

# Historical and Geological Walking Tour of downtown Spokane



## Part 1 – Western section, start at the Davenport Hotel (see page two for descriptions)



## Historical and Geological Walking Tour of downtown Spokane

### Part 1 – Western section, Start at the Davenport Hotel

**1. Davenport Hotel** (10 S. Post) Start the walking tour here. There is so much marble to see at the Davenport. See how many types you can see as you walk in towards the middle of the lobby. You will see the restored Carrara marble fountain in the center of the lobby. The stairs, ballrooms, restaurants, and ballrooms all have beautiful specimens, from the original hotel and newly added.

**2. Empire State Building** (West 905 Riverside) On the SW corner of Lincoln and Riverside is the Empire State Building, with a newer façade composed of rough-cut granite squares of ten by ten-centimeter rough granite from Minnesota and South Dakota. For a glimpse of the original design of the building, look at the entry and lobby of the Empire State Building, paneled in white Alaskan marble with grey veining.

**3. Post Office** (904 West Riverside) Built in 1906, the Post Office's southern front exterior base is comprised of grey granite blocks from the Little Spokane granite quarry north of Spokane. The northern extension of the building was added in 1939 and much effort was put into matching the look of the original building. The very closely matched grey granite is from Cold Spring, Minnesota and is known as Diamond Grey granite. The second and third stories are Mississippi Bedford limestone from southern Indiana. Bedford limestone is used in many buildings throughout the United States, including on the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC and the Empire State Building in New York City.

Geological Fun Fact: This limestone is 320 million years old and composed of calcite oolites and fine skeletal fragments of corals bryozoa, crinoids, brachiopods, foraminifera, and an occasional shark's tooth. Such rock is formed in a shallow, warm sea where currents or waves sort the particles into a uniform size. If you can visit during open business hours, look at the marble ornamentation inside the first floor of the building. The upper part of the building houses federal courts and offices, so visitors are limited and subject to security screening. Once inside, look for all the different types of marble used on the floors, stairs, columns, and walls. You will find white Alaskan marble again, as well as dark green Verde Antique serpentine, and black slate. How many different colors of stone did you find?

**4. The Spokane Club** (1002 W Riverside) Cross Monroe street diagonally towards the McConagh statue and the brick and cream Spokane Club. It may look like there are white stone accents, but this is glazed terra-cotta, a more cost-effective decorative accent. If you ever have occasion to go inside, there are multiple types of marble used in the Spokane Club.

**5. The Philanthropy Building** (1020 West Riverside) The front steps are made of a grey granite quarried near Medical Lake, Washington called Silver Lake granite. The front columns are made from Wilkeson sandstone from outside Tacoma, Washington. Look closely to find sand, mica, and other stone fragments. The red plaque on the building is a gneissic granite from Sweden.

**6. Riverside Place (former Masonic Temple)** (1110 W Riverside) To the west on Riverside, you'll see the impressive Masonic Temple built in 1905 and expanded in 1925. It looks like all stone, doesn't it? It is in fact faced with cast stone (a fancy type of concrete) over stone and steel reinforced concrete. If you ever get to go inside for an event, you'll find marble throughout. You'll see masonic insignia all over the building's doors and ornamental elements.

**7. North Coast Life Insurance Buildings** (1116 W Riverside) Built as an Elks Lodge between 1919-1921, this reinforced concrete building is faced in smooth sandstone. The lobby can be seen through the window and has marble throughout. Note the plaque awarded by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1983 for a faithful restoration.

**8. The Cathedral of Our Lady of Lourdes** (1115 W Riverside) This Romanesque Revival style cathedral features a stone foundation and sandstone trim. In 2019, the interior was remodeled with marble and granite throughout.

**9. The Chancery Building** Take a look while you can, this may be demolished! Originally built for Western Union Life insurance in 1924, this one also features glazed terra cotta facing. You can see into the lobby for a glimpse at several colors of marble. Before you cross Monroe to the east, look at the black slate roof of the distinctive pointed turret, or "witch's hat" on the Spokesman building.

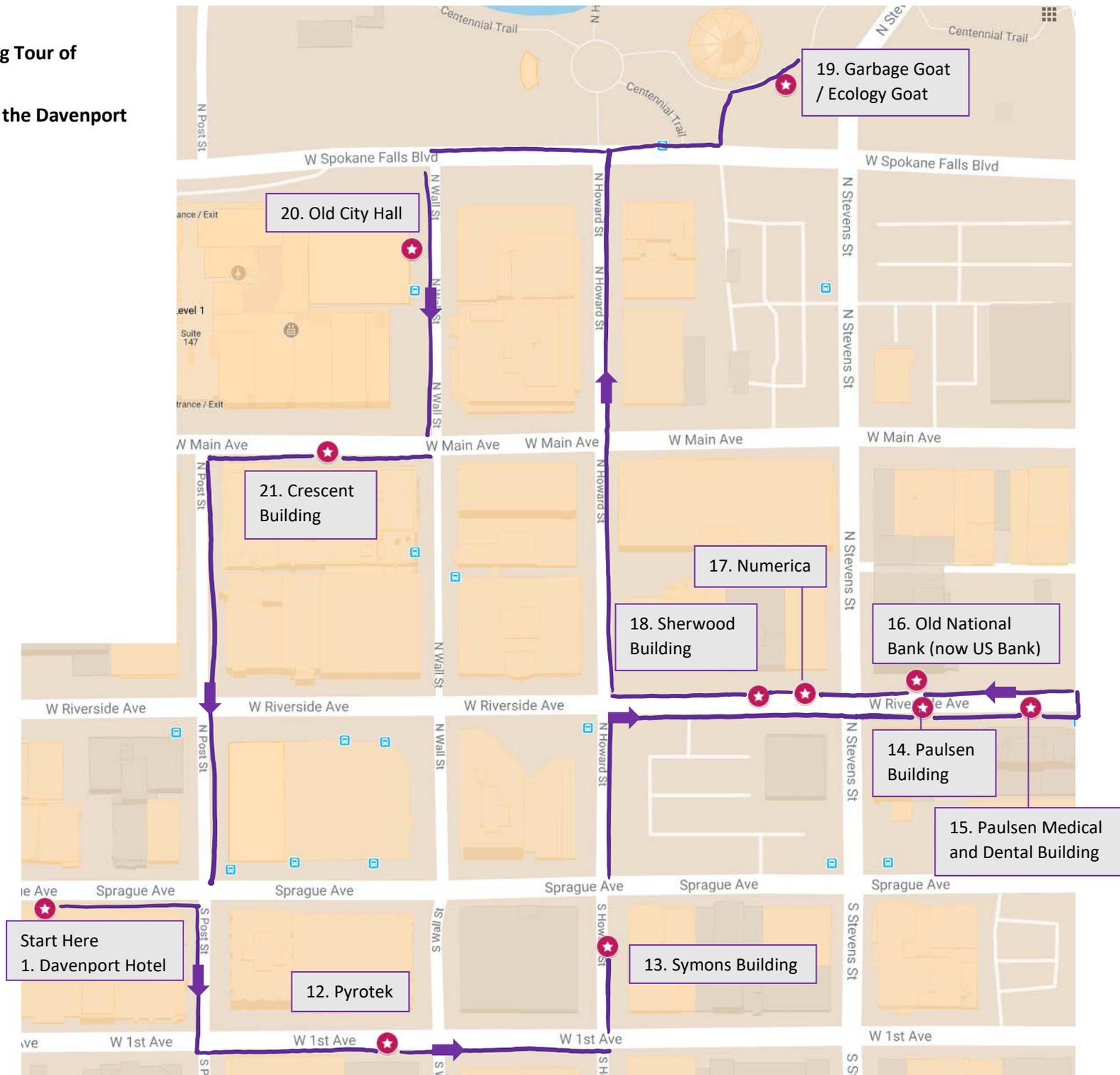
**10. Spokesman Review Building** At first glance, you just notice the brick of this building, but the base is light grey granite from Montana. The gated original entry is not open to the public, but you can see several types of marble in the lobby from the sidewalk. There's pink and red Tennessee marble, and green Verde Antique marble from Vermont. How many different colors of marble can you see? Head south on Monroe from here.

**11. Chronicle Building** (West 926 Sprague) The grey exterior base course is 101 to 109-million-year-old Cretaceous "Porterville White Granite" from California. You may be able to see some of the lobby and entry which feature pink Tennessee marble and green Vermont "Verde Antique" serpentine marble. The interior walls are surfaced with an imported grey French "Napoleon Marble." The floors above the street level are paved with a fire resistant concrete made with magnesite, a magnesium carbonate mined near Addy, Washington.

**Head back to the Davenport if you want to take a break or make it your base for part 2, the eastern section.**

# Historical and Geological Walking Tour of downtown Spokane

Part 2 – Eastern section, Start at the Davenport Hotel but then proceed to #12



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### Part 2 – Eastern section, Start at the Davenport Hotel

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**12. Pyrotek** (705 W 1st) This modern-era building features Sardinian flame finished granite on the south, east, and north sides. Look for small black biotite flakes.

**13. Symons Building** (7 South Howard) The entry features white and grey veined marble from Alaska. The black pillar bases in the outside entryway are known by the trade name "Petit Granite," but are in fact Belgian limestone from the Paleozoic age. Are you able to see any pink and white fossils?

**14. Paulsen Building** (421 W Riverside) The Paulsen Building exterior walls and entrance are faced with a pink and black granite known commercially as "Diamond Pink" and to geologists as porphyritic quartz monzonite. The billion-year-old slabs were quarried from rocks located northwest of St. Cloud, Minnesota.

**15. Paulsen Medical and Dental Building** (421 W Riverside) Built in 1929, Paulsen Medical and Dental sits on the east side of the block. The base course is "California Grey Granite" from Raymond, Madera County, California. If you can get inside the lobby, you'll find several different colored marbles. The square floor tiles are light marble with a band of pink, both from Tennessee. A smaller border of "Verde Antique," green serpentine comes from Rutland, Vermont. The wall panels are cream marble from Perlato, Italy.

**16. Old National Bank, now US Bank** (422 W Riverside) The first few feet up from the sidewalk are made of a polished grey granite from Vermont. Look for reflective mica in this stone. The building has been remodeled several times, what evidence can you see?

**17. Numerica** (502 W Riverside) There's two "gneiss" Minnesota granites on this mid-century era building. Greenish-black "Opalescent Granite" covers most of the building and the corner is wrapped in red biotite granite known as "Autumn Brown" or "Agate" in the trade. Both are no longer quarried in MN, and are Precambrian, about a billion years old.

**18. Sherwood Building** (510 W Riverside) The pillars at the front entry are polished "Silver Lake Granite" from the hills near Medical Lake. The quarry is no longer active, but in its heyday "Silver Lake Granite" was used as facings for buildings at Fort Wright, Washington State University, and the University of Washington. Look up at the terra cotta details, what do you see?

**19. Garbage Goat/Ecology Goat** (east of carousel in Riverfront Park) The large basalt columns which surround the "garbage eating" goat are excellent examples of the way volcanic lava cools when extruded in thick masses on the surface. Basalt, a common building stone in the Spokane area, is mined from local quarries.

**20. Old City Hall** (221 N Wall) The rough cut "Silver Lake Granite" foundation facing the east and north sides was quarried near Medical Lake. The entrance is oolitic Indiana Limestone. The interior walls and base are white marble from Alaska.

**21. Crescent Building** (707 W Main) The northern Wall Street entrance is flanked by green marble. The exterior facing on the northeast (Main and Wall) side is "Silver Lake Granite" from Washington. The northwest corner and the eastern Main Avenue entrance are faced with dark labradorite "Emerald Pearl Granite" from Norway, currently a Starbucks and Red Robin.

This self-guided tour takes you on a walk through two sections of downtown Spokane, starting and ending at the Davenport Hotel. You can really start at any spot or spread it out over multiple days. See details by using a magnifying glass or take a close-up photo and zoom in on your phone! This customized map is also available via Google Maps (<https://bit.ly/2Qekzt5>). It starts and ends at the Davenport Hotel, but you can combine a trip to Riverpark Square or Riverfront Park with this tour also.

Please observe any traffic revisions or posted signs. The stops on this tour all have stone that can be observed from the outside of the buildings, or through the front windows. Use your best judgement if you are going to go inside open-lobby buildings during business hours.

Updated 2020 Eva Silverstone and Vanessa Strange, Spokane Public Library Spokane Historic Preservation office surveys and nominations [historicspokane.org](http://historicspokane.org)  
Text and map based on: McKelvey, G. E.; Bunning, Bonnie B.; Burnet, F. William; Hamilton, Mike; Swanson, Byron, 1981, Cornerstones of Spokane—A guidebook to the building stones of downtown Spokane: Northwest Mining Association, 46 p. Used by permission.

