



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 125/06

Name and Address of Property: **Pacific McKay and Ford McKay Buildings  
601-615 Westlake Ave. N**

#### Legal Description:

Lake Union Shorelands, Addition, Block 78, Lots 4-6

At the public meeting held on April 19, 2006, the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Pacific McKay and Ford McKay Buildings at 601-615 Westlake Avenue North 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*
- F. Because of its prominence of spatial location, contrasts of siting, age, or scale, it is an easily identifiable visual feature of its neighborhood or the city and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood or the city.*

### DESCRIPTION

#### Development of the South Lake Union Area

The South Lake Union Neighborhood is bordered by the lake on the north, Interstate 5 on the east, and Highway 99/Aurora Avenue on the west. Denny Way serves as its southern edge. Early maps and photos from the 1870s depict the rural area as being primarily residential in character. Gradually it developed as a mixed-use neighborhood with industries and commercial buildings, a variety of wood-frame apartment buildings, boarding houses and single family houses, several churches and a public school. Wharves were constructed along

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the lake, and commercial service businesses developed along the main north-south access, Westlake Avenue North. The topography in the area slopes downward to the north and toward Lake Union. The grade along Westlake Avenue North is lower, as it was once the location of a streambed.

The South Lake Union area's pre-European history includes use of the lake as a transportation route. The lake was known to Duwamish people as "Xa'ten" (Little Lake) or "Terms Chuck" (Little Water). Early European settlers discovered several Native camps on the shoreline near the present route of Westlake Avenue.

The first white occupants of South Lake Union were probably loggers. The lake became an early transportation route for shipments of logs and coal, which were cut or extracted east of Lake Washington. Sawmills and shingle mills were predominant early industrial uses along Lake Union. In 1883, Seattle annexed what had been David Denny's original claim. Gradually, both the South Lake Union and Cascade neighborhoods developed as mixed-use urban communities with warehouses and manufacturing plants interspersed with wood-framed residences, boarding houses and apartments, and churches.

The large Naval Reserve Armory was constructed at the lake's south end in 1941, and during World War II, Lake Union served military ship repair needs. After the war, the South Lake Union industrial base contracted and much of the housing stock in the community deteriorated as the residential population declined. Meanwhile, commercial and manufacturing uses continued to increase, as evident in building permit records and historic photographs. Auto warehouses and retail showrooms became common along Westlake Avenue from the late teens and continued through the post-World War II era.

In a historic urban survey from 1975, the neighborhood was described as "a collection of auto showrooms, small businesses and manufacturing enterprises, and parking lots supplementary to, rather than integral with downtown" (Nyberg and Steinbrueck).

In the early 1960s, the construction of I-5 further defined the identity of the nearby Cascade and Eastlake neighborhoods, linking them with Lake Union as a result. The freeway's Mercer Street access ramps also divided the northeastern part of the South Lake Union neighborhood, placing several blocks of it in what might be considered the Eastlake area.

Vehicle traffic on Mercer Street continued to increase in the post-war decades, separating the area south of Mercer from the lakeside amenities. At the same time, the proximity to I-5 and downtown made the South Lake Union area increasingly attractive for residential and business development. Maps made after the 1960s show increasingly large-scale parcels and development, alley vacations, and replacement of small-scale buildings by empty sites, typically with parking lots.

Neighborhood industries in recent decades have included auto repair businesses and retail showrooms near Westlake Avenue, construction supply distributors, and floral and furniture warehouses. More recent businesses include printing/photography and childcare facilities, and telecom concerns such as AT&T and Onvia.com. The northeast portion of the

neighborhood, north of Mercer Street, has been redeveloped extensively by the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and Zymogenetics.

After the defeat of the Seattle Commons Initiative and rezoning in the late 1990s, development in the South Lake Union area has consisted mainly of three- to five-story office buildings and apartment buildings and condominiums of up to six and seven stories, on consolidated parcels. Current plans call for development of the streets, including a streetcar, and new buildings.

### **The Early Motor Age and Auto Dealerships in Seattle**

Beginning in the late 1890s, numerous automobile manufacturers were established in the United States, but they were typically located in the Northeast and Midwest, near sources of steel and other manufacturing. While Ford, General Motors, and Chevrolet are common domestic manufacturers today, these "big three" did not dominate the early marketplace. Rather, there were many inventors and small factories pursuing refinements in electric, gas and diesel-powered engines, and chassis, transmission and body designs. Between 1900 and 1902 alone, over 106 separate automobile manufacturing companies were organized in the U.S.

Smaller manufacturers sold their vehicles only through small dealerships, a type of retail business that first emerged in East Coast cities ca. 1900. Typical purchases of luxury auto were made after a customer viewed models at an auto "salon" such as the annual New York Auto Show, or by their selection of a model at a local showroom or simply from product literature. Order times of several months were typical before the finished car was delivered to the new owner.

Between 1910 and 1930, companies such as Ford and Chevrolet concentrated on increasing their market through mass production, assembly line methods, horizontal monopolization of suppliers, and ever lower prices. Other automobile makers, such as Oakland, Pierce-Arrow, Lincoln, Cadillac, Peerless and Packard, focused on the luxury market, creating different models including opulent sedans, speedsters, racing cars, coaches, and limousines. Retail prices for the luxury automobile were relatively high, ranging in the late teens from about \$2,700 to over \$10,000. By contrast, the retail sales price of the Ford Model T was as low as \$350 by 1927.

The Ford Company, undertaking innovations in mass marketing, elected to ship car parts to plants in distant cities, such as Seattle, for local assembly, distribution, and sales. In the teens, a large Ford assembly plant and showroom was established by the company at its new building, at Fairview Avenue North at Valley Street in South Lake Union's Cascade neighborhood.

Seattle had grown to over 80,670 residents by 1900 as the city's economy had boomed during the Alaska Gold Rush of 1897. By 1910, the city's population had risen to 237,194. Growth was even more expansive in the years preceding World War I, and by 1920 Seattle numbered

315,312. The population began to stabilize the following decade, and in 1930 it was 365,583.

During the first three decades of the 20th century, auto ownership grew rapidly in Washington as it did nationwide. Motor vehicle registration in the state rose steadily from 1914 through 1929, before dropping sharply with the onset of the Depression. Percentage of the population with registered autos rose from just over 11% in 1921, to nearly 25% in 1929. The greatest increases in number of vehicles registered occurred between 1916 to 1917, 1922 to 1926, and 1928 to 1929. Between 1928 and 1929, more than 35,000 new vehicles were registered in Washington State. In the following year, with the onset of the Depression, fewer than 3,000 new autos were registered. (Data from Washington State Corporations Division, Secretary of State's Office, 2005.)

Polk Directories dating from 1910 to 1950 trace the development of auto dealerships as specific retail businesses. In 1910, there were no listings for retail auto showrooms in Seattle. Rather, in response to the numerous models under production, there were distributors. These appear typically to have been local companies, such as Northwest Carriage & Auto on Pike Street, which handled several manufacturers' products. In 1915, according to the *Polk Directory*, there were numerous distributors in the north First Hill area. They included the showrooms for the Pierce-Arrow, Reo, Bringham, and Oakland on Pike Street; Hupmobile and Oldsmobile, on East Pike Street; and the Chalmers, Saxon, Bauch-Lang Electric Cars and the Mitchell Motor Car dealerships on Broadway Avenue.

The 1918 *Polk Directory* lists Buick sales at Pike and Broadway; Ford on 19th Avenue; relocation of the Oakland dealership to East Pike Street; White on Broadway; the Winton Motor Carriage Company at Pike and Terry; Studebaker Bros. Northwest and Franklin Autos on 10th Avenue; and Pierce Arrow's relocation to 1159 Broadway at Union. The Packard showroom was listed in the 1920 directory at various locations on Capitol Hill, but in 1925 a new, exclusive showroom was constructed at 1124 Pike Street (currently the Utrecht Art Supply Store – Volvo Showroom).

The auto-associated identity of Seattle's Pike-Pine Corridor declined in the 1920s and 1930s. Factory production of cars was diverted during World War II to production of aviation and marine engines, tanks and trucks. This diversion and the war itself also depressed the market for private vehicles.

Around the same time, Westlake Avenue was increasingly populated by motor vehicle sales and service businesses. In the early decades of the 20th century, the Westlake Avenue corridor had been mostly low-scale residential with some commercial and industrial structures. Development along Westlake Avenue North and nearby streets appears to have shifted in the 1920s to more consistent commercial use, while the blocks to the east in the Cascade neighborhood became more residential. The Ford Motor Company built an assembly plant in the South Lake Union neighborhood, at Fairview and Valley, in 1913. The subject block, on which the William O. McKay Company dealership showrooms are sited, is a part of the auto-associated commercial heritage.

After the war, the typical auto dealerships became larger, creating service departments and utilizing exterior lots as well as large interior showrooms, which required additional space. Along with those in the South Lake Union and Denny Regrade areas, an "auto row" also developed along Roosevelt Way. In addition to the Ford Assembly Plant, the manufacturing facilities of Kenworth Truck and Mack Truck were also located in South Lake Union.

### **Terra Cotta-Clad Commercial Buildings**

The cladding on the primary east and south facades of the two buildings is one of their significant historic features. Seattle has a fine heritage of terra cotta buildings that date primarily from the 1890s through the 1920s. Early 20th-century building codes required "fireproof" construction, making terra cotta, like brick, a popular material in Seattle in the post-fire era.

Five types of ornament typically characterized glazed terra cotta: supports (columns and pilasters; bands (friezes, cornices, etc.); panels; diapers (overall patterns); and free ornaments (rosettes, finials, cartouches, etc.). Each type of ornament was applied at a particular place: supports at the building base, cap, and sometimes corners; bands between major horizontal divisions and at the roof line; panels between windows; diaper on the field; and free ornaments as accents at roof line, corners, and intersections of major compositional lines. (Franz Sales Meyer, *A Handbook of Ornament*, London, 1924, cited in Ferriday, p. 27.)

Decorative glazed terra cotta often embodied classical motifs, as evident on the Ford McKay and Pacific McKay Buildings. The Ford McKay Building features egg and dart, scrolls, and rosettes, while lions' heads, egg and dart, dentils, modillions, and cartouches embellish the Pacific McKay Building. Both buildings are also adorned with foliate ornamentation.

Terra cotta units on both the Ford and Pacific McKay Buildings are attached to the concrete structures with narrow steel wire ties, except for those at the roof cap, which are simply mortared in place. The terra cotta is generally in good condition. Some cracks are evident, particularly at the upper portion of the south end of the Ford McKay Building, which appear to relate to earlier structural failure of the concrete frame. A significant number of anchorage holes are evident in the face of units in the signage bands on the upper portions of both buildings. Some of the cracks and holes have been patched, while others appear still open to the weather.

Other low-scale, commercial, terra cotta-clad buildings nearby include Transport Motor Company / Cosmopolitan Motors, at 2030 8th Avenue; and the Western Auto Supply Building, at 2004 Westlake Avenue. Downtown examples include the Metropolitan Health Club, at 114 Pike Street; the Mann Building, at 1401 3rd Avenue; the Pande Cameron Building, at 815 Pine Street, and the Scott Building, at Stewart Street and 3rd Avenue, and the Ames Building, at 121 Stewart Street.

### **History of the Block**

Early Kroll Maps and permit records indicate that at least one residence and a small brick building were located on the block between 1900 and 1920. Documents note a "carpet works" on the southeast portion of the site in 1904; it was removed by the mid-1920s. Later, a small, wood-clad mixed-use building with a café at its first floor was built at the northern end of the block, facing onto Westlake Avenue North. This building, with a sign noting

"beverages," appears in the background of the two auto dealerships in a historic Tax Assessor's photo from 1937. By 1946 it had been replaced.

The showrooms are two of four buildings currently on the block that are historically associated with the former William O. McKay Company, a Seattle auto dealership that was in business at this location from the 1920s through the 1980s. The 1923 *Polk Directory to Seattle* listed the William O. McKay Company as "Distributors [of] Lincoln and Ford Automobiles and Fordson Tractors."

The William O. McKay Company owned other properties near the subject site, and operated additional auto-related services. A 1941 Tax Assessor's record notes the William O. McKay Co. as owner of 900 - 916 Roy Street, while a Tax Assessor's photo from 1949 shows 705 Westlake Avenue North as "William O. McKay Company Auto Rebuild Department." Both of these buildings were located in the block immediately north of the subject block.

The two showroom buildings are adjacent structures on Westlake Avenue North. One former garage is located immediately north of them and another is located west across the vacated alley, on the corner of Mercer Street and 9th Avenue North. This nomination report focuses on the two historic showroom buildings.

### **William O. McKay**

William Osborne McKay (1887 - 1956) was born in Alturas, California. He moved to Seattle with his family in 1900 and later graduated from Broadway High School, then attending the University of Washington. McKay was very involved in athletics, participating in both football and track.

In 1911, McKay started working as an auto mechanic at the James T. Keenan Company. He advanced to auto salesman at the same company, and then in 1914 transferred to the William L. Hughson Company. Hughson was a Ford compatriot, developing Ford agencies on the west coast. After serving in WWI, McKay returned to Seattle and became northwest manager at Hughson. In 1922, McKay formed the William O. McKay Company and received an agency agreement with Ford Motor Company. His office was initially at Summit and East Pine Street, before the Ford McKay Building was constructed on Westlake Avenue North. The Westlake Avenue location was chosen in large part because of its proximity to the Ford Assembly Plant.

In addition to his prominent position in the auto business, McKay was active in regional and local civic and social affairs. For example, he was state chairman of the National Recovery Act drive in 1933, served as director of the Salvation Army and in 1931 and 1932 general chairman of the Community Fund, served as director of the Rotary Club, and was director of the Broadmoor and Seattle Golf Clubs and a board member of the Washington Athletic Club. McKay was also a director of the Chamber of Commerce and involved in the founding of Seafair. He died unexpectedly in 1956.

### **Ford and Lincoln Automobiles**

On June 16 1903, the Ford Motor Company was founded by Malcomson group. The Model A was produced that year, in a rented plant in Detroit. Under the leadership of Henry Ford, who quickly became the company president and majority owner, the company overtook Oldsmobile, Buick and Cadillac combined to become the number one automaker in U.S., a position it held for 20 years. In 1908, the legendary Ford Model T was introduced. In 1917 the company introduced the TT truck and Fordson tractor. By 1921, Ford had produced more than 5,000,000 automobiles.

Perhaps Ford Motor Company's single greatest contribution to automotive manufacturing was the moving assembly line. First implemented at the Highland Park plant in Michigan in 1913, the assembly line was so efficient that Ford far surpassed the production levels of its competitors and enabled the company to make the vehicles even more affordable. The Ford Assembly Plant (now Shurgard Headquarters) was built in 1913 in South Lake Union and remained active until ca. 1932.

In 1925, Ford Motor Company acquired the Lincoln Motor Company, thus branching out into luxury cars, and in the 1930s, the Mercury division was created for mid-priced cars. Ford Motor Company was growing.

Model T production ended in 1927 with over 15,000,000 built, and the company began making the Model A after a six-month shutdown for retooling. In the early 1930s Ford also introduced the Lincoln-K V-8 and V-12, the Ford V-8 and the English model Y. In 1935 it started production of the first medium-priced cars, with the 1936 Lincoln-Zephyr and the 1939 Mercury. Diversification and production impacted Ford's market position, and it fell to third place after General Motors and Chrysler in 1933.

In the mid 1940 the Lincoln-Mercury Division of Ford was formed, and in 1948 the company announced the first all-new post-war cars and the F-1 pickup. By 1950 over 1,000,000 Mercurys had been built and Ford overtook Chrysler to regain its second place position in the market. In 1955 the Thunderbird was introduced, followed by the Continental Mark II in 1956. That same year the company went public with sales of Ford Motor Co. common stock. The Edsel was first produced in 1957 and the Ford Galaxy in 1959. By 1960 Ford had made its 50,000,000th car.

## **The Original Architects**

### Warren H. Milner & Company, Designer of the Ford McKay Building

Original drawings for the Ford McKay Building were done by Warren H. Milner & Co. in 1922. Research has revealed little information about Milner. He practiced architecture in Seattle at least from 1911, when he was in partnership with Edwin J. Ivey. In the 1923 *Polk Directory*, Milner's office was listed at 507 Haight Building. He is credited with the design of the Fleming Apartments (1916), at 2321 4th Avenue, and another apartment building in the Denny Regrade neighborhood (1923). Milner's obituary states that he designed a number of Seattle buildings and was also associated with the Great Northern Railroad tunnel construction as well as with a Chicago courthouse. He died in 1949.

## Harlan Thomas & Clyde Grainger, Designer of the Pacific McKay Building

Harlan Thomas (1870 - 1953) and Clyde Grainger (1887 - 1958) were well-known Seattle architects in the early 20th century. Thomas and Grainger formed a partnership, which was later joined by Harlan Thomas' son, Donald P. Thomas. Major works by the firm included the Corner Market Building (Thomas & Grainger, 1911 - 1912), at the corner of 1st Avenue and Pike Street; Rhodes Department Store (Thomas, Grainger & Thomas, 1926 - 1927, recently replaced by an expansion of the Seattle Art Museum), at 1321 2nd Avenue; and Harborview Hospital (Thomas, Grainger & Thomas, 1929 - 1931, altered), at 325 9th Avenue.

Harlan Thomas was born in Iowa and moved to Colorado at age nine with his family. He worked as a draftsman in a Denver architect's office and attended Colorado State College, graduating in 1895. Thomas established his own architectural office in Denver and also traveled abroad for an extended period twice, to further his studies and see more of the world. In 1906, he moved to Seattle and opened an office here. Within his first few years in Seattle, Thomas designed the Chelsea Hotel on lower Queen Anne, the Sorrento Hotel on First Hill, Monroe High School (1909 - 1910, destroyed), and Enumclaw High School (1910 - 1911, destroyed). In addition to his partnership with Grainger, Thomas worked with other architects on various projects and also designed residential buildings. With Schack, Young & Myers he designed the Seattle Chamber of Commerce Building (1923 - 1925, altered); and with W. Marbury Somervell the three Carnegie Libraries: Queen Anne (1912 - 1914), Columbia (1912 - 1915), and Henry L. Yesler (1912 - 1914, presently the Douglass-Truth). Thomas was a professor of architecture at the University of Washington, serving as head of the Architecture Department from 1926 - 1940. He was elected an AIA Fellow in 1928.

Clyde Grainger was born in Chehalis and graduated from the University of Washington in 1909. He practiced as an architect in Seattle after obtaining his degree, and served as a member of the Seattle Planning Commission from 1944 to 1950. He was elected an AIA Fellow in 1951.

### **Urban Context**

The subject block is located near the south edge of Lake Union in a highly congested area near the Mercer Street access ramps of I-5, three blocks to the east. The recently developed South Lake Union Park is located directly north and northeast, across Valley Street. The block is bounded by Westlake Avenue North on the east, Mercer Street on the south, 9th Avenue North on the west, and Broad Street on the north. The property is legally identified as Block 78, Lake Union Shorelands Addition. Originally, the blocks in this area were platted into rectangular 60'-wide lots, bisected by a 16'-wide alley running north-south. They alley of Block 78 has been legally vacated.



The block is not rectangular, because Broad Street runs diagonal to Mercer Street. As a result, the northwest portion of the block is eroded and the northern property line angles from southwest to northeast. From the northeast corner, the block curves slightly along Westlake before aligning north-south.

The siting of the buildings on this block originally allowed for the auto showrooms as a terminus of vehicle-related businesses at the north end of Westlake Avenue North, before the street turned westward around the east side of Queen Anne Hill.

### **Site Features**

According to King County Tax Assessor's records, the site is 73,016 square feet (1.68 acres). The four buildings on the property cover a total of about 43,380 square feet. The Ford McKay Building is sited on Lots 4 and 5, and the Pacific McKay Building occupies Lot 6. One garage building is on Lots 7-9 and the southern portion of Lot 10, while the other is on Lot 3. The northeast portion of the block is paved for parking.

The entire block measures approximately 244' on the south property line and 243'-6" on the west. The north property line angles to the northeast, and is approximately 246' in length. The east property line totals approximately 353'. Paved sidewalks run along the perimeter of the block, with widths of 17' on the south, 11' on the west, 16' on the east, and 6' on the north.

### **The Ford McKay Building (1922)**

#### Structure and Facades

This two-story building is located mid-block, its primary facade facing east onto Westlake Avenue North. It is a conventional, heavy timber structure on a concrete foundation, with cast-in-place concrete walls and a flat roof with parapet. The Ford McKay Building appears to sit on spread footings. The footprint is 108' by 120', with an area of 12,960 square feet. According to current Tax Assessor records, the building is 39,162 gross square feet including the basement and two upper floors, with a net square footage of 26,108. The overall height of the building reaches 34' in the center section of the east facade including parapets and rises to 39'-3" at the top of the gable shapes.

The building's primary east facade is divided into six large bays, with each of the two end bays accented by a gable-shaped parapet. At the first story, each bay has a glazed storefront, and all but the southernmost storefront have a transom with five square windows. The southernmost storefront is newer and is an aluminum assembly with a pair of glazed entry doors. The main entry is recessed into the third bay from the north. Originally it featured a wood-framed glazed door with transom; presently it is an aluminum assembly. Large wall openings at the second story of each bay are glazed with plate glass. They were originally divided light, steel-sash industrial windows with operable six-light center sections. The wall surface is clad with white terra cotta, which has been painted a light gray color in some areas. The terra cotta features decorative details such as cartouches, egg and dart courses, and elaborate foliate patterns.

Storefront window openings are original, but some of the original plate glass windows have been changed and the transom windows modified. Local Tax Assessor's records cite the original storefronts as copper sash with plate glass. The southernmost bay originally contained a vehicle entrance at grade, accessed through large doors; this was subsequently modified and the doors replaced with another display window.

The Ford McKay Building is abutted by its neighbors on both the south (by the Pacific McKay Building) and the north (by a garage) sides. Only the upper portions of these exterior concrete side walls are visible. On the north side, a large opening has been cut into the wall at the second story, to provide vehicle access between the second floor of the Ford McKay Building and the roof of the garage, which is used for parking.

The west facade of the building is board-formed concrete and faces the vacated alley. Wall openings at the second story have been infilled with concrete block, except at the southernmost bay, where a steel-sash industrial window remains. At alley level, a large entry to an auto access ramp to the second floor parking area is located at the northern end of the west facade. What appear to have been large openings for vehicle access have either been infilled or replaced with window assemblies and person doors. A metal roll-up door is located near the southern end of the facade.

#### Interior and Plan Elements

The Ford McKay Building was organized from east to west roughly as follows: showroom, offices, stockroom, and service area. The original showroom was an irregular volume, occupying five bays of the eastern portion of the building. Along with Ford automobiles, Fordson tractors were showcased there. The south wall of the showroom angled to the northwest to accommodate a vehicle entry through the southernmost bay, which provided access to the service area in the western portion of the building. The showroom featured a long, partially open, parts counter along a section of the west wall. Offices were located in the northwestern portion of the showroom, and staff and service spaces were behind partitions. Additional spaces at a balcony level included a ladies' lounge and ladies' bathroom.

Presently the front (east) 32' of the building depth serves as a showroom space. The south bay that had been a driveway was altered and refinished as offices in 1957; later these partitions were removed and the space became part of the showroom. The current showroom space has been divided into two rooms, the north with four bays and the south with two bays. Non-original openings in the north and south end walls allow access into the showrooms of the two adjacent buildings, Garage No. 2 on the north and the Pacific McKay Building on the south. The balcony was significantly enlarged in 1957, but the former ladies' lounge in the second bay from the north was retained with its original leaded glass windows set into a wide, low arch.

Walls and finishes in the showroom appear to have been modified significantly from the original. Reported changes include the addition of false-framed beams and brackets,

installation of hardwood flooring and carpets, and infill and re-partitioning along the west wall. New leaded glass panels at the upper portion of the walls allow natural light to enter the office spaces.

The second floor of the building is an open, unfinished space used for parking. It is accessed by a ramp at the north end of the west facade. A large vehicle opening in the north wall at the second floor provides access to parking on the rooftop of the adjacent garage. Originally there were 12 skylights at this level; they have been removed and the original openings infilled. A second ramp that provided vehicle access from the alley to the basement has been removed.

The basement of the Ford McKay Building originally housed just the boiler and building service equipment. Today it is partially partitioned and used for parts storage. Floor heights are noted in tax records as 12' at the basement, 20' at the first floor, and 14' at the second floor.

### Changes to the Ford McKay Building

In addition to those already noted, the following changes have been made to the building according to permit and drawing records from DPD:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>
1948	Showroom for the English Ford William O. McKay Company
1957	Alter existing building per plan
1957	Install 8 auto sprinkler heads
1957	Install new duct work
1963	Erect & maintain electric sign
1964	Erect & maintain electric sign
1989	Alter existing building
2001	Emergency earthquake repair – repair earthquake damaged parapets
2004	Seismic upgrades

### Current Conditions

Settlement of the Ford McKay Building has occurred and there is evidence of recent bracing, doubling of roof framing elements, and the addition of steel plates attached at the inside face of the upper southeast corner to reinforce structural connections.

The building has been reinforced also to repair damage from the Nisqually earthquake. Cracks remain at the back of the east facade, with additional horizontal cracking at the roof structure line. Parapet braces have been added at the north and south parapets, and sheet metal coping has been installed over the terra cotta cap. The original 12 skylights have all been infilled and covered with built-up roofing.

Original storefronts have been altered somewhat over time, with the removal of cross members in the transom window sashes, and the subdivision of two large plate glass storefront bays. Most

significantly, the original vehicle entry in the southernmost bay has been replaced with an unsympathetic storefront and entry of aluminum frame windows and door. At the second story, the original industrial steel sash, with divided lights, were replaced with large, aluminum-framed windows.

Most of the terra cotta cladding has been painted a very light gray, although the original lighter color glaze can be seen on the jamb edge of some bays. As with the Pacific McKay Building, many of the terra cotta field units in the sign bands have holes from previous sign anchorage. It appears also that light fixtures were removed from the facade, and newer signage has been added.

## **The Pacific McKay Building (1925)**

### Structure and Facades

The one-story building is located at the southwest corner of the block, on the northwest corner of the intersection of Westlake Avenue North and Mercer Street, its primary facades facing east and south. Records suggest that an earlier brick building on the site was incorporated into the Pacific McKay Building, forming part of the service portion west of the showroom. The Pacific McKay Building is 60' by 108', and its facades have an average height of 25'-3", from grade to top of parapet. The primary facades include a 2' tall level parapet, which is stepped over the center entry on the east facade and projects upward another 4'. There is no basement. According to the current King County Tax Assessor Property Characteristics Report, the building measures 6,260 gross square feet.

The building structure is essentially a tall concrete box with a small mezzanine and flat roof. The roof is constructed of structural steel spanning east to west. Wood joists form the roof and mezzanine structures. The floor at grade is a slab. Exterior south and east walls appear to be reinforced concrete. Brick masonry is the backup structure for the terra cotta clad parapet on the 1925 portion. The original foundation plan indicates that the structure was founded on spread footings. However, as can be seen on the site, significant settlement has occurred, particularly towards the south and east along the street elevations. This condition suggests pilings.

The primary east facade and the eastern 34' of the south facade enclose the showroom space and feature a large expanse of plate glass set in ornately detailed terra cotta cladding and decorative elements. The ivory glazed terra cotta is highlighted with blue and gold details. Pilasters flank the entrance and are also located at the corners of the building. A diaper pattern decorates the upper portion of the terra cotta facade.

The main entrance is located at the center of the east facade, where it is emphasized by flanking pilasters, arched overhead surround, and a stepped roof parapet with elaborate cartouche and "Pacific" sign. The cartouche contains a profile of Abraham Lincoln. Above the entrance doors is a delicately carved wood detail that appears to read "607" rather than 601 (Westlake Avenue North). This element reportedly was carved in the Philippines and then shipped to Seattle. A stained glass design reads, "After we sell, we serve," which was the McKay Company motto.

The western portion of the Pacific McKay Building, which contains offices and repair shop, was originally distinguished on the exterior south facade by its lower overall height and brick finish. An original vehicle entry on this wall, accessed from Mercer Street, was fitted with a pair of wood-framed doors located just west of the office portion. Records suggest that this entry was eliminated in 1986. West of the vehicle entry, tall and narrow arched-head windows ran along the south facade. These have been replaced with rectangular plate-glass windows in new, larger openings.

A 1986 alteration, designed by architects Bittman Vammen Taylor, covered the western brick portion of the south facade with stucco and increased the apparent height of the building by the addition of raised parapets. The west (alley) facade and the western portion of the building's south facade are clad with stucco or an exterior insulation and finish system (EIFS).

Six original skylight wells remain at the roof of the back section. However, they have been either covered or converted into much smaller units atop the original openings. The rooftop was fitted with a steel frame in ca. 1959, when a neon sign was added to the building. The sign as since been removed, although the frame remains, exposed above the roof. (Reportedly, the sign was donated to the Museum of History and Industry by the former building owner.)

### Plan and Interior Features

The building presently contains a showroom on the east, a bank of offices and a concrete vault, and a service center on the west. A 12'-8" deep by 57'-9" wide mezzanine is located along and above the west side of the showroom. The highly visible showroom of the Pacific McKay Building is a particularly elaborate interior space, with a hung, barrel-vault-shaped ceiling, heavy crown molding, ionic pilasters, patterned terrazzo and marble flooring, and a double stairway in front of the west wall. This stair, embellished with a fountain, leads to a small landing at the mezzanine level and from there to two flanking offices that have windows overlooking the showroom. These leaded glass, casement windows are original, but interior office finishes have been changed.

The showroom is a single volume with a 34' by 58' plan and average height of 20'. It presently accommodates four vehicles on display, although historic newspaper articles cite up to nine display automobiles. The space, as it was originally designed and in its current condition is a formal one. Engaged columns and pilasters support a frieze band, giving the impression of the room as a large courtyard. This feeling is advanced by the mezzanine office windows, which have planter boxes and open out to the showroom. The interior wall surfaces are noted on drawings as "Craftex," an asbestos-containing plaster. The showroom is fitted with an ornate chandelier, which is not original to the building. (It was installed there on March 17, 1989 by the previous building owner, and is not owned by the current property owner. The chandelier has been on loan to current owner, but at this time the owner of the chandelier plans to remove it in the near future. The fixture is reported to have been one of six installed in Seattle's historic Orpheum Theater, which was demolished ca. 1969.)

Below the mezzanine and west of the showroom are three office spaces, each with original wood-framed entry doors surrounded by glazed sidelights and transom. Configuration of the offices, vault, and passageway appears original, though interior office finishes may have been changed. A fourth opening leads west into service spaces of the dealership. A non-original opening in the north wall provides access into the showroom of the Ford McKay Building. Originally, the north wall featured a large mirror.

Other spaces in the Pacific McKay Building, west of the showroom and mezzanine, have been modified from their 1925 utilitarian character as a service garage. (This portion of the building may predate the 1925 construction.) The back service space includes offices and file storage, which are accessed either by a hallway through the bank of offices west of the showroom, or through the entry door on the west facade.

### Changes to the Pacific McKay Building

In addition to those already noted, the following changes have been made to the building according to permit and drawing records from DPD:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>
1986	Remodel storefront and interior per plans (western portion of building)

### Current Conditions

The Pacific McKay Building has three original roof levels with intermediate parapets, corresponding with the service center, office bank, and showrooms below. (These varied levels are visible from above, but they have been obscured on the exterior by the raised parapets along the south and west facades, which date from the 1989 remodel.) The roof is a built-up assembly, with felt paper wrapping up to the underside of the terra cotta coping at the parapet. At several locations, the felt has pulled away, allowing moisture infiltration. The parapet structure is composed of two wythes of brick, sitting on the concrete frame below. The terra cotta coping is in relatively good condition, with some stains and biological growth in the sky-facing joints. Additionally, the "shelf" of the intermediate cornice band supports seedlings and ferns.

The storefront system and primary terra cotta-clad facades of the Pacific McKay Building appear to be settling as a unit, as evidenced by cracking in the wood bulkhead shelf in the south storefront. There is a large crack in one plate glass window on the south. The exterior granite bulkhead appears to have been coated, and the coating has discolored and made a hazy uneven appearance on the granite.

The Pacific McKay Building has suffered visibly and has structural problems due to settlement at the southeast corner, which has resulted in a differential height along the east primary facade of 8" to 9".

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

The exterior of the of the Pacific McKay Building, the showroom interior of the Pacific McKay Building including the stairs and mezzanine level up to the west wall, the exterior of the Ford McKay Building, and that portion of the site east of the vacated alley but not including the McKay Service Garage building.

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