



The City of Seattle

## Landmarks Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649 Seattle WA 98124-4649  
Street Address: 700 5th Ave Suite 1700

Name The National Cash Register Building / Superior  
Reprographics Year Built 1928  
(Common, present or historic)

Street and Number 1923-1927 Fifth Avenue, Seattle, Washington

Assessor's File No. 0659000435

Legal Description Heirs of Sarah A. Bell, 2nd Addition, Block 9, Lot 8 (STR-NE 31 25 4)

Plat Name: Heirs of Sarah A. Bell, Block 9 Lot 8  
2nd Addition

Present Owner: G4 CAPITAL SEA HOLDINGS LLC Present Use: Vacant

Address: 14 Skillman Street, Roslyn, New York 11576

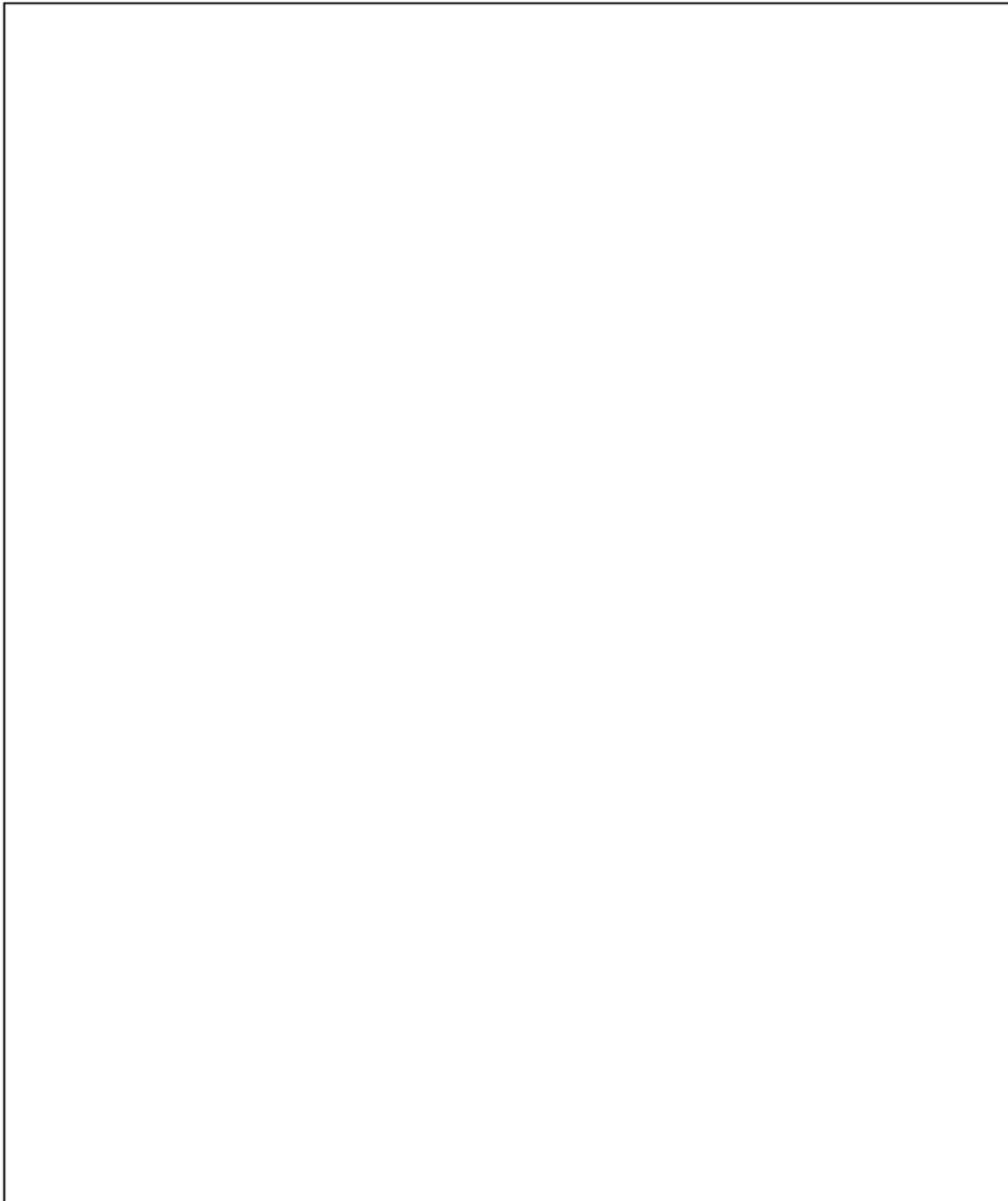
Original Owner: Fifth Avenue Holding Co.

Original Use: Mixed Use Retail

Architect: John A. Creutzer

Builder: Unknown

Photographs



Submitted by: Jonathan Fair for G4 CAPITAL SEA HOLDINGS LLC

Address: Douglaston Development: 42-09 235th Street, Douglaston, NY 11363

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Date January 2015

Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Historic Preservation Officer

# National Cash Register Building

Landmark Nomination Report  
1923-27 Fifth Avenue, Seattle, Washington  
December 2014

Prepared by:  
The Johnson Partnership  
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# National Cash Register Building Landmark Nomination Report

JUNE 2007-REVISED DECEMBER 2014

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This landmark nomination report provides information regarding the architectural design and historical significance of the National Cash Register Building. The building is located at 1923-1927 Fifth Avenue in Seattle, Washington. The Johnson Partnership prepared this report at the request of G4 Capital SEA Holdings, LLC, the current property owners, and Douglaston Development, which has the property under contract.

### 1.1 Background

The City of Seattle's Department of Planning and Development (DPD), through a 1995 agreement with the Department of Neighborhoods, requires a review of "potentially eligible landmarks" for commercial projects over 4,000 square feet in area. Because any proposed alterations to or demolition of the subject buildings described within this report will require a permit from DPD, buildings is providing the following report to the staff of the Seattle Landmarks and Preservation Board (L&PB) to resolve the property's eligibility as a City of Seattle Landmark.

To be eligible for nomination as a City of Seattle Landmark, a building, object, or structure must be at least 25 years old and it must meet one or more of the following six criteria (SMC 25.12.350):

- A. It is the location of or is associated in a significant way with an historic event with a significant effect upon the community, city, state, or nation.
- B. It is associated in a significant way with the life of a person important in the history of the city, state, or nation.
- C. It is associated in a significant way with a significant aspect of the cultural, political, or economic heritage of the community, city, state, or nation.
- D. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, period, or method of construction.
- E. It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder.
- F. Because of its prominence of spatial location, contrast of siting, age, or scale, it is an easily identifiable feature of its neighborhood or the city and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood or city.

A Landmark Nomination for the building and the surrounding site was submitted to the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board in July 2007. The Board subsequently failed to nominate the property. As more than five years has past since this property was reviewed by the Landmarks Preservation Board, the current owner is submitting this nomination to resolve the property's eligibility for designation as a City of Seattle Landmark prior to redeveloping the property.

### 1.2 Methodology

Research and development of this report were completed between January and July 2007, by Larry E. Johnson, AIA, principal of The Johnson Partnership. Research included review of King County tax

files from the Washington State Puget Sound Regional Archives and City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development archives. Other research was undertaken at the Seattle Public Library, the Museum of History and Industry, and the University of Washington's Library, Special Collections. Research also included review of internet websites.

The report was revised October-December 2014, to update and provide additional information. On-site inspections and photography of the building and site were undertaken November 2014, to document the building's existing condition.

Owner's contact:

G4 CAPITAL SEA HOLDINGS LLC  
14 Skillman Street, Roslyn, New York 11576

Nominator's contact:

Jonathan Fair  
Executive Vice President  
Douglaston Development  
42-09 235th Street  
Douglaston, NY 11363



## 2. PROPERTY DATA

**Building Historic/Common Name:** The National Cash Register Building / Superior  
Reprographics

**Address:** 1923-1927 Fifth Avenue, Seattle, Washington

**Location:** Denny Regrade

**Parcel Number:** King County #0659000435

**City of Seattle Zoning:** DOC2 500/300-500

**Legal Description:** Heirs of Sarah A. Bell, 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition, Block 9, Lot 8 (STR-NE 31 25 4)

**Date of Construction:** 1928

**Original/Present Use:** Mixed Use Retail / Vacant

**Original/Present Owner:** Fifth Avenue Holding Co. / G4 CAPITAL SEA HOLDINGS LLC

**Original Designer:** John A. Creutzer

**Property Size:** 6,480 sq. ft. (0.15 Acres)

**Building Size:** 18,280 sq. ft.

### 3. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

#### 3.1 Location

The National Cash Register Building is located slightly north of the central business district within the Denny Regrade district, a commercial area lying between Belltown to the west and the Denny Triangle to the east. *See figure 1.*

#### 3.2 Site

The National Cash Register Building is located mid-block on the western side of Fifth Avenue between Stewart and Virginia Streets. The building footprint covers the entire site. The grade slopes from the northeastern corner of the lot upward approximately seven feet to the west and downward a few inches along Fifth Avenue. There is an alley located at the rear of the lot running from Virginia Street to Stewart Street. *See figure 2.*

#### 3.3 Building Description

##### 3.3.1 Neighborhood Character

The National Cash Register Building is located within a commercial district that includes hotels, multifamily residential, and medium-density office and street-level retail. Surrounding buildings range from masonry and terra cotta faced buildings, manufacturing and office buildings of the 1920s to the two towers of the 1970s-era Westin Hotel located across Fifth Avenue from the site. The nine-story Hotel Åndra (former Claremont) is located to the northwest of the site, and the Times Square and Medical Dental Building are located to the southeast of the site. The original monorail line, starting from Seattle Center to the north and ending at Westlake Mall to the south, runs on elevated concrete rails along Fifth Avenue immediately alongside the building. *See figures 3-12.*

##### 3.3.2 Building Structure & Exterior Features

The National Cash Register Building is a two-story commercial building measuring approximately 60 feet along Fifth Avenue by 108 feet deep. The building has a height of approximately thirty-eight feet measured from the sidewalk to the top of the building parapet at its southeastern corner. The floor-to-floor-height from the main floor slab to the second floor is approximately eighteen feet, and the floor-to-ceiling height of the second floor is thirteen feet. The building is reinforced concrete with terra cotta facing on its single primary façade, with interior heavy-timber post-and-beam construction supporting a solid two-by dimensional lumber laminated floor at the second level, and rafters at the roof level. The building was designed in an Eclectic Commercial style with Renaissance Revival detailing. *See figures 13-14.*

The eastern façade fronting Fifth Avenue has a tripartite composition, consisting of three structural bays with intermediate tripartite storefront glazing. The street-level façade is faced with original flat polished black veined marble that covers the four vertical pilasters and the horizontal lintel. The top of the marble lintel is approximately nineteen feet nine inches above the sidewalk level at the northern corner of the building. The marble is in good condition with the exception of some cracking where a gas line enters the building. Recessed entries are centered within each of the three bays. The entry doors are Honduras mahogany store doors with sidelights and transom windows. Each entry doorway features a carved relief of grape-motif molding on the door lintels. The storefront glazing has cast bronze vertical and horizontal mullions. Metal panels with ventilation grills have replaced the original upper transom glazing and the northernmost opening has a flush entry door providing access to an interior stairway. *See figures 15-19.*

The upper section of the façade is faced with elaborately detailed cream-colored terra cotta, consisting of approximately twenty-six different tile patterns. The initial terra cotta course is a four-inch-high row of unadorned tile supported by the marble lintel. Directly above this transition piece and serving

as the sill for the second-floor windows is a decorative terra cotta cornice, which has a running frieze of scrollwork. Supported on the sill are decorative terra cotta pilasters with repeating acanthus panels with edge scroll beading that accent the window jambs. The scroll beading continues across the window heads, becoming a relatively simple cornice. Above this cornice is a highly detailed parapet of nine horizontal panels separated by twisted decorative columns. Each panel contains raised diamond-shaped diapering and features a central tan terra cotta shield with a cross. Above these panels, a row of blue and cream colored decorative terra cotta pieces run across the top of the cornice. Originally there were ten finials approximately eighteen inches in height evenly spaced atop the cornice; these are no longer present. The terra cotta appears to be in good condition except for some weathering and staining, although its structural condition is unknown. The second-floor windows are also tripartite wood-sash windows with transom lights. *See figures 20-21.*

The western façade faces the alley and is non-primary, consisting of unfinished red common brick in a stretcher bond with several utilitarian windows with industrial metal sash, and doors providing access to the alley. The remaining exterior walls on the north and south share a common lot line with neighboring buildings and are not visible. *See figure 22.*

### 3.3.3 Plan & Interior Features

A 120-square-foot concrete basement is located in the southwest corner of the structure, which has eight feet of clearance. The main floor interior was historically divided into three distinct, twenty-foot-wide structural bays running the length of the building. Columns supporting the second floor are spaced at eighteen-foot intervals from the street to the alley. The second floor contains the same three structural bays and a mezzanine open to the first floor in the southern end of the building. Vertical circulation is located at the northeastern corner and at the rear of the building. *See figure 22-25.*

### 3.3.4 Documented Building Alterations

The eastern façade is largely original with the exception of non-original metal panels in the storefront transom windows, the addition of a doorway (the doorway used to be open, providing exterior access to the second floor) at the northernmost corner of the building, and the loss of the parapet finials. The interior has been altered several times, and has no significant integrity.

Date	Designer	Description
1928	J. A. Creutzer, Archt.	Original construction (permit #279337)
1934	Unknown	Interiors for Colony Club (permit #311942)
1936	Unknown	Alterations for Musicians' Club (permit # 319309)
1938	Otis Hancock, Archt.	Alter partition & balcony, for NCR at 1925 address (permit #328181)
1946	Lowell V. Casey, Archt.	New balcony, for NCR at 1923 address (permit #371887)
1949		Ceiling alteration (permits #395449)
1949	Alfred F. Simonsen, Archt.	Combine use of two bldgs. for IBM (permit #398104)
1950	Andrew Willatsen, Archt.	Interior alterations for NCR at 1923-25 address (Permit #398268)
1952	Young, Richardson, Carleton & Detlie, Archts.	Build loading dock for NCR (permit #413319)
1952		Alterations (permit #413551)
1954-1961		Various alterations associated with IBM occupancy of a portion of this building and including the building to the north (install elevators-permit #425258) other interiors-permits #465885, 487538)
1962	Bittman & Saunders, Archts.	Interiors for Franklin Finance Co. at 1925 address (permit #499280)

1974  
1978-1981

Close existing opening in wall (permit #556492)  
Various alterations for Superior Reprographics, interiors,  
and including mezzanine alterations, may include  
alterations to this building and/or adjacent buildings  
(permits #576446, 582356, 587124, 587672, 590223,  
594373, 595122)

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## 4. SIGNIFICANCE

### 4.1 Historical Site Context

#### 4.1.1 *Development of the Denny Regrade District*

The development of the Denny Regrade district—generally considered the area stretching north of the central business district from Stewart Street to near Mercer Street—is a reflection of the gradual early 20<sup>th</sup> century expansion of the business community northward from its origins in Pioneer Square to major focal points along Second Avenue. Spurred by the economic boom, a direct result of the 1897 Klondike Gold Rush, Seattle’s population rose dramatically—growing from around 43,000 in 1890, to 88,000 in 1900, to over 236,000 by 1910, with subsequent northward expansion of the downtown business district.<sup>1</sup>

Rapid growth of the city was also aided by the improvements to and expansion of the streetcar lines, which tended to dictate the location of both commercial and residential developments. Second Avenue provided major streetcar links through downtown and to nearby residential developments on Queen Anne Hill.<sup>2</sup> Before 1904, downtown commercial expansion had essentially stopped just north of Pike Street due to the abrupt grade change as Second Avenue ran into Denny Hill, essentially making Pike Street the “end of town.” As the bluff overlooking Elliott Bay halted development west of First Avenue, and southward development was limited by the Duwamish tidal estuary, commercial development generally moved eastward to Third Avenue and then to Fourth Avenue. *See figures 26-27.*

When Seattle’s leaders envisioned a shortage of developable land, they turned to engineers to remake the landscape. R.H. Thompson was appointed City Engineer in 1892, and quickly developed schemes to continue re-grading and paving Seattle’s downtown streets, continuing northward from the developed central business district and subsequently leveling Denny Hill. Work began in 1898, and continued in segments until 1911. Denny Hill—with its crowning Victorian edifice, the Denny Hotel—was shoveled and sluiced away beginning in 1905, under the direction of City Engineer Thompson, and the Duwamish tidal areas south of town were systematically filled with soil from the Jackson Street Regrade and Dearborn cut beginning in 1907, increasing available land for industrial development.<sup>3</sup>

The first phase of the Denny Regrade, from Second Avenue to Fourth Avenue, was completed in 1911; over three million cubic yards of soil were removed. Land values in the area rose dramatically, e.g., lots valued at \$2,500 before the regrade subsequently rose to \$15,000.<sup>4</sup> The first wave of development in the Denny Regrade area came as soon as the most westerly portions of the former Denny Hill area were accessible, and consisted of a variety of hotel types. The nearby Pike Place

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<sup>1</sup> Richard C. Berner, *Seattle in the 20th Century, Vol. 1, Seattle 1900-1920, From Boomtown, Urban Turbulence, to Restoration* (Seattle, WA: Charles Press, 1991) p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Beth Dodrill-Rezghi, “Commodore Hotel—2013-17 Second Avenue—Landmark Nomination Report,” August 2006, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Myra L. Phelps, *Public Works in Seattle: A Narrative History, The Engineering Department, 1875-1975* (Seattle, WA: Kingsport Press, 1978), pp. 17-18.

<sup>4</sup> Phelps, *Public Works in Seattle*, p. 21

Market was another new commercial venue supporting general growth of the area. In C.H. Hanford's *Seattle and Environs*, the author describes the early development of the area:

*Building enterprise advanced to the Denny hill regraded district, and in rapid succession the New Washington Hotel, the Archibald [destroyed], Holland, Calhoun and Gowman Hotels, Wilson Modern Business College, the Haight Building, the Securities Building and the Moore Theater were erected. The Times Building, home of the Seattle Daily Times, is also located in that district. The Standard Furniture Company's nine-story building is a distinct feature of the same district.*<sup>5</sup>

Other smaller businesses such as clothing distributorships, furniture and upholstery shops and sewing machine sales and repair shops also existed in the area—likely drawn to the availability of parking and the proximity to both the retail shopping district and the wholesale trade facilities nearby at the Terminal Sales Building. Service businesses in the vicinity either catered to the needs of other commercial businesses, e.g., print shops and sign companies, or catered to the residential or tourist occupants of the nearby hotels, including tailors, dry cleaning, and shoeshine shops and auto and garage services.<sup>6</sup> **See figures 28-29.**

The National Cash Register Building, as a mixed use store-and-loft structure, is consistent with the commercial development occurring between 1911 and 1930 in Belltown and the Denny Triangle. In 1923, the city adopted one of the nation's first zoning ordinances, designating most of Belltown and the Denny Triangle a commercial district.<sup>7</sup> This designation led to greater variety than in the office-heavy downtown core, with uses including residential (hotels and apartment buildings), service-oriented (banks, fire stations, telephone exchanges, laundries), recreational (theaters and dance halls), and light industrial (printing presses, office supply manufacturers).<sup>8</sup> The new zoning structure also led to an increase in apartment buildings in Belltown, and businesses sprang up to serve the influx of new residents.<sup>9</sup> The subject building reflected Belltown's new commercial diversity by housing not only the regional sales offices of the National Cash Register Company, but also musicians' clubs and speakeasies, a church, and additional retail concerns (See section 4.1.2 for a more thorough discussion of the building's former occupants.)

Expectations of major development of the area north of Virginia Street, however, would go largely unfulfilled, with most development through the late 1920s concentrated in what was considered the new commercial core, extending eastward from Second Avenue to Sixth Avenue south of Stewart Street. Developments that marked the eastward shift included:

- the Joshua Green Building (1911-12, John Graham, Sr.) at Fourth Avenue and Pike Street;
- the Times Square Building (1913-15, Bebb & Gould) at Fourth Avenue and Stewart Street;
- the new Frederick & Nelson Department Store (1916-19, John Graham Sr.) at Fifth Avenue and Pine Street;
- the Medical Dental Building (1924-25, John A. Creutzer) adjacent to the north on Olive Street; and
- the new Bon Marché Department Store (1927-29, John Graham, Sr.), taking an entire block between and Third and Fourth Avenues and Stewart and Pine Streets..

Henry Bittman's Terminal Sales Building (1923) at First Avenue and Virginia Street; his Northwestern Mutual Building (1928-31, now known as the Olympic Tower) at Third Avenue and

<sup>5</sup> C.H. Hanford. *Seattle and Environs* (Chicago & Seattle: Pioneer Historical Publishing Co, 1924), p. 433.

<sup>6</sup> Beth Dodrill-Rezghi, "Commodore Hotel—2013-17 Second Avenue—Landmark Nomination Report," August 2006, pp. 8-10.

<sup>7</sup> Mimi Sheridan, "Belltown Historic Context Statement," Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, November 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Karin Link, Thomas Street History Services, "Context Statement, Denny Triangle, Historic Survey and Inventory," Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, June 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Mimi Sheridan, "Belltown Historic Context Statement," Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, November 2007.

Pine Street; Victor W. Vorhees' Joseph Vance Building (1927) at Third Avenue and Union Street; and the eleven-story Republic Building (1927) at Third Avenue and Pike Street were some of the last projects built at the northern edge of the central business district before the Great Depression. **See figures 30-31.**

The first Denny Regrade stopped short of leveling the streets and land on the eastern half of Denny Hill and subsequently property values deteriorated in this area, as developers were reluctant to invest in the area before the inevitable completion of the regrade. In 1928, work commenced on the second and final Denny Regrade, which focused on a trapezoidal area bounded by Virginia Street to the south, Fifth Avenue to the east, Thomas Street to the north, and Westlake Avenue to the west, resulting in the lowering of the grade throughout that area, as well as Denny Park, which had for years loomed over the surrounding commercial district.<sup>10</sup> **See figure 32.**

The Orpheum Theater (1926-27, B. Marcus Priteca) and the adjacent Benjamin Franklin Hotel (1928, Earl A. Roberts) were both built at the southeastern corner of the district, at Stewart Street and Fifth Avenue, prior to the regrading, but further commercial development of the area after the regrade occurred at a much slower pace and scale than originally anticipated, primarily due to the economic slowdown associated with the Depression of the 1930s, as well as concentration on war-related industries during World War II. During this time and through the 1960s, the neighborhood generally became a service area for the central downtown commercial core and the nearby theater and shopping district, with the construction of small and medium-scaled store and office buildings for retail, wholesale, and service businesses. Parking lots, garages, and auto service centers tended to be located on the eastern side of the district, where property values were lower.

During the 1950s and 60s, major regional development was directed to outlying areas, stimulated by post-war prosperity and increased availability of automobiles and highways. The Seattle World's Fair of the early 1960s was one attempt to stimulate investment in this area, with the original monorail and its elevated concrete tracks running between the fair site at Mercer Street south along Fifth Avenue to Westlake. Development in the downtown, when it occurred, was mainly directed to the Central Business District, with development of another generation of modern curtain-wall skyscrapers. The Orpheum Theater and the adjacent Benjamin Franklin hotel were razed in 1967 for the development of the new Westin Hotel. **See figures 33-36.**

A brief real estate boom and bust cycle in the 1980s and 1990s brought new office construction and condominium development, and today the area presents a rather mixed urban fabric that belies its renewed struggle for a less marginalized urban identity.<sup>11</sup>

#### **4.1.2 National Cash Register Building**

The two-story building was originally designed with three retail spaces addressed 1923, 1925, and 1927 Fifth Avenue.

In 1929, the southern storefront, 1923 Fifth Avenue, was occupied by the Toledo Scale Company.<sup>12</sup> The central storefront, 1925 Fifth Avenue, was occupied by Godon Prentice, Inc., a retailer of General Electric refrigerators.<sup>13</sup> The company also leased the entire second floor later that year.<sup>14</sup> The northern storefront, 1927 Fifth Avenue, was occupied by the Oil Heat Corporation, a distributor of LaSalle oil burners.<sup>15</sup>

In April 1934, the second floor, now addressed as 1927 ½ and accessed by a stair on the northern side of the western façade, became the “permanent” home of the Central Community Church headed

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<sup>10</sup> Phelps, pp. 29-31.

<sup>11</sup> Dodrill-Rezghi, “Commodore Hotel,” p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> *Seattle Times*, Ad, September 8, 1929, p. 52.

<sup>13</sup> *Seattle Times*, “Additional Floor Spaced Leased By Refrigerator Plant,” May 26, 1929, p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> *Seattle Times*, “Additional Floor Spaced Leased By Refrigerator Plant,” May 26, 1929, p. 20.

<sup>15</sup> *Seattle Times*, “Oil Burner Concern To Hold ‘Open House,’” June 2, 1929, p. 34.

by Dr. J. D. Powers.<sup>16</sup> By June of that year the second floor was then occupied by the Psychic Research Society, also lead by Powers.<sup>17</sup>

As early as 1937, the National Cash Register Company (NCR) occupied both of the southernmost retail spaces, and the northern space was occupied by a café.<sup>18</sup> At that time, the second floor was occupied by the Musicians' Association/Club (Local #76 of the American Federation of Musicians); the second floor had formerly been occupied by the 1925 Club (a.k.a. the Colony Club) between 1934 and 1935. Both clubs were speakeasies.<sup>19</sup> In 1949, portions of the northern end of the building were altered to accommodate occupancy by the IBM Corporation, which at the time was renovating the adjacent building to the north.<sup>20</sup> NCR occupied the southern portion of the building until at least 1955.<sup>21</sup>

In 1960, the southernmost retail space (1923 Fifth Avenue) was vacant, as NCR had relocated to the South Lake Union neighborhood.<sup>22</sup> IBM left the building in the mid-1960s.<sup>23</sup> In 1966, tenants included stamp traders Sperry & Hutchinson, the Franklin Finance Loan Company, and personal counseling offices of the Burden Bearer Inc. firm.<sup>24</sup> By 1975, none of these tenants remained and the building was not fully occupied, with only a portion of the building leased by a training school for bartending.<sup>25</sup> Washington Technical Institute, a business college, may have occupied a portion of the building in the late 1960s and early 1970s, in conjunction with occupancy at 1929 Fifth Avenue in the building to the north.<sup>26</sup> A beauty salon also occupied a portion of the building in the early 1970s.<sup>27</sup>

From the late 1970s until the late 1990s, Superior Reprographics occupied the building, expanding and reducing their occupancy at various times in all three storefronts and the second floor.<sup>28</sup> In 1995, both Superior and a specialty foods store occupied portions of this building.<sup>29</sup> By 1998, Superior Reprographics occupied the entire building and remained in this location until 2007.<sup>30</sup> **See figures 37-39.**

## 4.2 Historical Cultural Context

### 4.2.1 Building Owners

The Fifth Avenue Holding Company originally financed the building. The investors in this firm are unknown, but the agent's signature on the building permit application is "\_\_\_ Bennett,"<sup>31</sup> and may be Charles H. Bennett. Bennett was the Secretary/Treasurer of Washington Loans & Trust and the manager of the Uptown Realty Company.<sup>32</sup> Pacific Mutual Life of California was an early owner of

<sup>16</sup> *Seattle Times*, "New Church To Be Dedicated By Rev. Dr. Powers, April 21, 1934, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> *Seattle Times*, "Psychic Research Society Will Meet, June 29, 1934, p. 13.

<sup>18</sup> King County Tax Assessor Property Record Cards File #0659000445 (photo).

<sup>19</sup> King County Tax Assessor Property Record Cards File #0659000445 (photo); R.L Polk Co., *Polk's Seattle City Directory*, 1937; City of Seattle Building Permit #311942. Both speakeasies had several raids, resulting in arrests for illegal selling of alcohol.

<sup>20</sup> City of Seattle Building Permit #398104.

<sup>21</sup> *Polk's Seattle City Directory*, 1955.

<sup>22</sup> *Polk's Seattle City Directory*, 1960.

<sup>23</sup> *Polk's Seattle City Directory*, 1966.

<sup>24</sup> *Polk's Seattle City Directory*, 1966.

<sup>25</sup> *Polk's Seattle City Directory*, 1975.

<sup>26</sup> *Polk's Seattle City Directory*, 1975.

<sup>27</sup> *Polk's Seattle City Directory*, 1979 and 1995.

<sup>28</sup> *Polk's Seattle City Directory*, 1975, 1979, 1985, and 1995.

<sup>29</sup> *Polk's Seattle City Directory*, 1995.

<sup>30</sup> *Polk's Seattle City Directory*, 1998.

<sup>31</sup> City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD) permit data files, permit #279337.

<sup>32</sup> *Polk's Seattle City Directory*, 1928.

the building, as noted on King County Assessor's property record card (c. 1937). More recently, past owners include the Seattle Popular Monorail Authority, which purchased the building from V. Associates in 2004. They sold the property to Heron Development LLC in 2006.<sup>33</sup>

#### ***4.2.2 National Cash Register Company***

The National Cash Register Company occupied the National Cash Register Building from around 1937 to 1955.

John H. Patterson founded the National Cash Register Company (NCR) in 1884 in Dayton, Ohio. The company expanded rapidly and had become a multi-national corporation by 1888. The firm aggressively bought out competitors during the early years and by 1911 dominated the market. In 1912, Patterson was convicted on anti-trust charges, but the conviction was overturned in 1915, and the company continued to prosper. The company went public in 1926. Always considered a "high-tech" company, NCR entered the electronics and computer industry with the 1953 acquisition of the Computer Research Corporation (CRC) of California. NCR manufactured their first transistor-based computer system in 1957, with General Electric Corporation.<sup>34</sup>

In the 1950s and 1960s, NCR continued to develop and manufacture data processing and computer products, but by the late 1960s the International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) was a strong competitor in the market. In 1974, the company officially changed its name to NCR. In the 1980s the company pioneered open-systems architecture in computing with Unix-based systems. The eventual dominance of the MS-DOS system in the computer industry, which was pioneered jointly by Microsoft and IBM, furthered IBM's dominance of the market, and NCR eventually shifted to marketing "Point-of-Sale" hardware and software products, as well as other retail-oriented technologies, eventually becoming a major manufacturer of ATM banking machines. In 1991, NCR was purchased by AT&T, but re-emerged in 1997 as an independent publicly-held company.<sup>35</sup>

NCR was operating a sales branch in Seattle as early as 1901. H. N. Burpee, Sales Agent, managed an office in Seattle in the Washington Building, as well as overseeing operations of the firm's salesroom in Portland, Oregon.<sup>36</sup> In 1907, the company's Seattle salesroom was located at 305 Occidental Avenue and was described in a Seattle booster publication as one of the "great many selling agencies for renowned eastern products" that had recognized "the importance of Seattle as a distributing center for the entire Northwest."<sup>37</sup>

### **4.3 Historical Architectural Context**

#### ***4.3.1 Local Terra Cotta Manufacture and Eclectic Commercial Architecture***

After steel-framed construction was pioneered in Chicago in the 1890s, architects were free to increase the size of windows in commercial buildings, resulting in increased façade transparency and higher interior light levels, as well as allowing retail merchants "show windows" on the street-level facades.<sup>38</sup> At the same time and as a direct consequence of several disastrous downtown fires throughout the United States, building codes were developed, initially to protect property and eventually to save lives. After a major fire had destroyed Seattle's nascent central business district in 1889, fire-proof construction was mandated for new buildings in downtown Seattle. Free from the

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<sup>33</sup> King County Tax Assessor. File #0659000445.

<sup>34</sup> Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, "NCR Corporation," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NCR\\_Corporation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NCR_Corporation), accessed April 19, 2007.

<sup>35</sup> Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, "NCR Corporation," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NCR\\_Corporation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NCR_Corporation), accessed April 19, 2007.

<sup>36</sup> *Polk's Seattle City Directory*, 1901.

<sup>37</sup> *Seattle of Today*, Seattle, 1909, p. 201.

<sup>38</sup> R. Furneaux Jordan, *A Concise History of Western Architecture* (Norwich, G.B.: Jarrold & Sons, 1969), pp. 308.



limitation of load-bearing masonry construction, architects employed classical revival styles, particularly Renaissance Revival, which provided architects with the opportunity to dress their buildings with florid ornamentation utilizing versatile, relatively light terra cotta, rather than heavier carved stone. Around 1920, terra cotta became the preferred cladding material for exterior wall surfaces because of its durability, lighter weight, and visual lightness. Using terra cotta, Seattle architects designed dozens of downtown buildings that became a “source of splendor, richness and architectural variety that contributes to Seattle’s vibrant architectural urban environment.”<sup>39</sup>

Exceptional extant buildings from this period include, but are not limited to: the Arctic Club, (1914-17, A. Warren Gould), the Times Square Building (1915, Bebb & Gould), the Coliseum Theater (1916, B. Marcus Priteca, now Banana Republic), the Doyle Building (1919, Doyle & Merriam), the Decatur Building (1921, Henry Bittman), the Dexter Horton Building (1922, John Graham, Sr.), Eagles Auditorium (1924-25, Henry Bittman), and the Olympic Tower (1929, Henry Bittman). **See figures 40-42.**

As the demand for lighter and fireproof exterior cladding material grew in Seattle in the 1880s, four West Coast terra cotta manufacturing companies grew to dominate the industry. Two of these companies were locally based, the Puget Sound Fire Clay Company and the Northern Clay Company. The Washington Brick, Lime, & Sewer Pipe Company was based in Spokane, while the Gladding-McBean Company was located in Lincoln City, California. The Denny Clay Company was organized in 1882, after Arthur A. Denny took over the assets of the Puget Sound Fire Clay Company whose factory was near Van Asselt, a former town on the Duwamish where a Boeing factory is now located. By 1900, the company was marketing its tile along the West Coast from California to Alaska. Around that time the company relocated to Taylor, Washington, just east of Buckley, opening large clay mines and building a large factory. The Denny Clay Company merged with the Renton Clay Company in 1905, forming the Denny-Renton Clay Company. This company produced terra cotta for many well-known downtown Seattle buildings, including the King County Courthouse, the Arctic Building, and the Times Building. The Northern Clay Company was organized in 1900 in Auburn, and supplied terra cotta for the Coliseum Theater, the Washington Securities Building, the Crystal Swimming Pool, the Joshua Green Building, the Securities Building, and the Frederick & Nelson Department Store. The Washington Brick, Lime, and Sewer Company had a large plant in Spokane that was capable of a monthly production of 450 tons. Gladding-McBean was the “preeminent producer of terra cotta in California, and produced terra cotta for the Smith Tower, the Pioneer Building, and the Federal Office Building. In 1925, the Denny-Renton Clay Company merged with Gladding-McBean. Gladding-McBean is presently the only terra cotta manufacturer in the United States.”<sup>40</sup>

One unique quality of terra cotta building cladding is the range of glaze colors that was available for building designers, which was unmatched by any other material during the early 1900s through the late 1930s, when the material fell out of favor. Polychromatic ornamentation began to supplant the previously neutral and white tones of architectural ornamentation as early as 1906, with Bernard Maybeck’s *Isaac Flagg Studio*. The architectural research of German architect Gottfried Semper, published in *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten oder Praktische Ästhetik* (1853-1864), provided evidence that classical architecture and sculpture had been polychromatic. In turn, this finding influenced the preference for color in architectural ornamentation most prevalently in the 1920s. While most terra cotta-clad buildings had uniform glazes sprayed on before firing to produce non-permeable ceramic coatings, some buildings incorporated small blocks of different colored glazes, or incorporated blocks with two or more colors in an ornamental design, or, in some cases, a group of colored letters. The latter required hand brushing or air-brushing, and could involve multiple firings. Collectively, terra cotta-clad buildings incorporating multiple colored glazes are

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<sup>39</sup> Lydia Aldredge, *Impressions of Imagination: Terracotta Seattle* (Seattle, WA: Allied Arts of Seattle, 1986) Preface, p. 10.

<sup>40</sup> Mark Smith, “The History of American Terra-Cotta and Its Local Manufacture,” in *Impressions of Imagination: Terracotta Seattle*, ed. Lydia Aldredge (Seattle, WA: Allied Arts of Seattle, 1986), pp. 3-5.

referred to as polychromatic terra cotta.<sup>41</sup> *See figures 43-46.*

#### **4.3.2 Original Building Architect: John A Creutzer<sup>42</sup> (see Appendix 2)**

John Alfred Creutzer (1873-1929) was born in Sweden on September 22, 1873.<sup>43</sup> He immigrated to the United States with his family as a child. After growing up and starting his professional career in Minnesota, Creutzer moved westward to seek new opportunities. He first moved to Spokane, but eventually moved to Seattle in 1906.

In Seattle, Creutzer worked as an architect and construction supervisor in association with Seattle contractors Henderson Ryan and Alexander Pearson, in addition to implementing his own design commissions. A notable early Seattle work by Creutzer is the Swedish Tabernacle (ca. 1906, now First Covenant Church). Creutzer's most significant work is considered the Medical Dental Building (1927, City of Seattle Landmark), which was designed in association with Seattle architect A. H. Albertson.<sup>44</sup>

Other government and institutional buildings designed by Creutzer include a mausoleum at Washelli Cemetery (ca. 1917), interiors of the King County Courthouse (ca. 1917), and a design for a large "Sanipractorium," or sanatorium/hospital, an unexecuted project proposed for the Madison Park area on Lake Washington.<sup>45</sup>

From 1913 through 1924, Creutzer is also known to have designed at least fifteen apartment houses and hotels located throughout the Denny Regrade, Ravenna, University District, and the International District neighborhoods, as well as single-family residences. He also designed a number of smaller commercial retail buildings.<sup>46</sup>

Creutzer became a member of the Washington State Chapter of the AIA in the final years of his practice. He died on August 23, 1929, at the age of 55.<sup>47</sup> *See figures 43-50.*

#### **4.3.3 Building Contractor**

The contractor of the National Cash Register Building is unknown.

Prepared by:  
Larry E. Johnson, AIA  
The Johnson Partnership  
1212 NE 65th Street  
Seattle, WA 98115  
www.tjp.us

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<sup>41</sup> Larry E. Johnson, "Polychromatic Terra Cotta Manufacture and Examples in Seattle," supplement to City of Seattle Landmark Nomination Report for 2024-2030 Lenora Ave, 2006.

<sup>42</sup> Note: Other architects that complete interior alterations are not discussed as nothing significant remains of the interior.

<sup>43</sup> World War I Draft Registration Card, September 12, 1918.

<sup>44</sup> Dennis A. Anderson, "Creutzer, John" in *Shaping Seattle Architecture: A Historical Guide to Architects*, ed. Jeffrey Karl Ochsner (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1994), p. 341.

<sup>45</sup> University of Washington Special Collections, Architects Reference Files: "John Alfred Creutzer."

<sup>46</sup> Susan Boyle and Michael Benson, "The El Rio Apartment Hotel, National Register Nomination Form" (Seattle, WA: BOLA Architecture + Planning, August 1998), pp. 16-19.

<sup>47</sup> Anderson, p. 341.

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## APPENDIX 1

### FIGURES

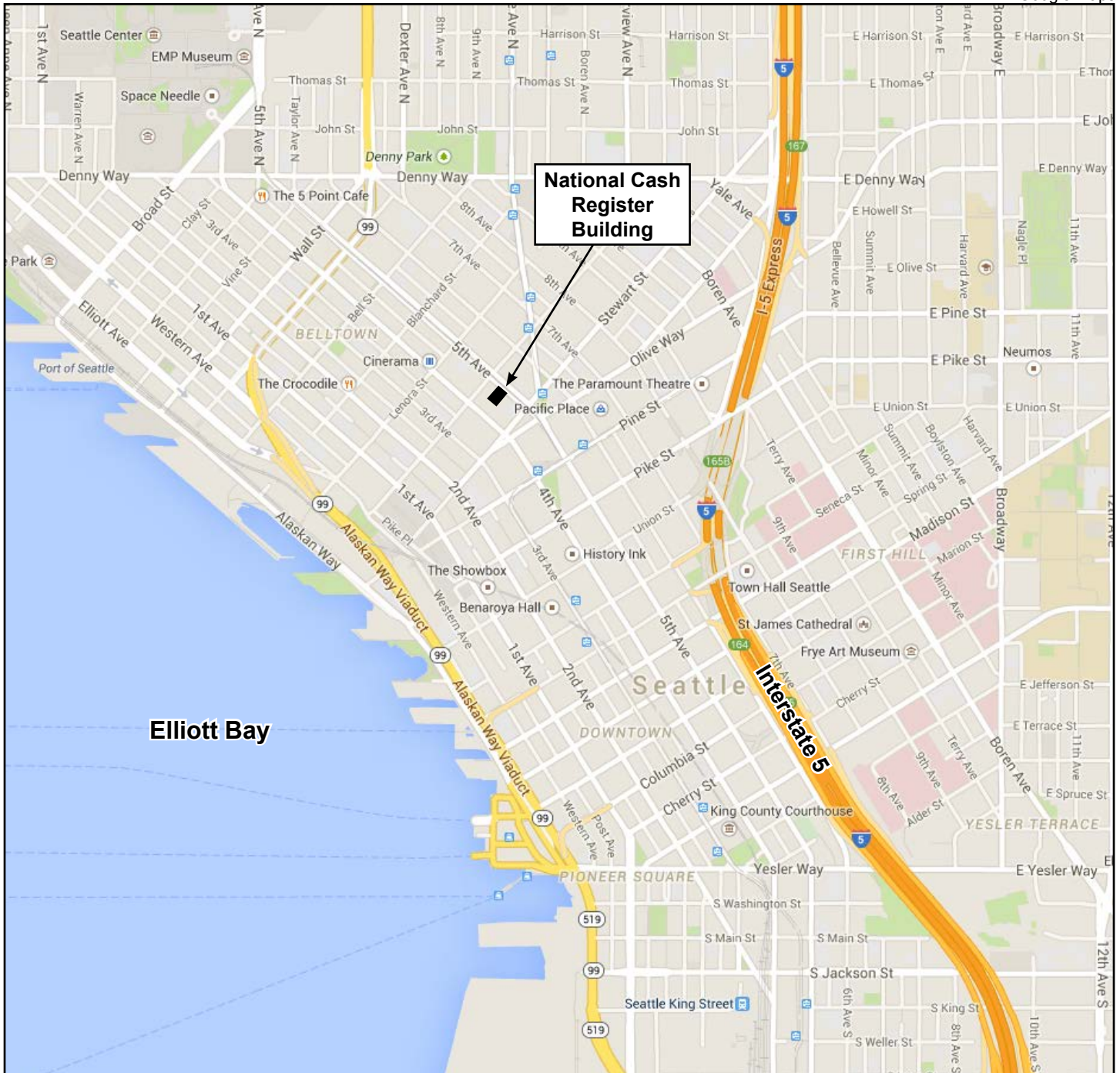
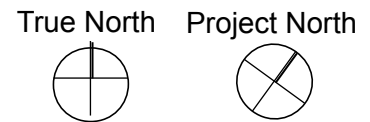


Figure 1 • Location Map



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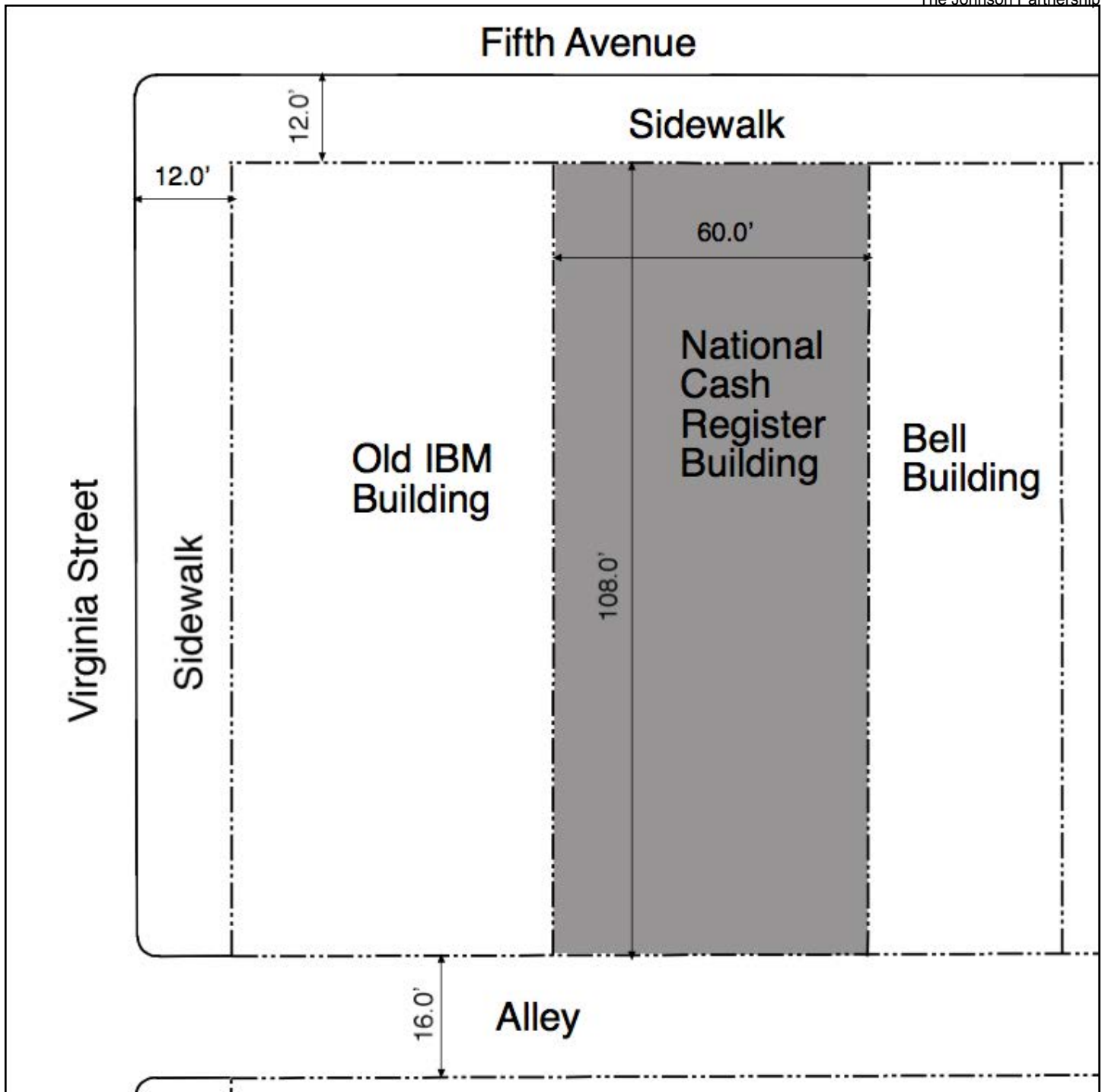


Figure 2 • Site Plan







Figure 3 • Vicinity Map

National Cash Register Building  
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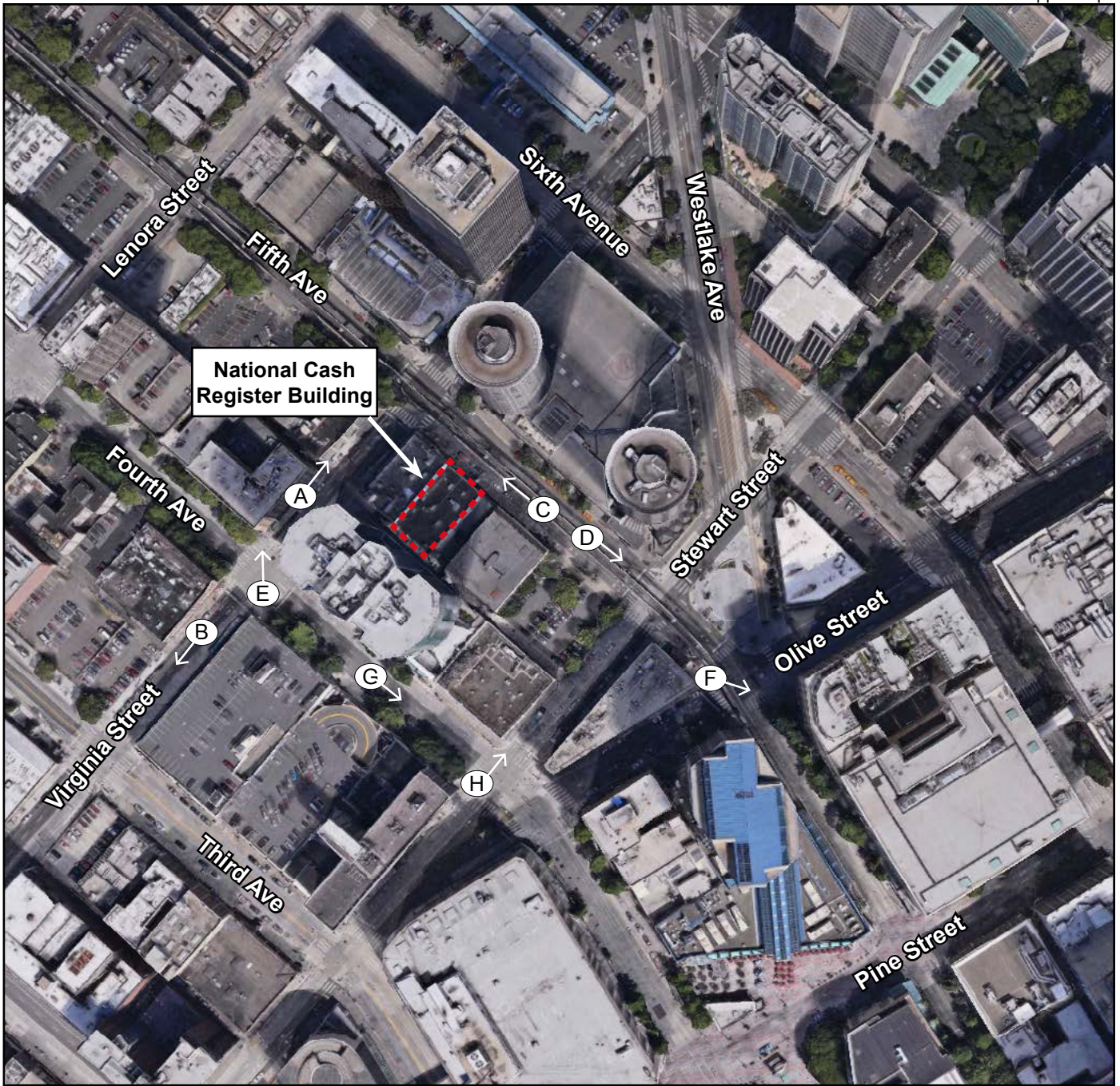


Figure 4 • Aerial View





Figure 5 • View A, viewing northeast on Virginia Street



Figure 6 • View B, viewing southwest on Virginia Street





Figure 7 • View C, viewing northwest on Fifth Avenue



Figure 8 • View D, viewing southeast on Fifth Avenue





Figure 9 • View E, Hotel Andra (formerly Claremont), corner of Fourth Ave & Virginia Street



Figure 10 • View F, Medical Dental Building, corner of Fifth Ave & Olive Street





Figure 11 • View G, viewing southeast on Fifth Avenue



Figure 12 • View H, viewing northeast on Stewart Street





Figure 13 • National Cash Register Building, eastern façade, Fifth Avenue



Figure 14 • National Cash Register Building, eastern façade





Figure 15 • Marble façade and entryway



Figure 16 • Detail, black marble and gas line

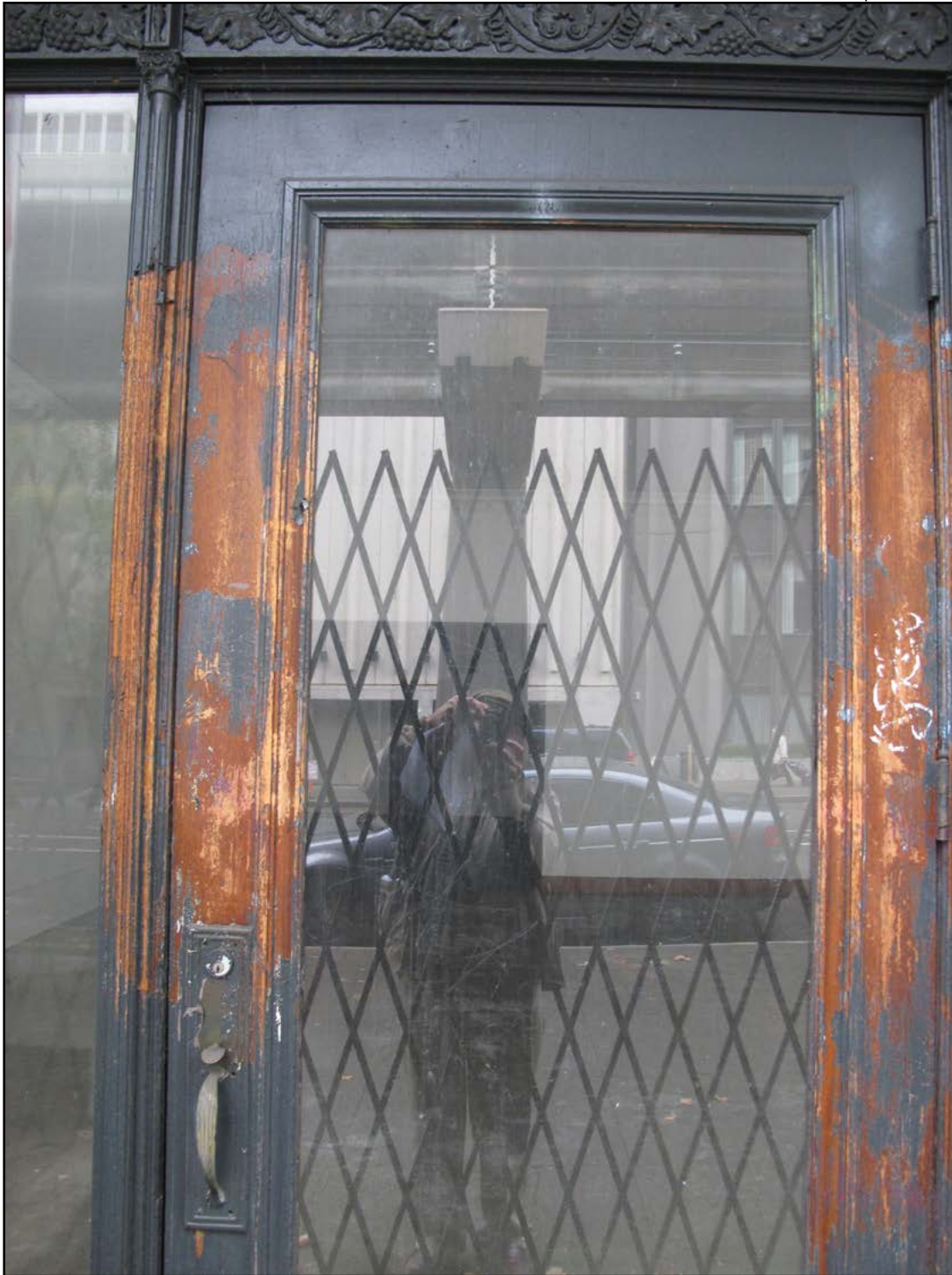


Figure 17 • Mahogany entrance door





Figure 18 • Door lintel with molding



Figure 19 • Detail, bronze mullion





Figure 20 • Second floor windows with terra cotta tiles



Figure 21 • Terra cotta cornice and parapet



Figure 22 • Western façade



Figure 23 • Basement





Figure 24 • First floor interior



Figure 25 • First floor interior

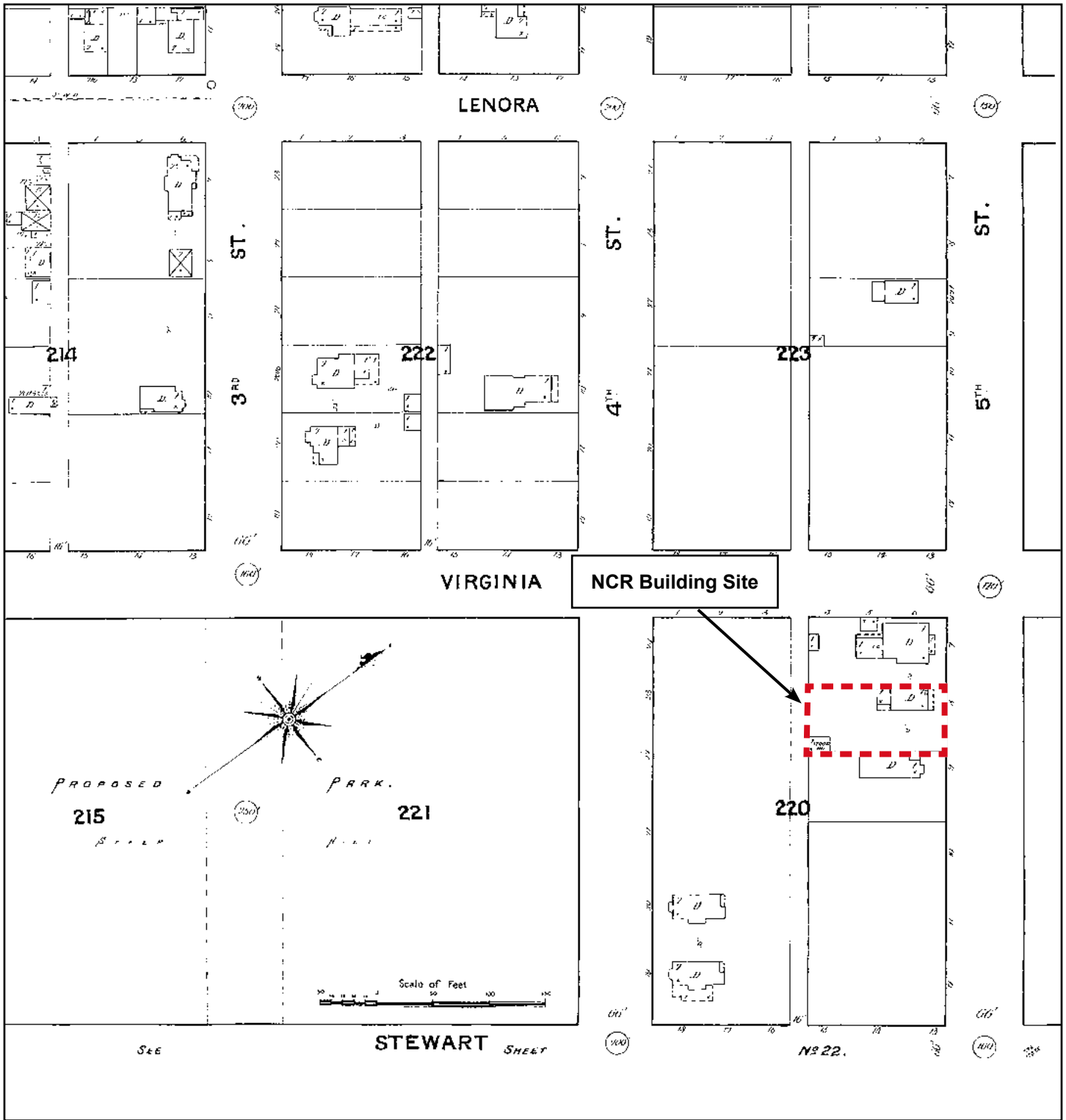


Figure 26 • 1888 Composite Sanborn Map

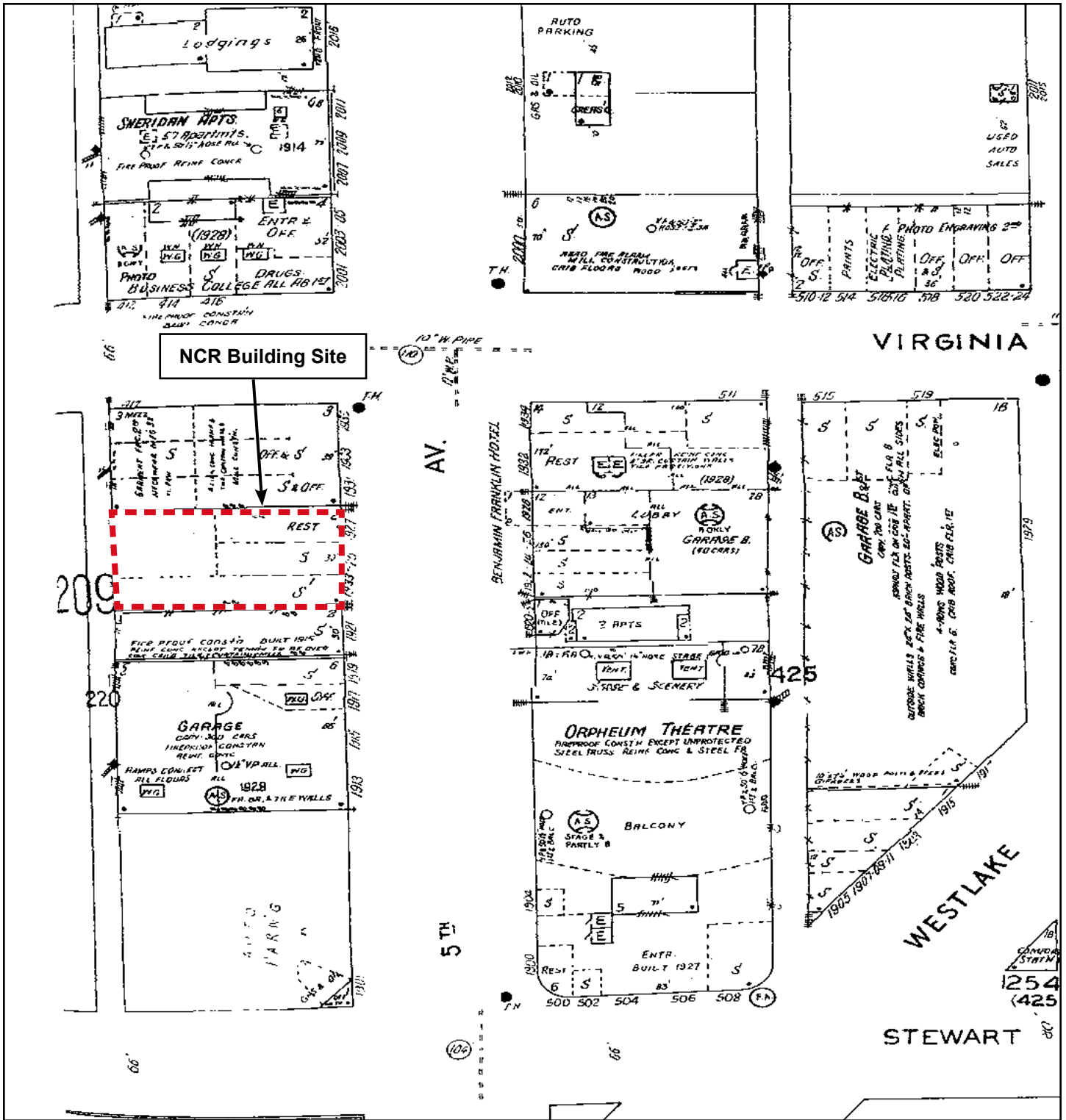


Figure 27 • 1905-1950 Composite Sanborn Map

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Figure 28 • Fifth Avenue, viewing north from Westlake Avenue and Olive Way, 1925

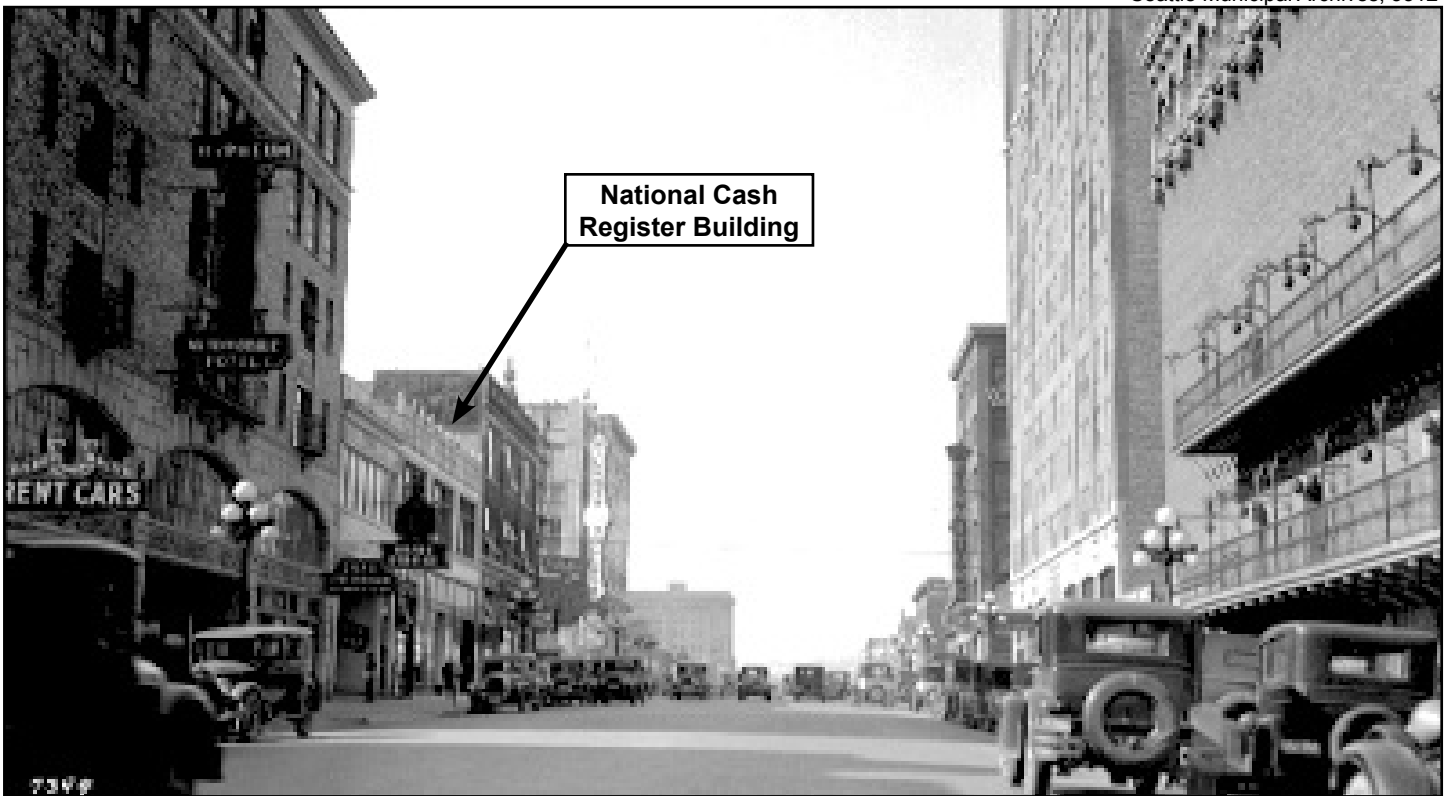


Figure 29 • Fifth Avenue N. from Stewart Street, March 18, 1929

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Figure 30 • Times Square Building, 1916





Figure 31 • The Bon Marché, 1927-29

UWSCD ,James P. Lee Photograph Collection, LEE058

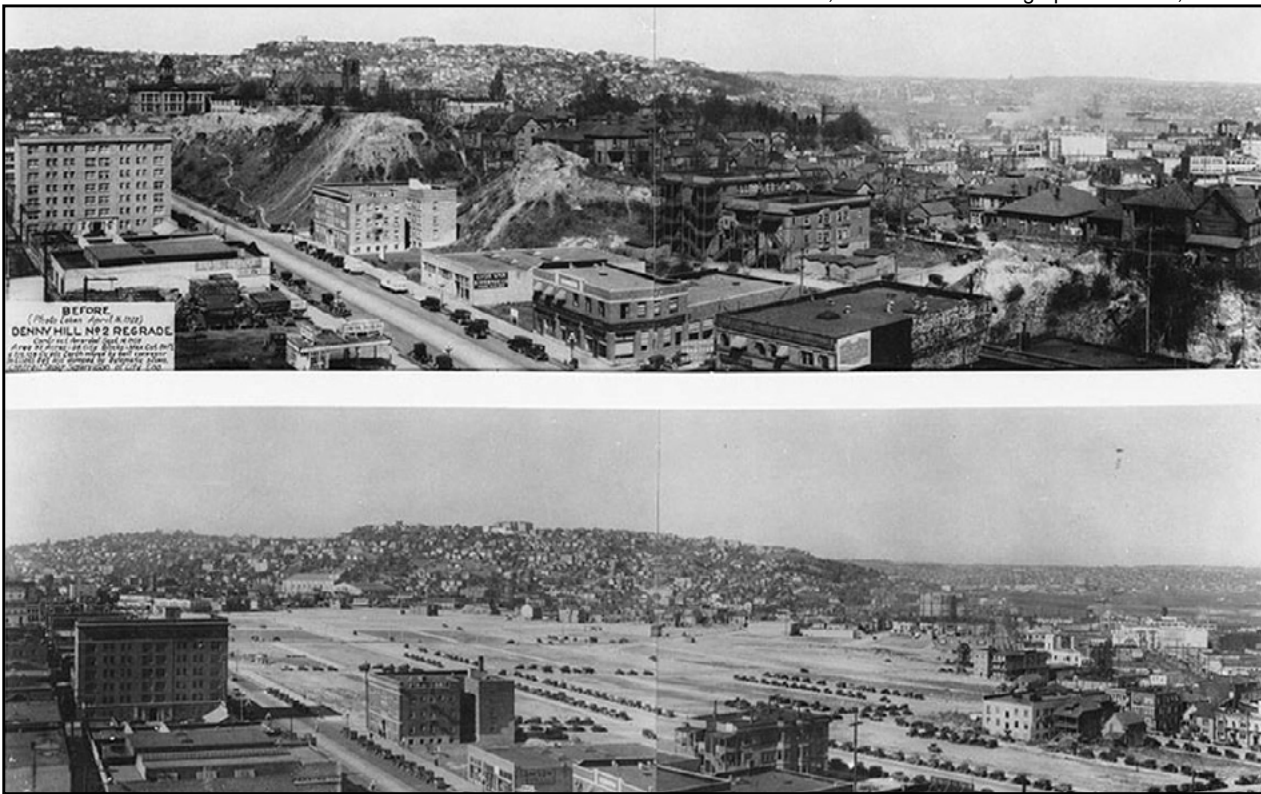


Figure 32 • Denny Regrade, 1928-1931

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Figure 33 • Orpheum Theater, 1928

MOHAI PI27478



Figure 34 • Fifth Avenue and Virginia, 1957

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Figure 35 • Monorail Construction, Fifth Avenue, 1961

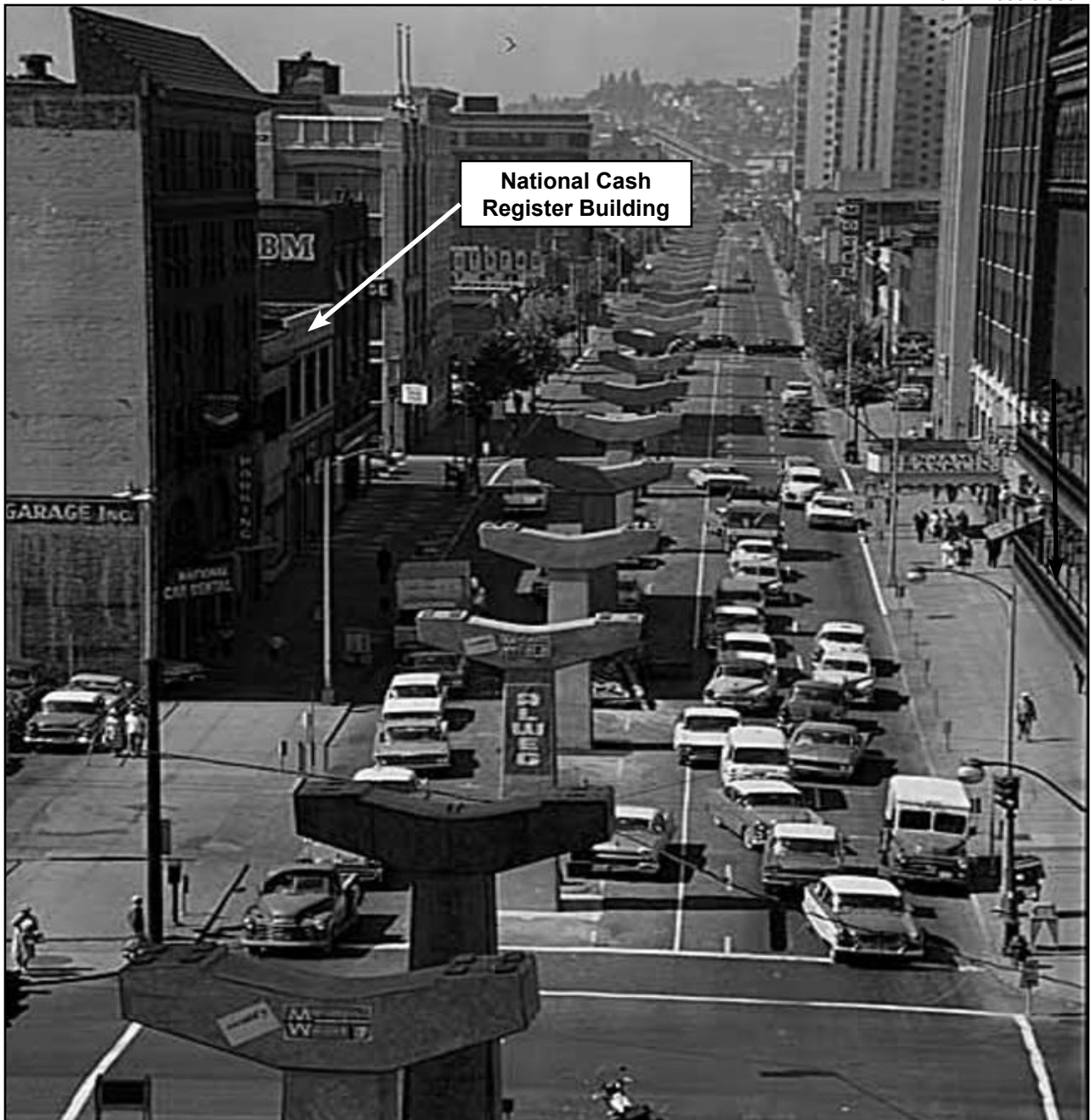


Figure 36 • Monorail Construction, Fifth Avenue, 1961



Figure 37 • National Cash Register Building, eastern façade, 1937



Figure 38 • National Cash Register Building, partial eastern façade, far right, 1949

# National Cash Register Building Landmark Nomination Report



Figure 39 • National Cash Register Building, partial eastern façade, far left, 1955

UW Digital Collections 1983.10.10417



Figure 40 • The Arctic Building, Bebb & Gould, 1914-17

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Figure 41 • Dexter Horton Building, John Graham, Sr., 1922

MOHAI 1983.10.3141



Figure 42 • Eagles Auditorium, Henry Bittman, 1926



Figure 43 • Pacific McKay Building (Harlan Thomas and Clyde Grainger, 1925)



Figure 44 • Seattle City Light Plant No.3, detail of decorative terra cotta (Daniel Huntington, 1921)





Figure 45 • Eldridge Buick Co. Building, Schack, Myers & Young, 1926



Figure 46 • Eldridge Buick Co. Building, detail of polychrome terra cotta



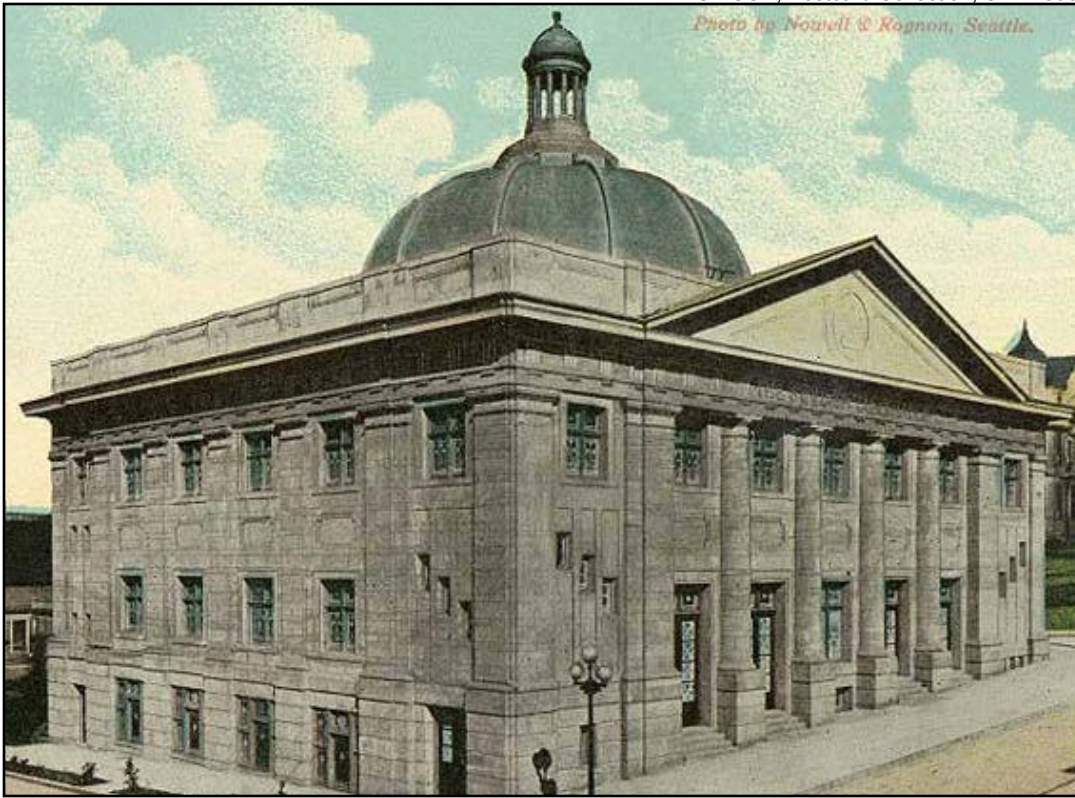


Figure 47 • Swedish Tabernacle, 1304 NE 42nd Street, John A. Creutzer, 1906



Figure 48 • The Swedish All Saints Church, Seattle (Project)



Figure 49 • Medical Dental Building, 1927



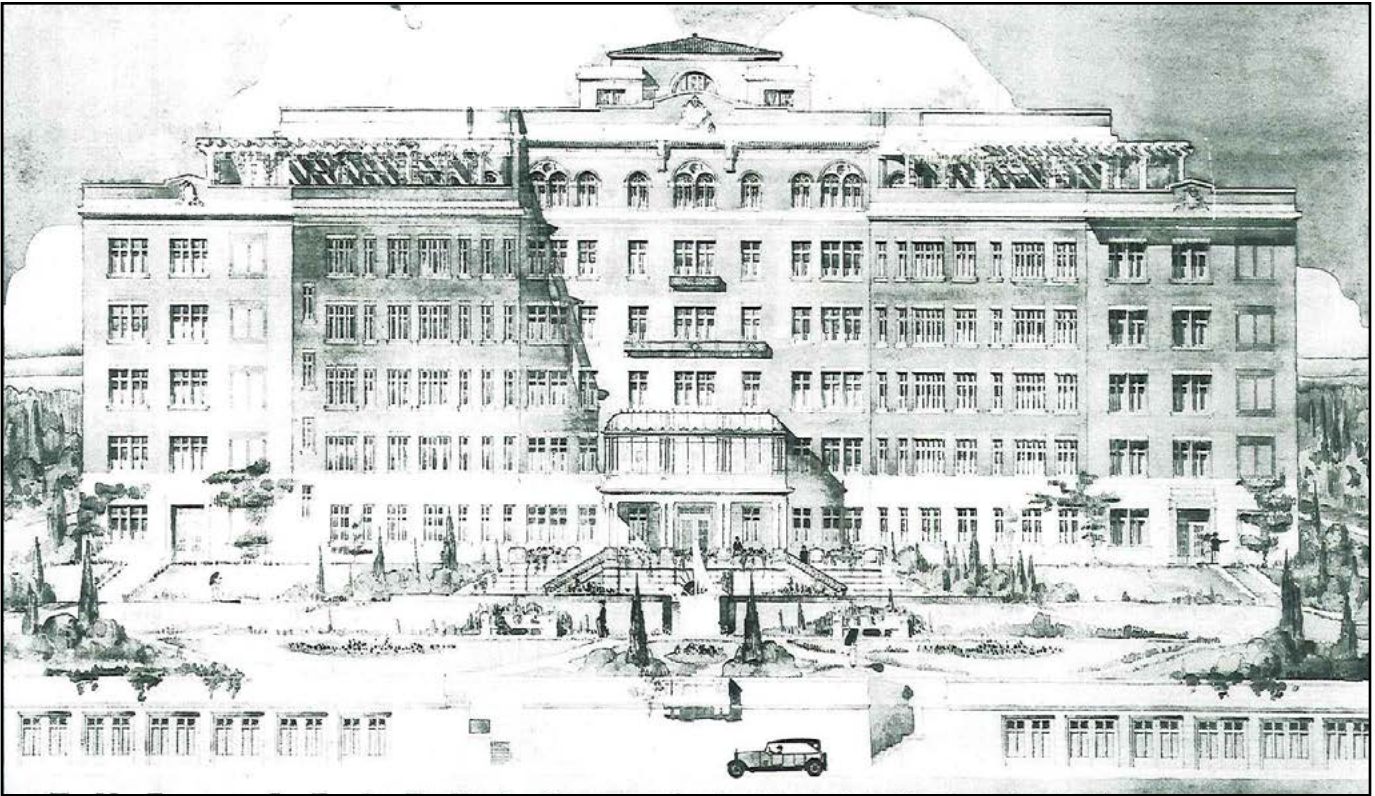


Figure 50 • The Seattle Sanipractorium, 1921 (Project)



Figure 51 • 610 East Pike Street, Seattle, WA



Figure 52 • 429-433 Eastlake Avenue, 1917

The Johnson Partnership, 6/27/07



Figure 53 • 429-433 Eastlake Avenue, 2007



Figure 54 • Julie (El Rio) Apartments, 1928



## APPENDIX 2

### LIST OF EXTANT BUILDINGS IN SEATTLE BY ARCHITECT JOHN ALFRED CREUTZER<sup>48</sup>

- Swedish Tabernacle (1304 NE 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, 1906)
- Medical Dental Building (509 Olive Way, 1927)
- Park Vista (5810 Cowen Pl. N.E., 1928)<sup>49</sup>
- El Rio Apartment Hotel (1922-1928 Ninth Avenue, ca. 1930, NHR)
- Theatre (1515 Fourth Avenue, 1913)
- Shops (610-618 East Pike Street, 1913)
- 429-33 Eastlake Avenue<sup>50</sup>
- 1527 Broadway, 1913
- 1633 Westlake Avenue, 1915
- 301 East Pine Street
- A. M. Atwood Residence (1941 Fifteenth Avenue North, 1915)
- Mausoleum (Washelli Cemetery, 1917)<sup>51</sup>
- Interior Decoration (King County Courthouse, 1917)<sup>52</sup>
- Sanipractorium (project, 1921)<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> This attribution list is derived primarily from Boyle and Benson, "The El Rio Apartment Hotel, National Register Nomination Form", pp. 16-19. The University of Washington Special Collections, Architects Reference Files: "John Alfred Creutzer," provided additional information.

<sup>49</sup> Seattle Department of Neighborhoods Online Survey of Historical Sites, record for 5810 Cowen Place, <http://web1.seattle.gov/dpd/historicalsites>, accessed April 19, 2007.

<sup>50</sup> DPD permit#162347, and Seattle Department of Neighborhoods Online Survey of Historical Sites, record for 429-33 Eastlake Avenue. <http://web1.seattle.gov/dpd/historicalsites>, accessed April 19, 2007.

<sup>51</sup> University of Washington Special Collections, Architects Reference Files: "John Alfred Creutzer."

<sup>52</sup> University of Washington Special Collections, Architects Reference Files: "John Alfred Creutzer."

<sup>53</sup> University of Washington Special Collections, Architects Reference Files: "John Alfred Creutzer."



## APPENDIX 3

### ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS:

John A. Creutzer. "Store Building." Six shts. August 8, 1926.

Otis E. Hancock, "Alterations to Store at 1925 5th Ave." One sht. July 14, 1938.

Andrew Willatsen. "National Cash Register Co. Alterations in Office." Two shts. December 30, 1949.