



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 334/09

Name and Address of Property: (former) First United Methodist Church  
811 Fifth Avenue

Legal Description: Lots 2-3 of Block 25 of C.D. Boren's Addition to the City of Seattle, according to the plat thereof, recorded in Volume 001 of plats, page 025, in King County, Washington.

At the public meeting held on June 17, 2009, the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the former First United Methodist Church at 811 Fifth 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;*
- D. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, period, or of a method of construction;*
- E. It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder; and*
- F. Because of its prominence of spatial location, contrasts of siting, age, or scale, it is an easily identifiable visual feature of its neighborhood or the city and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood or the City.*

### **Architectural Description**

#### *Site, Setting and Urban Context*

The First United Methodist Church is located on a steeply westward sloping site at the southwest corner of the intersection of Fifth Avenue and Marion Street in the downtown commercial core. The building was constructed between 1907 and 1910 and occupies the northern half of a half city block with prominent exterior elevations oriented to both of the side streets. Fifth Avenue is a one-way street running southward and Marion Street is a one-way street running eastward. The building is particularly noticeable from the north at various viewpoints along Fifth Avenue and from east at few points along Marion Street. The

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southern half of the half-block was formerly occupied by a 1950s era education wing addition that has been removed. Due to the removal, a portion of the original south elevation that previously abutted the addition is now visible. The main entrance to the former church sanctuary is oriented toward Fifth Avenue. A secondary entrance to the former Sunday school level is located at the west end of the north elevation at Marion Street. There is no alley; the west elevation is situated approximately five feet from the east wall of the adjacent Rainier Club.

The First United Methodist Church is immediately adjacent to the Rainier Club (1904, Kirkland Cutter and 1926-29, Bebb & Gould), which occupies the entire opposite half block to the west. Major modern high-rise office towers are located within the immediate vicinity and include the 42-story Bank of America Fifth Avenue Plaza directly across Fifth Avenue and the 41-story former Union Bank of California Building directly across Marion Street. The 62-story Seattle Municipal Tower and the 76-story Bank of America Tower (Columbia Tower) are both located nearby to the south of the subject building. Other nearby historic properties include the YMCA Building (1931, Albertson, Richardson & Wilson) at the NW corner of Fourth Avenue and Marion Street and the Leamington/ Pacific Hotel and Apartments (1915-16, W.R.B. Willcox and Julian Everett) at the SW corner of Fourth Avenue and Marion Street. Due to its relatively small scale in comparison to nearby high-rise buildings and its distinctive Beaux Arts architectural design character, First United Methodist Church contrasts with its surroundings and is a very distinctive component of the streetscape and the downtown urban environment.

### ***Current Exterior Appearance***

The exterior of the building is distinguished by architectural features and details that follow Beaux Arts stylist principles and borrow classical elements from early Roman, Byzantine and Palladian Renaissance architecture. The building form reflects a centralized Greek cross plan that is rooted in Byzantium architecture and typified by two main axis of approximately the same length. The centralized plan and its building form capped by a circular dome are characteristic of early Christian architecture from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. Noteworthy precedents include the Churches of St Sergius and St Bacchus in Constantinople (c.525) and Saint Vitale in Ravenna (c.525-548) as well as St. Irene in Constantinople (532, 564 & 740) where the height of the dome was increased by the addition of a drum.

The footprint of the church is nearly square measuring approximately 104' x 111 feet. The main central cross building form ascends to three stories in height and is accentuated at each corner by a two-story corner pavilion. The principal structural system is reinforced concrete and un-reinforced masonry. Due to the sloping site the building includes a reinforced concrete basement and partial subbasement level. The upper floor levels are clad with light buff/beige colored pressed brick that is accentuated by cream-color terra cotta detailing and ornament. The base or basement level is clad with smooth cut granite stone and pressed brick.

The Byzantine-inspired dome is covered by a red-orange toned tile roof with a small copper crown. The dome is 64 feet in diameter with low-arched form and rests on a drum that rises approximately 25 feet above the main perimeter roof, which is flat. It includes a structural

steel frame that is supported by four large 72-foot high concrete columns. The drum is penetrated by sixteen clearstory windows openings that hold rectangular, tripartite windows with transoms, which are only visible at the exterior side. The original broad terra cotta cornice at the junction of the dome and drum remains in place; it exhibits an ornate, high bas relief, vine-patterned corona. Original copper scuppers and downspouts remain partly in place.

The formal main entrance to the sanctuary is at the east elevation. This symmetrically composed elevation is distinguished by a central three-story bay accentuated by a gabled parapet. A two-story, segmental arched entry bay opening dominates the façade. A central and wider set of entrance doors is flanked by narrower sets of doors that are all surmounted by stained glass windows. An ornamental terra cotta spandrel with a central pediment is surmounted by a tripartite stained glass window feature (at gallery level) that corresponds with the entry door configuration. [Stained glass is described under interior description]. Terra cotta pilasters and mullions further accentuate the entrance and window features. The spandrels and pediment include intricate dentil courses and vine bas relief ornament. The east bay is further accentuated by terra cotta trim molding and horizontal terra cotta bands at the base and below the cornice line. The original broad terra cotta cornice that capped the entire main central cross building form has been altered by the removal of vine-covered terra cotta corona.

To each side of the east bay are separate two-story entrance pavilions; each dominated by a central entrance door opening. The doors are accentuated by ornate terra cotta surrounds composed of vine-covered trim and low-pointed headers decorated with tablets and crosses. The corner pavilions are further accentuated by the horizontal terra cotta bands at the base that extend around the entire exterior and serve to accentuate the sanctuary level for the church. Similar terra cotta bands accentuate the cap of each corner pavilion. The original broad terra cotta cornice at each corner pavilion remains in place and exhibits an ornate, high bas relief, vine-covered corona. The original 1908 cornerstone is located at the base of NE corner pavilion. All of the entrances at the east elevation are currently accessed by a concrete stairwell and wide landing that extends nearly the length of the façade, which was constructed in 1950-51. The brick-clad support wall that runs along Fifth Avenue is currently covered due to temporary construction activity.

The north elevation follows the same symmetrical composition with a central north bay flanked by corner pavilions and exhibits the same essential brick cladding and terra cotta details at the upper levels. The NE corner pavilion includes a stained glass window with a classically-inspired terra cotta surround. The north elevation is dominated by a two story, segmental arched, tripartite stained glass window feature. Three lower (sanctuary) level stained glass windows are surmounted by an ornamental terra cotta spandrel above which are three upper (gallery) level windows that correspond with the window configurations at the south and east elevations. Terra cotta mullions and spandrels further accentuate this window feature. The spandrels include intricate dentil courses and vine-covered bas relief ornament with Roman numerals indicating the cornerstone dedication date – 1908.

The base (and basement level) that is visible at the north elevation is primarily clad with smooth cut granite stone and pressed brick, at the west end. The stone and brick cladding is accentuated by stone quoins at this level. The central bay includes four tall narrow window openings with stone voussoirs and stepped keystones. The formal entry to the Sunday school level is located at the west end of the base. It includes a Doric-inspired surround surmounted by a vine-covered entablature head. Fenestration at the upper floor level above the entrance varies and reflects the office and other interior uses at the west side of the building.

The south elevation follows the same symmetrical composition as the north elevation with a central bay flanked by corner pavilions and exhibits the same essential brick cladding and terra cotta details at the upper levels. The SE corner pavilion includes a stained glass window with a classically-inspired terra cotta surround. The south elevation is dominated by a two story, segmental arched, tripartite stained glass window feature. Three lower (sanctuary) level stained glass windows are surmounted by an ornamental terra cotta spandrel above which are three upper (gallery) level windows that corresponds with the window configuration at the south and east elevations. Terra cotta mullions and spandrels further accentuate this window feature. The spandrels include intricate dentil courses and vine-covered bas relief ornament. The base (and basement level) is not currently visible at the north elevation due to adjacent construction and the installation of structural reinforcement members. It is primarily clad with smooth cut granite stone and pressed brick similar to the north elevation; however, it was previously altered in order to construct the education wing (now removed) in 1950-51.

The west elevation is more utilitarian in character. It is situated approximately five feet from the east wall of the adjacent Rainier Club and very difficult to view. It follows the same symmetrical composition of the east elevation with a central bay flanked by corner pavilions and exhibits the same essential brick cladding and terra cotta details at the upper levels and stone and brick finishes at the base. There are no stained glass window features at this elevation and the central portion of the west bay is primarily clad with pressed brick. Fenestration at the lower and upper floor levels reflects various office, classroom and other interior uses that were originally housed at this side of the building. Some of the original window openings have been infilled.

### ***Major Exterior Alterations***

The greatest alteration to the exterior of the building was the addition of the 1951 education wing, which covered a portion of the south elevation and has been removed. In conjunction with the construction of the education wing, the Fifth Avenue entrance stairway were also redesigned and changed. The original granite stairs lead directly westward from Fifth Avenue into the main entrance vestibule with a very narrow landing at the top. There were three separate sets of stairs; a wider main flight at the center of the façade was flanked to each side by separate narrower flights leading to the side entries at the corner pavilions. Each stairway included wide cheeks with sloping/curved caps. The central flight originally included three-ball light standards secured to each of the base cheeks. The original stairways and cheeks had been partially altered by 1937; however, the direction of the stair run and basic configuration remained the same. In 1951, all three stairways were eliminated to create

the current configuration with the construction a brick wall along Fifth Avenue and a wide landing that extends nearly the width of the facade. New stairwells leading up to the landing with north-south stair runs were constructed at the north and south ends of the landing.

In 1990 the exterior appearance of the building was also altered by the removal of portions of the main terra cotta cornice as a result of deterioration and safety concerns. The original main cornice design included a deep band of vine-covered bas-relief ornament that was consistent with other decorative motifs used for the exterior details. Original vine-covered terra cotta cornices do remain in place at the corner pavilions and the dome. None of the original solid wooden paneled entry doors remain in place; all of the current glazed panel entry doors are modern replacements.

### *Current Interior Appearance*

The First United Methodist Church exhibits an open sanctuary plan, a plan type that was typically used in progressive Protestant churches of the era. It facilitated the efficient use of the smaller urban building sites because the interior space included galleries that could accommodate seating for significant numbers of participants. The open sanctuary plan provided greater visibility of and proximity to the pulpit, a greater intimacy of space and prominence to the speaker. Thus, these spaces were often also used as lecture halls, schools and concert venues.

The subject building has three floor levels and one sub-basement level. The principal interior spaces are the *main entrance vestibule* and *main auditorium* (sanctuary) at the upper or Fifth Avenue level of the building. The sanctuary includes the pulpit, choir loft and a dramatic organ loft at the west end of the space. Above the main auditorium floor level are three seating *galleries* (balconies) that open onto the sanctuary from the north, east and south sides of the space. The gallery/balcony level above and the Sunday school level below are accessed via *formal stairwells* located in the corner pavilions at the NE and SE corners of the building. These pavilions also function as side entrances to the sanctuary and/or Sunday school level.

The lower level, which is directly accessible from the Marion Street entrance was used historically as a *general auditorium* and housed banquet facilities, including a kitchen and pantry. The general auditorium, which later became known as the Blaine Room, functioned as a meeting room and was primarily used for Sunday school purposes. Five small classrooms were designed to open onto this space, two additional classrooms were adjacent to it and several more classrooms were located at a balcony level situated above the west end of the space. This level was also designed to include two infant rooms, a library and restroom facilities.

The west end of the two upper floor levels housed offices and meeting rooms within the corner pavilions at the NW and SW corners of the building. In addition to choir and committee meeting rooms, a *Pastor's Room/Study* and a Ladies Parlor were part of the original design. These spaces were accessed via less formal (and more private) stairwells located in the corner pavilions at the west end of the building. The partial sub-basement

functioned as a utility area to store fuel and house mechanical equipment. It also appears to have been designed to include space for a live-in caretaker.

### Main Entrance Vestibule

The main entrance vestibule (or narthex) is distinguished by a segmental-arched and vaulted ceiling. The space is illuminated by stained glass window transoms located above each of the three door openings. The windows exhibit opalescent and translucent stained glass members (primarily amber, caramel and other warm, neutral tones including red-orange, yellow and green); they follow a color palette and iconographic themes that are seen throughout other stained glass windows within the church. The typical designs incorporate geometric borders and shapes, acanthus leaves and an open bible with Greek cross. The common wall between the narthex and the sanctuary includes soundproof leather covered doors with diamond pattern windows (per original design) and relight window walls that include Roman cross transom members. All of the running and standing trim in the vestibule and elsewhere in the sanctuary and side vestibules appears to be original white oak that has been bleached. Walls in the vestibules and throughout the upper floors levels are typically painted plaster. Modern exterior doors, carpeting and lighting fixtures have been installed in the main entrance vestibule and the side entry spaces.

### Main Auditorium (sanctuary)

The main auditorium or sanctuary has a bowled floor leading westward toward the pulpit, choir and organ loft. The pulpit is distinguished by bleached oak paneling. The panels behind the choir loft are capped by ornamental trim including carved dentil coursing and brackets and a pedimented central focal point. The organ and organ pipes were reconstructed c.1968 and remain in place. The floor is entirely covered by carpet. Oak pews remain in place at the main floor and within the galleries above.

The dome is approximately 66 feet above the sanctuary floor level and measures 64 feet wide in diameter. The perimeter of the base of dome is penetrated by sixteen sets of tall narrow arched clerestory windows. Each window includes an arched stained glass panel executed in opalescent and translucent colored glass with a geometric border and crown symbol. [These windows are actually relights illuminated by vertical windows at the exterior face of the drum.] An elaborate dentil course entablature extends around the entire base of drum. Four wide segmental arched openings or recesses extend into the pulpit and gallery areas corresponding to the Greek cross plan. Ten-inch round cast iron columns with fluted acanthus-like capitals support the balcony areas above. Acanthus ornamented plaster brackets/corbels are located at beam ends under the balconies. Ornamental wrought iron grills decorate the four spandrel/junction points of the segmental arches and the dome. An ornamented plaster and wooden cornice runs along the springline face of the four massive support columns within the sanctuary and extends into the pulpit and gallery areas. The simplified ornament appears to be drawn from Doric architectural precedents. The gallery floors are covered by carpet and acoustical tile has been added to front of the east balcony.

In addition to the dramatic dome, the interior of the sanctuary is dominated by a five highly distinctive groups of stained glass windows. Within each of the three segmental arched gallery recesses are segmental arched, tripartite stained glass window features. Tripartite sets of stained glass windows are also located below the north gallery and the south gallery at the main floor level. All of the windows exhibit a common color palette and some standard iconographic themes including acanthus leaves and lilies. The elaborate designs incorporate geometric borders and shapes and exhibit an ornate iconographic image at the focal point of the major central panel. The windows typically exhibit opalescent and translucent stained glass members (primarily amber, caramel and other warm, neutral tones including red-orange, yellow and green). Several of the windows memorialize notable members of the church congregation including David E. Blaine and T.S. Libby. The windows have been attributed to the Povey Bros. Glass Company, a highly regarded art glass studio located in Portland, Oregon.

### Formal stairwells

Formal stairwells are located in the side entry vestibules at the NE and SE corners of the building adjacent and interconnected to the main entry vestibule. These stairwells exhibit distinctive white oak balustrades and handrails and carved newel posts. The bottom six treads of each stairway are curved and spiral along with curved guardrails and handrails. The stairwells also include oak wainscoting and are illuminated by a single stained glass window. A single skylight (measuring 7'6" square) is located at the balcony level vestibule above each of these stairwells. [Simpler and less formal stairwells remain in place at the NW and SW corners of the building. They typically exhibit stained fir balustrades and handrails. The NW stair that served the Ladies Parlor, Pastors Room and the Sunday school entrance from Marion Street retains some original linoleum flooring.]

### Pastor's Room (Pastor's Study)

The Pastor's Room is located at the NW corner of the building. A highly distinctive terra cotta fireplace mantle and surround is located at the south wall of the room. It appears to have been custom designed by Daniel R. Huntington for this project. It is a 5'-0" high white terra cotta mantel and front with a low pointed arched firebox opening that is flanked by highly sculpted garlands. The ornate 14" high over-mantel is embossed with "Redeeming the time" in script. The room also includes one stained glass window at the north window transom. A simpler and less ornate wooden fireplace surround remains in place in the Ladies Parlor directly upstairs.

### ***Significant Interior Spaces, Features & Finishes***

The most significant interior spaces are the *main entrance vestibule* and *main auditorium* (sanctuary) that are located at the upper or Fifth Avenue level of the building. The *main entrance vestibule* retains a distinctive segmental arched and vaulted ceiling; stained glass window transoms and a common wall with the sanctuary that includes ornamental relight windows. The *main auditorium* (which includes the dome and gallery recesses) is distinguished by five highly distinctive groups of stained glass windows and sixteen sets of

ornate clerestory windows in the dome. The space also retains distinctive cast iron columns and spandrel grills, and plaster and wood ornamental cornices and brackets. Both of the spaces is also distinguished by original white oak running and standing trim. Other significant interior features include the *terra cotta fireplace mantel* in the Pastor's Room and the *formal stairwells* at the side entrance vestibules that retain white oak balustrades and wainscot trim, stained glass windows and skylights.

## **Statement of Significance**

The First United Methodist Church is directly associated with the initial period (1902-1920) of downtown commercial expansion that occurred due to local economic prosperity after the Klondike Gold Rush and in tandem with explosive population growth and suburban residential development. During this era, modern urban architectural scale began with the construction of the earliest steel-frame high-rise buildings and the establishment of a concentration of banking enterprises and department stores along Second Avenue from Cherry Street to Pike Street. The initial regrading of Denny Hill and the commercial redevelopment of the former University Grounds (University/ Metropolitan Tract) were major factors that facilitated northward and eastward commercial expansion. A significant number of extant commercial properties from this era remain within the downtown commercial core, including: hotels, banks, business blocks and early high-rise commercial buildings, as well as department stores, clubhouses, and theaters. The First United Methodist Church is the *only* extant downtown church building dating from this era.

The First United Methodist Church is a well-preserved and highly significant example of a very important historic property type and is indicative of the evolution of the settlement era town and city as a whole. It is a highly noteworthy example of church design influenced by the Beaux Arts Classicism. Furthermore, it is an outstanding work of the important Seattle architectural partnership of James H. Schack and Daniel R. Huntington.

### ***Historic Land Use Patterns & Downtown Commercial Development***

The downtown commercial core of Seattle has evolved for over one-hundred and fifty years. This unique geographic locale has been developed and redeveloped multiple times, as building sites have been repeatedly changed due to a complex set of social, economic and historic circumstances. The historic commercial development of downtown Seattle is reflected in the current urban environment; an environment shaped in obvious tangible (and subtle intangible) ways by national and international events and influenced by broader city-wide and regional land use and development patterns.

### **Community Establishment**

The settlement-era community of Seattle was essentially carved out of dense forest along a relatively steep hillside above Elliott Bay where the protected deep water harbor could function as an ocean-going port. As the community became established and was incorporated as a town in 1869, it gradually accommodated industrial, commercial, social and residential functions within a concentrated area near Front and Commercial Streets (now



First Avenue and First Avenue S.) and Mill Street (now Yesler Way). Due to its remoteness, the town grew slowly and evolved in a laissez-faire manner with land use and planning decisions based on public health and transportation necessities.

The surviving downtown grid street system is a legacy of the three original plats delineated by the city's major founders: Carson Boren; William Bell; and Arthur Denny. They chose to layout their individual land claims and correlated streets to follow the adjacent shoreline, rather than according to a uniform compass point; thus, creating distinctive angular street intersections within the overall grid. As established, this street grid pattern influenced the future form of the downtown district, its network of streets and blocks, and dictated the future special relationships between downtown commercial buildings.

The earliest settlement community was composed of wood-frame, plank and clapboard buildings that were typically one to two stories in height with gabled shingle roofs – constructed using locally abundant materials. Commercial buildings were clustered along Front and Commercial Streets; they exhibited utilitarian false front designs and building forms typical of newly established communities throughout the American West. One particularly notable exception to this pattern was the Territorial University building (1861) that exhibited a formal Classical Revival façade with ionic columns. It was situated at a high point some eight blocks to the north of Yesler Way on Denny's Knoll, a site that became known as the University Grounds.

By the early 1880s, the bustling commercial center had evolved to include elaborate architect-designed, wood-frame buildings and modest brick and stone masonry structures, many that were two to three stories in height. By then, a scattered collection of fashionable residences and smaller dwellings dominated the hillside above the bay. By the mid-1880s, a larger assortment of single-family homes extended all the way from James Street to Pike Street with only a few hotels or lodging houses north of Cherry Street and east of First Avenue. Commercial enterprises within the residential district were small-scale and principally located near Pike Street and Third Avenue. The largest uphill homes were typically situated on spacious ¼ block sites and concentrated nearer Cherry and Marion Streets. A fairly dense collection of smaller houses and cottages extended further uphill and northward. Intermixed among the residential district were some roughhouses and double-houses as well as several meeting and fraternal halls and numerous churches.

By the mid-1880s large mansions began to be constructed on First Hill and Queen Anne Hill, a distance from growing commercial, industrial and port activity. Indicative of an established population and the degree of residential development, two substantial schools - Central School (located at Seventh Avenue and Marion Street) and Denny School (at Sixth Avenue and Wall Street) - were built in 1883 and 1884. While residential concentrations grew to the north and east of the commercial center, the industrial growth and port activity became more concentrated along the mouth of the Duwamish River and southern tidelands portions of Elliott Bay.

### Post-Fire Reconstruction

The destruction of 64 blocks of the commercial buildings and waterfront industrial and shipping facilities in the fire of 1889 brought a dramatic end to these established districts, which had evolved over the prior three and a half decades. City leaders and local entrepreneurs immediately began to plan to rebuild commercial buildings and industrial facilities in anticipation of a future population for 100,000 people, several times the actual size of the community. The reconstruction effort adhered to new building code provisions that mandated safer and more fire resistant building construction and brought about a new urban scale and design character within the commercial core. Streets were regraded, modern water and sewer utilities were installed, and First Avenue and Yesler Way were widened to relieve growing traffic congestion.

Massive load-bearing stone, brick and heavy timber structures were constructed that utilized decorative terra cotta, cast iron, and modern elevator technology. The urban scale of the city was significantly changed as substantial five-story buildings began to characterize the reconstructed commercial district. Facades uniformly met the street edge and individual land parcels were typically developed to utilize the full frontage and lot area. Continuous block fronts of commercial offices, hotels, banks and wholesale houses began to dominate the new streetscapes.

Although the new commercial district remained fixed within five blocks of Yesler Way and First Avenue, substantial commercial construction gravitated further north along First and Second Avenues and toward the well-established residential district. First Avenue to the north of Yesler Way became a major shopping street. As modern business blocks and the growing retail trade expanded uphill, Second Avenue to the north of Marion Street remained largely residential. Gradually the southern portion of Second Avenue between Yesler Way and Marion Street became a second major banking and shopping district. However, step grades limited foot and horse-drawn carriage traffic further uphill to Third Avenue, which remained dominated by residences and numerous churches.

While the well-established residential district survived the fire, by 1889 new neighborhoods and residential districts were being established well beyond the original downtown residential district. While specific geographic sub-areas that had been dominated by industrial, commercial and residential uses began to be more clearly defined, the reconstructed commercial district remained very diverse. Residential hotels, flats and lodging houses were typically located above retail storefronts and various commercial; warehouse, entertainment and manufacturing uses were intermixed on the same city block. Furthermore, individuals from a wide range of economic levels lived and worked in relatively close proximity to one another.

The discovery of gold in the Yukon in 1896 prompted a major influx of people traveling to Seattle, which emerged as a primary embarkation point for those traveling to northern British Columbia and Alaska. After what had been a brief period of economic stagnation, the Klondike Gold Rush triggered unprecedented economic growth and dramatic subsequent population increases. Spurred by new economic prosperity, the City began to undertake

projects that would drastically reshape the city's topography. Beginning in the late 1890s, hills were removed, tunnels and canals constructed, numerous streets were regraded, and valleys and tidelands were filled in order to facilitate the movement of goods and people and the expansion of commercial and industrial development. These major engineering efforts, which continued for nearly three decades, addressed various transportation and civil engineering challenges and shaped the future of the burgeoning downtown commercial district in significant ways.

### Early Twentieth Century Growth

Modern urban architectural scale and design character began with the construction of the earliest steel-frame high-rise buildings in the commercial district - the extant 14-story Alaska Building built in 1903-04 at Second Avenue and Cherry Street and the 12-story American Savings Bank/Empire Building (1904-06, destroyed) at Second Avenue and Madison Street. In 1906, the extant seven-story Eitel Building at Second Avenue and Pike Street was the earliest substantial commercial building to be built as far north as Pike Street. Major commercial buildings were subsequently built along Pike Street, including: People's Bank Building (1906, destroyed) at the NE corner of Second Avenue; and the Northern Bank and Trust Company Building (Seaboard Building, 1906-09) at the NE corner of Fourth Avenue. By 1905, a distinct concentration of banking enterprises and specialty/department stores had been established along Second Avenue near Marion Street.

During this era numerous residential properties, including large mansions that were only 20 years old, were removed and/or relocated in order to accommodate large commercial and civic building projects. The increased pressure for commercial development brought about the first broad scale local planning efforts - influenced by the City Beautiful movement - intended to guide future downtown development. Various civic center plans were proposed between 1905 and 1911; however, none were ever fully adopted or implemented. The legacy of these efforts is reflected to some degree in several extant buildings within the commercial core, including: the Central Building (1906-08); and the Securities Building (1912-13). Unfortunately, two of the most architecturally distinctive public buildings to be constructed during this era and influenced by such grand schemes were lost during the 1960s; the Carnegie Public Library (1902) and the Government Post Office Building (1903).

The Rialto Building (1894, destroyed) at Second Avenue and Madison, housed the Frederick and Nelson Department Store, which was one of several major retail enterprises that gradually made Second Avenue a fashionable shopping district. Other important department stores included: the Bon Marche Store (1896, 1902, 1911 destroyed) at the SW corner of Second Avenue and Pike Street and the extant Stone, Fisher & Lane Store (Galland Building, 1906). Three more major retail enterprises: the J.A. Baillargeon & Co. (1907), MacDougall and Southwick Store (1907, Chapin Building, destroyed) and the original Rhodes Department Store (1907, destroyed) were also located along Second Avenue.

By 1905, numerous brick hotels were already clustered near First Avenue and Pike Street and further up Pike Street at Third Avenue. A particularly significant boom in downtown hotel development occurred between 1906 and 1910 in conjunction with improved economic

prospects, population growth and in anticipation of the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific (AYP) Exposition of 1909.

In 1907, the University of Washington regents successfully negotiated a long-term lease of the former University Grounds that encompassed several contiguous blocks between Seneca and Union along both sides of Fourth and Fifth Avenues. While the University had relocated to its current north end campus in 1894, it was not until early 1908 that a comprehensive master plan for the redevelopment of the University/Metropolitan Tract was finalized and made public. The ambitious scheme called for a concentration of ten-story business blocks unified by a Beaux Arts design and a formalized spatial relationship. The successful lease and this visionary plan signaled that the commercial district would certainly shift northward and that Fourth and Fifth Avenues would become major commercial thoroughfares.

While commercial development and retail activity had been concentrated along First Avenue and nearer to the waterfront ever since the earliest street regrading efforts had occurred in the late 1870s, Pike Street also functioned as a main transit route between Lake Union and the central waterfront. By the early 1900s the area around First Avenue and Pike Street was a center of small-scale commercial activity and residential hotels. Early in the decade, the regrading of Denny Hill and the establishment of the Pike Place Public Market at the foot of Pike Street triggered increased hotel and commercial development in the general vicinity.

Second Avenue continued to serve as the major downtown commercial thoroughfare for several decades – in addition to three of the five major department stores as well as the Smith Tower, the city's tallest skyscraper until 1968, the street included the largest office buildings, leading furniture stores, a distinct concentration of the biggest commercial and oldest pioneer banks and several of the leading hotels, including the Savoy Hotel (1906, destroyed). The street was preeminent due to the fact that it provided an easy and direct route for the movement of traffic and goods between railroad and wholesale terminals to the south and the thriving retail, business and residential areas to the north and east. Well into the 1930s, Second Avenue remained the principal arterial roadway through the downtown commercial core for those traveling by electric streetcar, private or commercial motor vehicle and for passengers making connections to water-based transportation on Elliott Bay.

However, by 1910 the commercial core had shifted northward and significant commercial real estate development was occurring within the former residential district. By then, regulations had been adopted that limited building heights to 200 feet - or sixteen stories high. In 1912 the City government enacted an innovative ordinance that governed building heights in greater detail according to lot coverage and set particular construction requirements. Following a nationwide trend, several major high-rise buildings were constructed – primarily located along Second and Third Avenues. Distinctive multi-story civic, commercial and hotel buildings were also being built as the urban scale and extent of the commercial district changed dramatically prior to World War I. With the opening of the elegant five-story Frederick and Nelson Department Store at Fifth Avenue and Pine Street in 1919, the fashionable retail center began to make a rather dramatic northward shift.

A local Zoning Commission was created in 1920 and in 1923 Seattle adopted its first ordinance that identified specific areas for specified uses. The zoning code allowed the most densely concentrated - although regulated – commercial development to occur in the downtown core. Over the following seven years the downtown core was transformed by the addition of highly distinctive office towers, major hotels and movie theaters designed by skilled local architects.

The economic prosperity of the 1920s stimulated the development of numerous major high-rise and commercial block office buildings, as well as smaller-scale bank and specialty retail stores, major hotels including apartment hotels, club buildings and entertainment facilities. The northward expansion of commercial development ultimately led to the destruction of Seattle's original residential district. Distinctive and highly ornate mansions on large lots, modest family homes, row houses and flats, and vernacular cottages and dwellings were gradually removed or demolished. By 1930, virtually all residential properties had been eliminated - as well as several immediate post-fire commercial buildings - due to regrading and commercial real estate development.

### *Modern Era Commercial Development & Regionalization*

As the density of commercial uses intensified during this era, the impact of the automobile became apparent and the need for downtown automobile services and storage facilities increased. As retail activity began to be decentralized to neighborhoods and smaller outlying commercial districts, downtown property and business owners became increasingly concerned about parking needs and traffic impacts in the commercial core.

The economic depression of the 1930s brought a fundamental halt to downtown real estate development and commercial construction. Few major downtown construction projects were undertaken after 1930 with two exceptions being the U.S. Federal Courthouse (on the former Sister's of Providence Hospital site) at Fifth Avenue and Seneca Street and the F.W. Woolworth Company store at Third Avenue and Union Street, both completed in 1940, during the build up to World War II. This period of stagnation extended through the World War II era as patterns of use in downtown Seattle remained virtually unchanged. The postwar era brought about the transformation of the region and the city's urban form, basically in response to the increased role of automobile transportation. Postwar planning efforts placed a heavy emphasis on the creation of modern traffic thoroughfares and expressway designs intended to facilitate easy access to and use of the downtown commercial core.

Compared with massive post-war suburban real estate development, relatively few new commercial buildings were constructed in downtown Seattle. Of particular note were the expansions of the two major downtown department stores. In 1952, after constructing a new suburban Bellevue department store, Frederick & Nelson added five stories to their downtown flagship store. In 1953, the Bon Marche added three stories to its elegant 1929 building and later the store was connected via a skybridge to a 10-story, self- parking garage constructed in 1959. Scattered major commercial construction occurred during the late 1950s and early 1960s at various downtown sites and several notable buildings were built reflecting modern zoning changes and architectural trends including: the Norton Building

(1958); the Logan Building (1959); the Washington Building (1960) and the IBM Building (1961-64). Other major modern redevelopment projects included several public buildings: the Public Safety Building (1951, destroyed); Seattle Public Library (1956-59 destroyed); and the Municipal Building (1959-61, destroyed). Numerous older downtown buildings were remodeled and expanded during this era.

### *Social Organizations, Clubhouses and Churches*

While the original settlement era residential district was almost entirely composed of single-family homes, it quickly grew to include several meeting and fraternal halls and numerous churches. By 1884, the district included the following churches:

Methodist-Episcopal Church	[Second Avenue and Columbia Street]
Methodist-Protestant Church	[Second Avenue and Madison Street]
Plymouth Congregational Church	[Second Avenue between Spring & Seneca Street]
Roman Catholic Church	[Fourth Avenue and Washington Street]
Baptist Church	[Fourth Avenue and Cherry Street]
Trinity Episcopal Church	[Third Avenue and Jefferson Street]
First Presbyterian Church	[Third Avenue and Madison Street]

By 1893, there were at least eleven churches located within the older residential district, on Denny Hill and in Belltown. Due to multiple factors including increasing real estate values, church congregations were beginning to relocate just outside the developing commercial core or building new churches in emerging residential neighborhoods. Despite the ever-increasing commercial real estate development and the removal of family homes throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, several congregations and social organizations remained downtown and new church buildings, fraternal halls and clubhouses continued to be built.

The continued presence of major new churches, fraternal halls and club buildings was a legacy of the land use patterns established by the settlement community and reflects the ties that descendants had to a rapidly vanishing era. Typically designed by leading architects – important non-commercial and non-governmental buildings that were constructed in the commercial district during this era included: the Rainier Club (1902, 1928); YMCA Building (1905, destroyed); First United Methodist (1907-10); Arctic Club Building (Morrison Hotel, 1908-09); Plymouth Congregational Church (1910-12, destroyed); YWCA Building (1913); the seven-story Elks Club (1913, destroyed); Arctic Club (1916); College Club (1921, destroyed); Women’s University Club (1914 destroyed, 1922); Eagles Temple (ACT Theater, 1924); YMCA Central Branch (1929); and the 21-story Washington Athletic Club (1930, expanded 1954). The club and association buildings typically included special club meeting, entertainment, and dining rooms as well as exercise and education facilities according to the purposes of the organization. They also functioned much like hotels providing long-term residential facilities for members and/or short-term guest rooms for visitors from affiliated groups. Churches served remaining downtown residents, visitors and new residents along with parishioners who continued to worship downtown after having relocated to newly established in-city neighborhoods.

### ***First Methodist-Episcopal Church – Church Congregation History***

Seattle's initial Euro-American settlers – the Denny, Terry, Boren and Bell families – landed at Alki Point on November 13, 1851. Within months the settlers moved to a more protected location at the southern end of Elliott Bay. The Methodist-Episcopal Church was the first organized church congregation established in Seattle's settlement community. Rev. David E. Blaine was the church's first minister and the first resident minister to conduct services in the community.

Rev. David E. Blaine (1824-1900) and his wife Catherine Paine Blaine (1829-1908) left Seneca Falls, New York for Seattle in 1853 as participants in a major New England evangelical movement. Traveling by sea and on mules over the Isthmus of Panama they stopped in Olympia and Steilacoom prior to arriving at Alki Point on November 26, 1853. Rev. Blaine conducted two services there before joining the tiny settlement across Elliott Bay. The Methodist-Episcopal Church was formally established shortly thereafter; on December 4, 1853 Rev. Blaine began to conduct services in a building known as "Bachelor's Hall" or Latimer Building near Front Street and Cherry Street. The original charter members of the church were Arthur and Mary Denny, John H. Nagle, and Catherine Blaine. Carson Boren contributed land for the construction of a parsonage that was completed in May 1854 near the southeast corner of Second Avenue and Columbia Street. In November 1854 construction began on a small wood-frame church located adjacent to the parsonage and near the town's first burial ground.

The church was dedicated on May 12, 1855 and became known as the 'White Church'. It was Seattle's first house of worship and for ten years it was Seattle's *only* church. Catherine Blaine – who had become Seattle's first school teacher - described the building in a letter dated May 19, 1855:

*It is 24 x 36 feet in width and 14 foot posts. It has no basement, except the hall which is 10 feet wide and at each end has winding stairs. The hall floor is on a level with the ground outside. In the audience room between the stairs are three seats, each raised one step above the other. These are for the singers. At the other end of the room is the pulpit, which is small and neat. On one side of the pulpit are three seats. There is but one aisle, a center one three feet wide. The house would comfortably seat 150 persons and more could find seats. On the top in front is a low square steeple, designed for a bell as soon as the people can afford to buy one. When the house is painted it will be quite an ornament to the town.*

The church was pitted with bullet marks after the Indian attacks of 1856. The building was repaired and a new porch was added in 1862 and a steeple was added at an unknown date. After the Civil War, Rev. and Mrs. Blaine returned to their native New York; however, they returned to Seattle in 1882. Rev. Blaine became fairly wealthy due to various business partnerships with Arthur Denny. The couple resided here until he died in 1900 and she died in 1908. In 1875 the 'White Church' was enlarged and a new parsonage was constructed at the corner of Second Avenue and Columbia Street. By 1884 the congregation had 269 members and two additional Methodist-Episcopal churches had been established. One was

located at Fifth Avenue and Pine Street and another at Third Avenue and Bell Street, an indication of the growth and expansion of the town during this era.

In 1886 or 1887 the parsonage and church property was sold to the Boston Improvement Company for \$30,000. The four-story Boston Block, the first building in Seattle to include a passenger elevator, was subsequently constructed on the site. The 'White Church' was moved to the NE corner of Third Avenue and Cherry Street where it was used a gambling hall, saloon and restaurant until 1898 when it was demolished for commercial development. The Boston Block was brick masonry construction and survived the fire of 1889. It was demolished in 1922 in order to construct the extant Seattle National Bank (United Way Building).

With the proceeds from the lucrative sale of the 'White Church' the congregation purchased property a relatively short distance uphill at the southeast corner of Third Avenue and Marion Street. The 60' by 120' lot reportedly cost \$10,000. In June 1887, Portland architect William Stokes was commissioned to design a new sanctuary and local architect John Nestor was employed as the local superintendent. However, Stokes was dismissed and Nestor appears to have been responsible for much of the final design. Reportedly, the congregation worshipped in portions of the completed basement until the entire wood-frame building could be completed in 1888. Considered Seattle's most elaborate pre-fire church building, it was designed in a highly articulated free Gothic style with a prominent 50' high corner tower, ornate rose windows and multiple steep gable and tower profiles. An estimated \$20,000 was expended on the construction of the building not including finishes and furnishings, after which the costs rose to \$45,000. At the time of completion *Seattle Illustrated* provided the following description:

*It is an architectural beauty, the finest in the city, and shelters a flock of 450 members...It has a basement fully fitted for lectures, social meetings, and prayer circles and a complete suite of rooms for Sunday school classes. The audience room is nearly surrounded with spacious gallery and highly ornamented with circular and gothic windows filled with stained glass of great beauty.*

The great fire of 1889 occurred on June 6, 1889 and came within a half block of the new church; however it was not damaged. Three months later it was formally dedicated. By 1890, membership had grown to 495 and by 1903 the First Methodist-Episcopal Church had a congregation of 1,022 full time members. There were eleven other Methodist congregations in the rapidly growing city, amounting to a total membership of 2,177.

In mid-September 1905, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reported on the recent sale of the First Methodist-Episcopal Church in what was a record real estate transaction for parcels located along Third Avenue; the property and the ornate wood-frame church had been sold for \$75,000. With the proceeds of the sale, the church trustees immediately purchased property at the SW corner of Fifth Avenue and Marion Street for \$43,500 with the intention of constructing a new "modern edifice." The ornate church building was leased back to the congregation for a year, until it was torn down in late 1906.



During the summer of 1906, Third Avenue was regraded to create the gentlest grade of any of the business district streets. Property values along the street were said to be 50% that of Second Avenue, which was the principal retail trade and business banking area. The prospect for future commercial and retail development along Third Avenue was further enhanced by the construction of new wide sidewalks and the installation of a modern street lighting system. Reportedly, at least a half dozen skyscrapers were being planned for other sites along Third Avenue. The change in street grade - said to be at least one story - impacted access to the church and along with the increased land values and commercial development most certainly forced the sale and subsequent move.

In early October 1906 the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* reported that the Trustee Company had completed the purchase of all of the lots on the entire half block along Third Avenue between Columbia and Marion Streets, a site that included the First Methodist-Episcopal Church and several smaller commercial and residential buildings. The article included a fully illustrated rendering of the Central Building (at the "The Central Point"). The architectural plans called for a riveted-steel and concrete structure to be fully clad in terra cotta. It was planned to be some eighteen to twenty stories in overall height including its central clock tower section.

### ***First Methodist Episcopal Church (First United Methodist Church) – Church Building Construction & History***

By early 1906, church leaders had begun to plan for the new church to be built on the 120' x 128' site at the SW corner of Fifth Avenue and Marion Street. The site appears to have been the location of three small, wood-frame family dwellings and a boarding house (5<sup>th</sup> Avenue House) with furnished rooms. By then the former Rainier Hotel, located on the opposite east side of Fifth Avenue, was in use as family tenements. Seattle architect James H. Schack was commissioned to design the new church building. On January 2, 1906 Mr. Schack and a church building committee departed on a three-week long trip to visit various cities in the American West in order to study church designs. The purpose of the excursion was to ensure that the design of the new church "...should be excelled by none other..." A subsequent article published in *The Seattle Daily Times* noted that the group admired particular churches – apparently those that were Romanesque Revival in design - in Pasadena, Los Angeles, and Portland. They also visited churches in Omaha, Nebraska and San Francisco.

In an article published in *The Seattle Daily Times* on April 27, 1906 the committee chairman, T.S. Libby, described the anticipated design of the new church as "Romanesque" and noted that the design program included several specific features. The main auditorium (sanctuary) would be covered by a glass dome measuring thirty-eight feet in diameter, there would be twenty-five Sunday school classrooms with partitions arranged to open onto a general auditorium. In addition to the organ loft there would be a pastor's study and choir rooms. There would also be two banquet halls, a kitchen, pantry, toilet and cloak rooms, a reading room, classrooms and room for the heating and ventilation equipment. Initial press coverage indicated that the construction would cost \$100,000.

A perspective sketch was published along with the April 1906 article. The preliminary design for the new church was Romanesque Revival in style with massive granite walls,

asymmetrical massing, a cross-gable roof form and a prominent corner tower with spire. The design appears to be somewhat similar to four other local churches that were under construction at the time. A contemporary *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (January 21, 1906) article discussed and identified the churches as the Unitarian Church, the Pilgrim Congregational Church, the Swedish Methodist-Episcopal Church and the Queen Anne Methodist-Episcopal Church.

However, by mid-February of 1907 a new design for the church was revealed by the architect. An article published in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* on February 17, 1907 included a sketch of the building, revealing a drastically revised design. The revised design was very similar in appearance to the competed Beaux Arts style church building. This article announced that the new church would be able to seat 2,000 with three balconies that functioned to increase the seating capacity. It would be clad with brick and terra cotta and include a fifty-six foot diameter “art glass” dome. According to the article the cost of construction was anticipated to be \$125,000 and construction work would begin that summer. The article also stated, “The old plans were changed since the question of the regrade of Fifth Avenue came up, and the building is to be set a few feet back on the lot to give an opportunity for conforming more gracefully to whatever grade is adopted in the future.”

Shortly thereafter, an illustrated brochure entitled *Our New Church - First Methodist Episcopal Church* was published. With text written in the future tense, it included a building description, floor plans and a new rendering. The new rendering was quite similar to that published in February 1907; however, it was clearly delineated by a different hand. Furthermore, it includes the notation ‘Schack and Huntington Architects.’ The plans include a title block that appears to be have been revised; it states, ‘Schack & Huntington – Architect.’ These are the first indications that Daniel Huntington had joined James Schack in the design endeavor. Rev. W.H. W. Rees, the church pastor, who oversaw the development of the building, noted in the text that the project had been delayed a year and that the building committee had changed the plan of the building “under the instructions of the Quarterly Conference” and in response to the potential regrade of Fifth Avenue.

The congregation had already relocated further uphill twice due to urban improvements and encroaching commercial development; thus, the design of the church had to be able to accommodate anticipated future grade changes “leaving ample room between the building and the streets.” While Rev. Rees noted that the plans were changed he did not specifically acknowledge the participation of Mr. Huntington or the basis for the broader stylist changes in the design. The brochure described the following features of the new church:

Main Floor Level: “..the Main Auditorium, with entrances on Fifth Avenue, will be one of the most beautiful and complete Auditoriums in the west. The Choir Loft is large, the Organ well located, and the Choir Room, Pastor’s Room and Ladies Parlors ample for all needs...The exterior of the building will be of pressed brick with terra cotta trimmings. The main Auditorium will be well lighted by large glass windows and a glass dome of large diameter.”

First Floor: "...facing on Marion Street, is arranged for Sunday School, league and Social purposes. Besides the General Auditorium this floor will have a number of classrooms, a Library, Cloak Room banquet Room, Kitchen and Service Rooms."

Basement: "A thorough and modern system of heating and ventilating will be installed in the basement, where we will have ample room for boilers, fans, fuel etc."

An extensive set of architectural drawings for this project was prepared by the firm of Schack & Huntington Architects. It is unclear what exact role each of the partners played in the design and construction of the church. The original architectural drawing set included at least 64 drawings, many of which bear the initials of James H. Schack and/or the initials and signature of Olaf Hanson. The design continued to be revised and developed while the building was under construction with drawings being added up until January 1910. The drawings that date from late 1909 and early 1910 do not include Huntington's name in the title block that only identifies 'James H. Schack, Architect.' Thus, the relatively brief partnership appears to have ended by mid-1909. However; the set does include very detailed and finely delineated drawings that clearly bear Huntington's initials for the design of the fireplace mantle and bookcases in the Pastor's study. Olaf Hanson appears to have been responsible for most of the design work related to the heating, mechanical and ventilation systems. He also produced many of the drawings for the final interior finishes and details, elements that were revised and redesigned toward the completion of the project.

An article published in *Pacific Builder & Engineer* on August 17, 1907 described the new church design and its departure from the traditional medieval-derived church design modes: "...the church goer is forced to accept, along with the twentieth century Testament, the architecture of the twentieth century. Some are loath to depart from the old, but the chaste simplicity of the new is more in keeping with the subject." There are no formal records or explanations regarding the specific design change from a Romanesque Revival style church to the classically-inspired, Beaux-Arts style that was executed. The change seems to reflect prevailing national architectural tastes and design trends reflected in contemporary urban construction and city planning efforts.

Construction does not appear to have been fully underway until the latter part 1907. The cornerstone was laid on February 2, 1908. The structural steel and wood frame for the dome was in place by May 1908 and the pressed brick and terra cotta cladding appears to have been near completion by late June. The congregation worshipped at temporary locations, including a tent and a theater, for two years. When the Blaine Room (the large community room or general auditorium directly below the sanctuary or main auditorium) was completed in early September 1908 services began to be held there. Subsequent construction activity appears to have been slow possibly due to the fact that much of the work was done by the congregation as day laborers.

After over four years of planning and construction the new church was completed at a cost of \$180,000. On April 17, 1910 a formal "Dedication and Forward Movement Rally Day" took place. Reportedly, Rev. W.H.W. Rees raised \$100,000 in donations that day, which helped to clear all of the construction expenses and left enough to purchase a \$15,000 pipe organ

that would be installed the following November. An illustrated brochure/souvenir program was published in conjunction with that event. It appears to have been very similar to the earlier brochure with descriptive text written in the future tense. An article published in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* in mid-May included a photograph of the new edifice and noted that adjacent street grading and street approaches to the church had been completed.

The citywide Seattle Methodist-Episcopal congregation had doubled its numbers between 1905 and 1910, a period of extraordinary city population growth and expansion. The Seattle congregation was said to be the largest in all of Methodism. The church was organized around multiple activities including: foreign missions, home missions, children's societies, ladies aid societies, an Epworth League, choral societies and other groups focused on performing good works. For the First Methodist Episcopal Church, along with many other urban churches, these activities and a changed focus in mission were a result of urbanization and broader societal changes that ultimately involved new building programs and a desire to construct prominent and fashionable churches to house their growing congregations. These major new Methodist churches served as important regional centers and symbolized the strength and success of its missionary outreach.

Four other extant Beaux-Arts style churches or synagogues were constructed during this period or within the following decade; each is located within about a mile and a half of the First United Methodist Church. Although they each reflect different stylistic expressions of the style, they all exhibit a similar building form and a central dome and classically derived architectural detailing and ornament. The group includes: First Covenant Church (Swedish Tabernacle designed by John A. Creutzer, 1906-1910); First Church of Christ, Scientist (Bebb & Gould, 1909-1914); Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center (Bikur Cholim Synagogue designed by Marcus Priteca, 1912-1915) and Town Hall (Fourth Church of Christ, Scientist designed by George Foote Dunham, 1916 & 1922).

Two other large distinctive downtown churches were also constructed during the same period as the First Methodist Episcopal Church, most certainly due to similar circumstances related to changing land use patterns and increased land values. However, both of these churches were designed in a literal Classical Revival design mode. Neither of them survived subsequent land use pressures and both were demolished in the 1960s. The First Presbyterian Church (Crapsey & Lamb of Cincinnati, 1906-1908) was located at Seventh Avenue and Spring Street and Plymouth Congregational Church (John Graham, Sr., 1910-12) was located at Sixth Avenue and University Street.

By 1915, there were over 30 Methodist-Episcopal churches in Seattle. The First Methodist Episcopal Church congregation increased from 1,700 parishioners in 1910 when the church was dedicated, to 3,756 parishioners by 1938. Relatively few alterations were made to the building; the Sunday school auditorium and stage were remodeled in 1920, the open mezzanine level over Sunday school auditorium was enclosed (c.1935) and the entry stairs were partly reconstructed (c.1936). By the mid-1940s, the congregation began to consider constructing a new church building at another location. However, the church decided in the late-1940s to proceed with plans to build a new building on an immediately adjacent parcel on the southern half of the block. As designed by architect John Graham Jr., a contemporary

new education wing was constructed in 1950-51. The L-shaped, two-story building enclosed an open landscaped courtyard oriented toward Fifth Avenue. It was designed to house a chapel, educational and administrative functions and social service facilities within two additional lower floor levels at the east side of the site. When the new wing was opened in May 1951, the congregation numbered 3,000 members. In 1968, the church's name changed to First United Methodist Church. The Sunday school level auditorium and classrooms appear to have been remodeled several times during the 1960s and 1970s.

In the early 1980s, the church congregation began to consider redevelopment plans for the church site involving the potential construction of a new multi-use church facility and office tower. In March 1985, the City of Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board (LPB) voted to approve designation of the First United Methodist Church as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of three designation criteria established in Ordinance 106348. The "Report on Designation" dated March 22, 1985 identified "the exterior of the 1907 building and the interior of the auditorium" as features of the Landmark to be preserved.

First United Methodist Church appealed the designation decision before the Seattle Hearing Examiner; however, the decision of LPB was upheld. First United Methodist Church then appealed that decision through the court system and the case was subsequently argued before the Washington State Supreme Court on September 27, 1995. On May 9, 1996, the Washington State Supreme Court ruled that, due to restrictions it had placed on alterations to the interior and exterior of the building, the Landmark designation was unconstitutional because it violated the rights of First United Methodist Church to the free practice of religion.

In May 2002, the church congregation retained consultants to assist with planning for the redevelopment of the church property, including the demolition of the historic sanctuary building. Historic preservation advocates including Historic Seattle and the National Trust for Historic Preservation along with City and County elected officials and governmental representatives became actively involved in an effort to find an alternative approach, one that would preserve the historic church building while allowing the congregation to sell the property and relocate to new facility that would better serve its current mission. After much negotiation, on May 20, 2007, the church congregation voted unanimously to accept a purchase proposal from Kevin Daniels, president of Nitze-Stagen. The church congregation vacated the building in March 2008 and is currently preparing to move to a new church facility that is under construction at Second Avenue and Denny Way at the foot of Queen Anne Hill. The education wing (1951) was demolished in August 2008 and the southern half of the site is currently being prepared for major commercial development according to current zoning requirements. Daniels Development Co. plans to preserve and adapt the historic church building for a permanent new use. It is currently being used as a recital hall.

## *Beaux Arts Style Architecture*

Beaux-Arts style or Beaux-Arts Classicism was an architectural style broadly used in the United States from the mid-1880s through the 1920s. The popular use of the style was significantly influenced by American architectural practitioners who had received formal training in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Turn of the century Beaux-Arts architectural training followed a demanding and strict curriculum that was steeped in classical traditions that had been refined for some 350 years. Beaux Arts training emphasized the study of Greek and Imperial Roman architecture, as well as Italian Renaissance and French and Italian Baroque models and required students to gain a complete understanding of classical design and decorative principles. The rigorous coursework involved the production of quick conceptual sketches, highly-finished perspective drawings and knowledgeable architectural detailing skills; this basic training method became widely adopted by architecture schools within American university systems.

Buildings designed in the Beaux-Arts style typically utilized several identifiable design characteristics, including: symmetry; a hierarchy of spatial components; integration of architecture with sculptural elements, bas-relief panels, mosaics or other artwork; precise design and execution of a profusion of architectural details; some explicit references to an eclectic mix of historic styles or “manners” and the subtle use of polychromatic finishes. The ‘White City’ of the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago was a triumph in the Beaux-Arts stylistic movement and a major influence on subsequent turn-of-the-century expositions and the City Beautiful movement. Because of the formal and idealized traditional design elements of Beaux-Arts Classicism, the style was particularly suited for colossal public buildings, post offices, libraries and railroad terminals and was used to a lesser degree for church design.

### *James Schack & Daniel Huntington, architects*

#### James H. Schack

James Hansen Schack (1871-1933) studied and apprenticed in Chicago prior to arriving in Seattle in 1901. Among his most important early commissions was the only partially completed Melhorn Building (1904). Other early commissions included Holy Trinity English Lutheran Church on Capitol Hill (1902), University Heights Baptist Church (1904), an addition to Seattle General Hospital (1904) and several residences and downtown commercial buildings.

He practiced briefly with Daniel R. Huntington from 1907 until 1909. Together, they are known to have designed several residences, the First Methodist Episcopal Church (First United Methodist Church, 1907-10), the original Arctic Club Building (Morrison Hotel, 1908-09), the Delamar Apartments (1908-1909) and the Mines Building (a.k.a. Oriental Building) for the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition (1908). Schack eventually formed the partnership of Schack, Young and Myers, a particularly prolific local architecture firm credited with the design of numerous important commercial, residential and institutional projects constructed during the 1920s.

David John Myers (1872-1936) settled in Seattle after the fire of 1889 and worked in succession for Parkinson & Evers, John Parkinson, and Evers & Keith until 1894. After studying architecture in Boston he returned to Seattle in 1905 and established an active partnership with John Graham Sr. He then worked with Virgil Bogue in 1911-12 on the ill-fated *Plan of Seattle* and is believed to have generated many of the architectural plans and drawings included in the plan. He also served on the University of Washington - School of Architecture faculty from 1917-1920. Arrigo M. Young (1884-1954) was a trained structural engineer. After working in Chicago and St. Louis, he migrated to Seattle in 1910 where he initially worked for the Moran Company. By 1913, he had established his own consulting firm; he then served as the structural engineer for various projects including theaters designed by B. Marcus Priteca.

Schack and Myers began sharing office space in 1917 and the full partnership with Young was founded in 1920. Shortly after the partnership was formed, Myers and Harlan Thomas collaborated on the design of the College Club (1921, destroyed), both of whom were members. The role of the larger firm on both the College Club and Chamber of Commerce Building (1924) projects appears to have been for engineering purposes, with Thomas serving as the principal architect and designer. Most designs credited to Schack, Young & Myers are in academic eclectic styles. The partnership lasted until 1929 when Myers returned to private practice. Schack and Young continued in partnership until Schack's death in 1933. By this time A.M. Young had obtained an architectural license; he then continued in partnership with Stephen H. Richardson and formed the firm of Young, Richardson, Carlton & Detlie, which later became known as The Richardson Associates and TRA.

### Daniel R. Huntington

Daniel R. Huntington (1871-1962) was born in New Jersey and migrated to Seattle via New York and Denver, arriving here in 1904 or 1905. Prior to entering into his brief partnership with James H. Schack he appears to have initially worked for others. After the Schack & Huntington partnership ended he collaborated with Carl F. Gould, Sr. designing several mixed use and residential buildings, including the Sanitary Market (1909, destroyed), until c.1912. He subsequently formed a brief two-year partnership with Arthur Lovelace and together they designed several residences and apartment buildings.

In September 1912, Huntington was appointed City Architect and held this important position until 1921. During this period he is credited with the design of numerous public projects, including: Colman Dock (1912, destroyed); Wallingford Fire and Police Station (Station No.11, 1912-13); Lake Union Steam Plant (1912, 1914, 1917, 1921); Firlands Sanitarium (CRISTA Campus, 1913-14); University Bridge piers (1919); Fire Station No. 33 (1914); Fire Station No. 12 (Sally Goldmark Library, 1914); Fire Station No. 2 (Fourth & Battery, 1920); Fire Station No.7 (Capitol Hill, 1920); and the exquisite Fremont Public Library (1920-21).

He returned to private practice in 1922 and is known to have taught briefly at the University of Washington in 1923-24. Important subsequent commissions include; the DAR House

(1924-25); Northcliffe Apartments (1924-25) and Fire Station No. 16 (Greenlake, 1928). In partnership with Arch Torbitt, he also designed the distinctive Piedmont Apartments (Evangeline Young Women's Residence, 1927-28), the Seventh Street Theater in Hoquiam (1927-28) and Hoquiam City Hall (1928-29). He also served as the local AIA chapter president for 1918-19 and 1925.

### Olaf Hanson

Olaf Hanson (1862-1933) worked intermittently for the office of James H. Schack and served as a designer, draftsman and plans checker for the First Methodist Episcopal Church project and other firm commissions during this period. Hanson emigrated from Sweden with his family c.1873. After suffering a complete loss of hearing at the age of ten, he studied at the Minnesota School for the Deaf. He subsequently obtained a B.A. in 1886 and M.A in 1889 at Gallaudet College in Washington D.C. He was a skilled draftsman and studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1889-90. He established a very successful architectural practice in Minnesota prior to moving to Seattle in 1902 after his firm Thayer & Hanson won the commission to design a major courthouse and jail project in Juneau, Alaska. He appears to have designed several residences and is credited with the design of the Georgetown High School (1904, destroyed) and the Snoqualmie School (1911). He designed several now-destroyed buildings for the Washington State School for the Deaf and Washington State School for the Blind. He served as a draftsman for the University of Washington Department of Buildings and Grounds from 1919 until 1931, during a period extensive campus expansion and construction activity. Olaf Hanson also played a leading role in several organizations that were early advocates for the rights of deaf and hearing-impaired people.

### Povey Brothers Glass Company<sup>1</sup>

Long time congregation members have attributed the stained glass used in the original construction of the church to the Povey Bros. Glass Company of Portland, Oregon. An architectural historian (Leslie Heald) who specializes in Povey-produced stained glass was also consulted. She believes that the windows were produced by the Povey Brothers Glass Company; however, the company did not sign their early work and production records are incomplete, thus authentication is difficult. Experts in the field have concluded that the painted stained glass used in the original construction of the church is of a very high quality, whether it can be properly and fully attributed or not.

The Povey Brothers Glass Company operated and produced stained glass in Portland, Oregon from 1888 until 1929. The beginnings of the firm coincided with the boom in American stained glass production that occurred in the 1870s and 1880s. The Povey family was originally from England, where they were established as glass artists. Joseph Povey immigrated to the United States in 1848 and subsequently worked in stained glass in

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<sup>1</sup> This information was extracted from a lengthy report prepared by Diana J. Painter, *Historic and Architectural Assessment: The First United Methodist Church & Rainier Club* (July 2003) that includes detailed information and footnote references regarding the history and architecture of FUMC.



Philadelphia, New York City and Newark. Three of his children eventually formed the Povey Brothers Art Glass Works, as the firm was initially known.

David Povey was the company's chief engineer; he had studied stained glass while traveling in Europe and studied art at Cooper Union Institute in New York City. George Povey was the financial manager and John Povey managed the glass studio/workshop. All three of them worked in various glass studios on the east Coast before establishing their own shop in Portland. Povey Brothers Glass Company was the most successful and prolific glass studio in Portland; albeit the only glass studio during some of this period.

The firm worked throughout the Pacific Northwest and are known to have completed commissions in Victoria, Bellingham, Seattle (First Christian Church (Robert H. Orr, 1922-23), and Eugene. Outstanding examples of Povey stained glass work in Portland include: First Presbyterian Church, First Baptist Church, First Congregational United Church of Christ, James Lutheran Church, the Old Church, and the Pittock Mansion.

One of the best known Povey commissions is the First Christian Church in Portland that includes 118 stained glass windows. In addition to churches, the Povey Brothers are credited with a significant number of residential and commercial projects, as well as work at the University of Oregon.

Povey stained glass work exhibits typical characteristics/themes that are reflected in the windows of First United Methodist Church, including: use of a mixture of opalescent and translucent stained glass members; use of amber, caramel and other warm, neutral tones (deemed especially appropriate in the Pacific Northwest); use of simple flower, particularly lily, motifs; and placement of a simple image at the center of a panel and "framing" it with geometric glass members that relate the panel to its architectural setting.

### *Austin Pipe Organs*<sup>2</sup>

The pipe organ located at the west end of the sanctuary contains over 4,000 pipes from 32" in length down to less than 2" in length. It was built c.1968 as Opus 2479 - meaning that it was the 2,479th pipe organ built by Austin Pipe Organs of Hartford, CT. Austin is the same company that built the Mormon Tabernacle Organ console, as well as many other fine, historic instruments around the world. Some of the pipes in this dramatic organ date back to the original church organ that was installed c.1910. Austin made use of some of the historic pipes that were already in place when Opus 2479 was designed and built. It is an instrument built in the American Classic style of pipe organ construction, making it one of the largest and most flexible pipe organs in the Pacific Northwest. The voicing of this organ especially for this space makes it one of the finest pipe organs in America built in the American Classic style.

Established in 1899, Austin Pipe Organs is the only remaining great name from the Grand Period of American organ building. Companies like M.P. Möller, Aeolian-Skinner, Kimball

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<sup>2</sup> This information was extracted from the Daniels Recital Hall webpage. For additional information regarding the Austin pipe organ see <http://recitalhall.fifthandcolumbia.com>

and a host of others have closed their doors. The company is known for the design and construction of notable organ works of all kinds, styles and sizes, from grand concert organs to small chapel instruments.

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*Our New Church" First Methodist Episcopal Church* (brochure). Courtesy of First United Methodist Church archives

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***The features of the Landmark to be preserved, include:***

- the exterior of the building (including the concrete stairwell and landing on the east elevation); and,
- the following interior features of the building: the sanctuary (excluding the pews), the main entrance vestibule, the formal stairwells in the side entry vestibules, the Pastor's Room, the balcony (excluding the pews), the organ and the pulpit

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