



## Rockwood - Days of Yore

Francis Cook, founder of Spokane's first newspaper and one of its most important developers, migrated to Eastern Washington in 1878 and soon acquired the 680 acres that have become a major part of the modern-day Rockwood and Manito neighborhoods. Because the rough, forested land with huge basalt outcroppings included distinctive stands of wild roses, Cook called his tract Montrose, literally Mount Rose.

Cook's holdings spanned a wide swath directly south of the bluff that sits above the center of the city's downtown. He had big plans. He built a fine home and created the first powered streetcar line, the Spokane and Montrose Motor Railway. He and his wife, Laura, were founding members of First Presbyterian Church. However, as was the case with many of the early real-estate, banking and business figures, the Panic of 1893 cost Cook dearly. He sold most of his holdings to pay his debts and lost the rest through foreclosure.



Mining and railroad magnate Jay P. Graves and his Spokane-Washington Improvement Company acquired the southern and eastern portions of Cook's land and supplemented them with parcels along the eastern edge. He added the streetcar route to his Spokane Traction lines and extended it to a proposed development at Lincoln Heights. In 1904, after a few of his associates bought parcels on either side of Grand Boulevard, Graves and the group donated rough-hewn Montrose Park to the city, which developed it into Manito Park.



Three years later, Graves associate Aubrey White, first president of the newly formed Spokane Park Board, hired the Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts, to upgrade existing parks and design new ones that would leave every citizen within walking distance of a public park. The Olmsteds, successors to legendary Frederick Law Olmsted, operated the nation's pioneer urban planning firm. Champions of the City Beautiful movement, they were deeply involved in Pacific Northwest projects, primarily the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition site that became the University of Washington campus.



In 1910, with Spokane in the midst of its greatest growth spurt, voters approved a \$1 million bond issue that effectively funded the Olmsted plan. Within three years, city park acreage expanded tenfold. By then, Graves and David Brown, the Hazelwood Dairy owner who had bought former Cook land between 14th and 17th avenues, had engaged the Olmsteds to design their own developments. Graves, with far more real estate at his disposal, funded a Rockwood Boulevard project that became the city's most desirable residential neighborhood and, in time, was recognized on the national register as the Rockwood Historic District.

Sweeping east and south from the foot of the Grand Boulevard hill to 29th Avenue, the district ranges from Hatch Street on the west and Arthur on the east, typifying Olmsted concepts by following the terrain with curved streets that wind through the remnants of the original ponderosa-pine and Douglas-



The Rockwood Neighborhood Council meets at 7:00p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month at Hutton Elementary School, except in July, August, and December.

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fir forest. Three small triangular parks dot the southern portion along Garfield Road. A fourth triangular park sits not far from the district's northern Rockwood Boulevard entrance. The district's 350 homes, built over half a century in a variety of styles and sizes, are set well back from the curb and are fronted by large deciduous street trees.

The Rockwood Neighborhood Council represents nearly all of the historic district, as well as another Graves development, Rockwood Terrace, to its east and postwar tracts built north and south as Rockwood Boulevard expanded to the east along the former streetcar right-of-way. Council boundaries extend in a funnel shape from Grand, just above Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center in the northwest corner, east to Southeast Boulevard and south to the southern boundary at 29th Avenue.



Neighborhood features include the magnificent Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, two pairs of Rockwood Boulevard entrance pillars, Hutton School, Lindaman's Bistro and Rockwood Bakery.

### Life in Rockwood - Today

The Rockwood neighborhood is a mature, stable neighborhood that residents describe as clean, well-maintained, friendly, and community-oriented. Professionals, families of all ages, retirees, and health-conscious individuals call it home. People enjoy the outdoors in the park-like neighborhood, walking with or without a dog, bicycling, or gardening. One favorite gathering place is the Rockwood Bakery on 18th Avenue. Many also enjoy the historic and extensive Manito Park. The neighborhood is close to downtown Spokane for those residents who work there with bus routes and a major bicycle route on Southeast Boulevard that help serve transportation needs. Rockwood retains a sense of grandeur and distinctiveness within Spokane. Hutton Elementary School helps anchor the community, particularly for young families. If you're a visitor, don't expect to navigate the area easily. The hilly terrain is responsible for streets that seldom follow a straight path. The meandering streets with their tree-lined canopies will take you on an ever-changing scenic journey.



### Rockwood - Treasures

#### St. John's Cathedral

In the early 1920s, the city's Episcopalian parishioners began to consider an appropriate home base for the denomination's growing regional membership. Under the leadership of Edward Makin Cross, who had become the bishop in 1924, the concept became reality with a major boost from prominent Spokane architect Harold C. Whitehouse.



Whitehouse, a member of the All Saints Cathedral west of downtown, was building a wide reputation as a designer of Northwest churches. After touring Europe, he recommended an English and French-inspired structure that fit the chosen location, a flat-topped bluff where Francis Cook's home once had a commanding view of Grand Boulevard. Work on the limestone and sandstone edifice, one of the few American examples of classic Gothic architecture, began in November 1925. On Oct. 20, 1929, three Spokane parishes, All Saints, St. Peter's and St. James, merged to form the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist and held the first service.



The façade includes a distinctive rose window that measures 23 feet in diameter. The cathedral houses a 4,039-pipe Aeolian-Skinner organ and one of the region’s few carillons. Its stained glass windows were created by nationally prominent designers.

The primary convention of the Diocese of Spokane, previously a missionary district, met in the cathedral on Nov. 1, 1964. Diocesan offices are located in the nearby August Paulsen House, which also serves as home for the bishop.

Other Rockwood Treasures

- Entrance pillars on lower Rockwood Boulevard and at Highland Boulevard and Hatch Street
- Large basalt outcroppings
- Numerous historic homes. In 1966, Rockwood Boulevard was designated an historic district on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Olmsted triangle parks

Hutton School



In response to the city’s rapid growth before World War I, construction of Hutton Elementary School began in 1920. Designed by partners Archibald Rigg and Roland Vantyne and built of masonry block with a tile roof and a stucco exterior, its Spanish colonial style building replaced the one-room Rockwood School at the corner of 24th Avenue and Hatch Street. Before the school opened in 1921, the Spokane School District named it for philanthropist Levi (Al) Hutton, who had struck it rich in North Idaho’s Hercules Mine.

Before long, neighborhood growth overwhelmed the new facility. Compatible wings were added to the original structure and, after World War II, temporary classroom buildings expanded the campus in front of and behind it. However, the temporary buildings remained in place until the school underwent a major restoration and expansion in 2014.



**Rockwood - Natural & Built Identity**

The Rockwood neighborhood is elevated well above the Spokane River valley in south-central Spokane. It includes severe hillsides, ridges, gentle slopes, and, mostly to the south, some level expanse. Basalt rock outcropping are found throughout, further dictating the layout of roadways and residential lots when the neighborhood was designed a century ago. Many lots are large but have a limited buildable area because of the topography. This helps create a great variety of site design and building architecture. A number of native rock walls serve a functional and decorative purpose. Existing specimen native trees, particularly ponderosa pines, are mixed with large, mature shade and street trees. Both create an urban forest setting that provides shade during the hot summer months. Extensive and detailed landscape planting are common on many of the homesites. The original neighborhood entrance pillars remain at the north end of Rockwood Boulevard and at the corner of Highland Boulevard and Hatch Street, adding to the historical identity. Pockets of open space and larger lots provide habitat for turkeys, quail, squirrels, and an occasional raccoon or skunk.





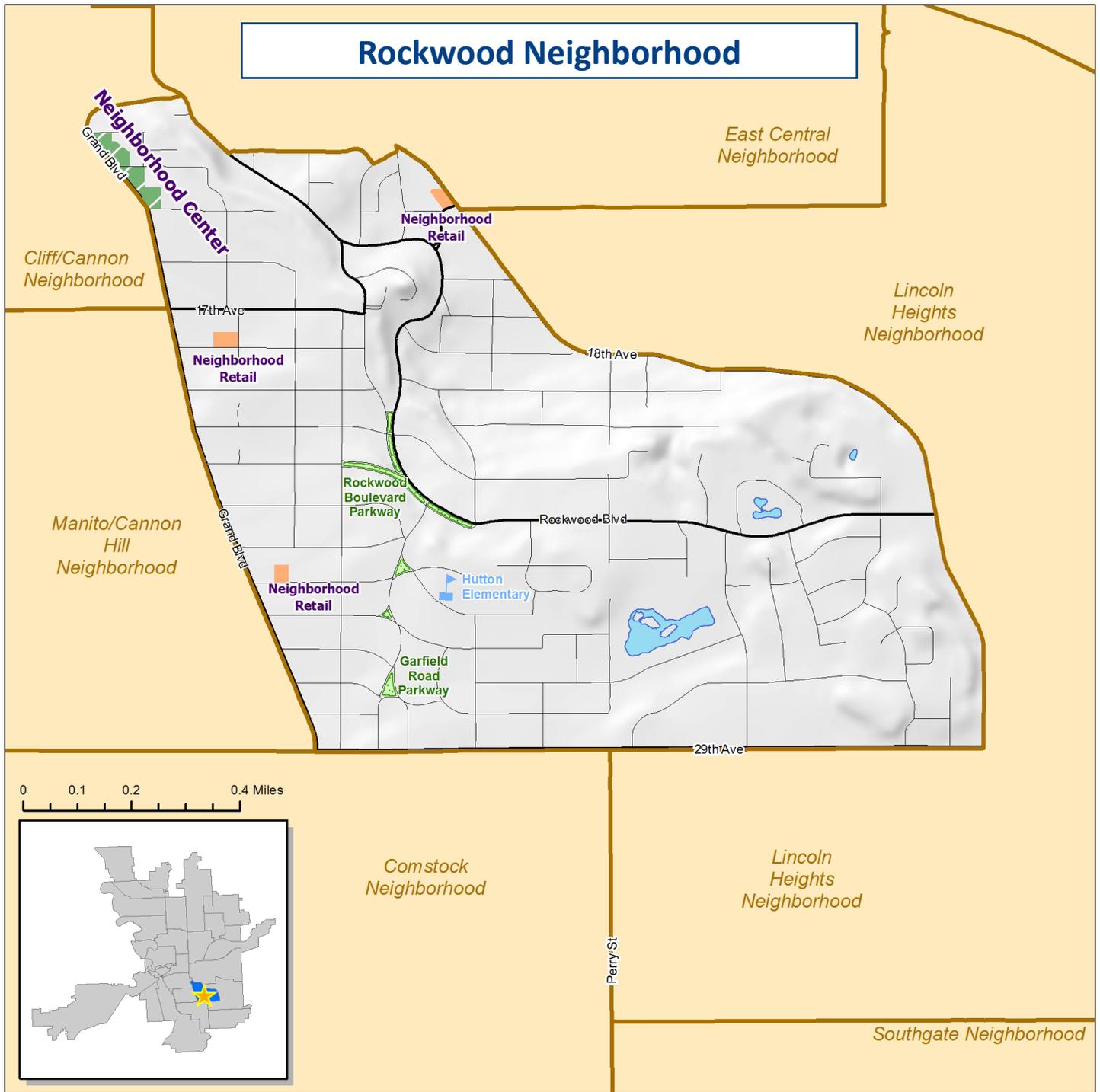
Of the Rockwood Historic District's 350 homes, 279 were classified as contributing properties – more than 50 years old with most or all of their exterior design features intact – when the National Register of Historic Places certified the district in 1997. Since then, a few dozen of the remaining 71, the vanguard of those built after World War II, have become contributors in theory by reaching the 50-year mark. Almost two dozen district homes have been placed on the Spokane City/County Historic Register.



Although time has blurred some of the details, district homes did not spring up overnight. The first houses, near the northwest end of Rockwood Boulevard, and scattered smaller houses on side streets near the boulevard's southeast end, were built in 1910. By 1918, Spokane's housing boom had come to an end. As a consequence, Jay Graves put 400 unsold Manito- and Rockwood-addition lots up for auction. Despite the deflated prices, only one-third of them sold. Many of Rockwood's lots sat vacant until the second half of the century.

Prominent local architects William Hyslop, Gustav Pehrson, Archibald Rigg, John E Anderson and Earl Morrison joined top contractors in development of the mansions that line the boulevard and adjacent blocks on Highland Boulevard and Upper Terrace Road. Tudor Revival and Colonial Revival predominate among the varied architectural styles. Smaller bungalows and cottages characterize the adjoining numbered streets. Many Rockwood neighborhood homes outside the district, ranging from early 20th-century Arts and Crafts bungalows to custom-designed Mid-century Modern homes, also might be eligible for listing on the local register.

Evidence of Spokane Traction's streetcar line remains along the central and southern portions of the original Rockwood Boulevard. Cars operated on a parklike shoulder along the south edge of the roadway. Clearly visible stretches begin at Upper Terrace and follow the sharp bend that begins South Rockwood. The berm continues almost to Arthur Street, where the boulevard ended. However, tracks continued eastward before terminating near the present site of Lincoln Heights shopping center. Streetcar service in the city ended in 1935.



South Hill Coalition Connectivity and Liability Strategic Plan June 2014

Lee Nilsson, "The Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist,"

Rockwood Historic District nomination <http://properties.historicspokane.org/district/?DistrictID=32>

Olmsted Parks in Spokane [http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file\\_id=8218](http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=8218)

SOURCES

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Special thanks to Jim Price who wrote most of this profile.

