



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649

Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

LPB 49/17

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

Name and Address of Property: **Mama's Mexican Kitchen Building**
2234 Second Avenue

Legal Description: Bell's William N. 3rd Addition less street, Block A, Lot 6, recorded in Volume 1 of Plats, Page 137, Records of King County, Washington.

At the public meeting held on January 18, 2017 the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Mama's Mexican Kitchen Building at 2234 Second Avenue 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 a method of construction; and*
- F. Because of its prominence of spatial location, contrasts of siting, age, or scale, it is an easily identifiable visual feature of its neighborhood or the city and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood or the City.*

DESCRIPTION

Site and neighborhood context

The subject site is located at the southeast corner of Second Avenue and Bell Street in the Belltown (also known as the Denny Regrade) neighborhood of Seattle. Belltown, although one of Seattle's oldest neighborhoods, is today largely characterized by low-slung, one- to two-story commercial and light industrial buildings, and two- to four-story mixed-use and apartment buildings that were developed on this north edge of downtown in the 1920s to the 1960s. Interspersed among these are highrise residential towers that were developed from the mid-1970s to the present. The neighborhood benefits from its convenient proximity between downtown and the Lower Queen Anne/Seattle Center areas, as well as the Pike Place Market and waterfront views along the neighborhood's western edge. There are a high concentration of social service providers in the neighborhood, and the area is a major route in and out of downtown by bus and automobile. As a city-designated urban village, the neighborhood is

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undergoing increase densification, and remains popular with residents and tourists for pockets of restaurants, bars, music clubs, and other forms of entertainment, primarily along First and Second Avenues.

The subject parcel measures 60 by 108 feet in plan and is essentially flat. The parcel is bounded by an alley on the east, and beyond that is Regrade Park, a public off-leash dog park, at the corner of Bell Street and Third Avenue. In recent years, the Bell Street right of way between First and Fifth Avenue has been designated as park space. For City of Seattle land use purposes, the subject site is zoned DMR/R 85/65 (Downtown Mixed Residential / Residential), and is located in the Belltown Urban Center Village.

To the south, sharing a property line, is the Wayne Apartments, a “regrade hybrid” building consisting of a c.1890 wood frame three-unit rowhouse structure on top of a c.1911 masonry commercial storefront structure which was inserted underneath after Denny Hill was regraded. The Wayne Apartments building is a designated Seattle landmark. To the west, across Second Avenue from the site, on the southwest corner of Second Avenue and Bell Street, are two early twentieth-century wood-frame commercial structures—2231 Second Avenue, built in 1900, and 2235 Second Avenue, built in 1907. According to the entries for them in the Department of Neighborhoods Seattle Historical Sites database, they and the Wayne Apartments are among the oldest remaining structures in Belltown.

Across Bell Street to the north is the eight-story Second & Bell apartment building, constructed in 2012. Diagonally across the Second Avenue and Bell Street intersection is the Bakhita Gardens, a six-story apartment building constructed in 2010 by the Seattle Catholic Archdiocese for transitional women’s housing.

Besides the Wayne Apartments, there are numerous designated Seattle landmarks within two or three blocks of the subject site. Nearby designated landmarks include the MGM Building, RKO Distributing Company Building, and William Tell Hotel one block north on Second Avenue between Bell and Battery Streets; the Austin A. Bell Building, Barnes Building, and Hull Building at First Avenue and Battery Streets; the Bon Marche Stables, Union Stables, and Empire Laundry Building along Western Avenue on either side of Bell Street; the Castle Apartments at Second Avenue and Blanchard Street; the Guiry-Schillestad Building at First Avenue and Lenora Street; and the Metropolitan Printing/Brasa Building at Third Avenue and Lenora Street.

Building description

The subject is a one-story commercial building constructed in 1924, located at the southeast corner of Second Avenue and Bell Street. Original drawings are on file, but they are difficult to read and may be incomplete.

The building measures 60 by 108 feet and fills the parcel. Structure is unreinforced brick masonry on a concrete foundation, with a post and beam interior supporting a flat built-up roof. The building is organized into three approximately equal structural bays along the east and west elevations, and six approximately equal structural bays along the north elevation. There is a two foot thick masonry fire wall between the front and rear halves of the building

(ie, between the third and fourth bays on the north elevation), which originally divided one large rear workshop from the three commercial storefronts along Second Avenue.

Most recently, the front of the building was occupied by a single restaurant, Mama's Mexican Kitchen (now closed), which had expanded over time into all three Second Avenue storefronts. In recent years, the restaurant had also expanded one bay eastward, beyond the two foot thick masonry fire wall, and an interior partition was constructed between the spaces. Today, the rear two bays of the building are a single open space occupied by Elliott Bay Crossfit, a fitness gym, which is accessed from Bell Street and the alley.

The exterior of the building is red brick with fenestration on the west, north, and east elevations. The exterior brick is laid in a running bond, with soldier courses at the tops of the piers between slightly recessed window bays. Windows feature brick sills throughout, and projecting cast stone headers at the main street-facing (north and west) elevations. A gently stepping and shaped brick parapet wraps the three elevations, and is topped by cast stone coping. Flush panels of brick laid in a checkerboard pattern are centered in the parapet above the windows. Exterior masonry in general is in fair to poor condition and appears to suffer from deferred maintenance and needs to be repointed. Historic photographs indicate that the brick has been painted in the past, and parts of the exterior are painted presently.

The building retains many of its original wood sash windows. At the east elevation, windows are intact, and the two-part wood garage door at the southernmost bay appears to have been moved from the garage opening on the north elevation some time after 1980, as indicated by photographs. The windows on the east and north elevations generally feature a heavy muntin in the upper quarter of the window, matching the dimension of the transom windows on the west elevation storefronts.

On the west elevation, the first and third storefronts retain the original configuration of recessed entries with angled flanking storefront windows on masonry bulkheads, with a transom overhead (now covered). However, the second or center storefront was replaced at some time, possibly the 1960s or more recently, with a modern aluminum storefront window system. The transom there was removed as part of the work.

The north elevation consists of six bays, with the eastern three bays featuring large glazing area related to the original rear workspace, while the western three bays have less glazing because they historically functioned as the side of the Second Avenue storefronts. Today, each of the six bays retains varying levels of integrity. The first bay retains original wood sash windows. The second bay retains original wood sash windows flanking the garage door, but the door is contemporary—the original garage door appears to have been moved to the east elevation some time after about 1980. The third, fourth, and fifth bay have been altered over time, with an original masonry infill wall below the window muntin (or transom) either being enlarged or being reduced to open more glazing area. In general at these bays, the wood sash window above the muntin (i.e., transom) appears intact. Finally, the sixth bay retains the original window configuration, although the transom is covered.

The interior of the three storefronts features a variety of finishes, having been occupied by a restaurant for many decades and a variety of businesses before that. Floors are concrete, hardwood, asbestos tile, and vinyl. Walls are plaster, brick, hollow core tile, or gypsum wallboard. The kitchen area at the rear retains two painted-over skylights which appear to be original to the structure.

The interior of the rear two bays of the building is a wide-open space, and features exposed structure. It appears to have been minimally altered. At the center of the room, adjacent to a single heavy timber support post, is an original brick chimney shaft which extends through the roof. A small build-out constructed in recent years, located at the northeast interior corner, houses bathrooms and a changing room. The partition wall on the west side of the interior, which is located between the second and third bays, was constructed in recent years.

Summary of primary alterations

Permits on record for the subject building almost entirely relate to minor work, such as alteration of a partition wall or ceiling, electrical or mechanical upgrades, or signage. Alterations to the exterior of the building are primarily derived from comparisons to historical photographs.

Known alterations to the exterior include:

- West elevation, first bay – Transom covered with signage.
- West elevation, center bay – Altered to non-original aluminum storefront, dating to 1960s or later.
- North elevation, second bay – Garage door is modern replacement. Original door moved to east elevation first bay.
- North elevation, third through fifth bays – Alterations to reduce or enlarge masonry wall below muntin/transom level, since 1937.
- North elevation, sixth bay – Transom covered with signage.
- East elevation, first bay – Two-part wood garage doors relocated from north elevation second bay some time after about 1980.
- New interior partition wall built c.2010 to separate gym space occupying rear two building bays from the front four building bays.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The development of the Belltown / Denny Regrade neighborhood

The term “Belltown” originally referred to the area north of downtown along First and Second Avenues, between Pine and Denny, but particularly around Bell Street. The later term “Denny Regrade” referred to a larger area cleared by the regrading of Denny Hill, extending eastward to about Fifth Avenue or Westlake.

The Belltown neighborhood north of downtown was originally part of the land claim of early Seattle settler William Nathaniel Bell and his wife Sarah. The claim stretched from Elliott Bay eastward to today’s Yale Avenue, and from Pine Street to Denny Way. Within the claim

area was an existing Native American semi-permanent winter settlement around the beach at the foot of Bell Street, which included longhouses over one hundred feet in length.

Although Nathaniel Bell, his wife, and four children were among the members of the original pioneering Denny party which arrived at Alki in 1851, they left for California a few years later, in 1856, after their cabin was burned during the brief skirmish with Native American locals known as the “Battle of Seattle.” Sarah Bell died in 1856 after the move, and Bell only returned briefly to Seattle in the 1860s to plat his land. In 1870, he and his son Austin—who had been born in Seattle during the five years the family resided there—moved permanently back to encourage the development of his properties, which had lagged behind the development of the Pioneer Square area. Part of the reason for the slow development of Bell’s properties was due to the steep grade of First Avenue (then called Front Street) and Second Avenues over Denny Hill, which separated the area from downtown to the south.

Nevertheless, by 1880, Belltown had more than fifty houses, at least two churches, a two-room school, and a grocery store. In 1884, the neighborhood was significant enough to be included in Sanborn fire insurance maps, and the neighborhood could boast the two-story Denny School at Fifth Avenue and Battery Street, Bell’s own Bellevue Hotel at First and Battery, and many more houses and duplexes. On the waterfront below First Avenue were two barrel manufactories, two wharves, a shipyard, sawmill, furniture company, and additional workers’ cottages.

In 1887, Nathaniel Bell died. His son, Austin, hired architect Elmer Fisher to design the five-story Austin Bell Building, next door to the Bellevue Hotel, which was completed by his wife after Austin Bell’s death in 1889. That same year, Fisher also designed the four-story Odd Fellows Hall (now the Barnes Building) next door to the Austin Bell Building, as well as the Hull Building across the street. These buildings served as the core of a three-block long commercial area along First Avenue between Battery and Lenora. Fisher would go on to design numerous structures in the Pioneer Square area following the great Seattle fire, which also occurred in 1889. The cluster of these substantial, multistory, relatively ornate structures, on the other side of Denny Hill from the urban core that had developed in the Pioneer Square area, helped to give the Belltown area a distinct identity, although commercial growth remained modest. The largest other nearby structure was the Denny (later Washington) Hotel, at the top of Denny Hill around Stewart Street and Third Avenue, for which construction had begun in 1888 and would not be completed until 1903.

In 1889, the first electric streetcar service to Belltown was installed along Second Avenue, extending from James Street to Denny Way. In a few years, additional lines would run down First and Fifth Avenues, connecting the neighborhood to the expanding city. By the final years of the 19th century and into the early 1900s, Belltown was a well-developed but low-density residential area, with a mix of housing types available to all income levels, social level, and family structure. Options in the neighborhood included single family homes, duplexes, triplexes, rowhouses, apartment hotels, boarding houses, worker’s hotels, and rooming houses, and tenements.

Seattle grew rapidly at the turn of the 20th century, fueled in part by the reconstruction of the post-1889-fire city, the completion of the Great Northern Railroad's direct transcontinental rail link in 1893, and the Klondike gold rush beginning in 1897. In the decade between 1890 and 1900, the city population would nearly double from approximately 43,000 to 81,000 people. By 1910, the city population would reach an astonishing 237,000 people, although that was partly due to the annexation of several adjacent pre-existing communities, such as Ballard, Columbia City, and West Seattle.

As the city grew, the downtown core expanded northward, along First and Second Avenues, blocked by Denny Hill. By the early 1900s, Second Avenue in the blocks around Pike Street had become home to the city's major retailers and department stores. Second Avenue served as the primary spine through downtown, and became the main route for city parades and festivals.

As a measure to accommodate downtown expansion, the city around the turn of the 20th century began regrading streets east of downtown (the Jackson Street regrade being an early example), and soon proposals to remove Denny Hill north of downtown followed. The hill, located approximately between Second and Westlake Avenues, and between Pine and Cedar Streets to nearly Republican Street, rose steeply at Second Avenue and Pine Street. The primary advocate for the regrade was Reginald H. Thomson, who was the longtime City Engineer from the 1890s to 1911 (and again briefly in the 1930s), who sought to encourage development and to improve water and sewage systems in the city. Steep grades were also an obstacle for the horse-drawn vehicles of the time. The hill west of Fifth Avenue was removed in several phases between about 1905 and 1911 (the hill east of Fifth Avenue would not be completely removed until 1930). Second Avenue in front of the subject site was regraded by 1906. During the process of regrading, most existing structures were demolished, but some were either moved to entirely new locations, or raised and remodeled to adapt to their new ground level.

Regrading dramatically increased land values in the area; however, early construction in this newly-improved area largely occurred south of Virginia Street. The area became dominated by hotels and apartment hotels, in part driven by continued population growth, the establishment of the nearby Pike Place Market in 1907, and the anticipation of the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in 1909. Buildings of very considerable scale were constructed along Second Avenue following the completion of the regrading of Denny Hill, just a few blocks south of the subject site, including seven-story Moore Hotel and Theater (1907) or the fourteen-story New Washington Hotel / Josephinum (1907). However, rarely was the scale of these buildings reached on the blocks north of Virginia Street until several decades later. Behind Second Avenue, period photographs show newly leveled, mostly empty blocks available for development.

In 1910, the newly regraded area was proposed as a new Beaux-Arts civic center, the epicenter of which was to be at about Fourth Avenue and Blanchard Street, approximately three blocks east of the subject site. This proposal, called the Bogue Plan, would have relocated the heart of downtown to the regrade district but was soundly defeated at the polls in 1912.

Instead, contrary to expectations, the Belltown/Regrade area grew slowly compared to other parts of downtown. Following the economic slowdown associated with World War I, there was a flurry of two- to four-story apartment and commercial building construction in the 1920s. Affordable apartment buildings convenient to downtown were an attractive option for single women, who were increasingly entering the workforce at that time due to changing social and economic conditions. In 1923, the institution of a new city zoning code had the result that higher buildings were encouraged downtown, but not in the Belltown / Regrade area, which was designated “Commercial” and remained relatively low-density. One- and two-story commercial buildings in the neighborhood continued to cater to light industrial or heavy commercial businesses—such as printers, suppliers, garages and other services related to the growing automobile business, and even the film distribution industry—all of which benefited from proximity to downtown but without the expensive land costs or congestion. Belltown was the center of Seattle’s taxicab business and touring companies.

It was at this time that the subject building was constructed, in 1924.

Very little residential construction occurred in the neighborhood during the economic downturn of the 1930s and during the material-rationing war years of the 1940s. Much of the existing housing stock deteriorated. The parts of Belltown west of Third Avenue were considered comparable to Seattle’s “Skid Road” in Pioneer Square. Dwelling units there were among the oldest and most crowded in the city, and consisted of worker’s cottages and cheap hotels often with no private toilet or bath. The area population had a high percentage of older and unemployed males. East of Third Avenue, conditions were better, due to the numerous relatively new brick apartment buildings that had been built there in the 1920s, and which were more likely to be occupied by female clerical and sales force workers employed downtown. However, the local economy improved during the war years, in part due to Boeing and other defense-related jobs, and Belltown was well situated to provide housing and entertainment for servicemen, waterfront workers, and defense workers.

In the post-war years of the 1940s and 1950s, local and national economic and housing trends emphasized the growth of the suburbs rather than city centers, and accommodating the automobile. Belltown continued to be largely seen as a service area to support downtown. Between 1952 and 1954, the Battery Street tunnel was constructed in a cut-and-fill fashion in order to connect the c.1930s Highway 99/Aurora Avenue with the newly-completed Alaskan Way Viaduct along the downtown waterfront. In 1957, a new zoning ordinance designated Belltown as a “General Commercial” area, which had the effect of discouraging new housing. The waterfront area continued to be classified as a manufacturing zone, as it had long been, which encouraged continuing construction of small warehouses and additional light industrial buildings in the neighborhood.

By the 1960s, parking lots were a common feature in Belltown, driven in part by the downtown commercial core to the south, and the construction of the 1962 Century 21 Exposition (later the Seattle Center) at the north end of the neighborhood. The easternmost part of Belltown, between Fifth Avenue and Denny Way, had become characterized by numerous car lots and automobile dealerships after remaining undeveloped for many

decades. Suburban-style motels with expansive parking lots also developed in this area, in anticipation of the fair. The construction of the above-grade monorail to connect downtown with the world's fair exposition grounds further emphasized Belltown as a place to move through, rather than a destination in itself.

The perception of Belltown as a service area to support downtown was further emphasized by a proposed comprehensive plan adopted by the city council in 1963, known as the Monson Plan. To stave off the increasing possibility of businesses fleeing downtown for the suburbs, the scheme emphasized automobile access and parking. It proposed (among other things) surrounding downtown with high-speed ring roads through Belltown, and a large parking/office structure to replace a demolished Pike Place Market. Public resistance to and rejection of the plan, and to similar citywide proposals in the 1970s, led to a movement to establish the local historic preservation program in 1973 and the protection of the Pike Place Market, Pioneer Square, and other areas.

In the early 1970s, Belltown continued to be marked by deteriorating worker hotels and other housing built earlier in the century. A major fire in a Belltown apartment building called the Ozark Hotel led to stricter fire safety regulations in the city, including mandatory sprinkler systems above the ground floor. An unexpected result was that rather than upgrading, some building owners simply closed off upper floors and left them empty. However, encouraged by new 1974 and 1985 city development plans for downtown and the regrade area, several non-profit agencies using federal and local housing funds began acquiring and restoring more than twenty buildings in the neighborhood for use by low and moderate income renters. New low-income housing was constructed as well, supported by social service agencies which established their facilities in Belltown and which remain to the present day. Also in the 1970s, large construction projects of the scale intended after the regrading efforts ended around 1930 were finally built. These included high-rise private condominiums, high-rise housing owned by the Seattle Housing Authority, and several office towers. Such major construction continued through the 1980s and to the present day.

The increase in housing activity supported an increase in commercial activity in the area in the 1970s through the 1990s. Many of the existing, lower-scale buildings of the past retained relatively inexpensive rents, which attracted artists, musicians, restaurants, clubs, galleries, cafes, and small shops to the area. The subject building, for example, became home to one of Seattle's earliest Mexican restaurants in 1974.

In 1994, the Belltown/Regrade neighborhood was designated an urban center to encourage increased density.

Owners and the development of the subject property, and building occupants

Owners (per tax records and title abstracts)

Pre 1923	Eleanor J. Beck, Edward J. Nordhoff, Arthur A. Nordhoff
1923	Henry and Mabel Schuett
1924	--- Building constructed ---
1926	Hugh H. McMillan
1943	Pennsylvania Mutual Life Insurance Company

1943	Harold G. Stern
1945	Florence Delman
1981	Myrtle Nudelman Moss
1999	Driko Investment Properties LLC to Michael T. and Maria L. McAlpin
2015	Minglian Realty LLC

Title abstracts, building permits, tax records, and searchable newspaper databases were reviewed to provide insights into the owners, occupants, and development of the property. The building appears to have been strictly an investment property, with numerous varied tenants unrelated to the different owners over the years.

Prior to the Denny Hill regrade, the subject parcel was occupied by two one-story 22 x 26 foot wood-frame cottages constructed in 1902—likely the first buildings on the site after it was platted by the Bell family in the late 1800s. At that time, the site was located at the northern foot of Denny Hill, just as it began to rise southward towards its apex around Third Avenue and Virginia Street. By the 1906 completion of the regrading of Second Avenue and the portion of Denny Hill in the immediate vicinity, these two cottages were presumably moved or destroyed, and the site regraded and lowered by several feet. The site apparently remained vacant for almost two decades. In a 1917 promotional map advertising development in the “Regrade District,” the site appears empty.

In 1923, the still-undeveloped parcel was sold by the then-owners, Eleanor J. Beck, Edward J. Nordhoff, and Arthur A. Nordhoff, to Henry and Mabel Schuett through the offices of the John L. Scott Company. It is unclear how long Beck and the Nordhoffs had owned the property. In 1923 or 1924, the Schuetts hired their son-in-law, architect George Wellington Stoddard, to design the subject building. It was promptly constructed and completed in 1924.

The developer of the subject building, Henry Schuett, was born in Germany in 1860 and had come to the United States when he was 21 years of age. He lived in Portland, Oregon, for a time in the 1880s. In 1891, he married his wife Mabel, who had come to Portland from Clinton, Iowa. In 1893 they moved to Seattle, and by 1901 Henry Schuett is listed in city directories as the manager of the E. J. Bowen Company, a retail and wholesale seed company based in San Francisco. From at least 1909 until the early 1920s, Henry Schuett was the owner and proprietor of the Seattle Seed Company at 810-812 Western Avenue. In the early 1900s, the Schuetts lived on Broadway Avenue on First Hill, where they raised two daughters, Henryetta and Marjorie. In 1921, Marjorie married young Seattle architect George Wellington Stoddard.

In these later years, the Schuetts lived a block from Volunteer Park in the Park Court Apartments at 921 11th Avenue North, a six-unit luxury apartment building also designed by their son-in-law George W. Stoddard, which was built in 1922 (and which remains extant today; Mabel Schuett continued living in the Park Court Apartments until her death in 1946). In 1922, Henry Schuett sold his seed business and retired due to poor health. After a long stay at a sanitarium in Long Beach, California, he returned to Seattle in 1924 but died later that year—the same year that the subject building was completed.

The Schuettts appear to have owned other real estate investments, including (for only a few months in 1924) the luxury Highland apartment building at 925 11th Avenue North, next door to their home.

Following Henry Schuett's death, Mabel Schuett began to sell off properties, including the Highland apartments in 1925, and the subject property in 1926. The latter was sold to Hugh H. McMillan, a resident of Spokane and Davenport, Washington. McMillan was a Presbyterian minister and one-time mayor of Davenport, with extensive farm and real estate investments in the Davenport area and in Seattle, including other properties in Belltown. Hugh McMillan died at age 74 in 1931 during the Depression, and the property appears to have remained in his family for over a decade.

In 1943, it was sold or transferred to the Pennsylvania Mutual Life Insurance Company, which then sold it the same year to Harold G. Stern. Stern was the wealthy owner of Seattle Refrigerative Supply Company, and resided in a West Highland Drive mansion on Queen Anne Hill. Two years later, in 1945, it was sold to Florence Delman, owner in the 1930s and early 1940s of a downtown and Capitol Hill fur and apparel shop, and who in the late 1940s was the manager of the Studio Apartments at 123 Bell Street. She retained the property until her death around 1976. In 1981 the estate transferred the property to Florence's sister Myrtle Nudelman Moss, who retained it for an unknown time. In 1999, then-owner Driko Investment Properties LLC sold the building to Michael T. and Maria L. McAlpin, owners of Mama's Mexican Kitchen, one of the building tenants since 1974. In 2015, the McAlpins sold the property to Minglian Realty LLC, the present owner.

Occupants

The building was constructed with multiple tenant commercial spaces, which have been addressed as 2230, 2232, and 2234 Second Avenue, and 209 or 211 Bell Street. Polk's Seattle Directory was reviewed for the following various years to provide an overview of the building tenants.

1937	2230	Vacant
	2232	Vacant
	2234	The New Cecelia Cafe
	209	Bell Street Auto Repair (at this location since the early 1920s)
1938	2230	Finrow Distributing Company, janitors supplies; and Norman C. Conover, insurance
	2232	Communist Party and Young Communist League
	2234	Stanley Majewski, restaurateur
	209	Bell Street Auto Repair
1948	2230	Marvo Textile Studio re-weavers
	2232	Burman's Heating
	2234	Vincent's Café
	209	Runstad Heating & Plumbing Company

1958	2230	Vacant
	2232	Darwin F. Luscher accounting
	2234	Copperlight Café
	209	Runstad Heating & Plumbing Company
1968	2230	Vacant
	2232	Vacant
	2234	Vacant
	209	Boyd Sign Company Manufacturing & Sales
1978	2230	Vacant
	2232	Mama's Mexican Kitchen
	2234	Mama's Mexican Kitchen
	211	Bug Doctors auto repair (specializing in Volkswagens)
1988	2234	Mama's Mexican Kitchen (occupies all three storefronts on Second Avenue)
	211	Import Doctors auto repair
1996	2234	Mama's Mexican Kitchen (occupies all three storefronts on Second Avenue)
	211	Import Doctors auto repair

The three retail storefronts along Second Avenue have generally been occupied by a range of small retail and office businesses. Notably, one of the storefronts along Second Avenue has regularly been occupied by a restaurant since at least the 1930s. Mama's Mexican Kitchen, one of the oldest Mexican restaurants in Seattle, began at this location in 1974 and expanded over time until it eventually occupied all three storefronts.

The larger rear portion of the building, accessed along Bell Street and the alley, has always been occupied by heavy commercial uses, including a a plumbing & heating company, several service and repair garages, and a sign manufacturing company.

Similar buildings in Belltown

The building is representative of the kinds of low-scale, commercial and light industrial buildings that developed in the numerous Seattle neighborhoods in the early part of the 20th century. From the early 1900s through the early 1940s, simple commercial buildings of these types were often built from lot line to lot line to enclose as much space as was economical, in a straightforward manner, with minimal and often eclectic exterior ornamentation often based on vaguely historic styles. Structure was generally masonry exterior walls with heavy timber interior framing, or concrete with concrete beams or steel trusses for roof support, in regular repeatable bays. Fire walls generally divide storefronts and primary interior spaces. When required, large display areas and showrooms are generally located along the primary street elevation, at the ground floor, and with relatively higher ceilings than upper stories (if there was more than one floor). Offices and support spaces were generally at the back, or on upper floors. Basements, where they occurred, were often used for storage and warehousing.

The subject building housed shops at the front along Second Avenue, and a large workspace at the rear of the building, accessed from Bell Street. This mix of uses was not an atypical condition.

According to a neighborhood survey of Belltown, the majority of the pre-World War II commercial buildings in Belltown are simple one-or two-story retail buildings of brick masonry or wood-frame construction face with brick or stucco. Typical features included large display windows, recessed entries, and multiple storefronts. Originally these spaces accommodated many types of stores and services, such as cafes and taverns, grocery stores, meat markets, bakeries, radio repair, barber shops or hair salons. In more recent decades, these spaces were taken over by other uses, often restaurants and night clubs. The subject building's Second Avenue storefronts would fall under this description. Examples of such commercial buildings cited in the neighborhood survey include 2235 Second Avenue (1907), across the street from the subject site; and, more similar in age to the subject building, are Two Bells Tavern at 2315 Fourth Avenue (1923), 401 Cedar (1926), the Five Point Café at 425 Cedar (1922), Spitfire at 2213 Fourth Avenue (1924), and Downtown Dog Lounge at 2230 Third Avenue (1925).

The neighborhood survey also identifies repair garages and automobile-related buildings as a typical building type in Belltown. These structures were typically one-story, and necessarily of fireproof construction, with brick or concrete masonry walls and heavy timber interiors. These buildings are identifiable by large garage doors with one or more storefronts on the main façade, and large interior areas for working on cars or car storage. Examples of such buildings cited in the survey and which remain as garages include the subject building, Dean's Transmission at 2116 Fourth Avenue (1929), and a garage at 2218 Fourth Avenue (1924). Two larger and older garages, the Sam Inch Gotham Garage at 2126 Third Avenue (1914), and the Golden West Garage at 2106 Second Avenue (1919), have been altered extensively.

George Wellington Stoddard, architect

The subject building was designed in 1924 by George Wellington Stoddard, an extremely prolific Seattle architect who was active from the 1920s to the 1960s. Architectural drawings on file show Stoddard & Son as the architect in the titleblock, but George W. Stoddard stamped the drawings, and so was presumably the designer.

Stoddard was born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1896, and earned an architectural engineering degree from the University of Illinois in 1917. He later served in France with the US Army during World War I. In 1920, Stoddard moved to Seattle and formed a practice with his father, Lewis Malcolm Stoddard, who was a civil engineer and naval architect. In 1921, Stoddard married Marjorie Schuett, the daughter of Henry and Mabel Schuett, the developers of the subject property.

The firm Stoddard & Son operated between 1920 and 1929, with the firm designing a wide range of building types and following the historical revivalist styles popular at the time. It was during this period that the subject building was designed and constructed in 1924. As

perhaps indicated by the minimal and simply-drawn architectural set, Stoddard may have performed the work as a favor for the subject property's owner, his father-in-law.

Works by Stoddard & Son in Seattle during this period of 1920-1929 include the Park Court Apartments (1922), the George A. Kribs residence (1922-23), the Metropolitan Printing Press at 2107 Third Avenue (1923, a designated Seattle landmark), the Broadmoor entrance gate and caretaker's residence (1923-24), the Fox Garage at 600 Olive Way (1925, altered), and the Dutton residence at 3355 East Laurelhurst Drive (1926). Outside Seattle, a notable work during this period is the Winthrop Hotel at South Broadway and South 9th Street in Tacoma (1925).

Following Stoddard's father's death in 1929, George established his own firm, George Wellington Stoddard & Associates. In the 1930s through the 1940s, he was well-known for his residential designs in planned Seattle area subdivisions, such as Blue Ridge or Sheridan Beach, as well as custom single-family residences, often in a Colonial Revival mode. In the 1940s, Stoddard was part of the design team for the Yesler Terrace public housing development, with William Bain, J. Lister Holmes, and others. Stoddard's commercial work at this time was often designed in an Art Deco or Art Moderne style, but later fully embraced the tenets of the Modern movement. In the post-World War II period, Stoddard was noted for mid-century modern designs for educational buildings, medical buildings, banks, retail, and apartment buildings. Works were sometimes innovative or experimental. As an example, he invented the concept of a "transportable school" which featured a central core with classroom structures that could be added or removed as needed. Three were constructed in the Seattle area in 1949; they were believed to be the first of their kind in the nation.

Notable works from the 1930s to the 1950s include a second Metropolitan Printing Press building (1931), garage at 777 Thomas (1931, a designated Seattle landmark), the Williams & Company potato chip factory (1932, sometimes called the Harlan Fairbanks Company building), Fire Station 41 (1934), low-cost pre-built "Quintec" homes (1938), Harbor Island Fire Station (1941-42), Stoddard Terrace Apartments (1944, now the Aloha Apartments), Seattle Memorial Stadium (1945-47), Renton Hospital (1946, demolished), Arbor Heights Elementary School (1948-49), University of Washington Stadium south stands (1949-50), the Green Lake Aqua Theater (1950), and King County Youth Service Center (1951).

In 1955, he formed a partnership with Francis E. Huggard, and named their firm George W. Stoddard-Huggard & Associates, Architects and Engineers. Although Stoddard retired only a few years later in 1960, works from this period include Sand Point Elementary School (1957-58), and several National Bank of Commerce branches, including the two at Third and Battery Street (1955) and at Westlake and Olive Street (1955).

Stoddard's work was published repeatedly in the Seattle Times and Seattle Post-Intelligencer, the local Pencil Points architectural journal, the national trade magazine Architectural Forum, and other trade publications.

Stoddard was also active in many professional and civic organizations, including the State Hospital Advisory Council Executive Committee (1948-1949), the Seattle Civic Arts

Committee (appointed as chairman in 1947), the King County Educational Advisory Committee (1950-1951), the King County Juvenile Advisory Committee (1952), the Rainier Club, the Seattle Art Museum, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce and the Municipal League. He also served on the board of the Seattle Symphony for many years. A member of the Washington State Chapter of the American Institute of Architects since 1922, Stoddard served as president of the chapter in 1946-1947.

George Wellington Stoddard and his wife Marjorie Schuett Stoddard resided from the early 1940s onward in a home of his design on the private Reed estate along Lake Washington in the Madison Park neighborhood. Stoddard in 1935 had designed a mansion for Stimson lumber heir William Reed Sr., and in return, Reed offered the Stoddards a parcel within the estate for them to build a house of their own. They lived there until Stoddard's death in 1967 at the age of 71. Marjorie died in Seattle in 1993 at age 94.

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- King County Parcel Viewer website. www.metrokc.gov/gis/mapportal/PViewer_main.
- King County Recorder's Office, for plats and maps. <http://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/records-licensing/Recorders-Office/records-search.aspx>

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The features of the Landmark to be preserved include: The exterior of the building.

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