



The City of Seattle

## Landmarks Preservation Board

700 Third Avenue • 4th floor • Seattle, Washington 98104 • (206) 684-0228

### REPORT ON DESIGNATION

LPB 251/98

Name and Address of Property: **M. V. Malibu**

Legal Description:

Coast Guard Registration No. 225799

At the public hearing held on July 15, 1998, the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the M. V. Malibu as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following standards for designation of SMC 25. 12.350:

- D. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or of a method of construction.*
- E. It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder.*

### DESCRIPTION

Malibu was constructed by the N. J. Blanchard Boat Company at their yard located at 3201 Fairview North on Seattle's Lake Union from plans drawn by Leslie Edward (Ted) Geary. It was launched on May 28, 1926.

Malibu is 100' 6" LOA, 96' LOW, 19' 6" beam, and 7' 3" draft. It was built of heavy 6x10 Douglas fir sawn frames on 16" centers with the upper futtuck sections (the individual sawn sections of the frame), which are more subject to dryrot, constructed of Alaska yellow cedar. Planking is 2 1/2" Port Orford cedar. It was flushed decked with decking of 7/8" teak over heavy yellow cedar. The Malibu exhibited more shear (the downward curve of the deckline from fore to aft) than most of Geary's designs, a feature that has been admired and commented upon. The hull has a fantail stern, characteristic of the larger yachts of the Twenties.

Geary designed the vessel to have a utilitarian look with the original superstructure constructed of Douglas fir and painted white. Only some trim, the doors, and window sash were bright finished teak. The outboard metal work including the stem band, rudder, shoe, struts, propellers,

and propeller shafts were made of bronze. Malibu was originally equipped with two four-cylinder 120 horsepower Washington-Estep diesel engines built by Washington Iron Works of Seattle. The Malibu originally cruised at 11 knots with a cruising range of approximately 4,000 miles.

Malibu was originally equipped with four boats on davits (a swiveling metal arm with a pulley wheel at the tip) on the canopy deck, including an 18-foot launch, and 18-foot lifeboat, a dinghy, and a skiff. Tall masts were located at the forward and aft ends of the deckhouse.

The wheel house was originally elevated only slightly above the deck. The captain's quarters were located directly behind the wheel house. Continuing aft was a full-length fidley (an air and light shaft) that provided access and light to the engine, followed by the galley. Amidships and adjacent to the galley was the dining saloon. The saloon was finished in teak and equipped with a fireplace and reproducing piano. All other parts of the deck house and below deck quarters were painted. The aft end of the deckhouse was originally the owner's stateroom with a full bath.

An exterior door on the portside near the aft end of the deck house opened onto a companionway that led to below-decks guest quarters, consisting of two double and three single staterooms and baths. The crew's quarters, with six bunks, bath, and lounge, were located forward in the forepeak and accessed via a sliding hatch and companionway.

Significant alterations to Geary's original design were undertaken in 1973 at The Boatyard, located at the original Blanchard yard. The most significant exterior change was the addition of a wheel house to the top of the canopy deck. The reconfigured profile is similar to Geary's Blue Peter, built at Lake Union Drydock's yard in 1928. A single mast forward of the stack replaced the original twin masts and two contemporary launches replaced the original four boats. The aft canopy deck was reinforced and is now used as a sun deck. Low metal bulwarks (solid low railings or guards) have been added to the bow altering the shearline.

The deckhouse now contains a starboard (right side looking forward) passageway along its entire length. A stairway leading down to the crew's quarters is located at the forward end of the passageway. A library and bath are located in the original wheel house. The original owner's stateroom has been converted to a lounge with a portside (leftside) stairway leading down to the re-configured staterooms. It was re-powered at that time with twin Cummins turbocharged NT335s.

The current owners extensively rebuilt the stern quarters in 1996. In March 1998, alterations to the hull and running gear were made to increase maneuverability and seaworthiness. These alterations include the addition of a bow thruster, two pairs of stabilizing fins, and replacement of the original single rudder with a paired stainless steel rudder. The original bronze propellers and shafts were replaced with stainless propellers and shafts.



## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Malibu is significant to the Northwest and its maritime heritage in that:

- *It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or a method of construction.* – Malibu represents the culmination in evolution of the pre-World War II motor yachts. It was built of the finest material, including Douglas fir, Alaska yellow cedar, and teak trim, and It incorporated the latest in marine technology. Stylistically, Malibu embodies the “classic” of this period, a sleek, traditional appearance. Yachts designers would abandon the stately proportions and classic detailing in the late thirties for the rounded-off or teardrop-shaped streamline forms that were appearing in automobiles, aircraft, and passenger trains.
- *It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder.* – Malibu was the last collaboration between two of Seattle’s maritime industry leaders, the designer, Leslie Edward (Ted) Geary; and the boat builder, Norman J. Blanchard. Their contemporaries and customers considered both paramount in their respective fields. Their vessels are widely recognized and admired today. The survival and high degree of maintenance of a vessel such as Malibu is a testament to its quality.

### Background

Leslie Edward (Ted) Geary, reputedly one of the Northwest’s finest naval architects of the first half of this century, designed Malibu for Mrs. Kay Rindge and her daughter Mrs. Rhoda Adamson of Los Angeles. At the suggestion of W.J. Hole, Mrs. Rindge’s son’s father-in-law, Geary had the vessel built by the N.J. Blanchard Boat Company located on Seattle’s Lake Union. In 1923, Hole had commissioned his 115’ motor yacht Samona with Geary as the designer and Blanchard as the builder. Malibu was launched from this yard on May 28, 1926, and completed for \$85,000. The press described it at the time as “palatial.” This was to be the last collaboration between Geary and Norman J. Blanchard, owner of the Blanchard yard.

Although based in Southern California during her early life, Malibu often cruised north to British Columbian waters. Malibu Falls in Princess Louisa Inlet is named after the vessel. Mrs. Rindge and Mrs. Adamson kept Malibu until 1937. It was brought back to Seattle when purchased by Mrs. Electa Duthie, wife of the Seattle industrialist, John Duthie. Malibu was soon sold to Ethel Hamilton, a partner in the investment and securities and real estate firm of Hughbanks, Inc.. Thomas Hamilton of Los Angeles purchased Malibu in 1947, and It returned to that city. Leslie Thuet, also of Los Angeles, then purchased the vessel and kept her until 1973.

Pacific Factors of Seattle brought Malibu back to the Northwest and was responsible for the extensive refitting completed in 1973. It was acquired in 1989, by a consortium of three Seattle businessmen headed by the late Jerry Schie, who used Malibu for charters. After the death of

Schie in 1991, Majestic Alaska Charters obtained the vessel. However, the company was unable to meet financial obligations and the United States Marshal seized the vessel in April 1993. Her current owners, Totem Resources, purchased Malibu at auction on October 15, 1993.

Totem Resources has restored the vessel to “bristol” (considered excellent) condition within her 1973 re-configuration. The company presently uses the vessel for private cruises for invited guests.

*Malibu* represented the heyday of early pleasure boating in the Northwest, and Seattle is widely recognized as a maritime city with more boats per capita than any other city in the U.S. The *Malibu* was part of a privileged lifestyle enjoyed by few.

### **Leslie Edward Geary**

Leslie Edward (Ted) Geary was born in 1885, in Atchison, Kansas, moving to Seattle with his parents in 1892. Geary exhibited an attraction to water-related activities. In 1899, at age 14, Geary designed and built with a friend the 24' centerboard racing sloop *Empress*. Four years later, with his lifelong friends, Dean and Lloyd Johnson, Geary designed and built *Empress II*, another 24' centerboard racing sloop. With Geary at the helm, it was never defeated in local races. While a sophomore at the University of Washington, Geary designed *Spirit*, a 42' LOA racing sloop for the Seattle Yacht Club. *Spirit* successfully challenged the Canadian Yacht *Alexandra* for the Dunsmir Cup in 1907. Geary's success attracted the attention of several prominent Seattle businessmen who, at Geary's suggestion, financed his education as a naval architect at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Geary designed several more competitive sailing vessels and crewed on many others in his long career. Among his designs are *Sir Tom*, an “R” class boat that dominated the racing circuit along the West Coast for three decades; *Katedna*, later *Red Jacket*, a 62' LOA schooner which would enjoy unrivaled success in Northwest racing; and *Pirate*, another successful “R” class racer. In 1928 Geary would design the popular ‘*Flattie*,’ a one-design sail trainer that is now known as the Geary 18.

Geary started his professional career designing commercial vessels, including *Chickamauga*, the first diesel-powered tug in the United States, commercial and fishing vessels, and during World War I, large 330' wooden-hulled freighters.

Geary also designed fast commuter yachts such as the 55' LOA *Geoduck* built in 1913 by the Johnson Brothers and Blanchard for W.G. Norris and the 43' LOA *Winifred* built in 1921 by the N.J. Blanchard Boat Building Company. His larger yachts beginning with the 100' LOA *Helori* built in 1912 by the Johnson Brothers and Blanchard for O. O. Denny, and the 82' LOA *Sueja* built in 1919 at the Tregoning yard for Captain James Griffiths, would lead to the classic large yachts of the Twenties and Thirties. These include:



- Wanda – 90' LOA, triple screw cruiser built in 1922 by the N.J. Blanchard Boat Building Company for C.D. Stimson. It is presently based in San Francisco.
- Samona – 115' LOA, built by N.J. Blanchard in 1923 for California oil magnate and developer W. J. Hole. Present status unknown.
- Westward – 86' LOA, built in 1924 by J.A. Martinolich at Dockton for Cambell Church. Westward is presently based in Seattle.
- Sueja III – 122' LOA, built in 1926 at owner Captain James Griffiths' own yard in Eagle Harbor. Now named Mariner III, It works seasonally out of New York and Florida as a charter yacht.
- Malibu – 100' LOA, built in 1926 at N.J. Blanchard's yard for Mrs. Kay Rindge Mrs. Rhoda Adamson. Malibu is currently owned by Totem Resources of Seattle and is used for private company cruises.
- Principia – 96' LOA, built in 1928 for San Francisco yachtsman L.A. Macomber by Lake Union Drydock Company. It was the only single screw version of the four 96' sister ships. Principia recently underwent major upgrades and restoration. It is now owned by Independence Seaport Museum of Philadelphia.
- Blue Peter – 96' LOA, built in 1928 for Seattle architect John Graham by Lake Union Drydock Company. It was purchased in 1947 by H.W. M<sup>c</sup>Curdy, presently remains in the M<sup>c</sup>Curdy family, and is based in Seattle.
- Electra – 96' LOA, built in 1930 for A.W. Leanard, then president of Puget Sound Power and Light, by Lake Union Drydock Company. It currently charts out of Newport Harbor, California.
- Canim – 96' LOA, built in 1930 for Col. C.B. Blethen, owner of the Seattle Times, by Lake Union Drydock Company. Canim is presently based in the Northwest.
- Infanta – 120' LOA, a steel hulled cruiser built in 1930 for actor John Barrymore by the Craig Shipbuilding Company of Long Beach California. Known as Thea Foss since her purchase by Foss Maritime of Seattle in 1950, It is currently mothballed in Seattle.
- Samona II – 147' LOA, a steel hulled long range cruiser built in 1931 by the Craig Shipbuilding Company for W.J. Hole.
- Stranger – 135' LOA, built in 1938 for Capt. Fred L Lewis, by Lake Union Drydock Company. It was used secretly by the Office of Strategic Services for charting the Pacific

region prior to World War II. It was owned later by the Scripps Institute and is reportedly derelict in Beaumont, Texas.

Geary moved to Southern California in 1932, attempting to attract additional wealthy clients. But during the Depression, Geary received few commissions, the single exception being Stranger. By the time he went to work at Craig Ship Building Company in 1939 to conduct stability testing during World War II, his career was near its end. Geary died on May 19, 1960.

### **Norman J. Blanchard**

Norman J. Blanchard was born in 1887 in New York City, and moved to Seattle with his parents in 1888. He left high school to apprentice with Mark Johnson at his boat shop at Leschi. Home projects in these early years included several small rowing and sailing craft, culminating in a 36' sloop built in his father's barn in 1907. In 1905, Blanchard teamed up with Dean and Lloyd Johnson to form the Johnson Brothers and Blanchard Boat Building Company on the Duwamish River near Georgetown. There they built several vessels in collaboration with their designer friend, Leslie Edward Geary, including the 48' LOA schooner Gwendolyn built in 1907, and the 100' LOA canoe stern cruiser Helori, built in 1911 for O.O. Denny. This team was also responsible for building Sir Tom, a lightning fast "R" class sloop, and the 130' LOA river freighter Kuskokwim River, for John Graham in 1915.

The Johnson brothers relocated to Canada and Blanchard worked for Skinner and Eddy Corporation building steel ships during World War I.

When the war ended in 1918, Blanchard took over building the 80' LOA Geary-designed express cruise Sueja at the Tregoning yard. Blanchard started his own yard in 1919. The N.J. Blanchard Boat Building was located at the foot of Wallingford Avenue on Seattle's Lake Union. In this location Blanchard built several Geary-designed boats including the 43' LOA fast express cruiser Winifred, the 62' LOA schooner Red Jacket, the 65' LOA schooner Aafje, and the 92' LOA motor cruiser Wanda.

After Geary had designed the 115' LOA Samona for California oil magnate and developer W. J. Hole and Blanchard had signed the contract to construct the vessel, the yard was destroyed by fire in 1923. Blanchard rented space in the Tregoning yard to build Samona. During this time Blanchard refused Geary's request to provide him a sales commission on future projects. After this Geary and Blanchard only collaborated on one additional large project, the 100' LOA motor yacht Malibu built in 1926.

Blanchard purchased property on the northeast end of Lake Union and built another shop. At this location in 1924, Blanchard launched the Northwest first stock design cruiser, the 36' "Standardized Raised Deck Hunting Cruiser," setting the stage for the well-known Lake Union "dream boats" of the Twenties. Other boats constructed here included the first Geary-designed "Flatties" built for the Seattle Yacht Club in 1928 and the Blanchard "Star Knockabouts," built from the early Thirties into the late Forties.

Blanchard's son Norman C. Blanchard joined the firm full time in 1931 and continued the business after Blanchard died in 1954. Norman C. sold the business in 1969. It is estimated that the Blanchard yard produced between 1,500 and 2,000 finely crafted boats during its 50 years of operation.

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

**The exterior of the vessel.**

Issued: July 27, 1998



Karen Gordon  
City Historic Preservation Officer

KG:bjf

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