



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

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

LPB 260/14

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

Name and Address of Property: **901 Harrison Street**

Legal Description: Lots 11 and 12, Block 91, Denny's Fifth Addition to North Seattle, according to plat thereof, recorded in Volume 1 of plats, page 202, in King County, Washington.

At the public meeting held on May 7, 2014 the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the building at 901 Harrison Street as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following standards 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.*
- 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

Current neighborhood context

The subject building is located at the southeast corner of Ninth Avenue North and Harrison Street, in the South Lake Union neighborhood.

The arterial Westlake Avenue is one block to the east, running north to south. Three blocks west is the major arterial Aurora Avenue/Highway 99. The site is equidistant between the arterials Mercer Street to the north and Denny Way to the south. Denny Park is located two blocks to the south of the subject building. In past decades, the surrounding blocks were a mixture of low-scale light industrial businesses, warehouses, surface parking lots, low- and mid-rise office buildings, and a very limited amount of retail/commercial space, interspersed between much older single family houses, apartment buildings, and churches, which reflect the depth of age and transitional nature of this neighborhood. However, in the past decade, the neighborhood has seen increasing residential development, with multi-story apartments, condominiums, and mixed-use buildings being constructed.

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

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Designated Seattle historic landmarks which are within about four blocks include:

- 777 Thomas, at Eighth Avenue N. and Thomas Street;
- Street Clock, West Earth Company, at Dexter Avenue N. and Harrison Street;
- Boren Investment Company Warehouse, at Boren and Harrison;
- The Van Vorst Building, on Boren between Harrison and Republican;
- Terry Avenue Building, on Terry between Harrison and Thomas;
- Troy Laundry Building, on Fairview between Harrison and Thomas;
- Seattle Times Building, at Fairview and John;
- Puget Power and Light Company Utilities Building, on Eighth Avenue N. and Roy Street;
- Pacific-Ford McKay Building, formerly located at Westlake and Broad.

Site

The parcel measures 120 by 120 feet, with little grade change across the site—dropping approximately three feet from the southwest corner to the northeast corner. There is an alley along the east side of the parcel. The building is L-shaped, and occupies the north, northeast, and east parts of the parcel, to the property line. There is a small surface parking lot associated with the subject building, which accommodates approximately six automobiles, occupying part of the southwest quadrant of the parcel.

To the south, on the same block, there is a surface parking lot for approximately 26 automobiles. The lot is a separate parcel, but held by the same owner of the subject property. South of this surface parking lot are a series of c.1920s-1930s one-story modest masonry commercial buildings.

Across the street to the west, the block is currently undergoing demolition and construction for a proposed redevelopment.

Across the street to the northwest, on the opposite corner, is the six-story, 100-unit reinforced concrete Veer Lofts Condominium building, constructed in 2008.

Across the street to the north, there is a one-story, 13,000 square foot masonry office/retail building constructed in 1948 in the Modern style.

Across the street and alley to the northeast, there is a simple one-story, 8,000 square foot masonry building constructed in 1948. The Tom Douglas restaurant Serious Pie occupies much of the building, which faces Westlake Avenue.

Across the alley to the east is the current location of Pande Cameron, an oriental rug store, which occupies the corner of Harrison Street and Westlake Avenue. The structure was built in 1923 in a modest Mediterranean or Spanish Revival commercial mode, with a red clay-tile clad parapet creating the slight appearance of a hipped roof. The red brick building, which historically had been an automobile dealership, retains some ornamental brickwork and apparently original windows.

Another building across the alley to the east is another building, south of Pande Cameron, which was originally a one or two-story masonry building constructed in 1927, but is currently undergoing a renovation and four-story addition for twelve apartments.

Building exterior and structure

The subject building was constructed in 1927 for the Pioneer Sand & Gravel Company, and was designed by The Austin Company. Intended as an office, showroom, and warehouse building for a building product supplier, the structure is a straightforward light industrial building with subtle ornament and massing that could be described as restrained Mission Revival.

The building was originally massed into three parts, forming an L-shape in plan, and reflecting a separation of functions: First, a full-width, east-west-oriented, 28-foot-wide one story rectangular bar along the north side of the property, which originally functioned as high-ceilinged product display showroom and sales offices, and is today the main retail space for the hardware store occupant. Second, south of this bar is connected a full-width, 31-foot-wide two-story rectangular bar, which originally contained individual offices, conference rooms, and support spaces. Attached to the south of these is an approximately 60 foot by 80 foot, north-south oriented two-story warehouse portion occupying the southeast corner of the site, which was originally a high-clearance covered garage, with a steel truss roof. Flat roofs with parapets cover the rest of the building. In 1999, a fourth component was added to this building massing—a two-story, vertically-oriented entry tower located at the re-entrant corner of the “L,” and capped by a pyramidal roof and low shaped parapet.

The 1937 tax assessor documents describe the structure as reinforced concrete stucco-finish exterior walls on a concrete foundation, with post and beam interiors, and a small partial basement for mechanical equipment. Original windows are steel sash over concrete and stucco finish bulkheads. The exterior walls are relatively flat planes of painted concrete, with the board formwork from the original concrete pour clearly visible.

The north, or primary, elevation, faces Harrison Street and features repeating, identical window bays on either side of what had been the primary entrance. The former main entrance is not centered on the elevation; there are four windows to the west side and six windows on the east. The entrance consists of three slightly recessed or blind arches, the center occupied by a recessed portico and door, with the flanking arches painted a darker color—originally, these contained rectangular windows. A shaped parapet above emphasizes the entrance.

The repeating window openings in the concrete wall along the north elevation feature shaped, solid “bracket” elements appearing to chamfer the corners of the window sash—in actuality, the window sash behind them are rectangular, but the “brackets” create the appearance of more complicated and decorative windows on the exterior. The bulkhead below the windows are recessed, with a simple projecting central panel, and a projecting sill. The windows themselves are divided by heavier steel muntins into six large equal sections (2 over 2 over 2), with each large section divided into three vertically-oriented lights. All of these windows appear to be original.

These windows wrap around to the west elevation (which faces Ninth Avenue), extending three bays, filling the west elevation of the northernmost building mass; these windows also appear to be original. The rest of the west elevation consists of the two-story building portion, and the recessed

former garage portion. The two-story mass features three undivided, square windows with non-original sash along the top floor, and three slightly recessed panels at the first floor below. The northernmost of these panels contains a rectangular (apparently original) divided light window; the southernmost panel is a recessed corner entry porch (not an original condition). This corner entry porch is today the main entry to the hardware store, City Hardware. The rest of the west elevation is the former garage portion, which is recessed beyond the small parking area, and provides the main entry to the other retail store, Kaufer's. Kaufer's entry dates to 1999 renovations, and features a slightly projecting covered entry, and a non-original storefront window system. Between the City Hardware entrance and the Kaufer's entrance is the vertical tower with pyramidal roof and very large 2-over-2 modern windows. This tower element was a 1999 addition.

The south elevation largely continues the fenestration pattern of the west elevation, wrapping each building mass. The south elevation of the garage portion was originally a party wall condition (today it faces the larger surface parking lot), and has no openings. A chain link fence divides the small parking lot from the adjacent large one.

The east elevation faces the alley, and is utilitarian compared to the north and west elevations. The southernmost portion, corresponding to the former garage portion, is marked by a large central door for vehicles, flanked by two large industrial sash rectangular windows protected by metal mesh. At the northernmost portion, the decorative repeating windows of the north elevation here wrap the corner, extending down the alley by two bays, although the windows have been filled in. The central part of the east elevation is the two-story portion of the building, which features two non-original window sash on the second floor, and one below.

Along the north elevation at the second story of the building are additional windows which are generally hidden from the sidewalk, because of the building mass setback, and because of the parapet height of the one-story mass in front.

Building interior

First floor ceiling heights range between 11 feet and 13 feet. Interiors have been altered over time to suit tenants, and remaining original finishes are limited to some original doors, plaster walls, and simple period door casework. Current interiors are characterized by drop ceilings, carpet or vinyl tile, and gypsum wallboard.

In the southeastern portion of the building, which had originally been the garage, a mid-level floor has been added, with the upper floor used for storage. Original skylights illuminate this space, and the steel trusses remain visible at some locations.

Summary of primary alterations

The building has had significant alterations to the building, but more intensely at the garage portion and two-story central portion of the building. In summary, primary alterations are as follows:

- Overall – Addition of stair tower entry in 1999
- One-story north portion – Covering of windows at alley; infill of windows flanking north entry.
- Two-story central portion – Replacement of original windows with retail entry at west and south elevations; replacement of all second-story windows at east, west, and south elevations; replacement of most second-story windows at north elevation (not fully visible from street).
- Garage portion – Reconfiguring of main west-facing entry, and removal/replacement of former garage entry with two flanking industrial sash windows. No change to alley elevation or party wall at south property line.

- Interior – The interior of the building has been completely altered over time and no significant interior spaces remain.

Major permitted alterations to the building are as follows:

- 1927: Office & garage. [original permit]
- 1933: Office partition.
- 1956: Alter building (\$1,500).
- 1963: Erect and maintain sign (\$850).
- 1976: Alter portion of second floor (\$6,000).
- 1977: Alter interior of existing building per plan; remove 19' x28' mezzanine (\$11,500).
- 1990-92: Alteration to interior 1st and 2nd floors; change portion of office to a dwelling unit (2nd floor) and occupy, per plans (\$210,000).
- 1999: Construct 2 story entry addition and interior alterations; upgrade windows per plan (\$100,000).
- 2000: Interior alterations to 2nd floor administrative office space (\$85,000).
- 2005: Alter warehouse; change use of SW portion of warehouse to expand existing retail in existing commercial building and occupy, per plans (\$115,000).

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The development of the South Lake Union neighborhood

The subject building is located in what is today called the South Lake Union neighborhood, as it merges into the Lower Queen Anne neighborhood to the west, the Cascade neighborhood to the east, and the Denny Regrade neighborhood to the south. The 2005 South Lake Union Historic Survey and Inventory for the Department of Neighborhoods considers the South Lake Union area to be bounded by Fairview Avenue to the east, Aurora Avenue to the west, Mercer Street to the north, and Denny Way to the south. The older Cascade neighborhood is considered to generally be the area southeast of South Lake Union and east of Fairview, traditionally having a closer relationship with Capitol Hill until the construction of the Interstate 5 corridor. All of these areas share common and overlapping histories due to topography and land use patterns over the decades.

The blocks around the subject site were originally part of the 320-acre 1853 land claim of David T. Denny, one of the original pioneer settlers of Seattle, which encompassed the south end of Lake Union westward to Elliott Bay, from Mercer Street to Denny Way. In David Denny's time, his land was nestled in a valley between Denny Hill to the south and Queen Anne Hill to the north. Prior to the Denny settlement, the area was noted for a large meadow and several Duwamish encampments, particularly where a small stream (today the course of Westlake Avenue) met the shore of Lake Union. The Denny's modest home was located at 8th and Republican. Nearby Denny Park at Dexter and John Street—two blocks south of the subject site—originally was six acres donated by David Denny in 1864 for use as a city cemetery, but was rededicated as a public park in 1883, becoming Seattle's oldest park. In the 1860s, a north-south military road was cut through the area, following an Indian trail (today's Dexter Avenue). David Denny subdivided his land into 500 building lots in 1872, but the area was relatively slow to develop, compared to the Belltown area to the south.

The area owes most of its character to transportation systems that developed around Lake Union and early rail corridors. Coal and lumber were transported via the lake from around the Lake Washington area, through a combination of boats, portage, and later, rail. A large sawmill was established at the foot of Lake Union in 1882, which was purchased by Denny shortly thereafter. From the 1880s to 1900, several industries developed in the area, including additional mills, several brickyards, a furniture company, and later, laundries and a brewery. Also in the 1880s, horse-drawn streetcars were

established in the vicinity, to connect the area to downtown. In 1883, the Denny claim had developed enough to be annexed by the City of Seattle. The area developed single family houses, churches, a few apartment buildings, and a school as the residential population grew—mostly workers for the nearby industries, through the turn of the century.

The 1909 extension of a rail spur and associated 1917 freight depot at Terry and Thomas Streets—two blocks from the subject site—connecting south Lake Union businesses to the Northern Pacific Railway, facilitated the continuing growth of industries in the south Lake Union area. The 1917 opening of the Ballard Locks and the Lake Washington Ship Canal (connecting Puget Sound to Lake Washington via Lake Union) spurred further growth. Over time, maritime industries developed, such as ship-related building and repair, particularly in response to the US entry into World War I and World War II. The large Naval Reserve Armory was established at the southwestern shore of the lake in the early 1940s, which today is occupied by the Museum of History and Industry.

Transportation-related companies established in the area as well. From 1913 to 1932, the first Ford assembly plant west of the Mississippi operated at the south shore of Lake Union (today's Shurgard Storage headquarters at 700 Fairview Avenue). Kenworth Trucks, founded in 1923 after the purchase of an existing 1917 truck factory located at Valley Street and Fairview Avenue, was located first at 506 Mercer Street, then 1263 Mercer Street until 1946, when it moved to a location south of downtown.

The 1888, 1893, 1905, and 1917 Sanborn fire insurance maps show the neighborhood slowly filling in with single-family houses, churches, and scattered small-scale commercial and civic buildings, with more intensive industrial land uses along the shore of Lake Union. On the 1893 Sanborn insurance map, the subject site was occupied by four small wood-frame dwellings on three variously-sized lots (at that time, Ninth Avenue was called Orion Street). By 1905, an additional building used as a greenhouse was constructed on interior of the largest lot. By the 1912 Baist map, the site has been entirely cleared of any structures, and the site remained vacant until at least 1917, if not longer. The 1912 Baist map shows some spotty commercial activity along the larger streets south of Denny Way, farther west along Denny Way, or east along Westlake Avenue. From 1893 to 1917, the neighborhood was originally characterized by 1-2 story wood-frame single-family dwellings or duplexes, but the surrounding blocks were increasingly marked by light industrial businesses and structures. During this period, businesses within a few blocks of the site included the Queen City Manufacturing Company box factory; a cabinet shop; a window-making shop; a sheet-metal shop; dyers and carpet cleaners; a printer; and a few automobile-service related shops.

One of the most dramatic impacts to the immediate area around the subject site was the second phase of the Denny Hill regrades, which occurred in two parts during 1906-11 and 1929-31, resulting in the flattening of the existing Denny Hill. The 1929-31 regrade work covered the approximately 20 blocks from Denny to Harrison, and Fifth to Ninth Avenues, as well as a half-block on either side Dexter up to Mercer Street. This phase of regrading included Denny Park, nearby blocks, as well as the subject site. The completion of the grading work was probably late 1930 or early 1931. By 1951, the Sanborn fire insurance map shows evidence that low-scale light industrial service and sales buildings, automobile-related buildings, and construction-related buildings had begun to fill in the neighborhood. Automobile-related businesses, usually only one story in height, were especially prevalent along the arterials Dexter and Westlake Avenues. Such development along Westlake occurred from the late 1910s through the 1930s and beyond, because it was not directly affected by the regrading occurring just a block to the west.

Three events significantly influenced the character of the Cascade and South Lake Union areas in the middle and latter part of the 20th century. In the early 1930s, Highway 99 / Aurora Avenue was

constructed in a below-grade right of way at the western edge of the neighborhood, substantially cutting the South Lake Union area off from the Queen Anne neighborhood to the west. In 1957, the Cascade and South Lake Union areas were rezoned as manufacturing areas, and no new residential buildings were permitted to be constructed there. Finally, in the late 1950s and the early 1960s, the construction of the Interstate 5 highway dramatically altered the relationship of the Cascade neighborhood to the lower flank of Capitol Hill to the east, and the creation of the Mercer Street interstate highway on-ramp just south of Lake Union altered the relationship of the Cascade neighborhood to the southeast shore of Lake Union. Together, these three events isolated the South Lake Union area generally, keeping the character of the area low-rise, light industrial, and with very little new development. In response to the increasingly automobile-oriented culture of the period, some parcels in the area were cleared and developed in the 1960s through 1980s as surface parking lots.

In the early 1990s, a proposal for a huge, Olmsted-like park called Seattle Commons was proposed for an area four blocks west of the site—approximately from Ninth Avenue to Terry, and from Denny to Lake Union, connected to downtown via Westlake Avenue. The project would have involved demolition of multiple blocks and closure of rights of way. The idea, which captured the imagination of the public and elected officials alike, ultimately failed at the voting booth, but it directed attention to the then-seemingly-underutilized South Lake Union area.

Since that time, increased development has occurred along the Westlake corridor, several blocks west of the subject site between Denny Way and Mercer Street, and at the foot of Lake Union. Westlake, Terry, and Boren Avenues have been the focus of carefully planned mixed-use residential and office development, attracting new technology-based industries and an increasingly dense population base. In 2006, officials broke ground for a new streetcar to connect South Lake Union to the downtown core, via Westlake Avenue. Beginning in 2008, the Seattle Department of Planning and Development instigated a series of public meetings and studies to consider rezoning portions of South Lake Union, in order to increase building height and density, in keeping with its designation as an Urban Center. New mixed-use and residential development has also occurred along Westlake Avenue. Additionally, in 2010 the new 12-acre South Lake Union Park opened at the foot of Lake Union, adjacent to the Center for Wooden Boats and the new Museum of History and Industry location in the refurbished Naval Reserve Armory, also a designated city landmark. Finally, the Mercer Street interchange at Interstate 5 is currently being reconfigured to improve both traffic flow and a more attractive pedestrian connection to the south end of Lake Union.

Owners of the subject property

The owners of the property have varied over time, and the site appears to have always been an investment property. The owners appear to have had no direct relationship to the tenants at any given time. Title abstracts on file at the Department of Planning and Development microfilm library were reviewed for ownership information. The earliest owner of the property found was Hiram B. Kennedy, who was the well-known president of the Navy Yard Route, a steamboat company which operated the route between Bremerton and Seattle. Kennedy died unexpectedly in 1920, and Paul S. Norton and Claude Stryker were appointed trustees of his estate, including the subject parcel. The site was vacant site at the time, and soon to be regraded as part of the Denny Hill regrade.

In 1922, Norton and Stryker sold or transferred the property to Thomas S. Lippy, a civic leader and philanthropist, presumably as an investment property. The subject building appears to have been constructed during Lippy's ownership, although for his tenant. The 1927 architectural drawings for the building, by The Austin Company, indicate that the client was the Pioneer Sand & Gravel Company, a company with which Lippy appears to have had no obvious personal connection.

Lippy was born in Pennsylvania in 1860, grew up there, and started a career as an iron moulder. In the 1880s he moved to Fargo, North Dakota, and then to Seattle in the 1890s, where he became the athletic director at the YMCA.¹¹ In 1896, he took leave of his schoolteacher job and became one of the first Seattleites to join the gold rush to the Yukon Territory, where he struck a successful claim and gained a highly publicized fortune. He then became active in Seattle real estate and industrial investments. He was an executive at various times in the Seattle Mattress & Upholstering Company, the Harper Hill Brick Company, the Northwest Trust & Savings Bank, and the Northern Life Insurance Company. He built the Lippy Block at Third Avenue and Columbia Street (no longer extant). He also served as president of the Seattle General Hospital, the YMCA, and was a Port Commissioner for several years as well. He died in 1931 at age 70.

In 1934, the property appears to have been sold or transferred to J. W. Snoke, who may have been Dr. John W. Snoke, a Tacoma physician and superintendent of the Western State Hospital who died in 1935. The property was sold or transferred again at least three more times by 1970 but the names are difficult to decipher in the records. From 1970 until the late 1990s, the property was owned by Harry Russak and family. Harry Russak appears to have been the owner of Harry Russak Truck Company, which first appears in city directories around 1941, and the family were owners of numerous small investment properties, especially in the light industrial parts of the South Downtown (SODO) area. In 1999, the property was sold by Larry and Rochelle Russak to Lee and Mary Sinclair. Since 2012, the property has been owned by Sinclair Holdings, LLC.

The development, use, and occupants of the subject building

The subject building was constructed in 1927 for the Pioneer Sand & Gravel Company, and was designed by The Austin Company.

Pioneer Sand & Gravel

Pioneer Sand & Gravel was organized in 1907 with the merger of the Martin Gravel Company, the Independent Asphalt Paving Company, and the Seattle Sand & Gravel Company.

The sand and gravel business developed in the Seattle area in the 1880s, when cement was shipped to the Pacific Northwest from Europe. The cement was mixed with ungraded beach gravel to make concrete, but large scale demand at that time was relatively light, as most buildings were made of wood and roads were either dirt or wood-planked. Concrete was used primarily to form the foundations for boilers and heavy machinery in the first steam powerhouses on Puget Sound.¹⁴ Small-scale sources of gravel were beaches near Fauntleroy and Three Tree Point (near Burien), which were loaded into scows by hand shovel, and then transported by water and unloaded at the foot of Washington Street in Pioneer Square. The material was hauled by horse-drawn “dump bar” wagons to construction or street surfacing jobsites. After the Great Seattle Fire of 1889, sand was in high demand because it was used in plaster and mortar for the large number of fire-resistant masonry buildings being constructed, but comparatively little gravel was needed because streets were rebuilt largely of wood plank or brick. In the late 1800s until about 1900, building contractors were also building materials suppliers, often owning brick factories or sand and gravel sources.

In the 1890s, the sand and gravel business was boosted when the federal government began the construction of three forts to guard the entrance to Puget Sound near Port Townsend and Whidbey Island—Fort Worden, Fort Flagler, and Fort Casey. The project required large quantities of high-grade gravel to make the concrete used in the construction of the foundations, walls, and heavy gun emplacements. One of the major contractors for the job, the Pacific Bridge Company of Portland, Oregon, undertook a search for adequate sources of material, along coastlines for ease of transport. Early discoveries included pits at Port Hadlock near Port Townsend, and at Keystone on Whidbey Island, but the quality or amount of material available was unsatisfactory. Finally, a single enormous

deposit of both high-quality sand and gravel in a variety of grades was discovered on the waterfront near Steilacoom, south of Tacoma, which was purchased and mined by the Portland Bridge Company for the construction of the forts. The gravel from this pit was of such high quality and uniformity that the Army Corps of Engineers and other federal agencies used it to establish standards of quality for gravel in other areas.

Around 1899, the Portland Bridge Company sold the Steilacoom pit to William B. Martin (who had worked on the Fort Flagler project), who set up the Martin Gravel Company. Two competitors, the Seattle Sand & Gravel Company led by Horace Middaugh, and the Independent Asphalt Paving Company led by Herman Goetz and Jim Stirrat, opened pits nearby and a period of intense competition followed. Eventually, a conflict with the railroads over a right of way through their gravel quarries resulted in the companies consolidating as the Pioneer Sand & Gravel Company in 1907 for their mutual benefit. They appear to have variously served as officers; initially, in 1908 William Martin served as President, Middaugh as Superintendent, and P. A. Heney (a previous president of Seattle Sand & Gravel) as Secretary-Treasurer.

Some additional information was found regarding William Martin, Horace Middaugh, Herman Goetz, and Jim Stirrat:

William Martin was born in Ottawa, Illinois, in 1858, and came to Seattle in 1896. He was a civil engineer, and later became inspector of bridges in Portland, where his chief work was the erection of the water plant and reservoir at Astoria. He may have worked for the Portland Bridge Company, because his obituary notes that he erected the fortifications at Marrowstone Point near Fort Flagler. He also erected the headworks of the Cedar River pipeline. Martin died in 1913.

Middaugh was born in Elmira, New York, in 1846 and came to Seattle from Pennsylvania in the late 1880s. He was superintendent of bridges and buildings for the Seattle Lakeshore and Eastern Railroad, and supervised construction of the White Pass & Yukon Railroad in Alaska. The first concrete pavement on Seattle streets, covering two blocks, was donated by Middaugh. He was also president of the German American Mercantile Bank. Middaugh died in 1931.

Stirrat and Goetz also operated a general contracting firm. Among their notable projects was the 1927 construction of the ornate Seaboard Building at Fourth Avenue and Pine Street in downtown Seattle.

Pioneer Sand & Gravel maintained offices and bunkers along the waterfront at the foot of Dearborn Street in 1908, and a chute at the foot of Bay Street. In 1911, a news article noted that the company owned the largest two barges in the Northwest, twice the size of any others and used for sand and gravel trade with Vancouver, British Columbia. One of the first big jobs for the company was supplying the sand and gravel for the streets and buildings of the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, and another was for the construction of the Smith Tower, completed in 1914.

In 1915, Harry Fargo Ostrander, owner of a successful Seattle shipping, import and export company specializing in Asian trade, bought control of the company. The company grew steadily from the 1920s through the post-war years with the general growth of city building activity and with increased road and highway infrastructure construction. Pioneer was the first firm to introduce ready-to-use concrete to the Seattle market during this time. Projects built with Pioneer sand and gravel during these years included the Seattle Civic Auditorium, the Lake Washington Floating Bridge, the Aurora Bridge, the dry-docks at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, numerous waterfront piers and warehouses, buildings, and roads.

In 1926, Pioneer's office was located on the eighth floor of the Leary Building, at the northeast corner of Second Avenue and Madison Street downtown. They maintained six waterfront bunkers in the Seattle area, as well as a floating bunker. The six locations were as follows: in Ballard, at the foot of 20th Avenue; in Latona (or Wallingford), at the foot of 7th Avenue NE; at the south end of Lake Union, at Westlake and Roy Streets, a few blocks from the subject site; on Harbor Island, at Spokane and E. Waterway; at the Fauntleroy waterfront in West Seattle; and at Rainier Beach, at 9160 Rainier Avenue. They also had seven bunkers in other cities, including Bremerton, Olympia, Tacoma, Everett, Bellingham, Raymond, and Longview. They advertised shipment by rail or water of their products—sand, gravel, “Hanover plaster,” lime, hydrated lime, metal lath, corner bead, and Tru-Mix concrete. City directory listings also indicate that they offered structural steel and other building materials.

In 1927, Pioneer Sand & Gravel completed construction of the subject building as their new home for their salesroom and general offices, with attached garage. An advertisement announcing the move highlighted that the building was “designed especially to meet the needs of our customers,” providing “a central location easily accessible from all parts of the city; plenty of parking space on our own property, with garage in connection; ample display space for the products we handle, conference rooms and all facilities for our customers, and the best of working conditions for our staff.”

However, just a few years later, in 1933, Pioneer moved out of the subject building and relocated their offices to 901 Fairview Avenue—the site of their existing warehouse and gravel bunkers at the foot of Lake Union. They remodeled an existing building there for \$10,000 in preparation for the move. While no explanation could be found explaining this relatively short stay in the building custom-built for their needs, it seems likely that the culprit was the Depression-era downturn in construction activity after 1929.

Harry Ostrander was president of Pioneer until his death in 1932, and was replaced a few years later, after a series of interim presidents, by Gordon N. Scott, who served until his death in the 1960s.

In 1959, Pioneer was described as the largest producer of ready-mix concrete and one of the largest building-materials firms in the Northwest, with 175 employees and sales of \$6 million. The company continued to mine their Steilacoom site, which by the early 1950s had produced 20 million cubic yards of sand and gravel, and was described as one of the largest of its kind in the world. Pioneer products during this period were used in the construction of the University of Washington stadium, the Norton and Logan buildings, and the Children's Orthopedic Hospital. In 1959, it was owned at that time by about 90 shareholders, principally members of the Ostrander family. That year, Pioneer was sold to Lone Star Cement of New York, becoming Lone Star's only domestic subsidiary. At the time of the purchase, Lone Star operated 15 plants throughout the United States, as well as in Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and Uruguay, and was the largest producer of cement in the United States. Pioneer was renamed Lone Star Northwest.

Besides being president of Pioneer, Harry Ostrander had also been a director of the Centennial (flour) Mills Company and the Pacific National Bank. In 1916 or 1917, Ostrander purchased the recently-completed home of clothier Julius Redelsheimer, which was constructed in 1914 and designed by Seattle architect Julian F. Everett. Ostrander engaged Seattle architect A.H. Albertson and the Olmsted Brothers to make improvements to the house and grounds of the elaborate Georgian Revival structure, which is located on Lake Washington adjacent to Denny Blaine Park. The Harry Ostrandersons owned the home until about 1940. It is today known as the Redelsheimer-Ostrander House and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Pioneer/Lone Star Northwest quarry site near Steilacoom was in 1992 the largest single producer of sand and gravel in the nation. Large scale mining continued until 2003, when commercial mining ended and Pierce County began environmental reclamation of the property. Today the 930-acre site includes parkland, a wastewater treatment facility, and the award-winning Chambers Bay Golf Course, a treeless, links-style course.

Richfield Oil Company

Richfield Oil occupied the subject building for use as offices, from May 1933 to about 1940 or 1941. Prior to that time, their offices had been located in the Northern Life Tower, with a distributing plant at 15th Avenue West and Garfield Street, and an oil garage at 1609 15th Avenue West. A newspaper report stated that no new alterations to the building would be necessary for their tenancy, and that the new location was preferred because it was closer to their plant and easier parking for their customers. While at this location, Richfield over the years received building permits for new service stations at 1501 Market Street, 6121 12th Avenue South, and 531 Fairview Avenue North. Richfield left the subject building in about 1940 or 1941, after which the building was vacant for a few years, according to city directories.

Richfield had its roots on the West Coast as early as 1905, but began formally in 1911 as a refining company with the merger of the Los Angeles Oil and Refining Company, the Kellogg Oil Company, and others. Richfield opened its first service station in Los Angeles in 1913, quickly growing into one of the leading gasoline marketers on the West Coast, and built a prominent 12-story Art Deco tower for their headquarters in Los Angeles in 1929.

In 1966, Richfield merged with Atlantic Refining, a company founded in 1866 in Pennsylvania. Atlantic had for several decades been part of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Trust but was independent again in 1911 after the U.S. Supreme Court directed the breakup of Standard Oil. The combined company was called the Atlantic Richfield Company, or ARCO, with exploration and production facilities largely in Texas and the Southwest. In 1968, ARCO and British Petroleum, operating jointly, were the first companies to drill for oil in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, which was the largest oil field discovered in U.S. history. In 1969, ARCO acquired the Sinclair Oil Corporation, gaining chemical plants, additional refineries, and a large network of pipelines. In 1977, they acquired the Anaconda Copper Mining Company in an attempt to expand beyond the petrochemical industry. After these mergers, however, ARCO was still a regional company in the Western United States. In 1972, corporate headquarters moved from New York to Los Angeles, and opened the "am/pm" brand service stations in 1978. Later, the company sold its East Coast stations and refineries. In the 1980s and 1990s, the company expanded their oil and natural gas explorations to China and Russia. In 2000, the company merged with BP (British Petroleum), at which time all of the latter's American stations in the West were rebranded as ARCO, but in 2013 the company was sold as a major divestment effort by BP. Today, the company is a subsidiary of the Tesoro Corporation and is headquartered in La Palma, California, and operates more than 1,300 gas stations or sites in California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, and Arizona.

Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company

The subject building was occupied by the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph District Plant Department from about 1943 to about 1953. The exact nature of their operations from this building is unclear, but it presumably provided maintenance or support services. The main offices for the company at this time were located downtown, at 1200 Third Avenue.

Pacific Telephone and Telegraph was the local operating company of the Bell System, which was a government-regulated monopoly that emerged in the 1920s comprised of the American Bell Telephone Company and the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T). The American

Bell Telephone Company formed in 1877 with Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, and two investors who financed his work, Gardiner Hubbard and Thomas Sanders. The company issued licenses allowing telephone system exchanges in cities and towns. Gradually, American Bell came to own most of its licensees.

AT&T was a special company formed to provide long distance service; in 1899, capitalization of American Bell was transferred and AT&T became the parent company of the Bell System. American Bell continued for a few more years as a patent-holding company, and then passed out of existence. The Bell System included Western Electric (manufacturing), Bell Laboratories (research and development), AT&T Long Lines and the regional Bell operating companies.

The regional Bell operating companies, like Pacific Telephone and Telegraph, were the largest part of the Bell System; they provided telephone service and handled local billing for this service. The operating company also owned the customers' telephones, and would replace or repair the telephone if necessary. By 1940, the Bell System included 17 operating companies nationwide. Of those homes with telephone service, roughly 80 percent were serviced by one of these Bell operating companies. The local Bell operating company for Seattle was for many years the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company, based in San Francisco and serving the West Coast; in 1961, the Pacific Northwest Bell Telephone Company, based in Seattle, was split off to provide service only for Washington, Oregon, and northern Idaho. The Pacific Northwest Bell headquarters were located at 1600 Seventh Avenue in downtown Seattle, including during the period that they occupied the subject building.

At one time, AT&T was the largest private employer in the United States, with over 300,000 employees. However, technological advancements developing in the 1960s (such as satellite communications) introduced opportunities for competitors into the government-regulated monopoly of the Bell System. In 1974, the federal government began an anti-trust suit against AT&T, which was settled in 1982 when AT&T agreed to divest itself of the wholly owned Bell operating companies. In 1984, the breakup of the Bell System resulted in a new AT&T, and seven regional Bell operating companies.

In 1984, Pacific Northwest Bell was transferred to a newly-formed regional Bell holding company, US West, which merged it in 1991 with Mountain Bell, another regional Bell operating company. After 1991, this new company was called US West Communications, but it was later acquired by Qwest Communications in 2000, and then Century Link in 2011.

Athletic Supply Company

Athletic Supply Company occupied the subject building longer than any other occupant, from about 1953 until 1989.

This sporting goods wholesale and retail company was established in or around 1930 by Osborne Enderlin, and first appears in Seattle city directories in 1933. It was located first at 1015 Second Avenue downtown, and later at 219 Seneca Street. In 1936, the firm was purchased by Eugene V. Walby, a young employee who had begun working there in 1934 while a student at the University of Washington. Walby was described as "a prominent figure in Seattle sports, especially baseball and hockey...known to thousands of athletes, coaches, and fans" through his sponsoring amateur leagues from the 1930s through the 1960s. Walby was also active in community and UW alumni affairs; he was the head of a Sports Advisory Committee for the 1962 World's Fair; and he headed both Western and national organizations of sporting-goods dealers.

In 1953 or 1954, Walby moved the sporting goods company to the subject building, where they remained until about 1989. At the time of the move in the mid-1950s, other sporting goods stores available in Central Seattle included Ken's Tackle and Economy Sales, both on Broadway; Burk's Surplus on Fairview North near Lake Union; Wilson's Outdoor Department Store and Warshal's Sporting Goods, both downtown on First Avenue; and Osborn & Ulland Sporting Goods, downtown on Second Avenue. Over a dozen other stores selling sports were located in North or South Seattle, including two Chubby & Tubby locations.

In 1968, Walby sold the company to five long-time employees, and retired. In 1989, Athletic Supply moved to a larger, multi-story building a few blocks away at 224 Westlake Avenue, near Thomas Street, and was known for giant murals of sports stars painted on the side and front. In recent years, that store was closed, and the company was purchased by Kimmel Athletic Supply, a firm operating largely east of the Cascades with headquarters in Spokane. Kimmel's one remaining Puget Sound area store is located in Redmond. Today, the company sells and distributes athletic supplies and equipment to colleges and universities, schools and school districts, recreational teams and leagues, as well as to businesses and the general public.

Recent occupants

Since 1989, the subject building has housed several other tenants. The current occupant of the northern part of the building is City Hardware, a neighborhood hardware store. The former garage portion of the original building, to the south, is occupied by Kaufer's Religious Supplies, a Christian book and liturgical supplies store which has operated in Seattle (at other locations) since 1904.

The architect, The Austin Company

The Austin Company was the designer of the structure, according to drawings on file at the Seattle Department of Planning and Development. They may also have been the builder.

The Austin Company was founded in 1878 in Cleveland, Ohio, by the homebuilder Samuel Austin, who had just arrived to the United States from England in 1872. As his reputation grew among the industrialists of Cleveland, Austin expanded to increasingly larger and commercial work by the late 1880s and 1890s, including banks and factories. In 1895, Austin constructed his first project outside Cleveland—the Western Mineral Wool Company factory in Chicago—and a series of electrical lamp factories in Cleveland and beyond, for the National Electric Lamp Association—NELA, the predecessor of General Electric.

In 1904, Samuel's son Wilbert graduated from Case School of Applied Science in Cleveland, and joined his father's company. Together, the Austins developed an approach to building which combined engineering, architecture, and construction provided as one service by one firm—a unique idea at the time. The company called this process The Austin Method, for which they received (and continue to maintain) a registered trademark.

In Seattle, the first mention in the Seattle Times of local work by The Austin Company occurs in 1923 news accounts, with a description of a one-story warehouse building of mill construction on Sixth Avenue South near Vermont Street, constructed for Charles Frye. The building, featuring repeating bays of individual storefronts, measured 190 by 320 feet, and was valued at \$50,000.³⁷ Today it is an automobile service garage.

The Seattle offices of "The Austin Company, Architectural Engineers and Builders" was in the Dexter Horton Building, and the District Manager in 1924 was George W. Plaisted. In 1927, a Seattle Times news article noted that the company had opened its thirteenth office that year, in Cincinnati. Other Seattle work in the 1920s includes the following:

- Factory for Henry Disston & Sons, at Fourth Avenue S. and Massachusetts Street (1924). This structure was described as 120 by 150 feet, two stories, of reinforced concrete exterior and mill construction, and valued at \$100,000. The factory was to be used to manufacture mill saws and machine knives, as well as repair mill saws for the lumber industry. It was described as the first manufactory on the West Coast by the Disston Company. Today this building is occupied by the Filson clothing store, in the SODO neighborhood.
- Hofius Steel & Equipment Company plant at First Avenue South and Alaska Street (1924-25). This twelve-acre site was expected to have, when completed, a two-story concrete office building measuring 45 by 70 feet; a structural steel shop measuring 70 by 300 feet; a frog and switch shop measuring 60 by 190 feet; a warehouse measuring 30 by 200 feet; and a locomotive roundhouse for repair work, measuring 90 by 200 feet. The work was valued at \$125,000.
- Pacific Coast Forge Company at 3800 Iowa Street, valued at \$35,000. (1925)
- Huston-Swanstrom Building at Fourth Avenue and Virginia downtown (1925). Also known as the Marshall Building, it is today occupied by the Dahlia Lounge restaurant.
- Proposed hotels in Yakima, Anacortes, and Wenatchee during the mid-1920s.
- York Products Plant at the northeast corner of Alaska Street and East Marginal Way (1926). The building was designed for office, factory, and warehouse use for a refrigerator firm.
- Pioneer Sand & Gravel building (1927), the subject building of this report.
- Cheasty Building at Third Avenue and Pike Street, an early Seattle department store (1927, demolished), valued at \$500,000.
- Two story factory addition valued at \$16,000 for Nordquist & Nelson, a door and sash manufacturer, at 120 W. Nickerson Street (1927).
- W.L. Eaton Company, Dodge automobile distributors, sales and service building at 1100 E. Pine Street (1927). This Spanish Mission style structure was described as two stories with basement, with heavy mill construction, and was valued at \$130,000 at the time of construction. Today, the building is occupied by a printer.
- The first hangar constructed at Boeing Field (1928), which measured 150 by 200 feet, and was valued at \$50,000.
- Boeing Airplane Company administrative offices (1929), a project valued at \$180,000.
- Fisher Body plant at 8801 East Marginal Way in Seattle (1929, altered), a project valued at \$500,000.
- Aircraft Plywood Corporation plant, on Salmon Bay at 15th Avenue Northwest (1929). The project was valued at \$350,000.

- Firestone Tire & Rubber automotive service center at Westlake Avenue and Harrison Street (1929-30), a block from the subject site. This hybrid Spanish Mission-Art Deco style structure was originally valued at \$50,000, and today remains in use by Firestone.
- The KOMO Broadcasting Studio building at Denny and Fourth (1948, demolished). It was described by one source as “Seattle’s finest example of Streamline Moderne.”

Comparable buildings in the South Lake Union neighborhood

The subject building is representative of the kinds of low-scale, office/light industrial buildings that developed in the South Lake Union neighborhood in the early part of the 20th century. This kind of development slowly replaced the housing stock that had characterized the neighborhood in previous decades. Businesses occupying these kinds of structures in the neighborhood were related to automotive sales and repair, commercial laundries, cleaners, printers, warehouse storage and transfer companies, tent and awning sales and manufacture, maritime supply, breweries, and a wide range of building and construction tradesmen and suppliers (like the subject building).

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, building and construction-related businesses located in the South Lake Union neighborhood were probably attracted by the central location in the developing city, low land costs compared to downtown, established rail and water transportation infrastructure, and ample available space (particularly after the regrades) for receiving, storing, and delivering their bulky building materials.

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. 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.

A description of five commercial buildings contemporary to the subject building and built 1928 to 1933 by the same owner along several blocks of nearby Dexter Avenue, are fairly typical: “The buildings, which are one to two stories in height, exhibit common characteristics: a symmetrical composition, brick cladding” distinctive brick patterns, raised parapets, pilasters signaling the edges of a bay of the facade, cast stone trim and storefronts with transom lites... Ornamental shields in cast stone often accentuate the center of the facade or a particular bay.” By the 1930s and 1940s, many such buildings in the South Lake Union area were designed in the Art Deco or Streamline Moderne styles, and Modern style buildings from the 1940s through the 1960s.

The subject building was constructed to serve as Pioneer Sand & Gravel’s office, sales, and showroom space, with an attached parking garage for the convenience of their customers and perhaps their employees. The attached, covered garage reflects the increasing ubiquity of the automobile by the 1920s.

Like other nearby buildings with showrooms and display areas from approximately the same time period, the subject building was designed with its showroom along a primary street elevation, although in this case, with separate massing. That it was a concrete building was not especially unusual for the time (the first concrete building in Seattle was constructed in 1904); for example, the Firestone Tire building a block away at 400 Westlake, constructed in 1928 and also designed by The Austin Company, is also a reinforced concrete building.

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

Issued: May 20, 2014

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