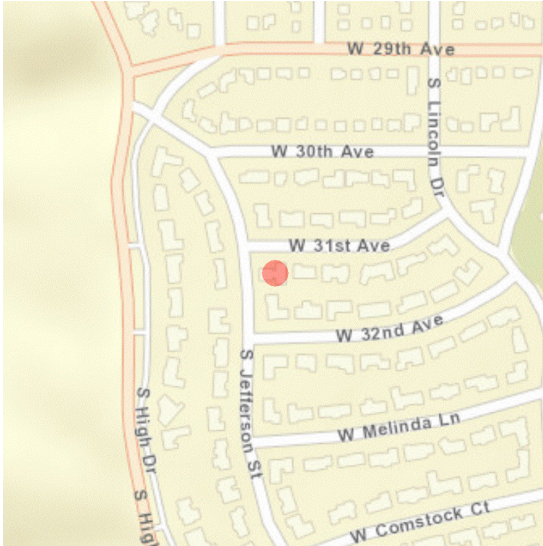


Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Johnson, Vern W, House

Property ID: 16772

Location



Address: 1015 W 31st Ave, Spokane, WA 99203

Geographic Areas: Spokane County, T25R43E31

Information

Number of stories: N/A

Construction Dates:

Construction Type	Year	Circa
Built Date	1954	<input type="checkbox"/>
Built Date	1954	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Use:

Category	Subcategory
Domestic	Domestic - Single Family House
Domestic	Domestic - Single Family House

Historic Context:

Category
Architecture

Architect/Engineer:

Category	Name or Company
Architect	Brooks, Kenneth

Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Johnson, Vern W, House

Property ID: 16772

Thematics:

Local Registers and Districts

Name	Date Listed	Notes
------	-------------	-------

Project History

Project Number, Organization, Project Name	Resource Inventory	SHPO Determination	SHPO Determined By, Determined Date
2011-03-00043, , Nifty From the Last 50	10/1/2003	Not Determined	
2011-06-00089, , Assessors Data Project: Spokane Residential 1	7/4/2011	Not Determined	
2016-12-08751, , Spokane Mid-20th Century Modern Survey 2016	5/31/2017		

Photos



North (front) facade



West, side facade



View of chimney detail



North facade

Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Johnson, Vern W, House

Property ID: 16772



West facade



Front facade, west wing



West facade



East facade



View of garage, east wing



Hyphen between east and west wing



Front facade, west wing



Hyphen between east and west wings



main elevation



oven.



laundry room/office looking into atrium.



master bath.



basement bathroom.



atrium.



fountain at bottom of basement stairs.



basement stair.



kids bedroom closet cabinets.



rear elevation.



west elevation.



fence detail.



kids bedroom.



basement rec room



center pivot gate.



oven.



backyard fountain wall.



backyard fountain bench.



fence.

Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Johnson, Vern W, House

Property ID: 16772



offset roof beams.



living room.



living room fireplace.



living room.



kitchen wall.



eave detail.



Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Johnson, Vern W, House

Property ID: 16772

Inventory Details - 5/31/2017

Common name:

Date recorded: 5/31/2017

Field Recorder: Diana Painter

Field Site number:

SHPO Determination

Detail Information

Characteristics:

Category	Item
Foundation	Concrete - Poured
Form Type	Single Dwelling
Roof Type	Gable
Roof Material	Asphalt/Composition
Cladding	Wood - Board & Batten
Structural System	Wood - Post and Beam
Plan	T-Shape

Surveyor Opinion

Property appears to meet criteria for the National Register of Historic Places: Yes

Property is located in a potential historic district (National and/or local): No

Property potentially contributes to a historic district (National and/or local): No

Significance narrative: History. Vern W Johnson (1910-2001) was a prominent builder in Spokane, under the name of Vern W. Johnson and Sons, with commercial and government projects in Washington, Montana, Idaho and Oregon. He was the contractor of record for his own house, designed by architect Kenneth Brooks in 1954. Johnson was born into a family of contractors in Medicine Lodge, Kansas. He worked his way through college and graduated with a degree in architectural engineering from Kansas State College in Manhattan, Kansas. Johnson moved to Spokane in 1946, after the company he was working for offered him \$20,000 to set up a branch in any city of his choosing; he chose Spokane (Youngs, 1996:297). He founded his own firm in 1960.

Among Johnson's most well-known construction projects was the 1959 Washington Water Power Central Service Facility (Avista Headquarters), where he worked with Kenneth Brooks, who had designed his residence. He was named in national publications in 1962 as the contractor for the St. Charles Catholic Church of Spokane, which was published in the prestigious Architectural Forum, Progressive Architecture and Engineering News-Record. Johnson was voted Spokane's "Man of the Year" in 1964. Among Johnson's many volunteer and civic activities was serving as a vice-chair of Spokane's Expo '74, where he headed the construction committee. Johnson and his wife were married 68 years and raised five children in the house at 1015 W 31st. At his death



Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Johnson, Vern W, House

Property ID: 16772

in 2001 he had been married to his wife Beryle Johnson for 68 years and had an impressive 19 grandchildren and more than 30 great grandchildren.

Architectural Context. The Vern W. Johnson residence is designed in what was often called the “Contemporary” style in the 1950s and 1960s. A Contemporary style or simply Modern house offered few traditional stylistic features or details, relying on overall form and simple modern details to convey its style. Materials also could play an important role, as seen here, where the color and texture of the materials of this house lend a richness and complement the composition of the front façade. Contemporary houses were often designed by architects and were considered “high style,” in contrast to the more common Ranch style home of the era. Common features include slightly sloped or flat roofs; overall asymmetry; expansive window walls; and the use of clerestory windows under the eaves where privacy was important. The Johnson house in particular displays expanses of glass, and a focus on contrasting, textured materials. Other features of the Contemporary house were shared by the Ranch style house, including an open floor plan, an orientation toward the rear, rather than front yard or street, and use of windows, courtyards, and other devices to “bring the outdoors in.”

Architect Kenneth Brooks. The Vernon W Johnson residence was designed by Spokane’s award-winning architect Kenneth Brooks (1917-1996). Brooks was born in Kansas in 1917. He earned a bachelor’s degree in architectural engineering from the University of Illinois in 1940, where he was awarded a six-month traveling fellowship in Europe, eventually studying city planning in Stockholm. After graduation he worked for the Seattle firm of Naramore & Brady Architects (later the international firm, NBBJ). After serving in World War II as an engineer and later as a Construction Officer, he worked for the New York office of Skidmore Owings & Merrill. While at this firm he worked under architect Gordon Bunshaft, best known for his design of the Lever House in New York City. Brooks settled in Spokane in the late 1940s, but soon returned to Illinois to complete his Master of Architecture degree from the University of Illinois, awarded in 1949.

Brooks established his own firm in Spokane in 1951, working on a wide variety of project types. In addition to his diverse architectural practice, he became active in civic affairs, particularly in urban design, regularly delivering papers to a wide range of audiences on such topics as urban design, city planning, transportation, and modern architecture. He served on numerous committees and architectural juries. Brooks designed several structures for the Spokane Expo ’74 and was one of the primary planners for the event. In the 1970s he joined with Joseph Hensley and Fred Creager to form Brooks-Hensley-Creager. The firm received numerous architectural awards over their 30 years in partnership. Brooks’ two most distinguished projects are the 1959 Washington Water Power company in Spokane, and his 1978 Art-Drama-Music Complex at Columbia Basin Community College, both of which received National American Institute of Architects Honor Awards. His Intermountain Gas Company Headquarters in Boise, Idaho garnered a National Award of Merit from the AIA in 1966. Brooks retired in 1991 and died in 1996.

Physical description:

Location and Setting. The Vernon W Johnson residence is located in the Comstock neighborhood of Spokane’s South Hill. It is sited within the Comstock Park Second Addition. This subdivision begins at the intersection of W 29th Avenue and S Bernard Street and extends southwest to the bluff above Hangman Valley, bounded by High Drive Parkway. The subdivision of curvilinear streets departs from the surrounding development that displays a grid-iron pattern. At the center of the subdivision is the 21-acre, 1938 Comstock Park, with its Revival style pool house. Landscape architect Harold T. Abbott, who at the time had been recently appointed foreman of the park, designed



Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Johnson, Vern W, House

Property ID: 16772

the landscape, laid out the grounds, and supervised the project. He would later become the parks board president. According to the website Spokaneplanner, the neighborhood surrounding Comstock "is generally upper-income and one of the more desirable locations in Spokane." The Johnson residence is located on a generous, .32-acre parcel in the southeast quadrant of the intersection of W 31st Avenue and S Jefferson Street and is oriented toward W 31st Avenue.

Materials. The wood-frame Vern W Johnson residence is a post-and-beam house with a prominent Roman brick wall on the front façade, broad expanses of glass, a composition shingle roof, and concrete foundation. The brick is complemented by a rustic, board-and-batten exterior finish and a very broad stone chimney in a random ashlar pattern.

Massing and design. The one-story, 2764 square foot Vern W Johnson house has a T-shaped footprint, with the garage located within a projecting wing overlooking W 31st Avenue. This east garage wing has a gable-on-hip roof, while the main portion of the house, connected to the east wing by an enclosed court, has a front-facing gable with a projecting, prow-like ridgeline. The house is set back toward the east and south lot lines, leaving a generous side yard on the west side and a deep front yard graced with an ornamental Japanese maple. The 1954, post-and-beam house was designed by prominent Spokane architect Kenneth Brooks in 1954.

Front (north) façade: The front façade of the Vern W Johnson house displays the garage with its gable-on-hip roof on the east side, the hyphen between the east wing and the west wing, and the gable roof with its deep eaves on the west side, which is the main portion of the residence. The most prominent features of the main, west wing is the large Roman brick wall, above which rises a dramatic glazed wall which continues to the deep eaves on the building. The primary entrance to the house is located under the left (east) side of this wing, within a small open forecourt that is under an open area under the primary roof, supported by a hefty post. A glazed "hyphen", which on the interior is a court containing a circular staircase to the basement, connects the main wing of the house to the garage wing. The garage wing has a broad, paneled garage door. Eaves are deep here, with exposed rafter ends. A series of windows on the west-facing wall of the garage are composed of three paired windows with broad mullions, placed high under the eaves.

West side façade: The west side façade of the Johnson house displays a board-and-batten wall under deep eaves. On the north side is a full-height window behind the Roman brick wall of the front façade. On the south side is a screen that shields the view of the rear yard. Underneath the primary wall are short paired windows that light the basement. Above the roofline is visible the very broad chimney, with its random ashlar stone composition.

Rear (south) façade: The rear façade of the house displays an almost fully glazed finish on the west side, punctuated by an extension of the chimney that projects into the back yard, serving as an exterior fireplace. The space between the garage and the main portion of the house offers another sheltered outdoor area.

East side façade: The east side façade of the house displays a variety of openings to the garage and the rear portion of the façade here. There are short windows under the eaves, as well as a bank of four tall windows at about the center of this façade. The windows lighting the garage consist of six ganged windows separated by wide mullions. These are matched by a similar bank of windows on the west side of the garage.



Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Johnson, Vern W, House

Property ID: 16772

Bibliography:

Houser, Michael C., Brooks, Kenneth W., (1917 - 1996), Docomomo WEWA, http://www.docomomo-wewa.org/architects_detail.php?id=59, accessed May 2017.

“Johnson, Vern W., Age 90” [Funeral notice]. Spokesman-Review, April 14, 2001.

Rebstock, Tracy L., “Comstock Park,” Spokane Historical, <http://spokanehistorical.org/items/show/110>, accessed May 2017.

“Spokane’s Best Parks, Spokaneplanner, Planning, Economic Development, Politics, <http://spokaneplanner.com/spokanes-best-parks/comstock-park/>, accessed May 2017.

Youngs, J. William T., The Fair and the Falls, Spokane’s Expos ’74. Cheney, WA: Eastern Washington University Press, 1996.

Inventory Details - 7/4/2011

Common name:

Date recorded: 7/4/2011

Field Recorder: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.

Field Site number:

SHPO Determination

Detail Information

Characteristics:

Category	Item
Form Type	Single Dwelling
Roof Type	Gable
Roof Material	Asphalt/Composition - Shingle
Foundation	Concrete - Poured
Form Type	

Surveyor Opinion

Significance narrative: Data included on this historic property inventory form (HPI) detail stemmed from County Assessor building records imported by the Washington State Department of Archaeology of Historic Preservation (DAHP) into WISAARD in 2011. This upload reduces data entry burden on community volunteers and historical societies participating in the survey and inventory of their communities. The intent of this project is directed specifically to facilitating community and public involvement in stewardship, increasing data accuracy, and providing a versatile planning tool to Certified Local Governments (CLGs).



Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Johnson, Vern W, House

Property ID: 16772

Currently survey and inventory projects at the local level produce a field form for each property surveyed and include digital photographs. Volunteers doing the survey track down and manually enter all the owner, parcel, and legal data manually. Manual data entry diminishes accuracy and quantity of resources volunteers can survey. Recognizing this, DAHP uploaded building data for each Certified Local Government (CLG) on properties that were built in or before 1969 to provide an accurate and comprehensive baseline dataset. Volunteers doing survey work need only to verify data, add in photographs and extent of alterations and architectural style data, as well as expand upon the physical description and significance statement as new data is collected. For planning purposes, the attrition rate of properties built in or before 1969 can start to be measured to guide stewardship priorities.

Project methodology entailed use of the University of Washington's State Parcel Database (<http://depts.washington.edu/wagis/projects/parcels/development.php>) to provide the base parcel layer for CLGs. Filtering of building data collected from each county trimmed out all properties built after 1969, as well as all current, previously inventoried properties. Translation of building data descriptors to match fields in HPI allowed the data upload. Calculation of point locations utilized the center of each parcel. Data on this detail provides a snapshot of building information as of 2011. A detailed project methodology description resides with DAHP. Project team members: Historic Preservation Northwest, GeoEngineers, and Artifacts Consulting, Inc. (project lead).

Physical description: The house at 1015 W 31st Avenue, Spokane, is located in Spokane County. According to the county assessor, the structure was built in 1954 and is a single family dwelling. The 1-story building has a gable roof clad in asphalt composition shingles. The single-family form sits on a poured concrete foundation containing a half basement.

Inventory Details - 10/1/2003

Common name:

Date recorded: 10/1/2003

Field Recorder: M. Houser

Field Site number:

SHPO Determination



Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Johnson, Vern W, House

Property ID: 16772

Detail Information

Characteristics:

Category	Item
Foundation	Concrete - Poured
Form Type	Single Dwelling
Cladding	Wood - Board & Batten
Structural System	Wood - Platform Frame
Roof Type	Gable
Plan	T-Shape
Roof Material	Asphalt/Composition

Surveyor Opinion

Property appears to meet criteria for the National Register of Historic Places: Yes

Property is located in a potential historic district (National and/or local): Yes