



The City of Seattle

## Landmarks Preservation Board

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

LPB 333/19

### REPORT ON DESIGNATION

Name and Address of Property: **Sunset Telephone & Telegraph Exchange /  
Queen Anne Masonic Temple  
1608 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue West**

Legal Description: Lots 8-9, Block 26, Laws 2nd Addition to the City of Seattle, as recorded in Volume 1 of Plats, Page 53, in King County, Washington.

At the public meeting held on June 5, 2019 the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Sunset Telephone & Telegraph Exchange / Queen Anne Masonic Temple at 1608 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue West 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.*

### DESCRIPTION

#### *The Setting*

The Queen Anne Masonic Temple is situated on the top plateau of Queen Anne Hill and is within a block of its highest elevation. The site is a mid-block parcel approximately 60' by 120', which is situated between W Garfield and W Blaine Streets on the east side of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue W. A paved, 16'-wide alley runs along the east end of the site. The land was graded for the building's initial construction, with a gradual slope along the building site, and a steep slope along the back of the building. Approximate grades are at elevation 417' at the northwest corner and elevation 409' in the southeast corner.

The subject building is consistent in scale with the residential buildings on the street, although it features a flat roof and commercial form while nearby buildings have hipped or gable roofs, and utilize Craftsmen, Four Square, and Queen Anne styles. The front (west) facade of the

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Masonic Temple aligns with houses to the north. These buildings were constructed in the same decade as the original exchange building: 1616 and 1620 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue W were built in 1908, 1624 in 1900. The two houses to the south, at 1606 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue W and 318 W Garfield Street, also date from 1900, and both have slightly deeper front setbacks off 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The houses to the west, across 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue W, are similar in vintage and scale. Across the street sits the historic 1913 Queen Anne Public Library, at 406 W Garfield Street. This brick clad, gable roof, 9,736 square foot Carnegie building sits on a double-lot and faces south onto a deep front yard. Its site is raised above the sidewalks and supported by low brick retaining walls. The library contains a lower level public meeting room, which is accessed by a wide on-grade walkway on the east.

The Temple is setback approximately 30' from the sidewalk. Its-deep front yard is relatively level, while side yards slope gradually down to the east and south. A concrete walkway leads from the public sidewalk to the front entry steps and landing, along with an accessible paved ramp with steel pipe rails. A narrow north side-yard contains a paved walkway, which accesses a secondary north entry and the back of the site, while the wider south side yard an open space. Concrete steps near the northeast corner of the building accommodate the approximate 3' grade change from the backyard setback. The deep rear yard setback is a paved parking area for up to six cars, and on-grade access to the basement door below the wood-framed back porch. A steel fire escape provides emergency access from the upper floor to a steel stair along the north side of the building. Steps at both ends of the porch lead to the grade.

Landscaping on the site is minimal. The front and side yards contain grass. A few shrubs are found in a shallow plant bed along the front façade and in the rear yard along the north property. Two mature cherry trees, planted in the parking strip, frame the main entry.

### ***The Structure and Exterior Facades***

The approximately 35' by 65' building was constructed to serve an industrial use as a telephone exchange. It was built with unreinforced bearing masonry, concrete foundation walls, and a concrete floor slab. These materials were used in part to carry heavy equipment loads and also for fire-resistance. The first floor framing is a post and beam system of 8x12 heavy timber columns and beams along with 2x12 floor joists set at 16" centers. (The beams have been augmented with bolted steel transfer plates to create a larger clear span.) The exposed framing in the center of the first floor suggests the location of an original stair to the second floor. The second floor and roof are wood-framed with wood joists and beams, along with 2"x4" laminated framing (car-decking).

Floor-to-ceiling heights, as noted in the County Assessor's property record card, are set at 8' at the basement and 14' at the first and second floors. An attic space conceals the roof framing, which supports the flat roof. The entry featured a concrete canopy. At some later date, a 5' by 14' wood-framed deck was constructed at the back. This front (west)wall is 17" thick. It appears to be a heavily painted concrete surface over the brick masonry, while the secondary facades are more utilitarian, consisting of 12"-thick common brick masonry. Exterior bricks are covered by heavy layers of paint on the north, and south facades, while the original brick is



more exposed on the east due to weathering. (In contrast within the building, the interior surfaces of some of the brick walls are exposed.)

The formally composed primary facade faces west toward 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue W. It features deep rustication at the first floor, with 12 bands, each 17" tall emphasized by 2"-deep recesses, and terminating at a cornice band below the second floor windows. This treatment may have resulted from protests by local residents in late 1905 that the original proposed design, using a common brick, was not sufficiently attractive. While they sought a pressed brick finish, the final design resulted in an even more finished appearance.

Above the second floor windows there is a similar cornice band below an emphatic projecting denticulated cornice, capped by a projecting parapet. The rustication is carried around the northwest and southwest corners to appear as quoining on the secondary facades, and into the entry opening. Trim bands and the cornice also wrap the corners. Because of the ample side yard setbacks, the "false-front" aspect of the design is readily apparent, while the solidity of the design gives the building an enduring, institutional quality.

The primary west facade is composed with overall and localized symmetry. The single central entry is emphasized by a 15'-wide, bracket-supported flat concrete canopy, and accessed by three shallow and a landing. The entry door, set in a narrow 14"-deep recess, consists of a tall, nine-panel wood door featuring a carved ship, and an infilled transom panel. Walls within the entry recess are plastered. Masonic symbols – the compass, square, and the letter "G" – are inset into the floor of the landing. On each side of the entry there is a narrow rectangular window opening, approximately 12" by 40". At the upper level there are three larger 44" by 84" windows set above a belt course, which are flanked by two narrower infilled window openings.

Original wood windows were double-hung or single-hung operational types with nine-lit upper sash in larger windows and single glazing panels in the smaller windows. Windowsills are concrete on the primary facade and brick on others. The second-floor windows featured flat heads, which were detailed originally with cast concrete keystones and voussiors. These decorative elements have been covered or partially removed, but a surface impression is visible.

The secondary facades contain similar-sized large windows with low-arched heads, capped by flush rowlock courses cap each opening. Several of these have been infilled as indicated in the historic tax assessor's photo, which shows four original openings at each level in the south wall. The infilled openings on the north and south facades are different, so they may have been altered at different times: those on the south are flush rather than inset. On the north, one original first floor window opening has been revised to provide a secondary entry. The back (east) facade contains a single door at the second floor level, accessed by the fire escape, along with three varied sized windows at the first floor, and a non-original entry assembly with solid panel-type door and large glazed transom.

By 1936, when the assessor's staff photographed the building, the four second floor windows on the south facade had been infilled with brick masonry. Those on the north presumably were

also infilled by this date. Current second floor window openings are limited to those on west façade at the second floor. The original windows that remain have been replaced with aluminum sash with fixed units above hoppers on the west facade. Infill of original window openings and the replacement of those that remain, and the loss of the decorative head treatment have impacted the building's appearance.

### ***The Interior***

The building plan is simple, with a full-width entry hall at the first floor in the first structural bay, which opens to a large social hall, approximately 35' wide and 32' deep. Finishes are held to the demising walls and the original 12"-thick unreinforced brick masonry sidewalls, along the north and south, are left exposed. A non-operating fireplace and bar are placed in the main room at the first floor. Floor heights are lofty, noted at 14' in the County Assessor's records at both floors versus 8' in the basement. The kitchen, finished with a suspended ceiling grid system, is situated in the approximate 16' deep eastern bay, in the southern part, while restrooms are in the northern part. From the kitchen a secondary access door leads to the open porch at the back. A narrow basement extends the full depth of the building along the north side. A sketched plan from 1961 indicates its width at only 8'. The basement is accessed by a single run stair at the northeast corner of the first floor.

A switchback stairway at the southwest corner leads from the first to the second floor. This stair is not original, having been built from a plan by William S. Kelton Co., Structural Engineers, dated February 14, 1961. (Head clearance is compromised at the first landing.) This current stair reportedly replaced an original stair situated in the center of the building.

The current upper floor plan features a vestibule in the front bay, with closets at the north and south sides, along with a single restroom at the north end and a smaller stair leading to a closet and the roof at the south. Finishes and partition locations indicate various phases of remodeling. Paired doors lead from the vestibule to the full-width Lodge Room, which encompasses the balance of the interior. The Lodge Room is arranged in a consistent manner with the ceremonial rooms in other Masonic Lodges, with a separate vestibule entry, largely symmetrical layout and specific compass orientation.

As described by the Grand Lodge of Washington State website, the interior of the Lodge Room is prescriptive in its seating layout for Lodge officers: "the officers of the Lodge are broken down into elected officers and appointed officers. Their jobs are as follows, and their stations in the Lodge itself are illustrated in the following map of the regular Lodge room. (Note, the map is oriented facing south, so every Lodge room has the Worshipful Master seated in the East, which is why it is also called the 'Oriental chair'.)"

### ***Changes to the Original Building***

Historic newspaper articles and other publications about telephone exchanges indicate that the typical telephone buildings contained banks of equipment on perimeter walls in large rooms. The buildings were also fitted with lounges as well as restrooms with space for socializing and resting for the women operators. The current building contains none of these features, though



it contains small restrooms for men and women in the northeast corner of the first floor and a small additional restroom at the second floor.

To serve the Masonic Lodge, the subject building was renovated in the mid-1920s, with its original stair moved from a central location on the north side of the building to the southwest corner. This revision allowed the main floor space to be opened. Ca.1958 snapshots show the Lodge members undertaking the renovations. Some of the work involved structural changes as central structural columns were removed in what is currently the first-floor public social hall, and large steel plates installed along two heavy timber beam lines to transfer the load to engaged posts on the east wall of the room and to a free-standing post and bearing wall along the west wall. The archival assessor's property record card indicates the building had six rooms in 1936, later expanded to ten with the addition of additional restroom(s) and a kitchen.

Some of the current interior finishes in main rooms appear to date from the 1920s or 1930s, such as the polished wood paneling. Others appear newer, such as the wood flooring on the first floor, which has been laid over resilient floor tiles in places, and the wall-to-wall carpet on the upper floor. The kitchen features newer finishes, cabinets, countertops, and appliances, and restroom fixtures are non-original. The heat pump, ducting and ceiling fans are components of recent systems, as are a variety of light fixtures. Some of the painted wood, panel-type interior doors appear to date from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and may be original. Few records have been found at SDCI. Permit records and sketches indicate the following changes:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Changes</u>
1905	Build telephone exchange
n.d.	Alterations for lodge (ca. 1924)
1960	Excavate portion of area under building for basement (no occupancy)
1961	Install stairs to partial basement
6.18.1992	Repair/replace exterior stairs (new configuration); alteration to interior

Queen Anne Masonic Lodge 242 has provided a narrative history and other details about other changes to the building that it made during its nine-plus decades of ownership and occupancy.

- The kitchen was converted from coal-fired in 1938. (While the website does not clarify what was coal-fired, this likely refers to the stove, as there was a boiler in the basement.)
- “In the 1940s and 1950s paneling was placed in the dining room, entry, staircase and Tyler’s room” (location unknown)
- “The Lodge room was renovated in the 1960s and the old ‘hotel style’ lamps replaced. In 1973 dropped ceilings were placed in the dining room, entry and kitchen.”
- “During the early 1980s a chair lift was installed [and] in 1992 and 1993 the wiring and plumbing was replaced, and the rest rooms, kitchen and dining room were remodeled.”
- The Lodge room was renovated in 2006. “The existing walls were taken down and new wall board installed. Existing bench seats and [chairs] were refinished and recovered. Old theatre type seats were replaced with new bench seats and new carpet installed upstairs and



on the stairway. ... Flooring in the entry and dining hall was removed and new hardwood flooring installed.”

The most significant change appears to be infill of window openings and replacement of the sash.

## **SIGNIFICANCE**

The building at 1608 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue West has long been part of the Queen Anne Hill neighborhood. It dates from a period when residential development was well established on the top of the hill. The building is significantly associated also with two distinct aspects of Seattle's social history. It was designed and constructed originally in 1905 as one of the city's earliest telephone exchange buildings by the Sunset Telephone & Telegraph Company. The exchange represents a building a type that emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century as the telephone industry took hold across the nation. For nearly two decades the building provided service to the neighborhood with its switchboard operated by young women. As exchange needs grew with additional customers and equipment, the functions outgrew the building. A new exchange was constructed one block to the south in 1921-22. Masonic Lodge No. 242 purchased the original exchange building in 1924 and quickly adapted the buildings for a new use as a Masonic temple. Lodge 242 owned and occupied the Temple for over nine decades, adding second layer to the building's layered history.

### ***Historic Development of Queen Anne Hill***

Members of the Puget Sound Salish tribes occupied much of what would become Seattle prior to pioneer settlement in the 1850s and their dispersal was the result of pioneer settlement. Settlers claimed the land and in the 1870s and 1880s its dense forests were cleared for timber. In 1883, the south slope and upper part of the hill, on which the subject building is located, were annexed by the City of Seattle. By this date the neighborhood, which was known as Queen Anne Hill, Nobb Hill, Queen Anne Towne, and Galer Hill, contained many estates and large houses on its south slope. Development at the top of the hill, which rose to an elevation of 520' above sea level, soon followed.

During the period of 1880 to 1890, about 65% of the land that makes up Queen Anne Hill was subdivided, largely into single-family lots (typically 30' by 120'), which sold for as little as \$300. Those on the top of the hill were aimed at middle-class buyers, while larger parcels on the south slope continued to command higher prices. An 1890 advertisement notes, for example, a 125'-wide corner for sale for \$2,760/ At this same time large view lots on the south slope and on First and Capitol Hills were sold for \$5,500 and \$10,000.

The neighborhood's growth parallel that of the city as a whole during this time, when Seattle's population of 3,533 in 1880 rose to more than 80,000 in 1890. In response, the city expanded its boundaries northward, and in 1883, the city limits moved north from the Galer Street to McGraw Street on the top of Queen Anne Hill. In 1890, it expanded again, the City annexed the entire hill north of McGraw Street and west of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue W. An 1891 bird's eye map of



the city shows Queen Anne Avenue, and then known as Temperance Street, terminating at the south edge of Highland Drive due to the steep slope. By this date, the hilltop was platted, though but sparsely settled with a few dwellings clustered around the extension of Queen Anne Avenue, along a few streets near Howe Street, and the west to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue N. By 1889, there were sufficient residents on the hill to warrant construction of the W Queen Anne Elementary School (1889-1916), followed by the first phase of construction of Queen Anne High School (1909). More housing followed.

Early development on the top of the hill was limited initially by the lack of water and transportation. In 1899, Queen Anne experienced a drought for several weeks when the two privately held companies that supplied water to the top of the hill experienced maintenance problems and halted water distribution in the area. Angry residents demanded that the city government form a municipal water company. The top of the hill was selected as the site of one of the Seattle's three earliest in-town water facilities, and the first tank was constructed in 1901, at 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N and Lee Street.

In 1902, public transportation advanced when a counterbalance streetcar was inaugurated along Queen Anne Avenue. Just as they did throughout the city, the streetcar routes reinforced urban growth. The top of the hill continued to densify with the construction of more residences, churches and schools, and commercial center continued to develop along Queen Anne Avenue. Four streetcar lines served the hilltop by 1920, by which date most of dwellings in the vicinity of the subject building had been constructed. In 1923, the City passed its first zoning laws, strengthening this residential development.

Parks played an important role in the neighborhood by providing open space amenities and attracting new residents. Donated by local real estate developers and residents, they included the Evergreen/David Rodgers Park (1883), Kerry Park (1907), the Reginald Parson's garden (1956), and the nearly four-mile long, Olmsted Brothers designed tree-lined parkways along the crest of the hill (1906-1916). The West Queen Anne Playfield was built two blocks northeast from the subject building after the city acquired the 7.4-acre property in 1924. The adjacent Queen Anne Recreation Center site was acquired in 1946 and the center built in 1950. In 1972, the playfield was enlarged to the west with funding from Forward Thrust, followed by construction of the Queen Anne Aquatic Center in 1979.

Because of its early development, there are a number of historic institutions on Queen Anne Hill. Those that have been designated as local landmark properties in the vicinity of 1608 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue W include the nearby Seattle Public Library at 400 W Garfield Street (1913 – 1914), and Garfield Telephone Exchange at 1529 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue W (1921-22 and 1929). In addition, there is West Queen Anne Elementary School at 1401 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue W (1894 - 1916, rehabilitated as dwellings in 1982); Queen Anne High School at 201 Galer Street (1909 - 1959, and also rehabilitated as dwellings in 1981); Bethany Presbyterian Church at 1818 Queen Anne Avenue N (1927); and the former Hay School at 201 W Garfield Street (1905 – present). These were cited as potential landmarks in the 1975 Nyberg-Steinbrueck historic survey along with houses at 216 W Galer Street (1900), 402 W Galer Street (1905), and one on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue W (1890). The Masonic Temple was cited along with others as “significant to the city.”



Queen Anne Hill has long been home to many middle- and upper-income residents. According to the 1900 U.S. Census, its housing stock was primarily single-family houses, with 95% of dwellings built between 1899 and 1930. By 1940 homeowners occupied 50-59% of all dwellings. (About half of these dwellings were owned outright and half were mortgaged.) Records indicate that much of the hill remained racially segregated with policies that limited homeownership to white families. Typical residential amenities and services found in most homes included central heat in 80-89% of dwellings and refrigeration in 50-59%. Data from 1900 and 1940 census indicates that the early residents of Queen Anne Hill were typically middle-class and well-educated, with 32% having completed four or more years of college. These residents would have made up strong market for early telephone service.

The neighborhood's history has encompassed many community organizations that residents supported: the Queen Anne Improvement Club, established in 1901, and the Queen Anne Community Club, organized in 1922. In addition, there were numerous other civic and fraternal organizations in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, among them the Knickers, Men's Club, and Women's Single Tax Clubs, the Optic Club, Fortnightly Club, Nomadic Circle (for writers), and Townsend Club (for retirees), as well as the Masons.

### *The Telephone Exchange*

The telephone was invented by Alexander Graham Bell in 1876, who established the Bell Telephone Company in 1879 and the American Telephone & Telegraph Company (AT&T) in 1885. Quickly capitalizing on this, the Bell Telephone Company grew to serve 60,000 customers by 1895. Service in Seattle began in the mid-1880s, with its earliest local exchanges opening in 1878. One of the earliest of the three local companies to serve the city was the Sunset Telephone & Telegraph Company, which was incorporated in 1883. The Sunset Company occupied rented space in the Western Union Telegraph office, but it soon moved into its own building at 2nd Avenue and Cherry Street (the present site of the Alaska Building). Sunset initially provided phone service to 71 businesses and 19 residential customers, with an installation for \$25 and monthly service of \$7 for businesses and \$2.50 for residences.

In 1889 Sunset had 318 subscribers. By the following year, the company served the entire city of Seattle. Its subscriber base rose to 3,612 by 1899, and over 28,500 by 1910. In 1893, the company constructed the first Seattle-Tacoma to Portland toll line, with lines to California to follow. The company merged with three other telephone companies in Oregon and California in ca. 1900 to create a new entity with \$16,000,000 in assets. One record indicates it incorporated in Washington State as the Pacific Wireless Telegraph Company in 1903. While the business was known officially as the Pacific States Telephone Companies, the local firm was still referred to as "Sunset" until at least 1907. (The company changed its name in 1900, but reversed this in 1909.)

The subject building, originally built in 1905, was one of its earliest exchanges; others were on Renton Hill near E Pike Street and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, in Fremont at Aurora Avenue N and N 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, and in South Seattle. The Renton Hill Exchange was later replaced in the 1920s with a new building, which was part of an expansion program that included a new exchange building in South Seattle and new facilities in West Seattle at California Avenue W and in Wallingford



at 4136 Meridian Avenue N. (The Fremont Exchange was removed as part of construction of Aurora Avenue N/Highway 99.) In 1917, Sunset merged with the Portland-based Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company (PT&T), which operated telephone companies throughout the Pacific Northwest. AT&T acquired the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company by 1921. By that date, the needs of the Garfield Exchange had outgrown the building at 1608 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue W, and a new building was planned and under construction one block to the south.

### *Women's Labor History Associations*

The original Queen Anne Hill exchange building is associated in a significant way with the history of the telephone industry, and with women's labor history because of the role of women operators throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This association is in part due to this history of the later telephone exchange building at 1529 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue W, was designated a city landmark in 2016.) However, the role of women as telephone operators extends beyond the two buildings.

Harriett Hanson (Mrs. Valentine Hall) is cited as Seattle's first telephone operator according to a historic photo from ca. 1885 in the collection of the Seattle Public Library (spl\_shp\_22948). According to a transcription on the photo, "Mrs. H.H. Hall opened their first 'central' exchange on May 7, 1883, with a total of 90 telephones." Another photograph from this period shows an ad hoc exchanges in retail store, the so-called Renton Telephone Exchange in Boisseau's Confectionary at 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and main Street, in 1900 (MOHAI photo, shs 16048). Both operators of these small exchanges were women.

The earliest operators hired by telephone companies were typically teenage boys, but they were soon replaced by young women. With few employment options, the women worked under rules with strict discipline, dress, and deportment requirements after having gone through training school to operate a switchboard. Ideal candidates worked "quickly and intelligently," and were hired for their "acuteness of their hearing, for the quickness of their hands and eyes, and above everything, for the poise of their nervous systems." The best operators were described as being "nervy...neither one who is in the least forward nor of too placid a temperament"; and as having "all quickness of perception, alertness of intelligence and even anxiety of nature." Schools emerged, such as the Western Telegraph School in Seattle, that taught the new communication technology. Recruitment and training films, even those dating up through the 1960s. identify the ideal "telephonist" as switchboard were known, as 15 to 51 years of age, relatively tall and in good health. New applicants were tested for hearing, eyesight, and spelling; voice tone, clarity, and diction (to create the "voice with smile"), and new operators were taught the "gentler qualities of unfailing courtesy." Consistent behavior, uniform appearance and voice, punctuality and loyalty were paramount, and operators were given specific statements to make, most notably to inquire, "What number, please?"

Limitations in women's labor roles are reflected in local newspaper help wanted advertisements placed by the Sunset company in 1905, which further identify the expectations of the women employees – that they should be "bright young ladies, between ages of 17 and 25." Similarly, private companies sought operators in service office positions. These same advertisements, for "Help Wanted – Female," represent the limited employment roles open to women in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which included childcare, housekeeping, cooking and other

domestic positions and dressmaking and laundry work for poorer and working class women, and bookkeeping, stenography, nursing and teaching for more educated and middle class women. Much like schools, the phone companies treated their young women employees *in loco parentis*, carefully supervising their behavior, directing their dress and speech, on-site exercise as well as hours of employment.

Because the technology made direct contact possible between these young women and male strangers, it appears that they also served as symbols of romantic interest as evidenced by post cards of the day. At the same time, the women were sympathetic figures in labor disputes. For example, in mid-1900, a dispute between the "Hello Girls" and a local Sunset manager led to a walk-out by 60 women employees, some of whom were considering union representation. This issue, combined with widespread public and commercial complaints about telephone service and costs, led to unsuccessful arbitration between the employees and the company's San Francisco management, and eventually to company concessions and improved working conditions, and pay increases from \$20 to \$35 per month. In this case the women were supported locally by retail company owners and a Chamber of Commerce committee.

By 1907, the Sunset company employed women operators at its eight exchanges in Seattle to handle the estimated 50,000 annual calls. As noted in a prominent article in the September 22, 1907 *Seattle Times* these women were among, "... hundreds of Seattle girls (who) enter the telephone schools established by the companies for the instruction of newcomers unfamiliar with the complicated switchboards. The Sunset ... employs almost 400 girls in its various exchange offices, the largest single office being on Third Avenue.

Persistent gender segregation in the workplace are indicated also in photographic records, such as a caption to 1905 Webster & Stevens of long-distance operations at the Sunset Telephone Company, which notes: "The Sunset Telephone Company hired men to set poles and run wiring, and women to operate the switchboards. All calls were connected by hand through the switchboard, and the women who made the connections soon became known as the 'hello girls.' ... In this photo, taken some time between 1903 and 1906, a group of women telephone operators sit at the long distance switchboard in the Sunset Telephone office on Third Avenue. The women wear typical working clothing for the early 1900s: a light colored blouse and a dark skirt. Each operator listens to both parties through her headphones, and talks through a speaker hung around her neck" (MOHAI photo No. 1983.10.7641). A comparable Webster & Stevens photo from February 25, 1927 shows all male managers in Seattle, making the first transcontinental phone call (MOHAI photo 1983.10.634.1), while a later photo shows only men working at the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company Seattle District Control Center on November 11, 1942 (MOHAI 1983.10.14637.1).

American women worked as switchboard operators throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the peak of their employment at AT&T in the late 1940s, women made up 98% of the company's 350,000 operators. They became empowered as labor laws were passed, and career options expanded. "In response to equal rights legislation in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, telephone companies began hiring women for 'non-traditional' jobs. Women could be installers and technicians, and 'boys' could once again become operators."



## *Fraternal Organizations in America*

Fraternal organizations have been popular in the United States for nearly two centuries, although the concept of fraternal benevolent societies appears as early as 2000 BCE in Greece. These societies developed from guilds in Europe in the medieval period and grew during the industrial revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Membership rose dramatically in the decades around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with more organizations being founded between 1880 and 1920 than ever before or since. Fraternal groups became popular in the United States in part to provide social integration for the over 20 million immigrants to the country during this period. The organizations, particularly those limited to men, were typically restricted to those within an identifiable ethnicity or race. They “offered them fellowship in a socially isolated environment” and some special membership rituals occurred in native tongues. The societies predated most public or private social security programs, and they provided economic security to members by covering the costs of member burials and offering insurance to widows and orphans of deceased members, often at relatively low rates.

Fraternal organization also offered social prestige and could aid in the transition from the lower to the middle class. While some organizations were limited to members of specific religions, others, such as the Grand Army of the Republic, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and American All, emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries to serve similar goals of brotherhood for military veterans of the Civil War, Spanish-American War, and World War I. Creation of new fraternal organizations slowed in the 1930s, in part due to economic conditions as recruitment by many groups slowed. However, most organizations’ membership did not significantly decline until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

While there are significant differences in the goals, rites, and rules of fraternal organizations, there are many similarities. The groups typically keep some organizational practices secret. Many have specific membership levels, often associated with rituals and degrees, and a strict hierarchal structure. Referential names and titles are also common, such as a “court,” “forest,” “aerie,” “encampment,” or “nest” for the meeting hall, or “knights,” “squires,” and typically “brethren” and “worshipful” (or “honorable”) “brother” for members. Most of these organizations are internally oriented, and bound to tradition. They tend to emphasize membership and family, and volunteer charity.

### *History of the Freemasons*

The history of Freemasonry is clouded by its associations with ancient orders. The organization was founded officially in 1717 in London, England, as the *Ancient Free and Accepted Masons*. The Masons are allegedly the oldest fraternity in the world, with the organization reportedly growing out of the medieval social institution of operative masonry (stone masons). In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the organization began admitting non-masons as honorary members, or “accepted masons.” (The roots of the term “free” in the name are unknown, although the organization cites its origins as “legendary history” associated as far back as the building of King Solomon’s Temple. Freemasonry in England was open only to men, as women then had minor status and no civil rights, and it was limited to white men of European descent. Freemasonry was introduced to France in 1835 where there is a similar



organization, *Le Droit Humain*, that offered membership to both men and women. Other lodges were established later for French women and men of color.)

Freemasonry came to the United States soon after its founding. John Moore noted multiple lodges in Pennsylvania as early as 1817. Sources suggest that the model of the public-school system may have derived from early American Freemasonry, and that the American Constitution was influenced by Masons as George Washington was one of the organizations' most famous members. "Freemasonry [also] made its mark on American society by serving as a model for hundreds of other fraternal orders that sprouted throughout the entire North American continent. Charles Merz, writing in 1927, estimated that there were over 800 different fraternal orders in the 1920s. Nearly all of these adopted given what he called, "Masonic features." These features include fraternity, brotherhood, and patriotism. (Masons cite their specific values as a commitment to the common good, and "the commitment between the Brotherhood ... a bond of true friendship ... a safe circle of trustworthy friends," and commitment to "Ethics, Morality and Integrity." In addition, Masonic Lodges have traditionally support charities for children and youth, education, and outreach to families and the elderly.)

Early settlers in Oregon Territory included seven Masonic members who organized their first meeting in 1846 to obtain a charter for a lodge in Oregon City. The Charter, Multnomah Lodge No. 84, was established in 1848. The Steilacoom Lodge No. 8 of the Grand Lodge of Oregon soon followed, along with two additional Lodges in Portland. The first Washington Territory Lodge was chartered in Olympia in 1853. Another soon followed in Grand Mound, along with a Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons for Washington Territory, which was established in 1858. Membership then numbered 112 Master Masons out of the territorial population of 9,000. The first Lodge in King County, St. John's No. 9, established in Seattle, in 1860. Over the subsequent years the organization continued to grow, and currently there are reportedly 168 separate lodges in Washington state.

Within the organization there are three degrees for members: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason (sometimes called the Blue Lodge). Applicants are typically recommended by a Mason, must be approved unanimously by the lodge members. Once a member becomes a Master Mason, there are additional degrees offered through the Scottish Rite (an additional 29 degrees) and/or the York, or American, Rite (9 degrees). The last of these degrees also allows the Mason to join the Order of Knights Templar. There are a number of other fraternal organizations associated with the Freemasons, including the Shriners International.

Several symbols that occur in Freemasonry are associated with architecture or geometry. Masons have occasionally been called the "Knights of Appropriation" because many of these symbols have been adopted; perhaps the most iconic is the all-seeing eye. Icon used throughout the subject building include a square and compass, with a "G" in the center. "The square and compasses stand for spirit and matter, credibility and integrity. The 'G' represents God, and also the word 'geometry.'" This common symbol appears on all Masonic buildings on or above the door, and often in other locations as well.



### ***Prince Hall Masonry***

One of the requirements of joining the Freemasons is that the applicant be “free.” “Operative masonry” in the medieval era in Europe rejected a bondman for membership because he was legally bound to the feudal lord or to a guild. As previously noted, Freemasonry was open to non-masons soon after the organization was founded in England in the 1700s. Despite this, exclusionary traditions persisted. In America, Freemasons translated and interpreted “bondman” as “free-born” or “free and well-born.” Thus, if an applicant had slave status at one time, he was ineligible for lodge membership. This racial discrimination was challenged in 1784 by an applicant, Prince Hall (1738 – 1807), who was born to an English man and a free Black woman. Hall and 14 other free Black men were denied a charter by the white Masons in Massachusetts in ca. 1775. In 1784, the men appealed to the Grand Lodge of England, which granted them a charter. However, as each state is allowed only one grand lodge and Massachusetts already had a grand lodge, the charter was held at the time to be “illegitimate” by most American Masons.

The term “free-born” was altered in 1838 to “free.” However, racial prejudices persisted. Historian Alvin J. Schmidt notes the first “softening” towards Prince Hall Masonry in 1971, in the decade after federal Civil Rights laws had been passed to eliminate discrimination. By this time, however, Prince Hall Masonry was well-established within the African-American community, and integration of lodge organizations did not begin for at least another decade. When it did occur, it was largely by recognition of the Prince Hall Masons as legitimate (“brother”). Despite this status, racial discrimination persists. Although all lodges are theoretically integrated, Grand Lodges in eight states did not recognize Prince Hall Masonry as valid as of 2017. The Prince Hall Lodge, at 306 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue S in Seattle’s Central District, was nominated recently as Seattle landmark. The building, which dates from 1925, was acquired by this separate Masonic order in the 1970s.

### ***Masonic Lodge No. 242 and its Queen Anne Temple***

Permit records from SDCI provide scant information about the building’s construction history. No original permit drawings have been discovered, and permit rolls and records cite only three permits:

- Build, 1905, \$6,000 in estimated cost, Telephone Exchange (Occupancy), permits #36228, and #3-3261, Alterations, Lodge (Occupancy)
- 1960, \$1,500, Excavate por. of area under bldg., for basement, no occupancy this permit, permit #185904
- 1961, \$900, Install stairs to part bsmt., VN (Const. Type), Assembly Hall (Occupancy).

(Later records, which are available online, include the following: 1991-1995, 1997-2006, and 2013 for the conveyance equipment certifications and 2000-2006, 2012-2017 for site equipment inspection reports.)

Masonic Lodge No. 242, or the Queen Anne Masonic Lodge, was established as an organization in the early 1921 by Queen Anne residents and members Lambert Peterson,



Sheldon Smith, Willis Shadbolt, Sheldon Babcock, Floyd Smith, and John Blackford. Until they renovated the former telephone exchange as a temple building, the lodge members met in the Austin A. Bell Building at 2522 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. In 1923 the lodge members appointed a building committee to find a location on Queen Anne Hill, where most, if not all, of them lived. The Garfield Telephone Exchange, which was located at the top of the hill at 1608 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue W, came onto the market in 1924 after the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company moved into a new, larger exchange one block to the south, which it had constructed in 1921-22. The company offered its older building to the masons, setting a price at \$20,000, and “most of the committee and lodge brothers were in favor of buying.” However, the chairman of the building committee, John C. Blackford insisted on waiting. Two weeks later, on August 1, 1924, the Lodge purchased the subject building for \$6,500 (\$95,300 in today’s dollars). Work on the building renovation began less than a week later. It was undertaken largely by lodge members: J.H. Wilson (contractor), Arthur Schramm (legal details), Fred Herbert and Alfred Drenz (plumbing and electrical), and Willis Shadbolt (overseer). Alterations cost \$2,000 (\$29,750 in today’s dollars). The Queen Anne Masonic Temple was officially “accepted” on August 29, 1924.

Several social clubs, internal to the Masons, were established in the 1940s. In 1946, a bowling team was established, followed by the Queen Anne Temple Dance Club two years later, which held monthly dances at the Federal Old Line Life Insurance building (1530 Queen Anne Avenue). In 1949, the lodge members held their first “Old Timers Night,” a gathering of brothers who had been Masons for at least 25 years. This continued until at least ca. 1996.

An undated, handwritten list in the lodge records notes other affiliate organizations that used the building: Eastern Star, a masonic order established largely for women members; Job’s Daughters, an order for girls and young women; the Order of DeMolay, an order for young men; the Order of Ameranth, an organization for Master Masons and their female relatives as well as widows; and the Order of the Rainbow, which focused on leadership training of young women. *Seattle Times* articles from the 1920s through at least the 1950s also note that the building was used extensively by these and other organizations. (This use may have been limited to the main floor rather than the Lodge Room). Peak membership in the Queen Anne Lodge occurred in the mid-1950s, when it boasted over 500 members. As with many other fraternal organizations in the U.S., membership declined in the subsequent decades.

### *The Building Style and Type*

The primary facade of 1608 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue W embodies some features of Neoclassical style, which is often associated with 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century institutional buildings. Characteristics of this style included rectangular plans, flat roofs, symmetrical compositions, stone and brick masonry, and stone trim and decorative elements, such as voussiors, keystones, cornice bands, dentils, and quoining. Balustrades, arcades and engaged or free columns are also typical features were not used in the design of the original telephone exchange building. The flat-roof entry marquee, which is symmetrically placed on the front facade, features decorative brackets with a Classical curve shape.

After fifteen years of use as a telephone exchange, the subject building was acquired and



remodeled by the Masons. Despite its origins, the plan appears consistent with a number of other fraternal halls, with stacking of large interior volumes, and in its sense of enclosure and inward focus. The building height expresses the large interior volumes, with the semi-public social hall at the near grade first floor and the members Lodge Room above.

A review of Masonic lodge and temples buildings in Washington State reveals the wide range of building sizes, ages, and architectural styles. In major cities, such as Tacoma, Seattle, Olympia, Everett, Spokane, and others, the large buildings were typically purpose-built, and they embody formal stylistic qualities of the Classical and Renaissance Revival styles. Photographs of comparable Masonic Temple buildings in Seattle is included in this report. A preliminary survey of on-line photographs of Masonic Temples throughout the state suggests that adaptive use of an earlier building was a common practice for some of the smaller lodges and those in small towns. Some contemporary lodges meet in adapted schools or other institutional and retail buildings, and some share buildings with other fraternal organizations, such as the VFW. What their building has in common is a sufficiently large assembly space for public use, and a separate Lodge Room for members.

### *The Designers and Builders*

The original builder of the Sunset Telephone & Telegraph Exchange remains unknown. No records or newspaper articles have been discovered that reveal the original architect or the contractor. When the Queen Anne Masonic Lodge 242 acquired the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Building, it found an appropriately sized building, structured to support assembly loads and large interior volumes, one of which they renovated to serve as the Lodge Room on the upper floor, along with other changes as noted in the architectural description. When the Masons undertook the building's renovations in 1924, the work involved a builder and lodge member, J. H. Wilson. A renovation project in the early 1960s involved a new stair, which designed by the local structural engineering firm of William S. Kelton Co.

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

Issued: June 18, 2019



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