



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

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

LPB-314/79

December 5, 1979

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

NAME OF PROPERTY: Parsons/Gerrard Residence
ADDRESS: 618 West Highland Drive
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Comstock Supplemental Addition, Block 26, Lots 6,7,8
OWNER: Linda and Keith Gerrard

On October 17, 1979, the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve nomination of the above property for consideration as a Seattle Landmark. At their Hearing of November 21, 1979, the Board voted to approve the designation of the subject property based upon satisfaction of the following criterion of Ordinance 106348:

- 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:

Prominently located on West Highland Drive along the southwestern slope of Queen Anne Hill, the Parsons/Gerrard Residence contributes significantly to the ambience of the Queen Anne Boulevard system of which West Highland Drive is a part. A number of pretentious and imposing residences representing both original and eclectic styles prevalent during the first decade of the twentieth century line both sides of the Boulevard, particularly along the south and southwestern slopes of Queen Anne.

Contemporary with these structures and comparable in scale and pretense, the Parsons house complements these residences and the broader landscape context linking them together, thus satisfying criteria 3.01 (6). It should, however, be recognized that the subject residence does not satisfy the historical nor especially the architectural criteria also set forth in Ordinance 106348. Its design suffers from an incoherent composition, and an ungainly and over-scaled front gable. It is not one of Seattle's better examples of Dutch-influenced eclecticism, nor is it an outstanding work of a significant designer or builder.


Features and characteristics identified for preservation include:

- the exterior of the main residence structure;
- the major structural and landscape elements on the site.

Issued,

December 5, 1979

Earl Layman,
City Historic Preservation Officer

By: 
Roberta Deering, Board Coordinator

RD:ih



City of Seattle

Department of Community Development/Office of Urban Conservation

Landmark Nomination Form

LPB-263/79

Name Parsons/Gerrard Residence Year Built* 1905
 (Common, present or historic)

- Landmark
 Landmark Site
 Both

Street and Number 618 West Highland Drive

Assessor's File No. 173280 0630 (155 W-23)

Legal Description Plat Name Comstock Supl. Block 26 Lot 6,7,8
 Add.

Present Owner Linda and Keith Gerrard Present Use Residence

Address same (282-2155)

Original Owner Reginald H. Parsons Original Use Residence

Architect W. Marbury Sommervell Builder H. S. Wold

The Parsons/Gerrard Residence, and the adjacent Parsons Memorial Garden are situated along the southwestern slope of Queen Anne Hill on W. Highland Drive. Together, they form two important elements of the Queen Anne Boulevard system of which W. Highland Drive is a part.

Designed in 1905 for Seattle businessman Reginald H. Parsons, the two and one half story stucco covered residence was supposedly derived from Dutch Colonial homes built in the Mid-Atlantic states during the eighteenth century. A low brick wall laid in English bond extends above the foundation to a termination at the first story sill line from which point stucco becomes used as an exterior material. The residence is sheltered by slate covered gambrel roofs, a tradition adhered to in a later east end addition. Fenestration takes the form of casement windows with transoms at the first story, and double hung windows at the second, several of which are encased within dormers. Leaded glass is employed in the east addition. The three original chimneys are covered by stucco and designed with rectangular panels which reveal the underlying structural brick. Detailing also includes good bracketry beneath the west wing eaves, and Palladian-influenced bay window with rounded corners immediately west of the main entry. In addition to the east extension, the original southeast corner porch and balustrade have been converted into a small greenhouse.

Originally part of the Parsons' estate, the Parsons Memorial Gardens were given to the City of Seattle for use as a public park in 1956 by the children of Mr. and Mrs. Reginald Parsons in memory of their parents. The park occupies approximately one third of an acre and is enclosed by hedgerows. Plantings include cedar trees, cherry trees, dogwood, holly and boxwood, as well as numerous roses. An informal walkway lined by cobblestones circulates through the various spaces, and an unobtrusive L-shaped comfort and fireplace facility is now located at the northeast corner of the garden.

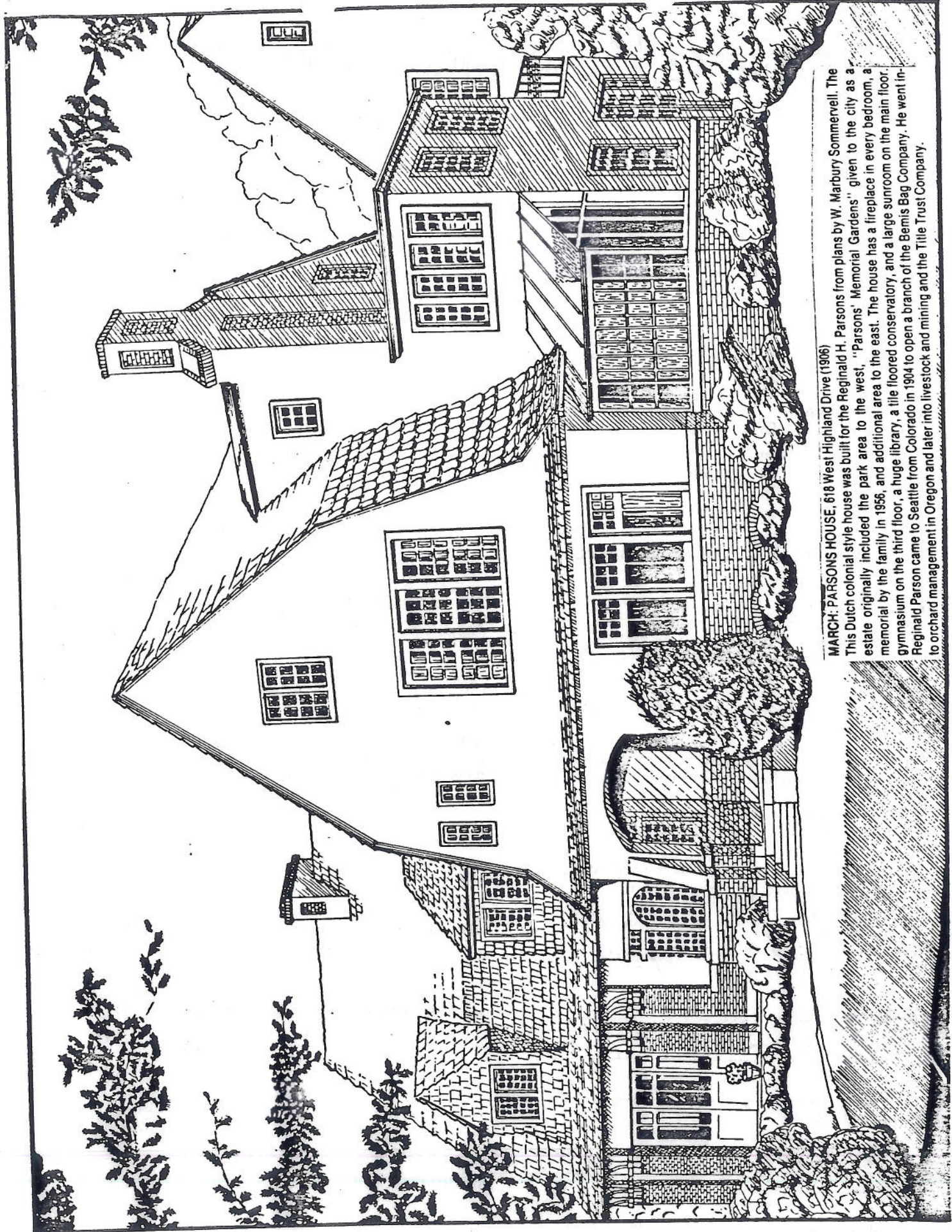
Submitted by The Office of Urban Conservation Staff

Address 400 Yesler Building Phone 625-4501

Date October 8, 1979

Reviewed 
Historic Preservation Officer

Date 09/01/79



MARCH: PARSONS HOUSE, 618 West Highland Drive (1906). The Dutch colonial style house was built for the Reginald H. Parsons from plans by W. Marbury Sommervell. The estate originally included the park area to the west, "Parsons' Memorial Gardens" given to the city as a memorial by the family in 1956, and additional area to the east. The house has a fireplace in every bedroom, a gymnasium on the third floor, a huge library, a tile floored conservatory, and a large sunroom on the main floor. Reginald Parson came to Seattle from Colorado in 1904 to open a branch of the Bomis Bag Company. He went into orchard management in Oregon and later into livestock and mining and the Title Trust Company.

Landmarks Preservation Board

Nomination Form

NAME (present) Parsons House

(historic) _____

ADDRESS 618 - W. Highland Dr.

NOMINATION AS:

- Building
- Site
- Structure
- District
- Object

NOMINATED UNDER CRITERIA (ORDINANCE 102229)

(1) has significant character, interest or value, as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, State or Nation; or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or

(2) is the site of an historic event with a significant effect upon society; or

(3) exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historic heritage of the community; or

(4) portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or

(5) embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type or engineering specimen; or

(6) is the work of a designer whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of Seattle; or

(7) contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or

(8) by being part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area, should be developed or preserved according to a plan based on a historic, cultural or architectural motif; or

(9) owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or city; or

(10) has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history.

OWNER APPROVAL: by phone Linda & Keith
3-2-77 Edward DRE

NOMINATOR: Q. A. HIST. SOC.
NOMINEE _____
address 311 West Holladay, Seattle

NOMINATION DATE 9/21/79
RECEIVED
MAR 14 1977

phone _____
NOMINATOR: _____

CITY OF SEATTLE
OFFICE OF URBAN CONSERVATION

NOMINATOR: SEE HIST. SEA. PRES & DEV. SURVEY
Reviewed _____
Historic Preservation Officer

BOARD SPONSOR _____
date _____

date _____

#24

618 W. Highland c. 19. 2
Parsons (see) Garden
P. Fuller (see)
(see kit. sea duck map)

7PK
20HS

Originally the ~~home~~ ^{estate} included the present home as well as ~~what~~ ^{as} the park to the ~~west~~ west (now a city park known as Parsons Memorial Garden - a gift of the Parsons children to the city as a memorial to their parents (?)).

Also part of the estate was the site of the name ^{richly} ~~richly~~ ^{had} ~~had~~ ^{was} a rose garden.

(The property was at one time ~~owned~~ ^{owned})

my own office
(furniture store.)

The
Originally there was a
carriage house behind
the Memorial Garden.
It stood until the
building of the present
cathedral was
made which enclosed
the carriage.

The home at 615 W. High
has a fireplace in
every bedroom and
a gymnasium on the
third floor.

There is a large
library on the east
side of the main
floor behind the
tile tile floors.

Original estate included area of present house plus park area to west, given by Parsons children as gift to the city, and area now occupied by house to the east which was a rose garden. (property at one time owned by owners of Doces Furniture store)

Originally there was a carriage house behind the memorial gardens which stood until construction of Pfeiffer Town House in 19

House has a fireplace in every bedroom and a gymnasium on the 3rd floor. There is a huge library on east side of main floor behind a tiled floored conservatory (plants) On the west side of main floor is a large sun room -

"Dutch colonial style of architecture" - Homes & Gardens Pacific Coast

(over)

(V. Klockgen)

Social Blue Book of Seattle, 1926

Mr Reginald H. Parsons

607 Cal / Rainier Club / Univ. Club / Yatch (Sea?) Club / College Club / Artie Club

Mrs (Maude Bemis) PARSONS - Colorado

Miss Anne Parsons - @ Mills College

Mr Reginald B. PARSONS - @ ANDOVER

THE PARSONS HOUSE

Located on the Boulevard, across from Marshall Viewpoint, this Dutch colonial style house was built for Mr. and Mrs. Reginald H. Parsons in 1910 from plans by W. Marbury Sommervell.

The estate originally included the area to the west, now Parsons' Memorial Gardens, given to the public as a memorial by the Parsons family in 1955, and the area to the east now occupied by another home.

Parsons came to Seattle in 1904 to open a branch of the Bemis Bag Co. and later went into orchard and produce management in western Oregon. He returned to Seattle with the Title Trust Company and became a civic leader as chairman of the first Seattle Beautiful committee, on the national board of the Boy Scouts of America (responsible for the Statue of Liberty at Alki Beach), sponsor of the National Recreation Assn. in Seattle and the Civic Christmas Ship in 1949.

The home has a fireplace in every bedroom, a gymnasium on the third floor, a huge library on the east side of the main floor behind a tile floored conservatory and a large sunroom on the west side of the main floor. The original carriage house was still standing immediately behind the rose garden until 1968 when it was torn down for another structure.

The home was one of those featured in the 1913 House and Garden of the Pacific Coast.