



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649
Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

LPB 660/17

Name and Address of Property: **Seven Gables Theatre (American Legion University Post #11) – 911 NE 50th St / 4753-4759 Roosevelt Way NE**

Legal Description: Lots 1, 2, and 3 in Block 1 of Supplementary Plat of McGuire and Holden's Addition to Latona, according to Plat recorded in Volume 7 of Plats at Page(s) 68, in King County, Washington.

At the public meeting held on September 20, 2017 the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Seven Gables Theatre / American Legion University Post #11 – 911 NE 50th St / 4753-4759 Roosevelt Way NE as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following standard 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, or period, or a method of construction.*
- 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

Site

The subject property is a movie cinema with street-level tenant commercial spaces, located at the southwest corner of Roosevelt Way NE and NE 50th Street in the University District. It was originally constructed in 1925 as an American Legion hall, for University Post #11. Both

Roosevelt Way NE and NE 50th Street are busy arterial streets. The latter serves as an exit/entrance to Interstate 5, which is located four blocks to the west.

The subject parcel measures 90 by 75 feet in plan, and is oriented east-west. The subject building essentially fills the site, except for an approximately six foot setback along the south property line. To the west is another 90 by 75 foot parcel, which is held by the same owner as the subject property, and of which approximately half is used as a surface parking lot for the cinema (the other half is vacant). The sidewalk adjacent to the subject parcel slopes approximately 10 feet from west to east along the north property line, and approximately two feet from north to south at the east property line. There is no alley.

To the north, across NE 50th Street, is the University Branch of the Seattle Public Library, set back from the street on a landscaped lot. The building was designed by the Seattle architecture firm of Somervill & Cote and constructed in 1910; the structure is today a Seattle city landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. To the east, across Roosevelt Way NE, is a six story, 50,000 square foot sixty-unit mixed-use apartment building currently under construction. To the south from the subject property, sharing a property line, is a 2,000 square foot one-story wood frame house constructed in 1939 with a mid-century commercial building constructed in front, most recently occupied by a florist.

Neighborhood Context

The subject building is located in the University District, a dense and varied neighborhood surrounding the University of Washington. The development of the neighborhood was closely associated with the development of the University. Students remain the most substantial component of the local population, with most of the nearby buildings and businesses devoted to educating, housing, feeding, entertaining, and otherwise providing services to the University's sizeable population. The overall area is a somewhat dense mix of eclectic and somewhat fine-grained urban fabric of residences and businesses, including restaurants, diners, bars, clubs, small shops, grocery stores, drugstores, services, and the like. Locally owned businesses and national chain stores, as well as civic and institutional buildings, are dispersed throughout the neighborhood. Building stock is varied in age and condition, with each decade of the 20th and 21st centuries represented.

The western edge of the University District is formed by Interstate 5, which separates the Wallingford neighborhood to the west. The University of Washington main campus is located to the southeast, approximately six-tenths of a mile away. The blocks east and south the subject site are primarily commercial, residential, and mixed-use buildings, while the blocks to the north remain largely single-family homes. The blocks to the south and east have been undergoing increased development in recent years, and are planned to receive even more development in coming years following an upzone of building heights and densities. The traditional commercial spine of the neighborhood, University Way NE or "The Ave.," runs north-south and is located four blocks to the east. However, the future neighborhood core may move with the completion of a light rail station currently under construction near NE 45th Street and Brooklyn Avenue NE, approximately half a mile southeast of the subject site.

Planned land use zoning there may allow for skyscrapers and building densities not seen outside of the central downtown/Belltown core.

Designated Seattle historic landmarks within a quarter mile radius of the subject site include:

- University Library at 50th and Roosevelt (Somerville & Cote, 1910)
- Seattle Fire Station #17 at 50th and 11th Avenue NE;
- Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church and rectory on 9th Avenue NE near NE 53rd Street (Beezer Brothers, 1909-25);
- University Heights Elementary School on University Way NE between NE 50th and 52nd Streets (Bebb & Mendel, 1902-06);
- The Wilsonian Apartments at University Way NE and NE 47th Street.

For city planning purposes, the subject parcel is located in the NC3-65 zone (Neighborhood Commercial 3, maximum allowable height 65 feet).

Building description

Exterior

The subject building is a two-and-a-half story commercial structure at the southwest corner of NE 50th Street and Roosevelt Way NE, with a movie theater occupying the upper or second floor, and two tenant commercial spaces at the lower or first floor. It was originally constructed in 1925 as the meeting hall and headquarters of University Post #11 of the American Legion, a military veterans' association. The building underwent renovations and updates around 1956, as evidenced by photographs, then was sold and renovated again for use as a movie theater in 1975.

Today, the roughly 9,500 square foot building measures approximately 68 by 86 feet in plan, and is oriented east-west with the primary elevation facing north, along NE 50th Street, and the secondary elevation facing east along Roosevelt Way NE. Tax records indicate that the structure is wood frame over a concrete foundation, with buff-and-brown colored rug veneer brick cladding at the first floor, and non-original unpainted cedar shingle cladding at the second. The prominent, cross-gable roof wraps three elevations, hiding a central flat roof portion from the street. The street-facing parts of the roof are clad in contemporary wood roofing shingles, with contemporary asphalt composite shingles on the interior slopes not visible from the street.

The main entrance to the movie theater is located on the north elevation, which is symmetrically composed of two clipped gable-ends flanking a central recessed entry porch, which is reached by a short flight of exterior brick steps. Each gable features a projecting bay window. The gable on the right corresponds to the screen side of the current movie theater auditorium, and the original glazing at the bay window there was infilled during the 1975 renovations, so the bay is now clad in shingles. The bay window on the left is two stories in height, due to the dropping sidewalk grade on the east side of the building. The window at the upper part of this bay lights a sitting lounge, and has non-original aluminum sash with

translucent ribbed glazing dating to sometime between 1937 and 1956. The lower part of this bay retains some of the original 1923 wood multi-light sash, and lights the street-level restaurant below.

The recessed entry on the north elevation is emphasized by two eyebrow dormer windows, and an angled roof hood over the entry resembling a form found in traditional thatched roofs. The entry is flanked by two non-original leaded clear glass windows on the north elevation that date to sometime after 1956, and likely date to the 1975 renovations. Two more leaded clear glass windows are located on the interior east and west walls of the recessed entry; at one time the east window served as the ticket window. On the original 1924 drawings, this entry porch is shown as three bays wide, rather than one bay wide; it is not clear from the 1937 tax photos whether it was actually constructed in that manner. If so, the outermost two bays were enclosed and made interior space by at least 1956. In any event, the bracketed double support posts at the porch entry, visible in the 1937 tax photos, were removed by 1956.

The east elevation is two stories, with commercial storefronts at the street level, and three gables projecting above the eave line. The gable at the north end is larger and features a decorative carved bargeboard, while the two smaller gables function more as dormers. Each of the windows in these three gables are non-original metal sash replacements of the original multi-light wood sash casement windows, although there appears to have been an attempt to match the approximate shape and function of the originals. The replacements were installed at some time between 1949 and 1982, although they appear to date to the earlier part of that period. Additionally, the replacements were slightly larger than the originals, so the dormer trim had to be notched to accept the window frame.

Between the two smaller dormers is a two-story brick "tower" element with shaped cast stone parapet that extends slightly above the eave line. At ground level of this tower element is an entry door providing access to a stair to the second floor, which is presently closed off, and a small window lighting the upper portion. The door features a distinctive flared cast stone header, which resembles door header trim on the interior. Running above the small window is a continuous soldier course of brick, and below it is a small in-plane brick diamond pattern. Dividing the second and first floors on either side of the stair tower is a pent shed roof, clad in shingles.

At the street level, there is a small commercial space on the left side of the brick stair tower, which is currently vacant. The storefront here was completely altered between 1949 and 1982, as evidenced by historic tax photos. The rest of the street level is another commercial leased space, which has three bays on the east elevation and wraps the corner to the north elevation. It is currently occupied by a restaurant. These storefront windows are largely intact, and retain recessed entrances, tile bulkheads (now painted with original decorative strip obscured), and transoms.

The west elevation is dominated by the large expanse of shingled roof and wall, but is comparatively featureless, with only a non-original central door in the façade which serves an exit from the movie theater auditorium. Originally, this exterior wall had a series of six multi-light casement windows and access door at the far south end (as shown in the 1937 tax photo),

but the windows were significantly reduced in size and replaced by 1956, and then completely removed in 1975.

The south elevation faces an interior lot line. The elevation features two clipped gables at either end, like the north elevation, but here the central part of the building is notably flat roofed and utilitarian. The exterior is clad in shingles, like the other building elevations. Originally, there was an exterior, recessed back porch and stair off the kitchen here, oriented east-west along the central part of this elevation. At some unknown time (likely after 1975), that was unsympathetically enclosed with grooved plywood siding and aluminum windows.

The building suffers from some deferred maintenance, with visible condition issues at several locations on the exterior, particularly wood deterioration at eaves due to water damage. Some of the masonry needs repointing, and there is apparent water damage to the brick at the sidewalk level along the east elevation. Significant cracks in the masonry veneer at the building's northeast corner due to settlement were observed in early February 2017, which required immediate review by a structural engineer. Although the conditions are not life-threatening, the problem damaged a window and is ongoing until remediated.

Interior

At some locations, original interior finishes are intact, which include plaster walls, fir and oak floors, and fir trim including baseboard and crown molding. Much of the space is carpeted with non-original material. There are a variety of period light fixtures throughout the building, but whether they are original could not be discerned for this report.

Primary access to the second or main floor of the building is through the recessed porch on the north elevation. The entry leads into a small vestibule, where today tickets are purchased for the movie theater. Behind the ticket counter is the ticket office, which is lit by a leaded clear glass windows on the exterior. The vestibule retains presumably original wainscoting on the wall opposite the ticket counter.

The vestibule leads through an arched opening into a wide, east-west oriented corridor, which was originally described on the 1924 drawings as a memorial hall. Directly ahead are the concessions counter and access to the movie theater on the right; on the left is a stair hall accessing a restroom upstairs at the attic level, and another restroom downstairs at the lower level. At the east end of the corridor are a flight of three steps giving access to a vaulted sitting lounge.

The sitting lounge features a high ceiling, large windows the north and east elevations; and along the west wall, a brick fireplace with two decorative Batchelder tiles and a tile hearth. The brick and tile have been painted, presumably a non-original condition. Beyond the south wall of this room are a suite of rooms which have been used as office and storage space since the renovation of the building in 1975. On the 1924 architectural drawings, these rooms were labeled as a billiards room, offices for the American Legion University Post #11 (the owner and developer of the building), and an apartment presumably for a caretaker at the southeasternmost building corner second floor.

The concessions room, accessed from the central corridor, is dominated by the candy display counter at the south end of the room. On the 1924 drawings, this space was the dining room. Behind the candy counter, the room connects to a small kitchen/service area, and also connects to what had been the open back porch and stair but is now enclosed. From that porch and stair is accessed the projection booth to the north, and the suite of offices to the south.

The movie theater auditorium is accessed through the concessions room, and corresponds to the entire west wing of the second floor. Originally, this space was used by the American Legion post as an assembly room for meetings and social functions, and was oriented so that the stage platform was on the south end. The room at that time was well lit with large windows along the west wall, and a bay window at the north wall. However, when the property was sold and renovated for use as a theater in 1975, the floor was partly excavated and a new sloping floor was installed with the movie screen at the north wall, reversing the orientation of the room. The bay window at that location was sealed off and baffles were installed on either side of the screen wall. An additional exit was installed on the building's west exterior wall in recent years to accommodate disabled patrons access from the adjacent parking lot. The interior of the movie theater auditorium features a vaulted ceiling with original decorative ceiling beams, but the rest of the room dates to the 1975 remodel. The screen backdrop is a colorful painted fairy tale scene by David Russell, dated 1975 (no additional information could be found about the artist).

At the first floor commercial spaces, interiors have been altered over time to suit tenants, and no significant spaces remain.

Summary of primary alterations

The building has undergone many alterations, but most of the permit records relates to signage, minor tenant improvements, or are mechanical/ventilation permits related to the theater or the restaurant kitchens. Below are listed permits for significant work:

<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Work</u>
223399	1925	\$25,000	Clubhouse (not started), 2 stories, 65x85
243393	1925	----	----
BN14212	1963	\$600	Alter front & lower ceilings of exist. office bldg.
BN29800	1967	\$350	Alter exist. bldg.
BN39831	1970	\$500	Alter ex bldg. & occupy as restaurant
BN45825	1973	\$10	School (bicycle repairing) Occupy part ex bldg as specialty
BN50283	1974	\$15,000	Alter por of 1 st exist. occupy as retail sales (Speaker Lab)

Photographs provide the best guide for assessing primary alterations to the exterior of the building, including:

- All of the windows at the second floor on all elevations are non-original, replaced between about 1956 and 1975.

- Removal of glazing entirely from bay window at west side of north elevation, in 1975.
- Removal of all windows on west elevation by 1975.
- Storefront at first floor commercial space at southeast building corner is non-original, and dates to mid-20th century.
- Removal of original bracketed entry posts at main entry on north elevation by 1956.
- Removal or covering of half-timbering at large gable-end on east elevation by at least 1982 and replaced with shingles.

Known interior alterations include the following:

- Reconfiguration of the former meeting room into a movie theater auditorium, including introducing a sloped floor, removing the existing stage. This work occurred in 1975.
- Enclosure of back porch and stair in recent decades.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Development of the University District

Following the founding of Seattle in 1851, the area that would become the University District was not incorporated into the city boundaries until 1891. The first settlers in the area received land grants and began farming there in 1867, when the area was relatively rural and far from the city center. By 1887 the Seattle Lake Shore & Eastern Railway—today's Burke-Gilman Trail—had been developed and built by a group of investors, providing an east-west connection between Fremont and the west shore of Lake Washington. In 1890 James Moore had purchased property, including part of the original settlers' farm, and began to subdivide it into building parcels, and advertising this new neighborhood which he called "Brooklyn." Moore was a vigorous developer in early Seattle, who already had success developing Capitol Hill. By 1891, large areas north of the existing city were annexed to Seattle, including today's Magnolia, Green Lake, Wallingford, Phinney Ridge, Montlake, and University District. Many of Moore's street names were changed after annexation, to match Seattle's numbered street system. Seattle's population at this time was about 42,000 people.

The most significant event for the nascent neighborhood of Brooklyn was the decision to relocate the University of Washington to this area from downtown Seattle, where physical growth for the institution was limited. The regents retained the original campus for future development, and began building in 1895 the new campus on the considerable acreage bounded by NE 45th Street, 15th Avenue NE, and the waterfront of Union Bay and Lake Union. The university spurred significant growth in the neighborhood. In addition to hundreds of students who attended the university, the non-student population quickly grew, so that by the first decade of the 1900s a complete community had developed, with apartment and single family housing, shops, churches, schools, and civic buildings. By this time, the neighborhood had come to be called the University District rather than Brooklyn. From 1900 to 1910, Seattle continued to grow due to population increase and through major annexations that took place in 1907. In 1900 the population was about 80,700; by 1910 it had nearly tripled to over 237,000.

The 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition was held on the University of Washington campus, improving the university with permanent buildings and landscaping, also spurring further growth in the area. University Way, which included a trolley route along it as early as 1893, had developed by this time into the primary north-south and commercial spine of the neighborhood. A 1907 trolley line from Wallingford along NE 45th Street established that route as the primary east-west spine through the neighborhood.

The construction of the Lake Washington Ship Canal from 1911-1917 was another catalyst for growth in the area, and the period from 1915-1929 can be considered the neighborhood's commercial heyday. In 1919 an improved University Bridge resulted in increased traffic in the area. The opening of the new Montlake Bridge in 1925 furthered this growth. With department stores, several theaters, and a few high-rise buildings by the late 1920s and early 1930s, the University District had by mid-century the one of the largest commercial cores outside of downtown Seattle. The overall population of Seattle through this period continued to grow but leveled off in the 1940s at approximately 366,000.

After World War II, the university's enrollment almost tripled, as veterans took advantage of the G.I. Bill. Fueled by wartime growth and postwar expansion and more annexations, Seattle's population by 1960 had reached 557,000.

Beginning in the late 1940s, parking congestion was a noticeable problem in the University District, and parking lots began to replace old houses and underperforming commercial buildings. Merchants organized the University District Parking Association to alleviate the problem. The presence of two high-rise buildings, the 9-story Brooklyn Building (b. 1929; home of the General Insurance Company after 1936, and replaced in 1973 by the even larger 22-story Safeco Tower) and the 15-story Edmond Meany Hotel (b. 1932), probably precipitated the increased demand over time for parking in the blocks north of NE 45th Street.

Postwar suburban and commercial expansion in the 1950s and 1960s began to take a toll on the businesses of the University District centered around University Way. Shopping areas such as University Village and Northgate Mall—both opening in the late 1950s—were more receptive to a new car-centered culture. The construction of the I-5 interstate highway in the late 1950s accelerated this trend, and also established a powerful western boundary to the neighborhood.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, 11th Avenue NE (northbound) and Roosevelt Way (southbound) were converted to twinned one-way arterials in order to handle the increasingly higher volumes of car traffic between University Bridge and Lake City Way. Roosevelt Way NE between NE 50th Street and University Bridge—which had already seen the development of car dealerships as early as the 1920s—was jointly promoted in the mid-1960s as the densest new and used car shopping zone in the state by the six automobile dealers along this strip.

In the 1960s the ever-larger university began to expand beyond its traditional boundaries, and began a controversial, decades-long program of purchasing homes, apartment buildings, and commercial structures west of 15th Avenue NE and south of NE 41st Street in order to redevelop more university buildings. In 1965, the daytime population of the University District

was approximately 70,000, and a University Development Plan began that year to address pressing concerns including growth, traffic and rapid transit, parking, zoning between family neighborhoods and denser development, schools, and parks. Enrollment at the University reached a high in 1979 of 37,549 students.

Also in the late 1960s through the 1970s, the University District became the center of Seattle's counterculture movement, home to numerous coffee houses, music venues, alternative and fringe social and commercial ventures, and the site of repeated protests during the Vietnam War.

By the 1980s, the demographics of the University District had shifted towards a mostly student population. The closing in 1989 of the University Heights Elementary School (built 1902 with a 1908 addition) in the heart of the University District due to a failing enrollment, demonstrably reflected this trend. In the 1990s, the neighborhood, like the rest of the city, experienced a building boom during an expansive national economy, with the construction of additional multifamily housing, office and university space, and renovation of older buildings in the area. This development trend is expected to increase in upcoming years, following the construction of a light rail station near NE 45th Street and Brooklyn Avenue NE, connecting the neighborhood to downtown. Significant upzoning of surrounding blocks in 2017 is expected to drive building heights and densities to levels not seen outside the downtown commercial core.

Today the University District has approximately 35,000 permanent residents, in addition to 50,000 university students and employees. The neighborhood remains dominated by the nearby University of Washington, but is nevertheless a vibrant, walkable "city within a city," with shops, restaurants, entertainment venues, and offices which serve not only the student population, but adjacent neighborhoods and the city as a whole as well.

The development and use of the subject building, and its occupants

The subject site was empty and undeveloped as of 1919, according to the Sanborn fire insurance map of that year, although most of the surrounding blocks were filled out with recently-built single family homes. Title abstracts are unclear regarding the ownership of the property at that time, but by early 1923 the members of the University Post #11 of the American Legion, a military veterans' organization, had purchased the site and released a proposed rendering for the subject building in the Seattle Times. The designer was architect Eric C. Rising, a member of the post. The University Post #11 had only been formed two years before, in 1921, and had been meeting at the nearby YMCA building at 14th Avenue NE and NE 47th Street (no longer extant). Although the post was not the first to be chartered in Seattle, it appears to have been the first to have constructed its own building, as the other American Legion posts were renting space in existing buildings for many years.

Property and construction costs for the subject building totaled approximately \$50,000, most of which had been raised through shares of stock issued to members. For the final \$5,000, the post sold stock to non-members, and used additional fundraisers such as auctions and social events to pay for furnishing the property. An early scheme proposed that the structure be co-owned and developed with other civic organizations in the area, but this plan was abandoned, for

unknown reasons. The building was completed and opened in mid-September 1925. Spokespersons for the post stated that although the building was an American Legion hall, it was intended to be a “center for all affairs of the district and other organizations will be urged to make use of it at all times” and noted that it was across the street from the neighborhood library.

As initially proposed in 1923, the building included only one 25 by 45 foot commercial space for lease at the first floor east elevation. The rest of this floor was proposed to have a handball court, a small gymnasium and locker room, and the boiler room. On the second floor was proposed a 25 by 50 foot auditorium and lodge room, the post headquarters, a billiards and smoking room, a memorial hall, and a large kitchen for accommodating in-house banquets. A 12 by 23 foot room was reserved for use by the ladies auxiliary. The 1923 rendering published in the *Seattle Times* shows a highly picturesque design, with a half-timbered first floor exterior wrapping the corner at Roosevelt Way and 50th Street; a prominent chimney at the west gable of the north elevation; and a roof that appears to be thatched, its curves emphasized by eyebrow windows and a gentle rise over the main north elevation entry.

However, as finally designed (and presumably as actually constructed) in 1925, available drawings on file with the city show that the first floor included two commercial spaces along the east elevation; an eastern set of stairs accessing the second floor; a “music studio,” and support spaces, with the entire western third of the building at the first floor unexcavated due to the slope. On the second floor, the rooms were established largely as we see them today, with a vestibule, corridor, offices for the post and the ladies’ auxiliary, a sitting lounge (larger, with an attached billiard room to the south), a meeting room (now the theater auditorium), and a dining room (now used for concessions). The caretaker’s apartment was retained at the southeast building corner. The meeting room, also used for social events, was in 1925 oriented with the stage on the south side, and with a level floor. The corridor was labeled as a memorial hall, and the post encouraged members to donate their war memorabilia to exhibit in the building.

The University Post #11 occupied the building until the mid-1970s, using it for meetings and social events, and regularly renting it out to other groups, according to classified advertisements in the newspaper. For a time in the mid-1940s, the building hosted Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #2877 and American Legion West Seattle Post #3. Typical events which were publicized in the *Seattle Times* in the 1920s through the 1940s included dances and fundraisers, benefits, local military band performances, children’s performances, honorary lunches, occasional speakers on military-related topics, and sometimes military-related films. The women’s auxiliary for the post held regular teas and lunches, small fundraisers for local causes, and the like. No events of special significance appeared to have occurred at the post—larger events by groups of veterans’ organizations appear to have been held at well-established downtown auditoriums or theaters, or hotel ballrooms, according to newspaper announcements from the period. Announcements for events held at the subject building, other than regular members’ meetings, appear to decline after the 1950s, through the early 1970s.

The first floor commercial spaces along the east or Roosevelt Way elevation were leased to a variety of tenants over the years. *Seattle Polk’s* city directories provide reverse listings

beginning in 1938, providing some indication of tenants after that year (tenants between 1923 building construction and 1938 are more difficult to trace):

- Several drugstores occupied a portion of the retail space for decades. Around 1936 or 1938, Douglass Herb Products, a health foods store and products company, occupied one of the storefronts until about 1943. At the same time, the northeast corner space was taken by Burnett's Drug Store, which had previously been located a few blocks north at 53rd Street and Roosevelt Way (at that time known as 10th Avenue). Burnett's appears to have been a small neighborhood drugstore, with only one store, rather than a chain. By 1948, Burnett's had been replaced by Heaton Pharmacy, which itself was replaced by Mack's Pharmacy in the early 1950s. Mack's was a local chain which had operated since about 1935 at other locations in Seattle, and occupied space in the subject building until the mid-1960s. No additional significant information could be found about any of these drugstores.
- A long-time commercial tenant of the subject building was Clean Well Cleaners, which occupied the center space from the late 1940s to the late 1950s. The company was a small local chain with multiple locations in north and south Seattle during this period.
- The small southeast commercial space was occupied by the Mrs. Margaret Berray Beauty Shop from 1938 to the mid-1940s, and may have been related to the Berray Beauty Supply Company established in 1941 in downtown Seattle. No other information could be found about this company. From the early 1950s to the mid-1960s, the space was occupied by Clarence A. Mittun's chiropractic office, occasionally with other partners. His office had previously been located in the J. Green Building downtown in the mid-1940s. Mittun was president of the Washington Association of Chiropractors at least twice in the late 1950s, and was named the state's Chiropractor of the Year in 1961 and 1962. He was also an accomplished mountain climber locally. In the late 1960s, his office was taken over for a few years by another chiropractor, Miller H. Russell.

In 1975, the property was sold to Randy Finley, who converted the second story of the property to the Seven Gables Theatre, which developed a reputation for specializing in independent and arthouse films (see additional information on Seven Gables Theatre elsewhere in this report). The commercial tenant spaces remained below, but with changing occupants:

- In the 1960s and 1970s, some of the commercial spaces are listed as vacant in the Polk's city directory. In the mid-1970s, the commercial spaces appear to have been consolidated for a single tenant, Spoke Folks bicycle sales and service, and later by Speakerlab Inc., a stereo system retail company.
- By the 1980s, the commercial tenants appear to have been more directly related to the Seven Gables Theater, which had begun to occupy the upstairs space in 1975. Occupants in the 1980s include Roosevelt Bakery & Espresso Bar (later the Roosevelt Café), and by the 1990s, Mamma Melina Ristorante.
- A longtime tenant during this period was Cinema Books, located originally at 701 Broadway across from the Harvard Exit Theater in 1977. The bookstore moved to a storefront in the subject building in 1984 at the recommendation of Seven Gables

Theater owner, Randy Finley. Founded by Stephanie Ogle, a former professor of cinema and film at the University of Washington, the bookstore and its owner were an important resource for film culture in Seattle, until the bookstore closed in 2015.

Finley's theater company, Seven Gables Theatres Corporation, eventually grew to a regional chain and for a time the subject building also served as the headquarters of the company. Over decades, the ownership of the company has changed, but the building has remained the Seven Gables Theatre to the present time. The current owner is Landmark Theatres, a company based in Los Angeles, California.

The American Legion

The American Legion was chartered by the United States Congress in September 1919 as a patriotic veterans' organization, formed initially by a group of American military officers and enlisted men in France following the end of World War I in November 1918. The movement to form such an organization had begun as early as 1915.

Membership quickly grew to over one million persons within a few years, and eventually was opened to include veterans of other wars and conflicts. The precedent for military veterans organizations had been established in the 19th century, and included the politically influential Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) which was founded by former Union Army soldiers in the 1860s at the conclusion of the Civil War, and the American Veterans of Foreign Service (later called Veterans of Foreign Wars or VFW) which was founded in 1898 by veterans of the Spanish-American War.

At the national level, the American Legion has served as a lobbying group for veterans' affairs, and supported in 1921 efforts to create the U.S. Veterans Bureau, the forerunner of the Veterans Administration. The group was instrumental in the effort to draft and pass the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (better known as the GI Bill, or GI Bill of Rights) after World War II, which established hospitals, made available low interest loans or mortgages, and granted stipends to cover college or trade school tuition for veterans. The bill was a significant factor in the postwar recovery. Other issues pursued by the American Legion have included support for veterans' employment, health issues, heart disease, and mental health, as well as child welfare, and youth sports and education. These efforts continue today.

The American Legion has also promoted causes seen to support patriotism, including leading attempts for decades to pass a constitutional amendment protecting the American flag from desecration. From the 1930s through the 1960s, this focus on patriotism through what they called their "Americanism" program led the American Legion to be at the forefront of anti-Communist activities, often clashing with more liberal organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

Today, there are approximately 2.4 million members of the American Legion, and 14,000 posts worldwide. The posts are organized into 55 departments; one each for the fifty states, and one each for the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, France, Mexico, and the Philippines. Posts are organized by state counties and then by districts, each with a leadership hierarchy. At the local

level, Posts are the basic operational unit for the American Legion membership and have a strong social component, with each holding meetings, voting on regional and national proposals, engaging in community service projects, organizing sports or social events, and so forth. While Post names are determined by their members, the numbering system varied by department, and some standards have changed over time, so the Post number may not represent any hierarchy.

The organization has been headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana, since its founding, but also maintains offices in Washington, DC. Their monumental Indianapolis headquarters building was constructed in 1940, and designed by the Cleveland, Ohio architecture firm Walker & Weeks.

In Seattle

In Washington State, American Legion posts were established quickly in various cities after the group was founded nationally. The first Seattle post was established in July 1919, by a “large and representative group of Seattle men” who had served in World War I. The group later received its charter from the national American Legion body and expected to “take up its regular program of entertainment, patriotic service, and mutual advancement of the interests of its members.” The post was led by Commander Lieut. Col. Fred W. Llewellyn.

However, in Washington State, the organization’s relationship with some sectors of the population was marked by early violence. At a parade in Centralia, Washington on November 11, 1919, celebrating the one year anniversary of the end of World War I, American Legionnaires clashed with labor union members of the International Workers of the World (or “Wobblies”), who were perceived as being dangerously radical and anti-establishment. The IWW’s membership in the Pacific Northwest consisted largely of laborers in agriculture, mining, and lumber. By the end of a 24-hour period, four veterans were dead and one IWW member had been pulled from the town jail and lynched. The event received national publicity.

Two weeks later, in late November 1921, French general Ferdinand Foch, the Marshal of France and supreme commander of all allied forces in World War I, visited Tacoma and Seattle in a six-week tour through the United States sponsored entirely by the American Legion and its member posts. The one-day event was one of the largest public events in Seattle up to that time, with nearly the entire city participating, and featured a single parade route that stretched from downtown to Capitol Hill, to the University District, to Fremont, to the Civic Center (site of today’s Seattle Center), and back to downtown.

In Seattle by September 1921, six posts and three women’s auxiliaries had already been established. All of them appear to have met in rented halls, or possibly in member’s homes. They included:

- Rainier Noble Post No. 1, meeting at the city’s Armory at Western and Virginia;
- Seattle Post No. 18, meeting at the Roosevelt Veteran’s Hall at 1616-1/2 Third Avenue;
- Lloyd T. Cochran Post No. 40, meeting at Ballard Hall on Market Street;

- West Seattle Post No. 160, meeting at the American Legion Hall at 41st Avenue and Juneau Street (no record of this Hall could be found, and it may have been a member's house);
- University Post No. 11, meeting at the YMCA at 47th Street and 14th Avenue in the University District (no longer extant).

In 1921, the University Post #11 of the American Legion was established as the fifth such post in the city, and formally received their charter from the national organization in October 1921. The group was expected to be the largest and most lively post in the city, due to the youthful University of Washington membership and University alumni boosters, so much so that other posts were concerned their members would defect to join. The University Post #11 appears to have been the first post in the city to construct their own headquarters building, rather than leasing space.

After World War II, the American Legion in Seattle constructed a new Seattle Post #1, to serve as the group's main headquarters and as a memorial to all wartime veterans, not just Legion members. The building was located at Seventh Avenue and University Street downtown, and was intended to be a "useful" structure rather than simply a statue. The building was completed in 1946, and the architect was Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johansen. Eric Rising, the architect of the subject building and an American Legion member, was employed at that firm at the time but it is not known whether he worked on the project.

Other Seattle posts which appear to have constructed their own posts include the Magnolia Post #123, a Modern style one-story building at 32nd Avenue West and West Barrett Street (1948, no longer extant), and the West Seattle Post #160 (1940) at 37th Avenue SW and SW Alaska Street, which is still in use today.

Seven Gables Theatres Corporation and Landmark Theatres Corporation

The subject property is today owned by Landmark Theatres, a Los Angeles based company, but was once the flagship cinema of Seven Gables, at that time the Northwest's largest chain of independent movie theaters.

The Seven Gables movie theater chain was established in 1975 by Randy Finley, his sister the television actress Pat Finley, and his wife Michelle Finley. Randy Finley, an Olympia, Washington native and University of Washington drop-out, began a career in the movie theater business in 1970. That year he and two partners opened the 93-seat Movie House (now the Grand Illusion), an early art movie house, at University Way NE and NE 50th Street in the University District. Finley also found success in film distribution and marketing for a few European and independent films. With profits from distribution, he purchased a 355-seat theater in Portland, Oregon in 1973. In 1975, he purchased the subject building and established the Seven Gables Theatre. Later that year, he purchased the Guild 45th Theater in the Wallingford neighborhood.

In 1976, the company purchased their first suburban theater, Lakewood Theater in Tacoma, Washington, where they continued to attempt to bring a relaxed, independent theater feel to

customers outside the traditional inner-city market—including free coffee in the lobby, no uniforms for ushers and concessionaires, and a brief introduction before each film by the theater manager. In early 1977, the company acquired the Federal Way Twin Cinema, and also the Fine Arts and Cinema 21 theaters in Portland, Oregon. The chain eventually expanded into owning or operating several Seattle theaters, including the Broadway Market Theater, the Egyptian, and the Harvard Exit on Capitol Hill; the Neptune and Varsity in the University District; the Uptown in Lower Queen Anne; and the Crest in north Seattle.

Collectively, the Seven Gables theater chain was associated with arthouse and independent films, but eventually began first-run films at some locations. At the subject building, films remained primarily in the arthouse category. In the mid-1980s, the Seven Gables theater chain became involved in the Seattle International Film Festival (which had been founded by another film group in the late 1970s), with some of its cinemas participating as venues, including the subject building. Other than an annual movie poster sale at the Seven Gables Theatre, no particular special events appear to have been associated with the subject building.

Over time, the Seven Gables company experienced increasing difficulty in getting the rights to good films to show in the Seattle and Portland markets, which Finley attributed to collusion between certain distributors and cinema chains. In 1984, Finley sued three competing theater chains, eventually winning the case in federal court in 1987. Finley agreed to settle the case for almost a million dollars to avoid appeal, but the experience was so exhausting that he sold his interest in the Seven Gables chain to local investors between 1986 and 1988, and went into the winemaking business.

In 1986, the Neptune and Harvard Exit theaters were sold to Landmark Theatres, a Los Angeles-based small independent theater chain, which at that time owned thirty-nine screens in California, Colorado, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Texas, and Wisconsin. The 1988 purchaser of Finley's remaining shares, Seattle-based Renaissance Entertainment run by Ron Erickson and Craig Palmer, purchased the rest of the Seven Gables holdings, and later that year expanded the company by constructing the ten-screen Metro Cinemas in the University District. In 1989, Landmark and Renaissance merged, continuing under the name Landmark Theatres. In 1998, Landmark was sold to Silver Cinemas, a Dallas-based discount theater chain that controlled more than five hundred screens in eighteen states at the time. In 2000, that company went bankrupt. In 2001, Los Angeles-based Oaktree Capital Management took over and created Landmark Theatres Silver Cinemas to restructure the company, which remained based in Los Angeles and operated 52 theaters around the country, including the old Seven Gables theater chain. In 2003, Oaktree Capital Management was purchased by media entrepreneur and Dallas Mavericks basketball team owner Mark Cuban, and his partner Todd Wagner, who also owned the Hollywood production and distribution company Magnolia Pictures. In 2011, Landmark Theatres operated 296 screens in 63 theaters in 17 states. Today, Landmark Theatres claims to be the nation's largest theater chain dedicated to exhibiting and marketing independent films.

In 2013 in Seattle, Landmark Theatres ceased operations at The Egyptian Theater, which was reopened by the Seattle International Film Festival organization in 2014. Also in 2014, Landmark ceased screenings at the Harvard Exit Theater, in the circa 1925 Women's Century

Club building on Capitol Hill, after the longtime family owners sold the property. In 2015, Landmark ceased operations at the Varsity Theater, which it leased from its owners, the University District Parking Association.

On April 6, 2016, Landmark Theatres nominated its Guild 45th Theatre property in the Wallingford neighborhood before the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board. The Board voted to accept the nomination, but on May 18, 2016, the Board voted against designation.

Tudor Revival Style

The Tudor Revival is one name for an architectural “period revival” style popular from about 1890 into the 1930s in the United States, which referenced an eclectic mix of medieval and post-medieval English building traditions in order to create a picturesque appearance. The name is misleading, as it does not necessarily closely follow the architectural traditions of the circa 16th century Tudor/Elizabethan/Jacobean period in England, which was a time marked by the introduction and reinterpretation of Italian Renaissance ideas and architectural forms into that country. In fact, the term “Jacobean” is often more properly used for high-style or more ornate buildings evoking that period. Instead, the Tudor Revival style draws on vernacular and regional building traditions in England, often broadly and flexibly. For that reason, the Tudor Revival style is also sometimes known by more general-sounding names such as Tudor Composite Style, English Cottage Style, or even by the portmanteau “Tudorbethan.” Additionally, the style shares some characteristics with the English Arts and Crafts style, Collegiate Gothic style, and others.

Tudor Revival was most commonly used for single-family home design, but also small apartments or commercial buildings, and sometimes small institutional or religious structures. Identifiable features of the style may include some combination of the following: Asymmetrical compositions; steeply pitched roofs, often with clipped gables or curved to appear as thatch; cross gables or prominent gables; decorative half-timbering, sometimes carved or ornamented; prominent chimneys; multi-pane windows, often narrow and vertically oriented; entry porches or gabled entries; patterned stonework or brickwork; overhanging gables or second stories; parapeted or Flemish gables.

Examples of the style in Seattle are numerous, but include:

- Hainsworth/Gordon House in West Seattle (Graham & Myers, 1907), a designated Seattle landmark.
- College Inn (1909) in the University District.
- Loveless Studio Building on Capitol Hill (Arthur Loveless, 1930-33), a contributing property within the Harvard-Belmont Historic District.
- Montlake Community Center/Fieldhouse (1935), a designated Seattle landmark.

As originally designed and constructed, the subject building featured many of the identifying characteristics of the Tudor Revival style, but it has been altered over time. Remaining qualities in the subject building which reflect the style include the steeply pitched roof with clipped gables; asymmetrical composition of the east elevation, and to a certain extent,

asymmetrical composition of the north elevation due to the grade change; the decorative bargeboard and half-timbering at the east elevation large gable; brick stair “tower” element with shaped parapet on the east elevation; and the brick and shingle cladding.

Eric C. Rising, architect

According to architectural drawings and newspaper articles, the architect of the subject building was E. C. Rising. He was a member of the University #11 American Legion post—which was the owner, developer, and occupant of the property—so may have been selected as architect for that reason.

Eric Rising was born in 1892 in Stockholm, Sweden, but little could be found about his early life. Census records indicate that his parents and siblings had moved to the United States by at least 1910, when they were living in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and Eric was working as a laborer in a typewriter factory. He studied at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, in 1915, and between 1916 and 1917 worked as a structural engineer for Westcott & Mapes, Engineers, in New Haven, Connecticut. He then served in the Army during World War I. In 1920, he continued his education at the John Huntington Polytechnical Institute in Cleveland, Ohio, and worked for the Osborn Engineering Company in Cleveland from 1919 to 1921. Rising worked on the structural design of Yankee Stadium in New York City while employed at Osborn, a pioneering firm founded in 1892 which during the 1920s built a reputation for major stadiums and sports facilities.

Rising moved to Seattle around 1921. According to his obituary, he worked on the structural design of the Dexter Horton Building (1922-23), suggesting that he may have worked for John Graham & Company, the architects and engineers of that building. From 1923 to 1929 he was employed with the architectural firm Stuart & Wheatley. That firm, which had been established in 1923 by B. Dudley Stuart and Arthur Wheatley, was well-known for apartment buildings and hotels through the 1920s. There, Rising is known to have worked on the design of the twelve-story Bergonian Hotel (1926, today known as the Mayflower Park Hotel) in downtown Seattle. Other projects within the firm at that time, which Rising may have worked on, include the Biltmore Apartments (1923-24) on Capitol Hill, Exeter House Apartments (1927) on First Hill, and the Marianne Apartments (1929) on Queen Anne Hill.

Rising apparently received the commission to design the subject building in late 1922 or early 1923. In March 1923, Rising’s initial design was approved by the client and a rendering was presented in the Seattle Times newspaper. However, it was not until 1924 that Rising passed his licensure exam and was admitted to practice architecture in Washington state. Another project from this period was the Cowen Park Garage/Maxwell Building (1925, altered) for J. L. Maxwell, at 5601 University Way NE in the University District.

Rising established his own practice in 1929, which operated until 1934. His office was located in the White-Henry-Stuart Building of the Metropolitan Tract downtown. Few buildings designed by Rising could be identified for this period. Two are the Roberta Apartments and its mirrored twin, the Carol Apartments (both 1929), at 12th Avenue NE and NE 43rd Street, for owner and builder Clayton E. Feltis. The mirrored asymmetrical Collegiate Gothic style

facades create the appearance of a larger building, spanning two parcels and having full elevations on 12th Avenue, 43rd Street, and the alley side. Feltis was a successful builder and developer in Spokane, who had moved to Seattle in 1926.

Perhaps impacted by the nationwide economic depression underway during the 1930s, Rising closed his practice and in 1934 began working as an engineer-inspector and traveling engineer for the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works / Public Works Administration until 1940. It is unclear what employment Rising had in the early 1940s.

In 1944, Rising began a long career with the young Seattle architecture firm of Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johansen (NBBJ), which had only been founded the year before. Rising remained there for over three decades. A major early project there was the Seattle Bank Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco (1949-52, today a designated Seattle landmark), for which Rising was the project architect.

Other major Seattle projects which Rising worked on during these years included the Seattle Public Safety Building (1949-51, with B. Marcus Priteca and Young & Carleton; destroyed); the I. Magnin store in downtown Seattle (1952-54, with Welton Beckett & Associates; altered); and the Washington Building / U.S. Post Office in downtown Seattle (1958-60, altered). Rising's major projects were not limited to Seattle; they included the Boeing Preflight Facility at Moses Lake, Washington (1954-55); the Pacific War Memorial at Corregidor, Philippines (1957-68); and the International Air Terminal in Agana, Guam (1968). Rising was made a partner at NBBJ in 1960, and retired from the company in 1979.

Outside of work, Rising was active in several organizations, and was apparently accomplished in the sport of fencing. Shortly after his arrival in Seattle around 1921, he became a founding member of the Seattle Fencing Club, whose other founders included the French, Italian, and Mexican consuls in Seattle, and Victor Alonzo Lewis, a prominent local sculptor and teacher. He was also active in the Masons, and was a long-time member of the American Legion, following his service in World War I.

Eric Rising married Tacoma native Dorothy Milne Rising in 1919, who he had presumably met when they were both students at the Pratt Institute in New York City. They and their children lived at 5033 17th Avenue NE in Seattle's University District from 1926 until at least the 1980s. Dorothy was an accomplished artist and teacher, with work in over thirty solo exhibitions. She was frequently featured in the newspapers, and founded the Northwest Watercolor Society and was president of the Women Painters of Washington. In later life, the Risings traveled throughout the world, including Africa and the Middle East. Eric Rising died in 1987, and Dorothy in 1992.

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

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