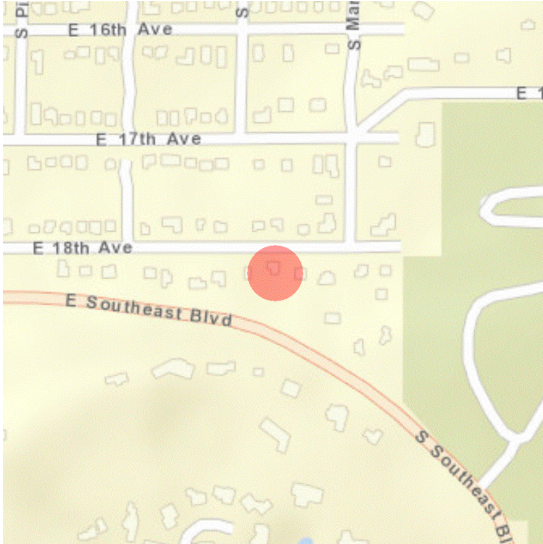


## Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Wells, Norman E. and Dorothy, House

Property ID: 16819

### Location



**Address:** 2020 E 18th Ave , Spokane, WA

**Geographic Areas:** Spokane County, T25R43E28

### Information

**Number of stories:** N/A

#### Construction Dates:

Construction Type	Year	Circa
Built Date	1956	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Historic Use:

Category	Subcategory
Domestic	Domestic - Single Family House

#### Historic Context:

##### Category

Architecture

#### Architect/Engineer:

Category	Name or Company
Architect	Heylman, Warren Cummings & Associates

# Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Wells, Norman E. and Dorothy, House

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## Thematics:

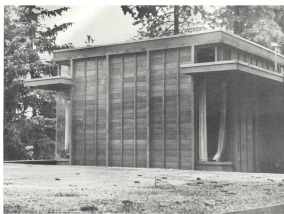
## Local Registers and Districts

Name	Date Listed	Notes
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## 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	
2016-12-08751, , Spokane Mid-20th Century Modern Survey 2016	6/26/2017		

## Photos





## Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Wells, Norman E. and Dorothy, House

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Front (north) and west facades



North and west facades



North facade



North facade, house



North facade, garage



North and east facades



## Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Wells, Norman E. and Dorothy, House

Property ID: 16819



Detail, north facade



Steps to east entry court



Main entry, east facade



Entry court, view to west



Entry court, view to east





# Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Wells, Norman E. and Dorothy, House

Property ID: 16819

## Inventory Details - 6/26/2017

**Common name:** Wells House  
**Date recorded:** 6/26/2017  
**Field Recorder:** Diana Painter  
**Field Site number:**  
**SHPO Determination**

## Detail Information

### Characteristics:

Category	Item
Foundation	Concrete - Poured
Form Type	Single Dwelling - Split Level
Roof Type	Flat with Eaves
Roof Material	Asphalt/Composition - Built Up
Cladding	Wood - Horizontal Tongue and Groove
Structural System	Wood - Platform Frame
Plan	T-Shape

### Styles:

Period	Style Details
Modern Movement	Wrightian

## 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. Norman Everett Wells was born May 31, 1924 in Eugene, Oregon. He served in the Coast Guard during World War II and in 1945, after the war, married Dorothy M. Wadsworth Wells. They had three children together. Dorothy died in 1969, at which time he married Julia J. Rehberg Wells. Mr. Wells worked for Old National Bank in the late 1940s through the 1950s, achieving the position of assistant treasurer in 1960. He and his wife moved to Walla Walla in 1989; he died on January 5, 2000.

The Norman E. and Dorothy Wells house was given a Spokane Chapter American Institute of Architects (AIA) award in 1960 (Spokane Chapter AIA, "A Selection of Contemporary Architecture in Spokane," 1967). It was also given special recognition in 1977 from the Spokane AIA (Spokane Chapter AIA, "Special Award, A Residence, Mr. and Mrs. Wells," 1977 Design Recognition Program). In the article that accompanied this recognition, the author described the program for the house as being to design a house for a young couple with three small children that was "a livable and exhilarating structure" that would fit the family comfortably, for under \$20,000. The house was also part of the tour

## Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Wells, Norman E. and Dorothy, House

Property ID: 16819

of mid-20th century properties in Spokane sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2012. In the brochure that accompanied this tour, the house was described as follows: "Decidedly Wrightian in character, it is a small, compact house that nonetheless feels more expansive because of borrowed space within the house and its relationship to the surrounding open space and woodlands" (Diana Painter, "Thoroughly Modern Spokane," 2012).

**Architectural Context.** The Norman E and Dorothy Wells house is designed in a style that is reminiscent of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959). Wrightian style architecture derives its name from the architecture of Wright during his Usonian period, which began in the late 1930s. Usonian houses represent Wright's attempt to design very livable, typically small houses, tailored to their owner's needs and their site. They were often exquisitely detailed and featured extensive use of wood and other natural materials. Architectural historian Alan Hess describes the Usonian homes as follows:

"The innovative Usonian designs were filled with ideas: basement-less houses were built on concrete slabs, and pipes running through the slab were filled with heated water, which radiated an even heat throughout the house. Single-walled board and batten walls replaced wood stud and plaster or brick wall construction. The small efficient kitchen was open to the dining room, which was open to the living room. Built-in couches eliminated the need for most furniture and created a unified space. An open carport was elegantly integrated into the roofline of the house, right next to the front door; the car was not hidden in a dark storage shed but became part of the design of the house itself. Warm brick and polished natural wood usually formed the materials inside and out." (Alan Hess, *Frank Lloyd Wright Mid-Century Modern*, 2007:18).

These concepts about modern house planning came to be shared by many architects and designers in the post-war era, including architects in Spokane. However, the Wells house also shares distinctive exterior features with Wright's Usonian houses, including a tension between vertical and horizontal emphases. As in Wright's houses, the lower horizontal form of this house, reinforced by the flat, deep, overhanging eaves, is counter-balanced by the vertical battens and vertical windows seen on the house. The horizontal wood siding, which also contrasted with the vertical battens, was more apparent before the house was stained a dark color. The variety and character of the windows, which nonetheless have a vertical emphasis, is also a feature that this house shares with Wright's Usonian houses. Lastly, the layered patterning of the building is a quality also seen in Wright's residences.

The Norman and Dorothy Wells house is the only Wrightian-style house in Spokane, according to the Washington State historic sites database (WISAARD). There are 43 recorded Wrightian-style buildings in Washington State, also according to the database. The architect for the house, Warren Cummings Heylman, is best known for his Neo-Expressionistic work, in contrast to this subdued and elegant house.

**Architect.** The Norman E. and Dorothy Wells house is designed by Spokane architect Warren Cummings Heylman and is a very atypical example of his work. Warren C. Heylman was born in Spokane and attended Washington State University. He was awarded an architectural engineering degree by the University of Kansas in 1945. Heylman was employed by Spokane architect G. A. Pehrson from 1945 to 1946, by the venerable architecture firm of Whitehouse & Price from 1946 to 1948, and by John P. O'Neill from 1948 to 1950. Heylman founded his eponymous firm in 1952. Among his most well-known buildings are the Liberty Lake Golf Course Club House (1957); Spokane



## Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Wells, Norman E. and Dorothy, House

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International Airport (1965, with William Trogdon); the Parkade (1967); the Hangman Valley Golf Course Club House (1969); Cathedral Plaza, Riverfalls Tower, and Lincoln Garden apartments; the Whitman County Library; and the controversial Spokane County Social and Health Services Center (1977). He also designed more than twenty houses, among them the Wrightian-style Norman Wells house (1956). Heylman was in practice for forty years, officially retiring from his firm in 1984. He was awarded six American Institute of Architecture awards over the course of his career and a Concrete Institute Award for the Parkade, and was inducted in the American Institute of Architects College of Fellows in 1983.

### Physical description:

**Location and Setting.** The Norman E. and Dorothy Wells residence is located between the South Perry, Lincoln Heights, and Rockwood neighborhoods on Spokane's South Hill. The house is sited above 18th Avenue, which has an almost rural feel in this location. Southeast Blvd., a major arterial, is located immediately north of the property, but is separated from it by topography and lack of access. Lincoln Park is directly east of the property but, again, does not feel accessible to the property. To the north is a relatively isolated neighborhood accessed by Overbluff Road. The Rockwood Historic District is about 10 blocks to the west. The area is heavily wooded with mature pine trees. 18th Avenue is a narrow, two-lane street with parking and sidewalks on each side that are in relatively poor condition.

**Materials.** The wood-frame Wells house is clad in horizontal wood with vertical battens, finished with a dark stain. The foundation is concrete and the roof is built-up. Accents are provided by the blue-green patina on the fascia of the building. The broad central chimney is brick. The foundation is concrete and the roof is built-up.

**Massing and design.** The Norman E. and Dorothy Wells house is three levels, configured as split levels; total square footage is approximately 1800 square feet. In contrast to most split-level houses, the different levels are parallel to the long face of the house. As a result, each level has a long, narrow configuration. The house has a T-shaped footprint, a flat roof with a short parapet on the main portion of the house and garage, and a moderate, boxed eave overhang over the front façade. A broad chimney rises from about the center of the house. Among the most prominent features of the house are the tall, narrow windows that alternate between fixed panes and "stacked" smaller, awning-style windows. The vertical patterning of the front façade is repeated in the battens on the front façade, which feature a repeating pattern of two shallow battens flanked by deeper battens. Between the two shallow battens are square, decorative panels, creating another layer of patterning. The proportions of the three-panel bays are echoed in the small clerestory windows along the upper north façade. The house is located toward the front of its .25-acre lot and is sited above the street, accessed by about 11 steps on the east side of the lot and a walkway from the garage on the west side. A high, solid fence extends beyond the face of the house on the east side, with an opening that leads to the main entry court for the house. A similar fence extends from the front of the house to the double-car garage. This forms a partially enclosed court on the west side of the house. The Wrightian house was designed by Warren Cummings Heylman and constructed in 1956.



## Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Wells, Norman E. and Dorothy, House

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Changes over time. Both courtyard/patios were constructed sometime after 1977, with a door to the west courtyard added at that time. The house was remodeled in 1985; specific details are unknown. The present owner, who bought the house in 2004, has upgraded finishes and features – such as the interior railing – in the house, while keeping the historic feel of the residence. No major changes to the house are known to have been made.

Landscape and site design. The landscaping on the site is naturalistic, presenting as a dense, forested area. The rear of the yard is steeply sloped, increasing the feeling of privacy for the residence.

### Bibliography:

The AIA Historic Directory of American Architects, 1956, 1962, 1970, <http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/Wiki%20Pages/What's%20here.aspx>, accessed December 2016.

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“Architectural Style Guide, Washington State Styles and Forms: 1860-1990,” Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, <http://www.dahp.wa.gov/learn-and-research/architectural-style-guide>, accessed June 2017.

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“Norman Everett Wells” (obit.), Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=96083442>, accessed June 2017.

Painter, Diana, “Thoroughly Modern Spokane,” (brochure), National Trust Conference Field Session, November 2, 2012.

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Spokane County Assessor, <https://www.spokanecounty.org/219/Assessor>, accessed January 2017.

US City Directories, HeritageQuest, <https://www.ancestryheritagequest.com/HQA/CityDirectories>, accessed June 2017.

Woodbridge, Sally B. and Roger Montgomery, A Guide to Architecture in Washington State. University of Washington Press, 1980.





## Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Wells, Norman E. and Dorothy, House

Property ID: 16819

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### Inventory Details - 10/1/2003

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**Common name:**

**Date recorded:** 10/1/2003

**Field Recorder:** M. Houser

**Field Site number:**

**SHPO Determination**

### Detail Information

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**Characteristics:**

Category	Item
Foundation	Concrete - Poured
Cladding	Wood - Vertical Boards
Structural System	Wood - Post and Beam
Roof Type	Flat with Eaves
Plan	Rectangle
Roof Material	Asphalt/Composition - Built Up
Form Type	Single Dwelling

**Styles:**

Period	Style Details
Modern Movement	Wrightian

### Surveyor Opinion

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**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

**Significance narrative:** Chosen by Spokane Chapter of the AIA for outstanding architecture award in 1960.