



The City of Seattle

## Landmarks Preservation Board

400 Yesler Building  
Seattle, Washington, 98104 • (206) 625-4501

LPB-130/78  
June 7, 1978

### REPORT ON DESIGNATION

NAME OF PROPERTY:

The Chelsea Apartments  
620 W. Olympic Place

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

SUPP. PLAT OF G. KINNEAR,  
BLOCK 27, LOT 6 & 7

OWNERS:

W.M. Management Co., Inc.  
3314 Fuhrmann Avenue East  
Seattle, Washington 98102

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DESIGNATION:

On May 24, 1978, the Landmarks Preservation Board conducted a Public Hearing to consider the designation of The Chelsea Apartments as a Seattle Landmark. After receiving evidence and hearing testimony, the Board voted to approve designation of the structure as a Seattle Landmark; those significant features of the structure noted include:

- - the entire exterior of the structure and loggia.

The Board finds that the structure merits designation on the basis of the following criteria of Landmarks Preservation Ordinance 106348:

MORE--

- (2) It is associated in a significant way with the life of a person important in the history of the city, state, or nation; or

Harlan Thomas architect, came to Seattle in 1906, built his own residence on Queen Anne Hill and was responsible for at least five major buildings in that district: The Chelsea, 1907; Rosita Villa Apartments, 1907; Queen Anne Public Library, 1914; Amalfi Apartments, 1916; and the Seventh Church of Christ Scientist, 1926. From 1926-1940 he was director of the School of Architecture at the University of Washington and designed such other significant buildings as the Corner Market Building in the Pike Place Market (on the National Register and recently rehabilitated), the Sorrento Hotel, The Chamber of Commerce Building in downtown Seattle, and the Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority.

The first owner and builder was Charles R. Collins. He was experienced as a mechanical engineer when he moved to Seattle from Philadelphia in 1896 to become general manager of the Seattle Gas & Electric Light Company, which position he held until December 31, 1900, when he went into business for himself. He was treasurer of the Alaska-Yukon Exposition, a position which added to his standing as an acute and able businessman.

- (3) 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; or

The Chelsea was the first family hotel and apartment building to be completed on Queen Anne Hill in Seattle. The Chelsea represents an example of a life-style available to the upper middle class at that time. Seattle as a "city" came of age at the end of the 19th century as a result of publicity and prosperity resulting from the Alaskan and Yukon gold rushes. By 1907 planning was afoot for the 1909 Alaska-Yukon Exposition, and facilities were sorely needed to accommodate the influx of visitors who could hardly be housed in Seattle's waterfront laborers' hotels. The Chelsea was the most distant of a number of apartment hotels developed for this purpose along a major street car line which extended from the railroad stations, through the business district, and on out to the scenic bluffs of Queen Anne Hill; some of these other hotels were the Moore Hotel and Theatre (a register property) and the Del a Mar apartments (city landmark) at the easterly end of Olympic Place.

- (4) It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or of a method of construction; or

The building consists of four stories and basement, and originally boasted a delightful roof terrace with pergolas. The basement level of the building is exposed clinker brick. The first floor is ornamented with brick quoins and brick pilasters and headers framing the windows, contrasting with heavily textured stucco. The upper three floors are stucco. The building is U-shaped with four tiers of projecting bays in the upper three floors on the front, with additional tiers near the rear of the west side. Perhaps the most striking feature is the spatial treatment at the entrance: a three-arched loggia (arches surmounted by stained, leaded glass panels)

(4) (cont.)

through which one gains entrance into the forecourt, and then up flights of steps and into the building. The architect, Harlan Thomas, spent much time in southern Italy and purportedly was a fond admirer of Italian architecture (this is his only apartment/hotel building without an Italian name, i.e., Sorrento, Amalfi, etc.). It would appear possible that he was cognizant of such baroque stair treatments as that of the University in Genoa which, although more complex, provides similar access into the building proper.

The building is described in the 1907 promotional brochure as of English renaissance style; there is little to relate it to such description. Some of the more florid decorative elements, as under the bay window tiers, are more akin to art nouveau. Generally, as with the details of the surmounting balustrades and pergolas, and the entry court, the spirit is much more nearly Roman/Italian.

- (6) 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;

The Chelsea is located on upward sloping property facing southwesterly on Olympic Place West on Queen Anne Hill, and with unsurpassed views (territorial, to use Real Estate language) out over the harbor with views of the islands; of Mt. Rainier and of the Olympics. The structure occupies the entire property; some houses which existed when it was built still stand behind it, but a large modern apartment house abuts it to the east.

The Chelsea and its neighbors are visually prominent as the "architectural wall" for Olympic Place & Kinnear Park.

Issued,

Roberta Deering, Coordinator  
Landmarks Preservation Board  
June 7, 1978

/hg

cc: Peggy Corley, Chairperson, Landmarks Preservation Board  
Mrs. Miriam Sutermeister  
Queen Anne Community Council-c/o Mike Woodin, Chairman  
Queen Anne Historical Society-c/o Ms. Alice Ellis, President  
Peter Lewicki, Attorney