



The City of Seattle

## Landmarks Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649 Seattle WA 98124-4649  
Street Address: 700 5th Ave Suite 1700

Name Bloss House  
(Common, present or historic)

Year Built 1915

Street and Number 4055 SW Holgate St

Assessor's File No. 9151600005

Legal Description      Plat Name Walnut Terrace      Block 1-2-3      Lot 1

The east 60 feet of lots 1, 2 and 3. Block 1. Walnut Terrace, an addition to West Seattle. As recorded in volume 3 of plats. Page 159. Records of King County, Washington.

Present Owner Ruth Ward

Present Use Single-family house

Address 4055 SW Holgate St, Seattle, WA 98116

Original Owner Roy and Mary Bloss

Original Use Single-family residence

Architect Elmer Ellsworth Green

Builder Unknown

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

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See attached.

Statement of significance

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See attached.

Photographs:

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See attached Figures section for maps, drawings, and photographs.

Submitted by: Eugenia Woo, Historic Seattle and Megan Meulemans

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245

Date 03/24/2010

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

BLOSS HOUSE SEATTLE LANDMARK NOMINATION REPORT  
4055 SW HOLGATE ST, SEATTLE, WA

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### Property Data for the Bloss House

**Property Name (historic):** Bloss House

**Property Address:** 4055 SW Holgate St, Seattle, WA 98166

**Assessor's File No.:** 9151600005

**Legal Description:** The east 60 feet of lots 1, 2 and 3. Block 1. Walnut Terrace, an addition to West Seattle. As recorded in volume 3 of plats. Page 159. Records of King County, Washington.

**Plat/Block/Lot:** Walnut Terrace Addition to West Seattle; Block 1; Lots 1-2-3

**Present Owner:** Ruth Ward

**Owner Address:** 4055 SW Holgate St, Seattle, WA 98166

**Present Use:** Single-family residence

**Historic Use:** Single-family residence

**Architect:** Elmer Ellsworth Green

**Builder:** Unknown

## **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

### **Site**

Built in 1915, the Bloss House is an excellent example of a Craftsman style residence in West Seattle. Oriented to the north, the house stands on a steeply sloped, rectangular lot in the Admiral district amid other single-family residences. The house commands an impressive view of Elliot Bay and the Seattle skyline. It is bordered on the north by SW Holgate Street; Walnut Avenue (a dead-end right-of-way) on the east; a two-story, single-family home built in 1950 and extensively altered in 1995, on the west; and a two-story, single-family residence built in 1907 (renovated and altered in 1983) to the south.

The topography in this part of West Seattle is hilly. The subject property's grade slopes down from south to north. The property's lot size is 60' x 102'. Part of the Bloss House's east side yard is city right-of-way (dead-end Walnut Avenue). The current owner has an easement on the right-of-way and uses it as an extension of the side yard. An original concrete retaining wall is located at the north property line. Concrete steps original to the site lead up to the house from the sidewalk. Dense vegetation of trees and shrubs provide a mature landscape throughout the front, back and side yards. An aggregate concrete path provides paved access from the front yard, through the west side yard, and connects to a back yard pathway. A set of concrete steps (non-historic) at the southwest corner of the yard lead up to a path towards an alley to the west. The current owner of the Bloss House has a walking easement through the western neighbor's property to reach the alley.

The 1,800 sq ft, one-and-a-half story (plus basement), single-family residence is rectangular in plan and measures 26' x 50'. It rises from a poured concrete foundation with concrete piers and is constructed of wood-frame.

### **Building Exterior**

The building exterior has a high degree of integrity. All features described are original to the house except where noted.

#### **EXTERIOR WALLS AND FEATURES**

Poured concrete foundation walls are visible from the outside. All four facades are clad in painted, clapboard siding with painted, cedar shingles at the base on the north, east, and west facades. The same cedar shingles also sheath the upper half-story on the east and west sides. Originally, the clapboard siding was painted but the cedar shingles were unpainted (this is evident in a 1920s photograph of the

house). By 1937, the cedar shingles were painted. The front (north) facade exhibits textured stucco and half-timbering on the double-gable ends.

Wood steps lead up to a front porch supported by two, square, wood piers. A criss-cross shaped, low, wood railing stretches between the two piers. An identical third pier balances the east end of the front facade. These piers rise from tapered column bases clad in cedar siding.

A rear porch on the east end of the south facade is an original feature of the house. It is supported by a single, simple, square wood column. The original porch railing is intact.

A brick chimney (partially re-built in 1989) is located on the east side.

## ROOF

The house has a side-gable roof with cross, double-gable ends on the north facade. The roof material is composition, asphalt shingles (non-historic). The original wood shingles were intact in 1938 when the King County Tax Assessor's photograph was taken. The wide, projecting eaves are distinguished by triangular knees braces on the north, east, and west facades and exposed rafters ends on the south (rear) facade. Vergeboards feature notched ends and decorative, pointed square blocks.

## WINDOWS

All windows are original throughout the house. Contemporary exterior storm windows provide added protection for the historic windows.

First story windows are double-hung, wood sash with variations in the glazing patterns including eight-over-one, six-over-one, and one-over-one. These "cottage-style windows" have smaller upper sashes than the lower sashes—common in Craftsman style homes. Squared window bays with a shed roof project from the east and west sides. A single, fixed, leaded glass, wood frame window is located on the east side next to the brick chimney. On the interior, this window is above the built-in bookcase in the living room.

The upper half-story features original, multi-light, wood casement windows. Basement windows are original, wood-frame hoppers.

## ENTRANCES

The house has three entrances, all original points of egress/ingress. The main entrance is accessed via the front porch on the north. The original door is a classic Craftsman style design with six, beveled-glass lights on the upper portion

underscored by a dentil course. The wood door is unpainted (as originally intended) but has been refinished. This door faces west, rather than the street side (SW Holgate Street). It leads directly into the living room.

The rear entrance is accessed through the porch on the south. This original, painted wood door has a single light on the upper portion and three horizontal panels on the lower portion. A contemporary metal and glass screen door has been installed on the exterior. This entrance leads directly into the kitchen.

A third entrance on the west side provides exterior access to the basement. The existing door (wood with an upper light and lower panel) is non-historic; it replaced an original door that matched the rear (south) entrance door.

### **Building Interior**

The house's interior exhibits well-executed features of the Craftsman home and is remarkably intact. All features described are original to the house except where noted.

#### FIRST FLOOR

##### *Living Room*

The living room remains unaltered. Unpainted mahogany woodwork retains its original dark finish. Character-defining features in the living room include the oak floor, fireplace, trimwork, box beams, baseboards, molding, picture rail, plaster ceiling and walls, sconces flanking the fireplace, and built-in window seat and bookcase. The leaded glass window is above the bookcase and compliments the leaded glass doors of the bookcase. The wood window seat is hinged, allowing for storage. Sitting on the window seat offers a view onto SW Holgate Street and Elliot Bay and the Seattle skyline in the distance. The fireplace and wood bookcase share a continuous wood mantelshelf. The original brick fireplace surround enframes an opening enclosed with a copper door custom-made by a local metal artist in the 1970s. Vintage lighting consists of sconces (brass fixtures with frosted glass shades) that flank the fireplace.

##### *Dining Room*

The dining room is adjacent to the living room—the two spaces are separated by a square archway trimmed in mahogany. The dining room also remains unaltered. Unpainted mahogany woodwork retains its original dark finish. Character-defining features include the oak floor, trimwork, box beams, baseboards, molding, picture rail, wood wainscot with plate rail, plaster ceiling and walls, ceiling lights, and built-in buffet with leaded glass cabinet doors. The buffet features the same pointed

square block design detail found on the exterior vergeboards. Two, vintage, ceiling lights hang from opposite corners from the box beams.

### *Kitchen*

A wood swing door opens into the kitchen from the dining room. The kitchen retains its original plan, cabinets, breakfast nook area (the built-in seating and table have been removed), and plaster walls and ceiling. Cabinet doors have been stripped of its paint—they would have originally been painted. Cabinet frames are painted. The existing laminate countertop was installed by the current owner in the 1970s. Window and door trim in this room is painted. The existing vinyl floor was installed by the current owner in the 1970s. The original fir floor is most likely intact underneath. Interesting features from the era when the house was built include the original cooler on the south wall above the counter (next to the back door) and a built-in ironing board hidden underneath a countertop in a cupboard on the north wall of the kitchen. This was a space-saving idea that also provided a “modern” convenience for the early twentieth century homemaker.

### *Hallway*

A hallway separates the kitchen and dining room from the bathroom and two bedrooms (referred to as chambers in the original plans). The floor in the hallway is fir rather than oak. A built-in linen closet has wood doors and drawers. The same trimwork design is found in this space as throughout the house. The two bedrooms bookend the hallway. Walls and ceiling are plaster. Stair access to the upper half-story and the basement level is through two separate doorways that lead from the hallway.

### *Bathroom*

The bathroom retains its original plan, clawfoot bathtub, built-in linen closet, medicine cabinet with mirror, trimwork (painted), and plaster walls and ceiling. The lower portion of the plaster walls is scored to give the appearance of 4-inch square tiles. This portion is separated from the rest of the walls by wood molding. The sink may be original. The existing linoleum floor is not original but date to the 1940s or 1950s.

### *Bedrooms*

The two bedrooms retain their original plan, trimwork (painted), fir floor, picture rail, and plaster walls and ceiling. Ceiling lights are not original to the house but are vintage. Each bedroom also contains a closet.

### *Other Features*

Original interior doors in the house are wood with the same dark finish as the rest of the woodwork. They are characterized by a horizontal panel above three, long vertical panels and glass knobs. The original, push button, electrical light switches are intact throughout the house.

### *Attic/Upper Half-Story*

A set of original wood stairs lead up to the upper half-story from the hallway. Metal dust catchers in the corners are found on each step. According to original floor plans, this level was built as unfinished attic space with a shiplap floor. Partitions were added to create two additional bedrooms—one large and one small. A small, third room was used as a darkroom by the second owner of the house. It is unknown when the attic space was finished, but the materials and features used indicate the work was completed by the 1920s, thus achieving significance over time. The 1938 King County Tax Assessor Property Record indicates the two bedrooms had been added by that time. The height of the ceiling and the level of finish of the stairs indicate the attic was designed to be finished as a half-story. Walls and ceiling are plaster. The original shiplap floor is intact. The current owner converted the darkroom into a second bathroom in the 1970s or 1980s.

### *Basement*

A set of original wood stairs lead down to the basement from the hallway. Access to the basement from the exterior is through a door on the west side. The basement remains as an unfinished space with a concrete floor and poured concrete foundation walls. The basement serves as a storage area and laundry room and houses the furnace and water heater.

## **Alterations**

Both the exterior and interior of the house retain a high degree of integrity and exhibit classic Craftsman style detailing. Few alterations have occurred. City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development permit records show no work other than the partial rebuilding of the brick chimney in 1989 and the addition of a new gas furnace. Following are the known changes to the house:

- Ca. 1920s: Attic finished as a half-story, adding two bedrooms and a darkroom.
- Ca. 1930s: Original cedar shingles on exterior painted.
- 1940s or 1950s: Existing linoleum floor in first floor bathroom replaced original flooring material.
- 1970s: Original kitchen countertops and flooring material replaced with existing laminate countertop and vinyl flooring.
- 1974: Gas furnace added (replacing original oil furnace).
- 1980s or 1990s: Exterior replacement door on west side installed.
- 1989: Brick chimney on east side partially rebuilt with new brick.
- Date unknown: asphalt composition roof installed (most likely within the last twenty to thirty years).

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### **Development of West Seattle and the Admiral District**

The Bloss House (4055 SW Holgate St.) is located in the Admiral district on the north end of West Seattle near the tip of Duwamish Head. Sunset Ave SW borders the district on the northwestern side with Admiral Way SW and Schmitz Park acting as the west border of the district. The southern boundary of the Admiral district is SW Charlestown St and the eastern boundary is Harbor Ave SW.

In 1851, the first Euro-American settlement was established on West Seattle's Alki Point, naming it New York-Alki. Charles C. Terry, one of the original settlers, platted and renamed the town Alki on May 28, 1853. However, the town's exposed location limited its commercial and industrial potential. Most subsequent industry in West Seattle developed on the calmer, east-facing shores of Duwamish Head.<sup>1</sup> By the 1860s, a mill town known as Freeport had developed on the Duwamish Head shores to support the industrial center that included a sawmill, several shipbuilding yards, and salmon cannery.<sup>2</sup>

The business and commercial center of West Seattle was established on the bluff just above Freeport in today's Admiral district. In 1885, the West Seattle Land Improvement Co., headed by Uriah R. Neitz, and most likely funded by capital from San Francisco, bought most of the Admiral district with the intent to make it a residential community. WSLIC replatted the area and marketed 50-by-150-foot lots offering "fresh air" and "magnificent views" for only \$88.<sup>3</sup>

WSLIC also invested in transportation and other amenities in order to attract potential homebuyers.<sup>4</sup> In order to improve access to Seattle, ferry service to Freeport began in 1888 on the side-wheel steamer *City of Seattle*, the first ferry on the Puget Sound. The ferry docked at what is now the intersection of Cascade Way and Ferry Avenue and connected to a cable car that ran up Ferry Avenue to the growing business district of the Admiral neighborhood.<sup>5</sup> In 1890, WSLIC also provided the first cable railway service to West Seattle for the benefit of ferry commuters. The West Seattle Cable Railway traveled in a loop up Cascade Avenue (now California Avenue) and back down Grand Avenue (now Ferry Avenue).

After the ferry and cable railway were established, WSLIC sold more than \$300,000 worth of land within a few short years. However, the "Panic of 1893" slowed the growth of West Seattle until the wild rush to find gold in the Klondike in 1897. Seattle businesses "began to profit from supplying gear to a stampede of eager prospectors heading to Alaska."<sup>6</sup> During the Klondike boom of the 1890s, the population of Seattle doubled then almost tripled from 80,000 to 237,000 between 1900 and 1910. In 1902, King County built a drawbridge over the Duwamish waterway at Spokane Street, providing better access to the city of Seattle.

Because of the large population growth of Seattle and the enhanced accessibility provided by WSLIC and King County, West Seattle experienced its own growth. In 1901, Arthur Stretch and William Hainsworth, local residents who made their fortunes during the Klondike gold rush, opened the Coney Island Bathhouse and a few years later, Luna Park along the shores of Duwamish Head. By 1909, nearly 72,000 tourists and visitors travelled to West Seattle annually.

Even with West Seattle's success in the tourism business, residential growth was slow. Despite this, in April 1902, West Seattle's few dozen permanent residents voted to incorporate the northern section of the Admiral area, from Duwamish Head to South Street (now Lander) as an independent, fourth-class city in order to improve the transportation system, provide more reliable water supplies, and install electric lighting on the peninsula.<sup>7</sup>

Two years later, on July 5, 1904, after proving that it had the required 1,500 residents, West Seattle reincorporated as a third-class city in order to fund a streetcar line with municipal bonds. The streetcar would become the first municipally owned streetcar system in the country.<sup>8</sup> West Seattle had its own streetcar line, but because it was municipally owned, the car could not extend beyond the town limits. This prompted the new city to extend an offer to the communities of Alki and Youngstown to provide streetcar services in these communities in exchange for annexation. After the communities firmly rejected West Seattle's offer, the city sold the railway to the Seattle Electric Railway Company. The company quickly expanded the line including a new swing bridge at Spokane Street connecting to Seattle. The line also connected the communities of Youngstown, the area called the Junction, and a virtually uninhabited area called Faunterloj Park. "The streetcar brought in buyers by the carload. For years, the boom of 1907 was legendary among West Seattle real estate agents."<sup>9</sup> On May 25, 1907, the three communities of Youngstown, Alki, and Spring Hill voted to annex to the City of West Seattle. One month later on June 29, West Seattle residents voted overwhelmingly (325 - 8) to join the City of Seattle.

The annexation of West Seattle was marked by a period of rapid growth for the community. Public amenities, which are now City of Seattle landmarks, were created to accommodate the Admiral district's growing population. The West Seattle Library and Olmsted Brothers-designed Hiawatha Playfield, the largest playfield in Seattle at the time, were established in 1910 and 1911, respectively. Schmitz Park was donated to West Seattle between 1908 and 1912.

However, by 1912 Seattle's economy slowed due to the declining timber prices and subsequent national recession in 1915. Business and residential growth in West Seattle picked up again with the U.S. entry into World War I. Shipbuilding and aircrafts became major industries for West Seattle. The North Pacific Shipbuilding Company, Elliot Bay Shipbuilding Company, and the Puget Sound Bridge and

Dredging Company employed nearly 40,000 workers, which brought many new families to the area. In 1916, William Boeing's Pacific Aero Products began producing seaplanes and aircraft for the Navy. By 1917, the northeast section of the Admiral district was a middleclass residential neighborhood. Most of the platted land featured single-family houses.

West Seattle experienced steady growth until the stock market crash in 1929. The economy didn't pick up again until the local shipyards and industries prepared for another war. Workers flocked to the area and between 1941 and 1945, Seattle's population jumped from 368,000 to 480,000. Housing projects, approximately 1,300 rental units, were constructed in West Seattle to accommodate these new workers and their families.

Following the war, West Seattle was met with yet another rise in residential growth due to the Federal Housing Administration and Veterans Administration which were programs that offered no-down payment and low interest loans to accommodate the returning veterans. In turn, there was a surge in construction. Thousands of tract homes, duplexes, apartments and rental units were built during this time. Today, the Admiral district is predominately a single-family neighborhood with a thriving commercial district along California Ave SW. Along with its historic parks, the neighborhood is dotted with other historic structures such as the West Seattle High School and the Admiral Theatre among others.

### **The Bloss House**

The site on which the Bloss House was built was platted in 1889 as the Walnut Terrace Addition to West Seattle. Street names were different back then. What is now Holgate Street was originally called Elm Street and Spring Street became Walnut Avenue. The unimproved part of Walnut Avenue (a dead end road) adjacent to the subject property to the east was originally named Walnut Terrace. The subject property (now 4055 SW Holgate St) was originally listed in Polk's City Directories as 4005 W Holgate St through 1929. The address changed to 4055 W Holgate St in 1930. Seattle changed the directional scheme for street names in 1961 by municipal ordinance. Hence, W Holgate Street became SW Holgate Street.

### **OWNERSHIP HISTORY**

The Bloss House has seen only three owners in its ninety-five year history. The biographical sketches of the owners that follow give a view into the lives of typical middle class residents in West Seattle. The house is the quintessential Seattle bungalow. This popular house type is the most democratic form of housing because the bungalow was built for everyday people for everyday living.

The house was originally built in 1915 for Roy S. and Mary A. Bloss, who lived in the home until 1924. Originally from Chicago, Roy moved to Snohomish County sometime between 1900 and 1902. While living in Snohomish County, he and Mary were married in 1902 and their daughter Fannie Rowena (Rowena) was born in 1906. The family moved to Seattle before 1910 and resided on W Roy Street in the Queen Anne neighborhood. They later moved to 1536 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave SW in West Seattle, a few blocks northwest of the W Holgate property where they would soon purchase land and build a house in 1915. The Blosses were first listed in Polk's City Directories at 4005 W Holgate in 1916. Roy's World War I draft registration card and the 1920 Federal Census indicate he was a banker at W.D. Perkins and Co. Bankers in Seattle. Polk's City Directories list him as a cashier at the same bank. Rowena Bloss attended Washington State College and received her master's degree from Columbia University in 1934. Roy died on December 21, 1944 in Skagit County. By 1952, Mary and Rowena Bloss lived in Leonia, New Jersey. While Mary's date of death is unknown, Rowena died at the age of 75 in Orange County, Florida on March 8, 1982.<sup>10</sup>

The next owners of the house were Frederick H. and Susan G. Copernoll. Frederick, a railroad inspector, came to Seattle from New York. Susan was born in Omaha, Nebraska and moved to Seattle as a child in 1881 with parents, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Gardner, and her sister Harriet. Susan and Harriet were members of the Washington Pioneer Association and were acquainted with Chief Seattle's daughter, Princess Angeline.<sup>11</sup> Both attended the University of Washington. While it is unknown when Frederick came to Seattle and when he and Susan were married, according to Washington birth records, Susan gave birth to twin boys, John Gardner Copernoll and Robert Shepard Copernoll, in Seattle on June 21, 1916. The 1920 Federal Census indicates that the family lived with Susan's mother, Engire E. Gardner, at 1913 Walnut Ave, adjacent to the south of 4055 SW Holgate St. The Copernolls purchased the house on SW Holgate St in 1926. Frederick died on December 6, 1948 at the age of 83. Susan retained ownership of the house and her sister, Harriet Case, moved into the house after her husband, Otto Case, died in 1957. Otto Case had a prolific political career. He was once state treasurer, a long-term Seattle City Council member, and he even ran for Seattle mayor and state governor. Finally, he served as the state land commissioner until his death at the age of 86. Susan and Harriet lived together in the house until they entered a nursing home in July 1971. Both women died of natural causes on October 18, 1971 at the age of 93 and 94, respectively.<sup>12</sup>

The third and current owner, Ruth M. Ward, purchased the house from the Copernoll family in 1971. Ruth was born in Marshfield, Wisconsin on October 30, 1920. She attended the University of Wisconsin and graduated in the second class of occupational therapists in 1948. In 1965, Ruth graduated from the University of Michigan with a master's degree in the then relatively unknown field of gerontology. Soon afterward, Ruth helped implement the Old American Act of 1965 by working

for the Wisconsin State Commission on Aging as part of the newly founded Administration on Aging within the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. In 1970, Ruth moved to Seattle and began working for the federal office of Administration of Aging. She was the coordinator for the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Alaska. Since her retirement in 1989, Ruth has remained active in the arts community. She had a one-person show of her Sumi paintings and participated in numerous group shows of the Puget Sound Sumi Artists. Ruth is also a singer and is a long-time member of the South Seattle Community College Community Chorus. In 2008, Ruth published a book of her own poetry and short prose pieces, *Thankful that the Tree Still Stands: And Other Musings*.<sup>13</sup>

### ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

#### *The Craftsman Bungalow and Plan and Pattern Books*

The Bloss House is an example of the growing trend of the Craftsman bungalow in Seattle in the early twentieth century. Many of the homes built in Seattle, including West Seattle, between 1910 and 1920 can be characterized as utilizing the Craftsman style, a product of the Craftsman movement. "The Craftsman movement emerged as the dominant architectural force nationwide of the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. An American derivative of the English Arts and Crafts aesthetic, it promoted features crafted by hand and natural materials over machine-made work, and embraced the Arts and Crafts principles of living 'simple, virtuous lives' in harmony with nature."<sup>14</sup>

The terms "bungalow" and "Craftsman style" are often mistakenly used interchangeably. A bungalow is not a style; it is a building form. According to Caroline Swope in *Classic Houses of Seattle*, "It describes scale, and it is used to describe small, one- or one-and-a-half story houses, regardless of style...Craftsman houses, and the bungalows that are designed in the Craftsman style, emphasize function and simple materials. They generally have two bedrooms and one bathroom, with a main floor of less than 1000 square feet of space. While large, more ornamented examples of this design do exist, they are less common than the small structures that fill Seattle."<sup>15</sup> The Bloss House is an exemplary example of the Craftsman style bungalow. Not only does it exhibit the classic features and design of the Craftsman style and the bungalow, but its high degree of integrity on both the interior and exterior make it stand out.

The Craftsman style was deemed an appropriate style for the growing residential population of Seattle due to the region's climate. The growth of Seattle from a population of just 80,000 in 1900 to nearly 240,000 in 1910 was marked by the rapid expansion of residential neighborhoods. There was much debate in the architectural community over which style would be the most appropriate for the growing neighborhoods of Seattle. This debate was exemplified in a paper, "The Historic Precedent in Coast Architecture," delivered by Seattle architect Charles H.

Alden at the second annual convention of the Architectural League of the Pacific Coast and reported in June 15, 1912, issue of *Pacific Builder and Engineer*.<sup>16</sup> Alden suggested that England, northern France, and parts of Germany had a geography and climate similar to the Northwest's and concluded that there was "much in their architecture that we could successfully apply, particularly that of England – 'our mother country.'"<sup>17</sup> It's not surprising that Seattle adopted a derivation of the English Arts and Crafts for the dominant style of residential homes and interiors. The endorsement of the Craftsman style was also supplemented with the availability of building materials specific to the style. A ready supply of Douglas fir was ideal for constructing Craftsman style bungalows clad in clapboard and shingles. "Along with wood products, indigenous building materials played an important role in defining Northwest regional differences in bungalow architecture and also exemplified the Arts and Crafts philosophy of blending in with nature."<sup>18</sup> Local river rock and basalt were common elements found in northwest Craftsman bungalows.

As noted by Janet Ore (and by Caroline Swope above), the bungalow was not necessarily defined by a fashionable exterior style, but rather a particular form and floor plan.<sup>19</sup> The Craftsman bungalow can be described as rectangular in shape with one or one-and-a-half stories and topped with a broad, sweeping hip or gable roof. It had an open-floor plan allowing free-flowing access between the living room and the dining room. In 1911, Seattle's Bungalow Company, Seattle's first bungalow building firm, described the Seattle bungalow as having an "exterior covered usually with rough siding, shingles, or shakes;...a lack of fancy mouldings, grill work, etc."<sup>20</sup>

Technically and socially, the Craftsman bungalow proved to be an ideal home for many of Seattle's residents. New industries and technologies such as pre-packaged foods and the advent of commercial cleaners and ready-made clothing, "greatly diminished the burden of household chores and the need for private production of domestic goods. The amount of workspace needed in the home was drastically reduced and the necessity for family servants was lessened or completely eliminated...women's presence within the workforce steadily increased, demanding a greater simplicity in domestic matters."<sup>21</sup> These bungalows were smaller and did away with the excessive work space and formal rooms associated with the Victorian house. Technological improvements such as indoor plumbing, central heating and kitchen appliances were also incorporated into the designs of these new house forms. Most importantly, these houses were affordable.

These houses were affordable, not only because of their small size and inexpensive building materials, but also due in part to plan and pattern books. Clients and builders looked increasingly toward plan books due to their availability and affordable prices. "Local architects and creative contractor-builders began to offer plans for direct sale, and they also initiated local architects' and builders' publications."<sup>22</sup> An abundance of pattern and plan books promoting bungalow designs and illustrating Craftsman homes and furnishings were widely influential in

Seattle, particularly in Jud Yoho's *Bungalow Magazine*, published in Seattle from 1912 to 1918.<sup>23</sup> The Victoria-based Bungalow Construction Company, most of whose plans and patterns were attributed to Elmer Ellsworth Green, appeared in the periodical several times. Green, architect for the Bloss House in West Seattle, published his own planbook in 1912 called *The Practical Planbook*. The book, *Shaping Seattle Architecture*, describes Green's planbook as an "attractive catalogue of plans with drawings and photographs for sixty different houses costing up to \$10,000."<sup>24</sup> Green practiced architecture in a competitive climate in Seattle during one of its biggest boom times for construction. He is not as well known as his contemporaries, but his body of work still extant is extensive and the quality of his residential work is on par with more well-known architects such as Victor Voorhees.

*Elmer Ellsworth Green: Architect of the Bloss House*

Elmer Ellsworth Green was born in the farming family of Sarah J. and Matthew S. Green on January 8, 1861 in Janesville, Waseca County, Minnesota. Green went to Canada in 1895, followed by his wife Julia and their children two years later. While living near Victoria, BC, Elmer was the superintendent of the Giant Powder Works at Telegraph Bay. He moved to Seattle in 1903 and set up a business as a draftsman and carpenter/builder. By 1907, Green became partners with William C. Aiken, another architect in Seattle. In 1909, Green won first prize for best bungalow in a competition sponsored by Lewis Publishing Co. of St. Louis, owner of *The Woman's Magazine* and *Woman's Farm Journal*. By 1912, Green had set up an architectural practice in Seattle's Sayward Building, in an office he shared with several other Seattle architects. He also had an architecture office in Vancouver, BC.<sup>25</sup> That same year Green also published *The Practical Planbook* with sixty-eight plans. In the foreword he stated:

*The designing of an artistic and practical Bungalow or residence of any kind requires much skill and education, together with practical knowledge of building construction. When I started to fit myself for the Architectural profession I firmly believed that a man had no moral right to call himself an Architect until he was thoroughly familiar with all kinds of building construction...Before taking up the study of drawing I spent several years with the best and the most experienced buildings I could find, and learned thoroughly the mechanical end of building construction. After becoming an expert in that line I took up the study of drawing and design, and now with twenty-five years experience on high-class work, I believe that I am in a position to give the very best service that money can buy.<sup>26</sup>*

Green was also the primary architect for the Victoria Bungalow Construction Company (BCC), which specialized in building "California Bungalows." The BCC appeared in Jud Yoho's *Bungalow Magazine* from Seattle on two separate occasions, the first in January 1913: "From the beginning, the company specialized in five and six room bungalows, designed with the idea of minimizing the labor of housekeeping and following in a general way the California idea, with adaptations to meet the slightly different climatic requirements."<sup>27</sup>

The Bloss House was constructed in 1915, three years after Green's planbook was published so its design is not from his planbook, but many features are similar to his earlier houses. The book was not reprinted in subsequent years and he did not produce others. However, he was as skilled an architect as any other planbook designers more known in Seattle such as Victor Voorhees who published the *Western Home Builder* (originally in 1907 and reprinted several times). Green emphasized that his plans were designed for the northwest climate and topography; his houses had basements, unlike other popular planbook homes designed for California but adapted to other environments around the country. Purchasing a plan from Green meant a homebuyer was getting close to a custom home because one could also pay extra for a more "custom" look.

According to Colin Barr, who lives in a Green-designed house in Victoria, BC and has conducted extensive research on the architect for many years, "Elmer closed his Victoria office in 1915, and by 1917 had left Seattle. He died in Eureka, California on February 18, 1928, and was buried in Santa Clara."<sup>28</sup>

*Comparative Analysis of Elmer Ellsworth Green's Work*

Elmer Ellsworth Green left a lasting legacy of work which can be found throughout many neighborhoods in Seattle including Queen Anne, Mount Baker, Capitol Hill, Madrona, Ravenna, University District, West Seattle, Central District, Wallingford, and Fremont. Between 1907 and 1915, Green designed over sixty, known extant residences in Seattle, which ranged from large houses to more modest scale ones. All were built with quality materials from the time and were designed to function well, hallmarks of Craftsman style homes. Examples include the mansion of a former Seattle mayor, located at 2609 Broadway E in the Roanoke Park National Register Historic District as well as three Mount Baker homes located at 2330 34th Ave, 2540 34th Ave and 3415 S McClellan St, which are included in the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods Historic Site Inventory. Some of Green's designs from his planbook can be found today, such as 1533 25<sup>th</sup> Ave in Madison Valley/Central District and 5045 16<sup>th</sup> Ave in the University District (see current photos and planbook designs in the Figures section of this nomination).

Green also designed several apartment buildings including the impressive Ben Lomond Apartments, the five-story red brick building overlooking Interstate 5 on Capitol Hill, as well as the Bostonian Apartments in Queen Anne which is included in the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods Historic Site Inventory.

In preparation for this nomination, a field survey was conducted throughout Seattle of Green's work, providing a broad scope of his residential designs. Green was very active within a short time span of eight years (1907-1915). The Bloss House was one of his last houses built in Seattle in 1915. Despite the fact that the Bloss House is not significantly like any of Green's other residential projects in Seattle, the house exhibits many qualities that are typical of Green's designs.<sup>29</sup> The house, like many of

his Seattle bungalows, “have distinctly-notched bargeboards with heavy support brackets ending in pyramids on the top of the bargeboards. These pyramids are also a frequent interior detail, at the upper corners of door and window casings.”<sup>30</sup> The Bloss House also features double-gable ends on the front roof slope as well as a deep front porch. The house also has cedar shingles and stucco with half-timbering as contrasting wall cladding, all of which were quite common in Green’s designs.<sup>31</sup>

What sets the Bloss House apart from the majority of the more than sixty houses surveyed (exteriors only) is its high level of integrity. The Bloss House embodies the Craftsman style house in Seattle and is an exemplary example of Green’s work as it exhibits quality of craftsmanship, materials and design found in his homes. Since the house has seen only three owners and has been maintained well for ninety-five years, it stands today almost exactly as it did when it was built. This “everyday” bungalow has served its occupants well with its simple floor plan, built-in features, interior woodwork, and details.

### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Cassandra Tate, “Seattle Neighborhoods: West Seattle-Thumbnail History.” pp. 1-2. History Link.org, posted July 8, 2001, [http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file\\_id=3428](http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=3428), accessed Nov. 3, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Best, Brooke V. *Celebrating 150 Years, Architectural History of West Seattle's North End: Harbor Avenue, Alki, and South Alki*. [West Seattle, Wash.]: Brooke V. Best, 2003, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Cassandra Tate, “Seattle Neighborhoods: West Seattle-Thumbnail History.” pp. 1-2. History Link.org, posted July 8, 2001, [http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file\\_id=3428](http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=3428), accessed Nov. 3, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Alan J. Stein, “Ferry service begins between Seattle and West Seattle on December 24, 1888” p. 1. HistoryLink.org, posted January 1, 2000, [http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file\\_id=1968](http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=1968), accessed November 3, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Best, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Cassandra Tate, “Seattle Neighborhoods: West Seattle-Thumbnail History.” pp. 1-2. History Link.org, posted July 8, 2001, [http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file\\_id=3428](http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=3428), accessed Nov. 3, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Crowley, Walt, and Paul Dorpat. *National Trust Guide, Seattle: America's Guide for Architecture and History Travelers*. New York: Preservation Press, J. Wiley & Sons, 1998, p. 230.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Biographical information provided through Federal census records, marriage certificates, draft registration cards, research on ancestry.com by Luci Baker Johnson.

<sup>11</sup> “The family was acquainted with Chief Seattle’s Princess Angeline, who often came to the house to exchange clams for apples.” Clever, Dick. “Their Life Seconds Numbering...” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* [Seattle] 20 Oct. 1971: A3. Print.

<sup>12</sup> Biographical information provided through Federal census records, marriage certificates, draft registration cards, research on ancestry.com by Luci Baker Johnson.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Ruth Ward by Eugenia Woo and Megan Meulemans, October 6, 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Best, Brooke V. *Celebrating 150 Years, Architectural History of West Seattle's North End: Harbor Avenue, Alki, and South Alki*. [West Seattle, Wash.]: Brooke V. Best, 2003. P. 46

<sup>15</sup> Caroline Swope, *Classic Houses of Seattle, High Style to Vernacular, 1870-1950*. Portland, OR: Timber Press, 2005, p. 100.

<sup>16</sup> Kreisman, Lawrence, and Glenn Mason. *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Pacific Northwest*. Portland, Or: Timber Press, 2007, p. 126.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 126.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 152.

<sup>19</sup> Ore, Janet. *The Seattle Bungalow: People and Houses, 1900-1940*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007, p. 5-6.

<sup>20</sup> Ore, p. 63-64.

<sup>21</sup> Doherty, Erin M. *Jud Yoho and the Craftsman Bungalow Company: Assessing the Value of the Common House*. Thesis (M. Arch.)--University of Washington, 1997, p. 10-11.

<sup>22</sup> Anderson, Dennis and Katheryn Halls Krafft. "Pattern Books, Plan books, Periodicals," *Shaping Seattle Architecture: A Historical Guide to the Architects*. Seattle: University of Washington Press in association with the American Institute of Architects Seattle Chapter and the Seattle Architectural Foundation, 1994, p. 67.

<sup>23</sup> Ochsner, Jeffrey Karl. *Shaping Seattle Architecture: A Historical Guide to the Architects*. Seattle: University of Washington Press in association with the American Institute of Architects Seattle Chapter and the Seattle Architectural Foundation, 1994, p. xxiv.

<sup>24</sup> Anderson, Dennis and Katheryn Halls Krafft, p. 68.

<sup>25</sup> Barr, Colin. "Elmer Ellsworth Green," *Building the West: The Early Architects of British Columbia*. Vancouver, B.C., Canada: Talonbooks, 2003, p. 341.

<sup>26</sup> Elmer E. Green. *The Practical Planbook*. 1912.

<sup>27</sup> Barr, Jennifer Nell. "Bungalow and Home Construction Companies," *Building the West: The Early Architects of British Columbia*. Vancouver, B.C., Canada: Talonbooks, 2003, pp. 342-44.

<sup>28</sup> Barr, Colin. "Elmer Ellsworth Green," *Building the West: The Early Architects of British Columbia*. Vancouver, B.C., Canada: Talonbooks, 2003, p. 341.

<sup>29</sup> Eugenia Woo and Megan Meulemans photographed each of Green's known, extant projects in Seattle. While no other house was found to be exactly like the Bloss House, many exhibited similar qualities.

<sup>30</sup> Barr, Colin. "Elmer Ellsworth Green," *Building the West: The Early Architects of British Columbia*. Vancouver, B.C., Canada: Talonbooks, 2003, p. 341.

<sup>31</sup> Barr, Colin, p. 341.

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