

Staff Report and Findings of Fact Nomination to the Spokane Register of Historic Places East Central Community Center – 500 S. Stone Street

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. **SMC 17D.100.090: "Generally a building, structure, object, site, or district which is more than fifty years old may be designated an historic landmark or historic district if it has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the city, county, state, or nation."**
 - Originally constructed as the Edison School in 1893, the majority of that building was demolished for the construction of the East Central Community Center in 1978; at this time, the building is not yet 50 years of age, but meets the age criteria for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places under exceptional significance due to Category E, Cultural Significance.

2. **SMC 17D.100.090: The property must qualify under one or more categories for the Spokane Register (A, B, C, D, E).**
 - The East Central Community Center is significant under two categories as established in Spokane Municipal Code 17D.100.020. The building is significant under Category A due to its association with the broad patterns of Spokane history particularly as the catalyst that initiated an era of community center construction in Spokane. The building is also significant under Category E due to its association with Spokane's racially and ethnically diverse East Central community and particularly with the League of Women for Community Action.
 - The East Central Community Center is significant under Category A due to its association with Spokane's era of community center construction. The decade-long grassroots community effort to establish and build the East Central Community Center was a catalyst and model for other Spokane neighborhoods to open their own community center. The West Central Community Center opened in 1980 and the Northeast Community Center opened in 1982 following in the footsteps of East Central and using similar funding models to establish and build the centers.
 - The East Central Community Center has maintained its role as a community resource providing a variety of services for the community. A newspaper article from 1976 when the center was being contemplated stated that the goal of the center was to create "a social refuge for their elderly and young, a dispensing point for many human services."
 - The East Central Community Center is exceptionally significant under Category E due to its deep association with the racially and ethnically diverse East Central Neighborhood and particularly with the influential community organization the League of Women for Community Action. The League was a group of approximately twenty-five Black women who were the primary advocates for the formation of the center and were the first provider to receive a contract from Spokane City Council to run the center.
 - The community center concept was initiated by the League of Women for Community Action and the building was developed collaboratively with the support of the City of Spokane using federal funds. The builder of the 1978 structure was the Max J. Kuney Company and the designer and engineer was the accomplished firm of Tan Brookie Kundig whose third namesake was the notable mid-century architect Moritz Kundig. The significance of the building under categories A and E allow for a less rigid treatment of the architectural significance and integrity.
 - The East Central Community Center is an institutional building on a full block community-focused campus. The community center building is on the northwest corner of the block, which is bound by East Fifth Avenue, South Stone Street, East Hartson Street, and South Lee Street. The building, or some portion thereof, was originally constructed as an elementary school building, most of which was demolished at the time the community center was constructed in 1978. The building, as conceived in 1978, retains good integrity, but is not significant for its architecture. The primary physical character defining features are the institutional form of the building, materials and the full block nature of the campus that has grown alongside the community.

3. **SMC17D.100.090: “The property must also possess integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and association.”** *From NPS Bulletin 15: “Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance...it is not necessary for a property to retain all its historic physical features...the property must retain, however, the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historic identity.”*
- The East Central Community Center conveys its historic physical features and is eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places. The primary significance of the ECCC is under Category A and E, and therefore, less dependent on integrity or architectural significance.
4. **Once listed, this property will be eligible to apply for incentives, including:**
Special Valuation (property tax abatement), Façade Improvement Grants, Spokane Register historic property plaque, and special code considerations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The **East Central Community Center** is eligible for listing on the Spokane Register under **Category A – Community Center Construction** and is **exceptionally significant under Category E – for its association with the League of Women for Community Action.**

Preservation Officer Review: Megan Duvall
Nominations Committee: Pending
Landmarks Commission Review: Pending

Report: 9/6/2024
Site Visit: ??/2024
Hearing: 9/18/2024