



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

700 Third Avenue · 6th floor · Seattle, Washington 98104 · (206)684-0228

LPB 294/89

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

Name and Address of Property: Fremont Trolley Barn/Red Hook Ale Brewery, 3400 Phinney Avenue North, Seattle, WA

Legal Description: Denny and Hoyt's Add, Block 41, Lots 1-3 and Block 42, Lots 1-5

At the public hearing held on September 20, 1989, the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Fremont Trolley Barn/Red Hook Ale Brewery as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following criteria of Ordinance 106348:

Section 3.01(1): 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;

Section 3.01(3): 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;

Section 3.01(4): It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or of a method of construction;

DESCRIPTION

The Red Hook Brewery is located in western Fremont in the old Fremont trolley car barn. The site is bounded on the north by North 35th Street, on the south by North 34th Street (formerly Ewing Street) and the Ship Canal, on the west by Phinney Avenue, and on the east by the new Burke Building. The site rises gently to the northeast and the main building slab is approximately 10 feet above Ship Canal water level. Fremont's historic business core at the foot of the Fremont Bridge is located several blocks

to the east of the former car barn. The former car barn is visible from the south side of the Ship Canal, but is less easily seen from the north side, as it is surrounded by taller buildings. The land use zone is industrial, and while most of the neighbors are manufacturers or offices, several residences are across the street. To the north is the Cressey Door Company, to the west is Tyrell's, a pet food manufacturer, to the east is the Burke Building, a new three story concrete tilt-up office building. Nearby, there are plans for a 20 acre development by the Quadrant Corporation which will impact the area. There are also plans for the extension of the Burke-Gilman Trail and a waterfront park along the canal to the south.

The Seattle Electric Company trolley barn is a red brick, flat-roofed timber frame shed with an attached office section. Although it is a basically rectangular brick shed, the west wall is angled in and out in two places. It is a handsome, straight-forward structure; it has strong decorative corbelling at the cornice line that adds formality to the building and unifies the garage portion with the office portion. A symmetrical facade along North 35th Street, facing north, is decorated with metal cap-like finials at the tops of the corners. The south facade originally had a wooden cornice for this elevation that conveyed the power and control; early photos of the building give this impression (photo #7). At its completion, it must have stood as a powerful symbol along with the three or four other car barns in the city. The exposed window lintels are painted steel sections which span the brick to allow for a wider glazed area. The external red brick walls give the appearance of a single-story building and ornamental stepped brick corbelling together with external pilasters join to form one plane at the roof line. Window openings are spanned by brick lintels. A central tall brick chimney stack has a corbelled top. The shell has been stripped of miscellaneous additions, infill in original windows, and only one or two new openings were created on the exterior. All windows are original or restored and are of wood with subdivided panes. External main doors are glass at the pub and south facade, and solid core steel elsewhere. Loading doors on the east are steel.

The building was constructed to lubricate, repair, and clean streetcars, and to serve as a dispatch office for conductors and administration. This activity required a durable, non-combustible structure, impervious to the oils, fumes and dirt from the trains. There had to be sufficient light for mechanics to work, and harmful fumes and welding gases had to be vented. It had to have the capacity to store up to 6 tracks for indoor major repairs. Therefore, the form of the structure is almost 170 feet long from north to south and 160 feet wide on the north elevation. The southern elevation is only 66 feet wide. A major hall on the east is separated from smaller halls on the west. In the large eastern hall, 6 lines of streetcars could be simultaneously served indoors. The roof had a 5 foot tall ventilation monitor running the full length of the building (photo #8). Access to rail was

necessary, so the trolley shed had tracks running into the south and east sides of the building; there is still evidence of these tracks from North 34th Street. Extensive concrete pit linings were encountered during excavation for brewery drainage. The eastern elevation steps toward and away from Phinney Avenue creating pleasant planted areas along this street (photos #3 and #4).

The red brick structure rests upon a perimeter foundation with 16 inch concrete foundation walls supporting 14" masonry external and internal bearing walls. The building is reinforced to meet earthquake loading by a steel X system introduced in certain column bays (photo #15). At the south, the main slab elevation is at grade and at the northeast is approximately 4 feet below grade. The original heavy timber and post construction was modified about 1956 with steel support columns and beams in the main hall. The roof is a wooden assembly and rests behind 30" parapet walls. The entire slab of the main hall is slightly sloped to provide drainage for the brewery. The old roof monitor was removed for better transfer of earthquake stresses as a single diaphragm. Around 1942, the cornice was removed and the entire south opening sealed with two-by material, plywood and rolled roofing. Quadrant complete a major renovation of the structure in 1987-88 (renovation drawings from 1987 were submitted at the designation hearing and are in the file). In 1987 the old clear span truss was still in place, but had deteriorated beyond repair; the truss was removed and a new facade installed consisting of glass, red stucco, and brick (photo #5). The eastern portion of the mezzanine has been demolished to restore the hall to one space. All external trim is green which matches the original color. In the 1987 renovation, all exterior brick surfaces were restored by chemical cleaning.

In 1988, the main hall was adapted for use as the brewhall for Red Hook Ale Brewery; a modern brewing operation has been placed within the original trolley hall. A steel grid system provides organization for internal utilities (photo #15). The brewhouse equipment from Germany is at the north end of the hall with catwalks surrounding the vessels. The ceiling has been painted blue/green and the walls white. High intensity lighting provides internal illumination. The northwestern portion of the building has become a contemporary brewpub named "The Trolleyman". It has a new wooden ceiling, functional fireplace hooked up to the existing chimney, and functions as a brewpub and a tour reception area. The eastern narrow portion of the brewery is awaiting full development, but will house the museum and a new tour/tasting area. The current brewery use is compatible with and complimented by its past trolley history and the brewery builds upon esoterica and a strong link with the past rather than the future. The crawl space beneath the floor has been investigated and much trolley lore lays hidden for future discovery. The outside eastern side is a parking and loading area with above-ground transformer vault and is a common space shared with the Burke Building.

The brewery painting and identification is of red, green, and yellow and is applied directly to the external walls on the north and west. A small hanging sign identifies the new tavern in the northwest corner of the building. Outdoor lighting was added to highlight the building at night. At this time, the brewery plans no significant expansion of the building envelope.

SIGNIFICANCE

In 1888, three years before Fremont was annexed to the City of Seattle, it was a one shack logging site in a heavily logged forest. By 1891 the community had grown to 5,000 people. As in other city areas, this explosion in population reflected a steady stream of settlers who were brought to the area by the expansionist vision of real estate entrepreneurs; these people became streetcar developers to lure their customers to the area. L.H. Griffith and E.C. Kilbourne were such individuals. In 1887 a railway line was built from Smith Cove to Fremont and along Lake Union providing twice daily transport to the city, but Fremont remained landlocked with the only streetcar stopping at Westlake and Roy. One had to take a steamer across Lake Union to the foot of Stone Way to get to Fremont. In 1888 a narrow ditch was dug between Lake Union and Salmon Bay and by 1891 a road had been built to cross it. Soon the streetcar system expanded rapidly and eastern companies such as Stone and Webster offered the capital necessary to build the systems. In 1902 a major streetcar line from Fremont to Ballard was inaugurated by Stone and Webster despite the distance from the street from the streetcars' most northerly routes to the nearest repair and storage facility.

This company, acting through its locally owned concern, the Seattle Electric Company, decided to build a car barn large enough to accommodate 5 trolley tracks. Construction of the structure began in March of 1905 and finished in November that year. As it was originally built, a central hall to the east accommodated five trolley lines extending the full length of the building with pits below (photo #9). These pits were used by mechanics repairing the underworking of the cars. The entire south facade was open with no doors, spanned by an elaborate cornice built of wood (photo #10). A central 5 foot high roof monitor with skylights on both sides removed exhaust and dirt from the space with a single high-power exhaust fan. To the east was a vast trolley yard with extensive trackage. A wash tower was placed centrally and manned with a firehose for cleaning the cars. It became known as the Fremont Car Barn and became home for the many streetcars which plied the Fremont-Ballard, Phinney, and Greenlake Lines. Workers in the major industries such as the iron mill of A.J. Goddard, and the lumber and shingle mills of Isaac Burlingame, relied on the trolley system and thus the Fremont Car Barn. This manufacturing in Fremont serve to accelerate the construction of the Ship Canal from 1911 onward, the 1914 construction of the Northern Pacific Trestle, and finally in 1916 the present Fremont Drawbridge. Fremont became a hub for transportation with an east-west railway line, north-south trolley and streetcar line terminus, horses,

boats, and ships. A dense fabric of shops and service businesses crowded the area to serve expanding commerce and the local residents. The intersection at the north end of Fremont Bridge became one of the most complicated rail-track installations in the country.

In 1919 the Municipality of Seattle purchased the entire streetcar system from the Puget Sound Traction Company. With the construction of the Aurora Bridge in 1932, much of existing industry and new commercial investment flew over the heads of Fremonters, but a close knit community remained. The Fremont Car Barn remained in operation until the last streetcar to operate in Seattle pulled into it on April 13, 1941. The structure was then purchased by the US Army for storage use in during the war. Then in 1956, a garbage collection company purchased it. In 1966 and 1984 the building had new owners. The present tenant, Red Hook Brewery, rents the structure from the Quadrant Corporation; Quadrant completed a major renovation of the building in 1987.

Criterion #1

This building was the first major streetcar service facility to be built "north of Seattle" as Stone and Webster journal entries indicate, and it represented at the time of its opening a new era in service and streetcar dependability for all inhabitants north of the Ship Canal. On April 13, 1941, the era abruptly ended with the last running streetcar, number 706, pulling into the Fremont Car Barn. Because the last streetcar to operate in the City of Seattle stopped in this structure, the building signifies the end of the streetcar era in Seattle. This event signified that the internal combustion engine would revolutionize transportation.

Criterion #3

For 40 years electric street cars were a central part of everyday life in Seattle. A vast web of lines and cable cars run by a multitude of different companies, all served the public in an expanding economy. The public's relationship to the streetcar was as powerful and immediate as the attachment to the automobile today; people structured their lives according to its timetable. Many individuals alive today can recall the streetcar era and the Fremont Car Barn. In this respect the building is significant to a wide range of people and is not limited to a public with a refined understanding of an obscure structure. To the extent that transport, community affairs, errands, and commerce depend upon the ability to move easily within a city, and since expansion of any metropolis is anticipated and promoted by an available transportation system for urban and suburban settlement, the Car Barn symbolizes this transportation system which operated from 1905 - 1941. This building represents the prosperity of the trolley system, which was operated by the same company that held Seattle's electric monopoly. The car was a reflection of private entrepreneurial activity which satisfied but also created the need for people to travel efficiently and at reasonable expense. When

the Municipality of Seattle bought the barn in 1919 to consolidate the entire streetcar system, the economic appeal had already vanished. The high purchase paid for a "white elephant" was criticized heavily as the significance of the streetcar system steadily declined. In 1956, the Fremont Car Barn auction by the Army to a private individual for a vast sum compared to the sale by the City to the army in 1942 caused anger from councilmen who felt the City was betrayed.

Criterion #4


The former trolley car barn is exemplary of an early 20th century brick industrial shed. Industrial sheds of brick were built after Seattle had been firmly established and the community and industry had acquired a sense of stability and permanence, and since fireproof construction became necessary after the great fire of 1986. The form of the brick shed is almost always flat-roofed, and like sheds of concrete block and often concrete, brick industrial sheds have a more horizontal profile. The sheds built of these more massive materials do not have the variety of pitched profiles, the verticality, that is the quality of the "stick" materials, wood and steel. The use of brick for industrial shed construction was limited; brick masonry demanded both skill and time, so brick industrial buildings were usually carefully considered, since the initial outlay is costlier in terms of materials, time and labor, than in wood construction. Literally all of the examples of brick industrial sheds in Seattle used some form of embellishment. The nature of small masonry units, as well as the tradition of the craft, allows for decorative detailing, and this was almost always exploited in the use of bricks. The corbelling on the trolley barn is an example of this treatment. Stone and Webster's new car barn would certainly be flammable with the use of open flame and lubricants by the mechanics. And there was a limited need for monumentality which ruled out stone but made brick an obvious choice. There are many buildings in Pioneer Square which were built of the same clay brick, yet this structure best exemplifies this method of construction in a utility building in Fremont.

Over the years most evidence of the trolley system has vanished, and with the exception of small structures like the waiting buildings at Stoneway or Greenlake, the Fremont structure is the only remaining car barn remaining in Seattle. In an Inventory of Buildings and Urban Design Resources sponsored by the Historic Seattle Preservation and Development Authority 1975, Steinbrueck and Nyberg sited this building as one of 22 significant buildings in Fremont. Original plans for the building have not been found and its architect is unknown. It has the qualities of scale and craftsmanship attributable to a well-conceived brick industrial structure, and stands alone in the neighborhood as a unique and distinctive property type. It seems to fit the neighborhood in a humane and approachable way.

The features of the Landmark to be preserved, include:

the entire exterior of the building, including the roof, and the site, excluding the existing plantings, and excluding the parking, driveway and loading dock on the east side of the property.

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City Historic Preservation Officer

KG:dlv

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