

# *Conditional Use Permit Application*

March 5, 2018

“Built in 1928, St. Joseph’s Catholic School Auditorium/Gymnasium is located at the intersection of Dean Avenue and Walnut Street in the West Central neighborhood of northwest Spokane, Washington. The auditorium/gym is an excellent interpretation of the Spanish Eclectic style applied to a building that was originally part of St. Joseph’s Catholic Parish ecclesiastical and scholastic campus. The property has few exterior alterations and retains excellent architectural integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and association as early 20th-century building erected in Spokane, Washington.”

-----*Historic Properties of Spokane*

In 1985 our family purchased the St. Joseph’s School Auditorium and Gym from the Catholic Diocese of Spokane. The parochial school had long since closed and the gym was being rented to SOGA, (The Spokane Olympic Gymnastic Association), where girls on balance beams worked toward being Mary Lou Retton.

The roof was leaking, and the interior was generally run down. Maintaining the building was a significant expense for the parish.

After the purchase, we made significant improvements to the infrastructure; including widening the entry, installing all new electrical service and HVAC. We replaced staircases that were no longer to code and completely rebuilt accessible restrooms and kitchen area to modern standards.

We made other improvements to repurpose the space as a commercial photography and motion picture studio. This included building a 30’x30’ cyclorama, a film processing lab, and both B&W and color print labs.

When we bought and improved the property, we did not envision that people in the community would want to continue to use The Hamilton Studio as an auditorium.

However, they did. Over the passed 3 decades, we’ve hosted many events from weddings to memorial services, anniversary celebrations, banquets, birthday parties, concerts, (including the Northwest Bach Festival), St Joseph’s Church functions, and Washington State Caucuses.

Local non-profits such as United Way, YWCA, KYRS Thin Air Radio, Center For Justice and The Lands Council, have had events at The Hamilton Studio.

During that time we've had occasional inspections by the Spokane Fire Department who concluded we were operating in a safe manner.

Over the years we've received many permits from the Liquor Control Board for various by-invitation functions.

Recently we've come to understand that we're not in compliance with the city code governing event centers. We're licensed as a photography studio. Our purpose is to rectify that.

Hamilton Studio, the business presently at 1427 West Dean, continues to be a going concern. We provide commercial photography and filmmaking services for businesses, non-profits and individuals. Since 1985 we have maintained and improved the property and listed it on the City's Historic Registry. We've provided employment to Spokane citizens and paid our taxes.

We propose to continue to use the space as a photography & film studio, but seek to legally restore one of its original purposes, that of an auditorium, as it has served the community since 1928.

1. List the provisions of the land use code that allows the proposal.

17C.335 allows for properties on the Historic Registry to apply for a Historic Change of Use. This property has been on the Historic Registry since 02/07/2011 and is allowed to apply for this conditional use permit.

2. Please explain how the proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan designation and goals.

In section 8.2 of the Spokane Comprehensive Plan the following is listed as one of its important values:

Preserving the historic buildings, historic fabric, and cultural heritage that provide Spokane with its character.

Section DP 1.1 of the Comprehensive Plan presents the following goal:

Recognize and preserve unique or outstanding landmark structures, buildings, and sites. Landmarks are structures or sites that provide focal points of historic or

cultural interest. Preservation of them, even when not located within historic districts, celebrates the uniqueness of the particular area.

Section DP 2.4 of the Comprehensive Plan discusses design flexibility for neighborhood facilities. Seeking to incorporate flexibility into building design and zoning codes to enable neighborhood facilities to be used for multiple uses. Neighborhood public facilities are often developed to serve a particular purpose. This can be the result of code requirements that preclude the ability to utilize the facilities for other purposes. Enabling flexibility in the application of the standards could better maximize the utility and cost effectiveness of neighborhood public facilities.

We believe that our stewardship of the physical structure, our contribution to the local economy, and making the space available to the public supports the values stated above.

3. Please explain how the proposal meets the concurrency requirements of SMC 17D.010.

No alteration of site or existing building is proposed as part of this application.

No additions or alterations are proposed. Existing facilities of water and sewer are being used. Stormwater drains from the roof to the sewer or is absorbed by existing landscaping. Solid waste is picked up on the residential schedule.

Since 1928 people attending events at the St. Joseph Auditorium and Gym have parked on the street and/or in the church parking on Walnut. We've kept up that tradition for the last 3 decades. This arrangement has served the neighborhood well as we never have events during church hours, and there is lots of street parking in the evenings when most events occur.

4. Property Suitability for Proposed Use

No site changes are proposed.

5. Adverse impacts to the environment and neighboring properties.

The proposed action is the formalization of the current use of the building and bringing that use into compliance with the City of Spokane zoning code.

The neighborhood grew up around the building and the neighbors I've spoken with believe it has always been an "event center".

We don't expect our impact on the neighborhood will be different from that of the last 33 years.