

The City of Seattle

## Landmarks Preservation Board

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

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

LPB-163/80

Name of Property: Immanuel Lutheran Church  
1215 Thomas Street

Legal Description: Homestead Assn., Block 11, Lot 12.

On Wednesday, 02 April 1980 the Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve the designation of Immanuel Lutheran Church as a Seattle Landmark.

The features and/or characteristics to be preserved include the entire exterior of the building and the main sanctuary interior.

Designation is approved based upon satisfaction of the following criteria, Ordinance 106348:

*Section 3.01 (2) It is associated in a significant way with the life of a person important in the history of the city, state, or nation;*

The present Immanuel Lutheran Church sanctuary is largely the product of the energies of the parishes long-time pastor, the late Dr. Hans Andreas Stub. Born to a family of prominent Norwegian-American clergymen and scholars, Stub received his education in Minnesota. Graduating from Luther Theological Seminary in 1903, the 24 year old pastor immediately came to Seattle and accepted the call to serve the Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, then located at the corner of Minor and Olive Streets. The parish grew rapidly in the next few years, and by 1907, the original eleven communicants had grown in number to several hundred. Plans for the present structure were drawn, and construction work was begun in 1907. When the dedication of the completed sanctuary could finally be held in 1912, the congregation and the pastor were honored with impressive ceremonies and the presence of two bishops from the Norwegian State Church. Stub's activities were not confined to parish duties alone. In addition to his responsibilities as a trustee of Pacific Lutheran University (Tacoma), he acted as Lutheran representative to the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition (Seattle, 1909) and the

Pan-Pacific Exposition (San Francisco, 1913). He was buyer for the Lutheran Churches Alaska missions and several times secretary for the Pacific District of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America. One of the founders of the Seattle Seaman's Mission, he remained as chairman of the board from 1917 to 1952. He also served for many years on the Board of Trustees of the Seattle Public Library and was known widely as a writer and lecturer. International recognition for his services came in 1947 when he was decorated with the Order of Saint Olav by King Haakon VII of Norway for having "used every opportunity to create good will between the United States and Norway." His tenure at Immanuel Lutheran Church covered 54 years--the longest pastorate on record to be served at a single parish.

*Section 3.01 (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;*

Immanuel Lutheran is also significant from the standpoint of its social and cultural contributions to the city during its ninety-year history. This church was completed in 1912 and dedicated in a ceremony attended by church dignitaries from Norway. The congregation grew rapidly, necessitating additional facilities. In 1919, a large addition was begun at the west end of the church. It was completed in 1920 and housed an apartment, a choir room, and auditorium, and a gymnasium which, over the years was used extensively by neighborhood youth. The congregation continued to grow over the years until at one point during the fifty-four year pastorate of Pastor Stub, the congregation reportedly grew to a point where five Sunday services were necessary. Although the parishioners have reduced in number due to a shifting of population, the church still continues to play a strong sociological role.

*Section 3.01 (4) It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or of a method of construction;*

Externally, Immanuel Lutheran Church is derivative of Germanic/Scandinavian Protestant churches of masonry construction, with a sturdy and impressive single tower at the entrance end of the main body of the church. The interesting recall of masonry (brick) construction is accomplished in the treatment of the wooden shingles and siding. The interior (sanctuary) is an excellent example of Protestant form.

*Section 3.01 (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 and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood or the city;*


Immanuel Lutheran is one of only two frame church structures remaining in the vicinity of downtown, and is the only such structure still used as a house of worship. Together with St. Spiridon's Cathedral and an old wooden church at 1900 Boren, no longer used for religious purposes, it lends a unique and symbolic presence to an ever increasing backdrop of urban anonymity. In addition to its strong visual prominence and contrast in the townscape, it represents

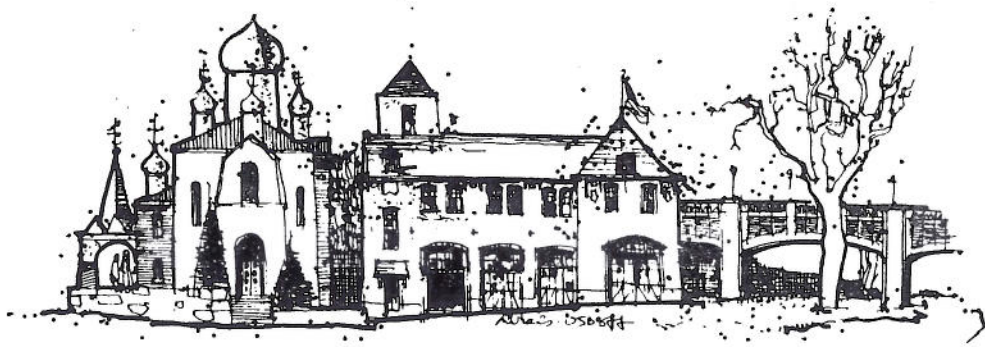
one of the last recognizable elements of the once cohesive community of Cascade.

Report Issued April 07, 1980

Earl D. Layman  
City Historic Preservation Officer

by:

  
Roberta Deering,  
Board Coordinator



**City of Seattle**

Department of Community Development/Office of Urban Conservation

## Landmark Nomination Form

LPB-59/80

**Name** Immanuel Lutheran Church **Year Built** 1907-1912  
(Common, present or historic)

**Street and Number** 1215 Thomas Street

**Assessor's File No.** 246740 - 0455

**Legal Description** **Plat Name** Homestead Assn. **Block** 11 **Lot** 12

**Present Owner** Immanuel Lutheran Church **Present Use** religious

**Address** 1215 Thomas Street

**Original Owner** Immanuel Lutheran Church **Original Use** religious

**Architect** Watson Vernon **Builder** Sylliaason & Sando

**Description:** Present and original (if known) physical appearance and characteristics

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Immanuel Lutheran Church was designed in 1907 by architect, Watson Vernon, in a style reminiscent of Germanic/Scandinavian Protestant churches of masonry construction. It is built entirely of frame construction on concrete foundations. The external form of the church is rectangular and incorporates a massive square based tower and spire at the entrance facade which dominates the composition. A simple pitched roof, broken by clerestories at each side, shelters the main portion of the church. A two and three story addition, built between 1919 and 1920, at the back of the church is covered with flat roofs, but compatibly detailed in the elevations.

The exterior is completely clad in wooden building materials which are handled to suggest masonry forms and details. At the basement level, wide horizontal siding, sealed at the seams with narrow horizontal battens, creates the impression of sharply-defined stone coursing. Above the basement, the exterior is sheathed in regular horizontal courses of shingels which simulate the scale and texture of bricks. Tapered pseudo buttresses, also covered with siding and shingles, separate the bays of the side elevations and are angled at the corners of the entrance facade and tower. Fenestration includes round arched windows in the side aisle bays, and lunettes in corresponding positions in the clerestories. The basement story is fenestrated with pairs of slightly recessed, double-hung, sash windows, one pair to a bay. A striking rose window is placed in the front of the tower at the clerestory level, and shinglework above it is arranged in five concentric rings which simulate a large brick arch. A group of four elongated, rectangular windows and a series of four square windows also open into the front of the tower. Understated entrances to the church are located on either side of the tower, well below the main floor, and concrete stairs, with rounded sidewalls, provide access to each.

The interior of Immanuel Lutheran combines the characteristics of a Protestant meeting hall with those of a nave and side aisle arrangement. The nave space is formed beneath a high, ribbed, barrel vault, supported upon four square piers. The half-round clerestory windows are recessed within the vault between ribs. Adjacent side aisle spaces are identified by narrower widths and lower vaults. Seating at the main floor consists of simple rows of straight pews. Balcony seating, located under the rose window and opposite the altar, curves into all three internal spaces in a manner characteristic of auditorium seating. An altar with a semi-circular rail composed of balusters is formed at the end of the nave, and a choir is situated above the altar in a recessed continuation of the barrel vault. A paneled balcony, with flanking staircases, projects from the choir and a pipe organ and altarpiece are located behind the choir seating. Originally the altarpiece was part of the altar, but was moved to its present location during an early remodelling of the west end of the sanctuary. Pews, wainscoting, fixtures and interior finishes are in an original and well-preserved condition. A social hall is located in the basement level beneath the sanctuary.

### Statement of significance

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Immanuel Lutheran is one of only two frame church structures remaining in the vicinity of downtown, and is the only such structure still used as a house of worship. Together with St. Spiridon's Cathedral and an old wooden church at 1900 Boren, no longer used for religious purposes, it lends a unique and symbolic presence to an ever increasing backdrop of urban anonymity. In addition to its strong visual prominence and contrast in the townscape, it represents one of the last recognizable elements of the once cohesive community of Cascade.

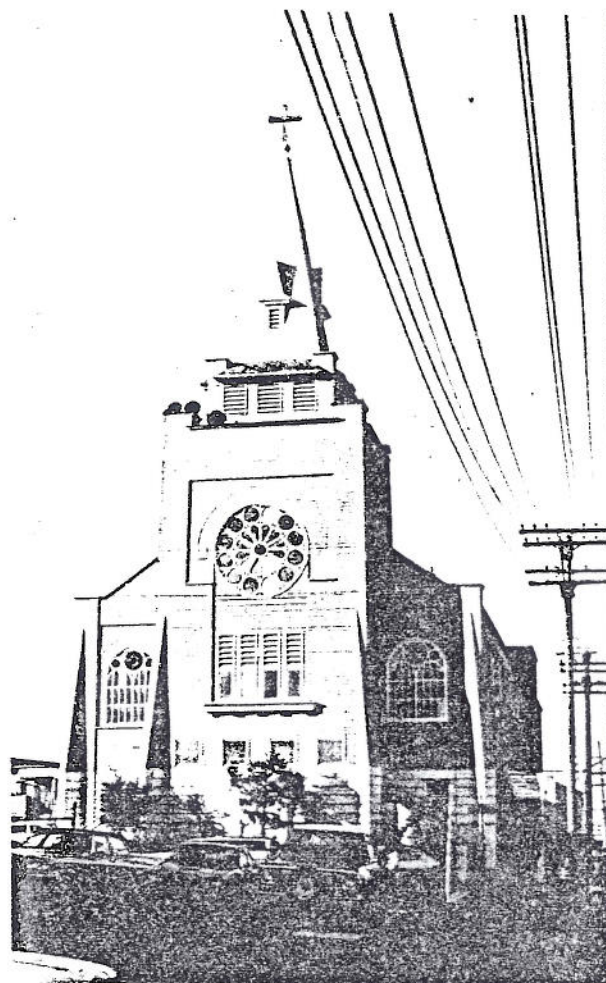
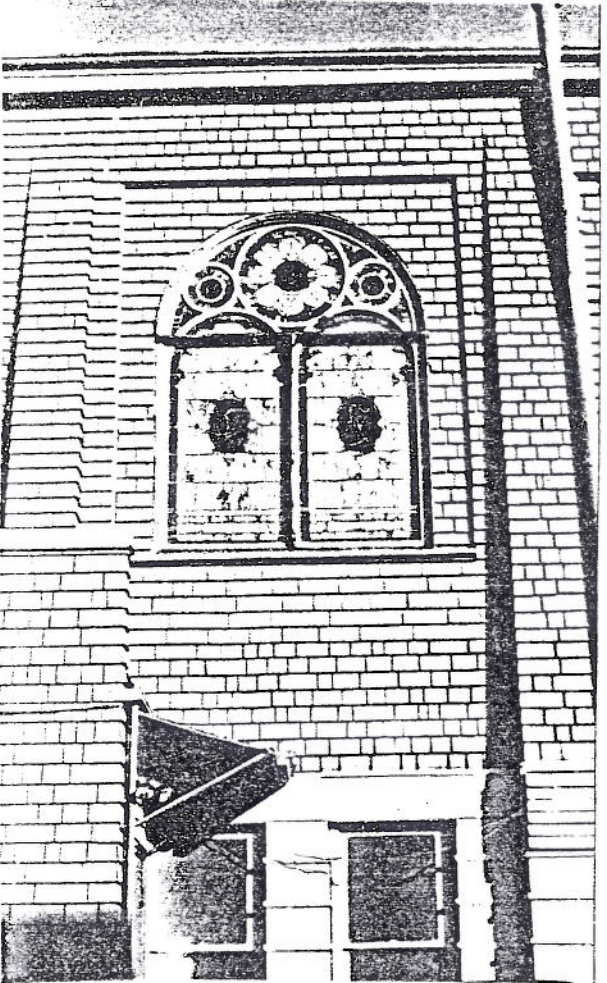
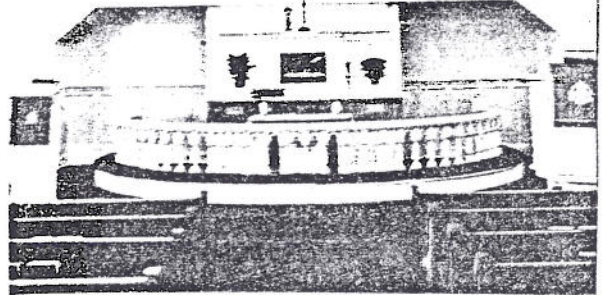
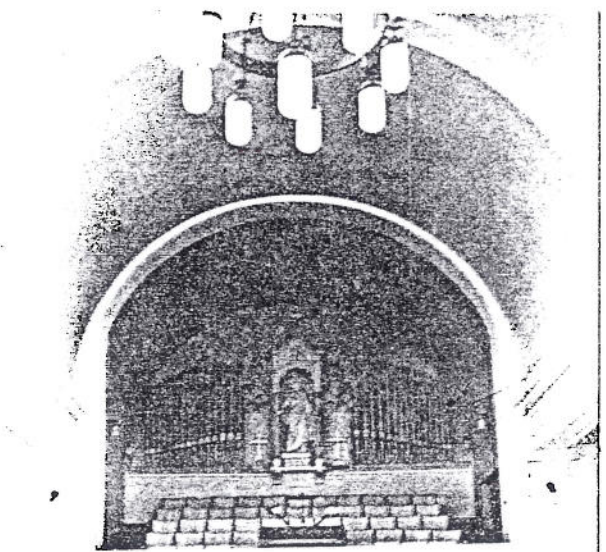
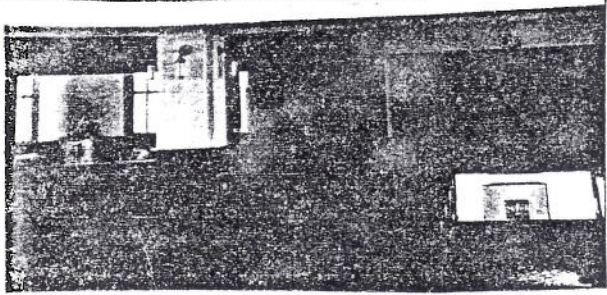
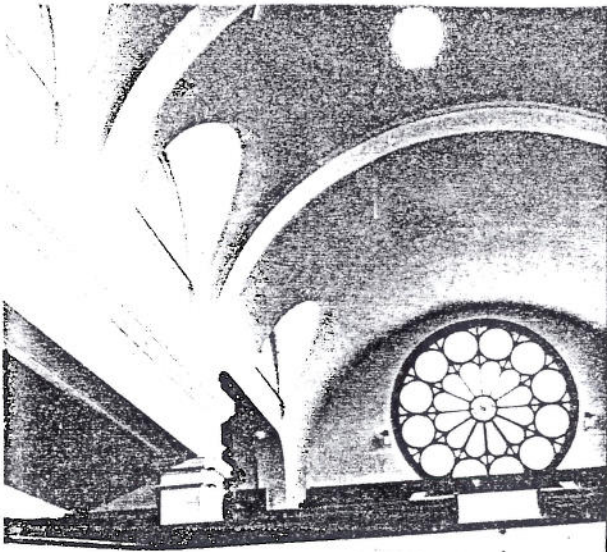
The church was designed in 1907 in a style strongly reminiscent of the Norwegian congregation's Scandinavian and Germanic tradition. Its massive tower base and tapered buttresses convey an impression of stability and weight, while the exterior siding and shingles are handled in imitation of masonry construction. The spire, with its diminutive dormered vents, is also particularly characteristic of Germanic architecture. The architect, Vernon Watson, is also known to have designed a variety of buildings in Washington and Idaho, including the Montesano Courthouse in 1911 and several apartment buildings, schools and residences.

Immanuel Lutheran is also significant from the standpoint of its social and cultural contributions to the city during its ninety-year history. The church was organized in 1890 by thirty-three individuals of Norwegian origins, and their first house of worship was built in 1891, at the corner of Minor Avenue and Olive. Although it was raised in 1899 to accommodate a basement, the congregation quickly outgrew this first home, and in 1907 purchased a lot at a new location on Pontius Avenue. Plans were drawn up in 1907 and by 1908 the basement of the present church was completed, allowing the congregation to hold their first church services in the new building. Construction became delayed until 1911 when a substantial loan was obtained from church officials in the East. The church was completed in 1912 and dedicated in a ceremony attended by church dignitaries from Norway. At the time of its completion it was considered to be one of the largest and finest Norwegian churches on the Pacific Coast. Later, in 1915, a contribution from Andrew Carnegie made possible the purchase of a Kilgen pipe organ. The congregation grew rapidly, necessitating additional facilities. In 1919, a large addition was begun at the west end of the church. It was completed in 1920 and housed an apartment, a choir room, an auditorium, and a gymnasium which, over the years, was used extensively by neighborhood youth. Internal alterations within the sanctuary took place at this time. The congregation continued to grow over the years until at one point during the fifty-four year pastorate of Pastor Stub, the congregation reportedly grew to a point where five Sunday services were necessary.

HANS ANDREAS STUB (1879-1965)

The present Immanuel Lutheran Church sanctuary is largely the product of the energies of the parish's long-time pastor, the late Dr. Hans Andreas Stub. Born to a family of prominent Norwegian-American clergymen and scholars, Stub received his education in Minnesota. Graduating from Luther Theological Seminary in 1903, the 24 year old pastor immediately came to Seattle and accepted the call to serve the Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, then located at the corner of Minor and Olive Streets. The parish grew rapidly in the next few years, and by 1907, the original eleven communicants had grown in number to several hundred. Plans for the present structure were drawn, and construction work was begun in 1907. When the dedication of the completed sanctuary could finally be held in 1912, the congregation and the pastor were honored with impressive ceremonies and the presence of two bishops from the Norwegian State Church. Stub's activities were not confined to parish duties alone. In addition to his responsibilities as a trustee of Pacific Lutheran University (Tacoma), he acted as Lutheran representative to the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition (Seattle, 1909) and the Pan-Pacific Exposition (San Francisco, 1913). He was buyer for the Lutheran Churches Alaska missions and several times secretary for the Pacific District of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America. One of the founders of the Seattle Seaman's Mission, he remained as chairman of the board from 1917 to 1952. He also served for many years on the Board of Trustees of the Seattle Public Library and was known widely as a writer and lecturer. International recognition for his services came in 1947 when he was decorated with the Order of Saint Olav by King Haakon VII of Norway for having "used every opportunity to create good will between the United States and Norway." His tenure at Immanuel Lutheran Church covered 54 years--the longest pastorate on record to be served at a single parish.

Dennis Anderson , 1979  
U.W. Special Collections





Photographs:



Submitted by: Office of Urban Conservation

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Historic Preservation Officer