The City of Seattle
Landmarks Preservation Board
Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649
Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

LPB 310/21

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

Name and Address of Property: **The Fairfax**
1508 10th Avenue E

Legal Description: All of Lot 5 and the west 17 feet of Lot 2 in Block 3 of the 1904 Hollywood Addition to the city of Seattle according to the plat thereof, recorded in Volume 11 of plats, page 43, in King County, State of Washington.

At the public meeting held on June 16, 2021 the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of The Fairfax at 1508 10th Avenue E as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following standard for designation of SMC 25.12.350:

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

E. It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder.

DESCRIPTION

Site

Located on north Capitol Hill, the Fairfax is a notable feature of the curve in 10th Avenue E between East Galer and East Garfield streets. The oyster-colored building faces west and is set off from the main thoroughfare, behind a two block long planting strip, on a paved road that is used for parking. Judiciously designed to make maximum use of its diagonally fronted 4,657 SF lot, it is one of the few apartment houses in this neighborhood of single-family homes. A few other apartment buildings are further north on 10th Avenue E near the small business area close to Roanoke Park.

The area surrounding the Fairfax is rich with Seattle landmarks. Located across 10th Avenue E from the old Street Nicholas School for Girls and sandwiched between the Roanoke Park Historic District to the north, the Harvard-Belmont Historic District to the southwest, Volunteer Park and Lake View Cemetery to the east, and the Broadway shopping area just south, the Fairfax is a distinguished and recognizable feature of this neighborhood.

Exterior Features

The Fairfax apartment building was constructed in the Gothic Revival style popular in the early 1920's. The three-story building (over a day-lit basement) fronts on 10th Avenue E, and is recognizable for its stepped facade, Gothic Revival details and vertical expression. The design and many decorative elements of the Fairfax (its verticality, prominent parapet finials, panels with grouped lancet arches) are seen later in the Gothic Revival downtown landmark, The Shafer Building, a project which was probably in Blackwell's office at the same time the Fairfax was designed.

The 4,657 square foot site is trapezoidal in shape, with the south property line measuring 106'-3". The east (rear) property line is 55'-6", oriented slightly to the northeast of due north. The north property line is 62'-7" and the west property line is 71'-8", running diagonally from southwest to northeast, negotiating the curve of 10th Avenue E. The site slopes up moderately from front (west) to rear (east) and a retaining wall on the north and east property lines allow for access around the building. There are no alleys adjacent to the parcel.

The building is sited on the south property line and is rectangular in shape, with a 21' x 25' notch at the northwest corner, to accommodate the shape of the site. There is also a 14' x 15' light court located at the center of the south wall of the building. The building was constructed with a 5' setback from the north property line and a 3' setback at the southeast corner, which gets larger (to about 6') as the property line shifts northeast.

Plan/Layout

The main entry portico is a half floor above grade, facing 10th Avenue E, at the corner of the "notch" of the building. Eleven steps lead up to the covered porch and the entry. Entering the building, a single corridor runs the length of the building (west to east), with a secondary access at the rear. The main basement door is accessed directly below the main entrance, by way of a walk adjacent to the main stair, with three steps down to the basement level. At the rear, eight steps are tucked against the building to get back up to grade. A modern fire stair connects all floors at this location.

Above the basement level, two apartments are accessed on each side of the double-loaded corridor, with the floor plans repeating on the second through fourth floors. The basement (first) floor consists of two apartments on the west side of the building and service rooms toward the rear (storage room and laundry on the north side, electrical room, and boiler/storage room on the south side of the corridor). The building stair is located at the

halfway point of the corridor on the south side. It connects from the basement all the way to the rooftop. All floors (including the basement) have ceiling heights of 8'-6". The building's fourteen apartments range in size from 545 square feet to 935 square feet, with an average size of 624 square feet.

Structure

The 1937 King County Assessor' property record card notes that the Fairfax is "a well-built building and well kept up." Structure is load bearing brick masonry over concrete basement foundation walls. On the north side, square vertical masonry piers run from the ground to the parapet, stiffening the wall and tying into the interior timber structural system, which is supported by 8" x 8" wood columns. In 2016, a new membrane roof was installed. As part of that project, the parapet was braced to the structural system. No other seismic upgrades have been made to the Fairfax. There is a non-original sauna and wood walkway on the roof that connects to the roof stair enclosure.

Elevations/Facades

Three walls comprise the primary elevations, due to the stepped plan of the building, two facing west and one facing north. Each of these elevations features paired window openings, vertically aligned at each floor of the building. The window groupings are each framed by a pair of diagonal pilasters that run from the ground to the top of the parapet. Each of these piers is then capped by a Gothic style finial. The Gothic revival decorative elements are repeated in a picturesque ensemble of details such as the pointed arch cast panels installed on the parapet, a pointed arched opening under the entry stair, cast iron balustrade with pointed arch details, and window details on the doors. The brick walls have been painted a buff color for many years.

The narrow primary elevations defined by the building form, along with the vertical pairing of windows and the diagonal piers topped by finials together create an impression of verticality which belies the building's modest footprint of 3,950 gross square feet.

The entry portico details include flattened Gothic arches, dentilated cornice and quatrefoils on each side of the arch. Originally, the upper porch on the west elevation was enclosed with a wood balustrade featuring lancet arches. The porch is now enclosed with a metal railing system.

All of the windows on the primary elevations are original or have been replaced in-kind. They are double-hung, three-over-one sash windows. The entrance doors (main entry, upper porch, and basement) are also original, as indicated on Blackwell's drawings.

The secondary north and rear elevations reflect a rational distribution of windows based on the apartment layout, repeating for each floor. The original windows were two or three-over-one. A few windows on the rear elevation have been replaced with one-over-one modern

wood windows or greenhouse windows.

The south elevation is a party wall condition. At least one non-original window has been installed on this wall. The upper part of the wall has been clad with modern (vinyl?) siding. The interior light court is also visible. There have been numerous alterations to openings in the light court over the years.

Interior Features

The Fairfax was constructed with interior features that were common in Seattle 1920's era apartments. A July 1923 rental advertisement in the Seattle Daily Times touted, "A combination of the most up-to-date conveniences…incorporated here, including electric ranges". A 1924 ad described corner suites with breakfast nooks, hardwood floors, ivory woodwork, French doors, and door mirrors. The floor plan shows some unusual features such as Murphy In-A-Door beds, which pivoted vertically from dedicated closets into living rooms, to provide extra sleeping space. Many of these closets have been converted into small offices, storage spaces and various other uses. A small secondary door for each apartment was accessible from the hall. Each one led to a small closet, which could be locked from inside the apartment, providing space for individual deliveries. Most of these small doors are still extant in the Fairfax. The central stair still reflects the original design, with its trefoil cutouts. The Fairfax public interiors reflect very few changes, remarkable for the building's age, while condominium interiors have been altered to varying degrees to suit their owners.

Building Alterations

The Fairfax has been fortunate to have maintained its appearance and structural integrity over the decades. The only noticeable alteration to the front of the building is the replacement of the original wooden railing on the deck above the front door with an iron railing. Some windows in the "courtyard" and rear of the building have been upgraded, but most on the primary elevation are still the original ones. At some point the brick exterior began to be painted. There is no indication that the range of colors used were anything other than the ecru/oyster shade seen today.

- **1922**: Permit 217968(?) granted to James Blackwell for original construction
- **1981**: Permit 594143 issued to John W. Demco for reconstruction of retaining wall on north property line
- **1981:** Permit 598748 was issued for the installation of a gable-type skylight in Apt. 404, greenhouse windows in the bathrooms of apartments 404 and 401, and small balconies off kitchens of same.
- **1994**: TCI Cablevision installed cable service
- **1995**: Permit 683057 to extend the retaining wall on the south side of the property
- **1996**: Permit 684138 to Snyder Hartung Architects to remove deck over the "courtyard" between apartments 401 and 404. Steel frame Juliet balconies were added to existing kitchen doors to deck outside each of those units. The stair landing access door to deck

was replaced with rebuilt 1/2 wall and greenhouse window
- **1999?**: Fire escape added to back of building
- **2000?**: Plumbing upgraded with new copper service lines
- **2009**: Refurbishment of original windows
- **2012**: Permit 6281859 was issued to reconstruct retaining wall on the east side of the property due to the neighbors' trees encroaching and damaging the wall
- **2015**: Permit 6460938 was issued repair the side sewer extending from the building west to 10th Avenue E.
- **2016**: New roof installed

SIGNIFICANCE

Neighborhood

In the mid-1800s the northern end of what is now Capitol Hill was steep and densely forested. The area was inhabited by the People of the Large Lake, the Duwamish. Rich in deer, wild pigs, game birds and fish, it was also home to cougars, bears and otters. Forests were a major attraction of the Northwest and a source of revenue for early white settlers who grew rich by shipping most of the lumber south to San Francisco. From the city's beginnings in Pioneer Square, land was cleared in stages from downtown, up Renton Hill (today's First Hill) and to north Capitol Hill. By 1880 Seattle's population had grown to 3,533, the native peoples had been displaced, the wildlife gone, and the hill logged off. Farms and orchards dotted the northwestern slopes. The entire area, then called Broadway Hill, began to be of interest as a residential district before 1901 when James A. Moore developed a large tract southeast of what would become Volunteer Park and renamed the area Capitol Hill.

The property later to be occupied by the Fairfax in 1923 is shown on an 1890 map as an empty space west of Lake View Cemetery. This land was owned by John Leary, one of Seattle's most energetic and ambitious individuals. Among his many other city properties, this one originally extended from the Cemetery west to Lake Union, between Roy and Roanoke streets.

The Great Fire of 1889 presented an opportunity for growth as an influx of people came to Seattle to rebuild a more robust and fire-resistant city. By 1890 Seattle's population had surged to nearly 43,000. Residential growth followed early public transit lines as they branched out from the center of town and by 1890 had reached North Capitol Hill. The Union Trunk Line was running along Broadway in 1891. An 1896 City of Seattle map shows a streetcar route running along 10th Avenue N (renamed 10th Avenue E by Ordinance 89910 in 1961), where it angles off diagonally across the Leary property to Federal Avenue N, proceeding to its terminus at E Lynn Street, then the city limit.

By 1902 the various streetcar companies were consolidated into the Seattle Electric Railway Company. The tracks were all normalized to a standard gauge, new cars were purchased, and the system was modernized to run on electricity. An added benefit to riders was the ability to

transfer between routes without having to pay a separate fare. A 1914 map shows Capitol Hill having all the routes in place that are familiar today. In 1919 the city bought the streetcar system and renamed it the Seattle Municipal Street Railway. By the 1920s Broadway had become one of the most popular shopping streets in the city and Capitol Hill was succeeding First Hill as a desirable place to have a home. This was helped by the proximity of many schools, churches, and cultural institutions, all of which are within walking distance of the Fairfax.

Although many grand homes were built by the wealthy on Capitol Hill, most of the homes were more modest by the standards of the day. The Hill was becoming a middle-class community, especially after 1900 when, due to the Klondike Gold Rush, Seattle's population doubled to over 80,000.

By 1910, with a population of 237,000, the city had undertaken much activity on the blocks adjacent to the future site of the Fairfax in the way of street grading and paving, water and sewer pipe installation and construction of sidewalks. Many nearby neighborhood features were well established and contributed to the attractiveness and importance of this part of Capitol Hill. Among them, directly to the east are three notable public greenspaces:

One of the first pieces of land to be cleared on Broadway Hill was donated in 1872 by David "Doc" Maynard, a Mason, to be used as a cemetery. A wagon road was cleared through a hog farm along what is now 14th Avenue E. Originally called the Masonic Cemetery, it was later renamed Lake View Cemetery, due to the scenic views of Lake Washington. It was to become the resting place of many of the city's founders.

In 1876 the city purchased 40 acres just south of the cemetery from J. M. Colman for the sum of $2,000 with the intent of developing its own cemetery for the citizens of Seattle and taking advantage of the road already cleared to the Masonic property. It was suggested by Mary Blanchard Leary, first wife of John Leary, that the new cemetery should have an Indian name and so it was called Washelli Cemetery, a Makah word for the west wind. Ten years later the city decided it would be more advantageous to turn the land into a public park, so the Washelli graves were resettled next door in the Lake View Cemetery.

Originally called Lake View Park, then City Park, in 1901 it was given the name Volunteer Park to honor those who fought in the Spanish-American War. In 1903, John C. Olmsted, of the prestigious eastern firm Olmsted Brothers, was hired by Seattle's Board of Parks Commissioner to design a complete park system for the city. He drew up a plan with many parks connected by a series of boulevards. Due to budget constraints following the depression of 1893, Volunteer Park was the only part of the Olmsted plan that was implemented at that time. Today the park boasts, among other features, a Conservatory, and the 1933 Carl F. Gould-designed Art Deco Asian Art Museum, designated a Seattle Landmark in 1989 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2016. Volunteer Park itself was listed on the National Register of Historic Places May 3, 1976, and on the Seattle Landmark list in November 2011. Several individual park structures are landmarks as well.

Directly north of Lake View Cemetery, across East Howe Street, is the Grand Army of the Republic Cemetery, devoted to the veterans of the Civil War. David and Huldah Kaufman, one of the first Jewish families to settle in the city, donated the land in 1895 for the interment of Union veterans and their wives. Among the 526 graves are three black soldiers and two Confederates. In 1942 the 63rd Coast Artillery put up a power plant, searchlight, and quarters for their crew as part of World War II's temporary defense system. The War brought a lot of military and other service activity to this neighborhood with the need for training and housing people in the armed forces.

Among the other noteworthy features of the Fairfax neighborhood are:

Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral was founded in 1889 and moved several times as the congregation grew, until its final purchase in 1923 of land at 1245 10th Avenue N. Money was raised and construction was begun on a new church in 1928. A grand plan was imagined for the building, but due to the Depression a more modest building, designed by San Francisco architects Arthur Brown, Jr., and E. Frere Champney, was erected, and came to be known as "The Holy Box." It was dedicated in 1931 and served the community until 1941, when, due to financial trouble, the Street Louis firm holding the mortgage foreclosed. It was put up for sale but remained empty until World War II made it attractive to the U. S. Army in 1943 as an anti-aircraft training center. Services were held elsewhere and by the end of 1944 the congregation was able to return to 10th Avenue Dedicated congregational fundraising between 1944 and 1947 resulted in the mortgage finally being paid off.

The Street Nicholas School for Girls, founded in 1910 by families wanting their daughters to have the kind of education provided by eastern preparatory schools, was originally located on Roy Street. By 1925 the enrollment had grown, and the trustees purchased land for a new school at 1501 10th Avenue N, across from the Fairfax. They hired the highly regarded local firm of Bebb and Gould to design the Jacobean-style building. In 1971 Street Nicholas merged with Lakeside School. In 1981 the Cornish College of Arts, having outgrown Kerry Hall at Harvard and Roy, acquired the building for a second, north campus. By 1989 they needed to expand once again and were able to relocate to the 1928 Art Deco Lenora Square Building in the Denny Triangle neighborhood. In 2003 Street Mark's Cathedral purchased the building from Cornish and now leases space to the Gage Academy and the Bright Water School. The building was designated a Seattle Landmark in September 1984.

Just north of the school are two remarkable properties with ties to John Leary. Leary was an enterprising Canadian who had done well in New Brunswick lumber and mercantile businesses and, after a stay in Maine, decided to continue these endeavors along the timber-rich Puget Sound. He arrived in Seattle in 1869, joining about a thousand whites who had settled among the thriving indigenous communities. In 1871 he got a law degree and from that time forward became one of the city's most influential citizens. Interested in many municipal affairs, he was elected mayor in 1884. Throughout his career he was involved in timber, banking, land, mining, transportation, and utilities, all to the betterment of the city and often at his own expense. He

was always concerned with effective ways to move goods and, when Seattle lost out to Tacoma as the terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad, Leary was instrumental in building the Seattle & Walla Walla Railroad. He also organized the Columbia River and Puget Sound Navigation Company, providing steamship service on the major waterways. In 1881 he bought the Seattle *Post*, as it merged into the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*. Leary erected the Post Building block, one of Seattle's best business blocks at the time.

In the early 1900s, after selling many of his land holdings, he began clearing 15 acres of the property he called Owl or Dogwood Hill, as an estate for him and his second wife, Eliza Ferry, daughter of Washington State's first governor, Elisha Ferry. The Learys gave part of the property as a gift to Eliza's brother, Pierre Peyre Ferry and his wife, Laurena.

The Learys had been living in a mansion on Second Avenue and Madison Street in what was becoming a dense mercantile area. The home they planned at 1551 10th Ave E became a 14-room, 2-1/2 story mansion with large, landscaped grounds resembling an English estate. The noted Seattle architectural firm of Graham and Bodley was hired in 1903 to design both homes on the property, but their partnership broke up and Alfred Bodley completed the Leary commission, while John Graham, Sr., worked on the Ferry house. Eliza had to see to the completion of their home in 1907 because John Leary passed away in 1905. She lived there until her death in 1935 when the General Insurance Company bought the property, intending to use the house as an office and add another large building on the western slope. Before they could start work, they offered the house to the American Red Cross during WWII for use as their Seattle headquarters. In 1948, the home was purchased by the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia. The diocese donated the home's original Tiffany stained glass window to the Burke Museum at the University of Washington. The Eliza Ferry Leary House was added to the National Register of Historic Places on April 14, 1972.

The Pierre P. Ferry house next door at 1531 10th Avenue E was designed in the American Arts and Crafts style by John Graham, Sr. and completed in 1904. This interior also featured work by the famed Tiffany Studios. Louis Comfort Tiffany himself is said to have come to Seattle to supervise the work. In 1934 Laurena Ferry moved away but kept the house as a rental property. In 1946 Street Mark's Cathedral purchased the house which it used as a deanery until they sold it to a private party in 1978. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on April 18, 1979, and as a Seattle Landmark on May 21, 1979.

One block south of the Fairfax, at 1220 10th Avenue E, is the house Louis O. Menard designed in 1912 for John W. Bullock, one-time city council member, coal merchant and president of the Mutual Gold Mining Union. It was designated a Seattle Landmark on December 2, 2015. Many other residences in close proximity to the Fairfax are deemed significant in historic resources surveys done by the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods.

While most of this part of Capitol Hill is made up of single-family homes, a few apartment buildings were constructed on 10th Avenue to the north of the Fairfax at around the same time. The nearby Alta Casa apartment building at 1645 10th Avenue is a Mediterranean

Revival-style building designed by Frank H. Fowler in 1923, the same year the Fairfax was built.

The character of this section of Capitol Hill has remained much the same since the 1920s and is a green and quiet oasis of attractive family homes.

The Gothic Revival in Seattle

Architectural design in the early 1920's in Seattle reflected eclectic and historical revival styles. The Gothic Revival was most commonly applied to church designs. Numerous examples of the English Gothic and Tudor Revival are found throughout the city. A unique subset of the style, the Collegiate Gothic, is exemplified by the collection of academic buildings called for and designed by the office of Bebb & Gould in their Regents plan for the University of Washington.

Integration of the Gothic Revival style for tall buildings in New York (the Woolworth Building, 1910-1914), and Chicago (The Tribune Tower competition, 1922) were highly publicized, and may have inspired Blackwell's designs.

Designed in the same years, Blackwell's use of simplified Gothic design elements appear on both the Fairfax and Shafer buildings. The Seattle Daily Times on July 6, 1924 noted that the Shafer was "of Gothic design and finished in mat-glazed terra cotta. . .the structure is prepossessing in appearance...a noteworthy feature is the elaborate cornice capped by terra cotta finials seven feet in height..." The 1986 City of Seattle report on designation for the Liggett building (a more elaborate Gothic Revival style office building constructed in 1927) noted that the Shafer Building, was the "first major office building to adapt Gothic decoration to its terra cotta surface." A later example of a Gothic revival residential building from 1928 is First Hill's Earl W. Morrison-designed Marlborough Apartments. Features that characterize the simplified Gothic Revival design of the Fairfax are as follows:

- Verticality: Instead of a horizontal cornice, the pier buttresses extend to the top of the building and are terminated by finials with crockets, similar to the Shafer building.
- Pier buttresses: Simple diagonal piers organize the façade and extend from the ground to the top of the building, reinforcing the building's verticality.
- Pointed arches: A design motif that can be found throughout the building, including on interior stair and exterior railings, parapet friezes, door glazing details and the door opening beneath the entry stair.
- Trefoil decorative elements can be found on the interior stair balustrade and on the front porch roof.

Apartment Development in Seattle

Apartment buildings did not become a recognizable feature of Seattle housing until the early 20th Century. Aside from the families who made their way west and settled the Puget Sound in the 1850s, most later arrivals were single men wanting to try their luck in the lumber, mining, and fishing industries. Housing then consisted of low-cost lodging houses, supplying

only a room in which to sleep, and boarding houses, providing a room and communal meals with other residents. Hotels were also an option at this time for renters as well as travelers, where one could stay for a single night or by the month. Some of these were modest but many catered to people of more means and those accustomed to some luxuries.

After the "Great Fire" of 1889 destroyed Seattle's downtown commercial district, more robust and fire-resistant urban buildings were required. Instead of two- and three-story wood commercial buildings, a more "metropolitan" scale of four- to six-story brick buildings rich with detail characterized the downtown. The city's population in 1900 was 80,000. The rapid growth of the city meant an acute need for housing. The Street Paul Flats, erected in 1901 on what is now First Hill, was the first of many purpose-built apartment houses. The three-story building at Seneca and Summit had eighteen large units averaging 1,400 square feet offering many modern conveniences. Following the success of the Street Paul, many of Seattle's earliest and most prestigious apartment buildings were constructed in the First Hill area. As First Hill became increasingly commercial and institutional, residential areas were being developed further away in nearby neighborhoods such as Wallingford, Queen Anne, and Capitol Hill.

Apartment Development on Capitol Hill

James Moore began selling parcels in his Capitol Hill tract in 1901. However, few apartment houses were among the early buildings constructed. The tract was intended to contain a community of significant homes for Seattle's wealthy, including Moore's own family mansion on "Millionaire's Row," just south of Volunteer Park. Although many grand homes were built by the well-to-do on Capitol Hill, most homes were more modest by the standards of the day. By 1910 Seattle's population had grown to an astonishing 237,000 and apartment buildings were beginning to spring up. Due to the growing need, builders were moving beyond thinking of apartments as housing for single men or the east coast tenements of the poor.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Capitol Hill became a popular spot in the city and attractive as a place to live due to the number of schools, churches, shopping, parks, and cultural institutions. Since many of the new arrivals during these years were young families and the single women who were increasingly entering the work force, apartments proved desirable and more affordable than houses for a growing middle class. Architects began designing upscale apartments in the neighborhood to complement its grand homes. Designer-builders such as Frederick Anhalt and Arthur Loveless began to build revival style apartments of distinct architectural quality. The Gothic Revival Fairfax designed by James Blackwell reflects this trend. These buildings provided living space with all the conveniences of a house and contributed to the middle-class housing stock.

In the 1920s, with a population of nearly 327,000, apartments were being built at a dizzying rate and were considered an outstanding investment, as gains could be made generating rent and later sale of the building. This real estate bonanza did not slow until the Great Depression of the 1930s. Apartment buildings have been a major feature of Seattle housing ever since.

Fairfax History

As John Leary began clearing this 15-acre property in the early 1900s on which to build two homes, the North Broadway Improvement Club saw a chance to connect the north and south ends of 10th Avenue N, which at that time was bisected by the Leary land. The Broadway business district was growing, and the club hoped to create a continuous thoroughfare that would run the hill's complete distance northward. Leary eventually agreed to do this, even offering to pay for grading the street and adding sidewalks, on condition that no unsightly poles, billboards, or streetcars disturb his view.

The plat that resulted from that agreement, conveyed to the city of Seattle on February 18, 1904, by the Ferry-Leary Land Company and Sam Hill, was called the Hollywood Addition. It was comprised of the blocks from E Galer halfway to E Blaine. The eastern edge ended at Lake View Cemetery, including Federal Avenue N, and the western boundary was the 10th Ave N extension created by Ordinances 10929 and 11447 in mid-1904.

In 1905 the Seattle Electric Company began running its streetcars down the newly opened street, using the curve in 10th Avenue N near E Galer that is a remnant of the circular drive onto the Leary lot. In 1944, when the city widened 10th Avenue N, this original road was bypassed and became the parking strip it is today. (In 1961, Ordinance 89910 changed all the north-south street directionals in this area from North to Northeast).

The Fairfax was designed and built in 1923 as an investment property by architect James Eustace Blackwell. An article in the March 24, 1923, *Seattle Daily Times* includes the Fairfax among several construction projects in the city**.** It reports it will cost $50,000 to build and have "fourteen handsome suites." G. F. Martin was the general contractor and Henry Broderick would soon have management responsibility.

Early Classified ads list the Fairfax having unfurnished 3- and 4-room apartments with "the most up-to-date conveniences," including hardwood floors, shower bath, wall beds, French doors, electric range, breakfast nook, and close to the park on the Broadway car line. Rental rates were $65 to $85 a month. By summer of 1924 rents seem to have gone down, as ads announced "a new schedule of prices" from $50 to $67.50 a month.

Residents throughout the years were a mixture of the middle class and those hoping to become so. The social pages of the twenties noted many newlyweds would make their first home at the Fairfax. It was also home to families with small children and single professionals, both men and women.

In the fall of 1924, the Fairfax was sold to investor Frank Owen Birney of Spokane for $75,000. Henry C. Ewing & Co. was the agent for the transaction. A *Seattle Daily Times* article on the sale noted that the Fairfax was "recognized as one of the best-equipped apartments in the city." Blackwell took his $25,000 profit and added it to his $40,000 purchase of the Rieff

Apartments at Broadway and Alder.

By March of 1927, the building was for sale again. Realtors Perkinson & Bridges placed a Classified ad stating that the building had “46 rooms” and was being “sacrificed” for $50,000. It appears to have been bought by J. B. Ruddy, because two years later in fall of 1929, the Christensen Realty Company was his agent in the sale of the Fairfax to L. W. Nordhus for $68,000. A small article about the sale in the *Seattle Daily Times* reported the building “contains 23 beautifully furnished suites”. (It appears the size of the building was misrepresented, or “suites” and “rooms” were used interchangeably.)

The Fairfax was up for auction in early 1931 and sold to W. J. Fortier and W. E. Olson, investors from eastern Washington, for $55,000 in a deal transacted by the C. D. Bridges Co.

At some point in the late 1920s, instead of having owners or agents lease out units, a tenant was given that responsibility. The U. S. Census of 1930 lists among the Fairfax residents seven couples with children, five couples without, and one single mother. Harry Jenkins, building manager, lived in Unit 101 with his wife and two children. Residents included an accountant, art teacher, bank teller, bank executive, two bookkeepers, engraver, machinist, manager in ladies’ apparel, printer, two salespeople, stenographer, and streetcar conductor. Rents ranged from $35 to $52.

Maintenance tasks also came to be handled by a resident. The *Seattle Daily Times* of April 2, 1935, reported that the resident janitor, W. B. Aitken, was locked up in the basement while robbers rifled through items in the storage area.

During the years following the depression, rents were lower. As an ad from 1936 indicated, one of the units was going for $30 a month. In 1937 a series of records was established for property tax purposes through a survey funded by a contract between King County Assessor and the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA). The survey was completed in 1940. Photographs were taken as descriptive examples at that time as well.

The census of 1940 recorded only nine apartments occupied. There were five couples without children, two single women and two single mothers. Myrtle Fromhold managed the building while her husband Arthur, 39, worked as a bottler for Hemrich Brewery. Other men had jobs as credit supervisor for an oil company, beverage distributor salesman, inspector for a shingle company and owner of a woodwork machinery shop. Widow Acquilena White, 52, a social worker, lived with her daughter, 22, who was an assistant in a doctor’s office, and her son, 20, a truck driver. Lottie Kreitel, 42, a divorced department store salesperson, had two daughters, one 11 years old and the other, 23, a public library clerk. Of the two single women, Bessie Vandivert, 61, was a public school teacher, and divorcee Anne Duggan, 43, was a hotel maid. The rents then were $30 to $45.

The Department of Assessments record shows the building was owned by Halcyone A. Knapp in December 1940 and valued at $26,500. In August 1941 it passed to the Seattle Federal

Savings & Loan. The Washington Mutual Savings Bank took over the $17,500 mortgage in April 1944 and in May passed the building to John E. Kobelin. He and wife Katherine managed the building from 1943-1944, while residing in Apt. 202. It returned to Washington Mutual in early 1945. The building's value increased incrementally over the next few years: Annetta C. Carpenter paid $38,500 in June 1945; J. Carlton Scott paid $47,500 in January 1946. Annetta Carpenter is listed as owner again in February 1955. Alan Gronberg bought the building in July 1964 for $85,000 and handled the leasing himself. A February 24, 1966 *Seattle Times* classified ad for a furnished apartment in the Fairfax was listed for $35 a month.

On March 24, 1982, the Fairfax Group was formed for the purpose of converting the building to condominiums, under King County Recording Number 8203240601, in Volume 59 of Condominiums, Pages 46 through 49, inclusive. The principals were Robert K. and Kathleen Lehr, Raymond, and Shirley Freidman, with Timothy McHugh and Deane and Jesslyn Hilt.

Advertising for the new condominiums began in fall of 1981. Prices ranged from $57,225 to $95,000. The first three apartments were sold by April 1982: Unit 101 for $52,925, unit 102 for $46,000 and unit 401 for $95,000.

Tim McHugh, one of the principals in the conversion and owner of Unit 204, seems to have been the general caretaker of the building during the sales. In November of 1982, he signed a contract for a five year lease for two washing machines and two dryers. The Fairfax paid $15 a month for each machine to the Metered Washer Company. The residents were charged 75¢ per wash load and 50¢ to dry. McHugh sold his apartment in June 1989 to Bryce William Miller for $51,500.

Since the condominium conversion in 1982, resident owners at the Fairfax have worked at a variety of occupations. They have included a Boeing engineer, one of Boeing's first "telecommuters," biotech engineers, and software engineers working in gaming and in Virtual Reality. Residents during the 1990s included a massage therapist, a health care worker and a commuter working at Bremerton Naval Base. During the 2000s, a radiology resident, a landscape designer, a graphic designer for a local newspaper, an interior designer at Olson Kundig, realtors, a sommelier, and nurses all lived at the Fairfax.

Writers and artists are also well represented, and include a short story writer, cookbook author and Cornucopia Cuisine owner Becky Selengut, science fiction novelist Isaac Marion, and Northwest Editors Guild Founder Sherri Schultz. Visual artists have included Reiko Mittet, Donald Meek (a member artist affiliated with the Seattle Art Colony collective) and Cassandria Blackmore, whose gallery is located on Pike Street on Capitol Hill.

Small business owners are also well represented, including the owners of Magnolia HiFi, Belltown Feed and Seed pet food and supply company, the Mother Come Home Card Company, Bellevue's City Flowers, and the Wales Literary Agency, which has been located at the Fairfax for many years.

Due in part to the proximity of the University of Washington, Seattle University and Cornish College, students of nursing, law and music have lived at the Fairfax, as have university teachers of Spanish and History, a Japanese translator and language instructor. Longtime resident Nicholas Heer, an Arabic language scholar and Islamic studies professor, now retired, came to Seattle from the east coast to teach at the University of Washington. He was one of the founders and first president of the Dorian Society in 1967, the city's first social organization for advocacy and outreach for Seattle's gay community. He briefly left retirement to teach Arabic to students after 9/11.

The June 2, 1993, *Capitol Hill Times* reported that a group of nearby homeowners, calling themselves The Friends of 10th Avenue East and East Garfield Street, applied for and got a matching grant of $46,757 from the city to contribute to the cost of a project to clean up and beautify the two block parking strip, which had become blighted by weeds and graffiti. The strip was repaved, a greenspace of trees and other plants was created to buffer the lot from 10th Avenue E traffic and ivy was planted to cascade down the retaining walls.

Currently the Fairfax is a self-managed condominium with general maintenance duties taken on by members of the Board with an assist from a rotating group of residents.

In 2013 the Fairfax was included in a survey conducted by the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and found to meet criteria for the National Register of Historic Places.

Architect James Eustace Blackwell

James Eustace Blackwell began his professional life as a civil engineer and ended it as one of the most productive architects in the Pacific Northwest. In a multi-faceted building career, his work runs the gamut in style and purpose. His work is present in Pioneer Square, along the waterfront, in downtown and on Capitol Hill, First Hill and Queen Anne. He designed everything from drydocks and warehouses to apartment buildings and private residences. One of his commercial buildings in downtown, the Shafer Building, was designated as a city of Seattle landmark. He was also active in the municipal affairs of the city as they related to buildings and roads at a time when Seattle was becoming a modern metropolis.

Born in September 1855 and raised in Fauquier County in northern Virginia, Blackwell graduated from Bethel Military Academy with honors and training as a civil engineer. The first of his jobs was surveying a route for a proposed canal between the James and Ohio Rivers. He next worked for nearly a decade in the Office of the Supervising Architect of the U. S. Treasury Department. After leaving the District of Columbia in 1888 or 1889 he may have spent a short time in Rochester, New York, before setting off for the Pacific Northwest.

He was one of thousands seeking their fortunes at that time in the new state of Washington. Some came for the natural resources and some to rebuild Seattle after the Great Fire of 1889. Blackwell settled in Tacoma in 1890. He met architect Robert L. Robertson and together they designed the Louderback Building (1890), the Vorhees Grain Elevator, the Puyallup Opera

House, and the Lumberman's Arch over Pacific Avenue to welcome President Harrison to Tacoma (all in 1891).

He left Robertson and Tacoma in 1893 to work on his first major project in the Northwest as partner and Chief Advisory Engineer for Byron Barlow & Company, which had been commissioned to build the first drydock at the Puget Sound Naval Station for the Bureau of Yards and Docks of the U. S. Navy in Bremerton. This necessitated moving his family to Charleston, near Port Orchard, where he also became active in local politics. In April 1896, a final test of the drydock was made when the U. S. S. Monterey came in for servicing. Despite some delays, approval by the government was given, with the distinction of being the only U. S. drydock up to that time to be finished by the contract date.

In 1894 Blackwell was one of the founding members of the Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. There had been work for many calling themselves architects in the boom years following the fire, but the economic Panic of 1893 saw a downturn in construction and professionally educated architects saw the need of formalizing standards. Even trained architects were having difficulty finding work. Blackwell himself took different jobs occasionally.

After the drydock was completed he made one of his many visits back to Washington, D.C. Upon his return, it appears he took other work to pay the bills, the economy still being poor. Some sources have him reconnecting with Robertson at an office in Portland between 1894 and 1897. However, this seems unlikely since he would still have been working on the drydock in those years.

In 1898 Blackwell and two partners set off in the schooner Jane Gray bound for Kotzbue, Alaska, on some business relating to the Klondike Gold Rush. The ship foundered and sank 90 miles off Cape Flattery. Blackwell was one of 27 of the 63 passengers to survive. Both of his partners died. A June 2, 1898, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* article about the tragedy states he is a cashier of the North American Transportation & Trading Company, so he was undoubtedly going to Alaska on their behalf. In late 1899 he was still working there, having been promoted to general freight and passenger agent. The Seattle census of 1900 lists his occupation as cashier with a national company.

1902 was a particularly busy year for Blackwell. He was hired to design a floating dock in Portland, prompting him to make a trip back east that spring, where he visited twenty-seven major docks along the Atlantic coast. In Washington, D. C., he applied for a patent for a floating dock and visited the Carnegie Library to investigate their plans for future libraries.

It may have been at this time, rather than 1894, that he renewed his partnership with Robertson. From 1901 to 1903, they were very involved with developers Smith & Kerry in the Columbia Terrace housing project, located in what is today's Central District. The *Seattle Mail & Herald* published weekly drawings of the proposed houses. Though the project got a lot of coverage, this early version of a planned housing development did not do as well as hoped. A

large ad in a 1903 *Seattle Mail & Herald* has Robertson & Blackwell in offices in the Dexter Horton Building in Seattle.

These years also saw designs for: Puget Sound Machinery Depot (1902, Railroad Avenue and Washington Street) C. J. Erickson house (1902, 1021 14th Ave E, torn down in 1942, but the carriage house, now a residence at 1001 14th Ave E., still stands in much altered form.) Hotel, pavilion, and bath house in West Seattle (1902) A. Hambach store platform (1903, 305-7 1st Avenue S) Eagle's Hall (1904, 7th Avenue and Pine Street) and several residences on First Hill.

He parted from Robertson once again in 1904, when Blackwell was hired by the New York Mutual Life Company to update the old Yesler Building they had purchased and add a western addition to it. He maintained an office there himself between 1904 and 1910. The Shafer Brothers later bought the building and had him make additional alterations in 1916.

One of the first orders of business, once in his own practice again was to build a home for his family. Completed in 1905, the Dutch Colonial-style house at 1112 Harvard Avenue East is still a part of the Harvard-Belmont Historic District.

Other Blackwell projects during these years are:

- Washington Iron Works (1906, Seattle Blvd. (now Airport Way) at Norman Street)
- Galbraith-Bacon Company warehouse and pier (1906, at the foot of Wall Street)
- Mission-style cottage for W. S. Ronald (1906, King Street)
- Gray's Harbor Electric Company plant (1907, Aberdeen, WA)
- M. F. Backus warehouse (1907, 1014 1st Avenue S)
- F. W. Charles apartment house (1907, 921 E John Street, demolished for the Capitol Hill light rail station)
- J. H. McGraw business block (1907, 1524-28 2nd Avenue and Pine Street)
- Eagle's Hall renovation (1908, 7th Avenue and Pine Street)
- E. O. Graves warehouse (1908, 1022 1st Avenue S)
- Kate Fabj duplex (1908, 31st Avenue)
- Retail and office building (1908, 5th and Main in Olympia, WA)

He met architect Frank Lidstone Baker in 1908 and they formed a partnership that lasted until about 1917. In the summer of 1910, they took office space in the Northern Bank Building at Westlake and Pine, which was becoming the new center of town. The firm Blackwell & Baker produced some notable designs. Among them:

- May Jorgensen store (1909, 401 23rd Avenue S)
- Chester F. Lee residence (1909, 1317 6th Avenue W)
- Miss N. C. Neilson residence (1909, 2nd Ave NW and 70th Street)
- Galbraith-Bacon Company warehouse and stable (2402-10 Railroad Avenue)
- American Cities Realty Company store and office building (1910, 1512-16 3rd Avenue)

- W. W. Chapin residence (1910, 1117 Boylston Avenue E)
- James A. Kerr residence (1910, 1105 Boylston Avenue E)
- Grand Trunk Pacific Dock (1910, destroyed by fire)
- Bellingham Armory (1910, Elk and Pine Streets, Bellingham WA)
- David H. Jarvis house remodel (1911, 1125 Harvard Avenue E)
- Mrs. R. V. Snowdon residence (1912, Federal Avenue E and E Gaylor [Galer?])
- Inland Navigation Company dock, warehouse, and office (1912, Bellingham, WA)
- Highland (now Dover) Apartments remodel (1912, 6th and Marion)
- Frink Building addition of two floors (1912, 400 Occidental Way)
- Sears, Roebuck & Company warehouse (1912, Utah and Lander)
- Thomas Garrison residence (1912, 820 W Lee Street)
- Boardman Building (1914,120 E 4th Avenue, Olympia)
- Nesika (now Stratford) Apartments (1915, 2021 4th Avenue)
- Carnegie Libraries:
    - Wenatchee (1912)
    - Olympia (1914)
    - Burlington (1916)
    - All Carnegie Libraries were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

After their partnership dissolved, Blackwell stayed on in the Northern Bank Building until 1919, when he moved to the Seaboard Building at 4th and Pike. He was finishing up some construction work on the last two houses for the Vancouver Home Company in Vancouver, WA.

Other work done in 1919 includes:

- Lodge No. 1186 Order of Elks clubhouse in Wenatchee
- Rainier Golf and Country club clubhouse and grounds (Des Moines Road)
- Lake Union Dock Company pier and warehouse (2700-08 Westlake Ave N)

Many of Blackwell's activities in the early 1920s involve Seattle's municipal affairs. He had been a long-time member of the Municipal League, where he served on the Committee on Parks, Buildings and Grounds and on the Streets and Roads Committee. He belonged to the Commercial Club, where he was charter member of the Good Roads Association. He served on the U. S. Shipping Board (1918-1920), the Board of Public Works, and was a member of the first Zoning Commission in 1923. He was also a Freemason and member of the Pacific Northwest Society of Engineers, the American Society of Civil Engineers, the Rainier Club, and the Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, serving as its President in 1905.

He served as Superintendent of Buildings from 1920 to 1922. When his term was over, he was able to return to his architectural practice. He took office space in the Hoge Building Annex where he designed the Fairfax Apartments (1923, 1508 10th Avenue E) and, most notably, the

Shafer Building (1924, 6th and Pine), which bears several design features similar to the Fairfax. The Shafer Building was given Seattle Historic Landmark status on May 18, 1987 and added to the National Register of Historic Places December 13, 1995.

Among Blackwell's last completed projects:

- Colsky store (1926, 2121 1st Avenue)
- Evans Building (1929, 3rd and Main in Renton, WA)
- Northern State Hospital's Women's Ward L-M building (1933, Sedro Woolley)

In April 1939, he had gone to the office of Sheriff William Severyns in the City-County Building to show him plans for a model prison farm. While there he suffered a fatal heart attack. He was 83 years old.

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The features of the Landmark to be preserved include*: the site, the exterior of the building, and the main interior stairway.*

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