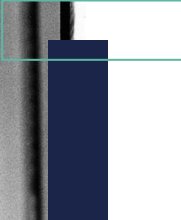


McKinney Center for Community and Economic Development

SEATTLE LANDMARK NOMINATION

Sarah Mills | August 5, 2026





OVERVIEW

- Built in 1974 to house the Seattle Opportunities Industrialization Center (SOIC)
- Later became the Seattle Vocational Institute and then the McKinney Center for Community and Economic Development
- Thousands of Seattleites trained in trades and job skills to boost employability
- Located in the heart of the Central Area
- Despite changing hands and names several times, it has always been used for education

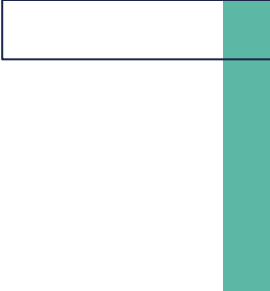
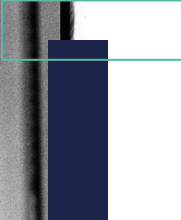


Photo source: [MOHA](#)

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION



Building

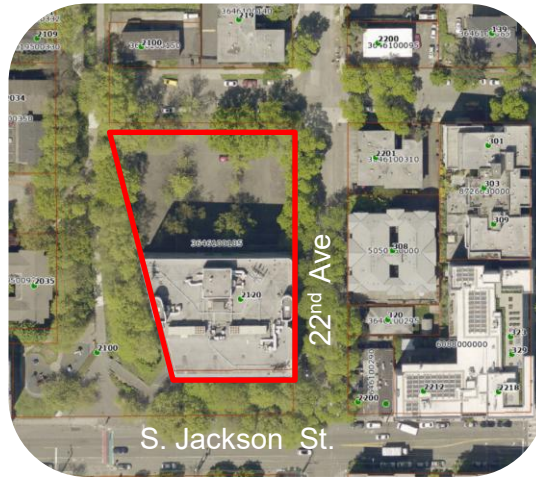
- 6-story, 111,000 sf cubic structure
- Built 1974 to house the SOIC program
- International modernist style
- Lower floor class spaces for automotive, carpentry, welding, plumbing
- Upper floor offices and classes for typing, IBM computers, etc.



- S Jackson St is at the heart of the Central Area, Seattle's historically Black neighborhood
- Next to Dr. Blanche Lavizzo Park and Pratt Park
- Near several other landmarks including the Douglass-Truth Library, Yesler Houses, and Fire Station #6

Neighborhood

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION



Site

- 0.98 acre parcel at the corner of S Jackson Street and 22nd Ave
- Dense trees allow the property to blend in with its surroundings
- North half of site is used for parking and provides access to the rear entrance and large ground-floor spaces.

MAJOR STRUCTURAL CHANGES

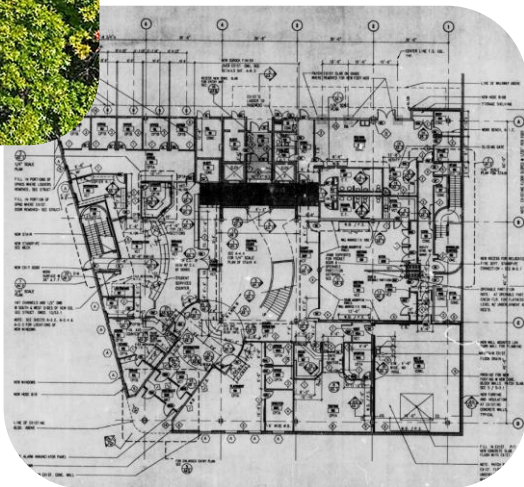


From 4 stories to 6

In 1982, two additional stories were added, bringing the building to its current 6-story height.

Gabor Lorant designed both the original structure and the addition, which had been planned since before the original building was constructed.

MAJOR STRUCTURAL CHANGES



Reskinning and New Entrance

In 1996, a major renovation was completed.

Johnson + Planning Architects designed the new southwest entrance and reskinned the façade in its current green metal siding.

DKA Architecture remodeled the interior, notably adding a sweeping stairwell in the new two-story lobby.

The lower floors were reconfigured to serve as a reception area, office space, and meeting rooms.



CRITERIA FOR HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Criteria C – Cultural Heritage

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.

- Vocational school serving minority population
- Community-building

Criteria B – Important Person

It is associated in a significant way with the life of a person important in the history of the City, state, or nation.

- Rev. Dr. Samuel B. McKinney – Civil Rights Leader
- 

Criteria A – Historic Event

It is the location of, or is associated in a significant way with, an historic event with a significant effect upon the community, City, state, or nation.

- Civil Rights Movement
- War on Poverty

Criteria D – Architectural Character

It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or of a method of construction.

- Modernist International Style
- 



THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT & THE OIC

- **1964** – President Johnson declared “War on Poverty”; passes the Economic Opportunity Act establishing the Office of Economic Opportunity.
- OEO aimed to alleviate poverty by investing in education, training, health, and housing.
- **1964** – Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) organization founded by Rev. Leon Sullivan in Philadelphia
- OIC provided job and life skills training to underserved populations, especially African Americans
- OIC employed a philosophy of self-help and self-determination
- **1966** – Seattle branch of the OIC (SOIC) founded by Rev. McKinney in the basement of Mt. Zion Baptist Church with funding from the OEO and the Departments of Labor and Health, and Education and Welfare

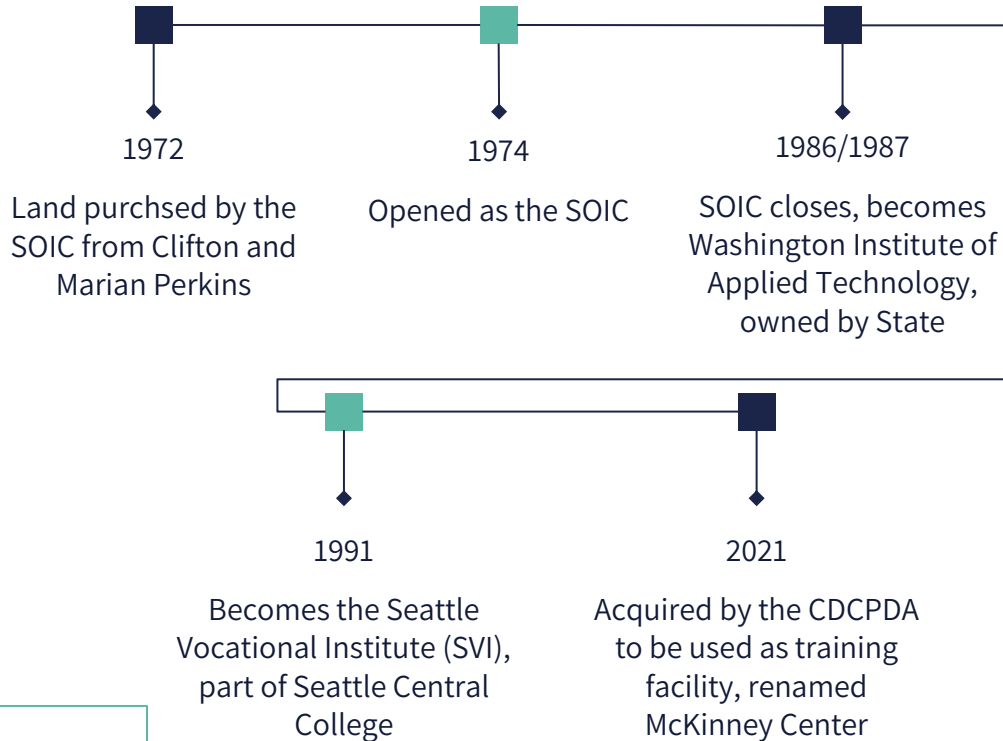


UPSKILLING FOR EMPLOYMENT

- By 1968, the SOIC had served approximately 3,000 people, including:
 - 560 graduates
 - Two-thirds of trainees under 34
 - 59.7% African American
 - 51.3% of graduates saw pay increases of \$0.50/hour or more (\$4.67/hour today)
- Job training programs included welding, automotive, plumbing, carpentry, electrical
- Skills training programs available for typing, keypunch, IBM equipment, NCR cash registers, and drafting
- By the 1980s, thousands of graduates had benefitted from the job training programs offered by the SOIC



CHANGING OWNERSHIP – SAME PURPOSE



REV. DR. SAMUEL B. McKINNEY

- Prominent Civil Rights leader and contemporary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
- Pastor at Mount Zion Baptist Church for 40 years
 - Mount Zion is designated in the National Register and one of Seattle's oldest Black churches
 - Mount Zion, with Rev. McKinney at the helm, became a hub of civil rights activism in Seattle
- VP of national OIC organization
- Co-founder of Seattle chapter of OIC
- Co-Founder of Liberty Bank, Seattle's first Black-owned bank





ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- Designed by AIA Fellow Gabor Lorant in 1972
 - Gabor Lorant was a Hungarian freedom fighter who immigrated to the US in 1956
- Modernist International Style or Late Modernism
- Architect's description: Characterized by smooth curvilinear forms, horizontal ribbon glazing, and a façade with contrasting materials emphasizing precision and continuity. The design bridges Modernism's functional purity with Streamline Moderne's aerodynamic elegance — projecting both efficiency and refinement.
- 1996 renovations aimed to “reflect the state-of-the-art teaching program within”

