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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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OCT 14 1992

NATIONAL REGISTER

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 an 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 The Eldridge Building

other names/site number Kauffman Buick, Simchuk's, Sampson-Ayers

2. Location

street & number 1319-1325 West First Avenue not for publication

city or town Spokane vicinity

state Washington code WA county Spokane code 063 zip code 99204

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

Mary M. Sampson 9/29/92
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
State of 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 the 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): _____

for Signature of the Keeper **entered in the National Register** Date of Action
Guy M. Lapsley 11/12/92

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 include previously listed resources in the count.)

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, 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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Work in Progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE, walls CONCRETE, BRICK, roof CONCRETE, other TERRA COTTA, METAL, GLASS

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.)

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1925-1936

Significant Dates

1925, 1936

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

G. Albin Pehrson

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(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 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 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

Name of repository:

Eldridge Building
Name of Property

Spokane County, WA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Approximately 1/3 acre (100' x 156')

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Railroad Addition, Lots 1 & 2, Block 21

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sally R. Reynolds

organization Consultant, Planning & Historic Preserv. date June 30, 1992

street & number 7015 East 44th telephone (509) 448-2594

city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99223

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name R. Ronald & Julie W. Wells (Wells and Company)

street & number 911 East 20th Avenue telephone (509) 536-7720

city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99203

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

The Eldridge Building
Spokane County, Washington

Description

Located on the southeast corner of First Avenue and Cedar Street on the western edge of Spokane's central business district, the Eldridge Building was erected in 1925 as an automobile sales and service center. This three-story Commercial Style building is rectangular in shape, and constructed of reinforced concrete. Its two principal elevations, finished in red brick with terra cotta accents, are symmetrical, with extensive window area. In nearly original condition, the Eldridge Building has sustained few alterations over time. Exterior changes are limited to doorway replacement and sign removal. Currently vacant, the building is in good condition.

The Eldridge building is located just south of Spokane's Riverside Avenue Historic District and north of the Northern Pacific Railroad's elevated downtown rail line. To the west is the Browne's Addition residential area, and to the east, the western portion of Spokane's commercial core, including its arts and entertainment district. An area of mixed residential and commercial uses, this four-block area of West First has historically been associated with transportation and automobile services.

Done in a style associated with automobile sales and service buildings, the Eldridge stands apart due to its size, its careful design detail, and its innovative features. The use of reinforced concrete as a construction material, a technology developed late in the 19th century, and gradually put into practice, allows its considerable window surfaces. One-hundred feet wide on First Avenue, and 156 feet deep on Cedar Street, the structure rises three stories over a below-grade basement. The flat roof, originally designed to store additional automobiles, provided the building with five useable levels. The Eldridge bears a resemblance to the Ford Motor Assembly Plants, designed by prominent Seattle architect John Graham, Sr.

On the primary facade, east and west halves are mirror images. At street level, each half has a central entry, flanked by piers that rise to the cornice and form a

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

The Eldridge Building
Spokane County, Washington

Description (continued)

shallow pavilion. Above the cornice, the pavilions end with geometric shapes on the roof's parapet, suggesting modern design, except for the application of classical swags. On either side of the pavilions are large plate glass windows recessed in wood frames. Above the windows are transoms of leaded glass with mullions. The red brick piers create six vertical divisions, of two widths, for the recessed, steel-framed windows with multiple panes, on the second and third floors. The red brick, laid in stretcher bond, connects the piers between floors with terra cotta corner accents. Terra cotta also trims the cornice with horizontal banding, and the entablature with framed panels at the pavilions, and is used for the large circle and small side squares of the parapet detail.

Over the entries, shallow metal canopies with a central peak extend past transom lights. They rest on scroll-shaped brackets, and have antheniums at the corners. On either side of the doorways are wrought iron light fixtures with plain white globes. The east entry's double doors are wood, with a single glass panel, and a second, single-paned transom above. The west entry has been altered through the addition of metal framing and a contemporary plate glass double door. At sidewalk level, footings for the piers and plate glass windows are concrete. Inside the parapet surrounding the roof, a safety rail and original flagpoles at the pavilions are intact.

The secondary facade on Cedar Street is nearly identical. Divisions or bays of nearly equal size, and two additional bays at either end, extend the length of this elevation. At street level, the fourth of five consecutive plate glass windows contains a small entry door. The sixth and seventh bays, once a garage entry and a plate glass window, respectively, have been closed in. The last bay contains an original, and still functional, automatic overhead garage door. The sidewalk adjacent to this elevation contains an original lift, still functional and in use.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

**The Eldridge Building
Spokane County, Washington**

Description (continued)

The south elevation faces the Northern Pacific elevated railroad tracks, and originally had a bridge connection to the railway at the third floor. The industrial style windows of the other elevations are repeated here, but window and roof line configuration reflects the rise of the interior auto ramp. A small doorway and a service entry at ground level are original. Except for a contemporary entrance at the north end, the east elevation is windowless below the second story, where another building once abutted. Concrete block faces this surface. The steel-sash windows of the other elevations are symmetrically spaced on second and third floor levels. Both on the south and east elevations, the concrete surface of the building is exposed.

The interior of the Eldridge Building featured a large showroom that extended across the full front along First Avenue. The room, unobstructed by supporting columns, is mostly intact, however partitions have been added. Some wall partitions have been removed as well, leaving free-standing square columns. The original black and cream tile floor, laid in a square pattern, is in place, showing some wear. Piers, matching the columns, are spaced along the walls. Support beams that were originally exposed as part of the architectural design, and trim at the head of the columns and piers, have been concealed by a false ceiling. The original finish for the concrete was Caenstone, still exposed on many surfaces. Beyond the showroom, some original interior office walls, the upper halves composed of windows with multi-paned transoms, remain, as does a central stairwell.

On the south side of the building, the ramp that permitted automobiles to be driven from one level to the next, is in place, with original interior doors. Additional modifications to the interior have included new bathrooms, and replacement of the original elevator. Skylights that provided window wells for all three floors have been sealed or painted over. Two metal plaques that read "ELDRIDGE BUILDING 1925" mark the corner pier.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

The Eldridge Building Spokane County, Washington

Statement of Significance

The Eldridge building is historically significant as a distinctive example of the commercial structures associated with the evolution of the automobile culture. Constructed in 1925 for one of the northwest's leading Buick dealerships, the Eldridge building was acclaimed as "The largest building in the State of Washington devoted to the sales and service of motor cars." Located on West First Avenue, the building established an anchor for an area of downtown Spokane historically linked to commercial transportation resources. Associated with the carriage trade before 1910, First Avenue, along with Sprague Avenue between Madison and Cedar, came to be known as "automobile row" by the mid-twenties. The building, which incorporated numerous modern features and innovations, is architecturally important as an indicator of the versatility and skill of G. Albin Pehrson, one of Spokane's most influential and important architects.

Context

The first automobile appeared in Spokane in the fall of 1899. A ten-horsepower Haynes and Apperson, it broke down shortly after its 50-mile trial run, and was returned to the factory in Indiana. When F. O. Berg, founder of one of Spokane's oldest businesses, drove his Stanley Steamer over the city's streets in 1900 and 1901, it marked the motor car's permanent arrival. Typically, the early autos were prone to an array of problems, from frequent break-downs and flat tires to a lack of replacement parts and skilled mechanics. Poor roads and limited gas supplies added to the inconveniences, reinforcing the auto's image as a frivolity.

In 1907, when Park Board President Aubrey White and the renowned landscape architect John Olmsted toured the city in an auto to consider sites for a parks system, Spokane had only a handful of car owners. Four years later, the automobile was an established part of Spokane life. By early 1911, the Spokane area had 1100 registered motor vehicles for approximately 125,000 citizens, and 23 miles of recently-paved city streets, with an additional 10

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

The Eldridge Building
Spokane County, Washington

Statement of Significance (continued)

miles contracted for. So popular was the car, the Sunday Spokesman-Review began devoting a full section to automobile news. The ability to commute led Jay P. Graves to choose a site far north of town on the Little Spokane River for his mansion.

In August, 1914, the Northwest Buick Company of Seattle opened its Spokane store, committed exclusively to the sale of Buicks, at 1225 Sprague Avenue. The following January, A. S. Eldridge, the manager, rode in a railroad official's private train car to Sandpoint to meet his second shipment of 200 Buicks, destined for salesrooms throughout Washington State. The cars were placed on display at Spokane's Great Northern depot for a day. In May of 1915, the Davenport Hotel hosted its largest gathering since its opening the previous September. The occasion was the awards ceremony and celebration for Spokane's first automobile show. A Buick was among the cars receiving prizes for the "Hill Climb" contest up South Monroe Street.

In January, 1916, having outgrown its accommodations, the Northwest Buick Company moved to a 12,000 square foot building at 1308 First Avenue. Records indicate 10,000 vehicles were operating in Spokane County that year. More affordable motor cars, due to assembly line production methods, and the introduction of the automatic starter, further increased auto sales, and the Northwest Buick Company, now Eldridge Buick, leased additional warehouse space in 1918 and 1921.

The automobile's popularity enjoyed a particularly rapid increase in the northwest between 1910 and 1925. With its open spaces and scenic vistas, the west offered great recreational opportunities for car owners. "Auto touring" once the pastime of the wealthy, became common. Eventually, what started as a diversion and a convenience turned into a necessity as suburban electric rail lines experienced decreased use and were forced to reduce service in the face of shrinking profits.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

The Eldridge Building
Spokane County, Washington

Statement of Significance (continued)

In 1924, E. C. Finlay, the former manager of Spokane's Eldridge Buick business, held a grand opening for his own auto sales and service facility, the Finlay Studebaker building, at the corner of Sprague and Madison. The building, a one-story concrete and brick structure designed by G. A. Pehrson, featured the latest in commercial lighting design, illuminating the night sky.

By early 1925, when A. S. Eldridge asked G. A. Pehrson to design his new Buick sales center, the western edge of downtown on Sprague, First and Second was sprinkled with one and two story buildings devoted to meeting the needs of Spokane's motoring community. Completed in December of 1925, the three-story Eldridge Buick building had over 60,000 square feet of floor space, with a modern showroom to display its cars to advantage, and with spaces designed for the pleasure and comfort of its customers. The structure featured the latest in indirect lighting, automatically timed; a used car showroom; full service and parts departments; and the resources for complete painting and top replacement. Other innovations included an automatic elevator for customers, automatically operated garage doors, and a modern air exhaust system. The features reflect both the engineering skill of the architect, and the entrepreneurship of Mr. Eldridge, who traveled to California and the East, gathering information on the latest design features for buildings of this type.

Eldridge Buick continued to operate on West First until 1936, when the dealership was sold and became Kauffman Buick. The Eldridge Family retained ownership of the building and the auto finance corporation associated with the dealership. In 1958, the building was leased, and eventually purchased, by Seeley Business Systems. The first floor showroom was partitioned and Simchuck Sporting Goods leased the west half for several years. Most recently, the Sampson-Ayers Music Company occupied the building.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

The Eldridge Building
Spokane County, Washington

Statement of Significance (continued)

Deeded in the mid-1880's from the Northern Pacific Railroad Company to Spokane mining investor Isaac N. Peyton, lots 1 and 2 of Block 21 of the Railroad Addition changed hands numerous times over the next few years as real estate speculation became common with properties on the western edge of the fledgling city. Among the owners were early Spokane mayors Daniel Drumheller and Charles Clough, as well as Jay P. Graves. As the area west of downtown developed, a predominant use along West First Avenue became blacksmith shops, livery stables, feed stores, and carriage companies. For several years between 1890 and the early 1900s, lots 1 and 2 of block 21 contained the livery stables and carriage shed of the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company. Before its purchase by Northwest Buick, the Mitchell, Lewis, and Staver Company, dealers in agricultural implements, tractors, and autos, used the land for warehouse storage. The area south of the Riverside Avenue District and east of Browne's Addition developed with apartment houses and commercial uses. Commercial use was most often related to the automobile, and by 1920, the area became referred to as "auto row". The addition of the Eldridge building affirmed the pattern of urban geography.

Architecture

Born in Sweden in 1883, G. Albin Pehrson received his technical training at Uppsala University and went on to study in Germany and Oxford University in England. He emigrated to the United States in 1906, working briefly as a draftsman for a Chicago architectural firm before settling in Spokane in 1907. Qualified in both engineering and architecture, he secured a position as a draftsman in the offices of Kirtland K. Cutter and Karl Malmgren. By 1913, the firm was working on the Davenport Hotel, and Pehrson, who was responsible for the drafting of the plans, was placed in charge of overseeing construction. In 1915 he married and, a year later, opened his own office on West Riverside Avenue.

Actively practicing his profession through the 1950's, his legacy is impressive for both the number of major

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

The Eldridge Building
Spokane County, Washington

Statement of Significance (continued)

structures he designed or remodeled, and the variety of architectural styles and forms he experimented with during his long career. Recognized for his engineering skills, he left his mark on Spokane's skyline with such notable contributions as the Paulsen Medical and Dental Building and its elegant rooftop apartment designed for August Paulsen's widow, and the Chronicle Building with its gothic detailing. He designed several other downtown structures, many now altered or demolished, such as the Spokane and Eastern building, once Spokane's most outstanding example of Art Deco styling.

With Kirtland Cutter's departure in 1917, Pehrson inherited some of Cutter's most important clients. For Louis Davenport, he designed a major addition and did various interior remodelings for the Hotel, as well as "Flowerfield", the Davenport home on the Little Spokane River. He supervised the remodeling of the Western Union Life Building, today the Catholic Diocese's Chancery in the Riverside Avenue Historic District. For the Cowles Publishing Company, he did Spokesman-Review interior remodelings throughout his career. His engineering and design skills were sought regularly for reinforced concrete structures. The imposing Centennial Flour Mills on Trent are an example.

Pehrson's residential designs, both modest and high style, dot the South Hill. They include Tudor, Spanish, and International style homes with such prestigious addresses as Sumner Avenue, Rockwood Boulevard, and Overbluff Road. The Woman's Club Cottage on Ninth Avenue is also his work.

Pehrson's influence extended well beyond Spokane. He designed the Stevens County Courthouse, major hotels in Missoula and Minot, a department store in Portland, and schools, churches, hospitals, and residences in many Eastern Washington communities. In the midst of World War II, he worked under contract to the United States War Department at Hanford. Among his responsibilities was the design and construction of the town of Richland, complete with community facilities. Active in civic affairs and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8, 9, 10 Page 9The Eldridge Building
Spokane County, Washington

Statement of Significance (continued)

professional organizations, Pehrson was a well-known figure on Spokane's downtown streets. He received national recognition and publicity for many of his works.

The Eldridge Building, one of several commercial-industrial structures done by Pehrson, is a distinctive example of his work and demonstrates his design and engineering skills, particularly in using reinforced concrete. In addition, the design process for the Eldridge Building marks a change in the practice of his profession, which Pehrson would describe four years later when he worked on the Paulsen Medical Center in the following manner:

The old way was for the owner and architect to get together and go over some ideas . . . then let the architect figure the rest out . . . Architects know designing and building details and can not give attention to features . . . Now it is all different. Under the new system, men who have devoted their business life to handling, management, and construction of buildings pool their ideas.

Pehrson praised the contribution of A. S. Eldridge, a trained engineer. Eldridge worked closely with Pehrson and brought many ideas to the design process after studying the latest innovations in automobile service buildings.

Bibliography

Durham, N. W. Spokane and the Inland Empire. Spokane, 1912
Edwards, J. Illustrated History of Spokane Co. Spokane, 1900
Polk, R. L. City Directories. Spokane
Pioneer Title Company. Tract Books
Spokesman Review Selected articles, 1910-1960
Spokane Public Library, Northwest Room. Vertical Files.

Verbal Boundary Description: Lots 1,2 Block 21, Railroad Addition, City of Spokane

Boundary Justification: The nominated parcel includes the entire property historically associated with the Eldridge Buick Company operation in Spokane.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page 10 Photographs

The Eldridge Building
Spokane County, WA

Photographs, black/white

Photographer: Sally R. Reynolds

Date of Photos: June 1992

Original negatives: Spokane City/County Historic
Preservation Office

Photograph and #

- 1 North (primary) and west elevations, looking southeast
- 2 South and east elevations, looking northwest
- 3 First Avenue streetscape, looking east
- 4 First Avenue streetscape, looking west
- 5 Cedar Street streetscape, looking south
- 6 East entry, north elevation, looking south
- 7 First floor, west showroom, looking south
- 8 First floor, east showroom, looking south
- 9 First floor stairwell, looking east
- 10 Second floor showroom, looking east
- 11 Third floor showroom, looking west
- 12 Ramp, third floor service area, looking south
- 13 Roof, looking north