



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

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

LPB 21/16

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

Name and Address of Property: **Maritime Building**
911 Western Avenue

Legal Description: Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4, Block 188, all in Seattle Tide Lands, according to the unrecorded plat thereof, in King County, Washington; more particularly described as follows: Beginning at the northeasterly corner of said Block 188; thence southeasterly along the west line of Western Avenue to the southeast corner of said block; thence southwesterly along the southerly line of said block, 134 feet; thence northwesterly parallel with Western Avenue, 240 feet, more or less, to the northerly line of said block and the south line of Madison Street; thence northeasterly along the south line of Madison Street, 134 feet to the place of beginning.

At the public meeting held on January 6, 2016 the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Maritime Building at 911 Western Avenue 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

Neighborhood context

The Maritime Building is a commercial structure located along the Seattle central waterfront downtown, and fills the entire block bounded by Western Avenue, Alaskan Way, Madison Street, and Marion Street. Although it is addressed as 911 Western Avenue, commercial storefronts wrap the Madison and Marion street elevations. The large and heavily trafficked Alaskan Way Viaduct is located directly adjacent to the building, largely blocking views westward of the waterfront from upper floors, and contributing a considerable amount of noise to the immediate area. Presently, much of the area around Alaskan Way is a construction zone for the rebuilding of the seawall and tunneling project for Highway 99; in a

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few years, the viaduct is scheduled to be demolished and the right of way renovated into an at-grade, landscaped boulevard.

Across Alaskan Way to the west is the surface automobile waiting/collection lot of the Seattle terminal (Jones, Lovegren, Helms & Jones, 1964-67) for the Washington State ferries to Bainbridge Island, Bremerton, and Vashon Island, although the vehicle entrance to the facility is actually two blocks south at Yesler Way.

Directly north of the waiting lot is the Seattle Fire Department Station #5 (Durham Anderson & Freed, 1963), which is equipped with both fire boats and fire trucks to serve the waterfront area. North of the fire station, across the intersection from the subject site, is Pier 54 (1900), a designated Seattle landmark today occupied by Ye Olde Curiosity Shop, Ivar's Acres of Clams restaurant, and other commercial tenants.

Across Western Avenue to the east, filling its entire block, is the Old Federal Building (James Wetmore, 1933), which was the first federal building constructed in Seattle, and one of the first federal buildings in the country to be designed in the Art Deco style.¹ The block had been the site of the cabinet shop which was the start of the Great Fire in 1889. In the 1970s, it was supplanted by a new Federal Building skyscraper constructed across the street to the east; however, the 1933 building was retained by the federal government for offices and as a post office facility.

Across Madison Street to the north is Waterfront Place, a thirteen-story condominium/office building, which occupies the entire city block. It was constructed in 1983 and includes retail at street level and three stories of enclosed parking. Across the Madison and Western Avenue intersection to the northeast is the National Building, described elsewhere in this report.

Across Marion Street to the south is the Commuter Center Building, described elsewhere in this report, which was originally constructed as two buildings. Along the north elevation of this building is the Marion Street Ferry Walkway or trestle, a three-block long raised concrete walkway which leads from First Avenue over Post Alley, Western Avenue, and under the Alaskan Way Viaduct, to the ferry terminal on the waterfront. Across the intersection to the southeast is The Post at Pier 52 Apartments, a mixed-use, sixteen story apartment building constructed in 2013 on a site that had been a surface parking lot for many decades.

For city planning purposes, the subject parcel is located in a DMC-160 zone (Downtown Mixed Commercial, with a 160 foot height limit), the Urban Harborfront shoreline zone, and the Commercial Core Urban Center Village.

Site and building description

The subject building occupies its entire parcel and measures approximately 134 by 240 feet in plan, according to tax assessor records, and is oriented lengthwise parallel to the waterfront (for purposes of this report, it is oriented north-south). The site is essentially flat.

Stylistically, the Maritime Building could be described as Eclectic Commercial but almost entirely lacks architectural ornament. The structure is largely utilitarian and derives its appearance from repetition of materials and simple proportions.

The building is five stories in height with a basement consisting of a single floor. According to drawings on file, floor to floor heights are 9 foot 7 inches at the basement, 16 foot 5 at the first floor, 12 feet at the second through fourth floors, and 13 foot 6 at the fifth floor to top of roof (with a 3 foot parapet). Exterior walls are load-bearing cast-in-place concrete, plastered and painted, or simply painted, on the interior, and painted on the exterior. The lines left by the board forms are evident on the exterior.

The interior structure is heavy timber post-and-beam construction with wood “car decking” floors, designed for 250 pounds per square foot loads. The roof structure is also heavy timber and wood decking. The roof is low-slope with built-up asphalt roofing. Four elevator/stairwell penthouses project above main roof level at the west side. Because the site is primarily tidelands and fill, with a high water table, the superstructure is supported by driven wood piles with concrete pile caps. The structure has not been significantly reinforced for improved earthquake resistance since its original construction.

The building was designed to have commercial storefronts at street level along the main elevation facing Western Avenue, with additional smaller storefronts wrapping the north and south sides along Madison and Marion Streets. The rear or western side of the building, facing the waterfront, appears to have been designed for loading and unloading, but did not feature unusually large openings, loading docks, or anything of the sort. Period photographs indicate, in fact, that some of the first floor spaces may have been office or commercial space as well, rather than loading areas.

In plan, the building was organized into four discrete sections on each floor separated by east-west concrete walls running the full width of the building, presumably for fire control as well as structural requirements. Functionally, this created a series of long narrow commercial spaces for primary tenants with frontage along both the waterfront and Western Avenue elevations. Interior spaces could be subdivided by the tenant.

Upper floors may have been initially arranged similarly. Each of the four sections were designed to have a freight elevator and secondary stair near the western exterior wall. Additionally, two small ground floor entry lobbies and stairs were located at the center of the north and south exterior walls, although were not built in narrower bays as indicated on the original drawings. The three main building entries were located where these demising walls met the eastern exterior wall, along Western Avenue, each which featured a vestibule and stair. The current passenger elevator at the center entry lobby is a modern replacement of one originally located there. By the 1980s, an interior north-south corridor was installed on each floor to connect these three main stair lobbies, to improve circulation. The corridor typically turns westward at the north and south ends, continuing along demising walls to the northernmost and southernmost freight elevators, thus creating a large C-shaped internal corridor. Apparently in 1970, or possibly the 1980s, decorative tile was added to the three main lobby entry surrounds on the Western Avenue elevation.³ Prior to the addition of the

tile, these three Western Avenue entries featured the (apparently) only architectural ornament on the building: the projecting concrete “keystone” and raised band element above the entry doors.

In elevation, the building is organized vertically into a tripartite scheme of a simple ground floor commercial base, three floors at the middle, and a single top floor, each separated by wide belt courses and simple parapet. The elevations are organized horizontally into regular structural bays filled with large expanses of glazing, typical of a warehouse or store-and-loft building.

Window openings at the second through fourth floors feature a slightly projecting sill and no header; windows there are separated by slightly recessed window panels between the structural piers. Windows at the upper floors are wood sash, and uniform in appearance across the building in the sense that a constituent sash unit of 3-over-6 lights (or sometimes 2-over-4) is ganged together into two, three, four, or five unit windows, or occasionally used singly. Each sash unit’s lower part opens on a horizontal center awning-type pivot, and the upper part once opened in a hopper-type fashion but these are now all apparently fixed shut. Windows providing fire escape access on the west have vertically pivoted sash.

According to another recent review of the building, “the majority of windows on upper stories have been replaced. Most windows not recently replaced are in fair to poor condition, especially on south and west elevations. Recently replaced windows are generally in good condition. From Owner records and interviews, as of 2009, approximately 300 of the 444 wood windows (67 percent) had been replaced with new wood sash, generally changing from single to double pane glass. The replacement has been made over time since 1984.”

The north and south elevations are essentially identical, with nine window bays of which the outermost are slightly narrower. The east or primary elevation along Western Avenue has fifteen window bays clustered into four groups of three bays each, which are separated by three narrower bays with punched-opening windows at the three primary entrances. Each of these four groups of windows is further subdivided into a 3-4-3 window bay width. At the street level, modern storefront window systems have been installed at every location on the north, south, and east elevations. The west or rear elevation, facing the waterfront, essentially matches the east elevation but is looser and more utilitarian in character, with projecting steel balconies at some locations, projecting vent hoods at some windows, loading areas, and exposed ducts and conduits.

Presently, the building is occupied by retail storefronts at ground level, and offices on upper levels. Interior spaces are flexible and vary by tenant. Current finishes are generally modern materials such as painted gypsum wall board, acoustical ceilings, and carpet, but at some locations original structure or materials are visible, such as car decking floors, heavy timber posts, and concrete exterior or demising walls.

Due to the deep interior spaces with no lightwells, some office partition walls facing the corridor include glazing or relights. The basement of the building has been used for automobile parking since 1967 (according to permits on file), which is accessed solely by a

ramp at the third northernmost bay on the Western Avenue elevation. As at some locations on the upper floors, the heavy timber interior construction, cast in place concrete exterior walls, and concrete demising walls are visually exposed and evident in the basement interior.

Summary of primary alterations

The original structure was completed in 1910, but since that time has had few substantial changes to the exterior of the building. The building has had numerous alterations to the interior over time, as tenants have changed. Scores of permits are on file for minor alterations to the building over time, such as interior partitions, signage, changes to electrical or mechanical systems, and so forth.

Below are the following primary alterations to the building:

- All ground level storefronts at south, north, and east elevations, and at half of the west elevation, have been replaced with modern metal frame storefronts, a modern garage door, and modern access doors.
- Approximately two-thirds of original wood sash windows at upper levels have reportedly been in-kind wood sash replacements, although with double-paned glazing. At least one location on the west elevation, windows appear to have been replaced with in-kind vinyl sash.
- Numerous panes on the west elevation windows have been replaced with ducts or grilles.
- Tile and mosaic work added to three primary entries along eastern elevation (Western Avenue).
- Interior corridor added to connect three main entry lobby and stairs.
- Interior office configurations between demising walls altered repeatedly over time.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The development of Seattle's central waterfront

The subject building is located directly on Alaskan Way (the former Railroad Avenue), along Seattle's central waterfront, and on Western Avenue, between Marion and Madison Streets. Railroad Avenue, waterfront warehouses and piers

The early commercial development of Seattle (c. 1850s-1880s) largely relied on ships for the receipt of imported goods, and for the distribution of lumber, coal, fish, and other products for export—a connection to the transcontinental railroad did not reach the city until 1883, by way of Tacoma. The numerous piers of Seattle's emerging port centered on what is now the Pioneer Square area, but quickly expanded northward along the waterfront (today known as the central waterfront). However, due to steep bluffs as one moved northward along the waterfront, the piers and associated waterfront buildings and infrastructure were limited to a relatively narrow corridor parallel to the shore. South of the Pioneer Square area, industries reliant on the waterfront would expand with a network of trestles and piers over extensive mudflats and tidelands, which would eventually be filled in by the early decades of the 20th century.

The central waterfront developed as a series of piers extending into the water from the shore, with railroads on trestles over the tidelands, running parallel to the shore, to service the piers. These local railroads were first introduced in the 1870s and 1880s, and provided an effective means to transfer large amounts of heavy goods to or from ships. Eventually, larger railroads such as the Great Northern were introduced to the waterfront. In 1887, the city established Railroad Avenue (later called Alaskan Way) as an attempt to introduce order into a largely unregulated corridor, particularly needed after the rebuilding of the area following the Great Fire of 1889 (which had begun at a paint and woodwork shop at First and Madison).

Railroad Avenue was initially built on pilings over the water, and surfaced with wood planks. Piers were located on the waterside, with warehouses, shops, stores, and industries on the land side. The corridor accommodated several railroad “through” rights-of-way, as well as side service tracks adjacent to the landside buildings, and rail spurs to the piers, for the loading and off-loading of goods. On the tracks were long moving trains, or stationary cars, often blocking access between the piers and the landside buildings. The street also had to accommodate large numbers of horse-drawn carriages and freight wagons moving between the piers and landside buildings, as well as crowds of dock workers, piles of packing containers and pallets, lifts and other moving equipment, and trucks or other motor vehicles in later years. As Railroad Avenue became more crowded, waterfront-related businesses and industrial activities expanded to what became Western Avenue.

The waterfront would be the subject of repeated efforts by the City Engineer Reginald Thomson to reduce congestion and establish order during the period of heavy growth from the late 1890s to the 1910s, including the establishment of inner and outer harbor lines in 1895, the re-alignment and rebuilding of piers in the years following the establishment of a waterfront plan in 1898, and the completion in 1905 of the Great Northern railroad tunnel which allowed some trains to bypass the central waterfront completely.

Between 1911 and 1915, seawalls were constructed between Washington and Madison Streets, improving the area between the subject site and the waterfront. The seawall work that was begun in the 1910s continued in phases into the early 1930s northward along the waterfront. Additionally, during this time Elliott and Western Avenues were regraded, and the mudflats under Railroad Avenue’s trestles were backfilled. During the war years of the 1940s, the piers were renumbered to the current system. By the 1950s, many port-related companies and activities increasingly began to move beyond the central waterfront to the containerized facilities at Harbor Island. The central waterfront remained a focus for regional ferries and some port-related businesses, but became increasingly developed for tourism-related businesses and activities after the 1960s.

There are numerous nearby structures associated with waterfront businesses or industrial activities which are contemporaries of the subject building. Two of the largest and most prominent are:

- The Olympic Warehouse and Cold Storage building (John Graham Sr., 1910) – This five story masonry building, located on Seneca Street between Alaskan Way and Western Avenue, was constructed by John Agen and designed by architect John

Graham, Sr. The cold storage warehouse was built as larger quarters for Agen's Alaska Butter and Cream Company, which had previously occupied the shed on Pier 57 (originally called Pier 6). Agen sold the pier to the Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway by 1911. In 1912, the pier was still called the Agen Dock and housed a variety of tenants, including shipping firms. Today the Agen warehouse is both a designated Seattle landmark as well as a National Register listed property.

- The Pacific Net and Twine Building (John Graham Sr., 1918) – Located three blocks north of the subject site at Western Avenue and University Street, this six-story reinforced concrete frame structure was built by the Pacific Net and Twine Company, a marine and fishery supply firm. This building was also designed by John Graham, Sr. Pacific Net and Twine (later the Pacific Marine Supply Company) owned and operated the nearby Pier 59 (originally called Pier 8), which housed numerous tenants and had been constructed in 1904 for the Ainsworth & Dunn Company, a major local salmon-packing firm. Both the pier and the warehouse are designated Seattle landmarks.

Western Avenue and the Commission District

In the late 19th century, and particularly after the Great Fire of 1889, the part of Western Avenue south of Spring Street (including the subject site) developed into a hub for produce wholesalers, known as the "Commission District." As described by historian Paul Dorpat: "As Seattle grew, so did its dependence on the waterfront. To this end,... the east side [of Railroad Avenue] and its "main street" Western Avenue...developed into the neighborhood of middle men called the Commission District. This narrow neighborhood...was vital to the families of the city because it was from here that the city's food was distributed, including the fresh produce that was shipped to the docks each day from Puget Sound farms. In 1907 there were an estimated 3,000 farmers around Seattle and by necessity most of them sold through the commission houses along "Produce Row." The opportunities for price fiddling among this "Western Avenue Combine" resulted in such routine abuse that the vendors were given the popular name "Western Avenue Offenders." The 1907 founding of the Pike Place Market was a direct political action designed to allow the producers and consumers to meet without the interjection of the vender-offenders... In spite of the muckrakers and the farmer's market alternative, the vendors on Western prospered, for they were also handling the bananas of Panama, the apples of Wenatchee, tons of citrus from California, pineapples from Hawaii, and just about anything digestible from anywhere whether it came by sea or land."

After the 1889 Great Fire, most of the buildings in the Commission District were temporary or makeshift structures. Period photographs show wood or corrugated metal sheds, often with extensive signage, housed numerous Commission companies. After 1900, however, the area began to be marked by more substantial masonry or concrete frame structures, including the subject building, and these remaining others which largely preceded it:

- The National Building (Kingsley & Anderson, 1905) – This six-story masonry building was constructed by the Northern Pacific Railroad for produce firms and the commission business. The National Produce Company, one of the West Coast's

largest grocery wholesalers, was the main tenant from time of construction until 1930. The building is now a designated city and national landmark.

- 809 Western Avenue / Mutual Creamery Building / Part of Commuter Center Building (1906) According to the DON Historic Resources Survey Database, “The building...was remodeled as a garage, a use it still serves, as early as 1926. By at least 1919, the Mutual Creamery, a wholesale distributor of butter, eggs, cheese and ice cream, also occupied part of the building, which later, by 1938, housed Montgomery Publishing. In 1943, the southern half of the building was demolished to make way for a Standard Oil service station and parking lot, while the northern half remained a garage.”
- 815 Western Avenue / Carstens Building / Part of Commuter Center Building (1906) – According to the DON Historic Resources Survey Database, “This building was...at least by 1940 called the Carstens Building, after its owner, Thomas Carstens. Carstens, the president of the Carstens Packing Company, a meat packing company and tenant of the building by the early 1920s, owned the building by 1928. Based on drawings from 1922, the architecture firm of Schack Young and Myers altered the first floor for Turner and Pease, a wholesaler of butter, eggs and cheese, who were tenants of the building by the 1910s. Subsequent architectural and interior drawings dating from 1947 to 1977, all for Turner and Pease, include a 1947 drawing for a "butter packing room" and work from 1952 and 1965 by Naramore Bain Brady and Johanson. Between 1999 and 2000, the building was upgraded seismically and the main elevations significantly altered. The building exterior has been significantly changed, with Post-Modern flourishes added.”
- 61 Columbia Street / Polson Building (Saunders & Lawton, 1910) – According to the DON Historic Resources Survey Database, “The Polson Building is named after its original owner, the Polson Realty Company...The building is significant because it dates from the period of economic and industrial growth as well as the expansion of the original heart of Seattle along the former tideflats. Its construction is in reinforced concrete, indicating a shift in construction knowledge and techniques, since many warehouse buildings from just a few years before had brick exterior walls and heavy timber interiors. While a simple utilitarian building, it has much in common with other more ornate warehouse buildings erected in the same period...The Polson Building was partially burnt in 1958 and is described as having been “rebuilt” in 1958. It also suffered a severe fire in the late 1990s...It was again rehabilitated, but based on historical photographs and despite two major fires, the basic design and exterior have been changed little since 1910.”
- 619 Western (aka 611 Western) / Western Building (1910) – According to the DON Historic Resources Survey Database, “The building... is a utilitarian building of a design similar to its neighbor, the Polson Building. Not surprisingly, it too was designed as a warehouse building. While a simple utilitarian building, it has much in common with other more ornate warehouse buildings erected in the same period. It stands out somewhat because of its original multi-light windows above the storefront level, which are definitely original.” “Like its neighbor, the Polson Building, its construction is in reinforced concrete... There does not seem to be an architect of record, but given the similarity with the Polson Building and the fact that it was also

designed in 1910, it is very possible that it too was designed by Saunders and Lawton, a notable Seattle architecture firm.”

However, just a block away, along First Avenue to the east, businesses and institutions developed which were largely unrelated to the Commission District or to activities along the waterfront. From the 1890s onward, First Avenue around Marion and Madison Streets developed numerous hotels, theaters, and commercial and retail businesses of all kinds. A review of the 1905 Sanborn map shows that, in the six blocks on the western side of Second Avenue, between Columbia and Spring Streets, were the Rainier Grand Hotel (among others), the Globe Building (now the Alexis Hotel), the Colman Building and Annex, the Burke Building, the Holyoke Building, Standard Furniture Company, and Frederick & Nelson in the Rialto Building.

The development of the subject building, owners, and occupants

After the destruction caused in the area by the Great Fire of 1889, a two-story frame and corrugated metal structure was built on the site, which the 1893 Sanborn map shows was used by a grocery wholesaler or “commission” company. The subject property, and parcels around it, at that time were owned by the Northern Pacific Railway Company.

Beginning around 1905, companies in the “Commission District” began to replace their shed-like structures built after the Great Fire with more substantial buildings. To that end, the Pacific Warehouse Company leased land from the Northern Pacific for fifty years, and built a two-story, 120 by 134 foot brick warehouse on the west side of Western Avenue between Madison and Columbia Streets in 1908-09. The structure was leased to several commission companies.

Across the street from that site, in 1909, the Pacific Warehouse Company obtained a fifty year lease on the subject property from the Northern Pacific. Newspaper accounts at the time reported that they were expected to begin construction on September 1 for a six-story building valued at \$200,000 at that site. The news piece, which included a preliminary rendering of the structure, stated that “the building will be for stores on the first floor and the five other stories will be used for light manufacturing and wholesale purposes.” The project was financed by \$150,000 in bonds held by an unnamed Boston corporation. The article went on to note that the Northern Pacific was pressing for more of their parcels along Western Avenue to be developed, so that “a modern business street will greet the thousands of visitors that come to this city on the hundreds of steamers that land at the docks daily.”

In 1909, the existing frame building on the subject site was demolished and the subject building was constructed for a reported cost of \$170,000.¹³ A newspaper article shortly after the building was opened listed the businesses which would be housed there: William Hunt & Co., Ridgway’s, John Vittucci & Co., C. W. Chamberlain & Co., Hibbard & Stewart, H. C. Allison & Co., R. B. Kellogg & Co., the Washington Paper Box Company, the Central Steel Metal Works, the McKenzie-White Paper Company, the Alaska Sail Loft, Banks & Saunders, the Northwestern Shoe Company, R. L. Beattie, the Gray & Borash Electric Company, and the Asiatic Exporting & Importing Company. Notably, the occupants appeared to be a mix of commission companies and light industrial concerns.

The Pacific Warehouse Company, which may have been incorporated prior to 1903 and reorganized in Washington State by 1908, was led by Edmund Cardin, president, and W. W. Williams, W. J. Hamlet, and Stephen A. Hull as officers. Several of these men were already involved in the commission business. Later, in the early 1920s, the Pacific Warehouse Company (by that time led by president Stephen Hull) built and operated the eleven-story Terminal Sales Building (Henry Bittman, 1923) at First Avenue and Virginia Street (and a designated Seattle landmark). The Pacific Warehouse Company's offices were relocated to the Terminal Sales Building, where they remained, managing it and the subject building until at least the late 1940s.

Later occupants of the subject building appear to have been primarily light industrial businesses. The early "Commission District" businesses in the building became fewer in number over time, and appear to have been focused in other nearby buildings. By the late 1930s/early 1940s, Polk's Directory lists approximately fifty-five produce commission companies remaining in Seattle, and approximately ten wholesale fruit brokers, of which the great majority were located in buildings in the 1000, 1100, and 1200 blocks of Western Avenue.

In 1938, the Polk city directory listed fifty-eight tenants in the subject building, with ten vacancies. These included:

- Eleven manufacturers agents or merchandise brokers (including bolts, belts, fire apparatus and supplies, John Deere plows);
- Five engine, marine engine, or electrical machinery companies;
- Five commission, produce, wholesale grocery, or other food-related firms (corn, tea, and two coffee companies);
- Four printers or publishers;
- Three paper, stationery, or box companies;
- Two duplicating, marking, or labeling products or machinery companies;
- Two import/export or transfer companies;
- And one each of following: an ink company, a dairy machinery company, a restaurant, a vending machine company and a wholesale novelties company, an electrotype company, a sign manufacturer, a mining company, a logging company, a furrier, a clothing manufacturer, a chemists office (I. F. Laucks), an office supplies company, a building materials company, a finance company, a Western Union office, and the office of the Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project.

In later decades, the type of occupants was largely the same. In 1968, for example, the building housed:

- Thirteen manufacturer's agents or merchandise brokers (paper foil, gift wrap, cordage, rubber stamps, and others);
- Six office supply, stationery, office communications, processing equipment companies;
- Four chemical manufacturers (two of which were branches of Monsanto);
- Four professional associations, clubs, or organizations (halibut, fisheries, Young Republicans of King County, a hospital fund);

- Three printer, publisher, or lithograph companies (Northwest Veterans newspaper, and a printer exclusively for menus);
- Three import/export, transfer, distribution, or freight forwarding companies
- Two clothing manufacturers (Filson's, and a handbag company)
- Two food-related broker or manufacturers;
- And one each of the following: a stenographer, an accountant, a market research company, a pharmaceutical company, a container company, a marine services company, a boat wholesaler, a fountain pen repairer, a commercial artist, a warehouse for United Airlines, and a restaurant.

Since the 1980s, the building has largely been occupied by design firms, architecture and engineering offices, interior designers, advertising and media firms, and other professional services companies.

Edwin W. Houghton, architect

Permits, original drawings on file, and newspaper articles indicate that E. W. Houghton was the architect and designer of the subject building.

Edwin Walker Houghton was a prolific architect based in Seattle, and one of the few whose practice spanned from the post-fire rebuilding years of the 1890s to the “modern” period of the 1910s and 1920s—a period encompassing decades of rapid growth and architectural change in the city. Although he designed a wide variety of building types and employed some variety of styles, he was best known for his designs of theaters, and was recognized as the leading designer of theaters in the Pacific Northwest at the peak of his career, c.1900-1910.

Houghton was born in Hampshire, England, in 1856.¹⁹ Several members of his family were in the architecture or building-related professions, and he received his own architectural training apparently from his uncles and his brother in London in the 1870s.²⁰ In the mid-1880s, Houghton moved to the El Paso area in Texas, where he attempted to farm but was ultimately unsuccessful after four years. He then moved to Pasadena, California, where he established himself as an architect for the first time, but then moved to Seattle around the end of May 1889.

Shortly thereafter, on June 6, 1889, much of downtown Seattle burned in the Great Fire. By September 1889, Houghton had established a partnership with architect Charles W. Saunders, a Boston native who had also just moved to Seattle from Pasadena in June 1889. Saunders was apparently overwhelmed with large commissions received within just two months after his arrival, including four school buildings, the Rainier Hotel (1889, destroyed) and the Bailey Block (1889-91) at the southwest corner of Second Avenue and Cherry Street. Projects undertaken by the partnership of Saunders & Houghton, after Houghton's arrival, include the Terry-Denny Building (1889-1891) and the Maud Building (1889-91) on First Avenue in the Pioneer Square neighborhood, and the former Olympic Block (1889-91, destroyed) that once faced Pioneer Square at the southeast corner of First Avenue and Yesler Way. Two city fire stations, no longer extant, were also designed by the firm. After just two

years the firm was dissolved in 1891, Saunders left the city, and Houghton was responsible for finishing all of the firm's projects.

Afterwards, Houghton practiced independently, designing residential, institutional, and commercial projects. In the 1890s, work was spotty, largely due to adverse economic conditions following a nationwide bank panic in 1890 and again, more severely, in 1893.²² Seattle conditions did not improve until the late 1890s economic boom associated with the Klondike gold rush. In 1894, he became a founding member of the Washington State Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. One notable design by Houghton from the end of this period was the Charles Riddle house (1899, destroyed) on Queen Anne Hill, described as the last significant example of the Shingle Style (a uniquely American architectural style, popular on the East Coast) in Seattle.

In 1898, Houghton's practice began a successful turn to theater design. That year, Houghton designed the Grand Opera House (1898-1900, altered), on Cherry Street between Second and Third Avenues, for John Cort, a regional theater impresario. In following years, Cort successfully established a well-known vaudeville circuit with dozens of properties in the Northwest, and hired Houghton to design or remodel numerous theaters by 1904. Eventually, Houghton began to receive commissions from other theater circuit owners, such as John Consadine. Projects between 1900 and 1910 included perhaps seventy theaters in total, including projects in Spokane, Bellingham, and Aberdeen in Washington; Boise, Idaho; Portland, Oregon; Los Angeles and San Francisco, California; Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbia; Salt Lake City, Utah; and even Boston, Massachusetts. Few of these buildings remain extant. In Seattle, projects included the Moore Theater and hotel (1903-07) at Second Avenue and Virginia Street, and the Majestic Theater (1908-09, later known as the Palace Hip, destroyed) which had been located at the corner of Second Avenue and Spring Street.

A biography of Houghton noted his "preference for symmetrical compositions and classicizing detail" for his designs in general. Houghton's theater designs, while ornate, were relatively sedate compared to what was to become popular in the 1920s. After 1910, Houghton's theater niche began to be eclipsed by a former draftsman in his office, B. Marcus Priteca, who went on to become, in the 1920s, one of the most wellknown designers in the country of highly elaborate and ornate theaters. Nevertheless, Houghton continued to design theaters into the 1910s, including the Clemmer Theater (1913-15, now the Bing Crosby Theater) in Spokane, and the Liberty Theater in Wenatchee (1919, altered).

Other Seattle work by Houghton during the 1900-1910 period, unrelated to theater design, were the Estabrook Building (1901-02, destroyed) at the southeast corner of Second and Union downtown; the Arcade Building at Second and Union downtown (1901-03, destroyed), the Lippy Building (1901-02, altered) on First Avenue in the Pioneer Square neighborhood, the Berkshire Hotel (1902-03, destroyed) at Second and Seneca downtown, and the unbuilt hotel-apartment block called the Hoeffler Building (1907).

After 1913, Houghton's firm was known as E. W. Houghton & Son, although his son, Gordon Houghton, moved to Oregon about six years after their partnership formed. Only a

few projects could be identified from the period of the mid-1910s through the mid-1920s, including a three-story masonry apartment building on Capitol Hill, a small hotel on First Hill, and a small theater on Beacon Hill (it is not clear if these were actually built).²⁶ In the late 1920s, Houghton was working on a single family home in the Magnolia neighborhood, an apartment building in the University District, and a theater in Fremont. Houghton died in May 1927, at age 71.

Houghton designed the subject building in 1909, at a period when he was best known for the design of theaters, but there are a few buildings for comparison that were designed by Houghton which have some qualities shared by the subject building. Houghton designed several very wide buildings—some a city block in width, or approaching that width.

Examples include:

- The Arcade Building (1901-03, destroyed). This four-story shop-and-loft building had a 360-foot-long main façade, and filled the entire street frontage on Second Avenue between University and Union Streets. As originally designed, the building was to occupy the entire city block between First and Second Avenues, with the First Avenue side stepping down to accommodate the grade, and a north-south oriented covered arcade at the center where the alley right of way was located (the First Avenue side was not initially built). The main Second Avenue façade was organized into three parts, with long wings of clustered windows above storefronts flanking a higher, entry pavilion marked by three prominent arches. Compositionally, like the subject building, the long rows of windows on the Arcade Building were clustered into groups (in this case, groups of six windows) and separated by vertical solid bands of wall with punched-opening windows, thereby breaking up what would otherwise be an overly monotonous façade.
- The Moore Theater and Hotel (1903-07), with a 215-foot-long, striking white glazed-brick elevation, fills approximately three-fifths of the street frontage on the east side of Second Avenue between Stewart and Virginia Streets. Like the Arcade Building and the subject building, the long expanses of windows on this six-story building are clustered into groups separated by vertical solid bands of wall with punched-opening windows.
- The Imperial Building project (1907, unbuilt) proposed for the waterfront in Tacoma, has some similarities to the subject building, in that it was a large port-related warehouse/office building, albeit substantially larger in size and scope. The Tacoma building has been described as “a visionary scheme [which] proposed a massive building that would have included port facilities, a railroad station, warehouse space, office space, and a hotel.” A period article described the project as follows:

“Twenty-four stories high, covering a floor area of 48 acres...The building will be 415 feet long, with a 200-foot frontage. It will have twenty elevators, and will contain manufacturing concerns and commercial institutions. A hotel will be in one section of the building, and it will contain 500 rooms. Trains of the Northern Pacific Railroad Company will run directly into the building and freight cars will be lifted to the floor of the firms to whom their contents have been consigned. The cars will be lifted by means of hydraulic cranes. The building is to be erected by the Imperial Development Company of Tacoma, interested in which are J. C. Donnelly and Edmund Croft of

Tacoma, and A. P. Gilles, of Seattle. Two passenger bridges 600 feet long will run to the building 75 feet above the ground over the yards of the Northern Pacific. The supports of the bridges will be modeled as towers, containing elevators to carry passengers from the ships and trains.”

A period rendering of the project shows a tall, steel or concrete frame skyscraper connecting the bluffs of downtown Tacoma with the waterfront and railroad tracks some thirteen stories below. Compositionally, the proposed building was organized into a tripartite scheme with base, middle, and top, and a grid of roughly equally-sized windows following a regular structural frame.

Stone & Webster, engineer and builder

Stone & Webster was founded in 1890 in Boston by Charles Stone and Edwin Webster, and originally operated as an electrical engineering consulting firm. Their first contract was to design and install a hydroelectric dam and transmission line system for a paper mill in Maine in 1891. They quickly became a major purchaser, developer, and manager of utility companies and electrical streetcar companies nationwide. Their success attracted financial backers and additional capital, which led to increased expansion of the company. Particularly after the national economic collapse of 1893, Stone & Webster agents acquired and developed struggling urban utilities and transportation systems throughout the United States (the firm operated through a complicated network of subsidiaries and holding companies in each locality). By the early 1900s, the company had become known for engineering, building, constructing, and managing power plants, which were generally integrated systems fueled by coal or hydroelectric generation.

The company had early dealings in Seattle. In 1898, representatives of the Stone & Webster management company first visited Seattle, and by 1899, the company had purchased and consolidated the city’s twenty-two streetcar lines, through a subsidiary, the Seattle Electric Company. This essentially gave the company a citywide monopoly on street lighting and electric utilities. The company would remain a player in Seattle’s transportation and utility systems through the mid-20th century.

In 1906, the company formed its first subsidiary, the Stone & Webster Engineering Corporation, to handle a number of major engineering projects underway in six states and with more on the way. This group managed all engineering, construction, and purchasing activities, including the construction of the subject building. By 1910, approximately 14 percent of the nation’s total electrical generating capacity had been designed, engineered, and built by Stone & Webster.

In Seattle, the Stone & Webster Engineering Corporation was responsible for the construction of numerous buildings in the city, and the company appeared to have been hired as a dependable contractor and engineering firm even if the project was unrelated to electrical power generation, utilities, or transportation systems or buildings. This appears to be the case for the subject building.

The Stone & Webster parent company continued to grow through the 1910s and 1920s, designing and building new wartime military bases and arsenals during World War I, as well as expanding beyond power plants and transmission lines into laboratories, factories, refineries, and other installations in the United States as well as abroad. By 1921, the company managed 59 utility companies in 18 states, and developed a large investment banking subsidiary for underwriting additional ventures. In 1929 the company became publicly held. As an example of the company's breadth, the company built in the early 1930s the Rock Island Dam (the first across the Columbia River) in eastern Washington, as well as building the RCA Building (today known as Rockefeller Center) in New York City. However, in 1934 Stone & Webster was divested of many of its subsidiaries by the federal government, which had declared the company a monopoly.

The company was heavily involved in wartime efforts, including not only power generation (now including natural gas and steam), but also steel plant construction, design and construction of artillery or TNT plants and other equipment, the development of artificial rubber, the development of fire control instruments, and other infrastructure. Additionally, during the mid-20th century the company became involved in nuclear power generation, and during World War II, Stone & Webster was closely involved in the Manhattan Project and the development of the atomic bomb. In the 1950s and 1960s, the company helped design and construct nuclear accelerators, nuclear powered ships, and nuclear power plants. From the 1960s on, Stone & Webster continued the development of hydroelectric and nuclear power plants and transmission systems, and became involved in plastics and petrochemical refineries, coal and oil gasification plants, synthetics, paper mills, purification facilities, extraction plants, environmental cleanup projects, and major bridge or transit system design and construction projects worldwide. Following economic downturns in the 1980s and 1990s, the company went through bankruptcy proceedings and is today owned by The Shaw Group, a Baton Rouge, Louisiana based oil and gas industry company.

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

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