



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 11/09

Name and Address of Property: **Washington Hall**
153 14th Avenue

Legal Description: The East 2 feet of lot 5 and all of 6, 7, and 8 in Block 1 of Lawler's Addition to the City of Seattle, as per plat recorded in Volume 1 of Plats, on page 214, in King County, Washington.

At the public meeting held on January 7, 2009, the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Washington Hall at 153 14th Avenue as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following standards for designation of SMC 25.12.350:

C. It is associated in a significant way with a significant aspect of the cultural, political, or economic heritage of the community, City, state or nation; and

D. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, period, or of a method of construction.

DESCRIPTION

Existing Site Conditions

Washington Hall is sited in the Squire Park Neighborhood in Seattle's Central Area. The neighborhood consists of mixed low-rise commercial units and single-family residential property. The neighborhood was part of the "Model Cities" urban renewal program, developed 1969-1974, which included multi-family housing units and a park a few blocks east of Washington Hall, near Yesler Way. One block southwest of the subject property, along Yesler Way between 12th and 13th Avenues, are a King County Records facility (north side) and the Gatzert Elementary School (south side). One block north of the subject property on 14th Avenue and Spruce Street is the King County Youth Service Center building, where Juvenile Court, Services, and Detention Center are located. Further north along 14th Avenue and Jackson Street is Seattle University. To the east, along 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th Avenues are newly constructed apartment buildings and town-homes.

Washington Hall is located on the northwest corner of the intersection of 14th Avenue and East Fir Street, on the southeast corner of the block bounded by those streets on the east and south, respectively, as well as East Spruce Street on the north and 12th Avenue on the west. The site consists

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The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

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of Lots 5-6-7-8, Block 1, Lawlers Addition, to form a parcel of 15,600 square feet or 0.36 acres. Directly west of the hall are several parcels currently owned by the Corporation of the Catholic Archbishop, including two paved surface parking lots (adjacent to the subject property), a Vietnamese Catholic Church, parish hall, rectory and several other related buildings. The rest of the block is a mix of single-family residential and one to two-story commercial properties.

The site slopes down slightly to the south, approximately 3' grade from the northeast to the southeast corner. The hall fronts 14th Avenue and is bounded by paved 6' wide concrete sidewalks on the south and east sides (set back 8' from the curb), and a paved surface parking lot on the north side. The parking lot measures 46' by 131'. A 1937 King County tax assessment of the property indicates a small garage, with a wood shed-roof, occupied the northeast corner of this parking lot. Early photographs from this period confirm this, but at some point mid-century it was removed. A chain link fence separates the property along the west side and part of the north side from adjacent church property. Two street trees are located in front of the hall along 14th Avenue along with two small palm trees in raised brick planters on either side of the entrance walkway. Two additional street trees are located in the southwest corner of the property, one along the Fir Street side and the other at the back of the building.

Original Building – Designed and As-Built

Building Exterior

Washington Hall is a three-story, double wood frame structure with a brick veneer skin. The design is an eclectic mix of Mission Revival and commercial styles. It has a rectangular footprint and measures 61' by 128', with a maximum roof height of 46'. The roof is pitched over the main hall and slopes down to a flat section located at the west end of the building. The pitched portion is shingle, and the flat section is combination tar and gravel. Two large skylights, located at this end, act as the main light source for the back portion of the building. The hall has a concrete foundation and partial basement, also located in the west end of the building.

The overall massing of the building reflects three basic functions defined in Voorhees' original floor plans: private fraternal lodge rooms located on the first floor, a large public "dancing hall" located on the floors above, and boarding rooms in the back west section of the building. Throughout the design of the hall, arched or semi-curved openings are used to indicate public spaces and square cut openings private. Attributes that contribute to the overall design concept include deeply recessed, arched entrances, a formal façade with large parapet and symmetrical composition of windows that inform upon a multiplicity of internal functions. Washington Hall is an interpretation of popular early-twentieth century styles.

East Elevation (14th Avenue)

The primary entrances to the fraternal lodge rooms and dance hall are located on the east side of the building along 14th Avenue. The east façade features a large mission style parapet with painted white metal coping and sided with plaster, and is the only side painted a bright red. Bracketed eaves, covered with semi-cylindrical metal tiles, and concrete block pedestals, flank either side. Centered within the parapet are a floral cast relief design and two panels that give the name of the hall and date it was built. Voorhees' original drawings note the panels are galvanized iron. At the center of the roofline, two arched, one-over-one light, single-hung windows bisect the exposed eaves cornice and provide a light source for the unfinished attic. Semi-curved window surrounds add a decorative element and reinforce the building's original white on red color scheme. The architect's original drawings indicate that decorative window surrounds were to be placed over each window on the 14th Avenue and Fir Street elevations, but early photographs show only these two in place.

Two groups of three arched, one-over-one, single-hung windows are located below the eaves and provide light for the interior balconied area, which overlooks the dance hall. Below these, several windows provide light for the second floor box office area: a centrally placed group of three windows (an arched, one-over-one fixed light window, flanked by two smaller one-over-one, single-hung windows) and two, one-over-one fixed light windows on either side of this group. The central semicircular light is decorated with a fan pattern. The use of upper arched lights is repeated along the Fir Street and parking lot elevations to indicate the dance hall area.

The main entrance to the hall is set within a deep porch, under a massive semicircular masonry arch. An early print of the hall shows a bracketed, metal tile, shed roof over the entrance, similar to the design of the eaves. A short series of concrete steps leads visitors to the porch beneath, where one set of double doors leads into the first floor fraternal rooms, and to the right, another set of double doors leads up to the dance hall on the second floor. A concrete entrance ramp, with a welded metal handrail, provides handicap access to the building. Flanking each side of the main entrance are two, one-over-one fixed light windows: one provides light for the main office, located in the southeast corner, and the other illuminates the stairwell leading up to the second floor, at the northeast corner. Two more single fixed light windows at the first floor level complete the symmetrical design of the east façade. The early print shows these windows were originally stain-glass.

South Elevation (Fir Street)

The south wall faces Fir Street and measures 128' long, with a roof height of approximately 46' at the east end, which slopes down to 37' at the west end. The bracketed eaves continue along the entire roofline, flanked by concrete block pedestals. 1937 tax assessment photographs show a second parapet was located along the Fir Street side. It was constructed in the same Mission style as the 14th Avenue parapet, with a large finial placed at the crest. The floral cast relief design at the center, however, was replaced on the south side with a shamrock pattern. This parapet is no longer extant.

Unlike the front elevation, which succumbs to a stricter symmetry, the Fir Street elevation's window arrangement gives a better indication of the hall's internal layout. There are three distinct fenestration arrangements, marking each segment of the building's organization. At the east end, arched, one-over-one, single-hung windows indicate the beginning of the dance hall and balcony areas, and the first floor lodge office is identified by a group of three one-over-one, single hung windows. The middle segment consists of three groups of windows, representing the three levels of the interior lodge halls. The uppermost group is a series of five arched, one-over-one, single-hung windows. These provide light for the balcony area above the dance hall floor. The middle group is a series of five fixed light windows, which provide light for main dance hall area. The bottom group is a series of five one-over-one, single-hung windows, which provide light for the main lodge room. [Note: In this description, the names main lodge room/lower hall/lodge hall are used interchangeably, and refer to the main fraternal meeting hall located on the first floor.] At the west end, one-over-one, single hung windows supply light for the boarding rooms.

Two entrances lead to the boarding rooms and lodge kitchen. Like the front entrance, these are also located under deeply set semicircular masonry arches. A short series of wooden steps leads visitors to a porch beneath each entrance. The right portal provides entry to the lodge kitchen, via a single wood frame door set back from the steps, and street level access to the basement through a set of adjoining, double wood frame doors. A decorated steel fire escape, located between the first floor windows and the entrance to the lodge kitchen, provides access to the roof.

North Elevation

The north wall, bordered by the parking lot, is secondary. The fenestration is similar to the Fir Street elevation, although with a less formal grouping and smaller windows at the west end. The only section that mirrors the south wall is the series of windows that provide light for the dance hall. There are two plain entrances located at the west end of the building: the left one leads down to the basement, and the right one used to provide access to the boarding room kitchen. A plain steel fire escape, located between these doors, offers roof access. Located 14' to the west of the fire escape, a brick chimney connects to the main boiler in the basement. A bracketed eaves course runs the entire length of the roofline.

West Elevation

The west wall is also secondary. A total of four windows (centrally located); one at the second floor, one at the third floor, and two at the first floor, provide light for the interior stairway at the back of the building. Like the north and south walls, the brick is exposed.

Building Interior

Like Masonic lodges, the interior organization of fraternal lodges often has a specific hierarchy of primary and secondary functions. Although Washington Hall functions more like a settlement house, than Masonic lodge, its original plan illustrates a deliberate separation of private (primary) and public (secondary) space. It is divided into three units; private gathering spaces for the fraternal members are on the first floor, public dance hall/performance area on the second floor, and boarding rooms are in the rear. These units were designed to be completely separate and autonomous, and access to all three could only be gained via exterior entrances.

First Floor

From the 14th Avenue entrance, members immediately enter a foyer with painted white, wood paneled wainscoting and parquet wood floor. The foyer connects to a hallway that leads members to rooms along the north wall. All the rooms on this floor, except the kitchen and the bathrooms, have their original wood paneled wainscoting and wood floors. The main office, a 22'4" by 21' carpeted room, occupies the southeast corner. Originally used as a library, the room still has its dark wood paneled walls.

From the foyer, double doors lead into the lodge's lower hall, where members meet to discuss the order's business. The dual ceremonial halls, lower lodge hall and upper dance hall, are centrally placed because they represent the focal point of building, and the remaining activities defer. This lower hall is situated along the building's south wall, and measures 38' by 55'. A 6" high, 3' deep wood riser runs along all four walls, except where broken by two double doors at the east end of the hall, a single door on the north side and two single doors on the west side that provide entry to the kitchen area. Three paneled box beams cross the ceiling, ending in brackets along the south and north walls.

The rectangular shaped kitchen measures approximately 34' by 12'. This kitchen has also been remodeled, although it contains much of the original cabinetry. Voorhees' drawings show that this was originally split into three spaces: a kitchen and connecting pantry at the south end and a separate locker room at the north end. Members could enter the locker room from the lower lodge hall via the north door. At some point, the kitchen was extended at the north end, getting rid of the locker room, and an additional door along the north end was added to provide access to the rooms along the north wall. The small pantry, located at the south end of the kitchen, provides access to the lower lodge hall via a south door. Kitchen staff could also enter the building from an exterior door along Fir Street, which opens to this little pantry and then the kitchen beyond.

Along the north wall of the building are bathrooms and several areas currently used for storage. At the western end, accessed from the original north hallway by two separate wooden doors, are two staging areas. The larger, open space, according to Voorhees' drawings, was originally the "billiard room". A door from this room now leads to the west section of the building, however, originally there was no interior connection between the fraternal lodge rooms on the first floor and the boarding rooms. The second area is smaller, and includes a storage closet and stairs, which lead to an upper half-story where lodge member lockers are now located. Originally this area was two separate rooms, labeled the "ante" and "waiting" rooms on Voorhees' drawings. Facing the north hallway are a women's and men's bathroom, between which is another locked room currently used for storage. This locked room is labeled the "smoking room" on Voorhees' drawings, and reportedly still contains the original wooden bar and fixtures shown in those drawings. Although the men's bathroom, located in the northeast corner of the building, is original, the women's bathroom was added more recently.

Second Floor

The second floor "dancing hall" is accessed from the first floor landing (14th Avenue entrance), via a double set of exterior doors and two flights of wide, wooden stairs. Additional access to the stairway is provided via the first floor foyer, by a single framed door along the east wall just north of the main entrance. The original floors, wood paneling, handrails and upper balustrades are still in place and in relatively good condition. The stairs lead to a rectangular shaped lobby along the east wall of the building. Voorhees' drawings show the lobby originally contained a coat "check room" with a claim window, and a large "women's dressing room" with two bathroom stalls and entrances on both the lobby and dance hall sides. Both rooms have since been altered, and now are two storage spaces and a bathroom. The claim window remains unaltered.

A set of double sliding doors leads visitors from the lobby onto the main dance hall floor. The room measures approximately 69'4" by 58'. The original wainscoting and wood floors are still intact, although the current renters have placed rugs and temporary wood pews along the floor. Four box beams cross the ceiling, ending in pilasters along the south and north walls. At the northeast and southeast corners are two original cast iron radiators, painted a silver color.

At the west end of the hall is a proscenium stage. The stage level begins 4' from the dance floor and rises approximately 13' to meet the dance hall ceiling. The width of the stage measures 33'8" with a depth of 14'3", and the widths of the wings measure an additional 12'. A storage area beneath the stage, used as dressing rooms for the performers, stands 7'11" high and 33'8" wide. The religious organization that is currently utilizing the dance hall as a place of worship has erected temporary barriers, which cover the proscenium arch and the original steps that lead up the stage and down to the storage area beneath. The original sockets for the exposed bulb lighting system, along the curve of the proscenium arch and the convex surface of the stage ceiling, is still intact.

Third Floor

From the second floor lobby, two short flights of stairs (one at the north wall and one at the south) lead visitors up one level to the horseshoe shaped balcony area. Originally this area was completely open, but recently a temporary wall has been erected, abutting the east railing of the balcony, to create a smaller service area for the church below. Openings in the wall (slabs of particle board set on sliding rails, bolted to the ceiling) allow visitors access to the balconies along the north and south walls. The original auditorium seating, plush faux-velvet and cast iron chairs, is still in place. At the west end, stairwells lead the visitor back down to the stage area and/or dance hall floor.

West Section

The boarding rooms are located in the west rear section of the building. A metal security door along the Fir Street wall provides access to the enclosed porch, under which another metal security door

allows tenants entrance to the building. This section was originally designed to be completely separate from the main building. The first floor contained a parlor, dining room, kitchen with door to the parking lot, smoking room and a “chamber,” presumably for the building manager. The upper two floors contained 18 single room “chambers,” with small closets, and two bathrooms for renters. A 10” thick firewall, which ran the width of the building, formerly isolated this area from the meeting halls in the front. This section of the hall burned in 1970 and has subsequently been extensively remodeled. A door, next to the main lodge kitchen, now connects the meeting hall rooms to this rear area from the inside.

The three floors of this west section are situated around a light well and sky lit stairwell. Although the light well has been rebuilt, both it and the skylight are original to the design as indicated by Voorhees' drawings. Although the footprints of the first floor parlor (southeast corner) and stairway (west wall, center) remain, a new parlor and stairway were rebuilt after the fire. The old boarding room kitchen (northeast corner), dining room, and chamber and smoking room (northwest corner) were not rebuilt. These spaces are now an open common room (northeast corner) and enclosed storage space (northwest corner). The Jamaatul Ikhlas Muslim community center currently rents the parlor and common room. The second floor contains nine small studio rooms, with closets, and shares a single bath. The third floor contains eight rooms and a shared bath. The hall's single boarder currently occupies the largest room, located along the south wall. However, at some point it was used as a ritual space by the Masons, as indicated by the molded decorative features that line the walls.

Alterations

The subject building has gone through several large and small alterations in the last 99 years. The following specific changes are documented in Voorhees' original 1907 drawings, historic photographs, and/or witnessed by the nomination applicants during a recent tour of the property (September 20, 2007). The Sons of Haiti made the majority of these changes during their period of ownership, 1973-2007:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Alteration</u>
1920s	14 th Ave and Fir St entryways altered
1949	Major earthquake takes out 2 nd parapet and finials
1970s	Boarding room remodel
1970s	1 st floor waiting room area remodeled
1970s	Air vents in 1 st floor lodge hall windows
1970s	Concrete entrance ramp added to 14 th Ave entrance
1994	Danish Brotherhood Sign on exterior removed
2000s	2 nd floor stage altered
2000s	Interior balcony area altered
2000s	Metal tile on side eaves replaced with sheet metal
unknown	1 st floor lodge kitchen area remodeled
unknown	1 st floor bathroom remodeled

A 1914 receipt from the Danish Brotherhood, includes a print of Washington Hall as its letterhead. That print shows an elaborate entrance for the 14th Avenue façade. A metal tile shed roof, painted faux pilasters, and large stylized brackets enliven the entrance and cast the arched porch in deep shadow. Voorhees' drawings indicate that all three entrance portals, along the east and south walls, were intended to have metal tile, and bracketed shed roofs. Sometime between 1914 and 1937 the entryway on the 14th Avenue façade lost its shed roof, brackets and painted pilasters, and the arched

porch became exposed. The 1937 tax assessment photos show all three entrances without roofs and having exposed arches.

In 1949, Seattle experienced a 7.1 earthquake, which, it is believed, caused the loss of the second Fir Street parapet and finials. Unlike the 14th Avenue parapet, which is backed by the pitched roof, the Fir Street parapet stood separate from the roof and was supported only by a single wood beam. After the loss of the Fir Street parapet, the eaves were extended along the full length of the wall, and brackets were repositioned to create a more uniform look.

In 1970 a fire destroyed portions of the back west section of the hall, where the boarding rooms were located. After they purchased the property in 1973, the Sons of Haiti began a long series of renovations and remodels to this area. Changes to the main hall include: interior connection between the meeting halls in the front and this rear area, the boarded up porch on the exterior entrance, bars on the exterior door and interior windows, and remodeled exterior staircase (ramp was added). The Sons of Haiti have also carried out extensive remodeling of the west section of the building, including; significantly altering first floor plan, partial removal of plaster work from the walls along the third floor, exposed ceilings where water or birds have caused damage and see-through plastic viewing windows for the light well.

Two of the smaller staging areas along the first floor have been altered, probably in the 1970s, to create one larger area with a storage closet and stairs leading up to a ½ story where members lockers are now located. Original drawings placed the member's lockers in small room adjacent to the original lodge kitchen. The lodge kitchen was also remodeled, incorporating this old locker room, but it is unclear when.

Along the Fir Street wall, the uppermost lights of the first story windows (looking into the main lodge hall) have been replaced with air vents.

Thomas Maul's 1994 Master's Thesis, shows a contemporary photograph of the hall with the Danish Brotherhood sign still extant. This sign was located on the 14th Avenue façade, below the exposed eave cornice. Like the Washington Hall sign above it, original drawings indicate that it was galvanized iron. Sometime between then and now the sign has been removed.

The current tenants of the dance hall have altered both the stage area and eastern portion of the balcony. The much of the proscenium stage has been temporary covered up to create a smaller altar space. They have also erected a temporary wall that separates the eastern end of the balcony area, in order to create a smaller worship space there as well.

Recently, the metal tiles that remained on the south eaves were replaced by sheet metal. The Sons of Haiti were told by the fire department to remove these tiles, because they caused a potential threat to passers-by. The north eaves are completely open and are starting to lose their brackets.

Original drawings show the first floor bathroom to be much smaller than it is currently. More stalls were added, and its walls were brought flush with the hall, creating its current L-shape. The date of its remodel is unknown.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Danish Origins

The Danish Brotherhood in America commissioned the construction of Washington Hall in 1907 to house the needs of its growing fraternal lodge. For some 65 years, the sturdy brick building served as a fraternal lodge and center for the social and cultural activities of Seattle's Danish immigrant population. But the hall came to symbolize something much greater for the Central District and Seattle as a whole. For nearly 100 years, Washington Hall has anchored a diverse, constantly fluctuating neighborhood in several important ways - as a popular assembly hall, as a social gathering place for the broader ethnic community, and as a well-loved venue for music and the performing arts.

The Danish Brotherhood in America is a fraternal benefit society founded in 1882 by Danish veterans of the American Civil War. This organization provided its members with an array of benefits including life insurance, help in old age and sickness, and burial aid. The group is still active today, and its goals are not so different. The Brotherhood is dedicated to perpetuating Danish cultural traditions. It also provides financial support to its members in times of need, assists them in securing employment, and offers them low cost life insurance. Seattle Lodge 29 was organized April 8, 1888. At the time of its establishment, the group had only eleven charter members and was the first Danish Brotherhood in America lodge on the Pacific Coast. Early lodge meetings were held in the old Germania Hall at Second and Seneca, and later in Carpenters' Hall on Fourth Avenue. By 1903, the lodge had grown to 109 members and its ranks continued to expand over the next several years. The Brotherhood was ready for a new and better location.

In 1907, the organization purchased two lots at 14th Avenue and Fir Streets for \$10,000, with an option to buy one more for \$3,000. In their choice of site, the group may have been speculating on the growth of Seattle's downtown in that direction. The regrade of Jackson Street, between 1906-1908, flattened an area between Pioneer Square and 12th Avenue, improving access to various points east and south, and creating the potential for expansion of the business district. The Brotherhood believed the renewed potential of the area, adjacent to the wealthy residential neighborhood of First Hill, might strengthen the economic and cultural standing of Danish immigrants in Seattle.

Seattle architect Victor W. Voorhees was commissioned to design the new lodge hall, and Hans Pederson was contracted to build it for the price of \$22,225. This large sum was raised mainly through personal pledges from the community and fundraising by the Sisterhood Lodge. Construction began in January of 1908 and ended in May of that same year. The function of the new "Washington Hall" was multi-purpose from the outset: specifically, it provided residential boarding facilities for newly arrived Danish immigrants, meeting and social spaces for lodge members, and an income-producing dancehall and performing arts venue for the larger community.

Many Danish newcomers to Seattle landed first at Washington Hall, in need of temporary room and board at a settlement house:

...through the paper Pioneer (i.e. Den Danske Pioneer, a newspaper published in Omaha, NE and distributed nationwide), I saw this boardinghouse they advertised, Washington Hall, that used to be the Danish Hall. I found that address and it cost eight dollars a week for board and room. It was pretty nice. I stayed there two-three weeks, then I found a job on a dairy farm. That was in 1932.

Gustav Simonson, Danish immigrant, quoted in *New Land, New Lives: Scandinavian Immigrants to the Pacific Northwest*, by Janet E. Rasmussen, 1998.

Others found employment, formed enduring friendships, and met future spouses through the social events and dances sponsored by Lodge 29. In Washington Hall, the Danish community found a center for the preservation of its cultural heritage over a span of decades. The very first documented theatrical production presented at Washington Hall was, appropriately enough, a 1911 Danish-language production, *En Sondag Paa Amager* (A Sunday in Amager), presented by a new Seattle-based Danish language theater company, Harmonien. The play was “a sort of vaudeville love story with music”. Harmonien established a tradition of staging the play every 25 years. The last documented performance of the play at Washington Hall was in 1986. Lori Larsen, a daughter and granddaughter of actresses who performed in the play in 1936 and 1961, respectively, restaged the show.

Ethnic Diversity

The Central Area/North Rainier Valley area surrounding Washington Hall has been the home of a wide variety of ethnic communities, including but not limited to: African-American, Danish, Italian, Japanese, Jewish, Vietnamese, and first and second generation residents from various European countries.

Other prominent buildings that had significant ties to immigrant populations were built in the surrounding neighborhood, included the Seattle Japanese Language School, at 14th and Weller. Citizenship swearing-in ceremonies were held at that building during the mid-20th century, and there is documentation from 1918 and 1935 of the building’s rental as a polling place. Between 1914 and 1971, one of Seattle’s largest Orthodox Sephardic Jewish synagogues, Chevra Bikur Cholim, was constructed only a few blocks away. The building was purchased by the City of Seattle as part of the Model Cities Project, and it reopened as a community center, later renamed the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center, in 1974.

Washington Hall soon became a gathering place for diverse groups seeking space in which to hold religious services, cultural events, classes, or political meetings. Even today, in an unbroken tradition, the hall serves as the temporary home of the Jamaatul Ikhlas Muslim Community Center and as an Ethiopian Orthodox church.

African Americans began to frequent Washington Hall for community and cultural events very early in its history. One of the earliest documented gatherings was in June of 1918. Lillian Smith’s Jazz Band performed here for a “Grand Benefit Ball” to raise money for the NAACP.

Although racial segregation in public places, public schools, and accommodation was not legislated in Washington State, *de facto* segregation meant that the majority of African-Americans in Seattle lived, worshipped, and socialized within the Central Area and South Seattle neighborhoods. Early African-American settlers and their descendants formed mutual benefit, social, and charitable organizations to support each other socially and economically. Over the years, many of these groups rented Washington Hall for social events such as dances, meetings, and concerts.

Sephardic Jewish communities, such as the congregation that would become Ezra Bessaroth, leased Washington Hall for religious services in the building’s early days. In Jack Wertheimer’s book, *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed*, it is documented that on one occasion, the congregation was forced to vacate Washington Hall before Yom Kippur services had ended because

the space had been rented out for a dance the same evening. The building was a frequent stop for touring Yiddish language theater companies during the 1910s and 1920s.

Many of the Filipino immigrants who were drawn to opportunities in Seattle during the early 20th century were unattached men. They found a respite from loneliness at social events in places like Washington Hall, which was rented for dances that were either organized by, or were welcoming to, the Filipino community. In *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919-1941*, historian Dorothy B. Fujita-Rony notes that “Men seeking female companionship had other options in Seattle. ... as well as Washington Hall, a local meeting hall frequented by Filipina/os.”

The Filipino Youth Club held meetings and dances at Washington Hall as early as 1937. The Seattle Filipino community thus has had a long association with the building, leasing spaces in the hall since at least 1917, when financial records show a November 17th rental of the 'hall' by the 'Phillipino Club'. A 1958 Semiannual Report shows that the Danish Brotherhood placed an ad in the Filipino Forum, a local newspaper, offering the building for rental.

A small sampling of Washington Hall rentals during the first half of the 20th century included: the Sons of Israel, 1917; “Hebrews Bazaar”, 1917; the King County Auditing and recording Department (for use as a polling place), 1918; Black Star Line Library (Marcus Garvey/Universal Negro Improvement Association), 1920; Filipino Women's Club, Serbian Sisters, both 1935; 'Mr. Sakamoto', Taiyo Club, Italian Club, 1940; Finnish Women's Club, Lithuanian Workers, Croatian Fraternal Union, Filipino Community Club, all in 1941; and the Seattle Chapter of the NAACP, 1943.

In 1973, the Sons and Daughters of Haiti, an African-American Masonic Lodge, purchased the hall from the Danish Brotherhood. The change in ownership marked a major shift in the property's primary ethnic identity. Masonic Lodges were significant factors in the development of economically stable, middle-class African-American communities around the United States, and especially in the Pacific Northwest, where there was a small Black population. Masonic Lodges provided social and business networking opportunities, charity work, parties and social events, youth mentorship, college scholarships, and other forms of community activity. Becoming a Mason also involved social mobility and entry into an emerging Black middle class in the Pacific Northwest, one that valued education, home ownership, entrepreneurship, and that most American of ideals, self-improvement.

Social and Political Associations

A number of significant social and political movements of the 20th century United States are reflected in Washington Hall's diverse history. James A. Hassel, an African-American Seattleite, presented a lecture at Washington Hall on March 14, 1920, on the work of activist Marcus Garvey, activist and founder of the UNIA (United Negro Improvement Association), an early Black empowerment movement that had an international following. Hassel presented Garvey's political theories and discussed the need for Black economic self-sufficiency. A paper published by the UNIA described the meeting (see nomination application for citations and footnotes):

A Negro Activities Agent from the Department of Negro Activities attended a meeting of Seattle Negroes held in Washington Hall on March 14, 1920, which was advertised in The Searchlight, a Negro newspaper, as the Grand forum at which meeting would be presented 'The cause of unrest in Panama' and 'The Progress of the Negro Factories Corporation Boom'. From information gained at the lecture, Marcus Garvey, president, incorporated the Universal Negro Improvement Association.

As set forth in an address by James A. Hassel, Negro representative of this corporation in Seattle, the object of the organization is to build factories in the United States, Canada, West Indies, South & Central America and Africa. Throughout the lecture Hassel continued reference and comparison was made between the Japanese and the American negro, similarity being drawn between the condition of the Japanese 49 years ago and the present condition of the American negro. He set forth that the possession and operation of steamships by the colored race would mean their assuming an equal position in the world with various other races.

Washington Hall has hosted many labor union meetings. For instance, the Stove Mounters' & Steel Range Workers International Union of North America met there the first Thursday of each month during 1962.

During the Cold War era, some of the groups renting Washington Hall came under surveillance. The United States Congress House Committee on Un-American Activities published a report noting the occasion of a "Meeting on March 6, 1954, at Washington Hall sponsored by the Washington State Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born, in honor of Abner Green, executive secretary of the American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born". The documentation of this meeting became part of the information presented in hearings on "Communist Political Subversion" in 1957. Monitoring of suspect activities at Washington Hall continued for some years. A November 1963, enlarged district meeting of the Communist Party of the State of Washington was noted in the Report of the Subversive Activities Control Board.

In a 1995 UW School of Architecture master's thesis on Washington Hall is an interview with Ms. Ingeborg Kisbye, caretaker of the building from 1954 through 1970, which sheds some light on how the Danish Brotherhood regarded such activities in the building. Ms. Kisbye remembers leasing Washington Hall to a radical Communist Finnish organization and later to the Black Panthers. "The [Danish] Brotherhood did not always approve of these groups using the hall," she remembered. "Other places, however, barred them and they did provide a reliable income."

Performing Arts Venue

King County's diverse populations are well represented in the long and colorful history of Washington Hall as a venue for music, theater, and dance. The hall has an unbroken record of occupancy and rentals for entertainment and the arts since 1908.

The first documented jazz performance by a local ensemble in Seattle took place in 1918 at Washington Hall, when Lillian Smith's Jazz Band played the Grand Benefit Ball for the NAACP. In November of the following year, she again performed at Washington Hall, this time leading the Grand Ball for the Seattle Chapter of the Elks Club. "Plenty of Jazz Music by the Best Jazz Band in Town," read the ad.

Other famed African American musicians of the period performed at Washington Hall through the mid-20th century. Seattle singer Joni Metcalf remembers playing the community dance in 1951 where Billie Holiday performed. "It was a community dance," she recalled. "Our band played for the dancing, then Billie came out and did her show. I was so excited, just to be that close to her. She sang beautifully!" Other big name artists of the period, such as Duke Ellington, Mahalia Jackson, Marian Anderson and Count Basie are said to have performed at Washington Hall. Although no confirmed written documentation has not yet been found for these appearances at the hall specifically, although local newspapers do document their presence in Seattle at several other larger venues during the 1930s, 50s and 60s. A teenaged Jimi Hendrix and his band, The Rocking Kings, played what was

probably one of their first Seattle gigs at Washington Hall. A 1960 photograph of the group on stage at Washington Hall appears in Paul de Barros' history of jazz in Seattle, *Jackson Street After Hours*.

For much of its history, Central Area residents knew the building more as a dance hall with a good hardwood floor, than as a Danish fraternal lodge. Architect Victor Voorhees had labeled the second floor space as a "dancing hall" on original floor plans, and it is clear that the Danish Brotherhood always viewed it as an income-producing asset. The Brotherhood's financial records for 1916 include a \$10.00 dance license expense, and the building is referred to as a "public dance hall" in 1939 Seattle Fire Department inspection records.

The Northwest Enterprise, an early local African American newspaper, publicized weekly dances that took place at the hall during the late-1920s and early-1930s. In the "Seattle Notes and Gossip" section of the weekly, advertisements for these dances announced:

"Novelty Surprise Dance! hosted by the Auspices Metropolitan Club. Monday Night, September 16 at Washington Hall. Free Door Prizes! Music By Freda Shaw's H.F. Alexander Band."

"Get Hot, Get Hot. Make Whoopee. Past Exalted Ruler's Council No. 29. Autumn Dance. Monday Night, Sept. 23 at Washington Hall. Cecil Finley's California Stompers! Prize Waltz Contest."

"COME! BEHOLD! ENJOY! Carnival Dance. Seattle's Most Popular Dance Club. Monday Evening, October 11 at Washington Hall. Sizzlin Hot Music By Evelyn Bundy's New Five. This Dance is Gonna Be Hot!"

Bands that frequently played the hall during this period included Evelyn Bundy's New Five, Oscar Holden's Orchestra, Jazz Kings 5 and Jimmy Adams Band. *Enterprise* ads also announced several inter-racial dances held at the hall, including ones hosted by the Young Communist League in 1930 and 1931. A 1932 advertisement indicates that the dance hall was used for another type of popular entertainment as well, movies.

First Seattle Showing Bill Robinson starring in The All Negro Talking Picture: 'Harlem is Heaven'. The most sensational talking picture ever made with an all Negro cast. SEE AND HEAR BILL ROBINSON. World's Greatest Dancer...Beautiful Negro Chorus...Tuneful Song Hits...and Great Story and Romance of Harlem. Friday Night, Sept. 30 at Washington Hall. Big Dance After Show. All under auspices of Sojourner Truth Home. Admission 50¢ Time 8:30P.M.

Washington Hall hosted local dances and entertainment events of all sorts. A 1950s local Garfield High School club, the Bon Temps - founded by Carver Gayton, current director of the Northwest African-American Museum, and his friends - booked the hall for dances to the latest R&B records. Eddie Cotton, a Seattle light-heavyweight fighter, was a co-promoter of boxing matches at the hall. Public figures that were not performing artists, such as champion boxer Joe Louis, would have drawn enthusiastic crowds from Seattle's close-knit African-American community.

In more recent decades, Washington Hall's second floor space has been valued as an intimate auditorium, with its cozy curved balcony and proscenium stage. Besides jazz, rock, and punk concerts, the hall has hosted a rich array of experimental dance, performance art, and professional theater.

On the Boards, an organization of performing and visual artists, rented Washington Hall from the Sons of Haiti for twenty fruitful years, from 1978 - 1998. During this period, many renowned dance groups and performing artists graced its stage, and emerging artists premiered or refined their work there. Seattle first saw two world-class performers, Spalding Gray and Meredith Monk, in the Central District building. Local choreographers such as Pat Graney and Mark Morris launched national careers on its cramped stage. Early works were given there by artists who later went on to receive the prestigious MacArthur Foundation genius awards, including sound artist and kinetic sculptor Trimpin, and choreographer Bill T. Jones.

Through the 1980s and 1990s, the hall continued to be rented out for unaffiliated touring artists and local performers, adding to Seattle's rich artistic and cultural history. Nu Black Arts West Theatre was the last major arts tenant, renting the space from 1998-2001. Please see appendices A and B for a list of internationally & locally recognized artists who have performed or presented their work at Washington Hall.

Architectural Context

Neighborhood Fraternal Halls in Seattle

The subject building is a distinctive, well-preserved example of early 20th century social/fraternal halls in Seattle, as identified in the city survey. In its exterior architectural style, Washington Hall differs from other neighborhood lodges built in the Beaux Arts/Neoclassical or commercial modes. In its internal organization, however, Washington Hall provides important insight into the vital role such structures played in neighborhood development and in contemporary social movements.

The primary purpose behind construction of lodge halls was to house the programmatic needs of the member organization. Washington Hall, like others of its era, contains a hierarchy of public and private spaces for official meetings of the organization and for its own social gatherings. To maintain financial viability, however, neighborhood fraternal lodges often rented out space for community meetings, lectures, parties and receptions. Ground floor storefronts were frequently leased for commercial use. The income generated from these rents provided welcome support for lodge membership programs, as well as for maintenance of the building. Usage by non-members, in fact, represents a significant portion of the history of these halls, and demonstrates their integral connection to the life of the neighborhoods in which they flourished.

Like the subject building, Phalen Hall in Columbia City contained a dancehall on its second floor that was the site of numerous community meetings and local events. Built by the Knights of Pythias in 1892, the dancehall provided extra income for lodge members from the outset. In 1901 William W. Phalen purchased the building, turning the first floor into a grocery business and continuing to rent the upper story for local events. Unfortunately, the second floor was destroyed by fire in 1941 and the original appearance of the ground floor has been greatly altered.

The Greenwood Masonic Lodge, home of Lodge #253 in the Greenwood neighborhood, in particular has a history of contribution to the growing Greenwood commercial district. The two-story brick, Commercial-style building was built in 1924 and has its original cast stone cornice, ornate entry and storefronts. The lodge still serves as a local Masonic headquarters and a meeting place for numerous Masonic groups, but is also available for lease to other neighborhood organizations and events. Valentine's Salon currently occupies the ground floor.

The Beaux Arts/Neoclassical style Ark Masonic Temple Lodge on Rainier Ave. S. was built in 1921. Lodge rooms were located on the second floor, while the Freeman Heater Glove Company

(manufacturer of aviator hats and assorted clothing) occupied the ground floor. After 1949, the Masons took over the ground floor as well, and remodeled it to serve as a dining room and kitchen. The entire building underwent a series of renovations and, in 2004, the Columbia City Cinema opened on the second floor. The ground floor now houses the Victorious Life Christian Center.

Although the 1915 Prince Hall Masonic Temple on 24th Avenue in the Central District has been altered, changes to it are moderate and the main side-gabled rectangular block is still relatively intact. Built for an African-American Masonic lodge, which was first established on the west coast in 1902, the temple continues to serve as a meeting place and headquarters for members.

Pioneer Hall, a National Register-listed property in the Madison Park area, was built in 1910 as a meeting place/social club for descendants of pioneers “to preserve and carry on the memories of the early pioneer families.” It currently houses a genealogical database and library which are open to the public.

With its income-generating “dancing hall”, and its basic hierarchy of fraternal meeting rooms, Washington Hall resembles other neighborhood lodge buildings in Seattle. Unlike the structures mentioned above, however, the subject building was designed as a resource for a specific immigrant group, that being peoples of Danish descent. In fact Washington Hall served as an informal settlement house, and thus embodies important differences in form and function than more traditional neighborhood fraternal halls in Seattle. In developing Washington Hall, the Danish Brotherhood looked to create a haven where the Danish community could engage in the common traditions and language of their heritage, while adapting to the American society. The boarding rooms in the rear provided a place for newcomers from Denmark to sleep, eat, and socialize in close quarters. As a home away from home, this building provided an internal social service to its immigrant membership - a function not envisioned in the city’s other fraternal halls.

Since its construction, Washington Hall has thus served the needs and desires of both its owner organizations, and the changing neighborhood surrounding it. Meeting wide-ranging social and cultural needs of the local community, the building has come to symbolize something much greater than a single-purpose fraternal hall.

Architect Victor Voorhees

Although Seattle architect Victor W. Voorhees (1876-1970) is probably best known for his early 20th century plan books - his *Western Home Builder* was one of the most widely known and used - his contribution to the built environment of the greater Seattle area goes far beyond this narrow residential scope. A prolific designer, his career embraced a great variety of building types in many styles, including a number of Seattle’s significant urban commercial buildings. Interestingly, however, Voorhees actually got his start in the building trade while working for the railroad.

V. W. Voorhees Jr. was born in Cambria, Wisconsin on May 4, 1876 to Victor Wilbur Voorhees, Sr., owner of the general store, and Violetta Irons, a schoolteacher. His father’s ancestors came from Hees, a small Dutch Village, and in the 17th Century immigrated to the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam (now New York). In 1881 Voorhees Jr. moved to Minneapolis and studied law at Minneapolis Academy. While attending school there, he also began working as a general laborer in construction. He married Antoinette Blackmarr in 1898, with which he had two children, Virginia and Frank. Shortly after he began working for the Milwaukee Road Railroad (later the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul RR) in its building department.

Working for the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul RR, Voorhees moved his family to Seattle in 1904. By August of that same year, however, he had left the railroad, and opened an architectural practice in Ballard partnering with a man named Fisher. Voorhees set a fast pace, and although the partnership was brief, the firm of Fisher & Voorhees designed several smaller business and apartment buildings in Ballard. By early 1905 Voorhees had dissolved the partnership and moved his practice to the Eitel Building, at Second and Pike, in downtown Seattle.

The turn of the 20th century was a period of intense technological and cultural change, when modern American society struggled to master its new industries but also hold on to its traditions. This was reflected in the built environment by the exploitation of new building materials, prolific use of historicizing elements, and ingenuity in planning. Voorhees was inspired by many different architectural styles and drew upon a wide variety of influences in his work. Washington Hall, built in 1908, was one of his earliest large-scale projects as a sole practitioner. As such, it shows an originality of design and efficiency in plan that will become characteristic features of Voorhees' buildings throughout the rest of his career.

Over the next twenty-five years, Voorhees designed over 110 building projects, including apartment buildings, commercial laundries and garages, industrial buildings, retail stores, banks and hotels. His designs for Seattle area retail stores include: the 1920 Perry's 10 Cent Store (now Zatz Bagels), one of the oldest and most intact commercial buildings in the Admiral business district of West Seattle; the 1924 Benjamin Franklin Thrift Market (now Café Soleil), in the Madrona neighborhood; the 1926 J. C. Penney Department Store (now an Antique Mall), located in the West Seattle Junction business district; and the 1929 Bartell Drugs (now Washington Management Co. building), also located in the West Seattle Junction business district. Voorhees also did a considerable amount of work for the Vance Lumber Company during the 1920s, including remodeling the Seattle Engineering School in 1926 into the Marqueen Apartments (now Marqueen Hotel) in the Queen Anne neighborhood, and designing the Vance Hotel (1926) in downtown Seattle. In 1917 he became the supervising architect for the Willys-Overland Motor Company, one of the earliest producer/manufacturers of Jeeps, and designed many auto showrooms and garages in Seattle and Spokane. Although the pace of his work declined after 1930, Victor Voorhees was still listed in the Seattle city directories as an architect until 1957. Shortly thereafter, he moved to Santa Barbara, California, where he died on August 10, 1970 at the age of 94. Out of the hundred plus buildings he is credited with, the subject building is his only fraternal hall.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

On May 6, 1908, local Lodge #29 of the Danish Brotherhood celebrated their 20th anniversary with the grand opening of Washington Hall, located in the Squire Park neighborhood of Seattle. Designed by local architect Victor W. Voorhees, the impressive red brick building, with its large Mission style parapet, combines elements of early twentieth century revival styles and exemplifies Voorhees' proclivity for eclectic modes of design. More than just a fraternal lodge, the hall was built to accommodate various Danish activities and included a dance hall with a stage on the second floor, and boarding rooms for newly arrived Danish immigrants at the back of the building.

Although the hall continues to function primarily as a private social lodge, it is the public performances that took place in the dance hall that many Seattleites associate with their memories of the building. As early as 1916, the Danish Brotherhood began to rent out use of the dance hall to the greater Seattle community. From the 1930s on, Washington Hall has remained a popular rental space for a wide variety of social clubs, performing arts groups and musical concerts. In 1973 the Danish Brotherhood sold the building to the Sons and Daughters of Haiti, an African-American Masonic Lodge, who continued to use the first floor rooms for their own organization and rent out the second

floor as a performance space. Washington Hall was also witness to a number of important social and political movements of the twentieth century.

Despite changes to both the exterior and interior of the building, Washington Hall still exhibits strong physical integrity. Its size and scale, its eclectic style, and its many intact significant interior spaces affirm this integrity. Washington hall retains its basic character-defining features.

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The features of the Landmark to be preserved include:

- The exterior of the building; and
- The following elements of the interior:
 - First floor: the entry hall and stairwell to the second floor, the original north hallway, and the first floor lodge room;
 - Second floor: the dancing hall and lobby, including the stage and dressing room which together are labeled as the “rostrum” on the original plans, and excluding the non-original seating;
 - Third floor: the balcony of the dance hall, including the space east of the temporary east balcony wall, and including the original seating; and
- The site, excluding the north parking lot

Issued: January 21, 2009

Karen Gordon
City Historic Preservation Officer

cc: MW Sons of Haiti
Charles Adams
Ajili Hodari
Jim Kelly
Flo Lentz
Brandi Link

Stephen Lee, LPB
Stella Chao, DON
Ken Mar, DPD
Diane Sugimura, DPD
Cheryl Mosteller, DPD