



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

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

LPB 240/15

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

Name and Address of Property: **Seattle Times Building Complex – 1947 Office Building Addition
1120 John Street**

Legal Description: Lots 7 Through 12 In Block 110, D.T. Denny's Fifth Addition To North Seattle, As Per Plat Recorded In Volume 1 Of Plats, Page 202, Records Of King County; And Together With Those Portions Of The Donation Claim Of D.T. Denny And Louis Denny, His Wife, And Government Lot 7 In The Southeast Corner Of Section 30, Township 25, Range 4 East, W. M., Lying Westerly Of Fairview Avenue North, As Condemned In King County Superior Court Cause No. 204496, As Provide By Ordinance No. 51975, And Described As That Portion Lying Southerly Of Thomas Street As Conveyed By Deed Recorded Under Recording No. 2103211, Northerly Of John Street, And Easterly Of The Alley In Said Block 110; And Together With The Vacated Alley In Block 110 Of Said Plat Of D.T. Denny's Fifth Addition, Vacated Under Seattle Ordinance No. 89750; Situated In City Of Seattle, County Of King, State Of Washington.

At the public meeting held on April 15, 2015 the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Seattle Times Building Complex – 1947 Office Building Addition at 1120 John Street as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following standards for designation of SMC 25.12.350:

- C. *It is associated in a significant way with a significant aspect of the cultural, political, or economic heritage of the community, City, state or nation; and*
- D. *It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or a method of construction.*

DESCRIPTION

Location and Neighborhood Character

The former Seattle Times complex is located on the within what is generally regarded as the greater South Lake Union area. The subject site is northeast of Seattle's Central Business District, about four blocks west of Interstate 5, and approximately one-third mile south of Lake Union. The immediate area has since the 1990s undergone rapid change from redevelopment of older properties, primarily

**Administered by The Historic Preservation Program
The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods**

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by the Vulcan Development Company. Nearby City of Seattle Landmarks include: the Troy Laundry Building (311-329 Fairview Avenue N), Supply Laundry (1265 Republican Street), the New Richmond Laundry (224 Pontius Avenue N), Immanuel Lutheran Church (1215 Thomas Street), the Boren Investment Company Building (334 Boren Avenue N), the Fashioncraft Building (2022 Boren Avenue), and the Jensen Block (601-611 Eastlake Avenue E).

A relatively small landscaped garden with large evergreen trees is located directly to the south of the site across John Street at the northwestern corner of Fairview Avenue N and John Street. The remainder of the block to the south is presently a paved parking lot. Presently the block to the north of the site is a construction site for a redevelopment that includes the Troy Laundry and the Boren Investment Company Building.

Site and Building Complex

The present complex takes up the entire block extending between John Street on the south, Boren Avenue on the west, Thomas Street on the north, and Fairview Avenue on the east. The north-south alley originally splitting the block is now vacated. The block slopes down to the north approximately 17 feet along Fairview Avenue N, up approximately 3 feet to the west along John Street, and down approximately 11 feet to the north along Boren Avenue N, and down approximately 9 feet to the west along Thomas Street. All right-of-ways surrounding the site have paved sidewalks and street trees are planted along Fairview Avenue N and additional street trees are located at the southwestern corner of the site at the intersection of John Street and Boren Avenue N.

The 1930-31 Seattle Times Complex consisted of three units: an office building, printing plant, and garage, all of which were designed by architect Robert C. Reamer. The original two-story office building (City of Seattle Landmark, 1995) portion was situated at the northwest corner of Fairview Avenue and John Street measures approximately 135 feet east-west and 68 north-south. The original three-story printing plant building is adjacent to the office building to the north and measures approximately 135 feet east-west and 170 feet north south. The original garage portion was demolished around 1948.

The original two-story office building (City of Seattle Landmark) of the original complex, situated at the northwestern corner of Fairview Avenue North and John Street, is considered an excellent American interpretation of Art Deco design. It had a footprint of 135 feet east-west by 68 feet north-south. The building was constructed of reinforced concrete and the exterior walls have a veneer of cream-colored Indiana limestone above a granite base. The original southern primary facade consists of the central entrance vestibule and the three window bays symmetrically placed to each side. Typical bays consist of two floors of windows with transoms, set in groups of four along the southern façade and in groups of five along the eastern façade. The windows were originally separated by turned wood mullions, but presently have contemporary commercial rectangular aluminum with double-glazing. The groups of windows at each level are separated by spandrels, faced with decorative panels in cast aluminum. Vertical piers, clad in Indiana limestone with shallow and wide fluting, separate the bays. Across the southern and eastern façades and above the fluted piers, there is a continuous, horizontal band of stone. Above the main south facing entrance, this band is incised with large letters that spell out "SEATTLE TIMES." Above the band, a simple cresting with repeated anthemion motifs distinguishes the parapet level. The recessed main entrance, situated along John Street, includes an aluminum grill, decorated with octagons and spirals, in addition to floral and wave motifs. Floral patterns are also carved in the limestone bas-reliefs to each side of the entrance. An Art Deco pendant light fixture is set just outside the recessed entry vestibule. The original lobby walls and floors are clad in a light tan Botticino marble.

A contemporary sheet metal sign is mounted at parapet level on the eastern façade at the southern end

of the original 1931 office building. The sign has a central plaque spelling out “The Seattle Times,” with an upper clock and lower digital temperature display.

In addition to the two remaining original 1931 buildings, the complex has six other major additions: a western office addition to a original office building (1947), northern addition to the printing plant (1949-50), a replacement utilitarian reinforced concrete garage located at the northwestern corner of the site (1949-50), a reinforced concrete printing plant and newsroom addition at the northern end of the vacated alley (1963), a four-story reinforced concrete addition running from the southern property line along Boren Avenue N to and abutting the garage building (1967), and a remodel and addition to the 1967 addition that completely covered the vacated alley.

The one-story garage building is constructed of reinforced concrete and measures approximately 120 feet north-south and 65 feet east-west.

The 1963 three-story pressroom and office addition, located west of the printing plant, was constructed of reinforced concrete and covered the vacated alley. The addition measures approximately 32 feet wide east-west and 136 feet 7 inches north-south. Only the addition’s northern façade remains visible, and it is strictly utilitarian.

The 1967 addition was constructed to the west of the expanded office building to house a new pressroom and the classified advertising department. The two-story building with two basements was constructed of reinforced concrete, and was 56 feet wide east-west and 238 feet long north-south, running from John Street on the south and abutting the 1949 garage building. A second-floor pedestrian bridge spanned the vacated alley, with the lower basement floor extending under the alley. The southern façade of the building was a stripped down version the original 1931 office building, although largely blank. What remains of the western façade is strictly utilitarian.

The 1979 remodel of and addition to the 1963 addition filled in the exiting alley and created a contemporary concrete and curtain-walled façade at the southwestern corner of the site measuring approximately 135 feet 7 inches east-west along John street, and 81 feet seven inches north south along Boren Avenue N. This façade has a lower stem wall of concrete and upper parapet of concrete, and an intermediate glazed curtain wall of three bands of commercial aluminum-sash windows. The southern façade portion has a projecting four bay portion with a parapet section that cantilevers eastward and westward to the extent of the addition.

All interior spaces within the complex have been reconfigured and remodeled several times over the years and very few original interior finishes or building fabrics remain, with the exception of the printing presses, which remain in place.

Subject Building—1947 Office Building Addition: Form, Structure, and Exterior Features

The subject building is the 1947 office building addition.

The 1947 office building addition extended the original 1931 office building’s southern façade two structural bays to the west, or approximately 37 feet 6 inches, and was approximately 68 feet deep, north-south. When the addition was constructed, the western wall of the 1931 office building was demolished. The addition was constructed of reinforced concrete. The addition has two north-south and three east-west structural bays. Square reinforced concrete columns support structural concrete slabs on all floors and the flat roof.

The southern façade is finished nearly identically to the original office building. Typical bays consist of two floors of windows with transoms, set in groups of four along the southern façade. The

windows were originally separated by turned wood mullions, but presently have contemporary commercial rectangular aluminum with double-glazing. The groups of windows at each level are separated by spandrels, faced with decorative panels in cast aluminum. Vertical piers, measuring 6 feet 6 inches wide separating the bays, are clad with 5-inch thick Indiana limestone. Each pier has seven wide shallow flutes. Above the piers is a continuous horizontal stone band/parapet featuring a simple cresting of repeated anthemion motifs.

The addition's western façade originally had a stone return continuing northward approximately 6 feet 6 inches from the southern building face. The western façade was originally clad with brick and had industrial steel-sash window. This façade, with the exception of the stone return, is now obscured by later additions.

The northern façade is utilitarian and clad in brick, facing the east-west light-well. Window openings have non-original commercial aluminum glazing.

Plan & Interior Features

The subject building has a slightly different floor-level arrangement than the 1931 office building, as it has a mezzanine level above the first floor and the second floor is set higher than the original office building's second floor, necessitating a stairway near the midpoint of the intersection of the two buildings. The mezzanine was set back from the building's southern face, leaving an opening between levels and requiring an east-west guardrail.

The building has been repartitioned and all original finishes have been either removed or covered. Current finishes are a mixture of contemporary finishes including carpeting, glued or suspended ceiling tiles, and painted gypsum wall board.

Documented Building Alterations

Exterior alterations include replacement of all original glazing with contemporary commercial aluminum-sash, reconfiguring all interior spaces, and replacement of all finishes on the third floor.

Nearly 100 permits have been issued for the entire Seattle Time complex. No permit for the 1947 construction could be identified.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historic Neighborhood Context: South Lake Union

The subject building is located in Seattle's South Lake Union District, here defined for this report by Fairview Avenue N to the east, Denny Way to the south, Lake Union to the north, and Aurora Avenue (SR 99) to the west. The neighborhood is often associated with the Cascade Neighborhood to the east and the northern portion of Denny Triangle Neighborhood to the south, with the general collective area often grouped as South Lake Union. This more general area's historical context is described below.

The immediate site area once lay near the bottom of a shallow valley between Denny and Capitol Hills that drained into a marsh at the southern end of Lake Union. The lake was called *meman hartshu* by the Duwamish tribe, who had a traditional summer camp on a meadow on Denny Hill near the present Seattle Center.

The first industrial use of the immediate site area was a narrow gauge railroad built by the Seattle Coal and Transportation Company in 1872. The rail was supported on trestles that extended from the

southern end of Lake Union to the Elliott Bay waterfront along what is now Westlake Avenue. From mines in Newcastle, coal was barged across Lake Washington, transported over the Montlake Isthmus, and loaded on barges for transport to the loading dock on South Lake Union that is now the site of the Center for Wooden Boats. This railway line was abandoned in 1877 when a new railway south of town was built. David Denny built his Western Mill sawmill at the southwestern corner of the lake in 1882. The mill would later become Western Mill Company and eventually the Brace Hergert Mill.

From the 1890s through the early 1900s, the general area was predominantly residential, mainly composed of immigrant worker housing. The Cascade School (1894, John Parkinson, destroyed 1955) was built in 1894 at the intersection of Pontius Street and Harrison Avenue, with several churches of various ethnic groups scattered through the greater neighborhood. The largest commercial enterprise in the immediate area was the North Pacific Brewery (1889, later Hemrich Brothers Brewing Company), located between Lincoln (now Pontius) and Ward (now Yale) streets, and Mercer and Republican Avenues.

The development of streetcar lines by competitive companies spurred residential and commercial neighborhood growth in the late 1880s and 1890s. Seattle businessman L. H. Griffith purchased the former Seattle Coal and Transportation right-of-way for his Seattle Electric Railway and Power Company, and in 1889 built a street railway extending along the western side of Lake Union over a bridge at the northern end of the lake to the town of Fremont. In 1893, in expectation of serving the new state university and reaching the commercial area supporting it, David Denny ran the northern extension of his Rainier Power and Railway Company streetcar line along Howell Street, up Pontius and Howard (now Yale) avenues, along the eastern side of Lake Union along what is now Eastlake, over a trestle he built at Latona, and through Brooklyn northward to William and Louise Beck's private Ravenna Park.

As the neighborhood grew, the Cascade School was expanded in 1898 with northern and southern wings (Saunders & Lawton), and the brewery became the Hemrich Brothers Brewing Company with a major brew house expansion (1903-04, Theobald Buchinger, destroyed). Residential development in the area remained the predominant use, although housing grew denser as blocks were developed. Westlake was paved for wagon and auto traffic in 1906, and extended northward from Pike Street to Lake Union. The Westlake Avenue and Pike Street intersection was the location of the first Interurban Depot—Seattle to Everett. The Seattle Electric Company, owned by the Stone and Webster cartel, bought the line in 1909, and made various improvements to this and their consolidated system of electric street railways. The Ford Motor Company constructed a five-story assembly plant (1913, John Graham Sr., City of Seattle Landmark), at the south end of Lake Washington in 1913.

Several churches were built in the neighborhood, catering to the various nationalities of its mainly immigrant population, including Scandinavians, Greeks, and Russians. A Norwegian Methodist Episcopal church was built on the northeastern corner of the intersection of John Street and Howard (now Yale) Avenue prior to 1893. In 1912, Immanuel Lutheran Church (Watson Vernon) was built on the northwestern corner of Thomas Street and Pontius Avenue, and in 1921, St. Demetrios Church (destroyed), serving the Russian and Greek communities, was completed on the corner of Yale Avenue N and N Thomas Street. The Russian Orthodox contingent eventually broke off and built St. Spiridon Orthodox Cathedral (City of Seattle Landmark, 1976) at the southeastern corner of Harrison Street and Yale Avenue between 1938 and 1941. The Bethany Lutheran Free Church (destroyed, ca. 1980) was built at the southeastern corner of John Street and Fairview Avenue in the early 1920s.

A number of apartment buildings were constructed throughout the neighborhood between 1900 and the 1920s, including the Jensen Block (1906, City of Seattle Landmark), the Grandview Apartments (1907, Henderson Ryan), the Hollister Apartments (ca. 1910), Carolina Court (1915, John A. Creutzer), all on

the western side of Eastlake; the Brewster (1916, Warren H. Milner) at the southeastern corner of Minor Avenue and John Street; and the Carlton (1926, Emil Guenther with Charles Saunders) at the northwestern corner of Mercer Street and Pontius Avenue, among others.

By the early 1920s, the Great Northern Railway built railroad tracks along Terry Avenue, serving the growing industrial warehouse district north of the Central Business District. The tracks also looped around Lake Union, serving the water-dependent industries along the shoreline made possible by the construction of the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks and the Lake Washington Ship Canal constructed between 1911 and 1917. The small freight depot located on Terry Avenue North between Harrison and Thomas streets was a far cry from the massive central station called for at South Lake Union in Virgil G. Bogue's 1911 "Plan of Seattle," prepared for the Municipal Plans Commission.

In 1928, work commenced on the second and final Denny Regrade, which focused on a trapezoidal area bounded by Virginia Street to the south, Fifth Avenue to the east, Thomas Street to the north, and Westlake Avenue to the west, resulting in the lowering of the grade throughout that area, as well as Denny Park, which had for years loomed over the surrounding commercial district.

After the 1920s, the South Lake Union Area slowly evolved into a mixed residential and commercial district. Several commercial laundries were located in the greater neighborhood, including the Metropolitan Laundry Building (1917, later called the New Richmond Laundry, City of Seattle Landmark), built in 1917 at Pontius Avenue N and Thomas Street; the Supply Laundry (City of Seattle Landmark), initially completed between 1908 and 1912, at Yale Avenue North and Republican Street; and the Troy Laundry Building (V. W. Voorhees, with additions by Henry Bittman, City of Seattle Landmark), built in 1927 at the northwestern intersection of Fairview Avenue and Republican Street.

In the mid-to-late 1920s, Puget Sound Traction, Light & Power Company was converting their interurban lines to bus service and created a bus garage and repair facility for their North Coast Lines on the former site of the former Pontius mansion at Pontius Avenue N and Denny Way.

Between the mid-1920s and the beginning of World War II, several other major commercial business operations were located in the neighborhood. The Seattle Times relocated to a new site at the northeastern corner of the intersection of John Street and Fairview Avenue N in 1930, into an Art Moderne building (1930, Robert Reamer, City of Seattle Landmark). George Horluck built a large brewery at Westlake and Mercer in 1933, responding to the end of prohibition.

The Aurora Speedway was constructed in the early 1930s, east of Dexter Avenue, with the George Washington Memorial Bridge crossing high above the Lake Washington Ship Canal near Lake Union's northern end.

The United States Navy built a Naval Reserve Armory (1942, William R. Grant w/ B. Marcus Priteca, City of Seattle Landmark), serving as an advanced training facility, on the site of the Brace Hergert Mill between 1941 and 1942, using funds provided by the Works Progress Administration.

Fairview Avenue N continued to be the primary commercial street of the neighborhood. The Washington State Game Department built their new International style headquarters (James C. Gardiner and Associates) on Fairview Avenue N near Mercer in 1948.

The neighborhood in many ways lost its center in 1949, when a major earthquake severely damaged the Cascade School. The School District closed the school and demolished the building in 1955, replacing it with the district warehouse, while retaining the old playground between Pontius and Minor streets as a city park. Further residential development within the neighborhood was officially discouraged in

1957, when the city's new zoning ordinance eliminated new residential uses in the Cascade neighborhood.

By the 1960s, Interstate 5 severed the area from Capitol Hill. In 1964, PEMCO built the first tower of its Eastlake Avenue office complex, with further construction continuing through 1983. REI built its new flagship store (Mithun Partners) in 1994 on an entire block on the western side of Eastlake Avenue between John and Thomas streets.

The area remained fairly stable until property values increased as result of major land acquisition stimulated in the 1990s by the "Commons" proposal and redevelopment of these properties by major area developers. A new streetcar line running down Westlake now connects the South Lake Union, Cascade, and Westlake areas with the CBD.

Site and Building History: 1120 John Street

Prior to the construction of The Seattle Times Building complex on the eastern half of two city blocks running along Fairview Avenue N between Denny Way to Thomas Street, the subject property was undeveloped. Single-family houses or duplexes occupied the western half of the two blocks.

The subject site was cleared beginning on September 26, 1929. Construction of the new Seattle Times Building commenced in 1930, and was completed in early 1932, with the newspaper publishing its first edition from the building on March 2, 1932. As originally constructed, the 1930-31 Seattle Times plant complex consisted of three related buildings: the office building, the printing plant, and a truck garage. Architect Robert C. Reamer, then head of design for the Metropolitan Building Company, designed all three buildings.

The original two-story office building (City of Seattle Landmark) of the original complex, situated at the northwestern corner of Fairview Avenue North and John Street, is considered an excellent American interpretation of Art Deco design. It had a footprint of 135 feet east-west by 68 feet north-south.

The original three-story with basement printing plant portion of the original complex was situated to the north of the office building and was connected to it by a bridge spanning a light well. It had a footprint of 171 feet 11 inches east-west by 133 feet 4 inches north-south running along Fairview Avenue N. In 1947 the office building was extended two structural bays to the west. This addition was designed by W. Henry Fey and is nearly identical in character and detail to the original 1931 façade design.

A new plant addition including a new pressroom wing was added to the northern end of the original printing plant building in 1950. This addition extended the eastern façade northward by three window bays. This addition was designed by architect William H. Fey and is compatible in character with the original six-bay design.

As part of the overall post-war expansion of the complex, the original garage on the southwestern corner of Boren Avenue and Thomas Street was demolished and a new larger reinforced concrete garage measuring 120 feet north-south and 65 feet east-west was constructed from designs prepared by William H. Fey. A new paper receiving platform was also constructed as part of this expansion. By 1963, the Seattle Times (Blethen Corporation) owned the entire block extending between John Street to the south, Boren Avenue to the west, Thomas Street to the south, and Fairview Avenue to the east. The north-south alley originally splitting the block had also been vacated. The addition was designed by Albert Kelly & Associates, consulting engineers. The reinforced concrete addition measures approximately 32 feet wide east-west and 136 feet 7 inches north-south. At that time, Kelly

oversaw interior renovation to the upper floors of the printing plant and added a new vault to the west of the existing office building.

In 1967, a major addition was made to the west of the expanded office building to house a new pressroom and the classified advertising department. The two-story building with two floors of basements was 56 feet wide east-west and 238 feet long north-south, running from John Street on the south and abutting the 1949 garage building. A second-floor pedestrian bridge spanned the vacated alley, with the lower basement floor extending under the alley. Arnold G. Ganges was the architect for the project and the contractor was Howard S. Wright.

The 1967 addition was further modernized in 1979, when the architectural firm of Naramore Bain Brady & Johanson completely refaced the southwestern corner of the building with reinforced concrete and glass curtain walls, and reconfigured the existing 1967 addition to include a large ground floor reception area and auditorium, as well as new stairways, restrooms and open office interiors.

Original Building Developer and Owner: The *Seattle Times* and the Blethen Family

The *Seattle Times* had the subject building, the Printing Plant, constructed between 1931 and 1932 as part of a complex of three buildings, also including the administration building and garage building.

Alden J. Blethen (1845-1915) founded the *Seattle Evening Times* in 1896, when he purchased the *Seattle Press-Times*, a four-page newspaper with a daily circulation of 3,500.

Blethen, a native of Maine's Waldo County, was a former teacher and lawyer who became a successful newspaperman in Kansas City, Missouri during the 1880s, owning a fifth interest in the *Kansas City Journal*. Blethen sold his interest in the newspaper in 1884, moving to Minneapolis where he purchased an interest in the *Minneapolis Tribune*, a morning paper, and with his partner, Edwin Haskell, eventually took control of the *Minneapolis Journal*, the city's afternoon paper, publishing both from the new state-of-the-art eight-story Tribune Building in downtown Minneapolis. In 1888 Blethen sold his interest in the Minneapolis newspapers and tried unsuccessfully to run for political office on the Republican ticket. After attempting to purchase the *Washington Post* and the *St. Paul Globe*, he repurchased the *Tribune* in 1889, becoming editor-in-chief. A disastrous fire that destroyed the Tribune Building eventually led to the loss of the newspaper to a creditor in 1891. In 1892, Blethen made an unsuccessful bid to gain the Republican nomination for mayor, losing to a dark horse candidate. His support of the party led to his gaining the appellation "Colonel," as a member of Governor Knute Nelson's honorary military staff. Blethen briefly turned to banking, but was severely impeded by the financial crisis of 1893. Turning once again to publishing, Blethen founded his own newspaper, the *Penny Press*, but was too financially strapped to remain in control. In 1896, Blethen sent his family to Seattle to stay with relatives while he sorted through his financial situation and attempted to raise money to buy the *Denver Times*. Alden's son, Clarence B. Blethen, corresponded with his father regarding Seattle's newspapers, encouraging Blethen to travel to Seattle to seek new opportunities in a relatively open field. At that time, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, whose politics was solidly behind the Republican party, was the leading local daily newspaper, with a daily circulation that equaled all the other state newspapers combined. Sensing opportunity, Blethen purchased the *Seattle Press-Times* for \$30,000 in August of 1896, with the financial backing of wealthy attorney and mining entrepreneur Charles Fishback. In addition to the printing presses owned by the paper, the former owners of the *Seattle Press-Times*, C. A. Davies and T. A. Hughes, had also possessed the valuable rights to an Associated Press franchise.

Blethen was determined "to make the [*Seattle Press-*] *Times* the most popular publication in the state of Washington" by publishing a cheaper paper with more content that that would attract more readers, and as a result gain more paid advertising. The *Times* moved into space in the Boston Block at Second Avenue and Columbia Street. Blethen installed the press below street level, and combined

business, composing, news, and editorial offices on the ground and balcony levels. He then ordered two new linotype machines from New York, and lowered the street price to three cents “to place the newspaper more largely in the hands of the common people.”

During the 1896 election, Blethen, acting as a political chameleon, transformed the new *Seattle Evening Times* into a populist voice, backing the Democratic presidential candidate, William Jennings Bryan, and speaking on behalf of the working man against the wealth of the establishment’s “silk-stocking gentlemen.” In Minneapolis Blethen had learned that controversy sells newspapers, and his goal was to build circulation by taking the *Post-Intelligencer* head on, spreading exaggerations and falsehoods as dubious news, and criticizing the *Post-Intelligencer* for low journalistic standards. His strategy worked, and during the heat of the campaign, the *Times* doubled its daily circulation, but dropped sharply after Bryan lost the election and Seattle settled back to being a out-of-the-way frontier town.

Although unable to meet the newspaper’s payroll, Blethen secretly bought up all available shares of the *Times*, with the 50-year-old Blethen becoming editor-in-chief. Blethen brought in his eldest son A. Joseph Blethen as 25 percent owner and the paper’s drama critic. In May 1897, the Blethens formed the Times Printing Company and secured the rights to the new Associated Press “day report,” a news service catering to the evening newspapers on the West Coast, where the daily political and financial news of the East Coast was three hours behind. This allowed the *Times*, with its afternoon delivery, to scoop the *Post-Intelligencer*. Nevertheless, the *Times* continued to lose money. The *Post-Intelligencer* generally avoided attacking Blethen directly, preferring to wait out the inevitable collapse of the upstart newspaper. However, the *Argus*, a weekly newspaper owned by A.T. Ambrose and Henry Chadwick, personally accused Blethen of selling his editorial influence by revealing that he had received loans from both Washington state senator Watson Squire and James J. Hill, owner of the Minneapolis-based Great Northern Railway, to purchase the newspaper. A bitter feud arose between Chadwick and Blethen, who regularly used their editorial positions to publically attack each other.

The *Times* continued to be unprofitable until July 1897, when the steamer Portland docked in Elliott Bay carrying 70 miners and a half-ton of gold. During the Klondike gold rush, tens of thousands of people from Seattle (and everywhere else in the country) journeyed north from Seattle to the Canadian and Alaskan goldfields. Seattle became the portal to those gold fields, and between 1898 and 1902 Seattle’s new federal assay office, run by Joseph Mayer, processed \$174 million in gold. Although several miners struck it rich, Seattle businesses that equipped eager prospectors—or entertained them in what would become Seattle’s notorious Tenderloin District—were more likely to make fortunes. All Seattle’s newspapers capitalized on the boom, and the *Times* finally turned a profit, as circulation and advertising revenues soared.

By 1898, *The Times* had a circulation of nearly 12,000, running five editions a day emphasizing hot news, sports, local crime and politics, humor, entertainment reviews, as well as beauty tips and society news that aimed to bring in women readers. The Saturday edition of the *Times* outsold every other Saturday newspaper in the state. At the turn of the last century, the *Times* shared the market with the two other dailies, the *Post-Intelligencer* and the *Seattle Star*. The newspapers had all profited due to the gold rush and the coverage of the Spanish-American War, often sinking to yellow journalism to increase circulation.

In 1900, Blethen formed the Times Investment Company, which would become the Blethen family’s financial holding company, protecting the family from financial losses similar to what they had suffered in Minneapolis.

By 1902, the newspaper's circulation had climbed to nearly 30,000, and the *Times* moved into the Denny Building at Second Avenue and Union Street, a new building built to specifications by the Denny family, and equipped with the some of the best production machinery in the West. In February of that year, the *Times* produced its first Sunday edition, offering it free to its daily subscribers. An early adopter of colored printing, the newspaper purchased its own four-color press in 1904, and prided itself on publishing photographs taken mere hours before publication.

Blethen's youngest son, Clarence Brettun Blethen (1879-1941) or "C.B.," became managing editor of the *Times* in 1903, overshadowing his older brother Alden Joseph Blethen, Jr. (1870-1937), who generally preferred a literary career. "Colonel" Alden Blethen, however, remained in complete control of the paper and its editorial policy.

Over the next several years Blethen would use his editorial platform to support friends while making fierce enemies, including *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* editor Erastus Brainerd, city engineer R. H. Thompson, and the influential Reverend Mark Mathews. The latter hired the William J. Burns Detective Agency to investigate Blethen and his allies, including Seattle councilman (later mayor) Hiram Gill, police chief Charles W. Wappenstein, and several others for corruption related to encouraging illegal activities in Seattle's "Tenderloin District." Blethen would eventually be indicted by a grand jury in 1911 for criminal charges of libel and conspiracy. He was eventually found not guilty.

Although Blethen supported organized labor, he actively took on the labor radicals, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), or Wobblies, calling them "bums," and describing them as "too lazy to work and too cowardly to steal." Shortly after a call by the *Times* for vigilante attacks on "anarchists," a fire destroyed much of the *Times*' physical plant and archives on February 13, 1913. The following July, the *Times* essentially incited a riot during the Potlatch celebration, calling for physical attacks on the Wobblies. A crowd of hundreds stormed and burned the offices of the IWW, moving on to destroy the Socialist Party's office. The Denny Building again suffered a destructive fire in October 1913.

In March 1914, Blethen broke ground for a new home for the *Seattle Times* on a triangular lot between 4th and 5th Avenues at Stewart and Olive Streets, almost in the "suburbs." The *Times* had purchased the property in 1912, hiring C. B. Blethen's new father-in-law to design a Classically inspired building. Later the architectural firm of Bebb & Gould gained the commission, initially designing a Gothic inspired building, before Carl F. Gould joined Bebb, transforming the building into a Renaissance Revival building clad in rose buff terra cotta. Blethen hoped that the new Times Square Building would be a "material expression of his years of competition and achievement, the monument to his life's work." Only a little more than a year later, however, on July 12, 1915, Alden Blethen died after a period of deteriorating health.

After Blethen's death the Times Square project continued after a brief interruption, allowing the newspaper to move into the new building with a state-of-the-art printing plant in September 1916. At Alden Blethen's request, Joseph Blethen became president and general manager of the paper and the Times Investment Company, with C. B. Blethen as vice president. This arrangement continued for a number of years, until C. B. was called into active service in the Washington National Guard during World War I, rising to the rank of brigadier general before resigning his commission in 1921, allowing him devote more time to the management of the newspaper. Daily circulation at that time was 56,460, and Sunday circulation was at 83,703. In April 1921, William Randolph Hearst purchased the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, putting the *Times* in direct competition with the most sophisticated newspaper chain in the country. The *Times*' revenues slid as the paper attempted to meet the challenge. Later that year, Joseph Blethen left the newspaper, selling his interest in the

Times' printing and investment companies, and relocating to San Francisco to work at an advertising firm. Now as editor-in-chief and publisher of the *Seattle Times*, C. B. Blethen moved the *Seattle Times* toward being a modern, objective mass-circulation metropolitan newspaper.

In many ways, C. B. sanitized the *Times'* editorial posture, eliminating sensationalized crime news from the front page, prohibiting reporters from using words such as “gun” and “blood” in their published accounts of the daily news. Additionally, the newspaper’s orientation was altered to embrace the tastes of the more cautious middle class.

By 1929, the area surrounding the Times Square Building had become a busy commercial neighborhood inappropriate for manufacturing purposes, and daily circulation had grown to around 100,000, with Sunday circulation near 140,000. The large “Basco” color presses used for the rotogravure printing were also housed off-site in another building, causing logistical difficulties. Anticipating building a new facility, the *Times* purchased the eastern half of two city blocks running along Fairview Avenue N between Denny Way to Thomas Street. The company announced that it would move to the new site in August 1929, and C. B. broke ground for the proposed new building in September of that year. The newspaper had hired Robert C. Reamer, then head of design at the Metropolitan Building Company, to design the initial development that would eventually include an office “tower of twenty stories or more in height.”

The *Times* moved into their new building in February and March of 1931, beginning publication on March 2, 1931. Over 2,000 tons of equipment was moved, including presses weighing a total of 600 tons, 57 tons of typesetting machines, and 70 tons of metal used for typecasting. The new facility consisted of three units: the administration building fronting Thomas Street; the plant located along Fairview Avenue N containing the newsroom, circulation offices, rotogravure plant and mechanical equipment; and a repair garage located on the site’s northwestern corner. The space between the buildings was used as “Times Alley,” allowing for truck delivery and distribution traffic.

The new Times Building was finished during the bleak days of the economic depression of the 1930s. C. B. Blethen was known for extravagant spending, and the new building’s construction, largely financed through the issuing of corporate bonds, stretched the finances of the *Times*, leading C.B. Blethen to sell a minority interest in 1930 to the newspaper chain owned by Ridder Brothers (later known as Knight Ridder Inc.; the McClatchy Company presently holds the former Knight Ridder’s 49.5 percent voting common stock). Although the move saved the newspaper and the Blethen’s family ownership, it led to a number of hostile takeover attempts, ending in the Blethens’ favor in 1949.

C. B. Blethen passed away in 1941, and control of the newspaper was passed on to Elmer Todd, C. B.’s friend and attorney. Todd was succeeded in 1949 by two of C. B.’s sons, William Kingsley Blethen (1913-1967), who was named publisher, and Francis (Frank) Alden Blethen (1904-1967), who became president.

After World War II, the *Times* expanded its operations with several additions to the original three buildings and, anticipating future operational expansion, increased its real estate holdings in the immediate area. The post-war expansion was driven by increased circulation due both demographic trends and aggressive business practices. Between 1940 and 1950, Seattle’s population grew at fairly modest rate of approximately eight percent, from 368,302 to 467,591, while the greater Seattle metropolitan increased from 504,980 to 726,462, or approximately 44%, due to the influx of workers drawn to employment opportunities during and after the war and the development of new suburban areas surrounding Seattle and its major employment centers. The *Times’s* management exploited this rapid population growth by expanding its circulation into these newly developed areas.

Additionally, the *Times* absorbed Seattle's third largest newspaper the *Seattle Star* in 1947, acquiring the offices, printing presses, and circulation lists for \$360,000. Driven by these factors, the paper's daily circulation increased from 101,662 in 1940, to approximately 215,000 in 1950, a gain of 81%.

As a result, the *Times* expanded its original office building in 1947, and between 1950 and 1951, acquired the western half block adjacent to the complex and added a large addition to its printing plant. In 1963, the *Times*, with a daily circulation of around 233,000, once again expanded its complex with a three-story pressroom and plant addition to the western side, adding a new press line boosting its capacity approximately 40%.

John Alden Blethen (1918-1993) succeeded the two Blethen brothers in 1968. By then the *Times* had a daily circulation of slightly more than 250,000, or nearly 50,000 more than the *Post-Intelligencer*, while the Sunday edition had a circulation of 310,000, 52,000 more than the *P-I*. Even more importantly, the *Times* carried over ten percent more advertising than the *Post-Intelligencer*. By the early 1980s, however, intense competition had become destructive to Seattle's two remaining dailies, particularly to the *Post-Intelligencer*, which was slowly losing its market position to the *Times*. In May of 1983, after surviving legal challenges, a 50-year joint operating agreement between the *Times* and the *Post-Intelligencer* was executed, enabling the two newspapers to cooperate legally in order to ensure their mutual survival in the marketplace. While the two newspapers remained editorially separate, the Seattle Times Company took control of all related production, advertising, and circulation matters of the *Post-Intelligencer*. Under the joint operating agreement, the *Times* ceased publication of its daily morning edition (begun in 1980), and split profits, with two-thirds going to the *Times*, and one-third going to Hearst.

W.J. Pennington, a non-family member, took over the management of the *Times* in 1983, but died unexpectedly in 1985. This allowed Frank A. Blethen, Jr. (1929-), the current and sixth publisher of the *Times*, to take control. Under his leadership and buoyed by the boost from the joint operating agreement, the *Times* entered a period of unprecedented financial growth, allowing the company to develop several spin-off niche publications, acquire three regional weeklies, and in 1989, acquire the *Yakima Herald-Republic*, a daily newspaper with a circulation of more than 40,000. Three years after the purchase of the *Yakima Herald-Republic*, the Seattle Times company opened a \$175 million, state-of-the-art satellite printing plant in Bothell. The company also owns the *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin*, and several regional weekly newspapers in the state of Washington.

As the *Times* entered the mid 1990s, it represented one of the last independent and locally owned metropolitan newspapers in the country, one of the few newspapers to avoid absorption by large publishing chains. As Washington State's largest newspaper, in 1995 it had daily circulation of 232,371, and 504,897 for its Sunday edition.

The *Times* switched to morning deliveries in March 2000, placing it in direct competition with its joint operating agreement partner, the *Post-Intelligencer*. In 2003, the *Times* announced its intention to cancel the joint operating agreement, leading to several years of legal disputes. The agreement was formally ended in 2009, when the *P-I* became an online-only publication.

In 2013, The Seattle Times Company agreed to sell two full blocks of its holding in South Lake Union, including its former administrative building and printing plant to Vancouver, B.C.-based high-rise developer the Onni Group. The company had moved to an adjacent building to the west the previous year.

The Seattle Times presently has a daily circulation of approximately 236,929, and 346,589 Sunday circulation. The *Times* has been awarded nine Pulitzer Prizes for excellence in journalism.

Historical Architectural Context: Art Deco

The subject property contains cast stone ornaments (finials, caps, spandrels and piers) designed within an Art Deco motif of flowers and stems.

The Art Deco style was born out of the 1925 *Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes* held in Paris in 1925. Literature promoting the expo prohibited imitations, reproductions and counterfeits of ancient styles. The new style strove to meld artistic expression and the machine age in a complementary, forward-looking manner. Polychromy and the celebration of decoration were the chief tenets of the Art Deco style. Art Deco is a style of ornamentation with motifs found on cars, trains, kitchen appliances as well as buildings. These motifs were low-relief geometrical designs in straight lines, chevrons, zigzags and stylized floral or fountain shapes. The inspiration for these shapes came from Native art in the Americas and Cubism in Europe. Exterior finish materials of metal, smooth stone and concrete were typically accented with terra cotta, glass and colored mirrors. Some of the most famous examples in the United States are the Rockefeller Center (Raymond Hood, 1940) and the Chrysler Building (William Van Alen, 1930) in New York City, and the historic district in Miami Beach.

In Seattle, most of the buildings designed in the Art Deco style were built between the late 1920s and the onset of the Great Depression. Some examples of this style include the US Marine Hospital Building (Bebb & Gould, Graham, 1932), Firestation #6 (Architect Unknown, 1931), the Seattle Tower, (Albertson, Wilson & Richardson, 1928), the Exchange Building, (Graham, 1930), the Seattle Art Museum at Volunteer Park (Bebb & Gould, 1933), the MGM/Loews Building at 2331 2nd Avenue (Edmund W. Denle, 1936), the RKO Distributing Building (Earle Morrison, 1928), and the Seattle Times Building (R.C. Reamer, 1931).

Historical Architectural Context: Newspaper Office and Printing Buildings

Newspaper buildings have traditionally followed the prevailing popular architectural style. The tallest building in the world between 1890 and 1894 was the *New York World* newspaper building. It had printing presses in the basement, retail space on the first floor and mezzanine, and the news offices in the top six floors of the building, with other floors rented to commercial tenants. *New York World* was just one of a number of newspaper office and printing buildings on New York's newspaper row, on Park Row near City Hall, including the *New York Times*, the *Tribune*, and the *New York Sun*. These buildings were all designed between 1858 and 1890 in different eclectic styles incorporating Renaissance revival, Romanesque and French-inspired forms. The buildings were intentionally clustered around City Hall; in addition to the proximity to newsmakers, the buildings were designed to express monumentality and civic values. The influence of eclectic designs are reflected in the *Seattle Times*' classical revival Times Square building (1916, Bebb & Gould) in Seattle, and in the *Spokesman Review*'s Romanesque forms in Spokane, WA (1891, Kirtland Cutter). The *Seattle Times*, along with other newspapers, chose to keep their linotype machines on the first floor, open to public viewing. The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* moved from a solid brick building at 2nd Avenue and Cherry Street to a gothic inspired terra cotta building at 6th Avenue and Pine Street in 1921.

In Chicago, the 1922 Chicago Tribune Building was inspired by the "Butter Tower" of the cathedral at Rouen. It was designed by Raymond Hood and John Mead Howells, who won a widely publicized competition for the design of the building. Eliel Saarinen submitted an Art Deco entry, and Walter Gropius an International Style scheme, but the paper ultimately chose the more traditional eclectic design. The Art Deco style was being used in the design of other newspaper buildings, including the Detroit Free Press Building by Albert Kahn, built in 1925. Although the Chicago Tribune building

influenced the design of other newspaper buildings across the country, including the San Antonio Express-News building (1929, Herbert S. Green), Art Deco became the predominant mode.

The Chicago Tribune design differed radically from Hood's later design with Andre Fouilhoux and John Mead Howells for the Daily News Building (1929-30) in New York, which reflects a mature Art Deco style. Many other newspaper buildings followed in this style including Reamer's Seattle Times Building and the Los Angeles Times Building (1935, Gordon B. Kaufmann). When the *Seattle Times* moved to their new Art Deco building they abandoned the idea of having the machinery on display, choosing to house the printing presses and other machinery in the basement. In Seattle, the *Post-Intelligencer* completed a new building in 1948, (Lockwood Greene with Henry Bittman) choosing Art Deco style for their iconic building.

Soon after World War II, the International Style became the preferred mode for buildings, such as the Chicago Sun-Times building by Naess & Murphy, built between 1955 and 1958. In 1975 the architecture firm SOM won the AIA National Honor Award for its 1971 design for the *Republic* newspaper plant and offices in Columbus, Indiana. These later buildings also demonstrated a shift to separating the printing plant from the rest of the operation, and locating it in more remote suburban areas, while keeping their newsrooms in town.

1947 Office Building Addition Architect: William H. Fey (1886-1977)

Seattle architect David H. Fey designed the 1947 Addition to the Seattle Times Printing Plant. William Henry Fey was born on July 14, 1886, in Butler Valley, Pennsylvania. He arrived in Seattle in 1906. He was employed by Howe & Stokes, a New York architectural firm that was hired by Metropolitan Building Company to design the White-Henry-Stuart Building (1907-15, demolished), the Cobb Building (1909-1910), and the Metropolitan Theater (1910-1911, demolished), at the Henry Building in 1910. Fey was working as a draftsman for the Seattle School District under architect Edgar Blair in 1918. He served briefly in the United States Army during World War I, and was thought to have been employed by John Graham by 1919. He received his architectural license from Washington State in 1927.

By 1927, Fey was working for Robert C. Reamer and the Metropolitan Building Company. They worked together on a wooden inlay map of the United States, measuring 210 feet by 17 feet, for the "map Room" at Yellowstone National Park's Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel. After Reamer's death in 1938, Fey became lead architect at the Metropolitan Building Company. He and Paul Thiry collaborated on projects between 1941 and 1948. As architect for the Metropolitan Building Company, Fey designed an addition to the office building of the Seattle Times in 1947 (the subject building), a garage for the Seattle Times in 1947, and an addition to the company's printing plant in 1948. He also designed a 100,000 square foot addition to Seattle's Medical Dental building in 1949.

Fey later worked for the Richardson Associates, retiring in 1972 when he was 86. He became a member emeritus of the American Institute of Architects after his retirement. Fey died at age 91, on December 17, 1977.

Original Building Contractor: George E. Teufel Contracting Company

The Seattle-based construction company of Georg E. Teufel Contracting Company built the 1947 Office Building Addition to the original 1931 Seattle Times Office Building.

George Teufel (1884-1961) and Paul N. Carlson (1885-1969) formed the general construction firm of Teufel & Carlson in 1925. Both had previously worked on the construction of the original Olympic Hotel (1924, George P. Post & Sons), under the direction of Robert C. Reamer, acting as the on-site architect. Teufel and Carlson would complete many projects designed by Reamer, including the

Skinner Building and Fifth Avenue Theater (1925-26), the Lake Quinault Lodge (1926), the Gallatin Gateway Railroad Station in Yellowstone (1927), 1411 4th Avenue (1928), The Great Northern Railway Building (1929), the Olympic Hotel east wing addition (1929), the Seattle Times Building (1931-32), and the Edmond Meany Hotel (1931-32). Other projects include the Rhodes Building (1926-27, Harlan Thomas, demolished), the Bon Marché Department Store (John Graham, Sr., 1928-29), The Umpqua River Bridge (1934, Conde McCullough, National Historic Register), and the Gorge Powerhouse for Seattle City Light (1937, National Register District). The firm also completed buildings for the United States Army during World War II, after which the two partners went separate ways, both continuing to complete local building projects.

George Teufel was born in Muscatine, Iowa in 1884. He claimed to be self-educated, and obtained a civil engineering license. He came to Seattle in 1906, and first worked for the Seattle Electric Company and later for Gran, Smith & Company, builders of the original Olympic Hotel. After his partnership with Paul N. Carlson, Teufel completed several school and church projects.

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

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