 16) in January of 1924. Adept at design, Bertelsen did a variety of job from small store and auto dealerships to large civic structures. His skill in working with terra cotta was well recognized. Reportedly he was wholly and in part responsible for more than 100 commercial and residential buildings in Spokane, including his work on the Davenport Hotel (as chief architect for Cutter in 1914), the Spokane Coliseum [demolished], the Inland Automobile Association Building, Shriners Hospital for Crippled Children, the United Hillyard Bank (1920), Waitsburg High School (1927), Mt. Spokane Vista House (1933), Lincoln School (1930) and several buildings at Gonzaga University.<sup>23</sup>

Active in civic matters, his affiliations were numerous. Among them the Rotary Club, the Spokane Club, Associated Engineers, the American Institute of Architects, the Press Club, the Athletic Round table, American Legion, the Sons of Norway and the Inland Empire Automobile Association. He served on the Salvation Army Advisory Board and the Fairmount Cemetery Board of Trustees. Bertelsen passed away in 1963 at the age of 75.

After it was built in 1926, the Solby House was described as a "charming European farm cottage reproduced in Rockwood Forest" in the Rockwood Terrace Addition.<sup>24</sup> William Solby stated that the home "cost more than the \$10,000... I planned.... with an eye to a minimum of depreciation."<sup>25</sup> Just two years after his show home was finished, William Solby died in 1928. In 1934 his widow, Margaret Solby, placed a "home for sale" advertisement in the real estate section of the *Spokesman-Review* newspaper:

### ***"Danish Style"***

*"True Danish by a noted architect. Authentic as Denmark itself.  
Leaded windows, ceramic fireplace, tile floor blend with hardwood in unique  
room designs. A striking living room on raised level.  
A view you'll cherish.  
Balcony overlooking a lovely yard.  
Quaint dining room, modern kitchen. A showplace home.  
Two extra-large bedrooms and den.*

<sup>22</sup> "Death Claims Civic Leader H. Bertelsen." *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 24 Aug 1963.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> "Charming European Farm Cottage Reproduced in Rockwood Forest." *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Oct 1926.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

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*No other home like this.*

*Original. \$20,000. Rockwood location.”<sup>26</sup>*

### ***Subsequent Owners***

The Solby House was purchased by Oliver & Tresa Matthews in 1934. Oliver “Mattie” Matthews worked as a pharmacist and manager for Hart & Dilatush Prescription Pharmacy in downtown Spokane. After a 16-year residency and Oliver Matthews’ death in 1950, the property was sold for \$14,510 to Alma Bertelsen and her husband, Henry Bertelsen, the architect who designed the Solby House. In a quick title transfer, the Bertelsens sold the property the same day they bought it to George & Della Ketchum. George Ketchum was owner and president of Ketchum & Son, Incorporated, a wholesale dry goods store that sold “underwear, hosiery, sportswear, and work clothing” at 35 W. Main Avenue in downtown Spokane.<sup>27</sup> Ten years later in 1960, the Ketchums sold the property to John & Alice McDowell. John McDowell was a partner at Reid McDowell Frazier Investment Securities, and Alice McDowell worked as an office secretary for the Garrett Insurance Company in Spokane. In 1990, the McDowells sold the house to Richard Steele and his wife, Karen Dorn Steele. A scientist, educator, and linguist, Richard Steele is currently a visiting associate professor in the Department of Computer Science at Eastern Washington University. Karen Dorn Steele is an historian, journalist, and investigative reporter who authors articles about environmental issues and special projects for the *Spokesman-Review* newspaper in Spokane. Highly educated with many awards, Richard Steele and Karen Dorn Steele were both listed in the 2001 edition of *Who’s Who in the World* (p. 5070).

### **ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Solby House is architecturally significant as an excellent example of the Tudor Revival style with strong “storybook” influence.<sup>28</sup> The property embodies distinctive characteristics of the style and possesses particularly high artistic values. With its Hansel & Gretel-like storybook characteristics and handcrafted architectural elements, the Solby House fully articulates the Tudor Revival style (sometimes called Cottage Tudor), expressing artful and aesthetic ideals of the storybook influence.

### ***Tudor Revival Style and “Storybook” Influence***

Whether expressed as a grand, formal baronial manor house or a small, informal cozy cottage, the Tudor Revival style is one of America’s best-loved architectural traditions. The style is a revival of architectural

<sup>26</sup> Real estate advertisement. *Spokesman-Review*, 1934.

<sup>27</sup> *Spokane City Directory 1955*, p. 459.

<sup>28</sup> Gellner, Arrol, and Douglas Keister. *Storybook Style: America’s Whimsical Homes of the Twenties*. New York: Viking Studio, 2001.



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forms, features, and designs made popular during the 16<sup>th</sup>-century reign of the Tudors, an English royal family descended from Sir Owen Tudor, a Welshman who married Catherine of Valois, a widow of Henry V.<sup>29</sup>

The Tudor style in England was adopted throughout the British Isles and developed during the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603) and the reign of James I (1603-1625), reaching a period that fostered the construction of many of England's great manor houses in both countryside and urban settings. Reminiscent of illustrations associated with English nursery rhymes and bedtime stories, smaller "storybook" cottages were also built throughout England and in northern Europe, especially in France, Holland, and Denmark. In the English Cotswold region, peasant-like homes and wool carder's cottages were made of indigenous limestone and stucco with moss-covered slate roofs. Similar to Cotswold cottages, quaint farmhouses in rural France, Holland and Denmark were constructed with whitewashed stucco walls and thick roofs made of brushy thatch.

In the 1920s, a revival of English and northern European cottage designs surged into favor throughout America, especially with returning World War I American GIs who remembered romantic rural farmhouses in the European countryside, a landscape which framed hopes for a peaceful and much sought-after tranquil and bucolic lifestyle at that time. Architecture and travel books with photographs of British and European cottages and farmhouses helped spark the cottage movement in America, and the advent of American veneering techniques in the 1920s and 1930s helped promote the construction of frame cottages with exterior veneers made of brick, stone, and stucco. In addition, plans and blueprints were published in builder's catalogues and houseplan books, and artists' conceptions of romantic sleepy cottages were used in home decorating magazines, greeting cards, advertising logos, children's nursery rhymes, and storybooks like *Hansel & Gretel*. Before long, small cottage homes were built throughout the country with "antiquated" appearances that approximated 16<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup>-century cottages built throughout England and Europe. In America the whimsical cottage design is sometimes called the Cottage Tudor Revival style and the "storybook" style.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps the strongest influence associated with the storybook influence was a quirky brand of architecture that arose in Hollywood, America's movie and motion picture capital. The architecture was initially built for movie sets but was also erected as both small studio homes and larger houses for Hollywood's newest

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<sup>29</sup> Yeomans, Linda. "English Tudors in Spokane." *Spokane Magazine of the Inland Northwest*, vol. 3, no. 5, Nov-Dec 2001, pp.34-37.

<sup>30</sup> Gellner, Arrol, and Douglas Keister. *Storybook Style: America's Whimsical Homes of the Twenties*. New York: Viking Studio, 2001.

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class of residents, motion picture stars. Set designs and actual homes were specifically designed to look older than they were. Through the use of materials like broken clinker bricks combined with textured stucco and stone, leaded-glass windows, and wavy rolled-edge thatch-like roofs, the designs for these small homes resulted in an artificially aged look—reminders of quaint, idyllic storybook cottages.

The film industry's expertise at evoking the architecture of distant places and times was unwittingly influential on residential architecture. Exotic settings such as those being routinely seen in motion pictures had previously been available only in published photographs, which in turn had been common only since the turn of the century. By the late '20s, however, movie sets—the product of Hollywood's best architectural talents—were on exhibit to a hundred million American [movie-goers] a week. Such vast exposure proved far more influential on public taste than any static image could have.<sup>31</sup>

### *Stylistic Features*

Defining features of the “storybook” Tudor Revival style include the following:

- Construction dates from roughly 1920-1945
- Artificially aged materials and designs that evoke an appearance of antiquity
- One or one-and-one-half story house
- Asymmetrical design, sometimes whimsical
- Steeply pitched roof with front facing gables
- Stone, stucco, brick or wood exterior wall cladding
- False half-timbering
- Massive chimneys, sometimes tapered with ornamental chimney pots
- Recessed entryways, sometimes arched or corbelled
- Wooden doors with leaded-glass lights, sometimes stained glass
- Tall windows with multi-paned glazing, sometimes arranged in rows of multiple windows
- Sloping sidewalls that extend from roof of house (cat slide roof), sometimes built with a concave-curved swoop
- Roof with wood shingles or shakes, sometimes with rolled edges to simulate the look of thatched roofs

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<sup>31</sup> Gellner, Arrol, and Douglas Keister. *Storybook Style: America's Whimsical Homes of the Twenties*. New York: Viking Studio, 2001, p. 16.

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- Interior appointments: ebony or walnut-colored woodwork; built-ins; wood and/or ceramic tile floors; plaster walls (some with heavily textured hand-troweled work); wrought-iron light fixtures, wall sconces and door handles; large fireplaces; and beamed ceilings

The Solby House exhibits many of the above-mentioned defining features of the storybook Tudor Revival style (see Section 7 of this document for a more detailed description) and includes unique features such as tinted leaded-glass sidelights made of bottle glass, a stained-glass front door window which features a Viking sailing vessel with a Danish flag (signifying Solby's Danish roots), and a false-thatch roof. Said to be designed and developed by William Solby and called "Solby's Thatch," the false-thatch roof was designed to resemble the look of a real thatch roof. In contrast to bundles of brushy thatch, "Solby's Thatch" roof was made from Zonolite, a non-metallic mineral mined near Libby, Montana.<sup>32</sup> Solby explained that the Zonolite material was ground in water and coupled with a binder that when mixed, produced a putty-like substance which was spread to a depth of three or four inches over the water-proofed roof. Speaking of himself and his associates, Solby said that

"we molded this with our hands to represent sheaves of straw, and laid great patches here and there to simulate moss. After it dried, we went over this with a paint preparation to give it color and depth."<sup>33</sup>

Zonolite, a type of asbestos material, has superior insulating and fire resistant properties which helped render Solby's completed roof a fireproof false-thatch design with "perfect insulation to heat and cold."<sup>34</sup> In the 1940s, wood shingles were installed over the original Zonolite roof of the Solby House, leaving just the rolled edges exposed. The roof remains unique to the Solby House on East Twentieth Avenue and has not been found on any other homes in the Spokane region.

Distinguished with many unique and artistic architectural elements indicative of the storybook-influenced Tudor Revival style, the Solby House was described as an "old-fashioned north European type of farm house" where "one almost expects to see a drove of geese come waddling around the corner, or to hear the whir of a spinning wheel inside the casement windows."<sup>35</sup>

The Spokesman-Review reported that:

<sup>32</sup> *Good Housekeeping*, May 1927, p. 74.

<sup>33</sup> *Good Housekeeping*, May 1927, p. 75.

<sup>34</sup> *Good Housekeeping*, May 1927, p. 75.

<sup>35</sup> "Publicity for Spokane Home." *Spokesman-Review*, 24 April 1927.

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“The home is outstanding in its style of architecture, probably being more nearly representative of the European cottage than any home in the northwest... So distinctive was the house which was designed by Mr. Solby, an artist, that it won national attention and was featured with photographs in *Good Housekeeping Magazine*.”<sup>36</sup>

The Solby House can be compared to other storybook-influenced Tudor Revival-style homes and cottages in Spokane. These include numerous small homes built during the 1920s and 1930s which have steeply pitched front-facing gables and are clad with brick, clinker brick, stone, and stucco, or combinations thereof. Some of these homes are particularly good examples of the storybook influence. The Waldo Rosebush House at 3318 N. Marguerite in Millwood, Spokane Valley, is an excellent example of this idiom. Individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001, the Rosebush House, like the Solby House, was designed by a prominent Spokane architect in conjunction with the home's owner. Designed by Harold Whitehouse, the Rosebush House was built for Waldo Rosebush, a decorated World War I veteran who so liked the French farmhouses he saw in Normandy on his tour of duty that he planned a similar design for his home in the Spokane area. Like the Solby House, the Rosebush House was built in the 1920s, was clad in stucco, and features a unique false-thatch roof design with a rolled edge. In contrast to the Solby House, the false-thatch roof of the Rosebush House is made of composition shingles instead of “Solby's Thatch” which was manufactured from Zonolite.

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<sup>36</sup> “Solby's Home to New Owner.” *Spokesman-Review*, Dec 1934.

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- "Fireplace Made of Cast Stone." *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Oct 1926.
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- "Native Pines Basis of Lawn Planting Here." *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Oct 1926.
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- "Thatched House with Pink Walls." *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Oct 1926.
- "W. J. Solby Dies of Heart Attack." *Spokesman-Review*, 11 Sept 1928, p. 1.
- "Zonolite Roof is First of Kind." *Spokesman-Review*, 3 Oct 1926.

### GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

- Verbal boundary description: The nominated area is located in the Rockwood Terrace Addition, Block 1, east 11 feet of Lot 22, all of Lots 23-24 of the City of Spokane, otherwise known as Parcel No. 35291.1721.
- Boundary justification: The nominated property encompasses the entire parcel (approx. 111 x 150) that is occupied by the Solby House.

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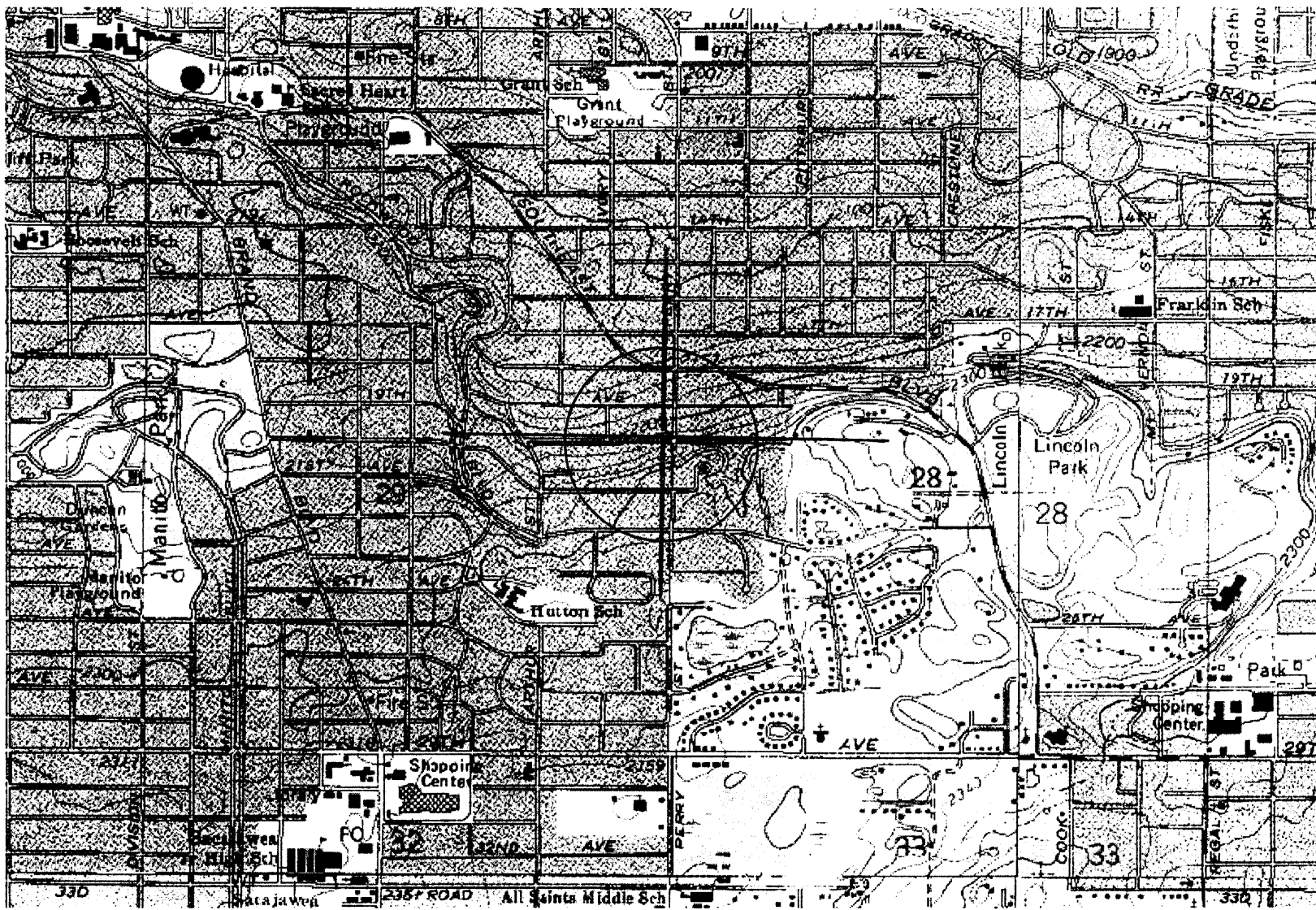
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### PHOTOGRAPHS

*(All photographs were taken in 2007 by the nomination consultant and produced on archival paper. Negatives are stored with the consultant)*

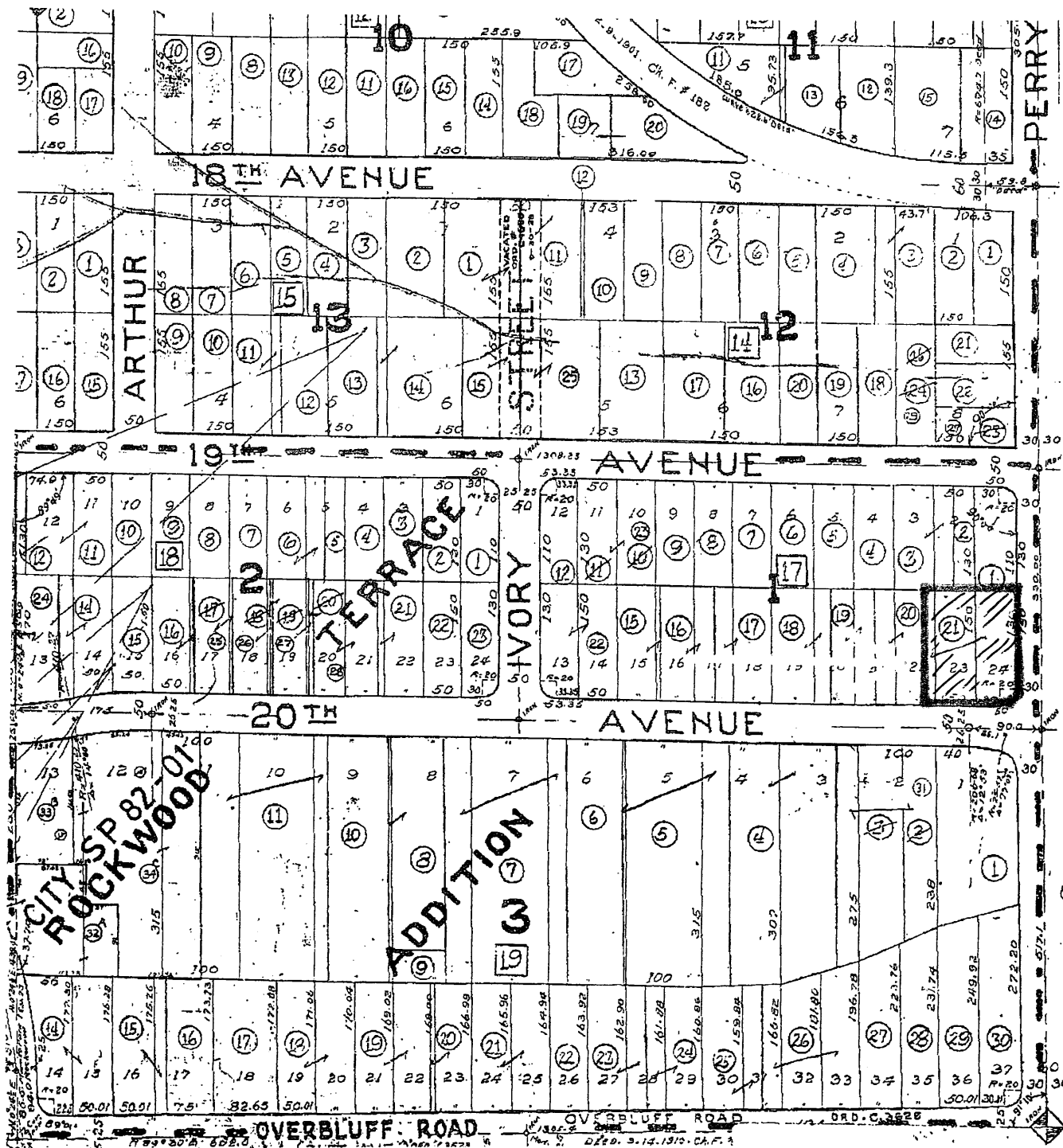
- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Photo 1 | Looking north at south façade of house.  |
| Photo 2 | Looking north at south façade entrance details.  |
| Photo 3 | Looking west at east elevation of house.   |
| Photo 4 | Looking south at north (rear) elevation of house and rock retaining wall and rock steps below house. |
| Photo 5 | Looking south at front entrance and foyer of house, first floor.                                     |
| Photo 6 | Looking south at east wall in front entrance foyer and door details.                                 |
| Photo 7 | Looking northwest from foyer into dining room and doors that open into library.                      |
| Photo 8 | Looking northwest into living room.  |
| Photo 9 | Looking northeast into living room.  |



**WILLIAM & MARGARET SOLBY HOUSE: Spokane, WA**  
UTM 11 470682E 5276020N (NAD83/WGS84)

**William & Margaret Solby House**  
1325 E. 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Spokane, WA 99203

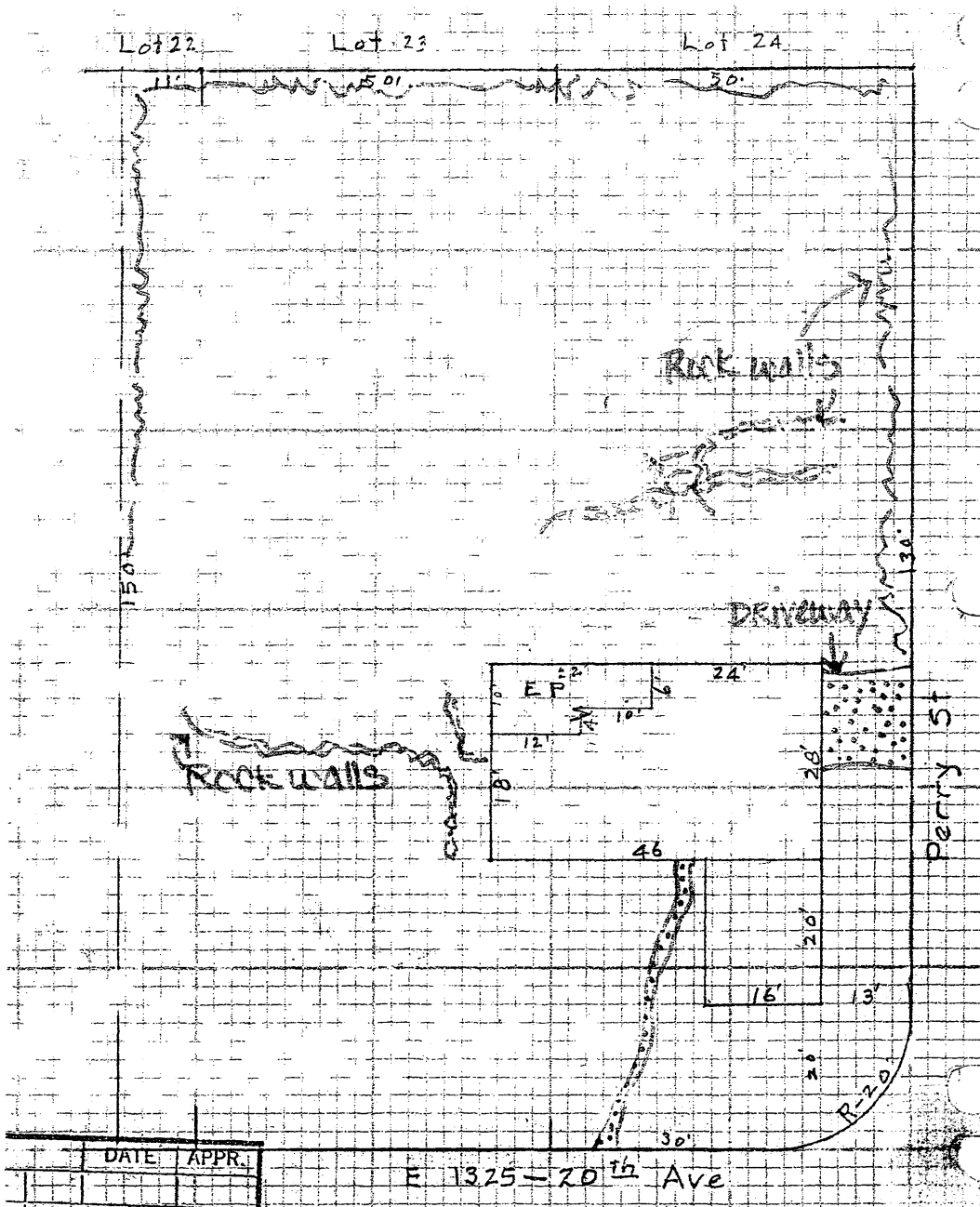
**Spokane County Plat Map in 2007**





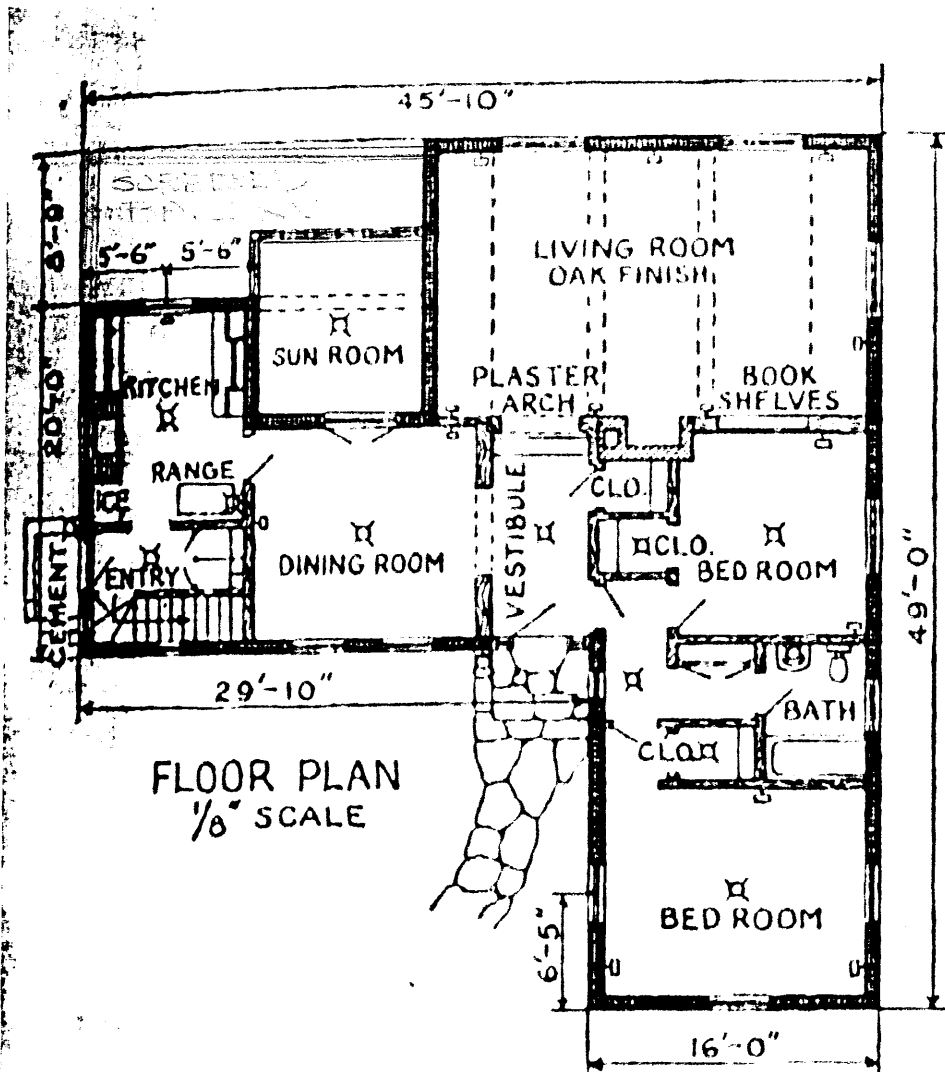
**William & Margaret Solby House**  
1325 E. 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Spokane, WA 99203

Site Plan of Property (source: Spokane County Assessor Records)



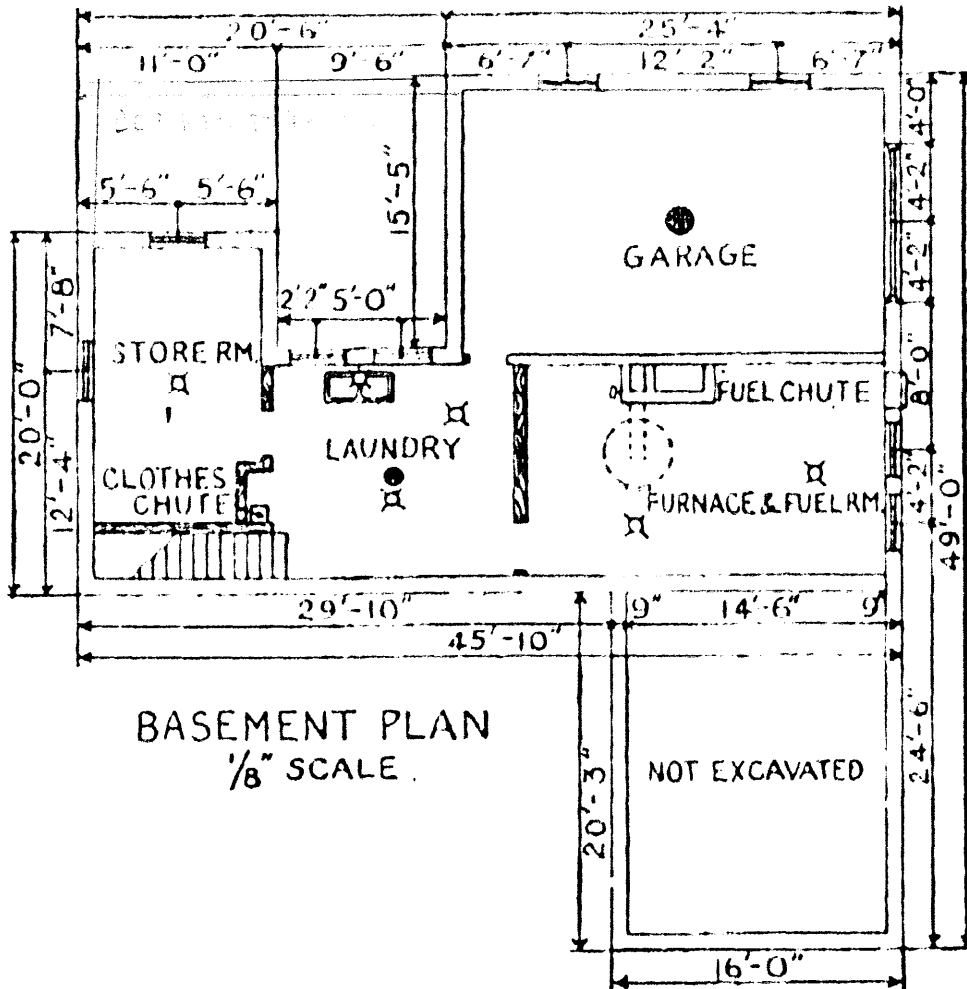
**William & Margaret Solby House**  
1325 E. 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Spokane, WA 99203

Floor Plan of Solby House  
FIRST FLOOR



**William & Margaret Solby House**  
1325 E. 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Spokane, WA 99203

Floor Plan of Solby House



**William & Margaret Solby House**  
1325 E. 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Spokane, WA 99203

**1930s-1940s photographs during ownership by Matthews**





This veritable enchanted cottage in the woods is modeled after a quaint farmhouse near Copenhagen



The dining-room is entered through a Moorish arch. Rather high windows are curtained with chintz in Royal Danish pottery design

# A Houseful of COLOR

*How a Memory of the Old Country  
Became a Reality in the New*

By Josephine Gilmer Corbett

*Photographs by [unreadable]*

ROMANCE and dreams, mixed with paint and cement, have made this house a perfect setting for an Old World fairy play. One almost expects to see a drove of geese come waddling around the corner, or to hear the whir of a spinning wheel inside the casement windows. Perhaps it is curiosity about the spinner, whether it is some lovely medieval lady or some little hunchbacked gnome, which causes people both young and old to stand on tiptoes, with noses pressed against window-panes, trying to get a glimpse of the interior.

"I have tried to carry out that old-fashioned North European type of farmhouse as closely as I dared," said William J. Solby, owner of this artistic home, and a former student of the Royal Academy of Copenhagen. "The outstanding impression of my childhood days," he continued, "is that of a quaint little cottage several miles out of Copenhagen, where I often

visited an old uncle during summer holidays. With its whitewashed exterior walls, its thatched roof of straw, and its many years of weathering, it was indeed a beautiful picture. So, when I was about to build a home of my own it was only natural for me to strive to emulate this little Danish farmhouse."

Situated on the terrace of a pine-grown northern slope overlooking Spokane, Washington, this artistic cottage holds itself aloof from the many beautiful homes surrounding it. As you approach up a long street, you catch glimpses of mellow pink walls and turquoise shutters. When entering the grounds, you pass between two tall sentinel-like pines about ten feet apart. Suspended across this natural gateway is a wrought-iron scroll from which hangs a lantern of antique design.

The thatch-like roof of the house is perhaps the thing which draws the attention first. It has thick, rounded eaves and is

the color of weathered straw, broken by brighter spots such as newer sheaves of straw might make. Splotches of very realistic moss are painted here and there. The effect is so charming that you forget it is merely clay and paint. In speaking of it Mr. Solby said: "There are several ways of making a so-called 'thatched' roof, such as wooden shingles or composition shingles, but a great amount of imagination is needed along with them. We experimented with cement molded on the roof, but that had its disadvantages because of weight and cracking; so I decided upon a non-metallic mineral mined near Libby, Montana. We ground this in water and mixed it with what we commonly term 'water-glass' for a binder. This composition was used in a putty-like consistency, spreading it to a depth of three or four inches over the water-proofed roof. We molded this with our hands to represent sheaves of straw, and laid great patches

# A Houseful of Color

here and there to simulate moss. After it dried, we went over this with a paint preparation to give it color and depth." This makes a roof which is not only decorative to a high degree, but also a perfect insulation to heat and cold, and is fireproof.

Hollow tile forms the inner base of the house walls. On this has been put cement, swiped by a trowel into semi-circular ridges and then painted a soft salmon pink. Against this background the window trims and shutters of turquoise blue make splashes of color.

The front entrance is approached over a rose-colored flagstone walk, and two cement steps of the same shade take you up to the sturdy oak door, at the left side of which hangs a replica of the antique lantern over the entrance to the grounds. On either side are oblong windows of amber bottle glass in leaded rounds, and on the door, worked out in colored glass and

little woodwork in any of these rooms; merely the narrow base-boards, window-sills, book-shelves, and doors. These have been stained a dark brown and filled with lead, as are the beams in the living-room. Steel casement frames, glazed with squares

of plate glass, are used exclusively throughout the house. The hardware is wrought iron with lever-handled door knobs.

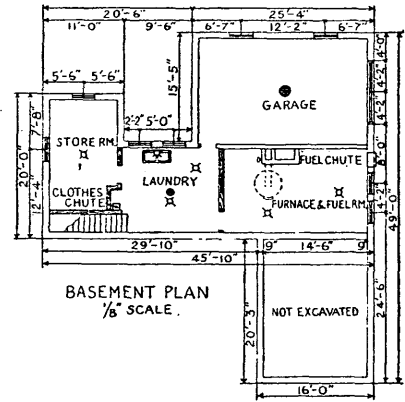
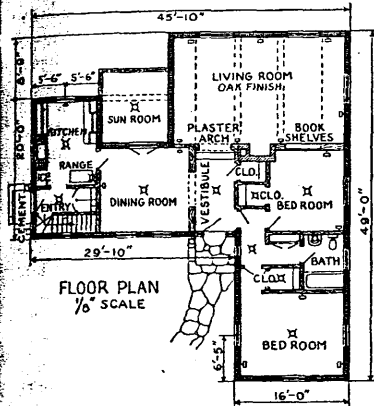
Each of the three large windows in the living-room, two facing north and the other to the east, commands a soul-resting view: the greater part of Spokane Valley, with the foot-hills and the mountains beyond, over which the light and shadow effects are constantly changing. These windows are hung with casement cloth, and the draperies are of hand-blocked linen with conventionalized flowers in blue, jade, rust, tan, and rose on a tan background. They hang to the floor on large rings from wrought-iron rods and brackets.

The center south wall is graced by a molded stone fireplace set flush against the wall. Standing on the floor at either side are two tall torchère lamps of twisted wrought iron, harmonizing in design with the curtain rods and topped by tiny iron ships. Their subdued



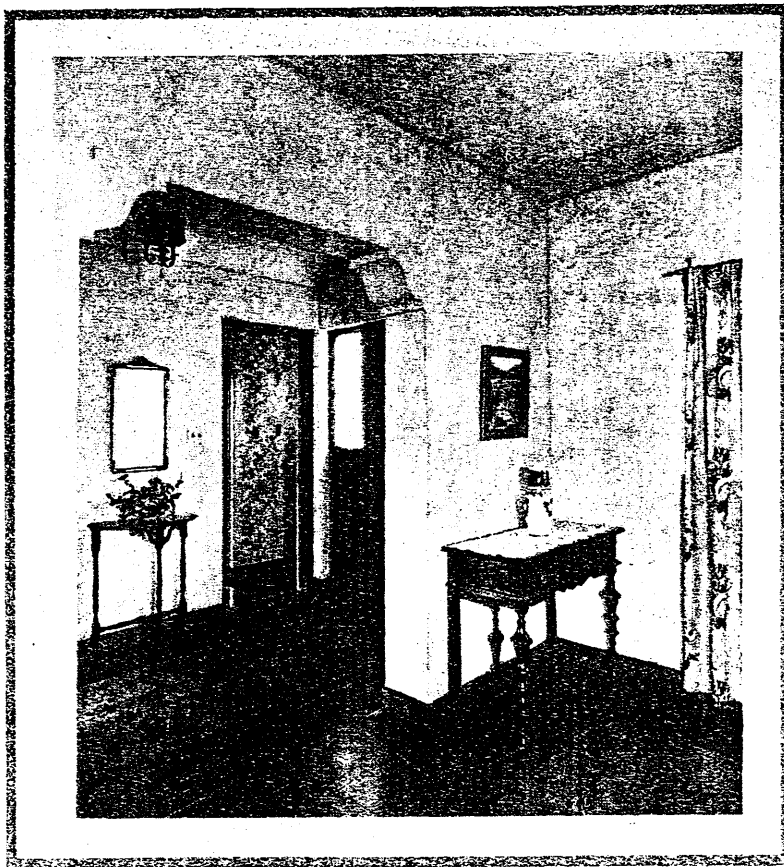
The spacious hall has an arched ceiling. One has an unusual feeling of space and quietude here, partly because of the long shafts of light falling across the floor

The floors in the hall, dining-room, and sun-room are tiled and have the same delightful coloring. There is little woodwork anywhere



lead, a Viking ship, with a Danish flag emblazoned upon one of its sails, which are billowed against a stiff sea breeze—a delightful emblem for a man who loves the sea. This jewel-like glass throws into the hall a warm glow as lovely as sunlight, even on the gloomiest of days.

The spacious hall has an arched ceiling. At the far end, directly opposite the entrance, are two steps leading up through an arch into the living-room. One has an unusual feeling of space and quietude here, partly because of the long shafts of light from the windows, falling across the floor, which is tiled with magnesite in soft, reddish-brown shades. The floors in the hall, dining-room, and sunroom are also tiled and have the same delightful coloring. There is very



glow shines on a large decorative panel, painted by Mr. Solby, which hangs above the fireplace. It depicts the little Danish farmhouse which inspired him to build his home.

Next to the fireplace is an oval arched bookcase which balances the arched entrance with perfect symmetry. The open shelves hold not only books, but some interesting bits of glazed ceramics and several beautiful bronzes. These pieces of bronze form a rich, warm harmony with the antique effect of the stippled walls. A Travertine stone effect has been made by putting a heavy, dough-like composition coating on a smooth plaster base. It was then mottled with a sponge and, when almost dry, evened out with a trowel. After drying it was sized (Continued on page 201)

by of tis-he is it of as es, is ri-of, of 1 a oy, nd rm osi-cy, our Ne ent nes

Phyllis as it seemed. In spite of her... offer, she and David were trying des... to live on his salary, and sometimes... for Phyllis was used to hav... Yet after those terrible days of... she felt she could stand being... if only David were happy and she had... she finished the dishes and went into the... room. But no one seemed to notice that... had entered; they were so busy talking... David's face was grave, absorbed, and his... was serious, but there was a light in his... eyes... Phyllis sat down near him, listening, but she... just as well have not been there for all... attention he gave her. The old pain swept... her again. She felt outside, apart from... husband, but she tried valiantly to suppress... pain. He was happy. She would have to... happy in his happiness. Then suddenly he looked up, and meeting her... he smiled at her, and that smile wiped... the pain; it drew her to him, drew her... within the circle. She was no longer outside... she was close, very close—closer even than... when she had stood guarding at the gate, try-... to keep the world out. A few little phrases leaped into her mind—... something about losing to gain—and about... being free; and she smiled to herself, a happy... smile, a wise little smile.

### A Houseful of Color

(Continued from page 75)

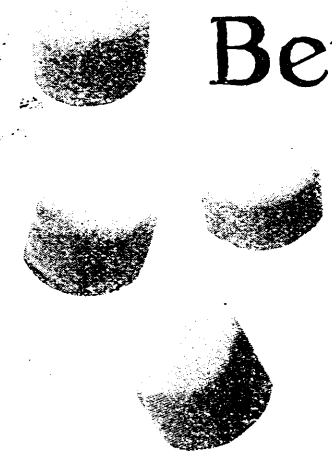
glazed over with a thin oil color to give a weather-aged look. The dining-room is entered from the hall on the left, through a Moorish arch. Rather high windows in the south wall are hung with case-ment cloth and a gay-figured chintz, the pattern and colors of which are similar to those found in the Royal Danish pottery used in this room, on which the color scheme is based. A large plaque decorated with a gorgeous, though primitive, pheasant in shades of soft brown and rust, and a border of deep purplish blue, hangs over a long oak side-table of Spanish design, opposite the entrance. The central lighting fixture is of hammered Belgian iron, in an elaborate design, suspended by a single bar of iron with a forged hook at one end. This design is in perfect harmony with the twisted, wrought-iron curtain rods over the windows. Opening off the dining-room to the north, through leaded glass doors, is the sunroom. Great, wide windows give a sense of airiness and freedom. The walls are the same color and texture as the exterior of the house. The window trims and the wicker furniture are painted turquoise blue. Pushed back, so as not to obstruct any of the view, are curtains splashed with gay and riotous colors. In this room, so high above the gardens and terraces below, one feels like a bird in flight. A swinging door, with a tiny, diamond-shaped glass, shuts away from your view a kitchen that would bring exclamations of joy from any housewife. The walls appear to be of archid tile, but really are marked off in paint, mottled with shades of pink, lavender and yellow, and then covered with a high-gloss varnish. The ceiling is of a much lighter shade. There are two windows of good size, the one over the sink facing west, and the other looking out to the north. Before this window is placed a small breakfast table with a bench on either side, painted the same shade as the walls. The view from this window is the same as that seen from the sunroom, and to breakfast in such a place is surely to start the day right. Ample space for dishes, glassware, and kitchen utensils is provided by two spacious cupboards extending along the east and west walls, made decorative



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## A Houseful of Color

by leaded glass doors. A recessed foot space at the base of these cupboards provides added comfort for the housewife. The woodwork is enameled in mellow ivory. Linoleum, in a tiled pattern similar to the magnesite tile, covers the floor. The sink and double drainboards are of porcelain. In the corner to the left is installed a porcelain-finished electric refrigerator. The electric range is in the opposite corner. A central light unit of porcelain glass and a service light over the range provide excellent lighting.

Opening off from the kitchen is a service hall with utility closet for reception of groceries and a compartment for vacuum sweeper, brooms, etc. In another compartment is the laundry chute. This passageway has two doors opening out from it; one leading to the basement stairs and the other on to a small back porch.

### In the Sleeping Wing

Two master bedrooms and bath are in wing separated from the rest of the house by a door leading from the main entrance hall into a smaller hallway. This hallway is covered with a gray tapestry figured paper, which lends both formality and space. A small high window with wrought-iron rod and casement curtain adds a decorative quality as well as light. A passageway leads into the bathroom, on the left of which is an unusually large linen closet and chest of drawers for bedding.

The guest room is made sunny and friendly by a gaily-figured English paper over which are scattered cornflowers, wild roses, daisies, and other old-fashioned garden flowers. The large casement window is curtained with casement cloth and has draperies of rose silk gauze. The lighting fixture in this room, as well as the one in the master bedroom, is of polychromed antique iron, fashioned to look like a small flower basket, with the little amber- and rose-colored globes peeping over the top.

The walls of the master bedroom are covered with a German imported paper with airy sprays of tiny golden flowers and deft touches of sage-green and black. The twisted wrought-iron curtain rods are tinted delicately to harmonize with the paper and the lighting fixture, and from these are hung draperies of soft sage-green silk gauze over casement curtains. This room, being at the extreme end of the wing, has a large casement window on each of the three exposed sides, giving unusual light and ventilation. The floors of the bedrooms and hallway are of white oak and the woodwork is enameled ivory. The hardware is dull brass with glass knobs.

The steep slope of the ground to the rear has worked out to very good advantage in the basement, for it leaves three sides exposed above the ground level. The basement is concrete throughout, with plastered walls which are tinted a light yellow. The wood trims are painted the same turquoise blue as the shutters outside. The basement includes a large garage, well lighted, with running water and a floor drain for the convenience of washing a car. This is next to the furnace room, so that the danger of frozen radiators in the winter is eliminated. The furnace room has a sealed fuel room and lavatory. There is a large fruit room, with a concrete shelf which is part of the foundation, on which the refrigerator motor has been placed to avoid vibration. A laundry room, electrically equipped, is adjoining.

This house was built to show how artistic a small home could be, and how much comfort and quality could be secured for a little more than ten thousand dollars. It may have been built for color, but it was built for wear also. Gazed upon, it seems not like a house in real life, but as one of those little dwellings in the fairy stories, those enchanting hunting lodges in the woods, the cottage where little Red Riding Hood went to see her grandmother, or where Hansel and Gretel scattered the white pebbles so they could find their way home.



**William & Margaret Solby House**  
 1325 E. 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
 Spokane, WA 99203

"Zonolite Co. Plans Merger." *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 2 April 1939

"Zonolite Ore Finds Friends." *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 4 May 1941

"Universal Zonolite Nets Small Profit." *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 16 July 1941

## ZONOLITE CO. PLANS MERGER

Fisher Body and Armour  
Interests Approve—Control  
Large Deposit.

LIBBY, Mont., April 1.—Consolidation of the two mining and manufacturing companies, the Zonolite and the Universal Insulation company, has been proposed and a stockholders' meeting has been called for May 1 to vote on the matter. If the vote is approved, the name of the consolidated company will be Universal Zonolite Insulation company.

Both companies have interests in the deposit of vermiculite, about five miles northeast of here and are large shippers of crude ore to plants in strategic points in the United States, Europe, Australia and South America.

### Heat Swells 20 Times.

Vermiculite is a form of mica, which, when treated by heat, expands to about 20 times its original size, making an unexcelled insulating material, which is of either a beautiful golden or silver hue.

General offices of Zonolite, the original company which located and developed the material, are in Detroit, and the Universal Insulation company, which came into the field later, is in Chicago. It is proposed when the consolidation is completed, to have the general offices in Chicago.

The Zonolite company originally mined and operated by the late Edgar N. Alley, who discovered the deposit, was sold to Detroit capitalists after his death and is controlled by the Fisher Body interests. The Universal Insulation company, started by local men, was sold to and is controlled by the Armour interests of Chicago.

### Resists Heat and Cold.

The treated ore is used in the loose form for house insulation, in plaster and for many other purposes, being a fireproof, heat and cold resisting insulation, weighing at six pounds to the cubic feet. The shipment of treated ore is made in large coffee sacks, containing four cubic feet material on an average of 25 pounds to the sack.

James Keeth of Spokane uses a large quantity of the treated ore in manufacturing an insulation board at his factory on Sprague avenue.

S. N. Muirhead of Detroit is president of the Zonolite company and, it is probable, will be continued as president of the new company which will have 11 directors.

## ZONOLITE ORE FINDS FRIENDS

In Movie Studios, Airplanes,  
Fireworks and by Painters,  
Builders, Lubricators.

The featherweight rocks of gold and silver hues that James Keith brought to Spokane from the Libby area of Montana about 15 years ago have grown in public appreciation. He called them zonolite and offered them for many practical and decorative uses. The public was skeptical and resistant. Progress was slow but persistence won.

In 1937, 26,000 tons were produced, an important part of it on Rainy creek, eight miles northeast of Libby, by the Universal Zonolite Insulation company of Chicago, a consolidation of three other companies, headed by S. T. Kearney.

Nature has taken hydrogen and magnesium, both by themselves highly inflammable, and has chemically combined them, writes Carl J. Trauerman, E. M., on strategic minerals of Montana. "The combination is known as phlogopite mica, or more specifically, as jefferite or vermiculite a greenish-black mineral. "If we heat this mineral, it wiggles like a worm, turns a golden color, and becomes light in weight. A given amount of the heated material will occupy about six times the space of the raw material and despite some highly inflammable elements, vermiculite is fireproof. "It is said that the Chinese used vermiculite in the manufacturing of fireworks, especially the pyrotechnic which we knew in childhood as snake in the grass."

## Universal Zonolite Nets Small Profit

Universal Zonolite Insulation company showed a small profit the nine months ended June compared with a small loss the previous year, according to the annual report received by the enterprise, part of which was circulated by James Keeth of Spokane until its operations spread over America, with 45 pending plants, of which 11 are in foreign countries. The company head office is in Chicago. Vermiculite quarries and plants are at Libby, Mont.

In the nine months the company's cash in bank was increased from \$28,235.32 to \$31,329.55 the company's net sales in the period averaged \$25,514.71 a month, compared to \$21,188.32 a month in the previous year.

### Mill Capacity Grows.

"Additional capacity has been added to our mill at Libby which will enable us to produce over 100 tons daily of zonolite ore suit for shipment," says the report A. T. Kearney, of Chicago, president.

Uses for vermiculite, mark under the trade name zonolite, steadily growing. It is used only for insulation but for plaster for walls and ceilings, as an aggregate in light-weight concrete roof decks, floor fill, and storage work.

The present corporation resulted from absorption of the pioneer operator, the Zonolite company, the Universal Insulation company of Chicago, which had previously taken over the business of the Vermiculite & Asbestos company of Libby.

### Makes Room Echoless.

It is being mined in Montana, North Carolina, Colorado, Wyoming, and Pennsylvania. The raw materials to make roofing. A man to \$12 a ton, f. o. b. the mine, and the heated, or exfoliated product sells from 90 cents to \$1.35 for a 25-pound bag, f. o. b. the plant.

The expanded product is used in making wallboard and outside building board and cement, as it is waterproof. It also is used as an insulator and mixed with other materials to make roofing. A manufacturer said that three inches of expanded vermiculite, used as a house insulator, would give an insulating value equal to a 5-foot brick wall or a 7-foot concrete wall. It also is used as an insulator in refrigerating equipment and in open-hearth furnaces of the steel mills. When used for roofing, it is said that an attic room is cool even in the summer.

Vermiculite is used in nearly all the talking movie studios as it is sound proof and makes a room echoless. It is being tested in airplane construction to deaden the sound of the motors. It is used as an extender of aluminum paint and as a coolant and lubricating agent in trucks.

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"Zonolite Mine Gets Contracts." *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 11 Nov 1929  
"Zonolite Patent is Issued Keith." *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 25 Oct 1935  
"Zonolite is Used in Many Products." *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 24 Jan 1936

## ZONOLITE MINE GETS CONTRACTS

Libby Firm Sells Product  
in East—Will Increase  
Output, Soon.

**NOV 11 1929**  
E. N. Alley of the Zonolite Company of Libby, Mont., has returned from the east where he secured large contracts for the company's product. It is estimated that the company's output will soon be 10 times what it is at the present, because of these contracts.

He made one contract with a Chicago concern to handle all the product in the United States east of the Mississippi, and a contract with a Winnipeg company to handle the entire production in Canada.

These contracts call for delivery to begin immediately and they will amount to several hundred thousand tons of crude zonolite each year.

To meet this great demand an expansion of the company's enterprises at Libby will immediately begin and the Riblet Tramway company of Spokane has been given a contract and is making the survey for a three-mile aerial gravity tramway which will put the product from the quarries into the bunkers at the Great Northern railway.

Zonolite is a new product and is used for insulating, for acoustic plaster, the lining of fire-proof safes and vaults, as a substitute for mica in lubricants and in fact many other uses, some of which are secrets of users, even the Zonolite company not being informed.

Other mining also is active in the Libby district. The Victor Empire Mining company, up Granite Creek from Libby, recently installed a 45 horse power Holt engine to supplement the water power plant. This has been made necessary by the great shortage of water in Grouse creek, which has also interrupted the work of other companies. Frank C. Vandepool is in charge of the Victor Empire company, most of the stock which is held in or near Moscow of which is held in or near Moscow, Idaho.

The Nome Mining company is a new corporation formed by H. C. Bolyard and associates of Libby. It is installing a compressor and other machinery. It has holdings adjoining the Midas, near Libby. The company will drive a 100-foot cross-cut tunnel into its lead. The ore is mostly gold and silver. Jim Stewart is in charge.

## Zonolite Patent Is Issued Keith

**NOV 25 1935**  
Patent rights on a process of preparing a plastic zonolite composition for steam and furnace insulation have just been issued in Washington, D. C., to James Keith, of Zono Products, E1827 Sprague.

Mr. Keith has been manufacturing the product in Spokane for more than four years, he said today. The process consists of grinding zonolite, mined near Libby, Mont., in water, to form a self-binding pulp, grinding a vegetable fiber in water to form a filling pulp, mixing the two pulps and then dehydrating the composition.

He has assigned his patent rights in the eastern portion of the United States to the Universal Insulation company of Chicago, he said today, and will continue to manufacture the product here for the western part of the country.

## Zonolite Is Used in Many Products

**NOV 24 1936**  
The story of zonolite is a story of one of the many successful mining enterprises which originated in Spokane. James Keith of this city discovered the useful qualities of the peculiar mineral found 10 miles from Libby, Mont., and with Libby men organized the Zonolite company which has developed a big industry. Its products are distributed all over the United States.

Insulation is the most important use to which the product is put. Acoustic plaster is made from it and it is used in making safes and cold storage plants and for insulating boilers and steam pipes.

It is absolutely fire proof up to 2500 degrees Fahrenheit. Its most peculiar quality is that when subjected to heat the native mineral expands to 16 times its original bulk. This gives it its great commercial value.

"This mineral is sometimes known as vermiculite but its proper name is Jeffersite, which is quite different from vermiculite," said Mr. Keith today. "The only place where zonolite or 'Jeffersite' is known to exist in commercial quantity is near Libby. A second company has acquired ground adjoining the property of the Zonolite company and also is shipping."

Mr. Keith has a plant, E1827 Sprague, Spokane, where he treats and markets zonolite.

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1325 E. 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
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"W. J. Solby Dies of Heart Attack." *Spokesman-Review*, 11 Sept 1928, p. 1

## W. J. SOLBY DIES OF HEART ATTACK

Expires in Masonic  
Temple at Show  
Rehearsal.

William J. Solby, age 46, head of the American Paint and Wall Paper company, 7720 First, one of the leading establishments of its kind in the northwest, died of a heart attack last night in the Masonic temple.

Mr. Solby, who was deeply interested in all kind of theatricals, was about to begin a rehearsal of the play, "Are You a Mason?" which he was to have directed, when he complained he felt ill.

### Dies in Few Moments.

He rested a moment and complained of a pain in the chest. Steward E. H. Doust of the emergency hospital and Police Sergeant Lee Markwood were summoned, and after Mr. Solby inhaled some spirits of ammonia he said he felt better. Suddenly, however, he lapsed into unconsciousness and died in a few moments. Dr. J. M. Gunning was present when he expired. Dr. T. C. Barnhart was notified and the body was taken to Hennessey & Calloway's. Angina pectoris was believed the cause of death.

Mr. Solby had not been ill, and had returned about a month ago from a trip to Europe. He was a native of Copenhagen, Denmark. His father, a government sea captain, used to take him on trips around Europe when a youth, and he was enthusiastic about art and painting from boyhood. He studied art privately in Europe and learned the profession of scenery painting.

### Came From Chicago.

Mr. Solby had been in Spokane for about 15 years, having come west from Chicago, where he became a successful scenery artist. He started here in a small way, but his talent as an artist and his business ability won him a reputation which caused his business to prosper steadily.

As an interior decorator of fine taste he won a name, and he was called upon by the leading architects for his opinion on some of the large building construction contracts here. His first big job was at the Union railway station and this was said to have given him his start. Other buildings on which he was consulted included the Auditorium, Gonzaga university, Old National bank, Chronicle building and many of the large and costly residences here. His own home was a unique show place here.

### Store Is Unique.

The store on First avenue was a source of great pride to Mr. Solby, and, after fire destroyed the premises a couple of years ago, he had it rebuilt and decorated on original lines which made it a show place of its kind. He introduced several features in connection with the store, such as holding classes in furniture painting and permitting women to paint articles of furniture there, which became unusually popular.

Mr. Solby's interest in the drama brought him recognition and he directed several amateur theatrical productions of the Drama league and other organizations. When in Europe this summer he visited the principal cities where Little Theater movements were active to obtain ideas for future use in Spokane.

### Was Also Painter.

Mr. Solby also was a painter of no mean ability and did some fine work in oils. He was a judge of fine painting and his opinion was sought by organizations sponsoring competitions in various classes of painting.

He held membership in the Danish Brotherhood, the Elks' lodge, the Moose lodge and the Rotary club.

Surviving are his widow, Mrs. Margaret Solby, at the home, E1325 Twentieth. There are no children. His parents survive. They are in Denmark.

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"Pays Tribute to W. J. Solby." *Spokesman-Review*, 11 Sept 1928, p. 6

## PAYS TRIBUTE TO W. J. SOLBY

**Spokane Artist Declares Late  
Business Man Had Unique  
Artistic Instincts.**

To the Editor of the *Spokesman-Review*: Spokane has suffered a loss in the death of William J. Solby, actor, artist and man of affairs. He was an extraordinary and unique personality of force and driving power.

As it is, dying at an age when most men are scarcely more than beginning, in the height of his vigor and enthusiasm and full of new schemes and enterprises, some of which were already under way, he had already built up a thriving and distinctive business from virtually nothing.

### Made Good in Business.

He was known and highly respected among the leading business men of the town. Without depreciating his executive ability, which was great and was recognized by observant ones for whom he had fulfilled large contracts, Mr. Solby was less a business man than an artist.

Wherever he made contacts, he made friends. Especially to those of us who are artists his loss is beyond tears. He was a person of broad sympathy and understanding, always ready to lend moral support, and indeed backing of a much more substantial order to any struggling artist—forestalling the request for assistance by the eager offer of his services.

### Fond of Theater.

An actor and theatrical director of marked ability and one of the foremost landscape painters in the city, Mr. Solby was singularly devoid of professional jealousy. Having come to this country from Denmark at the age of 20, he was never able to entirely overcome his difficulty with English sounds and this handicap often prevented his taking parts in local theatricals for which he was otherwise eminently well qualified.

This did not lessen his interest in such concerns. He was always keen to help others to shine, laboring untiringly to produce results.

### Excelled as Artist.

As an artist in the more usual sense of the word, his training had been slight, consisting of a few terms at the Royal academy at Copenhagen. He had had little leisure since to indulge his taste in that direction. But nevertheless in the few landscapes which he left, there is a breadth of handling, a vigor and sureness of vision that leave no doubt that had his energies been concentrated in that direction, he would have won for himself an enviable recognition.

He had few intimate friends among his associates. So it falls to one, who will always count it as one of the pleasant things of my life that I enjoyed a small measure of his friendship to write these words of appreciation and gratitude.

BERTHA BALLOU.

**William & Margaret Solby House**  
1325 E. 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Spokane, WA 99203

"Publicity for Spokane Home." *Spokesman-Review*, 24 April 1927

### **PUBLICITY FOR SPOKANE HOME**

#### **Mrs. Jack Corbett Writes of Solby Cottage in Good Housekeeping.**

An article in the May Good Housekeeping magazine by Josephine Gilmer Corbett is of interest to Spokane, for the writer is Mrs. Jack Corbett, W819 Twenty-first.

Besides being gifted with a flair for writing Mrs. Corbett has also won recognition as a painter, and her paintings have been shown at the annual northwest artists' exhibition at Seattle. She is a member of the Spokane Art association, and also Delta Gamma sorority.

It is the William J. Solby home, E1325 Twentieth, that Mrs. Corbett has written about under the title, "A Houseful of Color." Romance and dreams, mixed with paint and cement, have made this house a perfect setting for an old world fairy play. It is so true to type, to the old-fashioned North European type of farm house remembered by Mr. Solby in his childhood when he used to visit near Copenhagen with an uncle that one almost expects to see a drove of geese come waddling around the corner, or to hear the whir of a spinning wheel inside the casement windows.

From a vivid acquaintance made with the exterior, Mrs. Corbett takes her readers through each room of the unusual home, describing minutely and in attractive style, every little detail that completes the picture. The arrangement of the house, lighting fixtures, draperies and the many little features that reflect the owner's personality, are all comprehensively incorporated in the story.

As Mrs. Corbett sums it up "it may have been built for color, but it was built for wear also." Gazed upon, it seems not like a house in real life, but one of those enchanting hunting lodges in the wood, the cottage where Red Riding Hood went to see her grandmother, or where Hansel and Gretel scattered the white pebbles so they could find their way home."