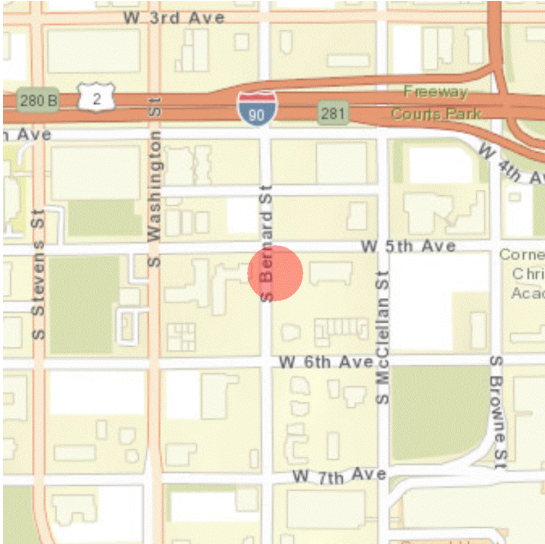


Location



Address: 521-525 S Bernard St, Spokane, WA

Geographic Areas: Spokane County, T25R43E19

Information

Number of stories: 2.00

Construction Dates:

Construction Type	Year	Circa
Built Date	1962	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Use:

Category	Subcategory
Health Care	Health Care - Medical Business/Office

Historic Context:

Category
Architecture

Architect/Engineer:

Category	Name or Company
Builder	Adkinson Construction, Inc.
Architect	Swoboda, Henry

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	12/21/2004	Not Determined	
2016-12-08751, , Spokane Mid-20th Century Modern Survey 2016	6/30/2017		

Photos



North and west facades



North facade



North and east facades



East facade



South and east facades



South facade



South entry detail



North entry detail



Window detail behind tile panel



Ceramic tile detail



Synthetic siding detail



Setting, looking southeast



Setting, looking south



Main façade



side elevation





Historic Property Report

Resource Name: MediCenter Building

Property ID: 38578

Inventory Details - 6/30/2017

Common name: Mediocenter Building
Date recorded: 6/30/2017
Field Recorder: Diana Painter
Field Site number:
SHPO Determination

Detail Information

Characteristics:

Category	Item
Foundation	Concrete - Poured
Form Type	Commercial
Roof Type	Butterfly
Roof Material	Asphalt/Composition - Built Up
Cladding	Stone
Structural System	Wood - Platform Frame
Plan	Square

Styles:

Period	Style Details
Modern Movement	Modern

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. The Mediocenter Building was designed by architect Henry Swoboda and constructed in 1962. It was developed and owned by Dr. Fred K. Viren. Today the upper level (addressed as 525 S Bernard) is occupied by medical offices. The lower level is unoccupied at this time. The historic name of the building is still spelled out in modern, free-standing aluminum letters on the main tiled face of the building. In 1981, Dr. Viren applied for variances to build and operate a two-story medical laboratory to the northeast of the existing building, in addition to the medical office building. This was evidently never built, as the site is used for parking today.

Dr. Fred K. Viren, an internal medicine specialist, was thrust into the public eye during the sensational trial of Mrs. Ruth Coe, a social leader who was tried and found guilty of trying to hire a man to murder the prosecutor and the judge who sent her son – who was known as the South Hill rapist – to prison for a series of rapes. Dr. Viren, who was Mrs. Coe’s personal doctor, testified that Mrs. Coe’s mental illness produced a deranged and disordered thought process.



Historic Property Report

Resource Name: MediCenter Building

Property ID: 38578

Architectural Context. The Medicenter Building exhibits several tenets of Modern commercial design popularized in the post-war era, particularly the juxtaposition of multiple materials in the place of traditional architectural detailing. There are several important ideas about contemporary commercial and institutional design in the post-war era that fall under the general classification of “Modern.” These qualities are found in many post-war structures, regardless of style, and reflect the underlying values of Modernism. One is the three-dimensional arrangement of forms as part of the architectural expression of the building. Another idea is the importance of the two dimensional composition on any one surface as a design feature. This composition is typically asymmetrical and does not, as in traditional architecture, serve primarily to emphasize the building form. Rather, it is a design feature that may express the interior functions of the building. As an aesthetic device, it can also facilitate a three-dimensional “reading” of the building form by drawing the eye around the corner to the next building plane.

A third Modern idea is that the pattern, texture, color, reflectivity, and other visual aspects of the building materials are also decorative features. As in many post-war styles, they take the place of traditional architectural detailing to embellish the building. The juxtaposition of polished granite and highly textured and patterned stone, the repetition of simple metal frames and pattern of small ceramic tiles, or the tinted glass and colored metal panels seen in many buildings in the survey are the “decoration.” They express or represent the building’s function, its structure, and its aesthetics, and speak to new possibilities in materials and construction in the post-war era. The Modern features seen in the Medicenter Building include the butterfly roof; the extended split beam ends, emphasizing the structural support of the roof; and the use of white stone cladding with dark grout, aluminum framing for the windows and doors, and panels of small ceramic tile, mostly in shades of blue. The post-war era was also one of experimentation with new materials. The use of a synthetic cladding on the building exemplifies this trend.

Architect. Born in Spokane on September 24, 1928, Henry John Swoboda was already an accomplished musician and a licensed pilot when he graduated from Gonzaga Preparatory School in 1945. Hoping to fly combat missions, he enlisted in the Marines in 1945 – while World War II was still raging – but instead was placed in the band at the Marine Corps Air Station in El Toro, California, where he served for two years. Following his discharge, Swoboda earned a degree in architecture from Washington State University, and began his professional career with the prolific G. A. Pehrson in Spokane in 1952. Two years later he opened his own practice. Over the next 50 years, Swoboda designed close to 800 buildings in Washington, Idaho, and Montana: churches, fire stations, city halls, restaurants, museums, post offices, and custom homes. Of note in Spokane are the Flamingo Restaurant, the Stardust Lounge, the Medicenter Building, and seven buildings on Gonzaga University’s campus, which include the former Museum of Native American Culture, the Health Center, and the COG. Swoboda died shortly after his 80th birthday on October 2, 2008 in Spokane.

Physical description:

Location and Setting. The Medicenter Building is located south of downtown Spokane, a block-and-a-half from Interstate-90, within an area of clinics and other medical facilities that support the medical center here. The Providence Sacred Heart Children’s Hospital is four blocks – and the Providence St. Joseph Care Center five blocks – to the east, and the MultiCare Deaconess Hospital is five blocks to the west. Also in the immediate vicinity of the clinic are vestiges of Spokane’s grand mansions, including the Glover Mansion, and substantial apartment buildings.



Historic Property Report

Resource Name: MediCenter Building

Property ID: 38578

The Medicenter Building is located in the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Bernard Street and 6th Avenue. Also on the block, on the east side, is a three-story apartment building and the three-story Fidelity building. The grade changes here, so these buildings appear taller than they are. On the west side of the block, north of the Medicenter Building, is a surface parking lot. Highly visible across the street to the south is a large Victorian house converted to four apartments.

Materials. The Medicenter Building is a wood-frame building finished in a synthetic panel siding, stone cladding, and small ceramic tile. It has a built-up roof and concrete foundation. Windows and doors have aluminum frames; a newer vestibule at the first floor level is framed in anodized aluminum. Split extended beams are wood.

Massing and design. The two-story Medicenter Building commercial office building has an irregular footprint and a slight butterfly roof. The lower portion of the building is entered from grade on the north side at about the center of this façade and the upper portion – also in the center of the façade – is entered from grade on the south side. Extended beams support deep eaves on the north, east, and south sides; there are no eaves on the west side. The building is surrounded by parking on the north, east, and south sides and set back from the street sufficiently to allow for two parking spaces on the west side between Bernard Street and the building. Pedestrian access to the lower level, on the north side, is at grade. Pedestrians can access the upper level, on the south side, via a sidewalk from the upper parking area or a stair from the lower park area. The parking lot can be entered via automobile from Bernard on the north and south sides of the building, and from 6th Avenue on the south side of the building. Character-defining features of the building include the banks of aluminum frame, three-part windows separated by wood battens that extend from the beams above the second floors to the beams above the first floor; the first and second floors are separated by the wood string course. A sun shade is located at the end of the eaves on the north façade. On the south façade, a bank of two fixed windows over an awning-style window is located to the left of the entry. The projecting panel clad in small tiles, with the name of the building in freestanding, aluminum letters, at the center of the Bernard Street façade is an unusual design feature. The Modern office building was designed by architect Henry Swoboda and constructed in 1962.

Changes over time. Building permit records indicate that the building was altered in 1979. This change was also designed by Henry Swoboda and constructed by Atkinson Construction Inc., although the nature of the change is unknown. An entry vestibule on the north side of the building is a later addition.

Landscape and site design. The Medicenter Building is sited on what is essentially a two-level lot, the east side being one level higher than the west side, which is at the grade of Bernard Street. The parking lot is landscaped on the south side. There are planting beds between the upper and lower parking areas on the south side of the building and a small planting bed adjacent to the sidewalk on the west side of the building.

Bibliography:

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Historic Property Report

Resource Name: MediCenter Building

Property ID: 38578

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

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Inventory Details - 12/21/2004

Common name: Mediacenter
Date recorded: 12/21/2004
Field Recorder: M. Houser
Field Site number:
SHPO Determination

Detail Information

Characteristics:

Category	Item
Foundation	Concrete - Poured
Structural System	Wood - Balloon Frame
Roof Type	Butterfly
Form Type	Commercial - One-Part Block
Cladding	Wood - Vertical Boards
Cladding	Stone
Roof Material	Asphalt/Composition - Built Up
Plan	Rectangle

Styles:

Period	Style Details
Modern Movement	Contemporary



Historic Property Report

Resource Name: MediCenter Building

Property ID: 38578

Surveyor Opinion

Property appears to meet criteria for the National Register of Historic Places: No

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

Significance narrative: Mediacenter was originally home to a group of three dental offices.