



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

700 Third Avenue · 6th floor · Seattle, Washington 98104 · (206)684-0228

LPB 266/89

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

Name and Address of Property:
Pacific Medical Center/former U.S. Marine Hospital
1200 12th Avenue S.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: All of Blocks 4, 5 and 8 of Golf Heights Addition to the City of Seattle as recorded in Volume 24 of Plats, page 12, records of King County, WA, together with portions of S. Norman St., 13th Ave S. and alleyways vacated under Ordinance 59530, and along with a portion of S. Judkins St. vacated under Ordinance 62723, less that portion of said Block 5 dedicated for general street purposes.

At the public hearing held on August 16, 1989, the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Pacific Medical Center/former U.S. Marine Hospital as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following criteria of Ordinance 106348:

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;

Section 3.01(4): It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder; and

Section 3.01(5): It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder; and

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.

DESCRIPTION

The Pacific Medical Center form a harmonious, intact Art-Deco campus within the more traditional residential neighborhood of North Beacon Hill. Originally built in 1932, the basic plan include the main medical building built to form the north enclosure of a lush commons or green. The green forms a mid-point terrace between the upper residential buildings and the lower main

medical building. Enclosure to the south and west are formed by six residential buildings in three basic designs. To the east a parking garage, built in 1985, provides the last wall of this "outdoor room." The residential buildings were originally erected as quarters for officers of the institution but now provide office and laboratory space. They are grouped in an "L" shaped layout around the commons. These two-story masonry buildings feature distinctive Art-Deco details that are in keeping with the motifs and materials of the main building. The residential buildings have particularly handsome brick details, floral terra cotta panels, chamfered entrances and dormers, copper-roofed bay windows, and hipped copper roofs. Many of the entrances to the buildings were treated differently to give each a separate character and identity. The grounds of the complex are lit with the original, chamfered lanterns decorated with chevron reliefs. Broad lawns, terraces, mature trees and shrubs provide a pleasant park-like setting, with spectacular vistas of the city, Puget Sound, and the mountains. Surrounding the entire campus is a finely detailed wrought iron and concrete fence.

The main structure not only provides the main focal point for the campus but is one of the most significant visual landmarks in Seattle. Its features were heavily influenced by the Art-Deco movement that was prevalent of the period. The tower's design emanates from previous Art-Deco buildings built in the east; inspiration can be clearly seen in structures such as the Panhellenic Tower built in New York City. A strong play with light and shadow, jutting crags, and receding terraces were all typical Art-Deco design elements; these design elements were skillfully employed in the design of this complex.

The main building is built of reinforced concrete faced in brick, is designed in the form of an "H", with sixteen-story tower flanked by "T" shaped wings. The wings consist of two thirteen-story elements on either side of the tower, joined at right angles to twin seven-story end units. The skyscraper form was determined initially by economy (the need for centralization of food, laundry, supplies, etc.) and by the psychological need of the patients to have light, well-ventilated accommodations. Although the building is approached from the north, the main entry and the majority of patients rooms face south. The structure is located at the north edge of the green, with patient rooms well above ground level in order to provide isolation from street noise.

The designers of the hospital sought to unify the main building with the subordinate structures by using consistent decoration that was not historical in content. The Art Deco motifs which appear throughout the campus, particularly in the combining of verticals and horizontals, and the use of chevron and chamfered ornamentation, are the idiom of the new machine age technology, of jazz rhythms, and of Cubist art. The hospital displays sumptuous textures, bright colors, precise linework, and fluent rhythms. It has some of the richest and most varied brick decoration of any building in the City as well as in the Northwest. Various shades of light brick are used in combination with black and red-toned brick in spandrels panels and horizontal striping; extended red terra cotta sills form ornamental bands. Chevron motifs and

chamfering, as well as basket-weave patterns in brick and terra cotta, dramatize the facade, particularly in the upper floors. These designs are also adapted in the handsome bronze and etched glass entranceway into the main medical building, the lobby, waiting room, elevator doors, flooring, ceiling plaster work, and lighting fixtures. The production of these spaces is yet another example of the collaboration of many diverse artists and craftspeople.

The tower itself is characterized by deeply recessed woven brick spandrels between three projecting vertical piers. The symmetrical extensions to the tower portion have slightly wider piers and similar tapestry brick designs in their spandrels. The side wings have no vertical piers. On the contrary, these wings have a strong horizontal emphasis: rust-colored brick, black brick linework, and red terra cotta edging provide continuous ornamental bands which are complemented with two stacked sets of chamfered corner windows that soften the edges of the building. This historical massing gives the hospital a sense of grounding -- of being tied to the earth while at the same time soaring skyward. The massing and articulation make the former United States Marine Hospital a powerful symbol in the Seattle landscape.

Since the main medical building and residences were built in 1932, a series of changes and additions have been made to the main medical building as well as the campus. In 1953, a three-story annex (Section 'F') was added to the east end of the main building. It was designed to house outpatient clinics. Along with earthquake repairs, the twin stair towers were constructed in 1975 on the south face of the main medical building.

In the northwest area of the campus are five metal buildings. Built to house everything from laboratories to an incinerator, these were built in 1979 by the U.S. Government prior to the transfer of the facility to the PDA. A laboratory and primary care addition were added in 1980 to the northeast of the main building. As part of this work, three brightly painted free standing stacks were constructed to the north of the addition. Lastly, a new emergency room addition was constructed to the south of the 1953 addition in 1985. At the same time a new, free standing 87,000 square foot parking garage was built to the south of the east entry. The parking garage was designed to complement the other campus buildings in material and detailing.

As with any modern medical facility, much has changed on the interior. With the reuse of the residences as offices and laboratories came wholesale revisions. In many cases the double residences have been converted into a single office use with only one entry door remaining active. The interior of the tower has seen many alterations over the years as medical technology has evolved. However, the main entry, waiting area, elevator lobbies up to the registration entry are all noteworthy and of special significance. The rich use of materials to include travertine, bronze, etched glass, plaster details, and fine Art-Deco detailing all add to this impression. Beyond the elevator doors the modernized clinics begin.

SIGNIFICANCE

The exterior of the 1932 buildings, the main medical building lobby interior, and the campus of the Pacific Medical Center combine to form a unique Seattle landmark property. The property qualifies for landmark designation under criterion 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Criterion 3 - The Pacific Medical Center/U.S. Marine Hospital has played an important role in the cultural heritage of Seattle and the region.

The U.S. Marine Hospital in Seattle had its origin in Port Townsend. The Port Townsend Marine Hospital was under private ownership, providing services to beneficiaries on a contractual basis until 1883, when its ownership was assumed by the U.S. Government. The facility burned down a few years later, and in 1896 a new 80-bed hospital was constructed on the same site. It remained as the U.S. Marine Hospital for the Northwest United States until the hospital was moved to Seattle. As early as April 1919, Seattle has anticipated the relocation of the facility. Land for the building was donated by the city on October 22, 1928. A plaque hallmarking this event was placed in the main lobby of the tower. Completed in late 1932, the doors were not finally opened until January 4, 1933, and the first patients were admitted in February of 1933.

The original bed capacity for the United States Marine Hospital in Seattle was 312. Like other U.S. Public Health Service hospitals, the Seattle facility served about 40 categories of beneficiaries, including Coast Guard personnel officers of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Indian Health Service referrals, and Department of Defense employees. As an accredited institution, the United States Marine Hospital in Seattle had an extensive training program for specialities in the health care field. It has been affiliated with the University of Washington School of Medicine as well as numerous professional and technical schools in the Seattle area.

By 1953, the hospital's name was changed to the U.S. Public Health Services Hospital, and a new 'T' shaped addition housing outpatient laboratory and diagnostics was built. The hospital's role expanded to also care for low income persons, American Indians, and Indochinese immigrants, as well as the Beacon Hill and International District communities.

In response to the federal government's plans to close the Public Health Service system in 1981, a massive community effort was mounted to save the hospital for Seattle. The federal government transferred control to a 15-member governing council known as the Public Health Hospital Preservation and Development Authority (PDA). In 1985, the PDA council formally changed the Authority's name to Pacific Hospital Preservation and Development Authority.

At the same time the PDA was created, the hospital medical staff established a nonprofit corporation called Pacific Health Associates of Seattle (PHASE). PHASE was the first nonprofit group practice begun in the State of Washington. In 1985, another

nonprofit corporation was created as part of PMC. Pacific Health, a health maintenance organization, began offering prepaid medical care plans through employers. A system of neighborhood clinics was established to support Pacific Health and to bring health care closer to PMC patients.

Since the transition in 1981, Pacific Medical Center has made a dramatic shift in the way it provides health care. PMC has changed from a regional referral center, to which many patients came from distant sites in the Pacific Northwest, to a community medical center serving patients largely from King and Snohomish counties. This shift, coupled with a national change in the way health care services are delivered, resulted in an enormous growth of PMC's outpatient services and a commensurate decline in inpatient services.

Hospitalizing patients in a local hospital with available beds was decided to be the best solution of PMC's inpatient needs and a wise use of community health care resources. In 1987 Pacific Medical signed a five year contract with Providence Medical Center that establishes Providence as the preferred inpatient care provider for PMC Beacon Hill and military patients under the care of their PMC physicians.

From its earliest beginnings to the present, Pacific Medical Center/former U.S. Marine Hospital has played and continues to play a significant role in the cultural heritage of both Seattle and the region.

Criterion 4 - The design of the Pacific Medical Center embodies the distinctive, visible characteristics of the Art-Deco architectural style.

The Art-Deco movement was a conscious effort to break with past architectural traditions. It was a successful attempt to chart a new, radically modern course for design. Rather than a programmatic vocabulary, Art-Deco was basically a massing, form and decorative movement. The Art-Deco, low-relief geometric language was used for many categories of design. Employed were the use of multiple horizontal and vertical parallel lines, chevrons, zig-zags, stylized vegetation, and many other motifs - many linear in nature. Instead of looking to classical cultural sources for inspiration designers turned to other cultures. Egyptian, oriental, and Meso-American stylized details were developed. These details were applied to panels above doors and windows, crowning decoration at the tops of buildings and details at corners and piers. Concrete, smooth-faced stone and metal were characteristic exterior materials. Accents with etched glass, terra-cotta, cast and smooth-faced stone, and vivid color all helped to establish the style. The hall mark of the Art-Deco movement was the collaboration of sculptors, painters, architects craftsmen, and designers. This led to a unified, harmonious buildings both on the interior and exterior.

The Pacific Medical Center is one of Seattle's handsomest examples of Art-Deco architecture, comparing favorably with the Northern Life Tower with which it shares a strong vertical emphasis, and

the Exchange Building, also designed by John Graham. The exteriors of the main and subsidiary buildings have been preserved with very little modification; along with the landscaped grounds, they provide a special environment which should be recognized and protected. The hospital has additional architectural significance in that the source of its design and the design itself were innovative for the time.

Many of the stylistic Art-Deco elements can be found at the Pacific Medical Center. From the husky, stepping forms of the main medical center itself to the Mayan motifs over the residential entries, the movement is well represented. Besides the tower itself - details of the main lobby, the residential buildings and landscape elements all form a striking cohesiveness that is of special significance to the citizens of Seattle.

Criterion 5 - The Pacific Medical Center is an outstanding work of three of Seattle's most prominent architects.

The project was the first such federal facility to be designed by architects in private practice. This development was a direct result of a bill passed by Congress permitting the U.S. Treasury Department to employ private firms when it was expedient to do so. The move also reflected increasing pressure by local architects to be chosen for federal work projects, a trend noted in editorials in Washington State Architect, Pacific Building and Engineer, and American Architect, the trade journals of the period. All three architects for the medical complex, Charles Bebb, Carl Gould, and John Graham, were highly respected members of the architectural establishment in the Northwest and had attained national and international attention for their works, which considerably modernized the appearance of Seattle. The former U.S. Marine Hospital is an outstanding work of each of these important architects. It is also significant as a collaborative work of these prominent architects.

Charles Bebb (1885 - 1942) was born in England and received his education at King's College, the University of Lausanne, and the London School of Mines. After some involvement with railroad buildings in South Africa, Bebb came to Seattle in 1890. For five years he was an architectural engineer for the Denny Clay Company. In private practice, he was associated with Leonard Lewis Mendel, then with Carl Gould. Bebb is credited with having designed the first fireproof structure in Seattle, the Bailey Building (Saunders and Haughton, architects). He was also responsible for the design and construction of the State Legislature, Temple of Justice, and Insurance buildings in Olympia, Washington. with Mendel, he designed the Hoge Building, the Frye Hotel, and a large number of handsome and well-detailed private residences in Seattle. In association with Carl Gould, he designed the triangular Times Square Building, the north addition of the Rainier Club, the University of Washington master plan and several campus buildings, and, in 1932, the Seattle Art Museum in volunteer Park. Bebb was elected a fellow to the American Institute of Architects in 1910. In the same year, he was awarded membership in the Royal Institute of Arts in London and the American Federation of Arts in Washington, D.C.

Carl Gould (1873 - 1939) was born in New York City and attended Phillips Exeter Academy and Harvard University (class of 1889). From 1899 to 1903, he studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. On the East Coast, he worked with the firm of McKim, Mead and White. He was associated with George C. Post on the design of the Wisconsin State Capital at Madison. He also assisted Daniel Burnham in the plans for rebuilding San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake and fire. In 1908 he came to Seattle. Gould, an authority on Gothic architecture, and Charles Bebb were responsible for a large number of buildings on the University of Washington campus (see above). In addition to his design work, Gould was the founder and head of the Department of Architecture at the University of Washington. From 1925 to 1930 he was a member of the Civic Planning Commission. He was also president of the Washington State Chapter of the AIA, president of the Art Institute of Seattle (1926 - 1929), president of the Architectural League of Pacific Coast, and a member of the Society of Beaux Arts Architects.

John Graham (1873 - 1955) was one of Seattle's most prolific designers of large-scale commercial buildings, most of them in Art-Deco or Modernistic styles of the 1920's and 1930's. Born on the Isle of Man, he was apprenticed to an architect in England at an early age and later designed buildings in England, China, Japan, and Canada, as well as in the United States. Among his works in Seattle are the Bon Marche', the Joshua Green Building, the Exchange Building, the Roosevelt Hotel, the second part of the Medical/Dental Building, the government Fisheries Building, Bank of California, Frederick and Nelson, University Methodist Temple, Plymouth Congregational Church, and the Deanery of the Episcopal Diocese of Seattle. In Tacoma, he did the Medical Arts Building. He was architect for the Ford Motor Company prior to his retirement in 1945.

Criterion 6 - Because of its prominence the Pacific Medical Center is an important visual feature of Seattle with city-wide significance.

The modernistic hospital structure creates a powerful impression on the Seattle skyline. Its red-hued brick form, like great granite cliffs, emerging as a natural outgrowth of the hill on which it sits. It is visible for miles from Seattle's waterways and hills, making it one of the most visually prominent local landmarks. Despite the addition of modern skyscrapers to the downtown skyline, the hospital continues to be set apart from the central business district and the industrial tideflats and to soar above them. Its siting to the south and that of the Space Needle to the north balance one another and frame the downtown business district. The top of the hospital is 462 feet above sea level and affords a sweeping view of the city, harbor, and mountains. An article in Washington State Architect (April, 1931) stated, "The view alone should be an inspiration to a sick man and a life saver."

When it was built in 1932, the United States Marine Hospital was unlike anything the U.S. Public Health Service had ever erected, the government usually showing a disposition for hospital

buildings of the "pavillion" type. Hoping to enhance the beauty of the city's skyline, and not believing the three-acre Beacon Hill site entirely suitable for a sprawling group of buildings, the government health service for the Northwest region authorized a tall structure and a limited number of smaller residential units framing a landscaped park.

According to Dr. Hooper, the first officer-in-charge of the hospital, the U.S. Marine Hospital in Seattle had been heralded as the only one "built on skyscraper lines." today, as Pacific Medical Center, the main building continues to be an important, powerful element of Seattle's skyline.

The features of the Landmark to be preserved, include:

the entire exteriors of the buildings, the main lobby and associated waiting room of the Main Medical Building, and the entire site; excluding the exteriors and interiors of Buildings B, J, K, L, M and N as identified on the nomination application site plan.

Issued: August 18, 1989



Karen Gordon
City Historic Preservation Officer

cc: Mary McCumber
Dennis McLerran
Alan Oiye
Ken Mar
Phil Sherburne
David Jones
William Chapman
Jim Daly
Keith Murray
Frank Kirk
Martha Lester
Sue Kunimatsu
Bill Duchek

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