



The City of Seattle

## Landmarks Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649

Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

LPB 320/17

### **REPORT ON DESIGNATION**

Name and Address of Property: **American Meter & Appliance Building  
1001 – 1005 Westlake Avenue North**

Legal Description: That portion of said Lots 1 and 2, Block 16, Eden Addition No. 2, to the City of Seattle, according to the plat thereof recorded in Volume 1 of Plats, Page 67a, records of King County, lying westerly of the westerly line of Westlake Avenue North as condemned under Ordinance No. 17629 of the City of Seattle and north of the north line of vacated ward street as shown in said plat, in King County, Washington.

At the public meeting held on May 3, 2017 the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the American Meter & Appliance Building at 1001 – 1005 Westlake Avenue North as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following standard for designation of SMC 25.12.350:

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

### **DESCRIPTION**

#### **Location and Neighborhood Character**

The subject property is located in Seattle's South Lake Union neighborhood, specifically in the Westlake Avenue N Commercial Corridor. Lake Union is located directly east of the site, with South Lake Union Park located to the southeast and Kenmore Air located to the east across Westlake Avenue N. The Marriott Courtyard Hotel is adjacent and directly south of the site, and an older commercial building is located across Eighth Avenue N to the west. The major arterial/highway Aurora Avenue N is located two blocks to the west.

## **Site**

The subject building is situated on the southern two thirds of a trapezoidal site, leaving a 30-foot by almost 37-foot parking area at the northern, narrow end. The site measures 120' feet north-south along its western property line fronting Eighth Avenue N, 36.92 feet east-west along its northern property line at the intersection of Eighth Avenue N and Westlake Avenue N, 133.82 feet along its eastern property line adjacent to Westlake Avenue N, and 92.11 feet along the southern property line shared with the adjacent Marriott Courtyard Hotel to the south. The site slopes down approximately 30 inches from south to north. A small rounded-off triangular asphalt-paved parking area in the right-of-way is located to the north of the site. Concrete sidewalks border three sides of the site.

## **Building Structure & Exterior Features**

The subject building has a hybrid structure of reinforced concrete perimeter walls with interior heavy-timber construction. The building has a conventional reinforced concrete perimeter foundation with reinforced concrete spread footings supporting 10"x 12" heavy-timber columns. The building does not have a basement and the ground floor is an on-grade concrete slab. The building has four structural east-west beam lines spaced approximately 17' 3.5" on center, creating five east-west bays. The northern two bays are approximately 30 inches lower than the southern three bays on the ground floor. Columns are placed along three north-south structural lines spaced approximately 19' on center. The second- and third-floor framing consists of 6"x 16" joists spaced at 3' on-center running north-south, supported by 12"x 22" heavy timber girders running east-west. The girders bear on the 10"x 12" columns mentioned above. The roof is made of solid 2"x 4" decking supported by 10"x 16" east-west heavy-timber girders. The roof slopes down to the north and is presently covered by hot-mop membrane roofing. Floor-to-floor heights are 19' from the ground floor to the second floor, 12' from the second to the third floor, and 12' from the third floor to underside of the roof framing. The top of the parapet is approximately 48' from the sidewalk level at the building's northeastern corner.

The exterior structural lines are expressed on the eastern, northern, and western façades, with board-formed concrete spandrels with recessed central panels spanning between simple rectangular columns/pilasters. The simple roof parapet rests on the lower columns/pilasters, with a central recessed panel spanning the length of each façade. Non-original vinyl-sash windows, aluminum storefront windows, plywood infill, or roll-up doors fill openings on the eastern, northern, and western façades. The entire southern façade is filled in with non-original concrete block.

The eastern façade has five bays, with the southern three bays having an approximately 6-foot-high concrete stem wall. The southern three bays retain their original tripartite window mullions with transoms, but have lost the original divided-light glazing. These bays now have plywood or aluminum-sash windows. A man-door is located at the northernmost portion of the central bay. The two northern bays have newer commercial storefront glazing. The second floor windows are tripartite vinyl sash non-operable plate-glass an original wooden mullions. The third floor glazing is also tripartite like the second floor, but the central lights have lower operable sliding vinyl-sash windows.

The northern façade has three bays and has glazing similar to the eastern façade. The ground floor has an entry doorway accessing the northern retail space on the easternmost bay.

The western façade has five bays and a glazing layout similar to the eastern façade. The southern two bays have large roll-up doors accessing the ground floor; the central bay is nearly blank with only a small non-original window centrally located at the upper portion of the bay. Two of the three sections of the northernmost bay on the third floor are blanked off.

The southern façade is blank and made of non-original concrete masonry units (CMU) installed after a fire in the adjacent building to the south.

### **Building Plan & Interior Features**

The building has three floors, with the ground floor having two floor elevations accessed by a centrally located stairway. The lower floor in this area allows for a mezzanine with five offices—each with a window overlooking the sales floor—and a restroom and kitchen located in its southwestern corner. The northern retail space is currently vacant. The southern warehouse area on the ground floor is partitioned off, generally along structural grid lines. At the southwestern corner is an enclosed stairway that accesses all floors and the roof. Also in this corner is a freight elevator with an exterior roll-up door that accesses all three floors. Another stairway, located near the center of the eastern wall, has a door leading to the exterior and provides access to the two upper floors. Restrooms are located at the center of the western wall.

The second floor is also vacant and is generally open, without partitions, with the exception of a small office located at the center of the northern wall.

The third floor was recently partitioned off as a three-bedroom apartment and has a kitchen and laundry room located along the western side of the building. This floor has two bathrooms, one of which is associated with a bedroom located in the building's northwestern corner, another located near the center of the western wall. The floor also contains two small loft spaces: one near the center of the building, one located adjacent to the freight elevator in the building's southwestern corner.

Interior finishes vary among spaces. The northern retail space has all non-original finishes with painted drywall walls and ceilings, and carpeted floors. The southern ground floor warehouse assembly area has bare concrete floors and exposed heavy timber framing. The second floor has exposed heavy framing but is otherwise devoid of interior finishes. The former third-floor apartment generally has exposed heavy framing, although rooms are partitioned off with framed gypsum-covered walls. The wood floor has been stained and finished.

## Documented Building Alterations

Although undergoing several interior remodels over the years, the most significant alteration to the building exterior has been the replacement of the original industrial steel sash windows and the changes to the storefront windows on the north side of the building. According to the present owners, the present windows were installed in May 2016, replacing a mixture of the original wood-sash and retrofitted aluminum windows. The storefront glazing was probably replaced in the 1960 or 70s.

## Recorded Building Permits:

Date	Designer	Description	Permit #
1919	Hurley-Mason Co.	Build	183512
1920	NA		188697
1920	NA		189733
1920		2nd floor alteration & partition for Hill Drying Co.	193624
1920		3rd floor alteration & partition for Hill Drying Co.	195401
1920	NA		192577
1921	NA		199286
1925		Masonry Flue	249778
1928		Repair	276122
1974	Johnny Sato & Assoc.	Alter exist bldg. workshop & offices	551768
1988	Charles Sharpe	Repair Fire Damage	8805335
1995	Jim Merlino	Interior Alterations to 3rd Floor, per plan	9504251

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Historical Neighborhood Context: South Lake Union and Westlake Corridor

The subject building is located in Seattle's South Lake Union neighborhood, defined for this report by Fairview Avenue N to the east, Denny Way to the south, Lake Union to the north, and Aurora Avenue (SR 99) to the west. The neighborhood is often associated with the Cascade neighborhood to the east and the northern portion of Denny Triangle neighborhood to the south, with the general collective area often grouped as South Lake Union. This more general area's historical context is described below.

The area once lay in a marsh, or under water, at the southern end of Lake Union. The lake was called meman hartshu by the Duwamish tribe, who had a traditional summer camp on a meadow on Denny Hill near the present Seattle Center. The residence of Tsetseguis and his family occupied the area during the time that Denny's sawmill was operating, and was called "trail to the beach"—or more literally "the foot at the end of the beach"—by the native people.

The first industrial use of the area was a narrow-gauge railroad built in 1872 by the Seattle Coal and Transportation Company. The rail was supported on trestles extending from the southern end of Lake Union to the Elliott Bay waterfront along what is now Westlake Avenue. From mines in Newcastle, coal was barged across Lake Washington, transported

over the Montlake Isthmus, and loaded on barges for transport to the South Lake Union loading dock that is now the site of the Center for Wooden Boats. This railway line was abandoned in 1877 when a new railway south of town was built. In 1882 David Denny built his Western Mill sawmill at the southwestern corner of the lake. The mill would later become Western Mill Company and eventually the Brace Hergert Mill. See figure 22. Starting around 1880 early residents used the southwestern corner of Lake Union as a swimming beach. From the 1890s through the early 1900s, the general area was predominantly residential, mainly composed of immigrant worker housing. By 1915, the southwestern corner of the lake had transitioned from a swimming beach to a landfill. The Cascade School (John Parkinson, destroyed 1955) was built in 1894 at the intersection of Pontius Street and Harrison Avenue, with several churches of various ethnic groups scattered through the greater neighborhood. The largest commercial enterprise in the immediate area was the North Pacific Brewery (1889, later Hemrich Brothers Brewing Company), located between Lincoln (now Pontius) and Ward (now Yale) streets, and Mercer and Republican avenues.

The development of streetcar lines by competitive companies spurred residential and commercial neighborhood growth in the late 1880s and 1890s. Seattle businessman L. H. Griffith purchased the former Seattle Coal and Transportation right-of-way for his Seattle Electric Railway and Power Company, and in 1889 built a street railway extending along the western side of Lake Union over a bridge at the northern end of the lake to the town of Fremont. In 1893, expecting to serve the new state university and the commercial area supporting it, David Denny ran the northern extension of his Rainier Power and Railway Company streetcar line along Howell Street, up Pontius and Howard (now Yale) avenues, and up the eastern side of Lake Union along what is now Eastlake. From there the line ran over a trestle he built at Latona, and through the settlement of Brooklyn northward to William and Louise Beck's private Ravenna Park.

As the neighborhood grew, the Cascade School was expanded in 1898 with northern and southern wings (Saunders & Lawton). The brewery became the Hemrich Brothers Brewing Company with a major brew house expansion (1903-04, Theobald Buchinger, destroyed). Residential development in the area remained the predominant use, although housing grew denser as blocks were developed. In 1906 Westlake Avenue was paved for wagon and auto traffic, and extended northward from Pike Street to Lake Union. The Westlake Avenue and Pike Street intersection was the location of the first interurban depot, running between Seattle and Everett. The Seattle Electric Company, owned by the Stone and Webster cartel, bought the line in 1909, and made various improvements to this and to their consolidated system of electric street railways. In 1913 the Ford Motor Company constructed a five-story assembly plant (John Graham Sr., City of Seattle Landmark) at the southern end of Lake Union. The immediate site area was located in the water between the shore and the railway trestle along the western shore of the lake. By 1916, the area was used as a garbage dump.

Several churches were built in the neighborhood, catering to the various nationalities of its mainly immigrant population, including Scandinavians, Greeks, and Russians. A Norwegian Methodist Episcopal church was built on the northeastern corner of the intersection of John Street and Howard (now Yale) Avenue prior to 1893. In 1912, Immanuel Lutheran Church

(Watson Vernon) was built on the northwestern corner of Thomas Street and Pontius Avenue. In 1921 St. Demetrios Church (destroyed), serving the Russian and Greek communities, was completed on the corner of Yale Avenue N and N Thomas Street. The Russian Orthodox contingent eventually broke off and built St. Spiridon Orthodox Cathedral (City of Seattle Landmark, 1976) at the southeastern corner of Harrison Street and Yale Avenue between 1938 and 1941. The Bethany Lutheran Free Church (destroyed ca. 1980) was built in the early 1920s at the southeastern corner of John Street and Fairview Avenue. Between 1900 and the 1920s a number of apartment buildings were constructed throughout the neighborhood, including the Jensen Block (1906, City of Seattle Landmark), the Grandview Apartments (1907, Henderson Ryan), the Hollister Apartments (ca. 1910), Carolina Court (1915, John A. Creutzer), all on the western side of Eastlake; the Brewster (1916, Warren H. Milner) at the southeastern corner of Minor Avenue and John Street; and the Carlton (1926, Emil Guenther with Charles Saunders) at the northwestern corner of Mercer Street and Pontius Avenue, among others.

A roadway, partially built on piles paralleling the old Seattle Electric Railway and Power Company tracks had been completed along the western shores of Lake Union by 1915. This roadway, now Westlake Avenue N, connected downtown to the northern side of the lake via a trestle bridge extending from Stoneway Avenue N. A railroad spur line constructed on pilings east of Westlake Avenue N and connecting to the main north-south railroad line in the Interbay area south of Ballard, provided freight service to South Lake Union manufacturing and warehouse facilities including the Brace Hergert Mill at the southern end of the lake and an oil/gasoline depot along Westlake Avenue N.

By the early 1920s, the Great Northern Railway built railroad tracks along Terry Avenue, serving the growing industrial warehouse district north of the Central Business District. The tracks also looped around Lake Union, serving the water-dependent industries along the shoreline made possible by the construction of the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks and the Lake Washington Ship Canal, constructed between 1911 and 1917. The small freight depot located on Terry Avenue North between Harrison and Thomas Streets was a far cry from the massive central station called for at South Lake Union in Virgil G. Bogue's "Plan of Seattle," prepared in 1911 for the Municipal Plans Commission.

In 1928, work commenced on the second and final Denny Regrade, which focused on a trapezoidal area bounded by Virginia Street to the south, Fifth Avenue to the east, Thomas Street to the north, and Westlake Avenue to the west, resulting in the lowering of the grade throughout that area, as well as Denny Park, which had for years loomed over the surrounding commercial district.

After the 1920s, the South Lake Union area slowly evolved into a mixed residential and commercial district. Several commercial laundries were located in the greater neighborhood, including the Metropolitan Laundry Building (later called the New Richmond Laundry, City of Seattle Landmark), built in 1917 at Pontius Avenue N and Thomas Street; the Supply Laundry (City of Seattle Landmark), initially completed between 1908 and 1912, at Yale Avenue North and Republican Street; and the Troy Laundry Building (V. W. Voorhees, with

additions by Henry Bittman, City of Seattle Landmark), built in 1927 at the northwestern intersection of Fairview Avenue and Republican Street.

Much of land along the west side of Lake Union was created by fill, including that either side of Westlake Avenue N extending westward to Dexter Avenue N. This land was developed for light manufacturing, such as the Hill Syrup Company (the subject building), the Pacific Ammonia and Chemical Company Plant, and a variety of other warehouses and storage yards.

In the mid- to late 1920s, Puget Sound Traction, Light & Power Company was converting their interurban lines to bus service and created a bus garage and repair facility for their North Coast Lines on the former site of the former Pontius Mansion at Pontius Avenue N and Denny Way.

Between the mid-1920s and the beginning of World War II, several other major commercial business operations were located in the neighborhood. In 1930 the Seattle Times relocated to a new site at the northeastern corner of the intersection of John Street and Fairview Avenue N, into an Art Moderne building (1930, Robert Reamer, City of Seattle Landmark). George Horluck built a large brewery at Westlake Avenue and Mercer Street in 1933, responding to the end of prohibition.

The Aurora Speedway was constructed in the early 1930s, east of Dexter Avenue, with the George Washington Memorial Bridge crossing high above the Lake Washington Ship Canal near Lake Union's northern end.

Between 1941 and 1942, the United States Navy built the Naval Reserve Armory (1942, William R. Grant with B. Marcus Priteca, City of Seattle Landmark) as an advanced training facility on the site of the Brace Hergert Mill, using funds provided by the Works Progress Administration.

Fairview Avenue N continued to be the primary commercial street in the neighborhood. The Washington State Game Department built their new International-style headquarters (James C. Gardiner and Associates) on Fairview Avenue N near Mercer Street in 1948.

In many ways the neighborhood lost its center in 1949, when a major earthquake severely damaged the Cascade School. The school district closed the school and demolished the building in 1955, replacing it with the district warehouse, while retaining the old playground between Pontius and Minor streets as a city park. Further residential development within the neighborhood was officially discouraged in 1957, when the city's new zoning ordinance eliminated new residential uses in the Cascade neighborhood.

In the 1950s, the Westlake commercial corridor had a number of uses, such as: the Seattle Disposal Company truck storage yard, a truck assembly area for Mack Trucks, a Puget Sound Power and Light Company (later Seattle City Light) workshop, cabinet and door and window sash manufacturing shops, paint manufacturers and wholesalers, lumber and storage yards, sheet metal shops, a neon sign manufacturer, a building equipment supplier, a transfer

company (the subject building), the Seattle office of the Washington State Patrol, the Seattle School District I shop and storage building, a seaplane service, and a veterinary hospital. By the 1960s, Interstate 5 severed South Lake Union from Capitol Hill. In 1964, PEMCO built the first tower of its Eastlake Avenue office complex, with further construction continuing through 1983. REI built its new flagship store (Mithun Partners) in 1994 on an entire block on the western side of Eastlake Avenue between John and Thomas streets. The area remained fairly stable until property values increased as result of major land acquisition stimulated in the 1990s by the “Commons” proposal and redevelopment of these properties by major area developers. A new streetcar line running down Westlake Avenue now connects the South Lake Union, Cascade, and Westlake neighborhoods with the Central Business District.

*Note: for additional information, refer to “2003 Cascade Historic Survey, Buildings, Objects & Artifacts, Context Statement,” prepared by Karin Link, Thomas Street History Services.*

### **Building History: 1001-1005 Westlake Avenue N**

The subject building was constructed in 1919 for Frederick Boyd (1875-1955) for use by the Frederick Boyd Company. The building was completed in late March 1920. The Hill Syrup Company occupied the building from May 1920, until 1923, when they moved to a new location. In 1922 the building, then known as the “Hill Syrup Company Building,” was sold to Arthur C. Van Doren, although the Hill Syrup Company continued their lease into the next year. See figure 35. Frederick Boyd purchased the former street right-of-way, Ward Street running between Westlake Avenue N and 8th Avenue N on October 24, 1919.

By 1932 the Northern Life Insurance Co. owned the building, and the 1937 Tax Assessor's record and photograph note its use as a warehouse for Van Doren Company. The building was known as the Van Doren Building until 1937 when the Christie-Lambert Van & Storage Company obtained the lease for the building.

After 1937, there are two phases of occupancy for the building. From the 1940s through 1970 the building housed multiple tenants, and was at first named the Dickenson-Christie building, but by 1955 was known as the Christie Building. The major tenant during this time was the Christie-Lambert Van & Storage Company Inc. For 20 years, between 1940 and 1960, North Star Inc., a company that operated variously as a food broker and oyster-packing business also occupied the building. The Baldwin Piano Company was a tenant during part of that time, along with shorter-term tenancies of the Miller Chair Rental and Transfer Company, some other associated moving and storage companies, and furniture companies including Donaldson & Co. Other tenants of the building were manufacturers' agents and sales brokers, none of which held a long-term tenancy. Portions of the building appear to have been sub-let at times, with photographer Bob Carver using an overhead loft of the Christie-Lambert space in 1964, and writer Eileen Crimmin also occupying a small portion of the building in 1965. Around 1950, the building attracted paint product companies such as the Transfer Company and the Commercial Paint Company.

By 1950, the immediate vicinity of the building contained two lumber sheds, a lumber yard, a sash and door manufacturing plant, a sheet metal workshop, neon sign fabricator and several paint shops.

The second phase of tenancy started in May 1974, when the American Meter Machine Co. purchased the building from Mrs. Elsie Christie and consolidated their offices there. American Meter became the sole tenant until the late 1980s when the American Appliance retail store, an offshoot of American Meter, shared the building. The American Meter Company gives the building its current name, and the building's former names have fallen out of use. By 2005 the company changed its name to American Meter & Appliance. American Meter moved out of the building in 2016. Today a software company occupies most of the ground floor and the entire third floor. The northern retail showroom and the second floor are currently vacant.

### **Original Building Owner and Occupant: Frederick Boyd and the Frederick Boyd Company**

The subject building was constructed between 1919 and 1920 for Frederick Boyd (1875-1955).

Frederick L. was born in Greenfield, Illinois on June 23, 1875. He graduated from Chaddock Boys' School in Quincy, Illinois. He moved to Seattle in 1902. He owned the Frederick Boyd Company for around thirty-five years and sold the business and retired during World War II. The Frederick Boyd Company, originally the Ainsley-Boyd Company, was founded around 1914 as a manufacturer of portable garages. These pre-cut and assembled garage buildings were stained, delivered and erected on-site for the purchaser starting at a cost of \$20. The company showrooms were originally located on Westlake Avenue and Lenora Street. On May 20, 1919, Frederick Boyd purchased the subject property site from Theodore H. Haller. By March 21, 1920, the firm had relocated to the subject building. The firm advertised "everything in the building material line at (the) new location." Boyd sold the building to William E Sander, the president of Hill Syrup Company on May 20, 1920. Boyd then proceeded to build a smaller one-story wood frame mill building on adjacent lot to the south, the former Ward Street right-of-way running between Westlake Avenue N and 8th Avenue N, he had purchased from Theodore H. Haller, on March 9, 1920.

By the late 1920s and early 1930s, the firm also fabricated and sold other wooden materials and products including sash and doors, door frames, window and doors screens, cupboard doors, drawers, flour bins, medicine cabinets, moldings, veneer panels and fine finish lumber. In February 1942, an advertisement in the Seattle Daily Times stated "Retiring"... "stock for sale cheap."

### **Additional Early Building Occupant: Hill Syrup Company**

The Hill Syrup Company, manufacturers of Old Yankee Syrup, occupied the subject building between 1920 and 1923.

Robert G. Hill (1824-1904), a native of Vermont, came to Seattle in 1891, and founded the Hill Syrup Company shortly thereafter. By 1897, the syrup was distributed in Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada. Burton F. Stone ran the company after Hill's death in 1904. The company operated in many locations throughout the city, and appears to have gone out of business in 1927.

**Additional Long-term Owner & Occupant: Elsie Christie, the Christie-Lambert Van & Storage Co., Inc.**

Elsie Christie, the owner of the Christie-Lambert Van & Storage Company obtained the lease of the subject building in 1937. Christie and her husband Fred arrived in Seattle in 1920 and established the Christie Transfer Company. In 1930 the Christies combined their business with the Lambert Van & Storage Company (est. 1912) to become the Christie-Lambert Van & Storage Company. Fred Christie died in 1966. At some point during the tenancy of the Christie-Lambert Company, Elsie Christie purchased the building. She then sold it to Gene Merlino in 1974. Christie died in 1980, although the business stayed active until 1989.

**Additional Long-term Building Owner & Occupant: Gene Merlino, American Meter & Appliance**

The American Meter & Appliance Company was founded in 1957 by Gene Merlino, and incorporated for business in 1958 as a commercial laundry machine leasing company. Gene Merlino was born in 1913 and grew up in Seattle, marrying Incarnata Fiorito in 1937. Merlino worked as the head of American Meter until his death in 2013. American Meter & Appliance served the Pacific Northwest region with offices in Seattle and Anchorage until 2014 when the nationwide WASH Multifamily Laundry Systems purchased the company. The WASH Company kept the American Meter Company name in the Pacific Northwest region, relocating their Seattle office from 1001 Westlake Avenue N to Renton, WA in 2016. See figure 40.

**Architectural Style Context: Eclectic Commercial & Industrial Warehouse Typology**

The subject building is a structural building typologically considered a “mixed-use” or commercial/warehouse building. The building has minimal architectural styling and what architectural styling it may exhibit can be classed as vernacular.

At the turn of the 20th century the vast majority of small commercial buildings and warehouses in the western portion of the United States were designed within a range of vaguely eclectic architectural styles derived from European models. Buildings were adorned with relatively minor exterior details attempting to enhance otherwise straightforward designs. These included architraves, corbels, belt courses, arches, projecting bays, and turrets.

Early warehouse buildings built in Seattle were constructed with the intention of securely enclosing as much space as economically as possible. Building exteriors were often wood-sheathed or of brick masonry, with heavy-timber interior framing in regular, repeatable bays. Exterior embellishments were relatively minimal. Examples of warehouses constructed during this period include the Ainsworth & Dunn Warehouse (1902, S. A. Jennings, City of Seattle Landmark), the Fredrick & Nelson Warehouse (1907, W. D. Van Siclen), and the Van Vorst Building (1915, City of Seattle Landmark).

Reinforced concrete with modular steel structural systems became more common in the mid-1930s. Floors were either concrete or heavy timber planks. Ceilings were relatively high, allowing for high exterior windows that allowed natural light to penetrate into the interior.

Roof monitor skylights were common. An early example of a concrete warehouse structure is the Polson Building, designed by Saunders & Lawton in 1910. A later example of a concrete warehouse is the National Grocery Company Warehouse (1930, the Austin Company).

After a major fire destroyed Seattle's nascent central business district in 1889, fireproof construction was mandated for new buildings in downtown Seattle. At the same time and as a direct consequence of several other disastrous downtown fires throughout the United States, national building codes were developed, initially to protect property and eventually to save lives. Buildings were often constructed of reinforced concrete to allow fireproof construction. Freed from the limitation of load-bearing masonry construction, architects employed Classical Revival styles, particularly Renaissance Revival, which provided architects with the opportunity to dress their buildings with florid ornamentation. Exteriors were faced with brick masonry, cast stone, and terra cotta, the latter two often highly ornamented with eclectic compositions of Classical detailing. Starting in the 1930s Art Moderne and Art Deco styles were widely adopted for warehouse and utilitarian structures. Beaux-Arts-style ornamentation can be seen on the A. L. Palmer Building warehouse (1910, George C. Dietrich). Minimal neoclassical detailing can be seen on buildings such as the Boren Investment Company Warehouse (1925, Stuart & Wheatley, City of Seattle Landmark).

Warehouses were grouped in industrial areas of the city, initially alongside railroad spurs or freight depots, but later near major highways and industries switched to trucking companies. Flexible freight delivery to building interiors was essential for warehouses with on-grade access doors, and loading docks were essential for the efficient receipt and distribution of freight.

### **Building Designer & Builder: the Hurley-Mason Company**

The builder and major designer of the building now known as American Meter & Appliance was the Hurley-Mason Company of Portland, Oregon, which at one time operated Washington branch offices in Seattle, Tacoma, and Spokane. The company was one of the region's leading construction companies in the early 20th century.

Charles Bender Hurley (1859-1932) was born in Philadelphia on April 7, 1859. He became a civil engineer and worked for the Mexican National Construction Company. Between 1884 and 1886 he worked as an engineer for the New Jersey Central and Baltimore & Ohio Railroads. Between 1886 and 1888 he served as vice president of the Pennsylvania Natural Gas Company. Hurley then went to Tacoma, Washington, to become the general manager of the Tacoma Light & Water Company. He married Portland native Ada McCracken (1867-1941) in 1891. Hurley formed the general contracting company Hurley-Mason with his brother-in-law, George C. Mason, after moving to Portland in 1904. Hurley died in Tacoma on January 30, 1932.

George Cotner Mason (1872-1929) was born in New York City on May 4, 1871. He received a degree in civil engineering from New York University in 1893, and a Master of Science degree in 1894. Mason moved to Portland, Oregon after marrying Ada Hurley's sister, Annie M'liss McCracken (1879-1961) in 1900. Mason was an active member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Pacific Northwest Society of Engineers.

Mason passed away in Portland on March 10, 1929.

The Hurley-Mason Company completed dozens of projects throughout the Pacific Northwest between its inception in 1904 and its liquidation in 1928, ranging from residences to major governmental and industrial complexes. The company could act as both builder and designer, having an engineering and design department. Early completed projects by the firm include:

- Olympic Cereal Mill (1906, Hurley-Mason Company, 107 SE Washington Street, Portland, OR)
- Board of Trade Building (1909, David C. Lewis, 310 SW Fourth Avenue, Portland)
- Lumbermen's Building (1909, David C. Lewis; 333 SW Fifth Avenue, Portland)
- Jefferson Street Substation (1909, Hurley-Mason Co., 37 SW Jefferson Street, Portland)
- Perkins Building (1909, Russell & Babcock, contracting engineering with Hurley-Mason, 1101 A Street, Tacoma, City of Tacoma Landmark)
- Electric Building (1910, Carl L. Linde, 621 SW Alder Street, Portland)
- Hatfield Building (1910, Bennes & Hendricks, 724 SW Eighth Street, Portland)
- Lipman-Wolfe & Co. Department Store (1911, Doyle, Patterson & Beach, SW Fifth and Alder streets, Portland)
- Union Station (1911, Charles A. Reed and Allen H. Stem, 1713 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma, now Washington State Historical Museum)
- Woodlark Building (1911, Doyle, Patterson & Beach, 813-817 SW Alder Street, Portland, National Register)
- Hotel Carlton (1911, MacNaughton & Raymond, SW 14th and Washington Street, Portland, demolished)
- Tacoma Building (1912, Potter & Merrill, 1019 A Street, Tacoma)
- Morrison Park Building (1913, Doyle, Paterson & Beach, 623 SW Park Avenue, Portland)
- Culbertson-Grote-Rankin Department Store (1913, Spokane)
- Carstens Packing Company (1916, Hurley-Mason, Tacoma)
- Seattle Construction & Drydock Company (1917, Hurley-Mason, Seattle)
- Carbon Hill Coal Company plant (1917, Hurley-Mason, Prosser, WA)

In June 1917, Hurley-Mason was awarded the contract to build the United States Army cantonment at American Lake, now part of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, on 70,000 acres donated by the City of Tacoma. At that time Hurley-Mason held its main office in Portland, but also had branches in Spokane, headed by Thomas W. Baker; and Seattle, headed by C. R. Collins. Hurley-Mason employed 10,000 local carpenters, plumbers, electricians, plasterers, and other laborers to expedite the project. The cantonment was completed in only three months and comprised 1,757 buildings, with a capacity of 44,685 soldiers within the 2,500-acre cantonment.

Other war-related contracts during World War I included the development of Todd Shipyards in Tacoma between 1917 and 1919.

After the war Hurley-Mason appears to have concentrated on industrial and commercial projects, such as parking garages. Later projects completed by Hurley-Mason included:

- Star Iron Works (1918, Hurley-Mason, 435 Eleventh Street, Tacoma)
- Acid Tower (1919, Howle Paper Mill, Oregon City, OR)
- Cascade Paper Company (1919, Hurley-Mason, Steilacoom, WA)
- Hicks-Schaeffer Garage (1919, Hurley-Mason, 734 Broadway, Tacoma)
- Gair Realty Garage (1920, Hurley-Mason, Westlake Avenue and Republican Street, Seattle)

In 1923 Hurley-Mason was awarded a \$1,300,000 contract to build the veterans' hospital at American Lake. At that time the company's former vice president in charge of their Spokane office, Charles R. Forbes, then director of the Veteran's Bureau, was accused of using influence in the contract award. Although no charges were brought against Hurley-Mason, Forbes was eventually prosecuted and convicted of conspiracy to defraud the United States Government and sentenced to two years in prison.

Late projects by Hurley-Mason included the Motoramp Garage (1925, A. J. Russel, 745 Commerce Street, Tacoma).

#### **Building Structural Engineer: Henry W. Bittman (1882-1953)**

Seattle engineer Henry Bittman was the structural engineer for the subject building and may have been involved with the design of the building.

Henry Weiss Bittman was born in Brooklyn, New York on July 15, 1882, the son of John Bittman (1850-1909), an interior decorator, and Dina Weiss Bittman. It is unclear where Henry obtained his early training, but in 1900, when he was just seventeen, Bittman listed his occupation as architect.

In 1905 Bittman attended two structural engineering classes at the Armour Institute in Chicago, Illinois, and briefly practiced structural engineering and taught drafting before moving to Seattle in 1906. There he formed a brief partnership with architect William Kingsley (1857-1915), before starting his own consulting engineering practice in 1908. Bittman married (Lena) Jessie Saunders (1885-1965) on January 28, 1908, in Vancouver, B.C. By 1910, the couple was living in Kennydale, WA, where Bittman worked as a structural engineer. In 1914, Bittman designed an English Tudor home (4625 Eastern Avenue) in the Wallingford neighborhood, where the couple lived for the rest of their lives. Jessie used the home a base for an extensive social life.

Bittman worked as a consulting structural engineer specializing in steel frame construction. In 1914 he was the structural engineer for architect Henderson Ryan's Blaine Building (demolished) containing the Liberty Theater. Bittman was consulting engineer for Bebb & Gould on the original University of Washington stadium. He was a representative of the Alaska Powder Company, an explosive manufacturing company based in Everett, from 1914 to 1919, after which he practiced solely as a structural engineer, with offices in the Securities Building.

Between 1919 and 1920, Bittman designed Chanslor & Lyon Company plant (1919, 1400 12th Avenue, altered, now part of the Trace Lofts), the Langert-Aronson Candy Company plant (1919-20, 914 Virginia Street altered, now the Spruce Street School), W. H. Cleaver garage building (1920, 1518-1524 13th Avenue, altered), and the Seattle Day Nursery (1920, 302 Broadway, demolished).

He obtained his Washington State architectural license on June 12, 1920, “grandfathered” in under the recent establishment of the architectural licensing legislation.

Bittman’s architectural practice thrived. Over the years, Bittman’s firm attracted several talented architects and designers. Harold Wallace Adams (1885-1954), who previously worked for John Graham Sr. on the Frederick & Nelson department store project, joined the firm in 1924. Paul Thiry (1904-1993) and Paul H. Kirk (1914-1995) both worked briefly for Bittman early in their careers.

Bittman’s prolific firm was responsible for the design of several dozen projects throughout the Northwest. The firm’s projects included commercial store-and-loft blocks, apartment buildings, hotels, civic buildings, and theaters. Some notable projects initiated prior to the Great Depression are as follows:

- The Decatur Building (1921-22, 1521 Sixth Avenue, City of Seattle Landmark-1985): This four-story mid-block Renaissance Revival building is clad with white terra cotta. The street-level base is rusticated with an arched storefront, while the upper office floors have tripartite windows between gigantic-scale rectangular pilasters.
- Terminal Sales Building (1923-25, 1932 First Avenue, City of Seattle Landmark-1989): The eleven-story reinforced concrete office tower has applied Jacobean Revival ornamentation. The building features a two-story white terra cotta base supporting vertical structural bays clad in brick. White terra cotta spandrels separate glazed openings of industrial sash windows with central awnings. The upper two stories are stepped back on the north and south one bay, and crowned with a white terra cotta parapet.
- Fraternal Order of Eagles (1924, 1416 Seventh Avenue, now ACT Theater, altered, City of Seattle Landmark-1985): The seven-story white terra cotta-clad Renaissance Revival building was built with street-level retail storefronts with arched second floor/mezzanine windows, gigantic-scale rectangular pilasters supporting a seventh-floor crown and heavy decorative cornice. The building had several interior assembly rooms and a large assembly room/ballroom seating 3,000.
- Mann Building (1925-26, 1411 Third Avenue, altered, City of Seattle Landmark-1990): This two-story white terra cotta eclectic building displays a mixture of Gothic and Renaissance Revival-style ornamentation. The lower floor has arched storefront openings and the upper floors are tripartite.
- Monte Cristo Hotel (1925, 1507 Wall Street, Everett, with A. H. Albertson, National Historic Register #76001907): The five-story hotel building was clad with brick masonry with cast-stone corner quoins and vaguely Georgian Revival-style ornamentation.

- Tye Building (1925, now Centennial Building, 410 Stewart Street): A two-story reinforced concrete building with street-level retail and second floor offices. The exterior is clad with white terra cotta with a decorative parapet frieze. The second floor windows are tripartite with operable outer windows, typical of most store-and-loft buildings.
- Troy Laundry (1927, 307 Fairview Avenue N, City of Seattle Landmark-1996): The two-story brick masonry-clad building is utilitarian with minimal white terra cotta Renaissance Revival-style ornamentation at the main entrance and at parapet level. The building's windows are glazed with industrial steel-sash windows.
- Music Box Theater (1927-28, 1414 Fifth Avenue, demolished 1987): The Spanish Baroque Revival theater building was designed for theater promoter John Hamrick and resembled the larger Sherwood A. Ford's Fox Theater (1929, demolished) on Seventh Avenue.
- Volker Building (1928, 2101 Ninth Avenue, now Cornish College of the Arts, National Historic Register #83004236): This brick-clad five-story building was designed for Missouri-based businessman and philanthropist William Volker to house the Seattle branch of his business. It was designed as an Art Deco industrial building, with industrial steel-sash windows.
- Von Herberg Building (1928-30, 1520 Sixth Avenue, demolished ca. 1952): The four-story building designed for theater promoter John G. von Herberg (born Peter Coyle) was located diagonally across the street from the new Frederick & Nelson department store. The building featured elaborate applied terra cotta Baroque spandrel and parapet ornamentation. The upper floors were leased to the Seattle Recreation Company and included billiard rooms and bowling alleys.
- United Shopping Tower (1928-31, 217 Pine Street, now Olympic Tower, City of Seattle Landmark-1987): This twelve-story terra cotta-clad retail tower was designed in the Art Deco style with its tower stepped back from its two-story base.
- King County Courthouse Addition (1929-31, 516 Third Avenue): Bittman's firm sympathetically added six additional stories to architect Augustus W. Gould's King County Courthouse building, originally built in 1916.

Bittman's firm suffered from lack of projects during the Great Depression, and never regained its former strength after World War II. One of the firm's last major commissions consisted of acting as the associate architect and resident engineer for the new Seattle Post-Intelligencer Building (1947, 521 Wall Street, with Lockwood-Greene, altered, now City University). By the 1930s and 1940s, Bittman's firm had shifted away from historical eclecticism to popular designs in the Moderne and International Styles.

Bittman continued his practice until his death in Seattle in 1953. At that time the firm became Bittman, Adams & Sanders, comprising Harold W. Adams, Bittman's nephew Herbert J. Bittman (1926-), and Dean Harris Sanders (1914-1987). Adams passed away in 1954 and the firm was renamed Bittman & Sanders. David Hasson (b. 1938) became a partner in 1970, and the firm was renamed Bittman, Sanders, Hasson & Associates. Hasson left the firm around 1980, and the firm's name reverted to Bittman & Sanders. After Dean Sanders retired in 1982, the firm's name was changed to Bittman, Vamen, Taylor, which later merged with Mulvanny/G2.

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***The features of the Landmark to be preserved include:*** The exterior of the building.

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Sarah Sodt  
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