



The City of Seattle

## Landmarks Preservation Board

400 Yesler Building Seattle, Washington 98104 • (206) 625-4501

LPB 409/86

### REPORT ON DESIGNATION

Name and Address of Property: Rainier Club, 810 Fourth Avenue

Legal Description: C.D. Boren's Addition, Block 25, Lots 1, 4, 5, 8, and portions of vacated alley

At the public hearing held on December 17, 1986, the City of Seattle's Landmark Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Rainier Club as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following criteria of Ordinance 106348:

Section 3.01(3): 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;

Section 3.01(4): It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or of a method of construction;

Section 3.01(5): It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder;

Section 3.01(6): 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

A rare early example of the Jacobethan Revival Style in Seattle, the Rainier Club was designed by Spokane architects Kirtland K. Cutter and Karl G. Malmgren. It was completed and opened for use in 1904. In 1928 the leading Seattle firm of Bebb and Gould was engaged to design an extension on the south end that would scrupulously preserve the style and lines of the original structure. Still impeccably maintained by the pioneer men's social and residential club in Seattle, the five-story building is an unusual landmark in the inner city, where high-rise office buildings are the norm. With its immediate neighbors, including the First United Methodist Church, the Seattle Public Library and the YMCA, the club creates a quasi-public grouping within the downtown office core.

The Rainier Club is located on Lots 1, 4, 5 and 8 of Block 25 of C. D. Boren's Addition to the Plat of Seattle. The site measures 240 by approximately 120 feet, with the major frontage on Fourth Avenue. The building is set back from Fourth Avenue approximately 33 feet behind a graded area planted with lawn and outlined by evergreen shrubbery and a low brick retaining wall. Street lighting, presently by modern mercury vapor lamps, has been revised three times since the site was initially developed.

As is typical of downtown lots, the site slopes in the direction of the waterfront, and as a consequence the maximum exterior wall surface is exposed on the west front. Because the site also slopes gradually to the south, there are six stories above grade on the south elevation and five above grade on the north. The southernmost 77 feet of the half block occupied by the Rainier Club is given to the club's off-street parking area, which is screened by plantings. The remainder of the intersection of Fourth and Marion is defined by a compatible group of buildings. Sited on the upper, or easterly half of the block on which the Rainier Club is located is the Beaux Arts First United Methodist Church. On the opposite side of Marion Street, above and below Fourth Avenue, respectively, are the multi-storied Seattle Public Library with landscaped setbacks (successor of an earlier library building in the Neo-Classical style) and the brick-faced Young Men's Christian Association, (YMCA), that dates from 1907 and 1936.

Rectangular in plan and oriented laterally on its site, the clubhouse measures 163 by 87 feet. Covering the front two thirds of the buildings is a shingled transverse gable roof. Brick end walls and the faces of frontal dormers extend above the roofline in imitation of the profiles of Elizabethan and Jacobean curvilinear gables. Sandstone coping finishes the scrollwork.



The remaining one of two original, large, straight-sided chimney stacks rises above the forward slope of the roof, offset from the center. Also on the forward slope of the roof, slightly above the valleys between the outermost gables, are two dormers with coupled double-hung sash windows and hipped roofs. Finials that originally decorated the crowns of either dormer are no longer extant.

On the facade, fenestration is grouped under four, contiguous, curvilinear gables of equal height and two smaller gables that flank them. At either end, eaves span about twelve feet from the outermost gables to the side walls. Most of the varied window openings are patterned after Tudor Gothic and Jacobean models. Tympanae of end wall gables and the larger gables of the facade are pierced by circular openings. The two smaller gables of the facade contain slit windows. Windows of the upper stories are double-hung sash with multiple leaded panes in the upper sashes. Windows of the second story are single and coupled casement types with multi-paned transoms. On the ground story, pointed arch windows with shield-shaped keystones alternate with large windows divided by heavy mullions and transom bars. Openings in the basement story above grade on the south end are casement types elongated by lunettes under round arch heads. Centered in the south elevation is an oriel window at first and second story levels.

The clubhouse is of brick masonry construction. The south extension of 1929 was constructed of reinforced concrete with a brick veneer. The facing, laid in a variation of Flemish bond, has a richness of color and texture achieved by the use of fire-flashed brick, random broken headers, dark mortar, and raked joints. Special effects gained through patterned and textured brickwork are characteristic of work by Cutter and Malmgren. A description of preliminary plans for the clubhouse published in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer early in January, 1903, indicates that these effects were calculated by the architects to give the appearance of "weather-beaten age." Brick facing on the south extension is rusticated on the ground story above a short base or water table. The only extensive use of horizontal trim is made on the addition in the form of an offset capping the basement and a narrow string course above it. These and other details on the south end, including staggered voussoirs and quoins framing basement windows, are essentially unseen today because of the thick coat of ivy that covers the facade. Ivy has been a feature of the building since before the enlargement of 1929.

The rain drain collection system used on the Rainier Club facade is of special interest. The problem posed by rain water draining from valleys between frontal dormers was solved by the architects in a straightforward manner based on historical precedent. Downspouts were placed between each gable and at eaves gutters at either end of the facade. Piping was snaked to right or left as necessary to avoid windows. Initially, these downspouts were treated somewhat more decoratively, with ornamental catch boxes



and scrolled brackets clasping the pipes to the wall. Although a similar system is in use today, numbering seven downspouts in all, the original material has been replaced. Original scrolled iron tie rod ornaments are still in place at the third story level on the facade and north end wall. A flag pole placed between the two central gables has been a fixture of the exterior since the enlargement of 1929. It is used to display the club flag as well as the flag of the United States.

The architects' initial concept for the clubhouse, as published in the Post-Intelligencer in 1903, was that of an Elizabethan manor house in the half-timbered style set back behind a walled "English garden." While the general conformation and the floor plan were not appreciably altered, the scheme was subsequently modified to a Jacobean type with an all-brick exterior that proved more suitable as street architecture when the setting became more urban. Plans by Cutter and Malmgren uncovered in the clubhouse at the time the new annex was being planned some 25 years later, indicate that the inspiration of the executed design was Aston Hall (1618-1635) in Warwickshire, England. It seems that plans for the clubhouse provided for eventual expansion and the addition of a turret in imitation of those used at Aston Hall. At the time the plans came to light, the term "replica" was used in newspaper accounts; nevertheless, the design was clearly not intended to be a literal recreation of Sir Thomas Holte's stately home near Birmingham with its H-shaped plan, bold string courses, turrets, and pavilions. Indeed, the multi-gabled facade of the clubhouse might as easily have been inspired by other celebrated Jacobean mansions such as Knole (from 1610) or Blickling Hall (1616-1628).

One surface feature that made the transition from the initial concept to the executed design was a single-story vestibule, or enclosed porch in the Tudor Gothic Style. Centered on the facade, the porch had a pierced parapet and pointed-arch openings. Adjacent to the north end wall a large straight-sided chimney rose from the roof as an integral part of the gable, flush with the outer wall. Occupying a comparable position on the south elevation, the second chimney (the stack of which is still extant) was treated as an outside end chimney with one straight side and one shoulder with a stepped profile. The facade, with its complex variety of openings, was formally organized beneath two large central and two smaller flanking gables. Sculptural elements such as hood molds and string courses were avoided altogether. The billiard room in the southwest corner opened onto a balustraded terrace on the front of the building. The terrace was subsequently enclosed as a kind of single-story piazza. Around 1907, the women's facilities in the northeast corner of the building were enlarged by the addition of a third story with gable roof and curvilinear gable end.



In 1929, when Bebb and Gould enlarged the clubhouse by an addition of 54 feet across the south end, the materials and lines of the original exterior were duplicated at the express request of the membership. The original facade scheme was merely extended to incorporate two additional frontal gables, and the southernmost bays of the original block were capped by a new large gable. The Tudor Gothic porch and the piazza adjoining it were removed, and the main entrance was placed in the new wing at grade level. Bas reliefs in spandrels between first and second story openings were added where the original porch had been. Bebb and Gould used similar contrasting decoration atop the new Baroque portal. The spandrels and heavily mullioned windows above the entrance were incorporated into an elaborate two-story framement terminating in crocket-decorated spires. The rusticated basement and the oriel window on the south elevation, previously described, were the only other stylistic elaborations made by Bebb and Gould, and they were, as planned, totally in keeping with the established theme of the later English Renaissance.

#### INTERIOR FEATURES

The interior of the clubhouse was substantially renovated during the expansion of 1929. Elevators were introduced, and partitions in the original block were removed here and there to enlarge certain areas, such as the kitchen and dining rooms. In the intervening years further adjustments have been made as need required. Original decor was based on the later English Renaissance, featuring oak-stained paneling, beamed ceilings and inglenooks. A large stone-faced fireplace of the original scheme is still in use in the main lounge and library. Original decor in the addition of 1929 was in the Art Deco Style. As presently organized, on the basement level are storage and locker rooms and, in the south addition, the entrance lobby. On the first story, or premier etage, are the gentlemen's clubrooms. On the second story are the women's lounge, the main dining room, accessory dining areas and kitchen. The upper floors are given to offices and private rooms.

#### Fifth Avenue Lobby, First Floor

The Fifth Avenue lobby dates from the 1932 addition to the building. The lobby ceiling features stenciled, paired, box beams, with smaller, painted joists between them. Ribbed columns terminate in elaborately carved capitols. Ornamental brass railings in a flower and vine, Art Deco motif, and grills, are also extant. Elevator doors, executed in brass and wood doors with inlaid panels, also date from 1932.

#### Second Floor Hallway

The hallway is appointed with fluted pilasters, a paneled ceiling, and paneled wainscoting.

### Second Floor Lounge

The second floor lounge appears to have been changed from its Tudor, to a Colonial Revival design. However, the stone fireplace on the west wall appears to be original, although its surround was replaced. Leaded glass windows, both arched and rectilinear, and french doors remain from the original construction.

### Third Floor Hallway Leading To Ladies' Lounge

The door surround features carved wood moldings, including an elaborate entablature of fine work surmounted by a latticed panel, framed by corner blocks. The cornice also features elaborate wood molding, combining small vertical and dart shaped pieces.

### Ladies Lounge

The ladies' lounge was added in 1918. Its plaster ceiling features a center circular design, with a border of smaller circles which frame rosettes. A cornice incorporates a reed design. A small fireplace is framed by rounded pilasters and a fascia is a raised scalloped motif.

### EXTERIOR CHANGES

The specifications called for metal shingles. The shingles are presently composition. Crenellation over the front entry has been removed. A projecting enclosed porch on the south end of the facade was added after the original construction was removed around 1910. The east elevation bordering the alley originally incorporated a one-story wing. The wing was raised to its current one-and a half story height, and a kitchen wing along the length of the alley in 1907.

### SIGNIFICANCE

The Rainier Club (1904) is significant to the City of Seattle as a well-known example of the Jacobethan Revival Style. It was designed by Kirtland K. Cutter and Karl G. Malmgren, one of the state's outstanding architectural firms of the turn of the century, the firm that garnered commissions of importance east and west of the Cascades. The clubhouse is significant to the City of Seattle as the headquarters of the city's oldest active gentlemen's club, that historically has included in its membership leaders in business and the professions. Since its founding in 1888, the Rainier Club has been host to presidents of the United States and to innumerable visiting dignitaries. In 1928 and 1929 the clubhouse was enlarged by a 54-foot addition on the south end; a project which, under the supervision of prominent Seattle architects Bebb and Gould, admirably retained the building's external character.



The Rainier Club was founded, and its articles of incorporation filed, in 1888. Pioneer educator and jurist Judge Thomas Burke was one of three who filed for incorporation, and Elisha P. Ferry, governor of Washington Territory, was among the first trustees named. The club, predominantly made up of younger men, rented the James McNaught House for its headquarters. The McNaught House originally stood at Fourth Avenue and Marion Street on the future site of the Seattle Public Library. Newspaper sources indicate that at the time the High Victorian Gothic mansion was occupied by the Rainier Club it had been relocated at the center of the block bounded by Fourth Avenue and Spring Street, two blocks north of its original site. In any event, the clubhouse was on the perimeter of the business district destroyed in the Great Seattle Fire of 1889, and, thereby survived the disaster. In the absence of hotels, the club became the central meeting and dining place of community leaders who planned Seattle's reconstruction. It is said that through this crisis many of the city's prominent older citizens were brought into the fold.

In 1892 the club's lease on the McNaught House expired, and interim quarters were found in the Seattle Theater Building that stood at Third Avenue and Cherry Street on the present site of the Arctic Building. In 1902 the club formed a building association to finance property acquisition and construction of a permanent headquarters. The cost of acquiring two lots at the southeast corner of Fourth Avenue and Marion Street was given as \$25,000. The cost of construction and furnishing was estimated at \$75,000.

It is significant that one of the six-member fundraising association was Seattle lumberman Charles D. Stimson, for whom Spokane architect Kirtland Cutter had designed a Tudor "half-timbered" home on First Hill in 1899, (the Stimson-Green Mansion, a designated Seattle Landmark). In the biographical portion of a 1912 history of Spokane, the Rainier Club was included in a list of K. K. Cutter's social affiliations. It is not yet known whether the architect's membership status with the Seattle club pre-dated or post-dated the building of the clubhouse. However the club's architects may have come to be selected, plans for the new building and a perspective rendering of the initial concept by Cutter and Malmgren in the Elizabethan half-timbered style were published in the Seattle Post Intelligencer early in January, 1903. In this account, the architectural firm's title was given as "Cutter, Malmgren & Wager, of Seattle." In fact, while Cutter and Malmgren had produced designs for other clients in the Puget Sound area by this time, the firm is not believed to have opened an office in Seattle before 1907. Nothing is known as yet about the part which may have been played by the person named Wager. His name does not appear in the classified section of the contemporary Seattle directory.



The clubhouse scheme ultimately evolved as an all-brick Jacobean manor house. The Rainier Club appears to have been among the earliest of a handful of buildings in a distinctly Jacobean mode produced by Cutter and Malmgren. In Seattle, the firm designed the Jacobethan residence of C. J. Smith, which was one of two Seattle homes selected by Herbert Croly to illustrate domestic architecture in a treatment of Seattle building in the Architectural Record in July, 1912. The headquarters of the Western Union Life Insurance Company in Spokane, with its patterned brickwork and stepped and curvilinear dormer gables, was erected according to the firm's designs in 1910. Cutter and Malmgren's Western Union Life Insurance Building was subsumed in a later renovation and is no longer recognizable.

The Rainier Club's first addition of consequence was carried out as early as 1907, when a third story was added to what was known as the "ladies annex" in the northeast, or rear corner fronting on Marion Street. These facilities were, of course, made available to wives of members, and the men's clubrooms remained sacrosanct. By 1916, membership, including residents, non-residents, and army and navy officers to whom privileges were extended, numbered over 1,000. The club's facilities already were beginning to be taxed.

Late in October, 1927, The Seattle Times carried an announcement of the club's loans for renovating and expanding its existing plant for a projected cost of \$500,000. The ambitious expansion was proposed during the term of club president Joshua Green, who, coincidentally, had acquired the Cutter-designed C. C. Stimson house on First Hill in 1914. President Green revealed that the 521 active members had stipulated that certain athletic facilities, elevator service, and a grade level entrance be provided as part of the improvements. Significantly, they also specified that the continuity of the existing exterior be preserved. The leading Seattle firm of Bebb and Gould was chosen to design the annex. Works by the firm in the Jacobethan style were in evidence on the campus of the University of Washington at this time.

The general membership as well as the club's building committee had a voice in approving the original design. In 1903 it was reported that Cutter and Malmgren's initial concept of a half-timbered Elizabethan manor house had been approved "in the main" by the building committee, but that site preparation would not begin until the plans had been submitted to the membership as a whole for further review. In the interval, the style of the building was modified. There is some evidence in subsequent newspaper coverage that the club and its architects considered the styles of the later English Renaissance ideal to reflect the Anglo-Saxon origins of the institution of the gentleman's club. Conveying the notions of age and tradition in a suitably restrained manner, the result was so satisfactory that the club would not allow its outward effect to be spoiled by the renovation of 1929.



Kirtland K. Cutter (1860-1939) was a native of Cleveland, Ohio. He studied at the Art Students League in New York City, and pursued architectural training in London, Paris, Dresden, Florence, and Rome before returning to the United States to commence his practice. Cutter was supported in his student years by well-to-do parents. One of the works to his credit is Kirtland Hall, Sheffield Scientific School, which a relative donated to Yale University. Cutter arrived in Spokane, Washington in 1887 or 1888. Spokane was the metropolis of the inland empire built up by railroads and activity in the nearby Coeur d'Alene mines of Idaho. The young architect made his reputation designing lavishly appointed residences in assorted period styles for the city's wealthier citizens.

The commission that established Cutter's reputation beyond regional bounds was the Idaho State Building for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. For the same exposition Warren P. Skillings had designed a picturesque half-timbered structure with a log base wall to serve as the Washington State Building. Cutter's somewhat more original design, a large rustic chalet of cedar logs and a stone base, was admired for its "indigenous" quality and was awarded a gold medal for its use of building materials native to the region.

Perhaps the most celebrated domestic work Cutter produced west of the Cascades is "Thornewood" (1911), the country home of Chester Thorne at American Lake near Tacoma. Among non-residential works of importance in Spokane are the Spokane Club (1910) and the Davenport Hotel (1913). Also to Cutter's credit are St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Walla Walla, Washington; the Lewis-Clark Hotel in Lewiston, Idaho; the Glacier National Park Hotel at Lake McDonald, Montana; and the Silver Bow Club in Butte, Montana.

Early in his career Cutter worked in association with John C. Poetz, co-designer of the Idaho State Building for the World's Columbian Exposition. In 1895 Cutter formed a partnership with Karl G. Malmgren, former draftsman in the Cutter and Poetz office. The Swedish-born Malmgren had acquired his professional education in his native country and in Germany. He emigrated to the United States in 1888 and the following year arrived in Spokane, where he entered the employ of Cutter. Building activity generated in Seattle as a result of the Tideland's real estate boom between 1904 and 1907 proved an irresistible attraction. The June 30, 1906 issue of Pacific Building and Engineering Record announced that Cutter and Malmgren had decided to move their headquarters to Seattle for the purpose of specializing in office building construction. The partners maintained an office in the the Arcade Building in 1907 and 1908, but thereafter returned to Spokane.

In 1923 Cutter moved to Long Beach, California and devoted his practice to residential work, which included many fine homes in the Palos Verdes district, San Marino, and other parts of southern California.



Charles Herbert Bebb was born in Surrey, England in 1856. He was educated in London at Kings College and later studied engineering at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland. His first professional experience was helping to build the Capetown-Kimberly Railroad in South Africa. Bebb emigrated to the United States in 1880 and for five years was employed as a construction engineer by the Illinois Terra Cotta Company of Chicago. In 1885 he joined the noted architectural firm of Adler and Sullivan, serving as Supervisor of Construction.

In 1890 Bebb left Chicago for the Pacific Northwest, eventually settling in Seattle and pursuing the practice of architecture. He was a member of the State Chapter of the American Institute of Architects from 1901, and served three terms as president of the organization. In 1910 he was elected a Fellow of the Institute.

In 1912 Bebb joined forces with Carl F. Gould. Gould graduated from the Harvard School of Architecture in 1898 and thereafter spent four years at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. On his return to the United States, Gould was employed by McKim, Mead and White in New York. Later, he became a member of the Alaska Yukon-Pacific Exposition of 1909. City planning was considered one of Gould's strengths at this time. He had been involved in the preparation of plans for the City of San Francisco that were produced in the office of Daniel H. Burnham and Company of Chicago. Gould, too, was active in the affairs of the Washington State Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and both partners were organizers of Seattle's municipal planning commission.

Bebb and Gould were appointed architects of the University of Washington Campus Plan in 1915. Over many years the firm designed some twenty major structures on the University of Washington campus (most of them in a collegiate Jacobethan style) and a number of buildings for Western Washington University in Bellingham also. The Hoge Building, and the Seattle Art Museum (1932) in Seattle, and the Public Library (1934) in Everett are among the firm's noted works. Bebb is credited as Supervising Architect during construction of the State Capitol in Olympia. The firm won the latter commission in competition and also designed the Legislative Building and Temple of Justice in the Capitol group. The firm designed the government building at the Ballard Locks in Seattle and undertook various projects for the Pacific Telephone Company and the Boeing Airplane Company. In cooperation with the George B. Post Company of New York, Bebb and Gould designed Seattle's premier hotel, the Olympic.

When the long and fruitful partnership ended with Gould's death in 1939, Bebb collaborated with others from time to time. At the time of his own death in 1942, Bebb was the widely-respected dean of Washington architects.



The features of the Landmark to be preserved, include: the exterior of the building, the site, and interior features to include the first floor lobby at the south end, the south elevator lobby, and stairwell from the first to third floor.

Issued: December 19, 1986



Karen Gordon  
City Historic Preservation Officer

KG:dlv

cc: Holly Miller, DCLU (3)  
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