



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

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

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

LPB 397/08

Name and Address of Property: **Sorrento Hotel**
900 Madison Street

Legal Description: Lots 6 and 7, Block 76 of A.A. Denny's Extension to Terry's 1st Addition to the City of Seattle, according to the plat thereof, recorded in Volume 1 of plats, page 88, in King County, Washington.

At the public meeting held on July 16, 2008, the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Sorrento Hotel at 900 Madison St as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following standards for designation of SMC 25.12.350:

- D. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, period, or of a method of construction; and*
- E. It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder; and*
- F. Because of its prominence of spatial location, contrasts of siting, age, or scale, it is an easily identifiable visual feature of its neighborhood or the city and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood or the City.*

DESCRIPTION

Site, Setting and Urban Context

The Sorrento Hotel is a prominent seven story hotel building located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Madison Street and Terry Avenue in the First Hill neighborhood approximately three block east of the Interstate 5 freeway and the downtown commercial core. The Sorrento Hotel is Seattle's oldest operating tourist hotel and is an exceptional example of Italianate design and the work of the highly-skilled Seattle architect, Harlan Thomas. Constructed in 1908-09, the building design was developed to accommodate a sloping site and take advantage of then-panoramic westerly views over the downtown commercial district toward Elliott Bay, Puget Sound and the Olympic Peninsula. This architecturally distinctive hotel building is composed of two perpendicular wings that are set back to the west and north with a 70' x 70' courtyard separating the hotel from the busy street intersection. The formal hotel entryway and port cochère are located within the courtyard at the junction of the two wings.

Administered by The Historic Preservation Program
The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

"Printed on Recycled Paper"

The Sorrento Hotel is located on a westerly sloping quarter block site measuring 120 feet by 120 feet (.33 acres). The building is formally oriented toward both Madison Street and Terry Avenue; the remainder of the half city block to the north is occupied by the John Alden Apartments, a distinctive four story brick apartment house constructed in 1924. Directly to the west of the hotel and across a north-south alley is a modest two-story parking garage constructed c.1926. The remaining quarter block to the northwest of the hotel is occupied by another distinctive brick apartment building, the four-story Paul Revere Apartments constructed in 1923-24.

A small scale commercial building is located directly across Terry Avenue to the east; a surface parking lot and the Baroness Apartments are located at the northeast side of Terry Avenue. Terry Avenue is terminated at the north end of the block by the Virginia Mason Hospital, a modern highrise medical complex that encompasses several city blocks. The Puget Sound Blood Center is located directly across Madison Street at the southwest corner of the intersection with Terry Avenue; it is a prominent multi-story concrete office and laboratory building with limited architectural distinction. Recently, a modern highrise apartment (senior housing) complex was constructed at Madison Street and Boren Avenue, on the site of the historic Perry Hotel/Columbus-Cabrini Hospital. St. James Cathedral is located one block to the south at Terry Avenue and Marion Street. The Dearborn House and Stimson Green Mansion are located approximately two blocks to the northeast. Other nearby historic properties of note include O'Dea High School, the Stacy Mansion (University Club), Gainsborough Apartments and Town Hall (Seventh Church of Christ Scientist).

Due to its site and building configuration, the principal courtyard facades of the Sorrento Hotel are prominently visible from views points to the east along Madison Street and from the south along Terry Avenue. The more utilitarian west elevation at the alley side of the hotel is highly visible from downhill views points to the west along Madison Street.

Courtyard: The formal entry to the building is through an historic courtyard area that now serves as a landscaped hotel entryway, temporary parking lane and port cochère. Portions of an original low stepped brick and stone wall separate the level paved courtyard from the adjacent sidewalk along Terry Avenue. The original taller courtyard wall along Madison Street increases in height as it descends downhill. The courtyard walls are capped by an ornate, non-historic wrought iron fence rail with a corner gate. Entry to the courtyard is via shallow curved steps at the original wall opening at the southeast corner or by way of the wider port cochère entryway at the northeast corner. The courtyard now contains several non-historic features, including; an ornate fountain; decorative paving; palm trees; and other landscape materials. A modern canvas canopy/ port cochère extends from the original hotel entry vestibule into the center of the courtyard. The landscaped central fountain feature continues to function as a focal point within the courtyard and is similar to the original design.

Current Exterior Appearance

The seven-story hotel building has an irregular L-shaped footprint composed of two perpendicular wings that appear to be symmetrical but actually vary slightly in width. The north-south wing (at the western side of the site) measures approximately 52 feet wide by 120 feet deep – including the octagon structure at the junction of the wings - and the east-west wing (at the northern side of the site) measures approximately 46 feet wide by 76 feet deep excluding the junction. The variation in width is due to the accommodation of a light well at the northern side of the building. The concrete, brick masonry and wood-frame structure includes a full concrete and brick masonry basement and sub-basement level.

The building design is Italianate in style and exhibits a distinct base, shaft and cap as part of a complex façade composition oriented toward the entry courtyard. The formal facades within the courtyard and the other principal elevations at Madison Street and Terry Avenue are primarily clad with red brick laid in an ornate Flemish double-stretcher bond highlighted by grey-white header bricks. The first floor level/building base is painted brick laid in a common bond with a wide water table that distinguishes it from the ornate brickwork that dominates the upper floor levels. The west and north elevations are red brick laid in a common bond and much more utilitarian in character. Poured in place concrete walls are visible at the basement level of the alley side and the Madison Street elevation.

Courtyard Facades: The formal courtyard facades of each of the wings and the entry bay (at the junction of the wings) are accentuated by a wide recessed bay extending through the sixth floor level of the building. The bays in each wing are recessed approximately 3'-6" and the entry bay is a recessed concave form approximately 12 feet in depth. Each of the bays is terminated by a segmental arch that corresponds with elaborate terra cotta ornament. The terra cotta ornament further accentuates the sixth floor level and the building cap, which encompasses an even more elaborate seventh floor level.

Double-hung, one-over-one windows are located within each bay; they are typically set in rows of four individual openings and accentuated by continuous terra cotta sills with brackets. The segmental arched openings are flanked by wide piers forming tower features that are dramatically terminated above the seventh floor level as part of the building cap. At each of the four piers there are individual window openings with typical double-hung windows up to the sixth floor level; at the sixth floor level there is an ornate oculus window with an elaborate terra cotta surround surmounted by a terra cotta gable pediment. Windows within the central concave junction bay and those at the piers/tower features have plain terra cotta sills.

The brick clad shaft is capped by a terra cotta coping at the top of the sixth floor level. The sixth floor level is further embellished by highly ornate terra cotta segmental arched window surrounds that echo the recessed segmental arched bays. This terra cotta treatment is very similar to the ornate window openings at the sixth floor level of the prominent elevations oriented toward Madison Street (at the south side of the building) and Terry Avenue (at the north side of the building) that are described below. The elaborate terra cotta ornament at the sixth floor level windows and tower features is part of the dramatic building cap that is only oriented toward the courtyard.

The four piers that dominate the brick entry facades extend through the seventh floor level; each pier is terminated by a hipped roof with wide bracketed eaves. The piers form dramatic tower features, which are particularly prominent due to the roof forms, architectural details and the light color terra cotta cladding that accentuates each tower feature and the roofline. The remainder of the seventh floor level of the building is typically set back from the façade line and reads as a penthouse above the courtyard; the tower features are further accentuated by tall round arched window openings, some of which have been altered or infilled but are still distinct design elements. Other windows within the penthouse level appear to have been infilled. The original penthouse balcony at the junction point appears to have been partially renovated and is barely visible from the street level.

At the seventh floor level junction of the two façade wings, directly above the formal hotel entry is a round arched, barrel vaulted lunette, similar to several window features originally at the opposite (Northwest) side of the building. The feature appears to retain portions of original classical-derived terra cotta ornament along with modern "Sorrento Hotel" signage. The complex main roof over both wings is mostly hipped with various hipped projections in addition to the four tower roofs. A taller hipped roof with a diagonal main ridge is located at the junction of the two wings. Extant barrel

vaulted lunettes (that are not visible from the street level) are indicative of the location and extent of the original main dining at the seventh floor level.

The building base at the courtyard is accentuated by the painted brick finish and round arched window openings that contrast with the traditional rectangular double-hung openings throughout the shaft. The original recessed entry vestibule at the junction of the two façade wings appears to be mostly intact; however, some extant elements are obscured by the modern canvas canopy/ port cochère. The low segmental arched entrance to the vestibule is adorned to each side by tall, classical-inspired, scroll-shaped terra cotta corbels; the same bracket design is utilized elsewhere at the sixth floor level windows and segmental arched openings. Modern hotel entrance doors with sidelights and transoms are flanked by original terra cotta surrounds composed of ornate sets of pilasters that are trimmed with classical motifs.

The terra cotta coping at the concave recess above vestibule, as well as the original terra cotta tile sign inscribed with “The Sorrento” and an ornate cartouche embossed with “Hotel” appear to be concealed behind the modern entrance canopy. The base of the recessed bay above the entry vestibule exhibits ornate serpent-fish brackets that adorn the corner of each of the adjacent pier/tower features.

South and East Elevations: The south and east elevations exhibit the same façade composition and design; however, the east elevation is narrower in width in order to accommodate a light well at the northern side of the building. The shaft exhibits similar fenestration as the courtyard facades; double-hung, one-over-one windows are typically set with a central individual window opening flanked by sets of two windows to each side and accentuated by plain terra cotta sills.

Each of these elevations is accentuated by a highly ornamental sixth floor level cap that corresponds with the courtyard windows at this floor level. The window units at this level are unified by elaborate terra cotta surrounds and continuous terra cotta sills with brackets. Classical-inspired, terra cotta scroll-shaped corbels flank each of the five window openings and the entire assembly is surmounted by a classical Italianate pediment feature with a prominent denticulated cornice.

The south elevation was originally capped by a prominent rooftop arbor and loggia that was visible from the east, south and west and wrapped around the west side of the building. The penthouse level was set back from the shaft to provide for a large balcony and terrace; thus, it functioned as a belvedere with dramatic westerly and easterly views. The arbor feature is no longer in place and the brick clad shaft is capped by a terra cotta coping at the top of the sixth floor level. The east elevation was originally capped by a narrow central penthouse with a bracketed cornice and had open balconies to the south and north sides. The balconies included rooftop arbors similar but much smaller than the belvedere at the south elevation. The balcony areas have been eliminated and the penthouse expanded to be flush with the south and north walls of the north wing, which now has a continuous bracketed cornice.

The building base at these elevations is also accentuated by a painted brick finish and round arched window openings that contrast with the openings within the shaft. The south elevation base is taller with the arched openings at a second floor level due to the sloping site. At the east elevation the arched openings are at the ground floor level; they are part of a formal entryway into the restaurant space located at the ground floor level of this wing. The central arched opening is a doorway (added c.1912) that is surmounted by a non-historic glass/metal arched canopy. Non-obtrusive, modern casement window units have been installed at this portion of the elevation. The second floor level also varies slightly; it includes a door opening at the central window bay and a narrow (non-historic) wrought iron balcony supported by ornate brackets. Two highly ornate lanterns that appear to date from a 1960s era remodel have also been installed at this elevation.

West and North Elevations: The west and north elevations are basically utilitarian in character. They are typified by red brick laid in a common bond and poured in place concrete walls at the basement and sub-basement levels. Both elevations exhibit double-hung, one-over-one windows that are typically located in individual segmental arched openings with brick sills; they are set in groups that accentuate the interior room breakup and structural bays. Terra cotta coping and trim accentuates a portion of the south end of the west elevation at the sixth floor level. The seventh floor/penthouse level is flush with the west elevation and the elevator core with mechanical penthouse projects above the main roof line at this elevation. A bracketed cornice line highlights the penthouse and varied fenestration reflects the original social and dining room uses at this floor level.

The northwest corner of the building is canted and a bay window feature extends from the second through the sixth floor levels at this junction; this canted corner corresponds to the octagonal internal structure at that junction of the two wings. Two round arched, barrel vaulted lunettes, similar to a feature at the opposite (southeast) side of the building, are visible at the north end of the west elevation. There is a sub-basement level delivery bay and secondary service entry at the alley level of the west end of the base. The north elevation is separated from the adjacent apartment building by a narrow passageway with a stairway at the west end. The seventh floor/penthouse level is also flush with the north elevation, which is capped by a continuous bracketed cornice. Only portions of the upper three floor levels are visible from the northeast. One round arched, barrel vaulted lunette is visible at the west end of the north elevation.

Non-Historic Exterior Alterations

Courtyard: The original courtyard did not include automobile access or a port cochère. The courtyard wall along Terry Avenue was not stepped and the walls did not include a fence grill or entry gates. Until at least the 1940s, the courtyard walls were capped by four single-ball light standards located along both the Madison Street and Terry Avenue elevations. Historic photos (c.1920) show a formal courtyard with a wide concrete paved walkway on axis with the hotel entryway and the curved courtyard entry steps at Madison Street and Terry Avenue. The center of the courtyard included a circular path around a small circular focal point that was flanked to the southwest and northeast by landscaped lawn areas. The focal point and the lawn areas appear to have been originally trimmed by boxwood hedges and included planters and conifer trees. A narrower concrete pathway also ran along the outer edges of the courtyard, which also included narrow planting beds along the interior side of the courtyard wall and deeper planting beds adjacent to the building. The deeper beds appear to have been trimmed with hedges and landscaped with conifer and deciduous trees.

The courtyard now contains several non-historic features, including: an ornate fountain; decorative paving; palm trees; and other trees and established landscape materials. A modern canvas port cochère canopy extends from the original hotel entry vestibule into the center of the courtyard. The landscaped central fountain feature continues to function as a focal point similar to the original courtyard design. Narrow planting beds along the inside of the courtyard wall and deeper planting beds adjacent to the building are also similar to the original design. The deeper beds continue to be trimmed with hedges and landscaped with conifer and deciduous trees and flowering shrubs.

Courtyard Facades: The courtyard facades appear to be relatively unaltered. Wooden window frames remain in place although sash members have been retrofitted with modern double-pane glazing in metal sash to match original. Some minor changes have occurred at the building base as hotel and restaurant functions have evolved. A small entry vestibule was added to center of the north wing in 1961 as part of the construction of the Dunbar Room. It remains in place but no longer functions as an entry or exitway. As noted above, portions of original ornate terra cotta trim above the

hotel entry vestibule are obscured by the modern canvas port cochère canopy; however, the canopy construction is non-obtrusive and does not appear to have damaged historic building fabric. Non-obtrusive modern hotel entrance doors with sidelights and transom have been installed. The greatest alterations have occurred at the penthouse/seventh floor level of the building and are described below.

Other elevations: Few alterations have been made to shaft and base portions of the principal south and east elevations and the minor west and north elevations. Wooden window frames remain in place although sash members have been retrofitted with modern double-pane glazing to match original. At the east elevation the arched openings at the ground floor level now include a small non-historic glass/metal arched canopy, modern casement window units and ornate lanterns that appear to date from a 1960s era remodel. The second floor level includes a non-historic wrought iron balcony. This portion of the elevation was initially altered c.1912 when a 9' x 19' glass and metal entry canopy was added; it was removed during the 1960s or earlier.

Penthouse/Seventh floor level: The greatest exterior alterations have occurred at the Penthouse/Seventh floor level. Several windows at the courtyard facades and tower features have been infilled. Original casement window sash members have been replaced by double-hung window units. The prominent rooftop arbor and loggia at the south end of the west wing, which was highly visible from the east, south and west is no longer in place. The open balconies with arbors at the penthouse level of the east elevation have been eliminated and the penthouse expanded to be flush with the south and north walls of the north wing. The lunette features at the northwest and southeast sides of the junction of the two wings appear to have been altered and partially enclosed. Portions of original classical-derived terra cotta ornament at the southeast lunette remain in place. The original Roman tile roofing appears to have been replaced by modern tile and asphalt roofing materials.

The following list is excerpted from the Sorrento Hotel Historic Elements Survey, prepared by the owners' consultants Nicholson Kovalchick Architects, dated July 9, 2008:

SITE

Current Non-Historic Elements

- All paving, steps, hardscape
- Trees and shrubs; all plantings
- Central fountain and basin
- Fabric canopy/porte-cochere structure at entrance
- Metal fencing and gates on the historic masonry wall noted below

Current Historic Elements

- Open entry courtyard at the southeast corner of the site, framed by the two building wings with primary building entry at the joint.
- Remaining masonry and concrete perimeter wall with terracotta coping, along Terry and Madison, including the supporting retaining wall portion along Madison. East portion (where brick rows under coping have been removed) was originally same height as south portion.

EXTERIOR: COURTYARD ELEVATIONS

Current Non-Historic Elements

- All windows, except as noted below
- Penthouse level structures, except as noted below
- Brick infill and attached entry vestibule (currently used as wine cellar adjacent to Hunt Club bar) at south courtyard elevation, level 1 windows

- Ogee-arched window at roofline at center joint which has been filled in, and replaced by non-historic signage saying “Sorrento Hotel”. Original was stained-glass window with a simple floral pattern.
- Soffit treatment at central recess between levels 6 and 7
- Brick infill in tower windows
- Signage, other than that in terracotta at entry
- Fabric canopy/porte-cochere over main entrance
- Flags and flagpoles
- All landscaping, including street trees and planters

Current Historic Elements

- Masonry exterior, except as noted
- Terracotta detail, including window sills
- Portions of cornice at penthouse/level 7, and tower elements roofs
- L’oeil de boeuf window sash at the level 6 tower elements may be original

EXTERIOR: LOWER EAST ELEVATION

Current Non-Historic Elements

- All windows
- Metal grilles at center windows
- Central metal door at level 2
- Central wood door and transom at level 1
- Metal balcony between levels 1 and 2
- Light fixtures (two projecting lanterns, and one pendant above level 1 door)
- All landscaping, including street trees and planters
- Signage on either side of level 1 door
- Outdoor furniture

Current Historic Elements

- Masonry exterior, in general
- Terracotta detail, including window sills
- Masonry at level 1 (including arched openings for windows and door, but not windows and doors themselves), and projecting beltcourse between levels 1 and 2. Arched openings were originally windows, but were lengthened in 1912, and a door inserted then. Color treatment of masonry at level
- Metal and glass marquee over level 1 door, not original but part of 1912 revisions.

EXTERIOR: WEST ELEVATION (NORTH ELEVATION SIMILAR)

Current Non-Historic Elements

- All windows, except as noted below
- Penthouse/level 7 structures, except as noted below
- Signage
- Light fixtures, conduit, and related items
- Downspouts and related items

Current Historic Elements

- Masonry exterior
- Concrete base at basement level
- Portions of penthouse cornice
- Arched window exterior forms at northwest corner roof

Significant Interior Features

Original architectural drawings have not been uncovered and accounts regarding the original interior finishes and features are very limited. Thus, identification of historic building fabric and features is based on a small group of c.1909 and c.1920 historic interior photographic views, some limited press descriptions, 1939 tax records and field examination.

First Floor - Entryway, reception desk and elevator lobby: All of the current major public spaces on the first floor level are very distinctive with elaborate hand-rubbed and polished Honduran mahogany paneling and trim and twelve-foot high plaster ceilings. The distinctive interior is characterized by classical motifs incorporated into the wall paneling and trim members, especially the classical pilasters and elaborate ceiling moldings. The entryway lobby, reception desk and elevator lobby appear to be essentially unaltered. The elevator lobby is terminated by a distinctive curved ceiling cove. The reception desk retains a distinctive large wooden key box that appears to be an historic feature. The floor areas were originally exposed fir covered by some small area rugs; the floor areas are now entirely covered by carpeting. Historically, the interior lighting appears to have been provided primarily by numerous dropped double-ball wall sconces, which are no longer in place. However, several ornate ceiling-mounted brass chandeliers appear to be original fixtures and definitely pre-date the 1981 renovation project. Reportedly, the first floor level originally included a “ladies parlor” and private reception rooms; these areas are no longer intact or accessible to the public.

First floor - Fireside Room: The most distinctive interior space within the hotel is the highly intact Fireside Room, the original main hotel lobby. It is octagonal in shape with a 40-foot diameter and exhibits the previously described elaborate dark Honduran mahogany paneling and trim. The twelve-foot high plaster ceiling is accentuated by ornate wood-paneled beams supported by a central structural column and further accentuated by a dramatic fluted ceiling light cove. The main hotel lobby is also distinguished by a highly unique inglenook fireplace adorned by particularly distinctive Rookwood tilework as described below. The original floor areas were also exposed fir and are now entirely covered by carpeting. Historically, this interior space was lit by numerous dropped double-ball wall sconces, which are no longer in place. The current wall mounted sconces are non-historic fixtures that are in character with the original design.

The Italianate design of the hotel is further accentuated by the unique tile-clad inglenook fireplace and over mantel located in the main lobby, now known as the Fireside Room. Set within a segmental arched opening, it measures approximately 12-feet wide with a raised hearth that is approximately 3'-6" deep. The face of fireplace nook and the hearth are clad with glazed and decorated Rookwood tiles. The hearth and two-foot wide side panels and segmental arched header are clad with emblematic Rookwood matte green glazed tile. The firebox is trimmed with polychromatic fruit garland faience tiles from classical motifs accentuated by a ribbed matte green surround with raised plinths. The over mantel is a green tile clad and bracketed sill surmounted by Rockwood scenic panel. The panel is composed of hand-painted and sculpted tiles illustrating a scenic view of an Italian garden. The scene includes blue skies, Cyprus trees, classical garden stairs with planters (similar to the original courtyard planters) leading up to a domed pavilion, and a path leading off into dense trees

and shrubs. It is executed in multiple colors including various shades of blue and green, brown, purple, yellow and cream. The panel is a segmental arched shape with a ribbed green tile surround.

First Floor - Hunt Club (dining room and bar): The first floor area that is now the Hunt Club dining room and bar appears to have originally housed a billiard room and a “grill room” - probably a small men-only bar and dining room. Portions of this space appear to have been remodeled as early as 1912 when the entry canopy was added. The area within the current bar includes mahogany paneling and trim; however, it is dissimilar in wood grain and texture to finishes within the entry and main lobby. The room is also characterized by classical bracket motifs, carved ceiling and trim features including lion and acorn finials. The dining room and bar spaces have been remodeled at various points; thus, it is difficult to determine the extent of historic building fabric and faux historic construction. Portions of the current interior finishes within the bar area may be extant features from the original “grill room” or early remodeling efforts; however most of the finishes and features appear to date from the 1960s Dunbar Room remodel, including a distinctive historic Arts & Crafts style light fixture at the Terry Avenue entry vestibule.

Seventh Floor – former “Top of the Town” dining room: The original design of the hotel was unusual due to the fact that the entire seventh floor/penthouse level was “given over entirely to entertainment and the social side of hotel.” This floor level appears to have been primarily devoted to various dining spaces and kitchen facilities. The most distinctive of these rooms was the main dining room, a large oblong-octagonal shaped room with an ornate trussed ceiling that did not require any support columns. It was located at the junction of the two wings and appears to have opened directly onto the elevator lobby. This dining room later became known as the “Top of the Town.” It was originally lit by large picture windows and a total of three ornate stained-glass lunette windows to the west, northwest and north and possibly three stained-glass lunette windows to the southeast. The picture windows to the west commanded dramatic and highly promoted westerly views over downtown Seattle and Puget Sound. The kitchens and other private dining and banquet rooms appear to have been located in the north wing. The west wing appears to have housed a “sun room” and “tea rooms.” The south end (and the south west side) of the west wing housed what was described as a “Florentine loggia and roof garden.” The tea rooms appear to have opened onto the loggia and roof garden, which also provided dramatic unobstructed westerly views. The loggia appears to have been directly accessible from the elevator lobby.

The seventh floor level appears to have been repeatedly and extensively remodeled during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Small portions of the original trussed ceiling within the old “Top of the Town” space remain in place. The original large oblong-octagonal shaped room has been significantly reduced in size and all of the original fan lights and lunette features have been removed or enclosed. The remaining space is now used for private banquet purposes. The areas within the west wing that originally housed the “tea rooms” and loggia and roof garden have been extensively remodeled and adapted to function for other hotel guest room purposes. The area at the south end of the west wing still functions as a small roof top garden; however, it is not open to the public.

Architectural Description of Layout and Features of Guest Room Floor Levels

The second through the sixth floor levels are entirely devoted to guest room and hotel service related functions. The layout and features of each of these floor levels is virtually the same. Each floor level includes approximately 15 guest rooms that vary considerably in floor area, amenities and plan configuration. Four of the Fifth floor level bathrooms include oculus windows. The typical L-shaped corridor system is double-loaded with guest rooms situated to each side. The elevator vestibule is located on the west side of the west wing corridor. Exit stairs are located at the south end of the west wing and the east end of the north wing.

No original architectural drawings or records regarding the original interior finishes or features of the guest room facilities have been located. The hotel rooms were extensively remodeled, reconfigured and combined in 1981 and again updated and remodeled in 2002. The guest rooms currently exhibit painted plaster and plasterboard walls and modern light fixtures, painted wooden trim and doors. The corridors currently exhibit painted plaster and plasterboard walls and modern light fixtures, painted wooden trim, and doors. Floors are entirely carpeted with the exception of bathrooms, which exhibit modern marble tile cladding and flooring.

The following list is excerpted from the Sorrento Hotel Historic Elements Survey, prepared by the owners' consultants Nicholson Kovalchick Architects, dated July 9, 2008:

INTERIOR: ENTRY LOBBY, RECEPTION DESK, AND ELEVATOR LOBBY

Current Non-Historic Elements

- Main entry doors, transom, side windows, and hardware
- Freestanding bellhop desk at main entry lobby, and cabinetry on wall behind desk
- Reception desk surface and lighting soffit above do not appear to be original
- Brass chandeliers in Entry Lobby and Elevator Lobby are not original to the location
- Elevator door exterior and elevator cab interior
- Unpanelled office/service corridor beyond Elevator Lobby and restroom corridor
- Bathroom interiors, located via corridor off Elevator Lobby
- Carpeting
- Signage
- Fabrics, upholstery, drapery
- Framed artwork

Current Historic Elements:

- Paneling throughout is generally original mahogany, but frequent instances of lesser-quality replacement panels exist; to be determined and field verified in any future renovation.
- Entry and Elevator Lobby beams and crown molding appear to be original; to be determined and field verified in any future renovation. Crown molding at hexagonal main entry area above bellhop desk is particularly ornate.
- Paneled office and restroom corridor off Elevator Lobby; paneling appears to have undergone extensive renovation over time.
- Original hardwood flooring presumed under carpeting
- Reception desk front paneling may be original; to be determined and field verified in any future renovation.
- Keybox behind Reception Desk may be original; to be determined and field verified in any future renovation.

INTERIOR: FIRESIDE ROOM

Current Non-Historic Elements

- Wood infill panels over windows, or integral vent registers, or mirror sills, along north, northwest, and western walls.
- Double doors from Fireside Room to Hunt Club
- Furniture, including banquette seating around central pier

- Light fixtures, including sconces, lamps, recessed lights, and central pier uplight fixture
- Sound system speakers located where ceiling beams engage wall in a flared Y shape
- Fireplace screen, metal insert, andirons, artificial logs
- Openable panel fire extinguisher cabinet at east wall
- Carpeting
- Signage
- Fabrics, upholstery, drapery
- Framed artwork

Current Historic Elements

- Paneling throughout is generally original mahogany, but frequent instances of lesser-quality replacement panels exist upon closer inspection (notably at southwest corner service alcove, or near Hunt Club entry off Entry Lobby); to be determined and field verified in any future renovation.
- Beams, ring-shaped beam at central pier, and crown molding
- Central pier and engaged flared ceiling
- Original hardwood flooring presumed under carpeting
- Fireplace tilework at wall surround and hearth, both simple tiles and art tiles.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

As Seattle’s oldest operating commercial hotel, the Sorrento Hotel is unique as it remains in use for its original “tourist hotel” purposes. It was constructed on First Hill in 1908-1909 for Samuel Rosenberg, a successful Seattle clothier and was designed by the highly-skilled Seattle architect, Harlan Thomas. As an exceptional example of Italianate design, the building was developed to accommodate a steeply sloping site and to take advantage of then-panoramic westerly views over the downtown commercial district toward Elliott Bay and Puget Sound. The hotel design included a unique Italianate entrance courtyard and seventh floor level dining facilities and belvedere including a Florentine style loggia and roof garden. It initially operated as a first-class family (i.e. residential) and tourist hotel attracting famous visitors and housing members of many of Seattle’s “best families.” The hotel also established a long tradition of housing members of the United States military during World War I, World War II and the Cold War era.

The advent of highrise commercial and residential development and the popularity of modern design impacted the panoramic views and diminished the architectural charm that had made the hotel famous. Despite economic challenges during the 1950s and 1960s, the hotel and its famous restaurant businesses endured. In December 1981, the Sorrento Hotel reopened after undergoing a major renovation that included the addition of the circular driveway and a newly landscaped courtyard. The European style design involved renovating the original 154 hotel rooms in order to create modern guest rooms and suites. The original entry lobby and main lobby were carefully preserved and exhibit highly distinctive Honduras mahogany woodwork. The main lobby, now known as the Fireside Room, includes an exquisite Rookwood tile fireplace; it is one of the most architecturally unique and significant commercial interior spaces in Seattle.

First Hill - Historic Context

First Hill was Seattle's first distinct residential district to be established beyond the early commercial, industrial and residential townsite, which had evolved along the Elliott Bay waterfront between the early-1850s and 1880. The development of the First Hill district was instrumental in the evolution of town from a fledgling settlement to a diverse and prosperous city. The first substantial single-family residences were constructed in the early 1880s; by 1905 nearly forty mansions were situated along the western slope of the hill and along the crest of the hill near Boren Avenue and Minor Avenue. These distinctive homes were owned by some of the city's most prominent settlement-era families and late 19th century entrepreneurs and industrialists. During the early decades of the 20th century, the rapid introduction of the automobile allowed for the development of more distant and choice residential districts. Gradually a wider range of housing types and commercial and institutional uses became to characterize the community and the elite residential character of First Hill began to change.

Buildings specifically designed for multi-family housing purposes with individual kitchens were not commonly built in Seattle until after 1903. By 1905, several small apartment buildings had been constructed and were mingled among older single-family residences located uphill and to the northeast of the expanding commercial district. Many early apartment buildings were located in proximity to Providence Hospital and Central School near Sixth Avenue and Madison Streets. However, the majority of the apartment house construction during this era appears to have been concentrated further uphill along Yesler Way and on First Hill, as well as in the burgeoning neighborhoods of Capitol Hill and Queen Anne Hill. Apartment and hotel-apartment construction on First Hill accelerated in the 1910s; during the 1920s as numerous distinctive highrise apartment houses were constructed the character of the neighborhood changed significantly.

The earliest hospital on First Hill was Grace Hospital, which was established in 1885. It was situated on the land parcel that is the current site of the old Summit School (The Northwest School, 1904). Early twentieth-century hospitals typically occupied buildings designed for other uses; Swedish Hospital [est. 1908] initially used an apartment building and Cabrini (Columbia) Hospital [est. c.1912] used the former Perry Hotel. By 1924, at least four sizable medical institutions had been established on First Hill; Minor Private Hospital, Swedish Hospital, Columbus Hospital, and Virginia Mason Hospital [est. 1920]. Shortly after the original portion of the Old Maynard Hospital (Northwestern Hospital) opened in 1930, King County constructed King County General Hospital [Harborview Hospital, 1931]. Each of these institutions with the exception of Minor Private Hospital continued to grow and expand. Thus, by 1971, the First Hill neighborhood was commonly referred to as "Pill Hill." Today, three major medical institutions (Swedish, Virginia Mason & Harborview) continue to dominate the central and western portions of First Hill.

Hotel Development - Historic Context

The concept of the modern hotel designed to include private rooms, toilet and bathing facilities, public spaces and related guest services, originated in the early nineteenth century. By 1853, the settlement community of Seattle included its first hotel, the Felker House. It was a modest wood-frame structure located near First Avenue S. and Jackson Street, which also served as a community gathering place where early King County court sessions and territorial legislative meetings took place. By the latter part of the nineteenth century, Seattle - like cities throughout the United States - included a significant number of hotels that served a wide variety of business travelers, tourists and both long-term and semi-permanent residents. By the late 1880s several elegant hotels were clustered along the west side of First Avenue between Cherry and Columbia in proximity to the original railway passenger depot.

Local hotel development was obviously stimulated by improvements in railroad service that transported immigrants and drew tourists and entrepreneurs. Prior to the fire of 1889, the Occidental – Seattle Hotel (1864, 1887 & 1889, destroyed) served as the city’s premier tourist-oriented hotel, although there were dozens of other hotels located within the commercial district. A significant number of hotel buildings were destroyed in the fire of 1889; however, by 1893 at least 63 hotels and lodging places were operating in the reconstructed commercial district.

After the fire, both the Rainier Hotel (1889, destroyed) located above Fifth Avenue between Columbia and Marion Streets and the Rainier-Grand Hotel (c.1889, destroyed) at First Avenue and Marion Street functioned as the major tourist hotels. The Rainier had been intended initially to serve as a resort hotel, like the Denny Hotel (a.k.a. Washington Hotel, 1890-1892, destroyed) on the south slope of Denny Hill. Both were large wood-frame buildings located on sites above the downtown commercial and residential district with panoramic views overlooking Elliott Bay. Other major post-fire tourist-oriented hotels included the Butler Hotel (1893, partly destroyed) and the Lincoln Hotel (1900, destroyed by fire in 1920) at Fourth Avenue and Madison Street. The Lincoln Hotel was promoted as a particularly elegant residential hotel with “family-style” living quarters; it was also renowned for the panoramic views from its roof top garden.

Based on the number of hotels that were operating in Seattle by 1900, it is certain that they mostly catered to long-term and semi-permanent residents rather than temporary visitors or tourists. Many buildings that were identified as hotels actually functioned as lodging houses or family hotels. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, hotel living was particularly common especially in the developing cities of the American West. Hotels varied significantly in size and the accommodations that they provided; they served every economic level from those of wealth to recent immigrants, transient salesmen and laborers. Given the tremendous population growth in Seattle after 1902, hotels and lodging houses played an important role in absorbing a new and largely transient populous. While large resort or tourist-oriented hotels like the Rainier-Grande Hotel and the Denny Hotel are noteworthy, the great majority of hotel buildings built after 1900 and prior to the 1920s were much more modest operations. A particularly significance boom in hotel development occurred between 1906 and 1910 in conjunction with local economic opportunities and population growth. Another major factor in hotel development during this era was the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific (AYP) Exposition of 1909 that drew some 3.7 million visitors. By 1910, *Polk’s Seattle City Directory* included over 475 hotel listings.

The Sorrento Hotel is among a group of noteworthy family-style and luxury hotels constructed during this era, including: the nearby Perry Hotel (1906-07, destroyed) at the SW corner of Boren Avenue and Madison Street; the 12-story Savoy Hotel (1906, destroyed) on Second Avenue near University Street; the New Washington Hotel (Josephinum, 1908) and the Moore Hotel and Theater (1907), and the Frye Hotel (1910) at Yesler Way and Third Avenue near the new passenger railway facilities at Jackson Street. Such well-appointed hotels typically included comfortable lobby areas, formal dining rooms, event and meeting rooms, and provided special housekeeping, laundry and meal services for their guests, many of which were long term or semi-permanent residents. The Sorrento Hotel is the only historic hotel to continue to serve its original luxury tourist hotel purposes; the other extant hotel buildings from this era have been adapted to include individual kitchens and serve as apartments and/or are now used for low-income housing purposes.

Family-style or “residential” hotels were designed to include suites of rooms that could be used by individuals who needed especially comfortable long-term accommodations for their relocated families or those who traveled to Seattle on a regular basis and maintained a principal residence elsewhere. During the 1920s “apartment hotels” became much more popular; they differed from earlier “family” or “residential” hotels in that they included modest kitchen or cooking facilities.

Typical long-term residents of family-style or “residential” hotels would rent a suite of rooms –on a monthly or yearly basis – often furnished with their own furniture and personal items. Such residents could enjoy the regular household help, dining and other services provided as part of typical tourist or luxury hotel operations.

During the 1920s, a second local boom in major hotel development occurred as several luxury hotels and “apartment hotels” were built in the downtown commercial district. These modern hotels contrasted with earlier hotel buildings that were rarely taller than six-stories in height. Like their neighboring office buildings, these new hotels were significantly larger and taller multi-story buildings that accommodated hundreds of guest rooms. Several were designed to include kitchen facilities and were promoted for both tourist hotel and apartment hotel purposes, including: the Spring Apartment Hotel (Kennedy, Vintage Park, 1922); Claremont Apartment Hotel (Hotel Andre, 1925); and Camlin Apartment Hotel (1926).

The construction of the highly luxurious Olympic Hotel in 1923 at a pivotal central location in the Metropolitan Tract spurred other major hotel construction nearby, including: the Continental Hotel (Hotel Seattle, 1926) and the Hungerford Hotel (Pacific Plaza, 1928). Simultaneously, numerous hotels were developed nearer the retail core at the north end of the commercial district, including: the Vance Hotel (1926); the Benjamin Franklin Hotel (1928, destroyed); and the Bergonian Hotel (Mayflower Park Hotel, 1927). The design for most – but not all – of these hotels included large lobbies, restaurants, meeting rooms, and storefront level retail spaces. They were typically executed in a modest neoclassical mode with brick cladding and distinctive terra cotta ornament at the base and building cap. The 17-story Roosevelt Hotel, designed in the distinctive Art Deco style was completed in 1930. It was the last major downtown hotel constructed during this era and the tallest to be built until the late 1960s.

Sorrento Hotel History

During 1906 and 1907 two distinctive new hotel buildings – the Herald Hotel and The Perry - were being designed and constructed along the western slope and the crest of First Hill near Boren Avenue and Madison Street. The Herald Hotel at the NE corner of Terry Avenue and Marion Street, designed by Saunders and Lawton, was five stories tall and included 100 hotel rooms. The seven-story Hotel Perry (a.k.a. Perry Apartments) at the southwest corner of Boren Avenue and Madison Street essentially functioned as a hotel – renting suites of rooms on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. The Perry was designed by Somerville & Cote and constructed on the site of the Hanford Mansion (c.1890).

It was during this period that Samuel Rosenberg, a retired Seattle clothier and successful real estate investor, acquired two vacant land parcels at the northwest corner of Terry Avenue and Madison Street. Madison Street was a major east-west thoroughfare between the expanding downtown Seattle commercial district and burgeoning neighborhoods to the east and Lake Washington. On February 2, 1907 *Pacific Builder and Engineer* reported that Mr. Rosenberg was planning to erect a “family hotel” on the site. The notice stated that Spear & Co. were the architects. The anticipated Hotel Puget would be six stories, cost \$265,000 and include 180 rooms, a roof garden and a full basement.

By April of 1908, a new architect had taken over the project and the initial hotel design and development plans – as well as the construction budget - had been revised. An illustrated article appeared in the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* announcing a “Seven Story Hotel under Construction on Madison Street.” The relatively brief article included an accurate architectural rendering that appears to have been executed by the designer of the new hotel, Seattle architect Harlan Thomas. The article described the building as a “modern family and tourist hotel” located at the NW double corner of

Madison Street and Terry Avenue and clarified that it was being erected for the Samuel Rosenberg Investment Company.

The seven story hotel was designed to include two wings placed at right angles facing the west and north sides of a 70' x 70' courtyard. The article reported that the courtyard was designed with the "very latest effects of landscape gardening." The interior room arrangements were also described in some detail, including the octagonal shaped "main office lobby" to be located on the first floor level along with a ladies parlor and reception rooms, elevator and stairwell lobbies and "billiard and grill rooms." The top –seventh- floor level arrangement of dining rooms and kitchen facilities was described as a "novel feature." The formal main dining room would contain 3,000 square feet of space; octagonal in shape it was distinguished by a decorative trussed ceiling, crystal chandeliers and several ornate leaded glass lunette windows. The top floor would be "given over entirely to entertainment and social side of hotel" and include a sun room, tea rooms, a Florentine loggia and a roof garden. Guest rooms were arranged in three-room, two-room and single suites with private baths and the ladies reception room would be furnished in the Louis XVI style. The article emphasized that the guest room placement was arranged to provide a view of either Puget Sound, Lake Washington, the Olympic or Cascade mountain ranges.

It is unclear what role - if any - the initial architects may have played in the final design of the hotel. Reportedly, Harlan Thomas was already involved with the design and construction of the Chelsea Hotel on the southwest slope of Queen Anne Hill when Samuel Rosenberg approached him to take over the project. Thomas' experience and skill in the design of the Chelsea Hotel, as well as the National Park Inn at Longmire, must have influenced Rosenberg's choice. Over the prior decade Thomas is believed to have made several visits to Sorrento, Italy where he stayed at an elegant hotel overlooking the Bay of Naples – possibly the Excelsoir Vittoria/Grand Hotel Vittoria. Built atop the remnants of an ancient villa in 1834, the hotel is still famous for its terraces, breathtaking views and garden terraces. The site of Rosenberg's new hotel was similar to Thomas' Sorrento model with the potential for expansive views to the west overlooking Elliott Bay and Puget Sound. Thus, the hotel was designed to house the formal dining room and other social spaces including a loggia and roof garden on the top floor, a rather unique feature. Other contemporary Seattle hotels featured rooftop gardens and belvederes including the Lincoln Hotel and the New Washington Hotel. However, the hilltop location of the aptly renamed Hotel Sorrento and the actual height of the dining facilities and loggia overlooking Puget Sound were particularly dramatic in comparison with its contemporaries.

Thomas also promoted the concept of an unusual Italianate design with the building set away from the street intersection by a formal landscaped courtyard. The courtyard presented a formal entryway evocative of the Sorrento model and functioned to separate the building from increasingly noisy cable car and other traffic along Madison Street. Mr. Rosenberg is said to have deferred to the architect on this rather novel design feature that decreased the potential hotel size. Thomas is believed to have recommended the name of the hotel and to have personally selected the Honduras mahogany panels used in the construction of the main lobbies and original "grill room" area.

It seems very likely, given his artistic interests and skills, that Harlan Thomas also provided the scenic imagery used for the production of the Italian garden Rookwood tiles in the main lobby fireplace design. The matte vellum green fireplace surround and scenic landscape panel were specifically commissioned from the Rookwood Pottery for the Sorrento Hotel main lobby and installed by W.W. Kellogg, Inc., a Seattle showroom and tile distribution business. Rookwood is known to have been commissioned to create a similar tile fireplace surround for the library of the John Leary residence (1904-1907) that was executed by Rookwood artist John Wareham. Due to the similarities in character, it is believed that John Wareham may have executed the Sorrento scenic panel.

By April 1908, building construction was underway, construction costs had been revised downward to an anticipated \$150,000 and the building was scheduled to be completed by September 1, 1908. A promotional sign that was mounted on the south elevation during construction stated “Hotel Sorrento...a select family & tourist hotel.” An individual named Mark Odell was one of several contractors involved in the construction. The hotel does not appear to have been ready for occupancy until the spring of 1909 when it began full operations. It was completed in time to accommodate visitors to the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition (AYP) that took place the summer of 1909. Reportedly, President William Taft signed the hotel guest register while in town as part of the AYP ceremonial events. Upon completion of the hotel, two large mansions remained nearby; the William Pitt Trimble House still stood at the north end of the block on Terry Avenue and the Moritz Thomsen House stood at the opposite corner of Madison Street and Terry Avenue adjacent to The Perry and the Herald Hotel. Reportedly, Mrs. M. Langford and Mrs. Emma Henderson were two of the earliest managers of the Sorrento Hotel, which attracted many women residents.

The Sorrento Hotel quickly became known as one of the finest residential hotels in Pacific Northwest. It was described as a “strictly first-class family and tourist hotel” and promoted for its warm wood paneled “home-like” main lobby. The lobby was simply furnished with Mission oak rockers and the formal top floor dining room with Mission oak tables and chairs. Its location on First Hill was desirable because it was just a short walk or quick ride to the financial, shopping and shipping districts of the city. It was described as “near enough to be convenient, but away from the noise and confusion of the busy streets.” Members of several of Seattle’s “best families” began to live at The Sorrento soon after its completion. Several Perry Hotel residents are said to have moved to The Sorrento; many of its women residents were reportedly unhappy with that hotel and its manager and management practices.

Rooms were available on the European plan with daily, weekly or monthly rates and “special rates” for long term guests. Rooms included large airy closets and were available “en suite” (or interconnected as an apartment) and furnished with solid mahogany furniture. Meals were available “table d’Hote” or “a la carte.” The kitchen facilities as well as the main dining room, tea room, banquet rooms and private dining rooms were all located on the top floor; thus, hotel rooms and guests were not subject to unpleasant cooking fumes.

In late 1910, Samuel Rosenberg appears to have entered into a business transaction involving the trade in ownership of the hotel land parcels for “goods and valuable consideration” – some 240 acres of pear orchards on Bear Creek in the Rogue River Valley of Jackson County near Medford, Oregon. Thereafter, he appears to have been fairly involved in the orchard operations and is said to have taken “great pride in his fruit ranch.” Mr. Rosenberg kept a residence at the Sorrento Hotel; however, Mrs. Ella Rosenberg appears to have resided elsewhere. He appears to have been directly involved in the operation and management of the property until his death in 1916.

Around 1912 the base of the east elevation of the hotel along Terry Avenue was remodeled. Originally the ground floor level included five round-arched window openings; the central window appears to have been a multi-pane casement type, which was flanked to each side by sets of typical double-hung windows. The interior first floor area of this wing appears to have originally housed a billiard room and a “grill room” -probably a small men-only bar and dining room. The central arched window opening was eliminated, a small entry vestibule was added and an ornate glass and metal entrance canopy/marquee (measuring approximately 9’ x 19’) that extended to the curbside of Terry Avenue was constructed. As the courtyard and main entryway were not accessible to automobiles, this second entryway may have been added to provide easier access and protection from inclement weather conditions.

Various articles and publications identify Vernon F. Pavey, an attorney and successful real estate entrepreneur, as the owner and proprietor of the Sorrento Hotel after January 1915. However, it is unclear exactly what the extent of his ownership position may have been as tax records indicate that Mr. Rosenberg, Bear Creek Orchards and/or Rosenberg's estate retained ownership of the property until sometime after 1920. A Capital Stock certificate for The Hotel Sorrento Co. dated December 1, 1914 lists V.P. Pavey as a shareholder and company official, thus he held some limited ownership interest by that time. Articles of Incorporation for the Hotel Sorrento Co. were recorded on November 27, 1914. The purposes of the corporation included the intention "to conduct a general hotel business; to buy, sell, lease, own or in any wise acquire for investment, all kinds of property, real, personal and mixed." The corporation was initially headed by Frank H. Holzmeimer, who subsequently lived in and managed the hotel from 1915 until c.1919. V.F. Pavey served as Secretary-Treasurer until assuming the position of the company president in 1920 when the *Polk's Seattle City Directory* identified him as the president and general manager of the Sorrento Hotel Co. Pavey is known to have resided at the hotel (with his wife and his mother) between 1914 and 1918. By the early 1920s, possibly after the resolution of Mr. Rosenberg's estate, V.P. Pavey appears to have gained ownership control and was heavily involved in the management and promotion of the hotel.

During World War I, like many other local institutions the hotel became involved in Red Cross support efforts. A dining (or tea) room at the south side of the west wing was given over as a Red Cross headquarters where long tables were set up for making bandages. Special teas dances were held in honor of visiting officers and several admirals were regular hotel guests. Reportedly, the hotel functioned as temporary headquarters for various Army and Navy personnel.

V.F. Pavey was responsible for two separate but very similar hotel promotional brochures published in the late 1910s and early 1920s that identify him alternatively as The Sorrento Hotel "proprietor and manager" and The Sorrento Hotel Co. "president and general manager." *Hotel Sorrento - Seattle's Exclusive Hostelry* with text attributed to V.F. Pavey may have been published in 1919 when H.E. Barrett served as hotel manager. *Seattle and the Sorrento Hotel* with very slightly revised text by V.F. Pavey includes distinctive color lithographic images and appears to date from 1920 when V.F. Pavey is identified as proprietor and manager. These brochures include flowery descriptions of the hotel services and its design attributes, as well as several photographs of the interior spaces with original interior furnishings. In 1919, the hotel hired Emil Tarantuan, a Filipino elevator operator who became very well known as he continued work at the hotel until the 1960s.

A front page article published in the *Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce* in July 1923 featured V.F. Pavey and his role in the successful operation of the Hotel Sorrento, which continued to function as an "exclusive family and tourist" hotel. The formal top floor dining and banquet (and ballroom) rooms continued to be particularly noteworthy; they were described as possessing "the most sweeping and beautiful view of any hotel in the world." It continued to convey a "Homey" and relaxing atmosphere said to be favored by the "most select patronage" of the community including families "who have lived there continuously since she was built in the spring of 1909." During this era, handsome special menus were published for elaborate multi-course holiday dinners that were served in the famous dining room.

V. F. Pavey also owned and operated productive irrigated apple orchards, vineyards and strawberry, asparagus and alfalfa ranches near Richland and Kennewick in eastern Washington. Products from these orchards and ranches were served to patrons of the Sorrento Hotel. Mr. Pavey appears to have again resided at the Sorrento Hotel between c.1923 and 1927. During the early and mid-1920s when Mr. Pavey operated the hotel it served as the recreational and residential headquarters for ship's officers involved with naval maneuvers on Puget Sound. Press clippings describe the hotel as

employing “the most modern and progressive methods of inn-keeping...with the highest possible standards in foods, service, ethics and morals.”

An article in the *Hotel News of the West* in November 1925 reported changes in the management of the hotel and the formal dining room and the installation of new hotel furnishings. These changes may have been precipitated by the increasing number of modern apartment buildings and residential “apartment hotels” that were being constructed in downtown Seattle and on First Hill during this period, including the adjacent John Alden Apartments and the nearby Paul Revere Apartments both built in 1924. The article reported that during the summer of 1925 Mr. Merton H. Marston and Mr. J.A. Audett “took over” the Hotel Sorrento and redecorated the interior “entirely” with “a complete new outfit of furniture.” It described the new dining room chairs as walnut with tapestry seats; thus, the Mission oak furniture must have been replaced at this time. The top floor level was remodeled to some degree with the installation of modern kitchen and food preparation facilities and the inclusion of hardwood floors for dancing in the ballroom space. A new hotel chef, Urben Mezzetti who had worked with some of the “finer hotels of New York,” Boldt’s Restaurant in Seattle and the Arctic Club was also hired. Subsequent hotel managers included Mrs. Jay Allen and Mrs. George Thompson.

On December 19, 1931 the *Town Crier* featured The Sorrento on the cover and reported that the famous hostelry would be managed by W.S. Sanders, the manager of the nearby Rhododendron Apartment Hotel (1928). Sanders would oversee both houses described as two of the city’s “exclusive apartment hotels.” Mr. J.A. Audett continued to superintend the dining and catering services. Mr. Art Apgar - a chef who was known throughout the Northwest - was retained to run the hotel kitchen and uphold the high standard of quality the hotel was known for. The *Town Crier* included advertisements for the Hotel Sorrento, noting the “American Plan” and the availability of “two and three room suites...guest rooms” and promoting the “famed view dining room.”

The Sorrento Hotel changed hands once again in October 1937 when it was purchased for \$100,000 by the Hotel Sorrento Operating Co. that had been operating the establishment under a lease agreement. The seller was the Portland Trust and Savings Bank represented by Glen J. Fairbrook and Merv McInnis, the attorney and chairman of the bond holder’s committee. The new ownership group was headed by Jesse M. Jackson, president; Leslie H. Jackson, vice president; and, Fred J. Wettrick, secretary. Jesse Jackson subsequently served as hotel manager. The press announcement stated that \$10,000 would be spent renovating and redecorating the hotel described as a “Seattle Landmark.” A month later when the King County Assessor’s property record card was prepared the building was described as an “Apart-Hotel” in use as “Resident Apartments” with 158 rooms and 73 tubs; however, *no* kitchens. Tax records describe the hotel as being in good condition with a “very elaborate” lobby and a maple dance floor. Sometime prior to 1937, the L- shaped penthouse level loggia that wrapped around the south and west end of the west wing - described as a “Florentine loggia and roof garden” – was altered. The tea rooms appear to have originally opened onto the loggia and roof garden, which provided unobstructed westerly views. The open balcony at the west elevation side was partially eliminated and the penthouse area was expanded to be flush with main west elevation.

In February 1940, *Seattlife* published an article about the Sorrento Hotel that was authored by Leslie Jackson - “The Sauntering Seattlite.” The author was presumably Leslie H. Jackson, vice president of the Hotel Sorrento Operating Co. This chatty commentary provides a significant amount of anecdotal information about the history of the hotel, its original design and notable occupants. Jackson noted that the granddaughter of C.C. Terry, a member of the Denny Party was residing at The Sorrento and that Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus Clapp were also long time residents, as were Mr. and Mrs. George Lent and Judge and Mrs. Frederic Bauman. Other long time residents and frequent residents included: Mrs.

Frank Waterhouse, Mrs. Royal Gunnison, Mrs. Harry Whitney Treat, Mrs. Benjamin Grosscup, Mrs. Alfred Battle, Miss May Quigley, Mr. & Mrs. Frances Schrader, Mrs. H.P. Whitworth, Mrs. Harry Bolcolm, Mrs. Jarvis B. Woods, Mrs. William R. Ballard, Mrs. Stanley Burchard, Mr. & Mrs. Frank Jeffrey, and Miss Henrietta Hamilton, a well known interior designer.

Leslie Jackson also identified several famous guests, including: Mme. Schmann-Heink, a well-known operatic contralto who often appeared locally; Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt; Mr. Robert Guggenheim, American statesman and nephew of Simon Guggenheim; and Senator James Hamilton (Duke) Lewis, an illustrious Illinois political figure.

During World War II, the Sorrento Hotel again became living quarters for members of the United States military. During this era, housing for military personnel was in great demand and members of the Army Air Corps Ferrying Command were given the opportunity to reside at the hotel. Thus, various flight crews regularly stayed at The Sorrento while on duty delivering Boeing B-17 bombers to air bases around the United States. The tradition of providing housing and services to Air Force personnel appears to have continued through the 1950s. The earliest extant building permit records date to 1943 when the roof terrace levels of the hotel were remodeled. In 1946, microfilm permit records note that the “club room” was remodeled. This appears to be in reference to the original top floor dining room space, which by then was known as the Aero-Marine Club. By this time, the dining facilities had been relocated to the first floor level “Grill Room” and the top floor functioned as a “very nice bar.” Because Washington State liquor laws allowed liquor to be served only in private clubs the bar served as a “club” room.

In 1950, the hotel was sold for \$290,000 to Cross Roads Inc. and appears to have gone through a string of owners over the following decade. By this time, many fewer permanent residents appear to have resided in the hotel. During the early 1950s, the club room became known as the “Top of the Town” and/or “Top O’ the Town.” The seventh floor level had been significantly remodeled; it housed only limited kitchen facilities and banquet rooms and included several guest rooms in the north wing. The size of the original dining room/club room space was reduced in order to provide a corridor and passage to the guest rooms in the north wing and the lunette windows were covered and enclosed. In July of 1960, the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* reported that the hotel had been sold for over \$800,000 to Neal Hubbard, president of the Coast Investment Co. The Coast Investment partners included Monty Moeton, John F. Biehl and George J. Mortenson & Associates, all of whom were prominent in Pacific Northwest building ownership and management activities including the operation of several Seattle apartment buildings and other investment properties. The seller was John A. Metzger; however, the purchase agreement allowed Metzger to continue to operate the hotel business for the following sixteen years under a personal lease back arrangement.

An extensive project involving the remodel and enlargement of the Top of the Town Restaurant and the Sorrento Grill was subsequently undertaken. The *Seattle Times* reported in February of 1961 that the “Air Base” – a small cocktail lounge off the main hotel lobby - that had functioned as a regular gathering place for Air Force men would close down due to the remodeling work. For the prior nine years, Air Force personnel had regularly stayed at the hotel while attending the Boeing Bomarc training program. They had tacked some \$300 worth of dollar bills and foreign currency to the ceiling and decorated the room with Air Force trophies.

The remodeling effort involved reestablishing a dining room/restaurant on the seventh floor and making extensive changes to the first floor “Grill Room” space in order to establish the Dunbar Restaurant. Architect Richard E. Lytel prepared plans for the project that involved reconfiguring and redecorating interior spaces, alterations to ground floor windows and the installation of salvaged bronze ornamental lanterns at east elevation. Despite the upgraded dining facilities, the hotel and the

restaurant operations struggled due to financial problems. During this era modern downtown hotel development had commenced and benefited from the Seattle Century 21 World's Fair. The advent of highrise commercial and residential development and the popularity of modern design impacted the panoramic views and diminished the architectural charm that had made the hotel famous. Despite these challenges, the Top of the Town and Dunbar Room endured and attracted a new generation of devotees. The hotel continued to operate and miraculously the distinctive main lobby survived with very few significant alterations.

In 1980, Michael Malone and Robert Burkheimer were able to acquire a long-term land lease and equity rights from the prior hotel owner. In December 1981, they reopened the hotel after undertaking a major \$4.5 million renovation project designed by Bumgardner Architects. The project included the addition of the circular driveway and new landscaped courtyard designed by R.W. Chittlock. The European style design involved renovating the original 154 guest rooms in order to create 76 guest rooms and suites. The Dunbar Room was gently adapted to become the Hunt Club, a 52-seat award winning restaurant. The former "Top of the Town" space was adapted to serve as a private banquet facility. The original entry and main lobby spaces were carefully preserved and restored. Every effort was made to retain and refurbish the original Honduras mahogany paneling, some of which had been covered by decorative panels. The highly distinctive Rookwood tilework had been painted and partially covered by decorative art panels; it was restored by local tile expert Marie Glass Tapp. Several ornate brass chandeliers and even the wooden key box behind the reception desk were refurbished. The original main lobby, now known as the Fireside Room, remains one of the most distinctive and well preserved commercial interior spaces in Seattle.

In 2002, additional hotel room renovation and redecorating efforts and modern high-technology upgrades were undertaken. Interior designers Charles Gruwell and Cheryl Neumann created 34 deluxe guest rooms and 42 luxury suites including a 2,000 sq. ft. penthouse level suite. Meeting rooms, the Hunt Club and the Fireside Room were also luxuriously refurbished and decorated. The project was featured in "A Sorrento Revival" published in *Architectural Digest*, September 2003. The Sorrento Hotel has been widely recognized by the travel industry for its service and historic hotel qualities receiving numerous awards and acknowledgements. After nearly 100 years of operation, the Sorrento Hotel continues to convey its unique historic character and maintains a long tradition of hosting leading entrepreneurs, celebrities and politicians, visitors from afar and sauntering Seattlites.

Harlan Thomas (1870-1953)

Harlan Thomas was born in Des Moines, Iowa and raised there until 1879 when the family migrated to Fort Collins, Colorado. He possessed an intense and early interest in architecture, drawing and mechanics. Thomas obtained some experience as a carpenter prior to becoming a draftsman for a Denver architecture firm of A.M. Stuckertas. In 1891, he began to attend Colorado State College in Fort Collins. As a student, he was selected to design two campus buildings, Agricultural Hall and the Industrial Arts/Mechanics Shop, as well as designing family homes in the community. He earned a B.S. degree with a major in mathematics and mechanics in 1894 and established his own architecture practice in Denver. In 1895 he married Edith Partridge and they departed for Europe; the couple stayed for a period of sixteen months during which time Thomas undertook architectural studies in Paris at the American atelier of Marcel Peruse de Montclo, a prix de Rome recipient.

Upon their return to Denver in the fall of 1896 he reestablished his architectural practice. During this period, he is known to have designed numerous buildings including the Fort Collins Methodist Church, Greeley High School, Stratton Hall at Colorado College of Mines, and a family home in Montclair (a Denver suburb) as well as serving three terms as mayor of Montclair. During 1903 and 1904 he took a fifteen month, round-the-world tour with his wife and two small children, again

focusing on further architectural study, sketching and painting. He continued his Denver practice until the family moved to Seattle in June 1906.

Among his earliest local commissions – and possibly the reason for the relocation to the Pacific Northwest - was the design for the old National Park Inn at Longmire; this three-story lodge building could accommodate 60 guests and was destroyed by fire in 1926. He also designed his own highly-distinctive Mediterranean style family home on Queen Anne Hill in 1906-07. Shortly after his arrival in Seattle, he designed two highly distinctive major projects: the Chelsea Hotel (1907-08) on the southwest slope of Queen Anne Hill and the Sorrento Hotel (1908-09) on First Hill.

In May of 1907, the Washington State Chapter of the AIA sponsored the “First Annual Exhibit of Architecture and the Allied Arts” held at the art gallery of the Seattle Public Library. Dozens of local and regional architects participated. The exhibition catalogue listed twelve watercolor drawings or sketches by Harlan Thomas that were included in the exhibit. Along with watercolor images of Paris and sites in Japan, he exhibited at least six watercolor drawings of places he had visited in Italy including images of the Certosa Monastery near Florence, several unidentified street scenes, a view of Mt. Vesuvius and a view of Capri.

Reportedly, Harlan Thomas was already involved with the design and construction of the Chelsea on Queen Anne Hill when Samuel Rosenberg approached him to design a new hotel on First Hill. Thomas had already made several trips to Sorrento, Italy and it is believed that he based the hotel design in part on an elegant hotel – possibly the Excelsior Vittoria/Grand Hotel Vittoria - overlooking the Bay of Naples. Thomas promoted the concept of an Italianate hotel design with the building set away from the street intersection by a formal courtyard and a unique top floor level dining room and roof top Florentine-style loggia; Mr. Rosenberg is said to have deferred to the architect. Unfortunately, there are no extant architectural records related to the original hotel design.

Thomas also won several commissions for the design of school buildings in the region including high schools in Aberdeen, Enumclaw and Monroe. The bulk of his subsequent commissions were often undertaken in partnership or collaboration with other architects including: Russell & Rice, Clyde Grainger and his own son Donald P. Thomas. He is credited with the design of several of Seattle’s most distinctive buildings, including: Corner Market Building (1911-12, in partnership with Clyde Grainger); the Queen Anne, Columbia and Douglas Truth Libraries (1912-13, with Marbury Somerville); the Chamber of Commerce Building 1923-24 with Schack, Young & Myers); William O. McKay Ford Showroom (1925); Seventh Church of Christ Scientist (Seattle, 1926); the Arcade Building/Rhodes Department Store (1926-27, destroyed) and the original portion of Harborview Hospital (with Grainger & Thomas, 1929-31). He also designed of the Delta Kappa Epsilon Fraternity House (Tau Kappa Epsilon, 1914); the Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority House (1930) and Bagley Hall (1935) at the University of Washington. During his career he also designed World War II housing in Bremerton and private homes at various Western Washington locations. Late in his career, he designed St. Stephen’s Church (1940) and the Sand Point Community United Methodist Church (1945) before formally retiring in 1949.

Harlan Thomas was a prolific watercolor and sketch artist and is known to have continued to travel, sketch and paint throughout his long career. It is believed that the distinctive design of the Chamber of Commerce Building was inspired by twelfth century churches he observed in Lombardy – Parma, Verona, and Pavia during his travels in Europe shortly before undertaking the project. Thomas was active in the AIA and served as the chapter president from 1924-26; he was elected an AIA Fellow in 1928. He is also held in high regard for his role as an educator at the University of Washington - School of Architecture, where he served as a professor of architecture and as the department head from 1926 until 1940. He became a recognized painter participating in exhibitions, especially after his

retirement. Efforts to identify the current location or repositories that may hold any of his paintings have been unsuccessful. Thomas is considered to have been one of Seattle's most urbane, versatile and influential architects. His worldly background, Beaux-Arts era training and true artistic skill are demonstrated in his ability to create composite stylist treatments for distinctive modern buildings. He died on September 4, 1953 at the age of 83 in Seattle.

Samuel Rosenberg (c.1860-1916)

The Sorrento Hotel was constructed in 1908-1909 for the Samuel Rosenberg Investment Company. Samuel Rosenberg was born in New Haven, Connecticut. He appears to have migrated to Seattle in 1886 at the age of 27. He became a partner in the successful Kline & Rosenberg clothing store business, which specialized in men's furnishings. The senior partner in the business was Lazarus Kline, who was married to Rosenberg's aunt, Caroline Rosenberg Kline (Galland). Kline and Rosenberg are known to have commissioned several new commercial buildings during the immediate post-fire era, including one designed by Elmer Fisher.

Lazarus Kline was a native of Bohemia who immigrated to America as a boy; after arriving in New York City he worked in a clothing store for board and clothing. In the 1850s he migrated to the Pacific Coast and went to work for the house of Allen M. Sachs in San Francisco and then established his own clothing business in Stockton, California. He subsequently established a successful business in Albany, Oregon and operated it for several years before coming to Seattle in 1881. He appears to have operated the business on his own until around 1885 when he became inactive due to health problems associated with malarial fever. By 1886, his wife's nephew Samuel Rosenberg was actively operating Kline & Rosenberg and Kline was primarily residing in San Francisco and traveling in the United States and Europe. Kline is known to have owned a considerable amount of real estate in Seattle and San Francisco. He died in San Francisco on April 15, 1891 at the age of 56.

Samuel Rosenberg appears to have been active in the successful operation of Rosenberg & Kline Clothiers until after the turn of the century. The store was centrally located on the west side of Front Street/First Avenue at foot of Cherry Street. Rosenberg was one of the seven members of the Bureau of Information, which was established by the Seattle Chamber of Commerce in August 1897. The Bureau of Information members were particularly successful in devising a plan and promoted Seattle as the Klondike gold rush provisioning and departure center. The Bureau not only promoted Seattle for these purposes but actively worked to counteract the efforts of other cities undertaking similar efforts. Ultimately, the Bureau of Information played a crucial role in the lucrative period of trade that resulted, as Seattle's economy benefited significantly during and after the Klondike era.

In 1888, Samuel Rosenberg married Miss Ella Lapworth of Saginaw, Michigan at a private residence located at the corner of Front Street and Seneca Street. A prominent newspaper story described Rosenberg as a "leading clothier of the city" and reported that after an extensive wedding tour to Washington D.C., New York and Berlin, the couple would reside in a beautiful new residence on Third Avenue between Union and University Streets. Located at the current site of Benaroya Hall, the Rosenberg residence remained in place until at least 1912; it was among of the longest surviving residences to remain in place as the commercial district expanded northward.

Samuel Rosenberg is also known to have invested in lucrative real estate holdings at various downtown sites, several that were near Third Avenue and Union Street and the original family home, including the Curtis Block at Second Avenue between Union and University Streets and the Rosenberg Building at the east side of Third Avenue between Pike and Pine Streets. Samuel and Ella Rosenberg appear to have continued to reside at 1309 3rd Avenue until c.1899 when they moved with their two young sons to 2205 Madison Street. By 1908, the *Polk's Seattle City Directory* listed Mr.

Rosenberg as a “capitalist” residing at 1522 Jefferson Street with business offices in the Alaska Building.

The specific circumstances related to Samuel Rosenberg and the development of the Sorrento Hotel are not known, other than the project was undertaken by the Samuel Rosenberg Investment Company and appears to have been initiated in conjunction with other nearby hotel development and in anticipation of the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific (AYP) Exposition of 1909. A particularly significance boom in hotel development occurred after 1906 in conjunction with tremendous population growth and local economic opportunities; thus, the development of the hotel was certainly undertaken for real estate investment purposes. After the construction of the hotel, Samuel Rosenberg maintained real estate business offices in American Bank Building and then the Central Building. Mr. Rosenberg kept a residence at the Sorrento Hotel; however, their sons Harry and David were students and boarded at 1605 E. Madison Street. By 1916, *Polk’s Seattle City Directory* listed David and Harry each as “farmer” residing at 713 - 17th Avenue N. It is unclear where Mrs. Rosenberg resided.

In late 1910, Rosenberg appears to have entered into a business transaction involving the trade of the ownership related to the hotel land parcel for “goods and valuable consideration” – some 240 acres of pear orchards on Bear Creek in the Rogue River Valley of Jackson County near Medford, Oregon. Thereafter, he appears to have been fairly involved in the orchard operations and is said to have taken “great pride in his fruit ranch.” His sons would be instrumental in the future development and successful operations of the Bear Creek Orchards.

Samuel Rosenberg died on his fruit ranch at the age of 57 on October 1, 1916. He apparently contracted pneumonia sometime after July 2nd when he departed Seattle in good health to spend time at his ranch. His obituary, which appeared on the front page of the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* the following day, identified him as the owner of Sorrento Hotel. Joseph Levinson of the Manhattan Investment Co. was the executor of the Samuel Rosenberg estate; it appears to have taken nearly four years to resolve questions related to the Rosenberg estate, ownership of the hotel and the distribution of Mr. Rosenberg’s other assets.

Samuel Rosenberg and the Bear Creek Company

The Bear Creek Company was incorporated in the State of Washington on December 12, 1910 with a long list of objectives, including: “To buy, sell, mortgage, rent, improve, develop, exchange or otherwise acquire or dispose of, trade and deal in real property, improved and unimproved; and conduct a general real estate agency and brokerage business and act as agent, broker, or attorney-in-fact of any person, firms, or corporations, in buying, selling and dealing in real property or its accessories.” The incorporation papers also state the objective of “purchase, acquire, lease, own, mortgage and operate theaters, play-houses, gardens, roof-gardens, opera houses, and other pleasure resorts and places of amusement and recreation, and inns and hotels, and to erect, maintain, purchase, rent, hire, lease, let or otherwise acquire or dispose of buildings or structures for said purposes.” The five trustees of the corporation were John D. Alwell, C.E. Whisler, and S.V. Beckwith of Medford , Oregon; and, W.R. Clark of Eason, Colorado and Max Hardman of Seattle, Washington.

In fact, on the following day of December 13, 1910, a warranty deed was filed with King County listing as grantors Samuel and Ella Rosenberg and The Bear Creek Company as grantee in a real estate transaction. The deed transfer document states that “for the consideration of ten (\$10.00) (and other goods and valuable consideration) dollars in hand paid, convey and warrant to The Bear Creek Company, a corporation, the grantee, the following described real estate: Lots six (6) and seven (7), Block Seventy-Six (76) of A.A. Denny’s Extension to Terry’s 1st.” The document was filed for the record at the request of Max Hardman, a notary public with the firm of Reed & Hardman and one of

the five trustees of the newly formed Bear Creek Company. The 1910 *Polk's Seattle City Directory* lists Mr. Hardman as a resident of the Sorrento Hotel. The Bear Creek Company does not appear to have ever established or operated offices in Seattle.

In November of 1910, Samuel Rosenberg was listed as the owner of the Sorrento Hotel property on King County tax rolls; however, The Bear Creek Company paid the property taxes. In March of 1915, Sam Rosenberg paid the property taxes for the Sorrento Hotel and signed for the owner, which was identified as The Bear Creek Company. By 1920, four years after Samuel Rosenberg's death the property taxes were paid by the Manhattan Investment Company. The executor of the Samuel Rosenberg Estate was Joseph Levinson, president of the Manhattan Investment Co. The *Polk's Seattle City Directory* for 1920 and for 1921 list Mrs. Samuel Rosenberg as residing at 1005 Terry Avenue – the Sorrento Hotel address.

Rosenberg appears to have traded ownership of the hotel land parcel for “goods and valuable consideration” – some 240 acres of pear orchards in the Rogue River valley of Jackson County near Medford, Oregon. Known as the Bear Creek Orchards in reference to a nearby stream, the orchards were initially operated by a manager under Rosenberg's supervision. Rosenberg's two sons - David and Harry Holmes – who had both been trained in agricultural studies at Cornell University became actively involved with the operation of the orchards in 1914. After Rosenberg's death in 1916, they took over all of the orchard operations. They specialized in the Comice pears – renamed Royal Riviera – and expanded the orchards and plant facilities due to strong export trade to markets in San Francisco, the East Coast and grand hotels and restaurants in Europe. The business flourished during the 1920s; however, due to the Great Depression these markets died out. By the mid-1930s they had established an innovative mail-order business and a “fruit-of-the-month” club – that would evolve to become one of the nation's oldest and most successful catalog mail-order companies. The business has been widely known for over seven decades as “Harry & David.”

Vernon Frederick Pavey (1882-1966)

Various articles and publications identify V.F. Pavey as the owner and proprietor of the Sorrento Hotel “since January 1915.” However, it is unclear exactly what the extent of his ownership position may have been as tax records indicate that Mr. Rosenberg, Bear Creek Orchards and/or Rosenberg's estate retained ownership of the hotel property until sometime after 1920. A Capital Stock certificate for The Hotel Sorrento Co. dated December 1, 1914 identifies V.P. Pavey as a shareholder and company official; brochure materials published in the late 1910s and early 1920s identify him alternatively as The Sorrento Hotel proprietor and manager *and* The Sorrento Hotel Co. president and general manager. He is known to have resided at the hotel (with his wife and his mother) between 1914 and 1918 and then later between c.1923 until 1927. By the early 1920s, possibly after the resolution of Mr. Rosenberg's estate, V.P. Pavey appears to have gained ownership control and was heavily involved in the management and promotion of the hotel.

Vernon Frederick Pavey was born on an 1100 acre farm near Leesburg, Ohio in 1882. He graduated from Ohio State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1904. He went on to earn a law degree in 1906 and was admitted to Ohio Bar. In April 1909, after undertaking some farming endeavors, he migrated to the Pacific Coast and settled in Seattle, where his mother was already living. He was admitted to the Washington Bar in 1910, but it is not known if he ever actively practiced law.

V.F. Pavey & Company was incorporated November 20, 1912 for the varied purposes of real estate investment and the development of various kinds of properties, as well as to conduct general farming, stock raising, fruit farming, agricultural and irrigation businesses. The purpose of the company was

also to deal in insurance and buy, sell, lease, own and otherwise deal in the stocks of other corporations.

Articles of Incorporation for the Hotel Sorrento Co. were recorded on November 27, 1914 and stock certificates were issued in early December 1914. The purposes of the corporation included the intention “to conduct a general hotel business; to buy, sell, lease, own or in any wise acquire for investment, all kinds of property, real, personal and mixed.” The corporation was initially headed by Frank H. Holzmeimer, who subsequently lived in and managed the hotel from 1915 until 1919. V.F. Pavey served as Secretary-Treasurer until assuming the position of the company president in 1920 when the *Polk’s Seattle City Directory* identified him as the president and general manager of the Sorrento Hotel Co. In May of 1915, Pavey and Holzmeimer also recorded Articles of Incorporation for The Sorrento Club the purposes of which were described as “a social club: the encouraging and fostering of literary and social development of the members...to hold real and personal property.” The establishment of the club may be related to State liquor laws; however, there is no indication that this social club was formally or openly operated.

V.F. Pavey & Co., Inc. also advertised on the cover of the 1916 *Polk’s Seattle City Directory*. An advertisement in the real estate department of the directory noted that the company possessed capital stock worth \$500,000. It stated that the company owned, leased, operated or handled “acreage, waterfront, city additions, business blocks, irrigated lands, income ranches, modern city homes, manufacturing plants, income business properties, tide lands and factory sites, timber lands, *first class hotels* and apartments and a magnificent railroad terminal site.”

A front page article published in the *Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce* in July 1923 stated that Pavey became the owner and proprietor of the Hotel Sorrento in January 1915. A 1924 publication stated that he “took over the Sorrento in 1915.” However, in March of 1915, Sam Rosenberg paid the property taxes for the Sorrento Hotel and signed for the owner, which was identified as The Bear Creek Company and in 1920, four years after Samuel Rosenberg’s death, the property taxes were paid by the executor of the Samuel Rosenberg Estate. Thus, these claims appear to be exaggerations. Given his various business ventures and the range of real estate interests, V.F. Pavey appears to have been a major investor in the property who gained controlling interest sometime after the Rosenberg estate was settled in the early 1920s.

Pavey wrote two promotional brochures for the hotel that were published during the late 1910s and early 1920s. The brochures are very similar in text and content with the primary variation being that the later document includes color lithograph illustrations, different graphic details and telephone numbers. During the mid-1920s when Pavey operated the hotel it served as the recreational and residential headquarters for the ship’s officers involved with naval maneuvers on Puget Sound. Pavey is said to have enjoyed hunting, mountaineering and motoring; his summers were often devoted to driving naval visitors, tourists, hotel guests and friends around Seattle, the State and Pacific Northwest.

By the mid-1920s, Pavey was described as a successful agriculturist. He reportedly owned choice view and residential properties in Seattle and was actively involved in various stock raising and orcharding enterprises. He owned and operated productive irrigated apple orchards, strawberry, asparagus and alfalfa ranches at Richland and Kennewick in eastern Washington. Products from these orchards and ranches were served to patrons of the Sorrento Hotel. One of these enterprises was the Lower Yakima Orchard & Vineyard Co. He also owned and operated the Seattle Veneer and Box Company and reportedly designed and built special automatic machinery used for the cutting and manufacture of thin wood veneers. The equipment utilized improved methods that eliminated waste and provided faster and more economical production of various veneer products.

No information has been obtained to indicate that V.F. Pavey played a direct role in the acquisition of the Bear Creek Orchards by Samuel Rosenberg, nor is there any indication that Pavey had any direct ownership interest in the Bear Creek Orchards. However, Mr. Pavey was involved with various orchards and agricultural enterprises in the Pacific Northwest, as well as various commercial and real estate investments including the Hotel Sorrento Co.; thus, he may have had some involvement in this business transaction.

Pavey's association with the Sorrento Hotel appears to have ended around 1928 for unknown reasons, most likely related to his financial position. His brief obituary was published in the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* on August 24, 1966 and included no mention of the Sorrento Hotel or his involvement with orchards or other agricultural activities. He was merely described as an attorney and real estate broker and as the owner of V.F. Pavey Real Estate in the San Juan Islands.

Rookwood Pottery – Historic Context

The art pottery movement in America began in the 1870s and was hastened by the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. The movement popularized the production of primarily handmade art pottery pieces that were designed and decorated by artists and produced as art objects. Hundreds of companies produced pieces of art pottery between 1870 and the 1940s. Rookwood Pottery of Cincinnati, Ohio was established in 1880 at the outset of the American Arts and Crafts Movement and is considered to have been one of the most innovative and influential art pottery companies in the United States. By the mid-1880s Rookwood pieces began to be recognized for superiority of workmanship, creativity and the use of ingenious rich glazes and surface treatments.

A major artistic accomplishment for Rookwood came in 1889 when the company was invited to exhibit its wares at the Paris Exposition Universelle and the Exhibition of American Art Industry in Philadelphia. By the mid-1890s, the company had gained wide international renown and participated in numerous prestigious expositions as works produced by the Rookwood studio of professional artists won top awards, including a Grand Prix at the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1900.

Rookwood wall plaques began to be produced as early as 1896 through the experimental work of the architectural faience department. Most of the earliest plaques were decorated with copies of well-known paintings by European masters. Rookwood began to fabricate decorative architectural tiles in 1901 and by 1903 Rookwood tiles began to be used in New York City subway station designs. After 1904, as the distinctive Rookwood vellum glaze was perfected, vellum scenic landscape tiles became an important Rookwood product. The most important years for the production of architectural faience were 1903 to 1913. Rookwood tile and faience products included mantels, mantel facings, wall panels, drinking fountains, architectural reliefs for building exteriors, and plain and decorated tiles. Tiles were made in sizes ranging from 2 x 3 inches to 12 x 18 inches. During the peak period of production, some thirty different colored glazes were used, typically with a matte finish. Reportedly, 145 different tiles designs were produced as well as hundreds of special tiles for borders and other decorative uses.

By 1904, Rookwood products were sold in over 100 retail outlets nationwide and available through a mail-order catalogue. Around 1907 Rookwood began to actively undertake large architectural commissions. Murals, wall plaques and decorative tiles produced by Rookwood were used to adorn the interior and exterior of public buildings, train stations, banks and various commercial enterprises including hotels.

By 1907, Rookwood tiles and mantels were advertised (in the AIA Exhibit of Architecture and the Allied Arts catalog) by William W. Kellogg, the agent for Z.C. Miles & Piper Co. in Seattle and the Kellogg Studios in Portland, Oregon. By 1907 or 1908, Kellogg operated a studio, showroom and tile distributor business in the Moore Theater Building that became known as the Kellogg Studios. William Kellogg was the major local supplier of Rookwood tile as well as tile products made by other important American art pottery and tile fabricators including Grueby Faience Company of Boston, Ernest Batchelder of Pasadena and Mercer Tile Works of Doylestown, Pennsylvania. William Kellogg is known to have provided art pottery tile products and layout designs for specially commissioned Rookwood fireplace surrounds at the Sorrento Hotel, the unidentified Oregon Hotel in Portland and the New Washington Hotel (1908, Josephinum) in Seattle. Reportedly, the Oregon Hotel included a tile fireplace surround that was decorated with a scenic view of Mount Hood. The now destroyed Totem Lounge at the New Washington Hotel (Josephinum) included a major tile commission; an elaborate mantel and over mantel incorporating stylized Haida masks, tiles decorated with a scenic view of Mount Rainier and polychromatic faience totems flanked by tile clad walls with stylized trees.

An article in a 1911 edition of *Pacific Builder and Engineer*, described an exhibit of products available from W.W. Kellogg, Inc. The exhibit “features Rookwood tiles and faience, Moravian Tiles and mosaics and Giannini glass mosaics, all of which William W. Kellogg, Inc. is the exclusive northwest agent.” The company is said to have specialized in the decorative use of tiles and faience and the “laying out of fireplace and other tile work to conform to architectural details and harmonize in style and color with specified decorative schemes.” The company is said to have carried the largest commercial stock in the region, specializing in the highest quality products. Kellogg reported having supplied tile products and installation services for various unidentified projects in Washington, Oregon, California, Montana, Idaho and Wyoming. Other Seattle installations are believed to have included the interior decorating studios of the Frederick & Nelson Store (Rialto Building, destroyed) and the tile floors and window bulkheads at Bauer’s Chocolate Shop (then located at 1208 Second Avenue).

A matte vellum green tile fireplace surround and scenic landscape tile panel for the over mantel were specifically commissioned for the Sorrento Hotel main lobby. The tilework is known to be Rookwood products provided and installed by W.W. Kellogg, Inc. The over mantel includes distinctive decorated tiles depicting an Italian garden scene. Rookwood is known to have been commissioned to create site specific faience tile fireplace surround for the library of the John Leary residence constructed between 1904 and 1907. Executed by Rookwood artist John Wareham, it includes tiles depicting a scenic view of Mount Hood with the Columbia River in the foreground and is similar in character to the scenic tile panel commissioned for the Sorrento Hotel. It is believed that John Wareham executed the Sorrento panel, as well. The Leary residence also includes a Rookwood tile panel depicting a group of swans that is located in a guest bedroom and a deep Rookwood tile frieze depicting water babies and mermaid-like children that was commissioned for Mrs. Leary’s bathroom.

John Hamilton Delaney “Dee” Wareham (1871-1954) is believed to have been the Rookwood artist responsible for the execution of the vellum scenic landscape tiles created for the Sorrento Hotel main lobby fireplace over mantel. Born in Grand Ledge Michigan, Wareham is considered to have been one of Rookwood’s finest designers of architectural commissions. He was one of 225 artists or decorators that worked for Rookwood between 1880 and 1967, when the last Rookwood production plant ceased operations. Wareham worked as a decorator for Rookwood from 1893 until 1954, and is known for depicting ships, portraits, bird and floral images and scenic landscapes. He won a bronze metal at the St. Louis Exposition of 1904, served as president of Cincinnati Art Club between 1904 and 1906 and as Vice-president and then President of the Rookwood Pottery Company after 1934.

Bibliographic References

Hanford, C.H. *Seattle and Environs 1852-1924*. Chicago: Pioneer Historical Pub. Co.1924. [V. F. Pavey biography, p. 556]

Kovel, Ralph and Terry. *Kovel's American Art Pottery*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1993.

Kreisman, Lawrence and Mason, Glenn. *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Pacific Northwest*. Portland, Oregon: Timber Press, 2007.

Ochsner, Jeffery Karl, ed. *Shaping Seattle Architecture, A Historical Guide to the Architects*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994, 1998.

Ochsner, Jeffery Karl and Andersen, Dennis Alan. *Distant Corner: Seattle Architects and the Legacy of H.H. Richardson*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003.

Polk's Seattle City Directory [1890-1930]

Newspaper & Magazine Articles:

"A Prominent Wedding" *Seattle Daily Press*, October 1, 1888.

"Death of Lazarus Kline" *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, April 17, 1891, pg.8.

"Apartment Hotels in New York City" *The Architectural Record*, January 1903, Vol. XIII.

----- *Pacific Builder and Engineer*, February 2, 1907, pg 14.

"Seven Story Hotel under Construction on Madison Street" *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, April 10, 1908.

----- *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, April 19, 1908, pg.12, col.1.

"Sorrento Apartments" *Western Architect*, July 1909.

"The W.W. Kellogg Exhibit" *Pacific Builder and Engineer*, January 28, 1911, Vol. No. 4, pg. 42.

"Pioneer Seattle Clothier Dies on Farm in Oregon" *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, October 2, 1916, p.1-2.

"Apartment Hotels are Much needed in Northwest" *Washington State Architect*, August 1921, Vol. 11, No. 9.

"Seattle Leaders: Hotel Sorrento (V.F. Pavey)" *Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce*, July 17, 1923, pg.1.

"Hotel Sorrento Wins Favor with New Furnishings" *Hotel News of the West*, November 21, 1925, pg.1.

"The Sorrento" *Town Crier*, December 19, 1931.

"Sorrento Hotel Changes Hands" *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, October 23, 1937.

Jackson, Leslie. "The Sauntering Seattlite – The Sorrento Hotel" *Seattlife*, Feb 1940 pp.57-59.

"Sorrento Hotel Sold" *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, July 10, 1960.

"Hotel's 'Air Base' is Deactivated" *Seattle Times*, February 26, 1961, Pictorial Section, pp.10-11.

"Dunbar Restaurant remodel – opening" *Seattle Times*, July 23, 1961.

"Dunbar Restaurant ceases operations" *Seattle Times*, July 8, 1964.

"Sorrento Hotel Sold" *Seattle Times*, October 30, 1964.

"V.F. Pavey" (Obituary), *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, August 24, 1966, p.32.

"Looking for Harry and David" *Pacific Northwest*, Dec 1984, Vol.18, No.10, p. 32-36.

"A Sorrento Revival" *Architectural Digest*, September 2003.

Public Records:

Building Plan & Permit Records. City of Seattle, Department of Planning & Development, Microfilm Library. [Post -1943 records available only]

"Harlan Thomas" Architect files. University of Washington libraries, Special Collections.

Harlan Thomas Photographic Collection c.1910-1940, University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections.

King County Articles of Incorporation Records (c.1885-1920). Washington State Archives - Puget Sound Regional Branch, Bellevue, Washington.

King County Assessment Rolls (1900-1920). Washington State Archives - Puget Sound Regional Branch, Bellevue, Washington.

King County Property Record Cards (c.1937-1972). Washington State Archives - Puget Sound Regional Branch, Bellevue, Washington.

Krafft, Kate & LaFever, Alison. "Historic Property Survey Report: Downtown Commercial Core – Seattle, Washington" 2006.

Other Sources of Information:

Krafft, Carl A., Seattle WA. - Oral Informant (Re: U.S. Air Force Hotel Use).

Hotel Sorrento - Seattle's Exclusive Hostelry (by V.F. Pavey) c.1919. [Published promotional brochure, MOHAI library]

Seattle and the Sorrento Hotel (by V.F. Pavey, Sorrento Hotel Co.) c.1920. [Revised Published promotional brochure with color images, UW Libraries, Special Collections]

The Sorrento Story published by the Sorrento Hotel, 900 Madison Street, Seattle, Washington, 2003.
[Limited edition bound publication.]

Nicholson and Kovalchick Architects, “Sorrento Hotel Historic Elements Survey”, July 9, 2008.
Prepared for the Landmarks Preservation Board for its meeting of July 16, 2008.

The features of the Landmark to be preserved include:

The site, the exterior of the building, and the following elements of the interior: the entry lobby and reception desk, the elevator lobby, and the Fireside Room.

Issued: July 30, 2008

Karen Gordon
City Historic Preservation Officer

cc: First Hill Investors, LLC
Jon Burke
Melody McCutcheon
Sorrento Hotel
David Peterson
Deborah Gibby
Kate Krafft
Stephen Lee, LPB
Stella Chao, DON
Diane Sugimura, DPD
Cheryl Mosteller, DPD
Ken Mar, DPD