

## 5021, 5015 & 5001 RAINIER AVENUE S



PREPARED BY:



1212 NE 65th Street Seattle, WA 98115-6724  
206 523 1618  
info@tjp.us | tjp.us

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SEPTEMBER 2022

# 5001, 5015 & 5021 RAINIER AVENUE SOUTH HISTORIC RESOURCES REPORT

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Historic Resources Report provides information regarding the architectural design and historical significance of three tax parcels, including two commercial buildings addressed at 5015 and 5021 Rainier Avenue South in the Columbia City Historic District of Seattle, Washington. 5021 Rainier Avenue S was designed by architect John L. McCauley and constructed in 1924. 5015 Rainier Avenue S was constructed in 1926. The third parcel, addressed as 5001 Rainier Avenue S, is a parking lot containing no structures. The buildings were documented on the Seattle Historic Resources survey, but were not included in the Columbia City National Register Historic District.<sup>1</sup> Studio TJP (formerly The Johnson Partnership) prepared this report at the request of Murakami Building LLC.

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

The subject buildings are located in the City of Seattle's Columbia City Landmark District, a special review district, and adjacent to the Columbia City National Historic District. The Columbia City Landmark District was established by the City of Seattle in 1978 to "preserve the area's unique character and to encourage rehabilitation of areas for community use, housing and pedestrian-oriented businesses."

According to SMC 25.20 The purposes of the creation of the Columbia City Landmark District are:

- A. To preserve, protect, enhance, and perpetuate those elements of the District's cultural, social, economic, architectural, and historic heritage;
- B. To foster community and civic pride in the significance and accomplishments of the past;
- C. To stabilize or improve the historic authenticity, economic vitality, and aesthetic value of the District;
- D. To promote and encourage continued private ownership and use of buildings and other structures;
- E. To ensure compliance with the District plan prepared in the spring of 1978 by The Richardson Associates;
- F. To encourage continued City interest and support in the District; and
- G. To promote the local identity of the area.

The City of Seattle's Columbia City Review Committee and the Seattle landmark Preservation Board are

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<sup>1</sup> Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, "Summary for 5015 Rainier Ave," <https://web6.seattle.gov/DPD/HistoricalSite/QueryResult.aspx?ID=1059176634> and "Summary for 5021 Rainier Ave," <https://web6.seattle.gov/DPD/HistoricalSite/QueryResult.aspx?ID=2098048247>, Seattle Historic Sites Survey, accessed September 2022.

responsible for review of proposed changes to properties within the District according to SMC 25.20.070:

“No person shall make any change, including but not limited to alteration, demolition, construction, reconstruction, restoration, remodeling, and changes involving painting or signs, (but excluding in-kind maintenance and repairs which do not affect the appearance of the structure(s)) to the exterior of any building or structure in the District, or to the external appearance of any other property or public right-of-way in the District which is visible from a public street, alley, way, or other public property, nor construct any new building or structure in the District without first securing a certificate of approval from the Landmarks Preservation Board. No City building permit or other permit for alterations or new construction shall be issued until the Landmarks Preservation Board has granted a certificate of approval for the proposed activity.”

According to the Columbia City Landmark District Guidelines, the following criteria will be considered for any Certificate of Approval:

1. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Structures;
2. The criteria of the Columbia City Landmark District Ordinance (Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 25.20) and
3. The following categories of properties of the Columbia City Landmark District:
  - A contributing building, site, structure, or object was present during the period in which the District attained its significance, has an identifiable architectural or historic significance to either the development of Columbia City or the City of Seattle, and reflects its historic integrity or has the ability to convey its significance.
  - A non-contributing building, site, structure or object either was not present during the period during which the District attained its significance, or due to alterations, additions, or other changes, no longer possesses historic integrity reflecting its architectural or historic character.

This report will provide background information to aid the board in the consideration of whether the subject buildings are considered contributing to the district.

In 2007, Susan Boyle of BOLA Architecture + Planning prepared a report on the history of the subject buildings along with another building not addressed in this report or the attached materials for Certificate of Approval. We have attached the BOLA report to this report for ease of reference as well as including text from that report in quoted and indented paragraphs.

## 1.2 METHODOLOGY

Ellen F. C. Mirro, AIA, Principal; and Katherine Jaeger, MFA, of Studio TJP (formerly the Johnson Partnership), Seattle, completed research on this report between August and September 2022.

This report includes information previously prepared by Susan Boyle of BOLA Architecture + Planning as described in section 1.1.



Additional research was undertaken at the Puget Sound Regional Archives, Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections, Seattle Public Library, the Museum of History & Industry, and the UW Special Collections Library. Research also included review of Internet resources, including HistoryLink.com, Ancestry.com, and the *Seattle Times* digital archive. Buildings and site were inspected and photographed on September 1, 2022 to document existing conditions.

Prepared by:

Katherine V. Jaeger, MFA  
Ellen F. C. Mirro, AIA  
Studio TJP (formerly The Johnson Partnership)  
1212 NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street  
Seattle, WA 98115  
[www.tjp.us](http://www.tjp.us)

## 2. SITE OVERVIEW

(NB: Units of measurement have been rounded to the nearest whole number for clarity and ease of reading.)

### 2.1 LOCATION & NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

The subject building is in the Columbia City Landmark District, in the Columbia City neighborhood.

The immediate subject area is a mix of commercial buildings along Rainier Avenue South and residential buildings in the surrounding neighborhood. Hitt's Hill Park is located one block immediately south of the subject site. Columbia Park is approximately 5 blocks to the northwest along Rainier Avenue S. The subject site lies approximately three blocks east of the major north-south arterial of Martin Luther King Jr. Way S.

The boundaries of the Landmark District extend south to the southern property line of the southernmost subject parcel, while the boundaries of the National Register District extend only to S Hudson Street, excluding the subject site.

The only individually designated City of Seattle Landmark in the immediate neighborhood is the Myers Music Street Clock at 4873 Rainier Ave S.<sup>2</sup>

*See figures 1-7.*

### 2.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject site consists of three city lots fronting Rainier Avenue S, just south of S Hudson Street. The site contains two buildings, one situated on the southernmost parcel and one on the central parcel. The parcel on the southwest corner of Rainier Avenue S and S Hudson Street is a parking lot. A paved sidewalk with mature street trees lines Rainier Avenue S. A small, fenced parking area is located between the two buildings. The western elevations of each building abut the western property line, making observation of the western façades of the buildings impossible.

The three parcels of total proposed site area measure approximately 22,014 square feet. The Columbia Auto Service Garage (1920), a masonry building identified on the City of Seattle Historic Sites survey, located at 3711 S Hudson Street adjacent to the subject site, is sometimes also addressed at 5001 Rainier Avenue.<sup>3</sup> It is not part of the proposed site.

*See figures 8-9.*

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<sup>2</sup> Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, "Landmarks Map: Map of Designated Landmarks," Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, <https://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/programs-and-services/historic-preservation/landmarks/landmarks-map> (accessed July 2021).

<sup>3</sup> Seattle Historical Sites Survey, "Summary for 5001 Rainier Ave," Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, <https://web6.seattle.gov/DPD/HistoricalSite/QueryResult.aspx?ID=1644016278> (accessed September 2022).

## 2.3 SITE HISTORY

**Historical information below is excerpted from the 2007 report by Susan Boyle of BOLA:**

### **Overview - Columbia City History**

The national register of historic places nomination for the Columbia city historic district describes many historic themes in explaining the significance of this neighborhood commercial area. These include the early development of Columbia city prior to the 1907 annexation by the city of Seattle; impacts of the railroad, streetcar, and highway and road systems primarily along Rainier Avenue South; the cohesive physical nature of flat-iron and wedge-shaped sites, and historic and older buildings that resulted from the angled street alignment.

Columbia city was established as a separate, incorporated city in the later 19th century. For much of its history its residents and businesses were tightly linked with many of the owners and employees of district's shops and companies living nearby. Economically depressed for several decades in the 1960s through the 1980s, the neighborhood has improved with renewed investment in recent decades. This development is due in part to long-time efforts of grassroots organizations, such as Southeast Seattle Development (SEED) and the Rainier Valley Historical Society (RVHS), and also because of economic incentives, including those brought with local and national historic district designation. Local entrepreneurs and businesses have had a positive impact in revitalizing the commercial district, as have local agencies. A farmers' market was established in 1998, and the historic Columbia city library was expanded and rehabilitated in 2004.

### **The Subject Block**

The subject block containing the buildings described in this report is located at a pivotal grid change, along Rainier Avenue South, at the south end of the City of Seattle Historic District. The block is bounded on the north by South Hudson Street, on the south by South Dawson Street, and on the west by 37th Avenue South. This portion of the block is not included within the boundaries of the National Register Historic District, which is smaller than the local Historic District, and has its southernmost boundary set along the north side of South Hudson Street. (The edges of National Register Historic District boundary were established largely to correspond with the original 1891 area of Columbia City.)

The block contains the subject buildings along with others which are outside of the local Historic District boundary. Other buildings include industrial facilities under private ownership and an older Seattle City Light building on the southeast corner of the block. Topographically the block slopes slightly upward to the south along the east side. The grade in the north central portion drops approximately 8', and it slopes steeply upward in the southwest corner to an elevation estimated at 18' above the northeast corner.

To the west, across 37th Avenue South, the blocks are largely residential in character. The block to the south, across South Dawson Street was once the site of the Columbia Lumber Mill, and presently contains apartment buildings and houses and Hitt's Hill Park, which recalls the fireworks manufacturer once located in Columbia City.

### **A Uniquely Diverse Community**

Much of what is known about Columbia City's history dates from the period of its early physical development from the 1880s up through the 1920s. History did not stop in the early twentieth century, however. The emergence of new residents, including those from immigrant and ethnic groups, has had a distinct impact in shaping the neighborhood's contemporary cultural character. Columbia City has a rich ethnic history, which is based on immigration and demographic changes that began before World War II. Up until that time, it like most of Seattle, was primarily made up by American or foreign-born Caucasian residents. In ca. 1900 over 50% of the residents of Columbia City were foreign-born, primarily from European countries and Canada. Presently the area identified by Census Tract 103 is the home to many African, African-American, Asian and Asian-American people, in addition to Caucasians. The ethnic history of the neighborhood dates from more recent decades, and has helped create new traditions. Columbia City's diversity helps make it a unique inner-city neighborhood.

In 1940 there were 10-14% foreign-born white residents in Census Tract 103, which includes Columbia City and parts of the Hillman neighborhood to the south. This percentage was slightly less than the city total of 16.2%. At that time there were 14,201 non-Caucasians living in the city. Seattle's foreign-born residents were made up primarily by Canadians, Norwegians, Swedes, English and Welsh, Germans, Italians, Japanese, Scots, Russians and Irish. These residents made up these top ten groups with 2,000 to over 12,500 residents each (Schmid. Charts 29 and 45, p. 102 and 130). The largest minority racial groups in Seattle in 1940 were identified as Filipino, "Negro," Indian, Japanese and Chinese. Analysis of census data from 1940 indicated that most ethnic minorities in Seattle lived far north of Columbia City, in what is presently known as the International and Central Districts (Schmid, p. 131-137, and 141-149).

Significant numbers of African Americans migrated to Seattle during World War II to take up employment with wartime industries. They initially settled in residential zones between Madison and Jackson Streets near 21st to 23rd Avenues, where early African Americans had originally settled. The new residents tended to remain there, expanding with population growth to other parts of the Central District and gradually south of it into neighborhoods along Rainier Avenue South. It appears that the residential area surrounding the Columbia City commercial district remained primarily white, however, until the 1960s and 1970s. During these decades many Vietnamese, Thai and Laotian immigrants, displaced by the Vietnam War, moved into the Rainier Valley area of Columbia City. They were followed by Ethiopians, Somali and Eritrean immigrants (p. 137 - 141).

As noted in the city's 2000 analysis of census data (provided by DPD up until 2005), Columbia City is home to nearly 6,200 people in Tract 103. While many demographic features of the neighborhood -- age, gender, and home ownership -- reflect city-wide statistics, it is far more ethnically diverse than the city as a whole. Racially over 67% of Columbia City residents identify themselves as non-white. The neighborhood's 31.6% Black or African American and 30.5% Asian are predominant races (vs. 8.4% and 13.1% respectively city-wide), and Hispanic or Latino residents make up 7% of the population vs. the city-wide figure of 5.3%.

In addition to its unique ethnic make-up, present day Columbia City residents appear to be more family-oriented in comparison to Seattle's general population. The majority live in households (98.4%, similar to the 95.3% city-wide). Nearly a third of Columbia City households have children less than 18 years of age in contrast to the city-wide average of only 17.9%. The average family size is larger also, at 3.5 people vs. the average in Seattle of 2.9 people (Seattle's Official Census Site).

In 2022, Columbia City remains remarkably diverse. However, as more white people move to the neighborhood, gentrification has become a forefront issue in the area, fueled by sharply rising rents and widening income inequality. In 2002, a *Seattle Times* obituary for neighborhood restaurant owner Betty Parker referred to a "Columbia City rapidly disappearing through gentrification."<sup>4</sup> Starting in the late 2000s and continuing through the 2010s, Columbia City became the "hot" "new" part of town, drawing new residents from points north and subsequently displacing long-term residents with lower incomes. Between 2010 and 2019, Columbia City experienced one of the highest rent increases in the city.<sup>5</sup> These included individual businesses such as the Columbia City Bakery, but also local chains Pagliacci Pizza, Rudy's Barbershop, and Molly Moon's Ice Cream, all of which opened outposts in the neighborhood in 2016 and 2017.<sup>6</sup> As of 2020, census tract 103 had a 55.12% nonwhite population, down more than 12 percentage points since 2000.

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<sup>4</sup> Stuart Eskenazi, "Betty Y. Parker, 72, ran tiny café with big heart," obituary, *Seattle Times*, February 16, 2002, B6.

<sup>5</sup> Gene Balk, "As South Seattle gentrifies, white people become largest racial group," *Seattle Times*, September 16, 2019, p. B2.

<sup>6</sup> Sharon H. Chang, "South End Residents of Color Clap Back at the Times," *South Seattle Emerald*, June 14, 2017, <https://southseattleemerald.com/2017/06/14/south-end-residents-of-color-clap-back-at-the-times/> (accessed October 2022).



### 3. 5021 RAINIER AVENUE SOUTH

#### 3.1 PROPERTY DATA

**Historic Building Names:** Weed Building (1926)

**Current Building Name:** L.E.M.S. Bookstore

**Address:** 5021 Rainier Avenue South  
Seattle, WA 98118

**Location:** Columbia City

**Assessor's File Number:** no. 564960-0130

**Legal Description:** MORNINGSIDE ACRE TRACTS, 14 PARCEL C, PLATS 14 & 30

**Tract:** 14

**Parcel:** C

**Date of Construction:** 1924

**Original/Present Use:** Automobile garage/Auto service building & Retail

**Original/Present Owner:** Theodore D. Weed/WCK Rainier Properties LLC

**Original Designer:** John L. McCauley

**Original Builder:** Unknown

**Zoning:** NC2-65

**Property Size:** 0.22 acres or 9,514 sq. ft. (per King County Tax Assessor)

**Building Size:** 14,423 sq. ft., gross  
9,311 sq. ft., net (per King County Tax Assessor)

### 3.2 BUILDING DESCRIPTION

**The indented text below is excerpted from the 2007 report by Susan Boyle of BOLA. Text in brackets has been added by Studio TJP for clarity:**

The 9,514 square foot site is relatively level parcel located in the middle of the block, with street frontage along the primary east facade. The existing building features a post and beam structure with masonry infill. [The exterior walls of the building are unreinforced masonry (hollow clay tiles), the timber beams rest on thickened brick masonry piers at the outer walls and timber posts at the interior of the building, forming four north-south-oriented bays. The northernmost bay contains the ramp to the basement.] The flat roof is supported by [wooden beams and joists] and concrete foundations walls and floor slabs. Brick masonry is placed on the lower portions of the prominent front façade, which rises to an estimated 16 feet at the top of the flat parapet. Sidewalls are finished with painted and exposed 9" [hollow] clay tile and concrete.

Angled along the corresponding street frontage, the building is rectangular in the back, with overall the dimensions of 160 feet on the south, 106 feet on the north, 72 feet on the west and approximately 89 feet on the east street-front or east side.

Original storefronts and transom windows on the primary east facade provided much of the building's visible character. These featured plate glass panels held by copper frames and wood trim, with brick masonry bulkheads.

The tax assessor photo, dating from 1936, shows the primary facade was painted by that time, with the tall section above the storefront and transoms serving as signage for the dealership business.

The building was constructed with two sections: the front section, housing the retail area, and the rear, with a two-story garage and a ramp leading down to an underground garage area. Brick masonry clads the street-front façade at the original storefront bulkheads and piers, with painted stucco cladding the upper section of the walls and parapet. Original storefronts have been filled in with painted diagonal wooden siding. A garage entry is located on the northern end of the eastern façade. At the center is a recessed retail entry flanked by two sets of four stopped-in, ganged, single-pane picture windows, with wooden frames and mullions. The sidewalls of the building are clad in hollow clay tile in remarkably poor condition. Skylights on the roof light the garage interior. *See figures 10-15.*

#### **Interior Layout & Finishes:**

The original plan featured the showroom in the front, with storefront windows and entry in two primary bays and a vehicle entry at a recessed section near the north end of the east facade. An office section with four rooms and a parts room was located in the middle, and the service shop was in the back 72' by 105' section. This tripartite division of space is typical of many auto showroom/garage buildings that date from ca. 1910 through the 1930s.

Tax records note there was an original 72' by 74' partial basement, which likely was located in the front or east end. The current overall size is noted as 14,423 gross square feet (9,311 net square feet).

The original basement had 9' ceiling height, and main floor was built with a 14' ceiling height. Original

interior finishes included plastered wood framed partitions, glass and “veneer board.” Floors were concrete, with asphalt resilient floor tile added to 2,400 square feet by the mid-1930s. Originally the garage contained 7' x 9' rolling steel doors.

The interior of the original streetfront showroom is now used for retail space. Behind the retail space is an office and restroom. The back half of the building is separate from the retail space and is accessed from the northern garage entry. This portion of the building contains garage space and a ramp down to the basement, containing more garage and storage space.

Finishes at the retail space consist of fir flooring, plaster walls, and painted drywall Gothic arched openings at the line of structure in the middle of the space.

Garage finishes are in poor condition, with plaster falling from the ceiling at the garage entry, gypsum wallboard falling from the ceiling at the main floor of the garage, and wear and tear on the doors and wall finishes. The skylights leak. *See figures 16-21.*

### 3.3 DOCUMENTED BUILDING ALTERATIONS

**Indented text below is excerpted from the 2007 report by Susan Boyle of BOLA:**

The present building has been changed to accommodate tenants, and lost the original character-providing storefront windows and entry doors some time ago. [In 2007] Wash's Auto Report (2106.722.3205) occupie[d] the back section, with vehicle access provided from the original location at 5021 Rainier Avenue South through a single large roll-up metal door set into an angled recess, 5 to 12 feet from the sidewalk.

The front tenant space is enclosed more than it was historically when it served as an auto showroom. Original storefronts, transom windows and entry doors removed, and the original two storefront bays infilled by painted diagonal wood siding and smaller window openings. An entry to the space, currently occupied by Columbia City Fitness Center (206.725.7894), at 5023 Rainier Avenue South, is provided in a recess off the sidewalk near the center with a non-original single door and glazed reight panels. This entry is framed by the infill cladding, each containing an estimated 4 by 12 foot opening for windows. Presently there are exposed brick masonry piers and a two-foot tall brick bulkhead. Windows are wood framed, fixed and single glazed, with sills are set at 4.5' above grade rather than at a historic display level. The interior is finished with carpet, resilient floor and a flat ceiling. The upper wall portion of the primary east facade is stucco clad, and painted a contrasting color from the lower section. Historic photos indicate the building once had skylights, which have been infilled or removed.

The original permit for the subject building, number 24017, was issued in 1924. Permits include changes in 1926, 1927, 1940 and 1968.

In 1991 a nonconforming billboard was removed from the southern façade of the building due to being technically located within the Landmark District.<sup>7</sup>

The building was repaired and maintained in-kind in 2010, according to a letter from the Columbia City

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<sup>7</sup> Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections, permit no. 15486.

Landmark District Coordinator.<sup>8</sup>

Subsequent alterations include a 2012 art installation on the southern façade of the building. Because the art installation is offset from the building, it crosses the boundary of the Colombia City Landmark District and is thus outside the purview of the District. The penetrations holding the art installation frame to the building were administratively reviewed and approved in 2012.<sup>9</sup>

### Recorded permits

Date	Description	Permit No.
1924	[illegible] sash [illegible] Co.	240174
1926		259380
1927		265410
1940		337882
1968		527889
1975	Plastic sign	1584
1996	Change use from retail to indoor participant sport	685245

### 3.4 BUILDING CONDITION

As of September 2022, the building is in overall poor physical condition. Exterior materials of the building include:

- Membrane roofing (unobserved)
- Concrete foundation and slab on grade
- Cladding: brick veneer
- Cladding: diagonal painted wooden siding
- Cladding: hollow clay tile
- Cladding: painted textured siding panels
- Windows: non-original wood framed stopped in glass
- Windows: original wood sash
- Doors: painted storefront system doors

Roof: No visual assessment of the roof from the exterior was made. Leaks were observed at the interior.

Foundation: The poured-in-place foundation seems to be in fair condition except on the eastern side, where settlement of the structure was observed. However, the crushing of the terra cotta walls at the north and south may indicate more extensive foundation issues.

Cladding: The existing cladding consists of the unreinforced masonry walls, including brick veneer at the storefront bulkhead, hollow clay tile walls, and painted stucco at the top of the street front wall. These materials exhibit a range of conditions from fair to poor.

The brick at the street front is in fair condition. Cracking in the mortar indicates settlement.

The stucco at the upper portion of the eastern wall is in poor condition, with evidence of moisture

<sup>8</sup> Rebecca Frestedt, "In-kind repairs and maintenance at 1521 Rainier Ave S," letter to Dennis Zitto, August 13, 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Rebecca Frestedt, email to Ellen Mirro, September 15, 2022

intrusion evident by the peeling paint and blistering surface.

The condition of the hollow clay tile at the northern and southern façades is remarkably poor, with the terra cotta spalling either from moisture intrusion and spalling, gravity load crushing, or settlement of the foundation. Graffiti on the sidewalls has been painted over.

The painted textured panels at the eastern end of the northern façade are in fair condition.

Windows: A comprehensive window condition survey was not undertaken as part of the scope of this report.

The non-original street-front storefront windows systems are single glazed but exhibit no obvious cracks or issues with the wooden frames. The original wood-sash windows at the western end of the building are in poor condition, with missing glazing and evidence of wood deterioration.

Doors: The main entry doors, including the garage doors and retail entry, are functional. Other doors were not tested.

Structural system: The structural system consists of unreinforced masonry piers supporting timber beams, interior timber posts, and concrete foundation. Evidence of settlement at the foundation is indicated by cracking of the brick mortar and crushing of the clay tile walls, along with the delamination of the plaster from the ceiling joists indicating water intrusion and movement of the joists.

*See figures 25-30.*

### 3.5 BUILDING HISTORY & TENANTS

**Indented text below is excerpted from the 2007 report by Susan Boyle of BOLA:**

This two-story wood framed, brick masonry commercial building was constructed beginning in 1924. It was originally owned by a Columbia City resident and businessman, Theodore D. Weed. **[For more on Theodore Weed, see section 3.6.]**

The building was designed by architect John L. McCauley, another Columbia City resident, who is credited with the design of at least seven buildings in the district. Despite it having been designed by an architect, its style is consistent with the building type and is characterized as Vernacular.

The building was constructed at a cost of \$4,000 as an automobile garage. It appears that the construction was phased, as an addition was built at the cost of \$2,000 for auto sales and service in 1926, and construction was completed in 1927 for another \$2,000. Tax records indicate that Mr. Weed had sold the building to Alice J. Mason in 1936. By this date it was a dealership for Brown and Webb, which dealt in Willys 77 vehicles. Auto related use continued under the Sam D. Stearns Auto Dealership, which is noted in the 1938 Polk Directory to Seattle. In 1940, Lyon's Plumbing Supply also was located in the building. By 1960 the building was occupied by Columbia Motors, a Direct Factory Dealership for Plymouth. Use of the back portion of the building for auto repair businesses has continued to the present day.



Columbia Motors Inc. occupied the building from 1948 until 1960, with another location at 5407 Rainier Avenue S. In 1956 they advertised in the *Seattle Times*: “20 years your dependable Dodge Plymouth Dealer.”<sup>10</sup>

The building appears to have had two tenants after Columbia Motors vacated the building. The addresses 5021 Rainier Avenue S and 5023 Rainier Avenue S have both been associated with the building, with the auto repair businesses located at 5021 and other retail businesses located at 5023.

Columbia Marina was the tenant of 5021 Rainier Avenue S from 1960 through 1964.<sup>11</sup> In 1974, Rainier Recreation at 5023 Rainier Avenue S moved in and installed a 4' x 6' electric sign on the building.<sup>12</sup> In 1975, Wash's Auto Repair at 5021 Rainier Ave S installed a blade sign.<sup>13</sup>

Other tenants have also been recorded in the permit record. In 1980, a Certificate of Approval was reviewed and later approved for signage at 5023 Rainier Avenue S for Sports in Action.<sup>14</sup> A building permit also authorized a change of use from retail to “indoor participant sport.” The wooden blade sign was illuminated by four flood lamps.<sup>15</sup> Later the tenant would be Kids in Action.<sup>16</sup>

Wash's Auto Repair remained in the building and replaced their sign in 2001.<sup>17</sup>

L.E.M.S. Bookstore began its tenancy in the building in 2009. *See figures 22-24.*

### 3.6 ORIGINAL OWNER: THEODORE D. WEED

Theodore D. Weed (1882-1963)—Columbia City businessman, property developer, and eventual city and county building superintendent—was the developer and original owner of the subject building. He owned the building from the time of its construction until 1936.<sup>18</sup>

Weed was born in Camp Douglas, Wisconsin in 1882. In 1902 he married Myrtle E. Currin (1883-1956).

By 1905 the Weeds had moved to Washington and were living on Ferdinand Street in what was then the town of Columbia. (Columbia would be annexed into the city in 1907.) In the city directory of that year, Theodore's occupation was listed as carpenter.<sup>19</sup> In the 1910 federal census, Weed's profession was listed as owner of a planing mill. At that time the Weeds lived at 3839 S Edmunds Street, approximately three blocks from the subject site.<sup>20</sup> The family lived there until at least 1926.

Myrtle and Theodore's daughter Luverne was born in 1912.

By 1919, Weed was the owner and operator of City Sash & Door, with offices and factory located at 5000 Rainier Avenue, directly facing the subject site.

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<sup>10</sup> *Seattle Times*, classified advertisement, February 10, 1956, p. 41.

<sup>11</sup> *Seattle Times*, passim.

<sup>12</sup> Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections, sign permit no. 00710.

<sup>13</sup> Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections, sign permit no. 01584.

<sup>14</sup> Roberta Deering, “LPB 125/80, Certificate of Approval Application –Sign—Sports In Action, 5023 Rainier Avenue S/Columbia City Landmark District,” letter to Mr. Joe Komo, March 13, 1980.

<sup>15</sup> Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections, sign permit no. 6785.

<sup>16</sup> Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections, electrical permit no. 737064.

<sup>17</sup> Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections, sign permit no. 001122-055.

<sup>18</sup> King County property record abstracts, Morningside Acres Tracts.

<sup>19</sup> R. L. Polk & Co., *Seattle City Directory*, 1905, p. 1246

<sup>20</sup> R. L. Polk & Co., *Seattle City Directory*, 1926, p. 1519.

In 1929, the family home was at 1303 E Lynn Street, in the Montlake neighborhood. By 1932, Theodore and Myrtle were estranged; Myrtle lived in the Lynn Street house while Weed was living in Columbia City at 3811 Ferdinand Street. By 1929, Weed had acquired the building at 4906-08 Rainier Avenue (1908), which is today known as the Weed Building.

In 1931, Weed was granted permits to construct three new houses on Cascadia Avenue S in the Genesee neighborhood.<sup>21</sup>

In May 1932, a "spectacular three-alarm fire of mysterious origin"<sup>22</sup> tore through the building at 5000 Rainier, housing the offices and factory of City Sash & Door and the Columbia substation of the postal service. The fire destroyed much of the company's stock.<sup>23</sup> City Sash & Door apparently ceased operating following this fire.

Later in 1932, Weed was embroiled in legal drama when he was arrested and charged with second-degree murder of his friend Frank Simpson. Simpson had plummeted over a cliff while on a hunting expedition with Weed. As he lay in hospital, Simpson accused Weed of having hit him with a rifle before shoving him over the cliff. Simpson died on October 17, 1932, and the following day, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* published a first-person account of Weed's side of the story, along with a photograph of Weed, Myrtle, and Luverne, proclaiming that the events had led to the couple's reconciliation.<sup>24</sup> The charges against Weed were dropped in January 1933, shortly before the trial was due to start, at the urging of Simpson's widow.<sup>25</sup>

In 1935 Theodore Weed began working for the building department of King County, as a construction foreman.<sup>26</sup>

Myrtle Weed divorced Theodore in 1941, citing cruelty.

In 1945, Weed received a permit to build a house at 3039 Avalon Way S, in the North Delridge portion of West Seattle. This house would remain Weed's residence for the rest of his life. In 1948 Weed married Sylvia May Sorensen (ca. 1894-1959), a registered nurse.<sup>27</sup>

After several years with what was known as County-City Building, Weed was promoted to assistant superintendent. In December 1950, Weed was appointed superintendent.<sup>28</sup>

Weed retired in 1953. He died of a heart attack in 1963.<sup>29</sup> *See figure 31.*

### 3.7 SUBSEQUENT BUILDING OWNER: WASHIN MURAKAMI

Washin Murakami (1928-2001) purchased the building from Thomas Mason in 1964.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Seattle Times*, "Building Permits," June 18, 1931, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> *Seattle Times*, "Mystery 3-Alarm Fire Hits Rainier Valley Factory," ^, May 10, 1932, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Seattle Times*, "\$20,000 Blaze Damages Block on Rainier Ave," May 10, 1932, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Lester Hunt, "Injured Hunter Dies; Weed Faces Murder Charges," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, October 17, 1932, pp. 1-2.

<sup>25</sup> *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, "Weed Freed of Death Charge," January 19, 1933, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> *Seattle Times*, "County Promotes Theodore Weed," December 7, 1950, p. 13.

<sup>27</sup> *Seattle Times*, "Mrs. Theodore Weed," obituary, July 1, 1959, p. 57.

<sup>28</sup> 1950 census.

<sup>29</sup> *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, "Theodore D. Weed," September 22, 1963, p. 22.

<sup>30</sup> Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections, King County Property Record Abstracts, Morningside Acres Tracts.

Murakami was born in Auburn, WA, one of eleven children of first-generation immigrant farmers.<sup>31</sup> The Murakami family was incarcerated at the concentration camp in Minidoka, ID as a result of President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066. After World War II ended, Murakami became an apprentice at Seventh Avenue Service on S Jackson Street. After completing his apprenticeship, Murakami worked at Terry's Auto Service on S Dearborn Street for the next 10 years, before going into business for himself.<sup>32</sup> In 1964, Murakami purchased the subject building and established Wash's Auto Repair, which he operated for the next 48 years. Murakami retired in 2012, and passed away in 2021 at age 93.<sup>33</sup>

### 3.8 NOTABLE TENANT: L.E.M.S. BOOKSTORE

L.E.M.S. Bookstore has been the tenant of 5023 Rainier Avenue S since 2009, one of the very few—if not only—Black-owned bookstores in the state, and Seattle's only bookstore focused on Black writers and culture.

L.E.M.S., also known as Life Enrichment Bookstore, was established around 1996 by Vickie Williams (1952-2017). Williams grew up in Indiana and attended Indiana State University. Upon moving to Seattle, she worked as a Metro bus driver and a substitute teacher before founding the bookstore with her sister. Originally the store was a Christian bookstore, but Williams shifted the focus to Black literature, culture, and history. (L.E.M.S. stands for Learning Educational Materials and Software, one of the store's previous names.)<sup>34</sup>

L.E.M.S. also served as a community hub and cultural touchpoint for the Black community of the city and the greater region. The store was known for its Kwanzaa celebrations and resources, and hosted craft bazaars during the holiday season. Events and programs hosted at the bookstore include an annual Gullah Festival,<sup>35</sup> African spirituality events,<sup>36</sup> a Black history study group, author readings, drum circles and other music performances, lectures, job fairs, and health services.<sup>37</sup> Lawyer and former Seattle mayoral candidate, Nikkita Oliver, described L.E.M.S. as a "fixture in South Seattle and a particularly important and necessary institution in Seattle's Black community."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Rose Marie Gai, "Longtime Columbia City auto mechanic retires," *City Living Seattle*, May 9, 2012, <https://citylivingseattle.com/Content/News/City-News/Article/Longtime-Columbia-City-auto-mechanic-retires/22/167/88889> (accessed October 2022).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> *Seattle Times*, "Washin Murakami," obituary, September 19, 2021, p. 53.

<sup>34</sup> Nicole Brodeur, "Bookstore owner created hub for black community," *Seattle Times*, March 16, 2017, p. A1.

<sup>35</sup> *The Skanner News*, "Seattle News & Events for July 11 Through August 2014," July 10, 2014, <https://www.theskanner.com/news/newsbriefs/21513-seattle-news-and-events-for-july-11-through-august-2014> (accessed September 2022).

<sup>36</sup> *The Skanner News*, "Community Calendar: Seattle," December 10, 2008, <https://www.theskanner.com/news/northwest/4148-community-calendar-seattle-2008-12-11> (accessed October 2022).

<sup>37</sup> Chamidae Ford, "Historic L.E.M.S. Bookstore Reopens," *South Seattle Emerald*, December 21, 2020, <https://crosscut.com/2019/03/will-seattle-save-was-only-black-owned-bookstore> (accessed September 2022).

<sup>38</sup> Ford.

The store moved several times. In 2002, the store was located in the Rainier Beach neighborhood. By 2007, it had moved north to Columbia City, at 5620 Rainier Avenue S, six blocks south of the subject site.<sup>39</sup> A grand opening was held at the subject building on March 14 and 15, 2009.<sup>40</sup>

Ms. Williams passed away from heart failure in 2017. In a tribute to Ms. Williams in the South Seattle Emerald, Black women's health advocate Bridgette Hempstead described her as "truly the walking, talking Black library," and cited Williams' "many hours [...] service to mentoring and counseling our youth and others who just needed a loving Vickie."<sup>41</sup> More than 600 people attended her funeral.<sup>42</sup>

Following Williams' death, her partner Aaliyah Messiah, granddaughter Tylicia Messiah, and stepson Hassan Messiah El took over management of the institution. The bookstore closed, but the subject building remained an event space and community hub. In 2019, a community-led effort and GoFundMe campaign organized by Estelita's Books raised more than \$90,000—well surpassing its original goal of \$75,000—to support LEMS. The campaign's objectives were to cover rent payments in the subject building, revive the bookselling portion of the business, and create a co-working space in the subject building. The store reopened in the subject building in December 2020 but has since closed. *See figures 32-33.*

### 3.9 BUILDING ARCHITECT: JOHN LAWRENCE McCAULEY<sup>43</sup>

The architect of record for the building is John Lawrence McCauley (1897-1957).

McCauley was born in Iowa in 1879. He graduated from Acoca High school in 1896, and was working in Iowa as a carpenter in 1900.<sup>44</sup> He moved to Seattle and in 1903 married Mary Frances Risse. McCauley and Mary Frances had six children between 1904 and 1917.<sup>45</sup> In July 1908, McCauley was working for the City of Seattle Building Department, and was promoted from a drawing inspector to a chief field inspector.<sup>46</sup> By 1908 he was in partnership as an architect with Washington N. G. Place. Place designed the AYPE Foundry Building (1909, now the Engineering Annex Building) while in partnership with J. L. McCauley.<sup>47</sup> By 1911, McCauley was the sole proprietor and principal of J. L. McCauley, Architect, a business he disbanded in 1931. His office operated from the Leary Building in 1910 and 1911, and from 1914 to 1924 from the New York Block. By 1926 he was working from the Alaska Building.<sup>48</sup> By 1935 McCauley had moved to San Diego,

<sup>39</sup> *Catholic Northwest Progress*, "Profiles of Black Spirituality for Every Day of the Year," Volume 110, No. 23, November 15, 2007, p. 19.

<sup>40</sup> *The Skanner News*, "Community News Briefs: Seattle," March 11, 2009, <https://www.theskanner.com/news/northwest/4646-community-news-briefs-seattle-2009-03-12> (accessed September 2022).

<sup>41</sup> Bridgette Hempstead, "Remembering Vickie Williams," *South Seattle Emerald*, March 5, 2017, <https://southseattleemerald.com/2017/03/05/remembering-vicki-williams/> (accessed September 2022).

<sup>42</sup> Marcus Harrison Green, "Hundreds Pay Respect to the Life of Vickie Williams," *South Seattle Emerald*, March 14, 2017, <https://southseattleemerald.com/2017/03/14/hundreds-pay-respect-to-the-life-of-vickie-williams/> (accessed September 2022).

<sup>43</sup> Adapted from the Landmark Nomination Report for Prince Hall Masonic Temple, Studio TJP, 2018.

<sup>44</sup> David Rash, "McCauley, John Lawrence," *Shaping Seattle Architecture: A Historical Guide to the Architects*, ed. Jeffrey Karl Ochsner (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2012), p. 458.

<sup>45</sup> Steve Schar, "John Lawrence McCauley Facts," Ancestry.com. Alan Michaelson, "John Lawrence McCauley (Architect)," Pacific Coast Architecture Database, <http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/person/3106/> (accessed July 2018).

<sup>46</sup> *Seattle Times*, "Building Department Ordinance in Effect," July 13, 1908, p. 10.

<sup>47</sup> Susan Boyle, "Historic Resources Addendum: University of Washington Engineering Annex Building," BOLA Architecture + Planning, 2012.

<sup>48</sup> *Seattle Times*, "Ten Story Hotel Big Improvement," July 12, 1914, p. 42; "Plans Being Drawn for new Business College," May 20, 1923, p. 15; "Contract Let for Building at 14th N. and McGraw," April 18, 1926, p. 72.

where he died in 1957.<sup>49</sup>

McCauley is the architect of record for several significant buildings in Seattle. These include the Bush Hotel in the International District (1915-1916), the Masonic Ark Lodge no. 126 in Columbia City (1920-1921, now the Columbia City Cinema), the Governor Apartments in the International District (1926), and the Publix Hotel in the International District (1927-1928). He also designed the Rainier Heat & Power Building (1917, demolished).

Of all his projects, McCauley received the most publicity as the supervising architect for the 1929 expansion of the King County Courthouse (1914-1916, A. W. Gould), designed in collaboration with Henry Bittman.<sup>50</sup> The expansion involved adding more than five stories atop the original 1914-1916 structure, designed by A. W. Gould. The top portion of the addition was a multi-story jail complex. As a result of his role as the supervisory architect of the courthouse project, he was considered for the position of Superintendent of Buildings for the City, although he never held the position.<sup>51</sup> The commission for what was then known as the “City-County Building” was one of McCauley’s last, and he moved to La Jolla, California. McCauley’s name was mentioned as a potential witness, but there is no record that he returned to Seattle to testify.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to the Masonic Ark Lodge in Columbia City, McCauley also designed the Rainier Lodge for the Freemasons in 1925. The *Seattle Times* described the building as “a two-story reinforced concrete lodge building for Rainier Lodge no 189, Masons and Amethyst Chapter, order of Eastern Star....The new Building will cost approximately \$30,000. It will be 60 by 90 feet and will have a mezzanine floor. An attractive pressed brick facing has been planned by the Architect J. L. McCauley.”<sup>53</sup>

McCauley designed many buildings of a smaller scale than the Rainier Lodge and the King County Courthouse. In addition to the subject building, McCauley designed two other buildings in Columbia City: a signal station at 800 Rainier Avenue S, now known as Budd & Company Auto (1925), and the Calvary Bakery Building (now La Medusa, 1927). Other commissions in the Columbia City area included alterations in 1929 to the Weed Building (4906-4908 Rainier Avenue S), one block north of the subject building.<sup>54</sup>

McCauley was listed as the design architect for numerous buildings that have been demolished or may never have been completed. In 1910, the *Seattle Times* records McCauley as the architect for a planned three-story apartment building in north Broadway, and as the architect for an additional story to a building located at 115 Fifth Avenue S.<sup>55</sup> In 1911, McCauley designed a home for James H. Nelson at the corner of 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and E Union Street (now demolished).<sup>56</sup> In 1918 he received a commission for a three-story hotel building at the corner of Eighth Avenue S and S Weller Street.<sup>57</sup> In 1922 he was the design architect for a two-story apartment building, measuring 36' x 60', near the corner of 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue E and E John Street.<sup>58</sup> In 1926, the

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<sup>49</sup> Alan Michelson, “John Lawrence McCauley (Architect),” Pacific Coast Architectural Database, <https://pcad.lib.washington.edu/person/3106/> (accessed July 2018).

<sup>50</sup> Rash.

<sup>51</sup> *Seattle Times*, “All Members of Public Works Board Quit Jobs,” July 16, 1931, p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> *Seattle Times*, “County Graft and Perjury Charged in Five Indictments,” October 30, 1932, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> *Seattle Times*, “Ready to work on \$30,000 Building,” May 17, 1925, p. 25.

<sup>54</sup> Rash.

<sup>55</sup> *Seattle Times*, “Building News” November 13, 1910, p. 46.

<sup>56</sup> *Seattle Times*, “Building News,” January 8, 1911, p. 40.

<sup>57</sup> *Seattle Times*, “Hotel News,” July 10, 1918, p. 8.

<sup>58</sup> *Seattle Times*, “Building Boom in City,” October 1, 1922, p. 10.



*Seattle Times* also reported that McCauley was the architect of record for a store building at 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue N and McGraw Street in 1926.<sup>59</sup>

McCauley originally obtained the commission for the Wilson Modern Business College in 1923, however this commission was later completed by Frank Fowler in 1927.<sup>60</sup> The building, now known as the Griffin Building, is a City of Seattle Landmark.

J. L. McCauley served as treasurer and trustee for the Washington State Society of Architects in 1916 and 1917.<sup>61</sup> He was a charter member of the Seattle Moose Lodge, serving in 1915 as treasurer and later as “dictator.”<sup>62</sup> In 1917 he was chair of the Modern Woodmen of America.<sup>63</sup> He served two three-year terms on the Board of Appeals for the Building Department, succeeding John Creutzer in the mayor-appointed board position in 1920, and re-appointed in 1923.<sup>64</sup> In 1924 he served as third vice president of the Washington State Society of Architects.<sup>65</sup>

McCauley died at the age of 78, in 1957, in San Diego.

### 3.10 ORIGINAL BUILDING CONTRACTOR

The original contractor or builder of 5021 Rainier Avenue S is unknown at this time.

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<sup>59</sup> *Seattle Times*, “Contract Let for Building at 14<sup>th</sup> N and McGraw Street,” April 18, 1926, p. 72.

<sup>60</sup> *Seattle Times*, “Plans Being Drawn for new Business College,” May 20, 1923, p. 15.

<sup>61</sup> *Western Architect & Engineer*, volumes 48-49. *Seattle Times*, “Change in Capitol Plans is Approved,” December 6, 1917, p. 20.

<sup>62</sup> *Seattle Times*, “W. G. Leckey named Dictator of Moose,” March 11, 1915, p. 7; “Loyal Order of Moose to Honor Past Dictators,” March 13, 1930, p. 38.

<sup>63</sup> *Seattle Times*, “M.W.A. Holds Election,” April 6, 1917, p. 15.

<sup>64</sup> *Seattle Times*, “Named to Appeal Board,” May 3, 1920, p. 9; “McCauley Appointment Confirmed,” May 9, 1923, p. 8.

<sup>65</sup> *Seattle Times*, “Roy D. Rogers Heads Architects’ Society,” December 7, 1924, p. 70.

## 4. 5015 RAINIER AVENUE SOUTH

### 4.1 PROPERTY DATA

**Historic Building Names:** Columbia Lumber Company

**Current Building Name:** Smoke & Beyond

**Address:** 5015 Rainier Avenue South  
Seattle, WA 98118

**Location:** Columbia City

**Assessor's File Number:** 564960-0133

**Legal Description:** MORNINGSIDE ACRE TRACTS N 60 FT OF S 131.37 FT

**Tract:** 14

**Parcel:** B

**Date of Construction:** 1926

**Original/Present Use:** Lumber Yard Office/Retail Store & Convenience Market

**Original/Present Owner:** Columbia Lumber Co/WCK Rainier Properties LLC

**Original Designer:** Unknown

**Original Builder:** Unknown

**Zoning:** NC2-65

**Property Size:** 0.12 acres or 5,040 sq. ft. (per King County Tax Assessor)

**Building Size:** 1,158 sq. ft., gross  
1,158 sq. ft., net (per King County Tax Assessor)

## 4.2 BUILDING DESCRIPTION

**Indented text below is excerpted from the 2007 report by Susan Boyle of BOLA:**

The site is a relatively level parcel located in the middle of the block, with street frontage on the east along Rainier Avenue South. The lot is 60 foot wide, with the building placed along the east property line near the center of the parcel with an estimated 20-foot-wide side yard on the south and 16- to 18-foot-wide side yard on the north. Both yards are unpaved, but the southern one is presently fenced and used for parking.

The building features a wood post and beam framing, and originally had post and board foundations. Its steep front-facing gable roof is supported by wood trusses. [.....]

According to the 1936 era historic tax record card, the building contained 1,197 square feet, with exterior dimensions on 56'-8" on the north and 18'-6" on the west, and approximately 68' on the south and 22'-6" on the east. It was largely rectangular, but a portion projected to the side near the front, and the front facade was extended with an angle to parallel the street.

Currently the building's massing comprises three sections: a streetfront front gable section with the eastern façade angled parallel to the street and a higher ridgeline; a central gabled portion with a chimney on the southern side; and a small flat-roofed former porch on the western end.

The western end of the building features a scalloped decorative bargeboard at the street front. The bargeboard was added sometime after 1956, as it doesn't appear in any historic photographs. Recent repairs have replaced the diagonal sign, filling in much of the retail storefront with yellow painted horizontal siding. Board and batten siding, painted yellow and brown, covers the northern side of the western end, and the gable end at the eastern façade. The southern façade is covered by painted shingles, and the western façade is clad with vertical T1-11 sheet siding at the main level and narrow horizontal lap siding filling in the gable end. A vinyl window with a metal security grill is located in the middle of the eastern façade and the retail entry is on the northern end of that façade.

The middle section of the building is clad in yellow-painted narrow horizontal lap siding and has several boarded-up window openings on the southern side. Evidence indicates that the windows on the northern façade were replaced with smaller windows surrounded by plywood infill.

The western end of the building is clad in white painted vertical siding. A parapet extends up past the gable eaves of the central section. *See figures 34-39.*

**Interior Layout & Finishes:**

The original interior featured a flat ceiling of 9' and was simple finishes of plaster board over wood framed partitions, and fir flooring, which was provided in three of the original four rooms. The original building was heated by a wood stove.

The building interior features a front retail area and a back office and stock area. Interior finishes include vinyl flooring, painted wallboard and painted ceilings. The walls and ceiling may consist of more than one

material, as they have been patched over time. The interior finish materials are in poor condition. *See figures 40-41.*

#### 4.3 DOCUMENTED BUILDING ALTERATIONS

**Indented text below is excerpted from the 2007 report by Susan Boyle of BOLA:**

The roof was originally finished with cedar shingles, and its exterior walls were clad with cedar siding and “frame shakes.” The original building contained three or four rooms, with the office and retail store spaces near the front and storage or service spaces near the back.

(Another historic tax photo for the property, dating from 1960, shows the presence of an open single-story shed structure between the existing building and the one to the south at 5021 Rainier Avenue South, with vehicle openings on both its front and back walls. No longer extant, this appears to have served as a storage shed, was built in 1952 – 1953 as a later addition to the subject building. A tax record and photo dating from April 1953 show it as an L-shaped structure that wrapped the back and part of the south side of the existing building. Constructed by the owner at the time, S.A. Foster Lumber Company, it was of “cheap” construction. It featured a post and beam structure with 6x6 posts and 2x12 floor joists, “old plank” floors, low gable and shed roofs. The shed was clad with 5/4 wood siding and 180 feet of a material cited as “flex-board.” It provided a total of 4,400 square feet. Records suggest it was demolished in ca. 1965 – 1967 although a portion may have been salvaged.)

The 1936 tax photo of the subject building shows the front facing gable end featured a prominent verge board and timbering on the primary facade, exposed rafter tails on the sides, and a tall painted panel sign along the ridgeline that read “S. A. Foster Lumber.” A shed roof awning, of what appears to have been wood panels, then sheltered the primary east facade. This contained the entry, with a multi-light wood panel doors, and several windows. Other wood framed windows were placed along the sidewalls.

By 1960 the awning has been removed. In both the 1936 and 1960 era photos the original sidewall cladding, of painted wood shakes applied in horizontal rows with deep exposure, is visible.

The present building retains the original gable roof form, with its two slightly different ridge heights. It exhibits changes with non-original siding, roofing, cladding, fenestration, storefront openings and doors. These exterior changes appear to have been made in response to retail store use. The primary east facade presently is clad vertical board and batten wood siding and the roof with composition roof shingles.

The current siding covers the original timbered treatment in the front gable end.

Original window and door locations on the front facade have been retained but the elements themselves have been changed. The back of the building appears somewhat domestic in nature with a partly enclosed porch on the back end of the south facade. Its condition appears poor.

Subsequent alterations include approved applications for signs and paint colors, and approvals for tree removals, landscaping, and right-of-way improvements. In 2022, an automobile accident caused extensive damage to the streetfront facade. The subsequent emergency repairs, replacing diagonal siding with horizontal

yellow painted siding, obtained an emergency certificate of approval conditional upon the submission of a restoration plan. The application is incomplete.<sup>66</sup>

Date	Description	Permit No.
1926		263024
1928		274000
1948		387795
1951	Repair fire damage and re-build per plans	411415
1965		512676
1979		585629
1992	Repair fire damage meter for electrical service for Store/Grocery	702962

#### 4.4 BUILDING CONDITION

As of September 2022, the building is in fair to poor physical condition overall. The exterior materials of the building include:

- Roofing: composite asphalt shingles
- Roofing: membrane (unobserved)
- Foundation: concrete slab on grade
- Foundation: post and pier
- Cladding: board and batt
- Cladding: horizontal lap siding
- Cladding: cedar shingles
- Cladding: vertical siding
- Window: vinyl sash with metal security grate
- Windows: boarded up
- Doors: painted wood-frame, single-light, with metal security grate
- Chimney: painted bricks

Roof: Shingles on the gable roof are in fair condition with evidence of biological growth on the northern side. No visual assessment was made of the membrane roof at the flat roof on the western end.

Cladding: The existing cladding consists of the following painted wood cladding products: painted wood horizontal siding at the eastern façade, shingles at the southern facade, board and batt, narrow horizontal lap siding, vertical siding, and vertical sheet siding (T1-11). These materials exhibit conditions ranging from good to poor.

The new horizontal siding on the eastern façade, installed in 2022, is in good condition.

The non-original board and batt siding is in fair condition.

The painted narrow horizontal lap siding is probably original but is in poor condition, with areas of missing boards on the southern façade, extensive patching, and areas of rot.

<sup>66</sup> Rebecca Frestedt, email to Ellen Mirro, September 15, 2022.



The T1-11 is in fair condition.

The vertical siding at the western end is in fair to poor condition, with areas of flaking paint and rot at the base of the wall.

Windows: A comprehensive window condition survey was not undertaken as part of the scope of this report.

The vinyl street front window dating from 2022 is in excellent condition. Other windows have been altered. No original windows were observed.

Foundation: The post and pier foundation was not observed. Settlement of the structure was observed.

Chimney: The painted brick chimney appears to be in fair condition.

Doors: The main entry door is functional. Other doors were not tested.

*See figures 45-48.*

## 4.5 BUILDING HISTORY & TENANTS

**Indented text below is excerpted from the 2007 report by Susan Boyle of BOLA:**

### **Building History**

This one-story wood framed and clad commercial building was constructed in ca. 1918 by the Columbia City Lumber Company to serve as its office. Prior to this date the company had been located on the parcel to the north, at 5001 Rainier Avenue South, from 1912. **[For more on the Columbia Lumber Co., see section 4.6.]**

The Columbia Lumber Company added onto the building twice in the late 1920s, and it subsequently was owned and operated by several lumber businesses, including S. A. Foster Lumber and the Valley Lumber Company, up through the 1950s. Tax records indicate it was sold in 1938, and purchased [by] S. A. Foster in 1948. It was sold in 1966 by Faswesh Garments Inc., and subsequently by Seattle 1st National Bank and Ray E. Bailey in late 1966 and 1968.

Historic tax records cite the original building's construction as "cheap," and by 1936 its exterior and interior were cited as being in only fair condition. The building's original designer is unknown, but presumably it was constructed by the original lumber company owner. It is a vernacular styled building.

Between 1922 and 1926, the building's business tenant was called Kneisley Lumber Company, rather than Columbia Lumber Company. By 1927, the name had reverted to Columbia Lumber Company. Between 1943 and 1948, Rainier Furniture was operating from the building, selling used appliances. Records at the Rainier Valley Historical Society indicate that in 1945 the building was occupied by Roy Bailey's Insurance Co.

In 1950, Valley Lumber was the tenant. The following year, in 1951, boys playing with matches causes a fire that destroyed a large lumber shed on the site and \$35,000 worth of stock.<sup>67</sup>

Rainier Furniture once again occupied the building between 1955 and 1958.

In 1963 Columbia City Lumber was the tenant of the building. In 1965 the entire inventory of Columbia City Lumber was sold at auction.<sup>68</sup>

Busy Bee Greens & Things grocery was located at the site in 1983. The same company was also listed as a new business at the site in 1992.

Smoke & Beyond moved into the building in 2017. *See figures 42-45.*

#### 4.6 ORIGINAL OWNER: COLUMBIA LUMBER COMPANY

The original owner of the subject building was the Columbia Lumber Co.

Columbia Lumber Co. was incorporated in 1910 by Charles Schlagel and H. R. Kneisley. Schlagel may have been only an investor in the firm; Kneisley ran the business and is referred to in local newspapers as the owner. In 1921, the company changed its name to Kneisley Lumber Co. In October 1926, a classified ad declared that Kneisley had sold the business to another entity named Columbia Lumber Co.<sup>69 70</sup> (It is not clear whether the firm had any previous association with Kneisley or the original Columbia Lumber Co.)

By at least 1928, William C. Miller was president of this iteration of the Columbia Lumber Co. By September 1930 the company had moved north to the University District, with offices at 3900 University Way. A full-page advertisement spread in the *Seattle Times* described a new complex included a wooden office building, a lumber yard, and "permanent exhibit of building materials and their application in modern construction."<sup>71</sup> At that time, the company president was W. C. Miller and manager was W. C. Bell. By 1931, the company comprised 19 lumber yards, including the one at University Way. That same year, the firm began offering remodeling and house-painting services. The company financed "new homes for lot owners" and also sold new homes.<sup>72</sup>

By 1936 the Columbia Lumber Co. was offering Federal Housing Administration home financing loans. Miller remained president and general manager of the company until his death in 1936 at age 50.<sup>73</sup> Miller was succeeded by F. J. Blanchard.

---

<sup>67</sup> *Seattle Times*, "Boys Playing with Matches Believed Cause of \$35,000 Blaze," July 14, 1951, p. 4.

<sup>68</sup> *Seattle Times*, classified advertisement, April 22, 1965, p. 45.

<sup>69</sup> *Seattle Times*, "Clean-Up Prices on Lumber!" classified advertisement, November 21, 1926, p. 56.

<sup>70</sup> *Seattle Times*, "Lumbermen Attend Opening of Retail Bellingham Yards," February 17, 1928, p. 24.

<sup>71</sup> *Seattle Times*, "Columbia Lumber Company Opens New Headquarters," advertisement, September 6, 1930, p. M7.

<sup>72</sup> *Seattle Times*, "Build Home Now and Save Money in Construction," April 30, 1931, p. 18.

<sup>73</sup> *Seattle Times*, "William C. Miller Funeral," October 18, 1936, p. 49.

The company seems to have ceased operations around 1941. It is not clear whether the entire corporation folded, or merely the Seattle location. As of the late 1940s, the only firm of that name appearing in the local papers was based in Alaska, with a branch office on Second Avenue in Seattle.<sup>74</sup>

The University of Washington subsequently purchased the building at 3935 University Way (extant) and the lumberyard to its south.

*See figure 50.*

#### 4.7 BUILDING ARCHITECT: UNKNOWN

The designer of 5015 Rainier Avenue S is unknown at this time.

#### 4.8 BUILDING CONTRACTOR: UNKNOWN

The builder of 5015 Rainier Avenue S is unknown at this time.

---

<sup>74</sup> *Seattle Times*, classified advertisements, passim, 1948-1960.

## 5. 5001 RAINIER AVENUE SOUTH

### 5.1 PROPERTY DATA

**Historic Building Names:** Gas station/Parking lot

**Current Building Name:** N/A (parking)

**Address:** 5001 Rainier Avenue South  
Seattle, WA 98118

**Location:** Columbia City

**Assessor's File Number:** 564960-0135

**Legal Description:** MORNINGSIDE ACRE TRACTS E 38.5 FT OF 15 & N 100 FT OF 14 LESS ST

**Tract:** 14 & por 15

**Lot:** 14 A and por 15 C

**Date of Construction:** N/A

**Original/Present Use:** Gas Station/Associated Parking

**Original/Present Owner:** Columbia Lumber Co./WCK Rainier Properties LLC

**Original Designer:** NA

**Original Builder:** NA

**Zoning:** NC2-65

**Property Size:** 0.17 acres or 7,460 sq. ft. (per King County Tax Assessor)

**Building Size:** N/A sq. ft., gross; N/A sq. ft., net (per King County Tax Assessor)

### 5.2 PARCEL DESCRIPTION

The 7460-square foot parcel has a triangular shape. Landscaping planters are located along the sidewalk.

*See figure 51.*

### 5.3 HISTORY

The Columbia Lumber Company occupied the site as early as 1914. The site was used by the Rainier Motor Company located in the building adjacent to the west in the 1940s and 1950s. The Rainier Motor Company operated a store and gas station. As mentioned above, the building now addressed at 3711 S

Hudson Street formerly had the address 5001 Rainier Avenue S. By 1965 Lin's Chevron Station was located at the site.<sup>75</sup> The gas station was demolished some time after 1965. *See figure 52.*

---

<sup>75</sup> *Seattle Times*, passim.

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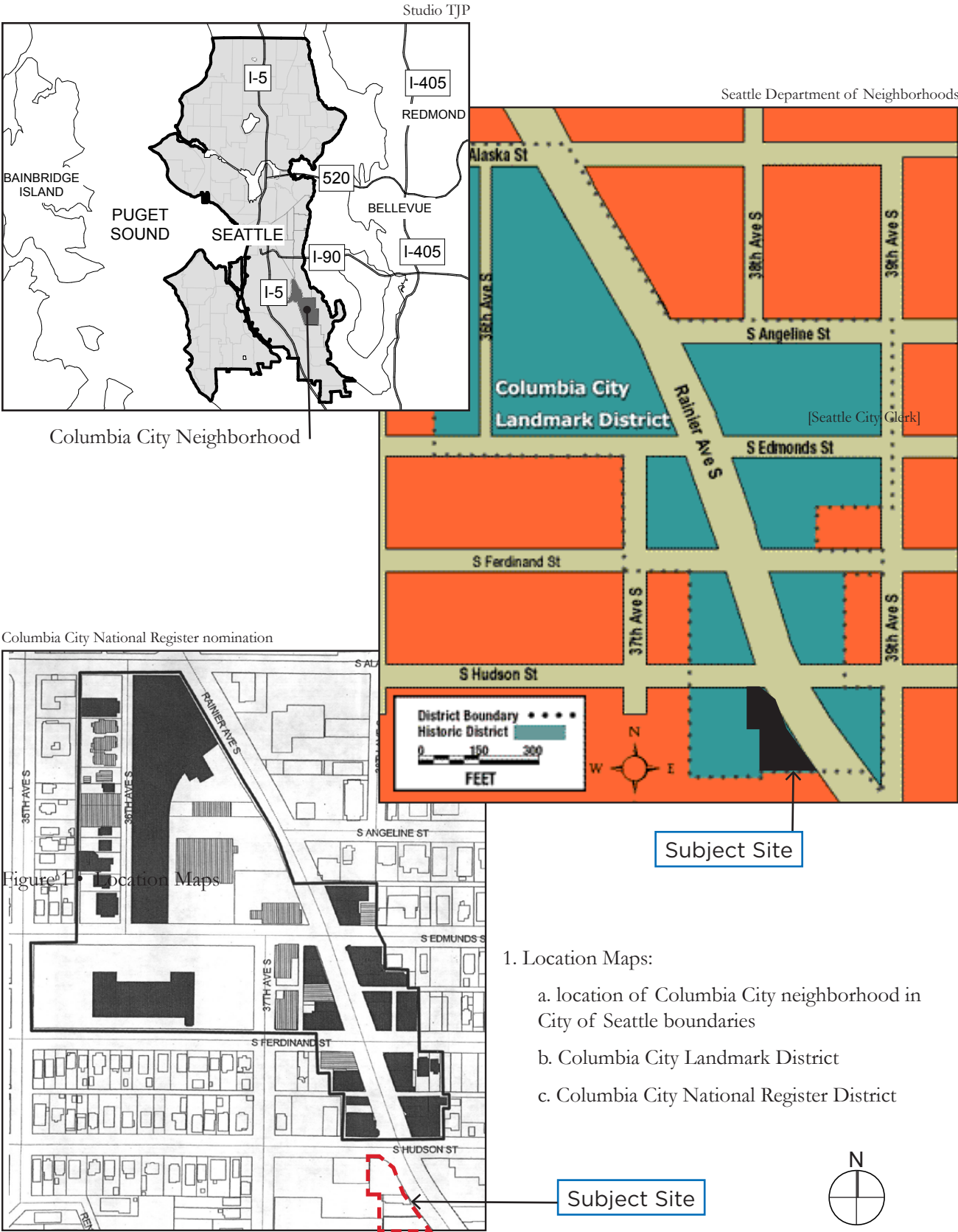
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6.2 FIGURES





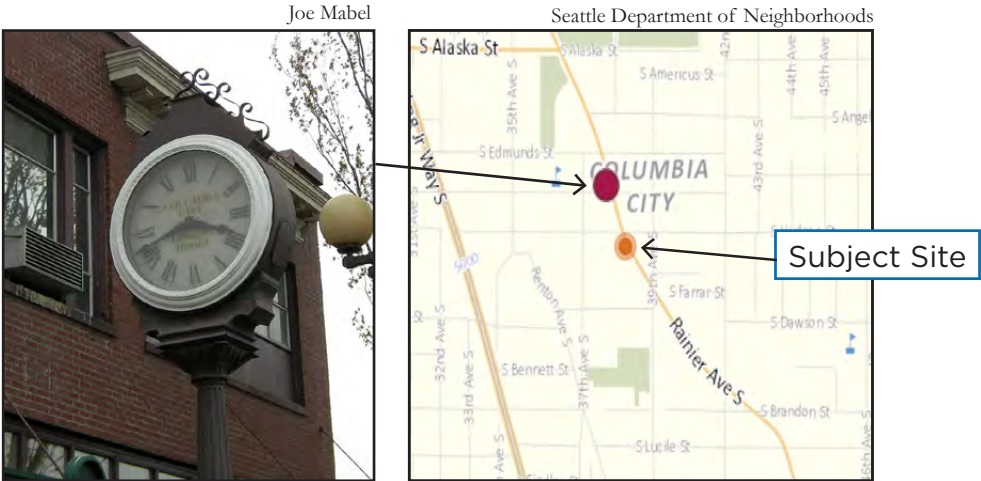


Figure 2 • Meyers Music Street Clock, 4873 Rainier Avenue S, the only individually-listed landmark in the District



Figure 3 • Aerial view



Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 4 • Viewing southwest from corner of Rainier Avenue S and S Hudson Street

Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 5 • Viewing northeast from Rainier Avenue S



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Figure 6 • Viewing west on S Hudson Street

Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 7 • Viewing south at subject site from S Hudson Street



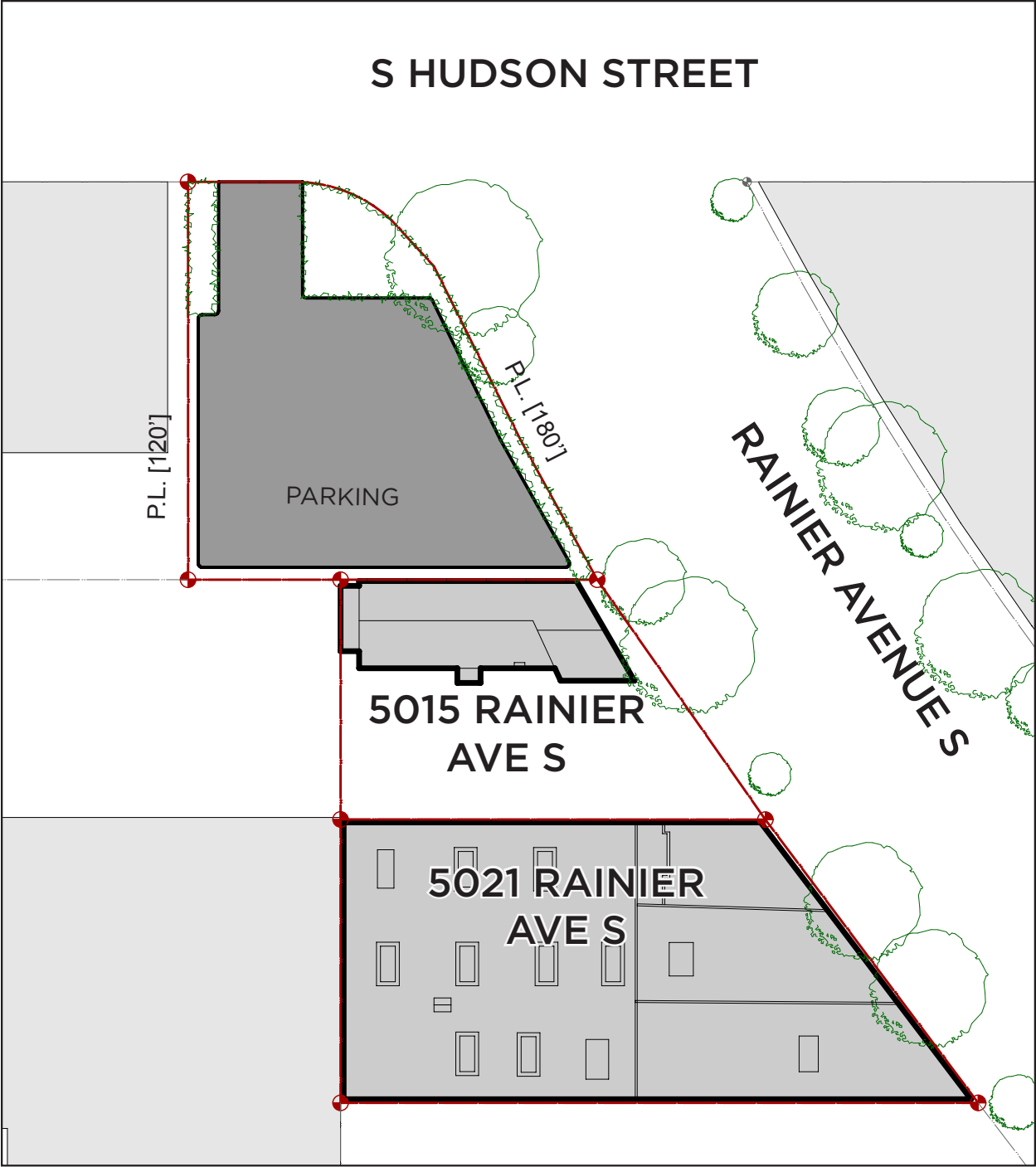
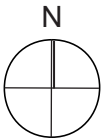


Figure 8 • Site Plan



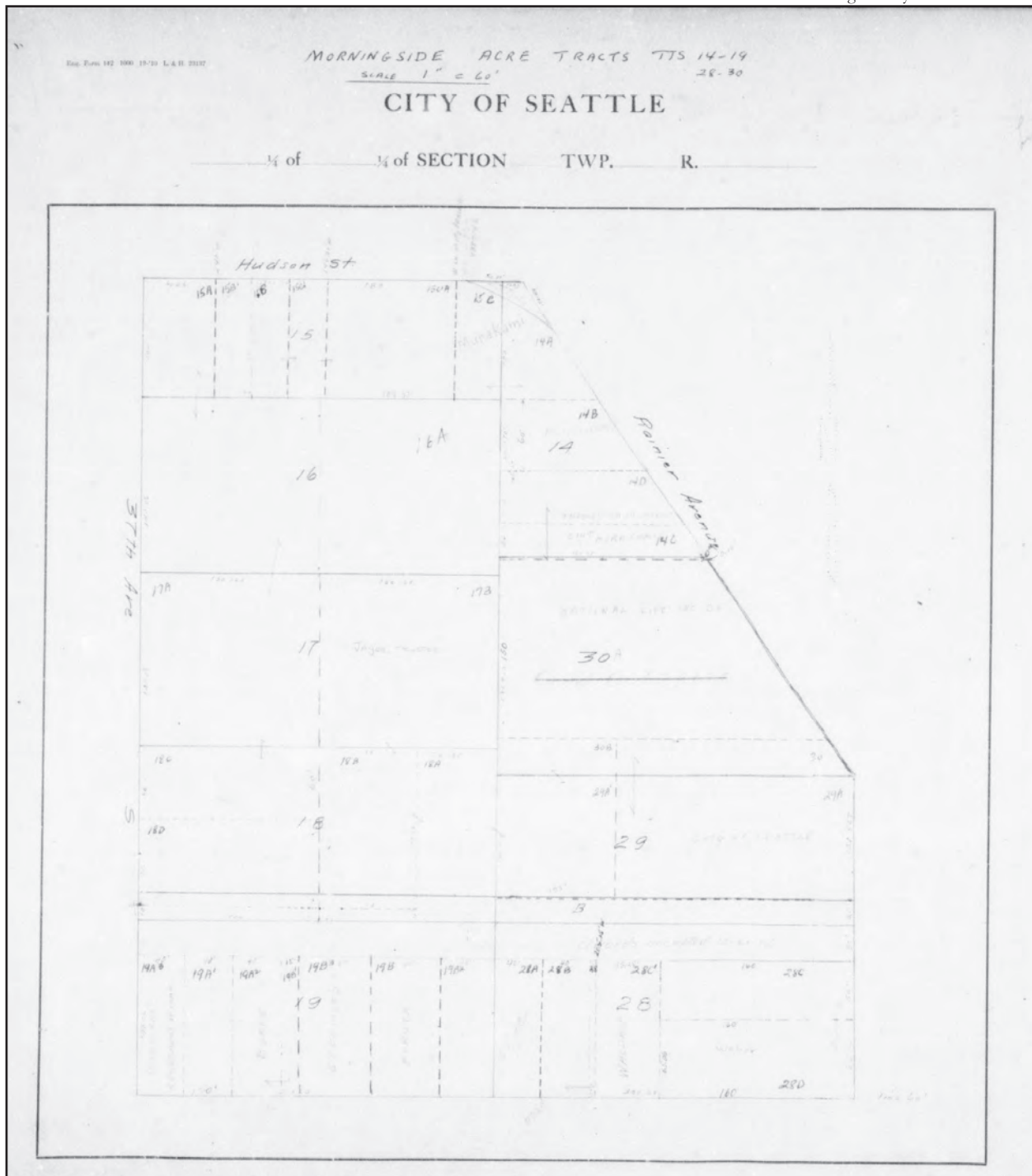


Figure 9 • City of Seattle plat map, Morningside Acre Tracts, tracts 14-19 and 28-30

Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 10 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, eastern façade

Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 11 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, eastern façade, detail of entry door



Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 12 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, southern façade, viewing northwest

Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 13 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, southern façade, western end





Figure 14 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, northern façade, viewing southeast



Figure 15 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, northern façade, western end



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Figure 16 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, streetfront retail, viewing southeast

Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 17 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, streetfront retail, viewing north

Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 18 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, entry to auto repair warehouse, viewing west

Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 19 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, auto repair warehouse, viewing southwest



Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 20 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, ramp to basement, viewing east

Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 21 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, basement of auto repair warehouse



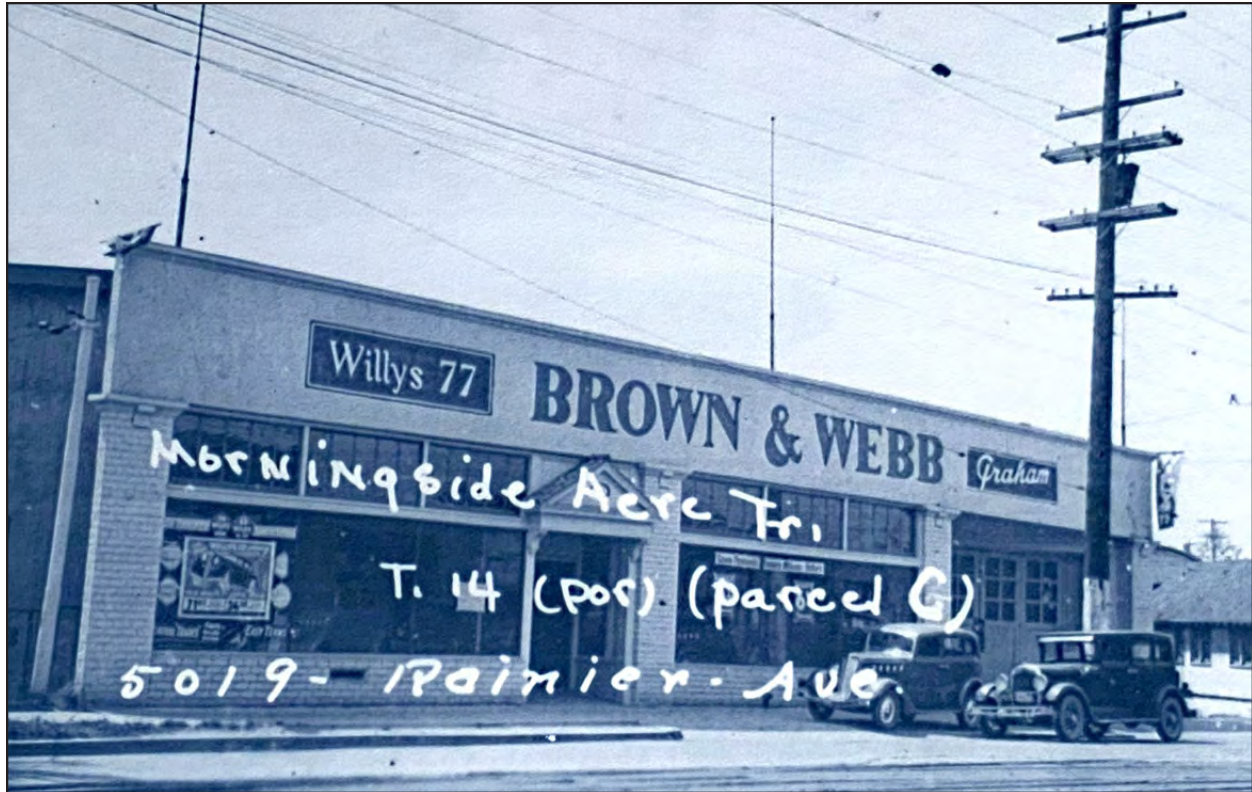


Figure 22 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, King County Tax Assessor photo, 1937

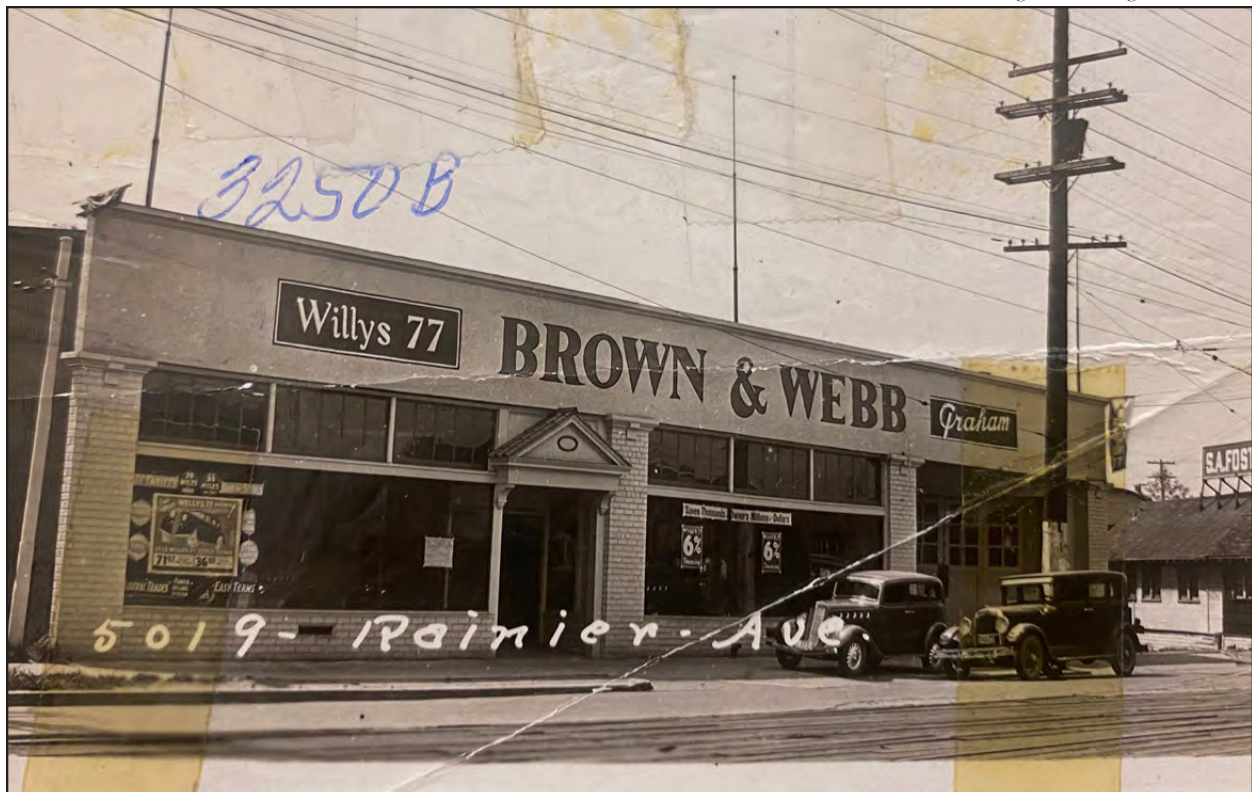


Figure 23 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, King County Tax Assessor photo, 1937

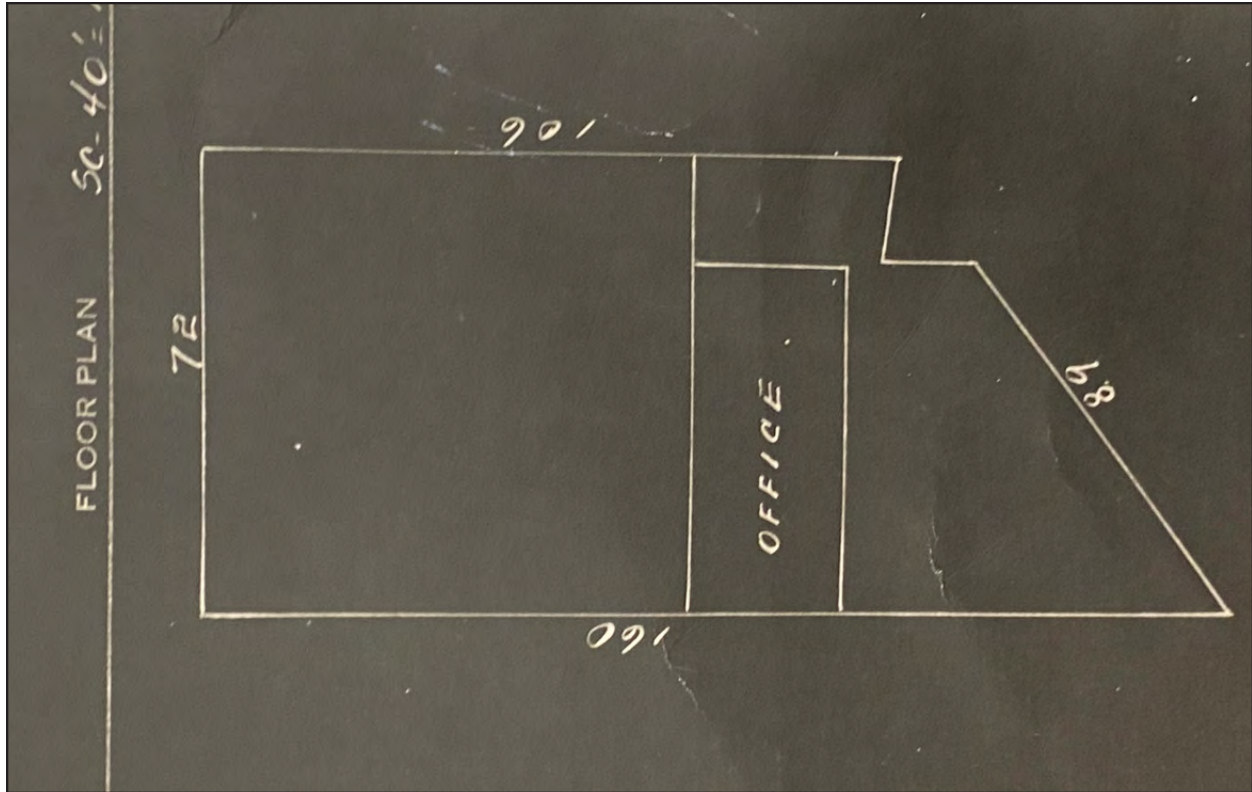


Figure 24 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, historic plan from King County Tax Assessor



Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 25 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, condition of brick veneer

Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 26 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, condition of clay tile sidewalls



Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 27 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, condition of clay tile sidewalls, graffiti and evidence of settlement

Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 28 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, condition of stucco



Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 29 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, condition of stucco at infill siding

Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 30 • 5021 Rainier Avenue S, condition of original wooden windows



*Seattle Times*, October 17, 1932



Figure 31 • Theodore D. Weed, Myrtle Weed (left), and Luverne Weed (right), 1932



Jim Bates for the *Seattle Times*



Figure 32 • Vickie Williams, owner of L.E.M.S. Bookstore, inside her store, date unknown

Susan Fried for the *Skanner News*



Figure 33 • Llaila O. Afrika, MD (left) and Reginald A. Hollins, Sr. (right) speaking at L.E.M.S. Bookstore as part of the third annual Gullah Festival, 2014



Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 34 • 5015 Rainier Avenue S, viewing from northeast

Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 35 • 5015 Rainier Avenue S, eastern façade



Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 36 • 5015 Rainier Avenue S, detail at eastern façade

Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 37 • 5015 Rainier Avenue S, southern façade



Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 38 • 5015 Rainier Avenue S, northern façade

Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 39 • 5015 Rainier Avenue S, northern façade



Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 40 • 5015 Rainier Avenue S, interior viewing west

Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 41 • 5015 Rainier Avenue S, entry door



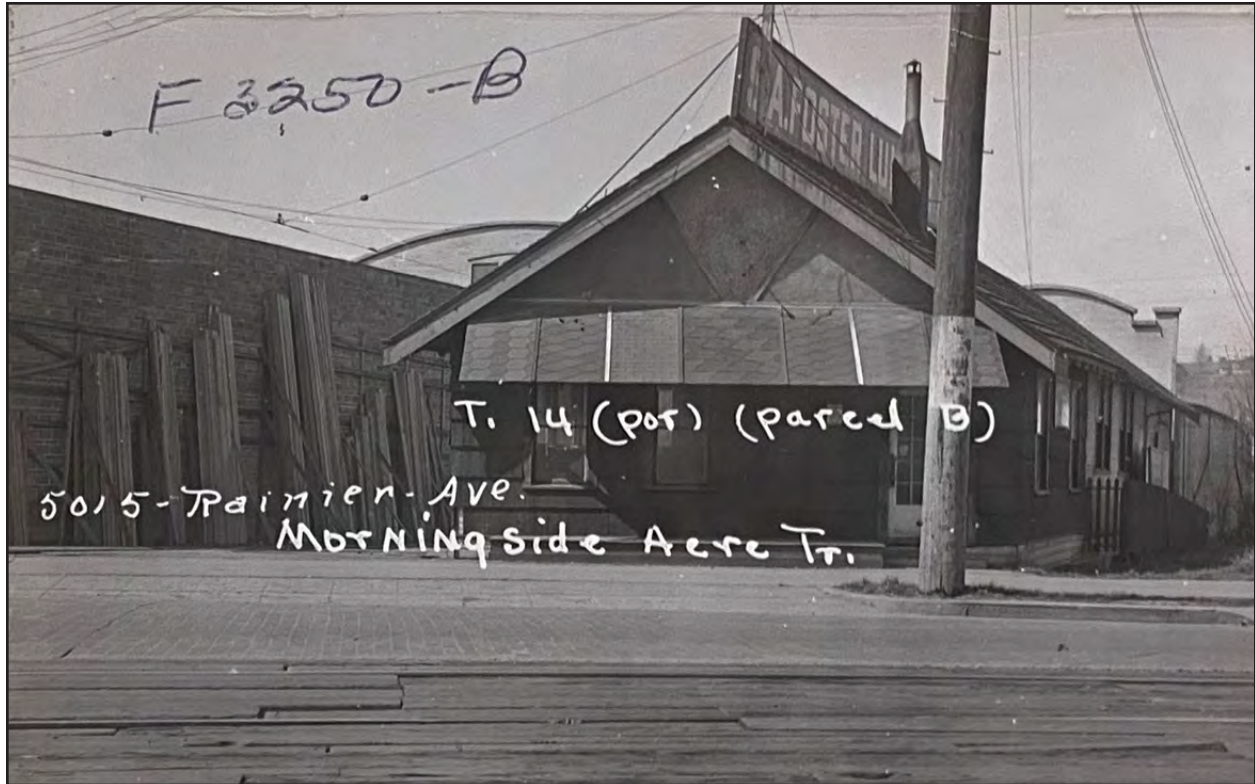


Figure 42 • 5015 Rainier Avenue S, King County Tax Assessor photo, 1937



Figure 43 • 5015 Rainier Avenue S, King County Tax Assessor photo 1949



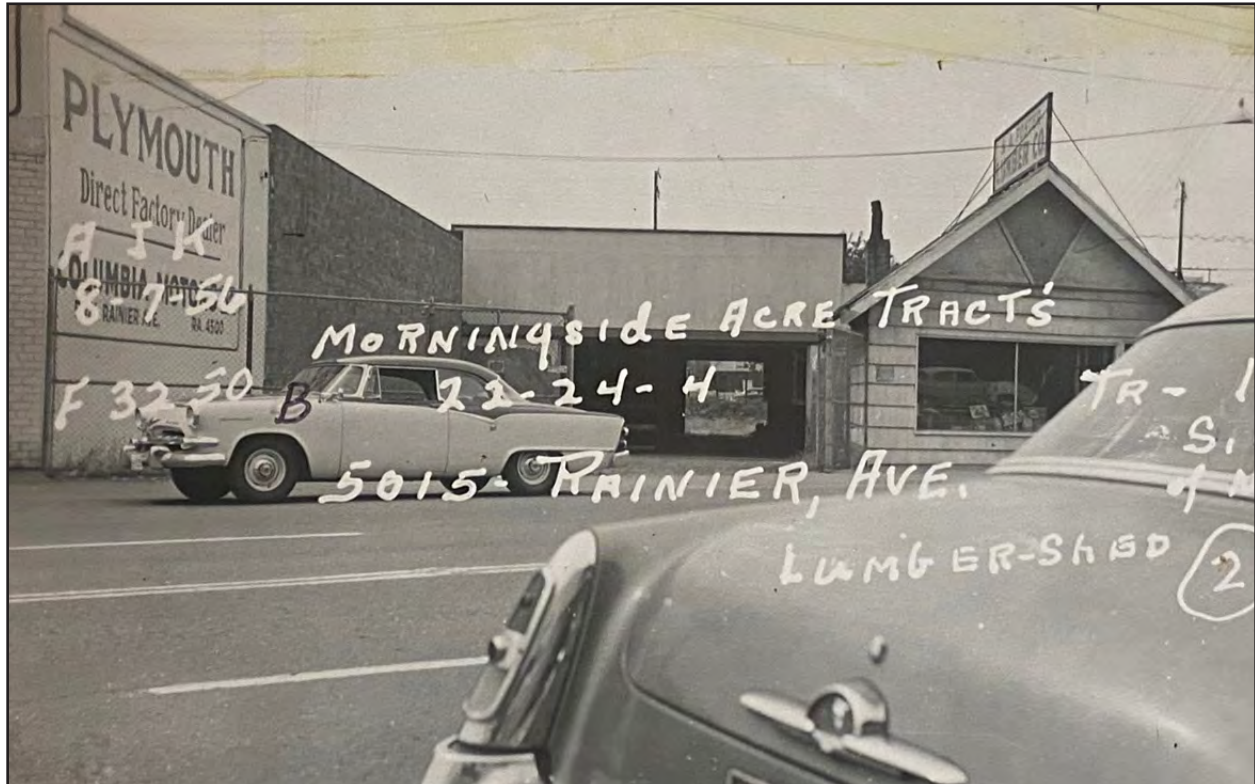


Figure 44 • 5015 Rainier Avenue S, King County Tax Assessor photo, 1956

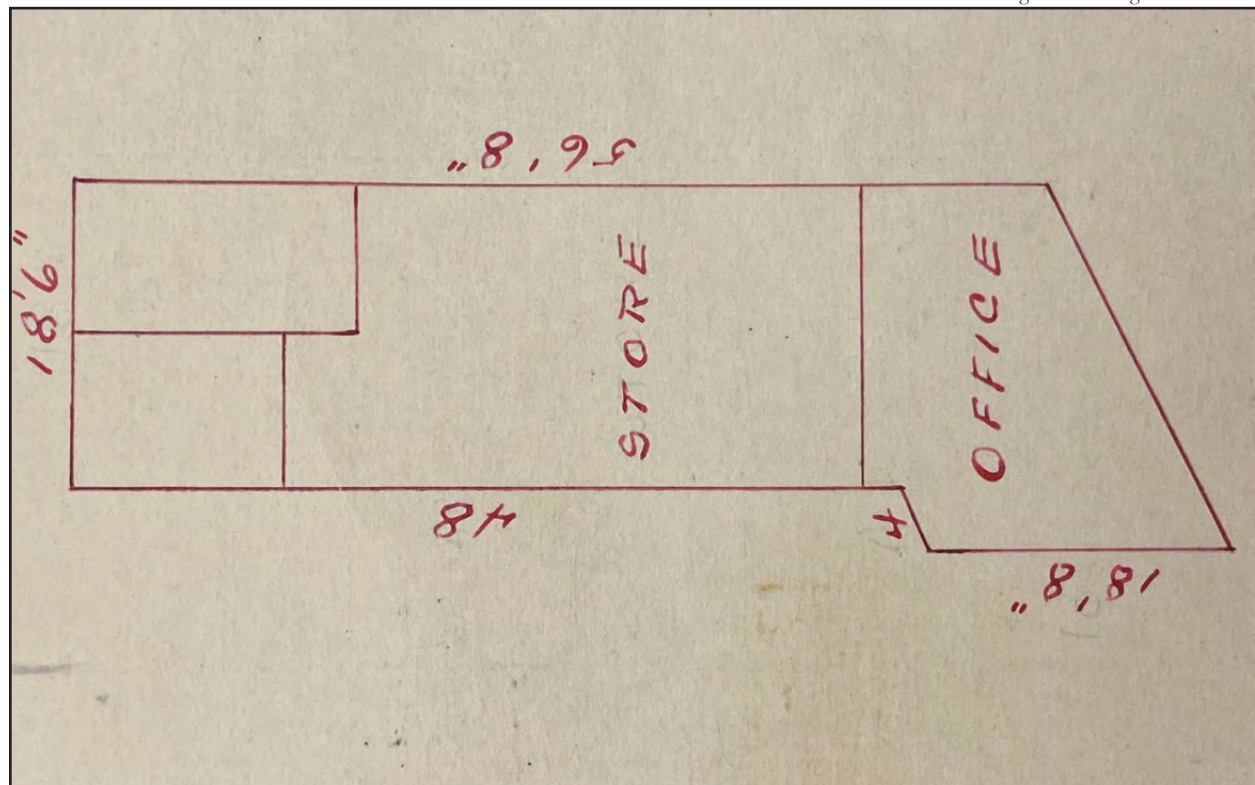


Figure 45 • 5015 Rainier Avenue S, historic floor plan from King County Tax Assessor



Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 46 • 5015 Rainier Avenue S, condition at exterior

Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 47 • 5015 Rainier Avenue S, condition at exterior



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Figure 48 • 5015 Rainier Avenue S, condition of interior flooring

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Figure 49 • 5015 Rainier Avenue S, condition of interior ceiling

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3. **WORKMANSHIP AND SUPERVISION** become the responsibility of Columbia Lumber Co. when it does the financing.



Figure 50 • Grand opening of Columbia Lumber Co. campus on University Way, advertisement in Seattle Times, September 6, 1930



Studio TJP, 09.01.2022



Figure 51 • 5001 Rainier Avenue S, viewing south

Puget Sound Regional Archives



Figure 52 • 5001 Rainier Avenue S, King County Tax Assessor photo with Standard Oil/Rainier Motors, 1955



# **Three Buildings in Historic Columbia City**

## **A Review of 5001, 5015 & 5022 Rainier Avenue South for Harbor Properties**

**BOLA Architecture + Planning**  
**February 23, 2007**

### **1. Introduction**

This report was developed by Susan Boyle of BOLA Architecture + Planning for Harbor Properties, Inc. It describes three buildings located at the southeast edge of the Columbia City Historic District in Seattle. Harbor Properties plans to develop the north half of the block on which the buildings stand with new, mixed-use structures on the site. It sought this review of the existing buildings' historic and architectural significance, and recommendations for preservation and interpretation opportunities.

Research for this report included collection and review of the City of Seattle's recently revised National Register landmark nomination of the Historic District, historic photographs and maps and King County tax records. Research also involved a review of documents in the collection of Rainier Valley Historical Society, and a site visit to review and document the existing buildings and their current condition.

The report results from a brief research effort, and did not include tours of the building interiors or extensive reviews of their materials. Additional research is necessary to further document changes to the subject buildings, accurately cite the physical conditions of the buildings.

### **Overview - Columbia City History**

The National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Columbia City Historic District describes many historic themes in explaining the significance of this neighborhood commercial area. These include the early development of Columbia City prior to the 1907 annexation by the City of Seattle; impacts of the railroad, streetcar, and highway and road systems primarily along Rainier Avenue South; the cohesive physical nature of flat-iron and wedge-shaped sites, and historic and older buildings that resulted from the angled street alignment.

Columbia City was established as a separate, incorporated city in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. For much of its history its residents and businesses were tightly linked with many of the owners and employees of district's shops and companies living nearby. Economically depressed for several decades in the 1960s through the 1980s, the neighborhood has improved with renewed investment in recent decades. This development is due in part to long-time efforts of grassroots organizations, such as Southeast Seattle Development (SEED) and the Rainier Valley Historical Society (RVHS), and also because of economic incentives, including those brought with local and national historic district designation. Local entrepreneurs and businesses have had a positive impact in revitalizing the commercial district, as have local agencies. A Farmers' Market was established in 1998, and the historic Columbia City Library was expanded and rehabilitated in 2004.

### **The Subject Block**

The subject block containing the buildings described in this report is located at a pivotal grid change, along Rainier Avenue South, at the south end of the City of Seattle Historic District. The block is bounded on the north by South Hudson Street, on the south by South Dawson Street, and on the west by 37th Avenue South. This portion of the block is not included within the boundaries of the National Register Historic District, which is smaller than the local Historic District, and has its southernmost boundary set along the north side of South Hudson Street. (The edges of National Register Historic District boundary were established largely to correspond with the original 1891 area of Columbia City.)

The block contains the subject buildings along with others which are outside of the local Historic District boundary. Other buildings include industrial facilities under private ownership and an older Seattle City Light building on the southeast corner of the block. Topographically the block slopes slightly upward to the south along the east side. The grade in the north central portion drops approximately 8', and it slopes steeply upward in the southwest corner to an elevation estimated at 18' above the northeast corner.

To the west, across 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, the blocks are largely residential in character. The block to the south, across South Dawson Street was once the site of the Columbia Lumber Mill, and presently contains apartment buildings and houses and Hitt's Hill Park, which recalls the fireworks manufacturer once located in Columbia City.

## A Uniquely Diverse Community

Much of what is known about Columbia City's history dates from the period of its early physical development from the 1880s up through the 1920s. History did not stop in the early twentieth century, however. The emergence of new residents, including those from immigrant and ethnic groups, has had a distinct impact in shaping the neighborhood's contemporary cultural character.

Columbia City has a rich ethnic history, which is based on immigration and demographic changes that began before World War II. Up until that time, it like most of Seattle, was primarily made up by American or foreign-born Caucasian residents. In ca. 1900 over 50% of the residents of Columbia City were foreign-born, primarily from European countries and Canada. Presently the area identified by Census Tract 103 is the home to many African, African-American, Asian and Asian-American people, in addition to Caucasians. The ethnic history of the neighborhood dates from more recent decades, and has helped create new traditions. Columbia City's diversity helps make it a unique inner-city neighborhood.

In 1940 there were 10-14% foreign-born white residents in Census Tract 103, which includes Columbia City and parts of the Hillman neighborhood to the south. This percentage was slightly less than the city total of 16.2%. At that time there were 14,201 non-Caucasians living in the city. Seattle's foreign-born residents were made up primarily by Canadians, Norwegians, Swedes, English and Welsh, Germans, Italians, Japanese, Scots, Russians and Irish. These residents made up these top ten groups with 2,000 to over 12,500 residents each (Schmid. Charts 29 and 45, p. 102 and 130). The largest minority racial groups in Seattle in 1940 were identified as Filipino, "Negro," Indian, Japanese and Chinese. Analysis of census data from 1940 indicated that most ethnic minorities in Seattle lived far north of Columbia City, in what is presently known as the International and Central Districts (Schmid. p. 131 - 137, and 141 - 149).

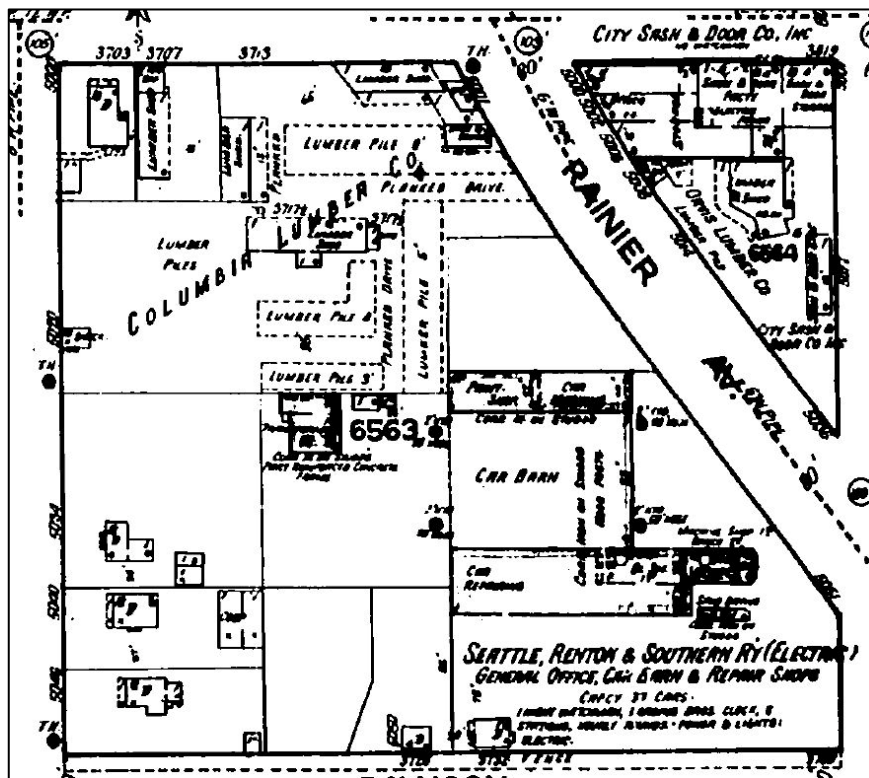
Significant numbers of African Americans migrated to Seattle during World War II to take up employment with wartime industries. They initially settled in residential zones between Madison and Jackson Streets near 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenues, where early African Americans had originally settled. The new residents tended to remain there, expanding with population growth to other parts of the Central District and gradually south of it into neighborhoods along Rainier Avenue South. It appears that the residential area surrounding the Columbia City commercial district remained primarily white, however, until the 1960s and 1970s. During these decades many Vietnamese, Thai and Laotian immigrants, displaced by the Vietnam War, moved into the Rainier Valley area of Columbia City. They were followed by Ethiopians, Somali and Eritrean immigrants (p. 137 - 141).

As noted in the city's 2000 analysis of census data (provided by DPD up until 2005), Columbia City is home to nearly 6,200 people in Tract 103. While many demographic features of the neighborhood -- age, gender, and home ownership -- reflect city-wide statistics, it is far more ethnically diverse than the city as a whole. Racially over 67% of Columbia City residents identify themselves as non-white. The

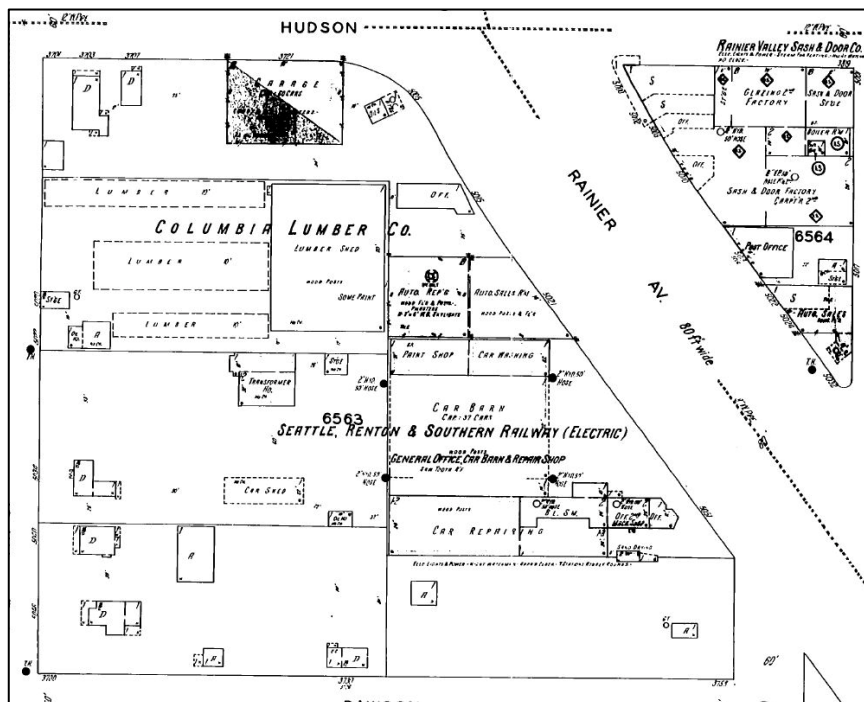
neighborhood's 31.6% Black or African American and 30.5% Asian are predominant races (vs. 8.4% and 13.1% respectively city-wide), and Hispanic or Latino residents make up 7% of the population vs. the city-wide figure of 5.3%.

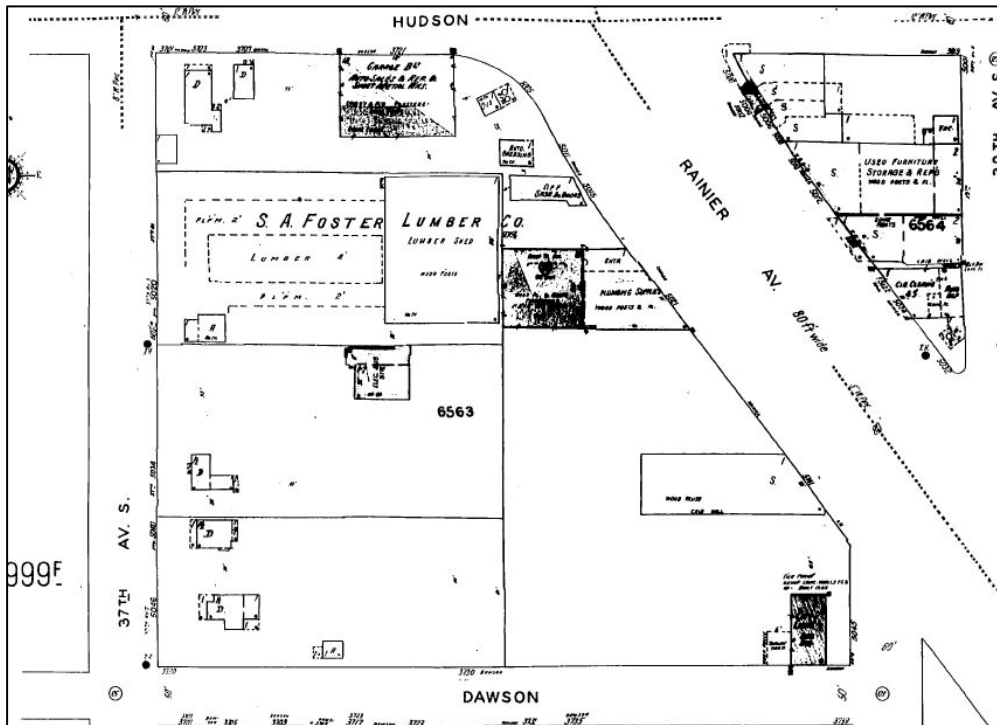
In addition to its unique ethnic make-up, present day Columbia City residents appear to be more family-oriented in comparison to Seattle's general population. The majority live in households (98.4%, similar to the 95.3% city-wide). Nearly a third of Columbia City households have children less than 18 years of age in contrast to the city-wide average of only 17.9%. The average family size is larger also, at 3.5 people vs. the average in Seattle of 2.9 people (Seattle's Official Census Site).



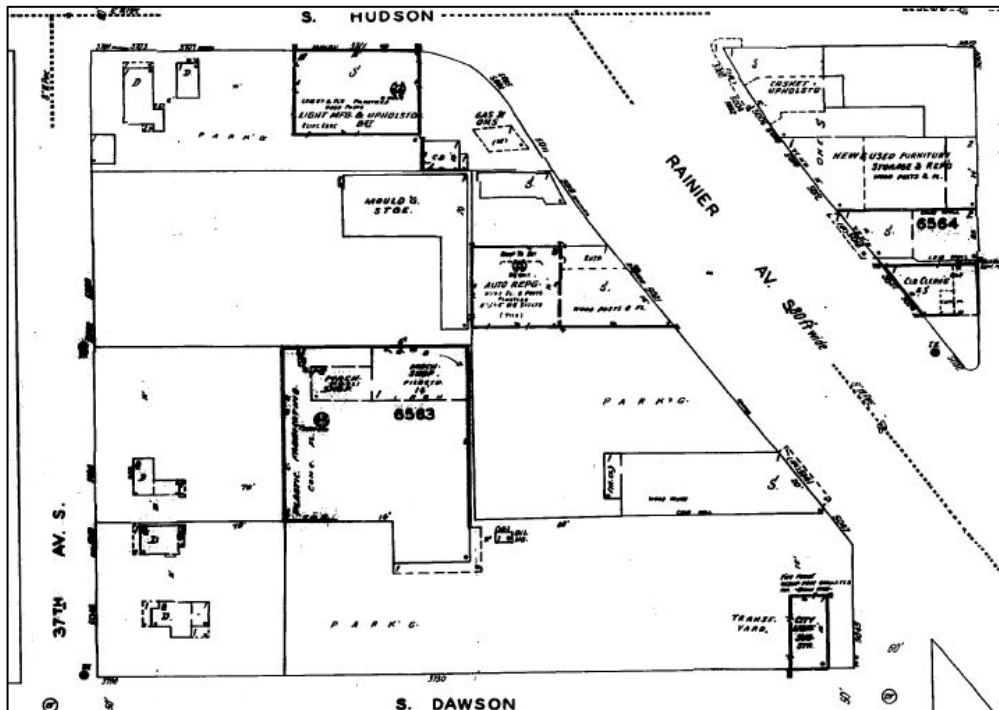


Above, an excerpt from a 1917 Sanborn Insurance Company map of the subject block. North is up in all views. Below, an excerpt from a 1929 map that shows a former gas station at the northeast corner of the block and the building at 5001 Rainier Avenue South, surrounded by lumber piles and the Columbia Lumber Company. The Seattle Renton & Southern Railway Car Barn, Shops and Offices were at the center and southeast corner. (Maps courtesy of Harbor Properties, Inc.)





The 1950 Sanborn map, above, shows changes to the block including removal of the Car Barn and the presence of the City Light building at the southeast corner. The garage at 3711/3717 South Hudson Street and the S.A. Foster Lumber Company office/showroom mid-block at 5015 Rainier Avenue South, were present. Below, excerpt from the 1967 Sanborn Map. (Maps courtesy of Harbor Properties)





Property of Rainier Valley Historical Society, Seattle WA

*Above an aerial view of Columbia City in ca. 1903, looking north from South Dawson Street. (Rainier Valley Historical Society, Item 185) Below, a view looking north of South Hudson Street at the commercial district and electric railway lines on Rainier Avenue South. (RVHS, Item 78)*



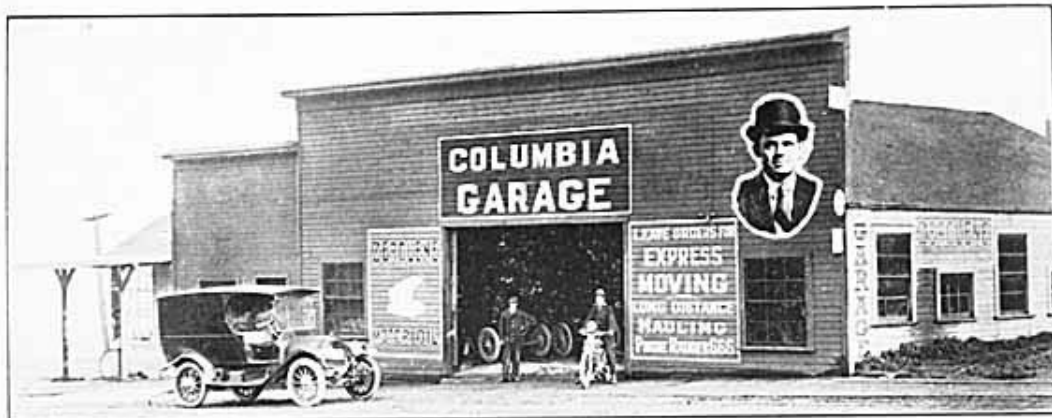
Property of Rainier Valley Historical Society, Seattle WA





Property of Rainier Valley Historical Society, Seattle WA

*Above, a view of the Streetcar Barn located south of the site, on the west side of Rainier Avenue South in 1915. (Rainier Valley Historical Society, Item 343) Below, a photocopy image of a wood framed repair garage, 1915. (Rainier Valley Historical Society, Item 69)*



A. Welch, proprietor of this modern garage, maintains the most complete equipment possible for storing, repairing and taking care of autos, motorcycles, and trucks. The Columbia Garage has the only oil station in Rainier Valley. When you need experienced work in the garage line, phone Rainier 666.

Property of Rainier Valley Historical Society, Seattle WA



Property of Rainier Valley Historical Society, Seattle WA



*Above, an aerial view of the neighborhood looking north in 1947, showing the northeast portion of subject block is in the lower left. (Rainier Valley Historical Society, Item 230)*

*Left, a map of the City of Seattle Columbia City Historic District. (City of Seattle, Dept. of Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Program) The City has established design guidelines for preservation and new buildings in the District. The southern edge of National Register Historic District Boundary, on the west side of Rainier Avenue South is along South Hudson Street.*



Property of Rainier Valley Historical Society, Seattle WA

*Above, below, a view looking northeast from South Hudson Street at the neighborhood's commercial district in 1929. (Rainier Valley Historical Society Item 12) Below a similar view in 2004. (City of Seattle, Municipal Archives, Item 150289)*







Above, a current aerial view of the subject block. (City of Seattle DPD Map Center) Below, a historic street clock which was installed near the center of the Historic District in ca. 2000. (Seattle Municipal Archives, April 16, 2001, item No. 112737). Street furniture, such as this piece, help evoke the history of this neighborhood.



## 2. 5001 Rainier Avenue South (3711-3717 South Hudson Street)

### Property Data

Parcel Tax ID: #5649600150 (incorporating #5649600145)  
Legal Description: Morningside Acre Tracts, (originally Tract 15 Parcel C), presently Tract 15 Parcel C and Tract 14 A  
Date: 1920  
Historic Name: Columbia Auto Service Garage  
Current Name: Saint Gobain / Performance Plastics  
Historic Use: Auto service garage  
Current Use: Auto service garage  
Original Owner: George C. Johnson  
Present Owner: Murakami Washing

### Former Parcel and Buildings

Note: This property incorporates what were originally two separate parcels, No. 564900145 (Tract 14 Parcel A) and #5649600150 (Tract 15 Parcel C). These parcels and the buildings on them originally had different addresses of 5001 Rainier Avenue South and 3711 or 3717 South Hudson Street respectively.

Tract 14 Parcel A, was once a separate property of approximately 97 by 63 by 110 feet. Triangular in shape in response to the surrounding street grid, it was located at the northeast corner of the block at the prominent intersection of the two streets. It is aggregated currently with what was once a separate property to the west that contained the subject building.

The original triangular-shaped section at the corner is presently a paved parking lot. This portion of the property was the former location of the Columbia City Lumber Company, in ca. 1912 - 1918. The lumber company, under the management of President Henry R. Kneisley, moved its office to the adjacent lot to the south, at 5015 Rainier Avenue South, in ca. 1918 - 1920. Prior to that time it had constructed and used several lumber sheds on the subject property, including a large wood framed warehouse built in 1918. This construction chronology suggests that the former warehouse was removed by that time.

In June of 1918 George C. Johnson purchased Parcel A of Tract 14 from the Columbia Lumber Company. Johnson built a gas station that year on the approximate 6,985 square foot, triangular shaped



*Left, a partial view of the former gas station located on the site, at the northeast corner of the block. This station was constructed in ca. 1918 and stood until the 1960s. On the left side of the photo is the north facade of the adjacent building at 5015 Rainier Avenue South. (Puget Sound Regional Archives)*

### 5001 Rainier Avenue South, con't

corner lot, along with a separate "Grease Shed." The gas station was a single-story, concrete frame structure made up by a small 15 by 15 foot enclosed office and a 15 by 17 foot, column-supported, covered driving lane with three gas pumps on a raised outer island. It featured a single hipped roof with standing seam metal cladding, glazed windows on three sides of the office, and a roof-mounted sign.

The design of the former station was of the "Pavilion-type" then favored by national gasoline companies. The property tax record card from 1936 notes that by then the contract purchaser was Standard Oil SS #663, and the record photo shows a sign identifying it as a Standard Oil station. (Columbia City was served also by a Texaco Gas Station that dated from ca. 1915.) By the late teens, national oil companies had begun to build stations based on a consistent design to market their services and brands. The pavilion-form provided shelter for vehicles and station employees along with pull-through convenience for drivers. These stations were sometimes operated by local owners, but gradually the national corporations took over ownership and directed station designs, products, and services.

In 1955, the "Grease Shed" on the site was removed, and in 1956 the service station was remodeled. According to a tax record photo, the gas station at the front corner was operated as "Buzz and Joe's Auto Service" in 1960. The station was remodeled again in 1962 and subsequently removed. It is a lost piece of Columbia City history.

### The Current Building's History

The building was constructed in 1920, on a separate site behind and west of the gas station, on what was then Tract 15 Parcel C. Its lot was 180 by nearly 97 feet, or approximately 17,400 square feet. The 70 by 100 foot auto repair garage, known as the Columbia Auto Service, was built to the northern property line along South Hudson Street. The original owner, designer and contractor remain unidentified, but by 1926, the garage was owned and operated by Luke E. Thompson. Thompson owned the garage at least until in 1938, according to a *Polk Directory to Seattle* of that year. A tax photo dating from 1936 shows signage on the building advertising "Auto Top – Curtains Made," and "Auto Painting."

Tax records note the property was purchased in 1948 by J. L. Newberts and others. It suggests that the two parcels -- Tract 14 Parcel A, which contained the service station, and Tract 15 Parcel C, the subject site -- may have been merged at that time. In 1961 the property was purchased by Louis Lavinthal.

The repair garage was remodeled to include a small auto showroom at the northeast corner in the 1950s. A 1960 era tax photo suggests that, by that date, it once again was operated simply as an auto repair garage. By this date the gas station to the west had been removed and the front of the lot paved for parking. Saint Gobain / Performance Plastics (206.762.0660) currently occupies the building and uses it for offices and shipping.

### Architectural Description

The property is at the northwest corner of the block and at the southeast corner of the intersection of Rainier Avenue South and South Hudson Street. A paved parking lot for a dozen or so cars is nearest the intersection with the subject building placed along the north property line, approximately 65 feet west of Rainier Avenue South. It was constructed as a single story masonry structure with a full basement. The site slopes approximately 10 feet from the northeast to the southwest, and thus the basement was fully exposed at the southwest corner. Constructed primarily as an auto repair garage, the building later served as an office and warehouse. Its interior was demised by framed partitions that demised the space for a single store and offices in two rooms. Later it was partitioned further into ten offices and one warehouse space at the main floor and two warehouse spaces in the basement.



### 5001 Rainier Avenue South, con't

The garage was constructed of wood framing with concrete foundations and floor slab and bearing brick masonry exterior walls on the primary north and east facades. Poured-in-place concrete walls were exposed on the secondary south and west facades. It had a flat roof and a rectangular footprint of 70 by 100 feet. Interiors were finished with a laminated 2x6 fir floor (car-decking). The original basement had an unfinished dirt floor, but a concrete slab was added in 1947. The ceiling heights were noted in the tax record card 9 feet at the basement and 14 at the first floor, and the mean roof level at 16 feet.

The original building had raised brick masonry parapets that projected at least 6 feet above the roof on the north, east and west sides. The outer corners on the north and west facades featured curvilinear parapet walls. These low arched forms were finished with terra cotta decorative tiles at their centers. The raised parapets are stylistic elements taken from classical and baroque design. They once provided embellishment to the relatively utilitarian and vernacular design, and emphasized the buildings height and sense of mass.



*Above, the primary east and partial north facade of the garage at 3711 - 3717 South Hudson Street as shown in a 1937 historic tax assessor's property record card. (Puget Sound Regional Archives)*

Primary piers rising from grade to brick corbelling on the parapets demarked the structural grid on the exterior walls. Secondary piers and large window openings were placed between the primary structural grid, and provided a secondary scale, along with ample natural light to the building's interior space. Industrial steel sash windows were placed between the piers. These were composed in horizontal groups of two or three, each with 3:3 divided panels. Multi-paned transoms provided a similar pattern above the windows on the primary north and east facades, and on portions of the west and south secondary facades. Window openings on these secondary facades were smaller, but contained industrial steel sash windows. The building originally featured a large vehicle opening in the easternmost bay of the north facade, and another on the basement level west facade. Brick masonry was laid in a stacked pattern in bulkhead areas below some of the windows on the primary facades. Painted signage was provided in wood panels above the transoms at the northeast corner and on a projecting blade sign.

### 5001 Rainier Avenue South, con't



*Left, this later tax assessor's photo, from 1957, shows the secondary facades and the slope that exposes the basement walls on the south and west. (Puget Sound Regional Archives)*



*Left, a 1948 tax assessor's photo showing changes to the northeast corner of the building when it was "modernized" for use as a small auto showroom. (Puget Sound Regional Archives)*

### Changes to the Original Building

Although the brick structure remains in its original location and retains its original overall form, it has been subject to changes over time that has diminished its original character. Original, multi-paned "industrial sash" windows have been removed and replaced by fixed, plate-glass windows, and the original transom windows have been removed and openings infilled. The highly decorative raised masonry parapet was removed in the post-World War II era to the present flat parapet. The building was identified after this time as "Kaisir-Frazer" Auto Dealership.

Dramatic changes made in ca. 1956 – 1960 when the northwest corner of the building was opened and partly restructured with an assembly of tall, plate glass windows on over half of the east facade and portions of the north facade. Both industrial sash windows and transoms were removed to provide a "new" Modern style treatment for a small auto showroom. The new corner glazing was topped by a continuous lintel aligned with the top of the original remaining transom windows. Some of the industrial steel sash windows and multi-paned transoms in openings at the basement and first floor remained. At least one of the original vehicle doors was also replaced at this time.

### 5001 Rainier Avenue South, con't

Another remodel, dating from 1962, is noted in the tax records, and this may be the date of the station's removal and other upgrading of the original repair garage building. (The City's Historic Property Inventory Report for 5001 Rainier Avenue South notes that auto use continued through the 1960s.)

The present site includes a paved parking lot, with landscape screening, on the front northeast corner near the intersection, where the gas station once stood. The subject building is located west of the parking lot. The original 5001 Rainier Avenue South and 3711-3717 South Hudson Street properties have been aggregated with others on the block to make up a larger, 3.77 acre site and facilities identified by the current King County Parcel Viewer as Tax Parcel #5649600170. This parcel includes Morningside Acre Tracts 15, 16, 17, 18, and portions of Tract 14.

The subject building is identified in the current tax record for the parcel as Building No. 1, one of five. It presently serves as an office and shipping facility for Saint Gobain / Performance Plastics. The parking lot to the east of the building, along Rainier Avenue South, is screened by shrubs and clipped hedges. There is a tall conifer tree located at the northeast corner of the lot.

Physical changes to the building that occurred since the 1960s include replacement of all of the original remaining industrial sash windows with plate glass, some with reflective coating. The original window sills, made up by soldier courses of the brick masonry remain as do some areas of stacked brick patterned panels below the windows, some corbelled rows in the masonry near the top of the walls and parapet, and small areas of decorative brick patterning on the piers that demark the bays. Transom windows appear to have been removed or covered with painted plywood panels, and exterior doors replaced with painted flush types of wood or metal. These changes and removal of the raised parapets, have impacted the building's architectural integrity although it appears to be a sturdy structure with some historic features.



*Above, a contemporary view of the primary north and east facades. This and all other current color photos are by BOLA Architecture + Planning and date from February 2007.*



5001 Rainier Avenue South, con't



*Above, a view of the secondary west facade. Note the continuation of the original window and transom pattern, which was typical on the north and east facades, along the northern portion of the west facade. Below, a view looking east on South Hudson Street.*



**Evaluation Comments**

The City's Historic Site Survey of February 2004 cited the building as a "large and imposing warehouse that was constructed as an automobile garage (that) still stands, in greatly altered form. The survey concluded that, "Although the building has been extensively altered, the majority of the alterations have been cosmetic, (and) the original building form and cladding remains largely intact." This building is substantial and retains some of its original character. It is a good candidate for rehabilitation and reuse.

### 3. 5015 Rainier Avenue South

#### Property Data

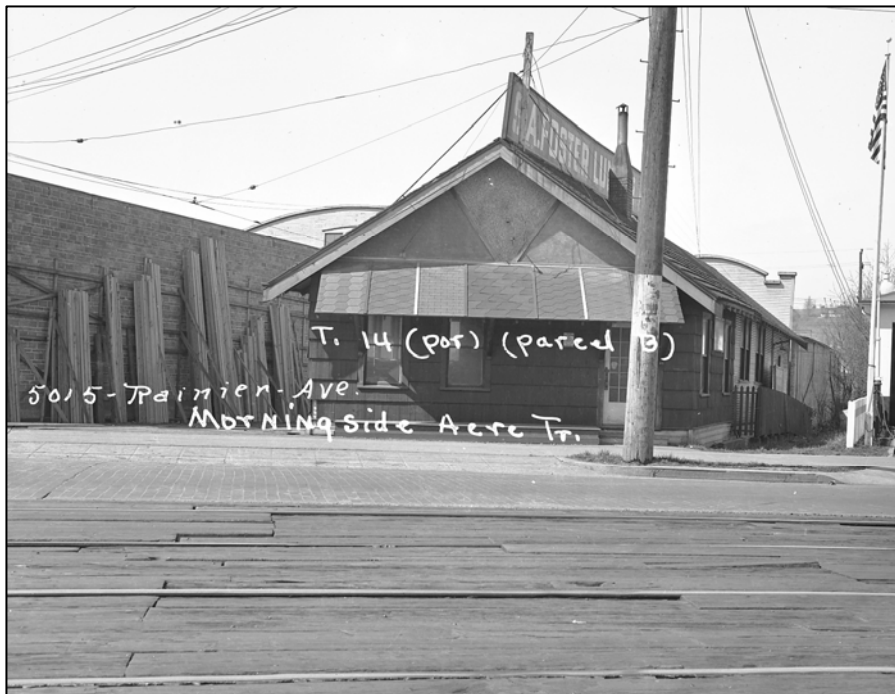
Parcel Tax ID: #5649600133  
Legal Description: Morningside Acre Tracts, 14 Parcel B  
Date: ca. 1918  
Historic Name: Columbia City Lumber/S. A. Foster Lumber  
Current Name: Busy Bee Mini Mart  
Historic/Current Use: Lumber yard office / Retail grocery store  
Original/Current Owner: Columbia City Lumber Company/ Murakami Washing

#### Building History

This one-story wood framed and clad commercial building was constructed in ca. 1918 by the Columbia City Lumber Company to serve as its office. Prior to this date the company had been located on the parcel to the north, at 5001 Rainier Avenue South, from 1912. Columbia Lumber was established in the early 1890s and was one of the earliest businesses in the area. Henry Kneisley, the president who managed the company during this period, was a long-time resident of Columbia City.

The Columbia Lumber Company added onto the building twice in the late 1920s, and it subsequently was owned and operated by several lumber businesses, including S A Foster Lumber and the Valley Lumber Company, up through the 1950s. Tax records indicate it was sold in 1938, and purchased S. A. Foster in 1948. It was sold in 1966 by Faswesh Garments Inc., and subsequently by Seattle 1<sup>st</sup> National Bank and Ray E. Bailey in late 1966 and 1968.

Historic tax records cite the original building's construction as "cheap," and by 1936 its exterior and interior were cited as being in only fair condition. The building's original designer is unknown, but presumably it was constructed by the original lumber company owner. It is a vernacular styled building.



*Left, the building in ca. 1936 from the tax assessor's property record card. This photo also shows the tracks of the electric railroad line that ran between Seattle and Renton. To the left in this photo is a partial view of the north facade of the neighboring building at 5021 Rainier Avenue South. Note also the two historic double-hung wood windows in the front façade. (Puget Sound Regional Archives)*

## 5015 Rainier Avenue South, con't.

### Architectural Description

The site is a relatively level parcel located in the middle of the block, with street frontage on the east along Rainier Avenue South. The lot is 60 foot wide, with the building placed along the east property line near the center of the parcel with an estimated 20 foot-wide side yard on the south and 16 to 18 foot-wide side yard on the north. Both yards are unpaved, but the southern one is presently fenced and used for parking.

The building features a wood post and beam framing, and originally had post and board foundations. Its steep front-facing gable roof is supported by wood trusses. The roof was originally finished with cedar shingles, and its exterior walls were clad with cedar siding and "frame shakes." The original building contained three or four rooms, with the office and retail store spaces near the front and storage or service spaces near the back.

(Another historic tax photo for the property, dating from 1960, shows the presence of an open single-story shed structure between the existing building and the one to the south at 5021 Rainier Avenue South, with vehicle openings on both its front and back walls. No longer extant, this appears to have served as a storage shed, was built in 1952 – 1953 as a later addition to the subject building. A tax record and photo dating from April 1953 show it as an L-shaped structure that wrapped the back and part of the south side of the existing building. Constructed by the owner at the time, S.A. Foster Lumber Company, it was of "cheap" construction. It featured a post and beam structure with 6x6 posts and 2x12 floor joists, "old plank" floors, low gable and shed roofs. The shed was clad with 5/4 wood siding and 180 feet of a material cited as "flex-board." It provided a total of 4,400 square feet. Records suggest it was demolished in ca. 1965 – 1967 although a portion may have been salvaged.)

The 1936 tax photo of the subject building shows the front facing gable end featured a prominent verge board and timbering on the primary facade, exposed rafter tails on the sides, and a tall painted panel sign along the ridgeline that read "S. A. Foster Lumber." A shed roof awning, of what appears to have been wood panels, then sheltered the primary east facade. This contained the entry, with a multi-light wood panel doors, and several windows. Other wood framed windows were placed along the sidewalls. Records at the Rainier Valley Historical Society indicate that in 1945 the building was occupied by Roy Bailey's Insurance Co.

By 1960 the awning has been removed. In both the 1936 and 1960 era photos the original sidewall cladding, of painted wood shakes applied in horizontal rows with deep exposure, is visible.

According to the 1936 era historic tax record card, the building contained 1,197 square feet, with exterior dimensions on 56'-8" on the north and 18'-6" on the west, and approximately 68' on the south and 22'-6" on the east. It was largely rectangular, but a portion projected to the side near the front, and the front facade was extended with an angle to parallel the street. The original interior featured a flat ceiling of 9' and was simple finishes of plaster board over wood framed partitions, and fir flooring, which was provided in three of the original four rooms. The original building was heated by a wood stove.

### Changes to the Original Building

The present building retains the original gable roof form, with its two slightly different ridge heights. It exhibits changes with non-original siding, roofing, cladding, fenestration, storefront openings and doors. These exterior changes appear to have been made in response to retail store use. The primary east facade presently is clad vertical board and batten wood siding and the roof with composition roof shingles.



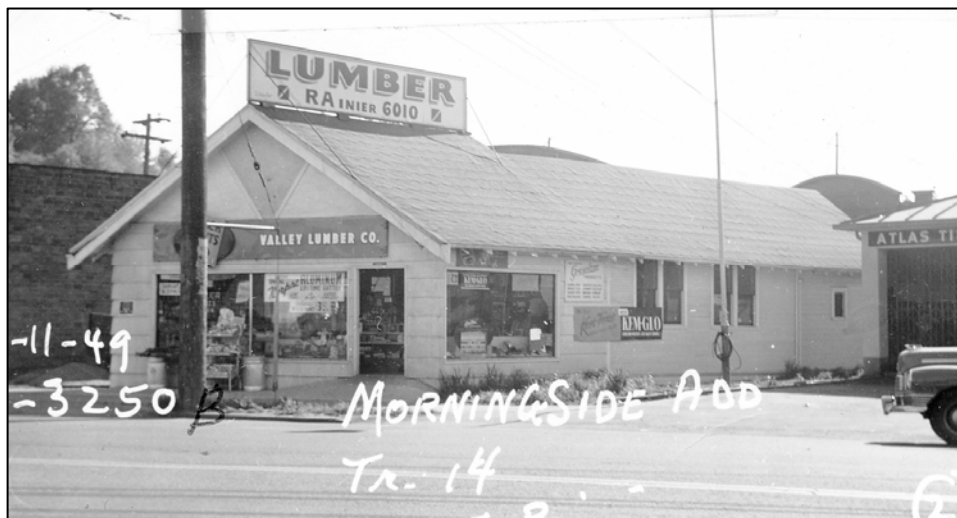
### 5015 Rainier Avenue South, con't



*Above, the building in a tax assessor's record of 1956. Original windows had been replaced by this date. Note the lumber storage building in the back of the lot. (Puget Sound Regional Archives)*

The current siding covers the original timbered treatment in the front gable end. Most of the remaining wall areas are finished with diagonal board siding, and most of the side windows are covered with painted plywood panels, although there are some areas on the north where wood callboards are visible. Original window and door locations on the front facade have been retained but the elements themselves have been changed. The back of the building appears somewhat domestic in nature with a partly enclosed porch on the back end of the south facade. Its condition appears poor.

Presently a retail grocery store, the building features fixed metal security bars across the front windows, a shed roof awning and highly figurative pattern of black and yellow painted board and batten cladding. The unpaved open space to the south is fenced and serves as a small parking lot. To the northern part of the parcel is a weedy open space, unpaved but fenced.



*Above, the building in a 1949 tax assessor's record. (Puget Sound Regional Archives)*

5015 Rainier Avenue South, con't



*Above is current view of the primary east facade and partial view of the south facade of the Busy Bee Mini-Mart. Below, a view looking south across the parking lot of 5001 Rainier Avenue South at its north facade.*



**Evaluation Comments**

This vernacular building has interesting history associated with the Columbia City Lumber Company, but this history is not embodied in the present structure. The City's Historic Sites Inventory Form notes the storefront has undergone significant alterations, but that the building is otherwise intact. However, changes are evident in cladding, storefront windows and interiors, and the wood framing and foundation appears to be in only fair condition. Other early buildings on the site, constructed as part of the lumber yard, have been removed. The building's size, condition, and scale limit its use to small retail or offices.

#### 4. 5021 (5019-5023 Rainier Avenue South

##### Property Data

Parcel Tax ID:	#5649600130
Legal Description:	Morningside Acre Tracts, 14 Parcel C, Plats 14 & 30
Date:	1924 - 1927
Historic Name:	N/A
Current Name:	Wash's Auto Repair and Columbia City Fitness Center
Historic/Current Use:	Auto showroom & repair garage / Fitness center & auto repair garage
Original/Current Owner:	Theodore D. Weed / Murakami Washing

##### Building History

This two-story wood framed, brick masonry commercial building was constructed beginning in 1924. It was originally owned by a Columbia City resident and businessman, Theodore D. Weed. Weed had resided in the city since 1905 and owned and operated the City Sash and Door Company. He also owned several buildings in Columbia City from ca. 1910 through the 1930s, including four buildings in the 4900 and 5000 blocks of Rainier Avenue South, and the building at 4906-4908 Rainier Avenue South (in 1929).

The building was designed by architect John L. McCauley, another Columbia City resident, who is credited with the design of at least seven buildings in the district. Despite it having been designed by an architect, its style is consistent with the building type and is characterized as Vernacular.

The building was constructed at a cost of \$4,000 as an automobile garage. It appears that the construction was phased, as an addition was built at the cost of \$2,000 for auto sales and service in 1926, and construction was completed in 1927 for another \$2,000. Tax records indicate that Mr. Weed had sold the building to Alice J. Mason in 1936. By this date it was a dealership for Brown and Webb, which dealt in Willys 77 vehicles. Auto related use continued under the Sam D. Stearns Auto Dealership, which is noted in the 1938 Polk Directory to Seattle. In 1940, Lyon's Plumbing Supply also was located in the building. By 1960 the building was occupied by Columbia Motors, a Direct Factory Dealership for Plymouth. Use of the back portion of the building for auto repair businesses has continued to the present day.

##### Architectural Description

The 9,514 square foot site is relatively level parcel located in the middle of the block, with street frontage along the primary east facade. The existing building features a post and beam structure with masonry infill. The flat roof is supported by wood trusses and concrete foundations walls and floor slabs. Brick masonry is placed on the lower portions of the prominent front façade, which rises to an estimated 16 feet at the top of the flat parapet. Sidewalls are finished with painted and exposed 9" structural (grouted) clay tile and concrete.

Angled along the corresponding street frontage, the building is rectangular in the back, with overall the dimensions of 160 feet on the south, 106 feet on the north, 72 feet on the west and approximately 89 feet on the east street-front or east side.

The original plan featured the showroom in the front, with storefront windows and entry in two primary bays and a vehicle entry at a recessed section near the north end of the east facade. An office section with four rooms and a parts room was located in the middle, and the service shop was in the back 72' by 105' section. This tripartite division of space is typical of many auto showroom/garage buildings that date from ca. 1910 through the 1930s.



### 5021 Rainier Avenue South, con't

Tax records note there was an original 72' by 74' partial basement, which likely was located in the front or east end. The current overall size is noted as 14,423 gross square feet (9,311 net square feet).

The original basement had 9' ceiling height, and main floor was built with a 14' ceiling height. Original interior finishes included plastered wood framed partitions, glass and "veneer board." Floors were concrete, with asphalt resilient floor tile added to 2,400 square feet by the mid-1930s. Originally the garage contained 7' x 9' rolling steel doors.

Original storefronts and transom windows on the primary east facade provided much of the building's visible character. These featured plate glass panels held by copper frames and wood trim, with brick masonry bulkheads.

The tax assessor photo, dating from 1936, shows the primary facade was painted by that time, with the tall section above the storefront and transoms serving as signage for the dealership business.



*Above, the building as shown in the historic tax assessor's parcel record card. (Puget Sound Regional Archives)*

5021 Rainier Avenue South, con't



*Above a contemporary view looking northwest from the sidewalk at the secondary south facade and partial east facade of the building. Above a contemporary view of the secondary north facade. Below an oblique view of the north and partial east facades.*



### 5021 Rainier Avenue South, con't



*Above, oblique view of the primary east façade on Rainier Avenue South.*

### Changes to the Original Building

The present building has been changed to accommodate tenants, and lost the original character-providing storefront windows and entry doors some time ago. Currently Wash's Auto Report (2106.722.3205) occupies the back section, with vehicle access provided from the original location at 5021 Rainier Avenue South through a single large roll-up metal door set into an angled recess, 5 to 12 feet from the sidewalk.

The front tenant space is enclosed more than it was historically when it served as an auto showroom. Original storefronts, transom windows and entry doors removed, and the original two storefront bays infilled by painted diagonal wood siding and smaller window openings. An entry to the space, currently occupied by Columbia City Fitness Center (206.725.7894), at 5023 Rainier Avenue South, is provided in a recess off the sidewalk near the center with a non-original single door and glazed relight panels. This entry is framed by the infill cladding, each containing an estimated 4 by 12 foot opening for windows. Presently there are exposed brick masonry piers and a two-foot tall brick bulkhead. Windows are wood framed, fixed and single glazed, with sills are set at 4.5' above grade rather than at a historic display level. The interior is finished with carpet, resilient floor and a flat ceiling. The upper wall portion of the primary east facade is stucco clad, and painted a contrasting color from the lower section. Historic photos indicate the building once had skylights, which have been infilled or removed.

### Evaluation Comments

This one story building retains its historic flat roofed form, but it has few distinguishing architectural characteristics that remain from its original construction. The deep, one-story mid-block structure has windows only on the east façade, and does not lend itself to adaptive reuse.



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**Personal Communication:**

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