

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Continental Hotel

other names/site number Earl Hotel, Heart of Seattle Hotel, Hotel Seattle

2. Location

street & number 315 Seneca Street ☐ not for publication

city or town Seattle ☐ vicinity

state Washington code WA county King code 033 zip code 98104

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria

X A B X C D

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

WASHINGTON STATE SHPO
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register

 determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register

 other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | private |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - Local |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - State |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - Federal |

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | object |

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	buildings
	district
	site
	structure
	object
1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC / HOTEL

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC / HOTEL

DOMESTIC / WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY

REVIVALS: TUDOR REVIVAL

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: STUCCO

TERRA COTTA

roof: SYNTHETIC – Rubber

other:

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary

The Continental Hotel is an eleven-story building constructed in 1926 in Seattle's early central business district, an area of the city that developed into a dense urban commercial core. With the exception of the early 1960s, the hotel has been operated by local owners, beginning with its development by contractor Stephen Berg. A concrete frame structure with stepped massing and terra cotta decorative details, the building expresses the design legacy of the early 20th century. Despite some exterior changes to the lower-level cladding in 1962, it retains a high level of integrity. The building retains much of its original interior lobby and upper floor arrangement of double-loaded corridors and guestrooms with private baths.

Location & Setting

The Continental Hotel was built in the center of Seattle's downtown commercial district on a steep street that extends down to the waterfront. When it was constructed in 1926, 4th Avenue, just 60 feet away, served as an extension of the Pacific Highway that ran through the city center. This area, which is identified as Seattle's central business district (CBD), developed initially between 1910 and 1930, after the north-south avenues were graded. Its commercial focus and urban pattern have largely persisted for more than a century, even as it has seen increased density with assembled sites and many larger and taller developments from the late 20th century to the present. Open spaces in the area diminished in the post-war era, while alley vacations, which allowed for half and full-block sites and larger buildings, were commonly allowed.

The age, scale, and size of immediate surrounding buildings vary, ranging from a neighboring two-story former bank to the east at 1411 4th Avenue (1921), to 13, 15, and 28-story commercial buildings dating from 1955 to 1972. This context represents the dramatic growth of downtown Seattle over the 20th century. The National Register-listed Olympic Hotel (1923-1928), a 12-story full-block building, is located a half block northwest of the subject property at 411 University Street. The Northern Life Tower / Seattle Tower (1928), a 28-story stepped Art Deco-style skyscraper and local landmark, is located one block north at 1212 3rd Avenue (1928).

The Site

(Note: The Continental Hotel is set on an angle due to the street grid layout, with Seneca Street to the northeast. For clarity in this nomination, a reference north is established in the direction of this street, with 3rd Avenue and the adjacent alley to reference west, 4th Avenue to reference east, and the back of the building to reference south.)

The building sits on the 60 x 60-foot, 3,600 square foot (0.83-acre) lot, mid-block on the south side of Seneca Street between 3rd and 4th Avenues. A portion of the original Northern Pacific Railroad tunnel runs far below grade on the eastern part of the site. A relatively level, 15'-8"-wide paved alley runs along the building's west side, while the sidewalk and Seneca Street on the north slope steeply downhill from the east to the west with an overall grade change of 10 feet. The slope is addressed by separate entries on the primary north façade set at different elevations with an eastern on-grade entry to the first-floor retail space, a central entry, and interior steps to the first-floor hotel lobby. The lower entry is access to the basement stair landing. From the alley on the west there is also a separate service entry to the basement.

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Exterior

(Note: Current building codes interpret the existing mezzanine as a second floor because its area was expanded over repeated remodels in the 1960s and 1980s. However, this National Register form retains the citations of a basement and eleven stories as noted in the original 1926 design drawings with the uppermost level as the eleventh floor.)

The 36,240 square foot building mass is stepped. At the basement, and first and second floors it fills the 60-foot x 60-foot site with a footprint of 3,600 square feet. Above the second floor there is a 14.75-foot-deep south setback, which meets the grade level of a neighboring building. This setback results in a smaller footprint on the third through tenth floors of 60 by 45.2 feet and 2,712 square feet each. In addition, there are east and west setbacks at the eleventh floor resulting in 35-foot-wide floor plan of 1,592 square feet. This stepping and the tall central elevator penthouse above the roof create a unique and identifiable rooftop profile, and a massing that emphasizes the design's verticality. Each of the stepped roofs, the uppermost roof, and penthouse roofs are flat. The building's south setback, above the second floor, provides a roof deck, which is accessed by a single door from the southwest corner laundry room. This lower roof deck currently holds mechanical and communication equipment.

The structure consists of fire-resistant reinforced concrete and steel framing with a concrete foundation and basement. Concrete posts and perimeter pilasters support the perimeter walls and floor and roof slabs. The foundation includes a deep concrete shaft, built over the pre-existing railroad tunnel, which was remarked upon during its construction for the deep excavation.¹ The structural frame makes up five bays in width, which are visible on the primary north façade: three slightly recessed center bays, each 11.75 feet-wide, feature paired windows separated by narrow wall sections, and two outermost ones with wider single windows aligned in the middle of the 12.5 foot-wide bays. This modulation gives a sense of verticality to the façade. The four structural bays on the east and west vary in width, from 11.25, 14, 14.75 and 18.75 feet, but these are less evident as the exterior walls are flush as is the back south façade. The typical upper floor-to-floor heights are approximately 9.2-feet-tall, while the first floor with mezzanine is approximately 18.3 feet and the basement 12 feet-tall.

The original stucco cladding was a light color that appears white in historic black and white photos. Presently the facades are painted a dark tan color. The primary north façade, below the second floor, originally featured a stone base and light-color terra cotta units set in a pattern of large blocks, but this area is covered by a dark colored cementitious cladding ("Marblecrete") added in 1962. (The lower northernmost 20 foot-wide section of the west facade, which faces the alley, is treated similarly.) In addition to the cladding, the original metal framed central marquee was removed at that time and three precast concrete canopies were added at the entry and storefronts. A fourth canopy, glazed and framed with steel, was added later over the entry door to the basement in the westernmost bay. There is no canopy over the eastern on-grade retail entry.

The stucco coated exterior walls above are embellished with decorative terra cotta elements on the north primary facade. A glazed terra cotta cornice band runs below the second-floor windows. Above, cast spandrel panels provide decorative relief below paired rectangular windows in the center three bays on the second through ninth floors. Tudor Revival-style terra cotta elements are provided at the uppermost two floors, raised parapets, and elevator penthouse emphasize windows and roof lines, their cream glaze color contrasting with the darker stucco. These include framed panels with quatrefoils shapes set below the large arched head windows of the tenth-floor center three bays, and shallow bracket-supported decorative balustrades with plinths, caps, and similar panels below windows in the outer two bays. The arch head tenth-floor windows at outer corners of the other façade also receive terra cotta surrounds with tall hood moldings, each detailed with shields and a central peak shape. These outer corner bays have raised parapets with a central gabled peak and terra cotta caps. Raised crenulated parapets and terra cotta panels also characterize the eleventh-floor facades. While visibility of the elevator penthouse above the eleventh floor is obscured by setbacks, its parapets can be seen from a distance. The building's east and west sides, and north rear facade are void of

¹ *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, May 30, 1926, p. 31.

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decoration with the exception of the terra cotta label surrounds at outer corner tenth-floor windows and raised parapets.

Typical windows on the primary north facade feature one-over-one double-hung sash set in individual rectangular openings in the two outer bays, and in pairs in the central three bays. Originally wood frames, those above the first floor are replacement types dating from the 1970s with dark bronze colored anodized aluminum frames, double-hung one-over-one sash (similar to the pattern of the original wood-frame windows) and fitted with double glazing. The storefront level and mezzanine windows appear to be the original wood frames and sash with some divided lites.

Most of the window openings are rectangular with flat heads, with the exception of low segmental arched head windows at the first-floor transoms and the arch head windows on the tenth and eleventh floors. Single windows extend on the secondary facades in vertically aligned openings. They also align with service doors on the west facade along with the projecting concrete exit stair. Some data/telecommunication equipment is attached to the east wall at and below the seventh floor, and a dish-type antenna is placed on the uppermost roof. Typical sills are cast stone, with terra cotta on the embellished uppermost floor windows.

The central bay on the primary north facade, which faces onto Seneca Street, contains a slightly recessed primary entry. A pair of aluminum framed doors and original wood storefront windows are provided in three large original openings, each with an original tripartite, wood-framed arched transom. In the eastern bay there is a separate on-grade entry to the retail space fitted with an aluminum framed entry door and panel infill at the original transom. These changes date from 1962-1964, the same time the original marquee was replaced with a pre-cast concrete canopy, and the basement entry was replaced by a solid wood door salvaged from another building. Near the sidewalk level there remain several original openings that once contained windows to the basement.

Interior

The original hotel design with its identifiable stepped massing, subtle modulated facade, and expressive Tudor and Jacobethan Revival terra cotta decoration has persisted over the past nine decades along with much of its original interior layout intact. The first-floor plan features a vestibule at the base of the central main stairs and a small front lobby with direct access to the elevator and south stair core. A retail space is situated in the eastern two bays, and a mezzanine covers most of the western three bays and back of the first floor.

Permit records indicate that a variety of tenants that occupied the first-floor retail space. While original interiors remained when the hotel was renamed the Earl in the mid-1930s, by 1962 the owners of what was then known as the Heart of Seattle Hotel enlarged the mezzanine to fill the southeast corner of the first floor and provide additional service spaces. In 1971-1972 the retail space and lobby received new finishes, glazed partitions, and stained wood trim and doors. Non-public spaces have since received contemporary finishes.

The first floor currently contains offices in the western bay (in what was originally a small apartment for the hotel manager), along with restrooms and access to the exterior exit stairs and the enclosed entry and stairs to the basement. The southern area behind the reception desk has been partitioned into additional store and service spaces. While the lobby remains spatially intact, these interior rooms are small. With the exception of decorative plaster coffering on the lobby ceiling, finishes at the first floor and mezzanine – carpet, stone and wood base, painted gypsum wallboard, wallpaper and suspended ceiling systems – are not original. The interior stairwell and elevator core are to the east of the lobby reception desk. The stairwell consists of cast concrete with simple painted finishes, while the original elevator mechanism, cab, and doors have been replaced.

An original floor plan from 1926 shows a large landing inside the basement entry at the building's northwest corner with steps leading down 3.5-feet to an L-shaped dining area in the basement. The original kitchen was

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situated west of the elevator and stair core, a boiler room in the southwest corner, and a storeroom in the southeast corner. Historic newspaper accounts note the presence of a radio station in part of the basement and first floor in the 1920s, but there are no remnants of it. The basement was remodeled in 1962-1964 for the Bavarian Haus Restaurant, and a new kitchen was created along with a cocktail lounge in 1965. A later restaurant, Bernardo's, opened in ca. 1987. Repeatedly updated with new furnishings and equipment, the present basement contains a vacant restaurant with a lounge and dining room, and a large kitchen, all with contemporary finishes. Service spaces are still situated to the back, as well as east of the lounge/dining room.

Consistent with the hotel building type, the upper floor plans feature double-loaded corridors leading from the central stairs and elevator core to the guestrooms (typically five on the north side and four on the south), and to the east and west corridor ends. A single window at the east end of the corridors above the second floor overlook a neighboring building. A door at the west end leads to a secondary exit and concrete exterior stairs. These feature projecting landings surrounded by low walls that extend over the alley. This stair terminates at the first floor where it leads to a short hall to exit through the lobby.

The hotel originally contained 94 guestrooms, each with its own bathroom; on floors two through eleven and in the retail spaces and the hotel lobby on the first floor. Today, present plan accommodates 79 guestrooms with several suites created from smaller guestrooms; with a hotel laundry and seven small guestrooms on the second floor, nine each on floors three to five, eight each on floors six to ten, and four on the eleventh floor.

Upper floor corridor walls are finished with non-original wallpaper and carpeting, and guestroom doors are rated, flush types from the 1970s installed to meet fire and life safety codes. What appears to be the original wood door trim and base remain on corridor walls. Most finishes within guestrooms on the second to eleventh floors appear to date from recent decades, but the original room layout and spatial qualities remain along with several small guestrooms assembled into suites at the southwest corner. Finishes include painted wood base and trim, wood paneling, gypsum wallboard and plaster walls and ceilings, and suspended acoustic ceilings. The small bathrooms contain contemporary fittings and tub showers; some retain original glazed hexagonal tile flooring and marble thresholds.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1926 – 1961

Significant Dates

1926 (Original Construction)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Stuart & Wheatley (Architects - 1926)

Berg, Stephen A (Builder)

Damm & Daum (Architect – 1962)

Croonquist, Alfred (Architect - 1964)

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Narrative Statement of Significance

(Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Summary

The Continental Hotel in downtown Seattle, Washington, is historically significant under Criterion A for its direct association with the early development of Seattle's downtown central business district and its hotel industry. The building serves an example of a locally owned and operated hotel, constructed during a period when the lodging industry expanded to serve a growing clientele of middle-class travelers, businessmen, and tourists. With the exception of one period during the early 1960s, the hotel has been operated by local owners, beginning with developer and contractor Stephen Berg, a local businessman who was responsible for many new hotels in Seattle in the 1920s. Today it is one of only eight hotels dating from the early 20th century that remained in operation as a hotel in downtown Seattle.² The hotel closed in 2020.

The hotel is also significant under Criterion C as a resource that embodies the characteristics of its type and period of construction. The concrete-framed hotel retains its original lobby and upper floor arrangement of double-loaded corridors and guestrooms with private baths. Despite some inharmonious exterior changes to lower-level cladding in the 1960s, it still retains its architectural and historical integrity, and its eclectic Revival period characteristics remain. It also served as a noteworthy work of the architectural firm of Stewart & Wheatley, one of Seattle's prominent early 20th century architectural firms. The period of significance begins in 1926 the year the building was completed and ends in 1961 the year prior to interior and exterior updates that were made to the building.

Development of Seattle's Central Business District

The part of the city in which the hotel is located began to develop as a mixed-use area in the late 1880s with the extension of Seattle's first electric streetcars and regrade programs, and the city's expansion after the great fire of 1889. Relocation of the territorial university in 1895 created an opportunity for a planned complex of commercial buildings nearby on ten open acres, which later became known as the Metropolitan Tract. Development of these parcels and other surrounding properties continued through early decades of the 20th century as the regional service economy emerged along with population growth. The area was also effected by the establishment of land use regulations that codified the creation of Seattle's Central Business District (CBD), the densest part of the city.

The City of Seattle compiled some building codes as early as 1909, but it was not until 1920 that it established a Zoning Commission. After a prolonged study, in 1923 the commission adopted the first land use ordinance in the City of Seattle. This effort divided the city into zones or districts and specified the uses allowed within them. Ordinance 45382 called for, "regulating and restricting the location of trades and industries; regulating and limiting the use of buildings and premises and the heights and size of buildings; providing for yards, courts or other open spaces; establishing districts for the said purposes; defining offenses; [and] prescribing penalties and repealing all ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict therewith."

The new land use code established Seattle's industrial, manufacturing, apartment, and single-family residential zones. It called for the densest concentrated commercial development in the CBD and allowed buildings within this area to be to over 100 feet-tall, with maximum heights proportional to street widths. The future site of the nominated hotel was located in this area. At the same time, the economic prosperity following World War I and innovations in construction technologies stimulated construction of high-rise office buildings, banks, hotels, and apartment hotels, along with club buildings, theaters, and street-level retail shops and restaurants. By the end

² Other purpose-built historic hotels still operating in downtown and Pioneer Square include the Alexis Hotel (1901), Moore Hotel (1907), Yesler Pioneer Square Hotel (1911), Arctic Club/Arctic Club Hotel (1916), Olympic Hotel (ca 1924), Vance/Max Hotel (1926) Claremont Hotel/ Hotel Andra (1926), Bergonian Hotel/Mayflower Park Hotel (1926-1927), Roosevelt Hotel (1928), and Hungerford Hotel /Executive Pacific Hotel (1928). Historic hotels currently providing low-income housing include the Morrison (1908), Frye (1911), and Leamington/Pacific (1916-1917).

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of the 1920s nearly all of the early downtown wood frame buildings had been removed. Most of Seattle's oldest residential properties – as well as many of the immediate post-fire commercial buildings outside of Pioneer Square – had also been replaced. While retailing moved further north on 2nd Avenue to Pike and Pine Streets, and later east to 4th and 5th Avenues, service businesses and financial institutions remained in the CBD. Thus, by the time the Continental Hotel was constructed, the surrounding blocks contained numerous banks and office buildings which often featured pedestrian-friendly retail businesses on the first floors.

The hotels built in this area served traveling businessmen and tourists as well as some residents. Their builders and operators were drawn to the CBD because of its commercial focus and proximity to railroad stations and passenger ship terminals. As transportation systems gave way to automobiles, purpose-built parking garages were also built, and or basement parking spaces created. Historic maps and photographs from the late 1920s show that Seattle's commercial core was well established. With the onset of the Great Depression, the era of early 20th century development ended.

A History of the Lodging Industry and the Hotel as a Building Type

The concept of a modern hotel – one that would include private rooms, toilet and bathing facilities, public spaces, and related guest services – originated in 18th century England, and soon spread to other European countries and north America. However, buildings that offer refuge and lodging to travelers extend back to the thermal baths of classical Greece and the Roman Republic, and to the caravanserais of the Silk Road from Turkey to China and along trade routes from Persia, India, China, and the Roman Empire. In the Middle Ages, monasteries and abbeys built inns, hospices and hospitals, and rest stops were built along pilgrimage and crusade routes. In England and France regulations requiring guest registration date to the 1600s. By the late 1600s traveler guidebooks were published in France, and regularly scheduled stagecoach routes and inns were operating in England.

The first purpose-built hotel in the U.S. was built in 1793 in New York City. Reportedly the Tremont House in Boston, built in 1829, was the first American hotel to offer single-room occupancy and locks on guestroom doors along with soap and laundry services. Luxury hotels, such as the Waldorf Astoria, opened in New York (1836), while the Statler Hotel in Buffalo (1805-1808), was a more modest hotels that offered "a room and a bath for a dollar-and-a-half."³ Similar hotels with private bathrooms were built in Kansas City and Philadelphia (1844 and 1845). Chicago's Palmer House (1870), was the nation's first fire-resistant hotel constructed with concrete with masonry veneer cladding. By the late 1890s electric lighting was a common amenity, along with private telephones in some guestrooms.

More American hotels were built with increased train travel. Railway hotels flourished in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with buildings constructed near station terminals. The rise in national and international commerce prompted construction of more modest accommodations for traveling businessmen and salespeople. In cities, such as Seattle, with dynamic population growth in the early 20th century, residential hotels also provided temporary housing for newcomers, while those with dining facilities served residents much like clubhouses. The industry changed after World War II with hotels developed by major airlines that catered largely to businesspeople. By the 1960s tourism had become a primary economic sector throughout the world. The post-war decades also saw proliferation of American motels, notably those built along the country's interstate highways. Later changes in the lodging industry in the 1980s included the restoration of historic hotels and the trend of differentiation for different clientele. Business practices that emerged in recent decades include property management and marketing systems, aggregation of national and international chains, along with vacation and private shared lodging and extended-stay hotels.

Hotel Development in Seattle

Early hotels in the 19th century were often modest structures, often appearing as wood-framed boarding houses. However, by the late 19th and early 20th century urban hotels began to resemble an office building,

³ Keiser, *Baltimore Sun*, October 15, 1996.

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with bearing brick structures, double-loaded corridor plans, small rooms with exposure to ventilation and daylight on the exterior or in lightwells, and repetitive windows set in single openings. Small lobbies led to elevators and stairs. Exterior designs utilized historic revival styles, and tripartite façade composition regardless of upper floor functions. The typical massing of “alphabet” shaped buildings – those with setbacks and lightwells – allowed for ventilation, daylighting, and fire separation. By the 1920s hotel designs emphasized exterior appearance and focused on the entry and lobby. Appealing to tourists rather than residents many “included large lobbies, restaurants, meeting rooms, and storefront level retail spaces, typically executed in a modest neoclassical style with brick cladding and terra cotta ornament at the building base and top. Plans remained efficient with repetitive layout of guestrooms, but with separate bathrooms.”

By 1900 many of Seattle’s operating hotels served long-term residents and some buildings identified as hotels actually functioned as lodging houses or apartment hotels. This was a typical phenomenon in the developing cities of the American West. Given the tremendous population growth in Seattle after 1902, hotels played a key role in absorbing the new residents. Hotel construction between 1906 and 1910 coincided with increased economic opportunities and population growth, encouraged by the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in 1909. This fair drew some 3.7 million visitors. By 1910 there were over 475 hotels listed in *Polk’s Seattle City Directory*. They offered accommodations for every class, from the wealthy to recent immigrants, tourists, traveling businessmen, and laborers. The February 1915 issue of *The Hotel Monthly* cites a local hotelier predicting an increase in the number of travelers to Seattle. To aid flexibility a combination hotel-apartment building emerged, which allowed each section to subsidize the other.

Seattle’s population grew rapidly from 80,671 in 1900 to 237,194 in 1910, and 321,931 in 1920. This rapid increase in population created a sharp rise in housing needs, and apartments reigned supreme. However, this focus led to a decrease in hotel construction. In 1925 City Building Superintendent Robert Proctor noted in the local business paper that, “Investors have avoided hotel development for several years so that now this city is behind with that type of housing.”⁴

A boom in hotel development in the mid to late 1920s followed. The new buildings were taller than earlier hotels, which were rarely taller than six stories, and they often were much larger with hundreds of guest rooms. Several, including the Spring Apartment Hotel (1922, later known as the Kennedy, and the Vintage Park), Claremont Apartment Hotel (1925, later the Hotel Andre) and Camlin Apartment Hotel (1926), were designed with kitchen facilities in guestrooms to serve as both hotel lodging and apartments. Along with clubs with residential quarters, such as the Sunset and Rainier Clubs, these buildings began to blur the differences between building types.

The Olympic Hotel surpassed all of these in amenities and luxury when it was built at a pivotal location in the Metropolitan Tract in 1923-1924. It appears to have spurred nearby construction of other downtown hotels, including the nominated Continental Hotel, which were easily accessed by visitors traveling on ships or trains, and those driving in vehicles along the Pacific Highway. This road, which ran from California to Canada, passed directly through Seattle on 4th Avenue. Hotels on and near 4th Avenue include the nominated building (1926), the Leamington Hotel & Apartments (1916-1917, at 317 Marion Street), with its simple guestrooms fitted with kitchenettes; and the Hungerford Hotel (1928, at 400 Spring Street). During this period several other large hotels were built near the retail core that emerged north of the commercial business district. These included the Vance (1926), the Bergonian / Mayflower Park I (1926-1927), the Benjamin Franklin (1928, demolished 1980), and the Roosevelt (1928-1930).

The era of the downtown hotel boom ended with the advent of the Great Depression, which was accompanied by a sharp drop in tourism and stabilization of Seattle’s population. Residents numbered 363,426 in 1930; and 368,302 in 1940. The seventeen-story Roosevelt Hotel, designed in the distinctive stepped Art Deco style and completed in 1930, was the last major downtown hotel constructed during this era, and the tallest one until the

⁴ (*Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce*, January 24, 1925.)

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late 1960s. In 1969, the thirteen-story Benjamin-Franklin Hotel was connected to a new 40-story tower wing and renamed the Washington Plaza Hotel. In 1980, the Benjamin Franklin Hotel was replaced by a second 44-story tower wing, known as the Westin Hotel. Meanwhile, in the post-war era, the downtown business core continued to densify with larger, taller commercial buildings.

Developer and Contractor Stephen A. Berg

The nominated hotel was developed and built by Stephen Berg, a well-known member of Seattle's development community. As a builder, Berg built hundreds of homes in north Seattle between 1909 and 1922, along with apartment buildings on Capitol Hill, and a number of hotels in downtown Seattle. The eldest of eight children, he was born on March 17, 1887, to Kristian and Anna Corneliussen in Trondheim, Norway. His father was a carpenter, with whom he worked from an early age. In ca. 1905, both his parents died, and he left for America. Upon arriving in Boston in 1905 at the age of 18 he took the more common Norwegian name of "Berg" and began working in construction. In 1907 he soon moved to Seattle, and by 1909 he had established his own general contracting business.

During the early period of his career, Berg identified himself in company advertisements as a designer as well as builder. He was a prolific builder of single-family homes, often buying multiple lots in various new developments throughout the city. While no master list exists of his work, building permit notices in local newspapers account for hundreds of projects. Notable projects include residences for E.E. Davis and Fred Wagner, and the Lulu Smith house in the Wallingford neighborhood, which was featured in a multi-page spread in the April 1915 issue of *Bungalow Magazine*.⁵ Berg's larger scale construction and development work, as well as his ambitions were well recognized by historian Clarence Bagley:

"Stephen Berg has won distinction as a prominent factor in the mammoth building operations of Seattle during the past few years, a period marked by an entire revolution in the style of architecture. He entered upon his varied duties with admirable equipment, having learned the carpenter's trade in Norway, and gaining board practical experience ere (sic) starting business for himself in the northwest, where he has carried out his projects with such industry that within the last five years, he is credited with the erection of one hundred and twenty-five buildings. He believes that the city offers a field for profitable investment and as his operations in the field of contracting bring his success, he adds to his property holdings. He is a typical young businessman of the present age, alert and enterprising, and his career has been marked by steady progress."⁶

Berg's business prospered, and by the early 1920s he had grossed more than one million dollars in annual revenue. A respected businessman, he quickly became known for constructing and selling moderate-sized quality houses. In addition to his business interest, he was active in community and civic activities, in particular those serving the Norwegian community. He was also a member of the Lay Association for Lutheran Unity, a congregation that promoted the elimination of European language and racial divisions in America.

His first foray into apartment construction began in 1923 with the completion of the Stephensberg Apartments (405 E Olive Street). He sold the building shortly after it was completed for \$90,000, and soon after began developing far more elaborate and larger buildings. For Berg, the Stephensberg project also began the start of a working relationship with the architectural firm of Stuart & Wheatley. Their next project was the Biltmore Apartments (418 E Loretta Place), the city's second largest apartment complex at the time of construction. Berg initially planned the Biltmore to be a five-story \$350,000 building, but his ambitions grew, and he had his architects add another story; a move that increased the building's estimated construction cost to \$565,000. The design, a Jacobethan Revival-style concrete frame structure featured a brick and decorative terra cotta masonry exterior, a grand lobby, had 125 luxury units accessed by two elevators, and was fitted with built-ins

⁵ *Bungalow Magazine*, "A High Type of Bungalow – Seattle Home of Miss Minta Lulu Smith. (Stephen Berg, Architect, 4334 Wallingford Ave N)," April, 1915, pp. 210-220.

⁶ Bagley, Clarence, *History of Seattle from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Times*, Volume 2, 1916, pp. 664-665.

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and modern kitchen appliances. Occupants were served by 24-hour on-site staff, and Berg even had a rooftop antenna, so his tenants' to connect their radios. In 1925 he built the Biltmore Annex across the street at 113-117 Summit Avenue to provide associated retail shops to serve the residents. The annex was also designed by the architectural firm of Stuart & Wheatley.

Upon completion of the Biltmore Apartments, Berg also began three large downtown hotel projects: the 10-story Claremont Hotel (2000 4th Avenue) completed in January 1926; the 11-story Continental Hotel (the nominated building), completed in December 1926; and the 12-story Bergonian/Mayflower Park Hotel (405 Olive Way), completed in July 1927. All three were also designed by Stuart & Wheatley.

In July 1926 Stephen Berg leased the nominated site from Sarah Slyfield. She had acquired the property in April 1917 and at the time, records indicate the site was home to a small wood frame boarding house. Shortly after the agreement was finalized, Berg's construction crews began excavation of a deep shaft to ensure the solidity of the building which sat directly below the easterly half of the Great Northern railroad tunnel.⁷ Various citations note the final construction cost for the hotel was between \$176,000 and \$300,000.

Berg owned and operated the property through a corporation, the Continental Hotel Company Inc. As both a builder and property manager, he assured his building's residents and hotel guests were served by well-designed buildings of long-lasting construction. He also took an active interest in management. For instance, to accommodate the Biltmore Apartment residents, he built a nearby retail store building, and his hotel restaurants often served salmon that he personally caught while sailing.

By mid-1927 Berg had developed and constructed seven large buildings in the city and was a well-known, and well-respected developer in the city. However, his projects began to incur considerable debt and he required multiple mortgages to cover his financing. Between 1927 and 1930 creditors filed over 20 lawsuits against him. By the end of 1927 he was forced to sell the Biltmore Apartments, after having mortgaged it for well over \$100,000. Then in 1928 he sold the Continental Hotel Company Inc. to an outside investor. Eventually he and his wife forfeited their assets after declaring bankruptcy in late 1930.

His marriage strained, he retired alone to a farm in Auburn, Washington, at the age of 43, while his wife and children remained in Seattle. He continued living a quiet life there for another 25+ years and died there on January 5, 1966, at the age of 78.

Hotel Operations

The Continental Era – 1926-1934

The Continental Hotel officially opened for business on December 4, 1926. The grand celebrations included an evening gala with a series of live music performances. Entertainment was provided by radio station KFQW from its new facilities in the hotel, with "one large studio for orchestras and other large productions, one small studio for solo work, and a reception room adjoining the hotel lobby."⁸ The 100-watt radio station, at frequency 1380 kHz, had been originally established in Knierim's Photo Radio Electric Shop in North Bend, Washington, in mid-1925. It broadcasted from the Continental Hotel from June 30, 1926, to November 11, 1928. After they moved to another location, the hotel's first floor was changed to accommodate other retail businesses. These included a coffee shop and café in the basement. Configuration of the lower floor interiors also changed several times with a variety of tenants. These included a beauty salon located in the street-level retail space adjacent to the hotel's main entrance on Seneca Street by 1927.⁹

In a newspaper article extolling Seattle's building activity in 1927, the Continental Hotel's \$176,000 construction was noted along with two other nearby hotels: the Stratford, built for \$275,000, and the Hotel

⁷ *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, May 30, 1926, p. 31.

⁸ *Seattle Daily Times*, October 3, 1926, p. 29.

⁹ *Seattle Daily Times*, February 27, 1927, p. 58.

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Hungerford / Executive Hotel, built for \$500,000.¹⁰ The three additional hotels were nearby, including the Olympic Hotel, which had opened in 1924.

In 1926, the year that the Continental Hotel opened, the local Chamber of Commerce extolled the city's downtown developments and described Seattle as "One of America's healthiest . . ." Building permits illustrated steadily growth since 1918, and in 1926 alone the permits represented \$34 million dollar investment in construction. Investments in hotels and apartment buildings also during this period totaled over \$5,777,000. The city's economy boomed and its population grew.

The 1927 and 1928 *Polk's Seattle City Directory* identified the Continental Hotel's manager as Albert E. Walsh. They described the hotel as having "100 rooms 100 baths, all outside rooms, with coffee shop in connection." In March of 1928, Berg sold the Continental Hotel to a "veteran hotel man," Herman A. Greenberg, for \$240,000. Greenberg, a hotel operator, made it his residence. He purchased the land which Continental Hotel Company had leased from the estate of the original landowner, Sarah Slyfield in October 1930. Greenberg owned the Continental Hotel Inc. until May 1934 when he sold it to an investor, William MacKay.¹¹

The Earl Hotel – 1935-1961

Upon purchasing the property, MacKay leased the hotel to local hotel operator, Earl Hungerford, who immediately changed the name of hotel to the Earl in 1935. Hungerford had entered the hotel business with his father in ca. 1903. By the mid-1930s he also operated two other downtown Seattle hotels, the Caledonia, and the Hungerford Hotel. Upon MacKay's death in December 1935, a retired wholesale grocer, Frederick T. Fischer, purchased the hotel as an investment from MacKay's estate. The Fischer family continued to hold on to the property through October of 1961. To attract new business, Hungerford added a prominent rooftop sign to the building in ca. 1935. The large neon sign was a typical feature of tall buildings in the 1930s, and for a period it helped identify the hotel. It was removed in ca. 1961 when the business was renamed.

To accommodate modern travelers, in June 1957 the owners announced plans to upgrade the hotel. This would include the construction of a new "drive-in" entrance from 4th Avenue and a parking facility for 50 automobiles on a parcel to the south.¹² Other changes noted in the project's July 1957 permit (No. 457399), included the installation of an additional lobby stair and a balcony above the first-floor level, a waiting area or secondary lobby, and entry to the mezzanine level on the back (south façade) to serve guests arriving from the parking lot. While lobby changes were made, for unknown reasons the parking facility was never built.

Heart of Seattle Hotel – 1961-1977

In October 1961, a group of investors led by Lee F. Sutcliffe, of the St. Louis firm Lamplighter Motel Inns, acquired the property. Sutcliffe and others formed the Heart of Seattle Hotel Co. Inc. the following month to own and manage the hotel. Anticipating increased tourism due to the 1962 World Fair, the new investors announced plans for a \$2,000,000 modernization project which was to be completed by January 1962. According to the building permit, No. 496740, the proposed project included alterations and a complete refurnishing of the hotel, as well as the construction of an adjacent multistory building. Both would be operated as the "Heart of Seattle Motor Hotel."

The alterations to the primary north facade included "Marblecrete" covering of the lower-level terra cotta cladding and granite base, and replacement of a rod-supported flat roof marquee over the hotel entry with a new canopy. The canopy, which remains, consists of three thin shell concrete vaults at an upper level above the main entry and storefronts, and later a glazed steel framed canopy at a lower elevation above the basement entry. The lower canopy and a solid door to the basement, which was installed at this time, obscure the original rectangular opening in the lower western bay that had held a glazed storefront. The project also

¹⁰ *Seattle Daily Times*, July 9, 1928, p. 34.

¹¹ Property Abstract for Block 15 of C.D. Boren's Addition.

¹² *Seattle Daily Times*, June 23, 1957, p. 29.

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included installation of a coffee shop and/or cocktail lounge in the east retail space adjacent to the lobby. A new restaurant was opened in the basement, the Bavarian Haus in November 1962. The Seattle architects Damm & Daum, and Alfred Croonquist designed the alterations. The new canopy was designed by structural engineer E. L. Strandberg.

The planned exterior alterations were not completed until late-1962, too late to take full advantage of Century 21 tourism, and the proposed adjacent building was not constructed. The investment company went into bankruptcy due to cost overruns and unpaid debts totaling \$109,500 (approximately \$1M today), and it was soon reorganized. The new company held the property for only a few months before selling it to the Republic National Life Insurance Company in January 1964. Building permits from that same year, No. 507294 of May 21, 1964, and No. 507452 of June 2, 1964, called for a new lounge on the first-floor mezzanine and other changes were made to update the main lobby. The hotel's management changed again in March 1965 when Pier 67 Inc., the owners of the Edgewater Hotel, leased the Heart of Seattle Hotel, which they later purchased. The new operators undertook further interior updating of the lobby, cafe, and guestrooms. Under Pier 67 management, the hotel's Bavarian Haus restaurant began focusing on its cocktail lounge and live music.

Hotel Seattle – 1977-Present

In April of 1977, Pier 67 Inc. sold the property to a new investment company, Heart of Seattle Incorporated. Despite taking "Heart of Seattle" as its corporate name, the new company was locally owned and operated by the Nyherts family of Seattle. The family members simplified the hotel's name to "Hotel Seattle" and hired Fry Interiors, a local company, to renovate the interior, including the combination of several corner rooms to create a honeymoon suite. The Bavarian Haus continued to be a popular restaurant for several additional years into the mid-1980s.

In 2021 the hotel property was purchased by new local owners with a focus on its rehabilitation. It closed that year due to the pandemic. The building is currently vacant except for a small retail space on part of the first floor.

Hotel Clientele and Retail Occupants

Stephen Berg's design and marketing plan for the Continental Hotel was to serve business clientele rather than upper income travelers and visiting professionals who were drawn to storied accommodations offered by the Olympic Hotel, or by Berg's Bergonian Hotel. The Continental Hotel was presented as up-to-date and modern, clean, and efficient, with simple, similar-sized guestrooms and private baths.

Under the management of owner Herbert Greenberg local newspaper classified ads from November 1928 describe the Continental Hotel as "eleven stories of supreme comfort; newest and most modern." An advertisement from September 1929 offered rooms for \$2, \$2.50, and \$3 per night, comparable to the average estimated rate in the U.S. hotel industry of \$3.21 per night in 1930 (around \$51 in 2022 dollars). In contrast, the more luxurious Bergonian Hotel posted room rates of up to \$4.50. This was at a time when the estimated average household income for cities the size of Seattle ranged from \$2,450 to \$4,000, when \$55 per hour was the average weekly union wage, and \$42 was the average monthly rent for a single-family house.¹³

Later print advertisements for the hotel reflected the worsening economic conditions following the stock market crash and the deepening Great Depression. In December 1929, ads described the hotel as "refinement with economy," and in December 1931 as "economy with refinement." A brochure for the Earl Hotel from ca. 1935 advertised rooms rates "as low as \$1.50 single, \$2.00 double." Room prices in 1931 started at \$8 per week, indicating a further shift. Print ads for the hotel did not resume until March 1948, at which time it offered "desirable rooms for weekly or monthly occupancy" in a "Class A building" with "Choice location," and the hotel also advertised "an option for permanent occupancy in 1949." (*Seattle Daily Times*, March 22, 1948, p. 20; October 4, 1949, p. 29.) The following year, in September 1950, the hotel announced a "complete" renovation.

¹³ Data cited for May 15, 1930, from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin 540, October 1931.

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Room prices advertised in *The Seattle Times* between 1950 and 1956 ranged from \$15-\$17.50 per week and \$60-\$70 per month. By 1958 the Earl Hotel's advertised room rates ranged from \$4.50 to \$8 per night. These modest rates compare with the U.S. hotel industry average of \$5 per night in 1950, and \$10 per night in 1960.

Retail tenants of the original radio studio spaces and street-level commercial unit varied over this time and included a barbershop (1938), Seattle Recording Studios (1936-1940), the George Rex Studios (music instruction, 1940-1945), Central Catholic Gifts (1949-1951), Communication Workers of America (1949-1955), and Plus Computing Machines Agency (1956-1959). In 1984-1985 Buddy Squirrel Nuts opened a shop in the hotel.

Architects Stuart & Wheatley

Designers Bertram Dudley Stuart and Arthur Wheatley had an active Seattle partnership from 1923 to 1930. Their firm is credited with many apartment houses, fraternity houses, and mid- and high-rise commercial as well as light industrial buildings in Seattle. Both Stuart and Wheatley were born in England, and their skill and knowledge of revival-style designs, including Tudor Revival and Jacobethan Revival, may be due to early exposure to buildings in their native country.

In addition to the Continental Hotel, Stuart and Wheatley designed several other noteworthy buildings for Stephen Berg including the Biltmore Apartments (1923-1924); the Stephensberg Apartments (1924); the Claremont Apartment Hotel (1925); the Bergonian / Mayflower Hotel (1926-1927); the Marlborough Apartments (1926-1927); and the Exeter House Apartments (1927-1928).

Prolific practitioners, other notable apartments for other clients include the Highland (1923); Broadway Court (1925); Windsor Arms (1926); Sterling Court (1926); the Davison (1926); the Shelby (1928); the Levere (1928); the Garfield (also identified as 715 24th Avenue) (1929); the Talbott (1929, demolished); and the Charmaine Apartments (1929).

Notable other buildings include the Chi Psi Fraternity House (1927), the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity House (1925-1926), and the Chi Omega Sorority House (1926); the Devonshire Hotel (1927, demolished); and the Sunset Electric Company Building #3 (1925-1926, demolished).

Bertram Dudley Stuart, Jr. (1885 – 1977)

Bertram Dudley Stuart, Jr. was the son of a local merchant in the town of Epsom in Surrey, Stuart spent his early years in Kent. His educational background has not been verified. However, by 1910 he was living in Seattle with his mother and stepfather, Arthur Sackville-West, and is listed in local directories as a draftsman for Seattle architectural firm of Saunders & Lawton. Stuart married in Seattle in 1910, and seeking new opportunities, he and his new bride moved to Canada.

Initially he established a sole practice in Edmonton, Alberta, but shortly thereafter moved to Vancouver, British Columbia. His projects in British Columbia included the Palace of Horticulture for the Vancouver Exhibition Association (1911); a rooming house for M.K. Nigore (1911); the Jean Templar Residence (1912); Broker's Arcade Pedestrian Passage (1912); an apartment block for William Dobson (1912); stores and apartments in the Poulson Block (1912); the Forestry Pavilion / B.C. Wood Products Building for the Hastings Park Exhibition Grounds (1913); and the Campbell Apartment Block in Vancouver (1914).

Around 1914 Stuart formed a partnership with architect Howard E. White. Together they designed several other residences in Vancouver including a home for Edward J. White (1912); a residence for H. N. Halberg & Co (1912); the William W. Ingledew House (1913); and a residence for Mrs. Philip W. Burbridge (1913). Other projects include the Watson Bros. Fish Curing Building (1913); the Rowling Apartments (1913); and the Bachelor's Club (1913, a rustic Classical style wood framed and log structure).

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While establishing his career in Canada, Stuart had maintained close ties to family members in Seattle. As such in 1915 he decided to move back to Seattle permanently. By that time, he had already become a Canadian citizen, but would eventually apply to become a U.S. citizen (applied in 1924, finally achieving this in 1931).

Upon his arrival he established a sole practice before forming a partnership with architect Arthur Wheatley in 1923. To date, few projects from his early solo practice in Seattle have been discovered. After this partnership ended with Wheatley in 1930, he continued working as a sole practitioner off and on. During the war years he had several associations with other architects including working with J. Lister Holmes and Victor N. J. Jones. After the war he formed a short-lived partnership with Robert L. Durham (1945 to 1951). Afterward he returned to private practice and retired at the age of 86. He passed away in Seattle at the age of 92 in 1977.

Arthur Wheatley (1885 – 1916)

Arthur Wheatley was born in the town of Barnsley in Yorkshire, on December 13, 1885, and resided in Britain until 1901 according to census records. He and his wife, Ethel, arrived by ship in Canada, and soon after arrived in Vancouver, British Columbia. There he opened his own independent practice. Wheatley's design work during this period is unknown.

Wheatley and his family arrived in Seattle by 1916 according to U.S. Census records, and he received his naturalization papers in September 1919. Working as a sole practitioner he designed the Beachmont Apartments (1920), and the Woodland Park United Methodist Church (1921), both with architect Edward Thomas Osborn. He is also credited with designing the Central Auto Terminal Project, a six-story Tudor Revival warehouse/retail building also association with Osborn (1923, unbuilt). Another early project is the Lockhart House (1919-1920), a two-story Colonial style residence on north Capitol Hill.¹⁴ Wheatley designed a four-story addition to the 1909 Holland Building at 1415 4th Avenue in 1923, the same year he and Stuart established their partnership.

After their partnership ended Wheatley worked again as a sole proprietor. His projects during his late career, the period from 1931 to 1942, include a remodel of the Doris Apartments (1931), and the Colman Park Playfield Shelter (1938). In 1930 he became a U.S. citizen. The census record from that year noted his family's residence in Seattle along with his employment as an architect. In the 1940 U.S. census he was noted as an engineer working on Works Progress Administration projects. He reportedly suffered some sort of mental trauma around this time and after 1942 he was living at the Northern State Hospital in Sedro-Wolley, Washington.¹⁵ He passed away in Seattle on May 7, 1946, at the age of 60.¹⁶

The Building Materials and Stylistic Features

Stuart & Wheatley's design of the Continental featured traditional materials of brick, cast stone, and terra cotta. These elements are seen on many bearing masonry structures of the 19th and early 20th centuries. While many buildings are completely clad in terra cotta, the material was often used for decoration. Due to the plastic nature of its mold-making, it was easy to create a variety of shapes along with textures, colors, and reflective

¹⁴ *Domestic Engineering* (construction notice), 86:13, March 29, 1919, p. 585, as cited by Michelson in PCAD.

¹⁵ Peterson, David R., "National Register Nomination, the Highland Apartments," August 2018.

¹⁶ Biographic information in this section is derived from a number of sources: Michelson, PCAD, "Stuart and Wheatley (Architects)," "Bertram Dudley Stuart, Jr., (Architect)," and Arthur Wheatley (Architect)"; Peterson, David op cit; *The Biographic Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800 -1950*, <http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/>. See also Anderson, Dennis and David A. Rash, *Shaping Seattle Architecture*, 2014, pp. 478, 479, 484; and D. Luxton, *Building the West: The Early Architects of British Columbia*, 2003, pp. 380, 519. Information about Wheatley from Ancestry.com: 1930 and 1940 U.S. Census records, 1919 Draft Registration, and 1901 Naturalization Record; Washington State Department of Health Death Record, file 2057; and *Seattle Times*, May 7, 1946 (death notice).

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glazes. This allowed the terra cotta elements to display a wide range of eclectic architectural styles, from Classical and Beaux Arts to Mediterranean, and Tudor Revival.

Additional advantages of terra cotta emerged with the building of skyscrapers: the material was fire-resistant, and less costly and far lighter weight than stone. It lent its **use as cladding on tall steel frame structures, such as the Smith Tower (1912-1914), Arctic Club (1914), and Dexter Horton Building (1922).** Throughout the 1920s terra cotta continued to be used as well on smaller scale commercial buildings and concrete frame structures, such as the nominated Continental Hotel, where decoration embellished the fire-resistant and noise-abating concrete. The building's terra cotta elements – cast courses above the base and parapet caps and molded decorative panels and window surrounds – reflect historic traditions of the English Tudor era of the late 15th and early 16th century. While the Jacobethan style, a subset of Tudor Revival, is often associated with residential design, it is seen in many masonry collegiate buildings of the teens and 1920s. Architects added the decorative elements to upper areas of a commercial building to elevate its otherwise simple design. And, as was popular in this period, terra cotta was used also, “to clad the street level facades to provide a more elegant contact with pedestrians.” This was the case with the nominated hotel, which originally featured terra cotta cladding at the first floor above a stone base course on the primary street-facing north façade.

While terra cotta was used throughout the nation, its manufacture was regional. Northwest terra cotta manufacturers, such as the Northern Clay Company and the Denny Renton Clay & Coal Company were established around 1900. They provided materials for many of the region's early 20th century buildings, including the permanent structures of the 1909 Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition. In 1925 these two companies were acquired by the large California manufacturer, Gladding McBean. By that date terra cotta was produced in varied products, colors, glazed finishes, and decorative shapes.

Rising production costs, changing taste, and the economic decline of the Great Depression impacted the use of terra cotta. Its use diminished during the run-up to World War II as construction emphasized efficiency, and low cost. Gladding McBean closed its regional facilities and moved operations to Renton. Later it consolidated manufacturing further to Lincoln, California. With the rise of post-war Modern design, symbolic decoration was eliminated in favor of abstraction, along with less costly and planer cladding. The terra cotta buildings that remain in Seattle, such as the nominated hotel, represent a unique period of technological, cultural, and aesthetic change in the early 20th century.

Many of Seattle's remaining terra cotta clad buildings also express the design and construction legacy of this period through their massing. As noted in the architectural description, the nominated hotel embodies the features of a stepped skyscraper style along with eclectic Jacobethan-style decorative elements. Construction of stepped skyscrapers emerged earlier in the 20th century, and particularly after New York City zoning rules were passed in 1916. These regulations sought to retain daylight at the ground plane in reaction to blocks of tall commercial structures. Quickly this influenced high rise design across the United States creating the so-called “American Perpendicular Style.”

Several buildings in downtown Seattle embody this stepped skyscraper massing. These include the nominated Continental Hotel, the nearby Northern Life Tower, 1212 3rd Avenue (1928, designed by A. H. Albertson, Joseph Wilson, and Paul D. Richardson), the Olive Tower, 1624 Boren Avenue (1928, designed by Earl W. Morrison); the Roosevelt Hotel, 1531 2nd Avenue (1928-1930, designed by John Graham, Sr.); the Exchange Building (1929, designed by John Graham, Sr.); and the Washington Athletic Club, 1325 6th Avenue (1960).

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"The City that is Ever Building," July 9, 1928, p. 34.

"Hotel Claremont and Apartments" August 4, 1929.

"400k In Slyfield' Estate Left for Charity," November 5, 1930, p. 1.

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"Acquired From MacKay Estate," December 22, 1935, p. 22.
Classified Advertisements, March 22, 1948, p. 20; October 4, 1949, p. 29; September 9, 1950, p. 11.
"New Entrance," Seattle Daily Times, June 23, 1957, p. 29.
"Announcement," Seattle Daily Times, February 13, 1958, p. 6.
"Old-World Charm Mark's Bavarian Haus," November 2, 1962, p. 2.
"Judge Confirms Reorganization Plan of Defunct Hotel Firm," November 2, 1962, p. 2.
"It started as a one-desk company," June 8, 1977, p. 84.
"An aerial depiction of Seattle's too-busy bay ..." Pacific Magazine, August 19, 2021.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

"Building Workers Start Chinaware to Insure Structure's Foundation," May 30, 1926, p. 31.
"Continental Hotel Is Sold For \$240,000," March 18, 1928, p. 87.
"Hotel Owner Earl Hungerford Dies at Age 74," September 10, 1956, p. 26.
"Pier 67 Acquires Hotel," March 11, 1967, p. 22.
"Bavarian Haus" (advertisement), September 16, 1977, p. 53.
"New Year's Eve Room & Dinner for Two" (advertisement), December 18, 1987, p. 9.

Seattle Union Record

"An Immigrant Boy's Challenge and Victory," January 1, 1927, p.6.

Seattle Public Library, NW Photo Collection, <https://www.spl.org/online-resources/seattle-culture-and-local-history>

Seattle Star, "Arthur Wheatley" (obituary), May 7, 1946 (from Ancestry.com)

Shannon, Robin. *Seattle's Historic Hotels*. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2010.

Stein, Alan J. *The Olympic: The Story of Seattle's Landmark Hotel Since 1924*. Seattle: HistoryLink, 2005.

UNESCO, Silk Road Programme. "Caravanserai: Crossroads of Commerce and Culture,"
<https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/content/caravanserais-cross-roads-commerce-and-culture-along-silk-roads>.

University of Washington Libraries, Archives and Special Collections
B. Dudley Stuart Architectural Photograph Collection ca. 1920s-1940s.
Digital Photography Collection, <http://contents.lib.washington.edu/all-collections.html>.

U.S. Census, 1930 and 1940 (from Ancestry.com)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☒ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 Zone Easting Northing

3 Zone Easting Northing

2 Zone Easting Northing

4 Zone Easting Northing

Or Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 47.607223° -122.334531°
Latitude Longitude

3 Latitude Longitude

2 Latitude Longitude

4 Latitude Longitude

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated area is located in Section 31 or Township 25N, Range 04 the East of the Willamette Meridian in King County Washington, and is legally described as the westerly 60 feet of lot 2, Block 15, of C.D. Boren's Addition to the City of Seattle. It is otherwise identified as King County Tax Parcel #0942000120.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated properties encompasses the entire urban tax lot (60' x 60') that is occupied by the Continental Hotel.

11. Form Prepared By

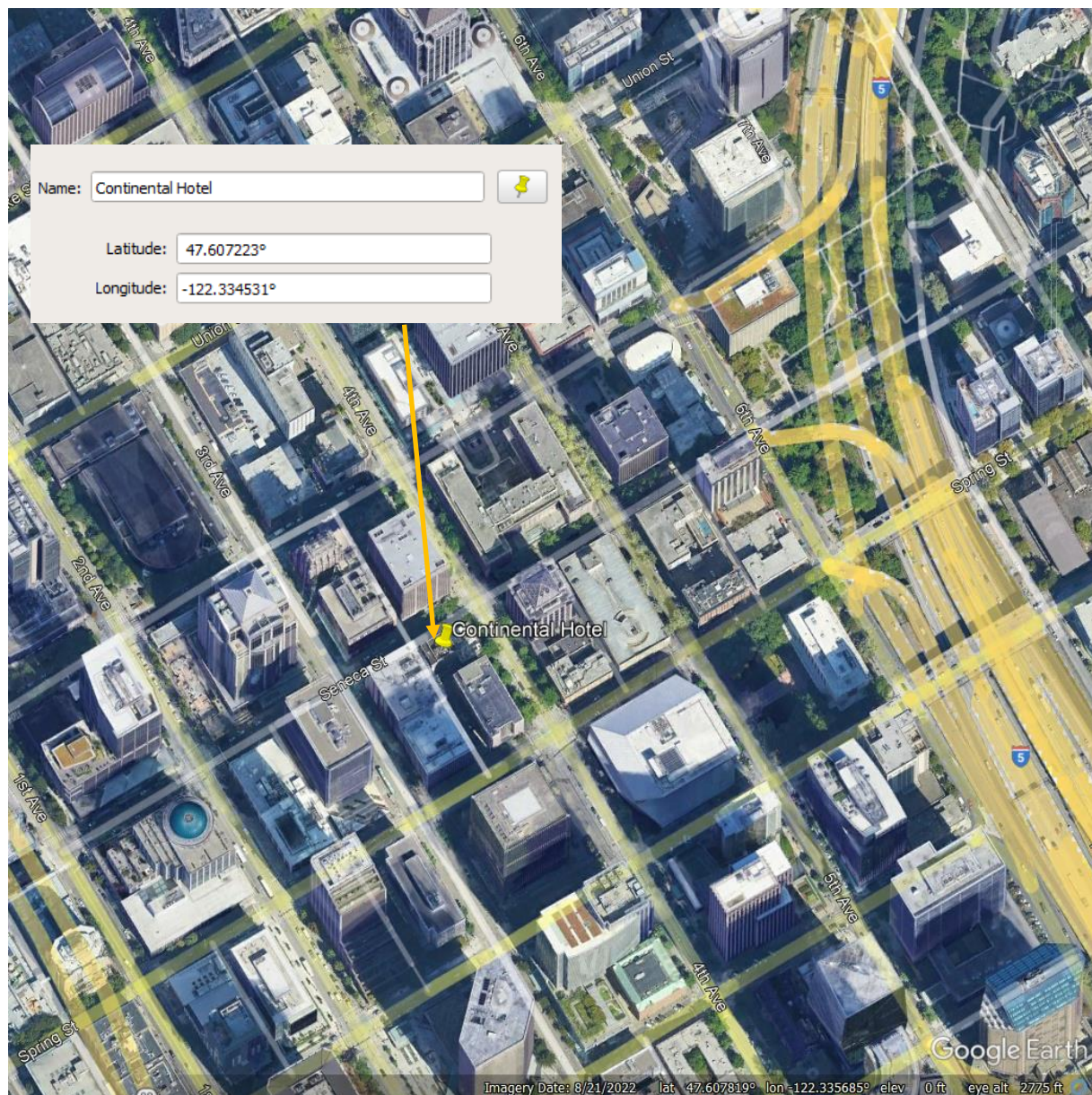
name/title Susan D. Boyle (Edited by DAHP Staff)
organization BOLA Architecture + Planning date February 2024
street & number 26114 99th Avenue SW telephone (206) 383.2649
city or town Vashon state WA zip code 98070-8430
e-mail sboyle@bolach.com

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location (See Figure 1 on the Continuation Sheets)
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)



Google Earth Map

Figure 1. Above, excerpt from a Google Earth Map showing the location of the Continental Hotel at 315 Seneca Street in the Central Business District of Seattle.

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Historic Images

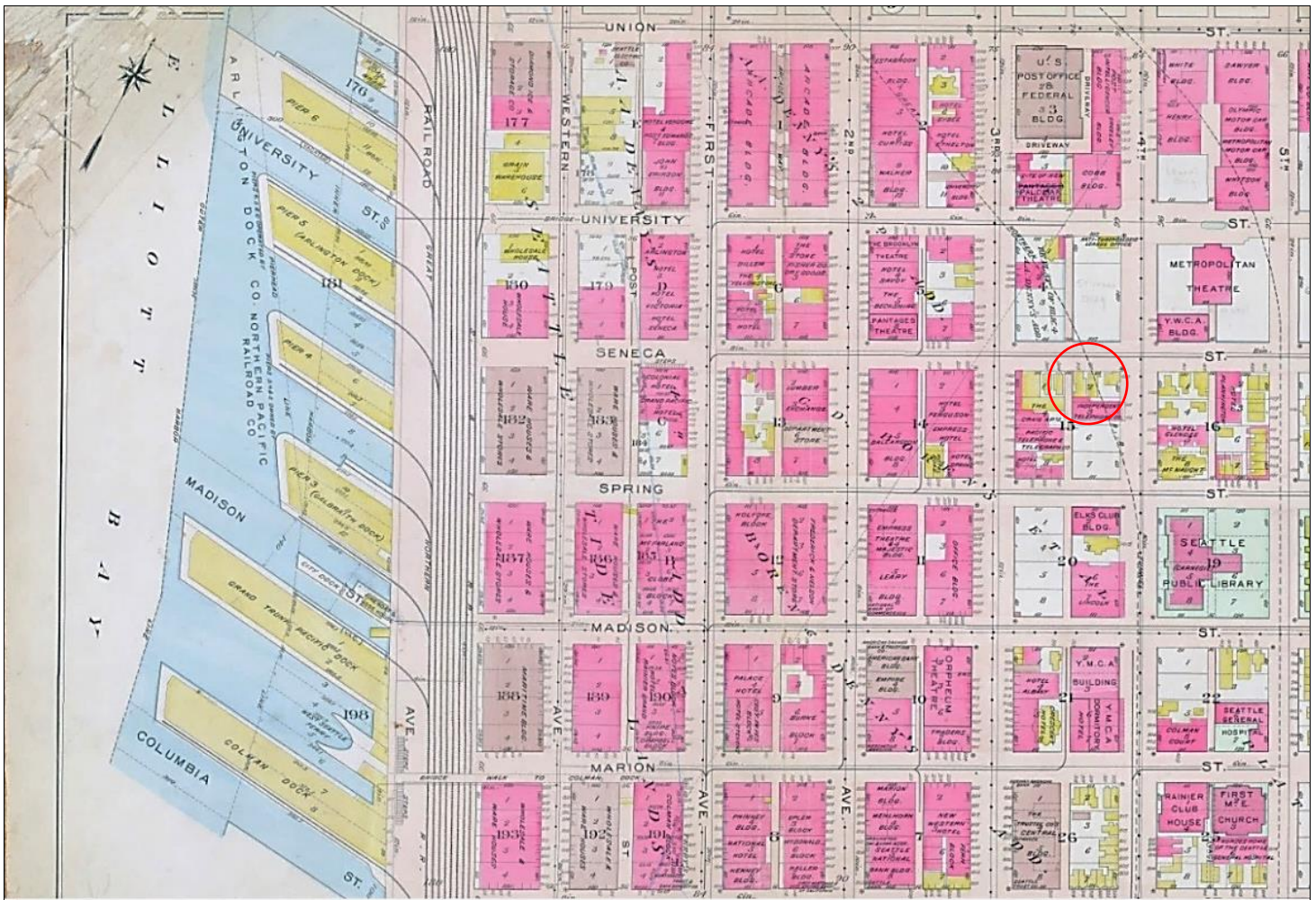


Figure 2. Above, much of Seattle's downtown west of 3rd Avenue was developed by the early 20th century as indicated on this 1912 Baist map, Plate 2. The hotel site, within a red circle, contained wood frame dwellings (Baist map courtesy of Dorpat).

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Figure 3. Looking north along 3rd Avenue north of James Street in 1914 (Seattle Public Library, spl_shp7383). The red arrow identifies the approximate future site of the hotel.

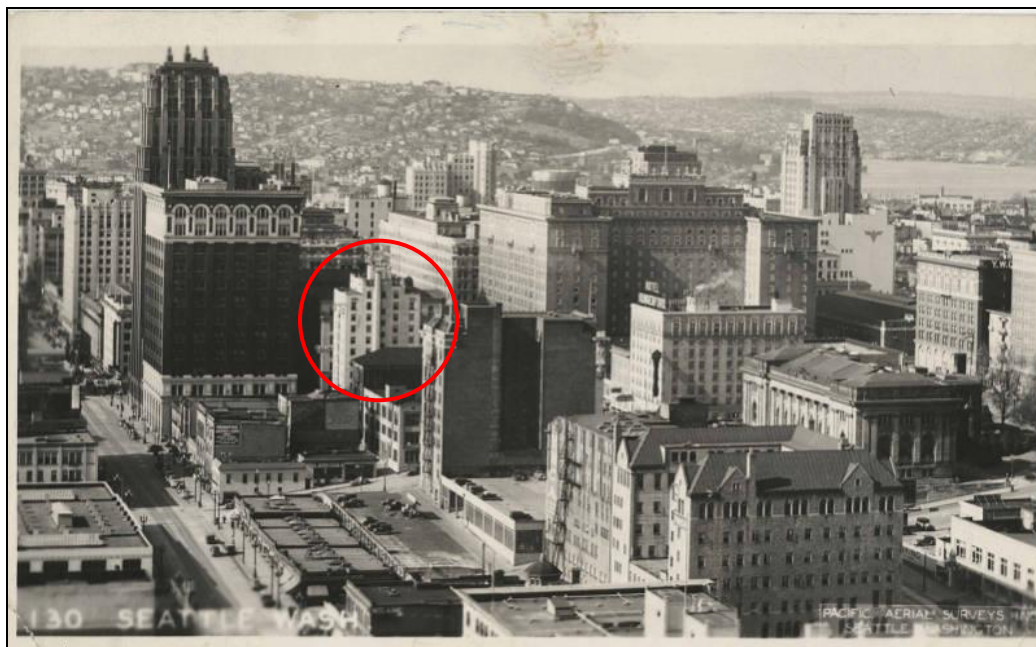


Figure 4. Looking north of Marion Street ca. 1941, along 3rd and 4th Avenues. The Continental Hotel is circled (Seattle Public Library, spl_shp40969).

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Figure 5. A view looking west on Seneca Street from 6th Avenue on April 1957. with the nominated hotel visible in the background within the red circle. Then known as the Hotel Earl, it had a tall rooftop sign that was installed in the mid-1930s and removed in 1961 (Seattle Public Library, spl_wl_str_00081).

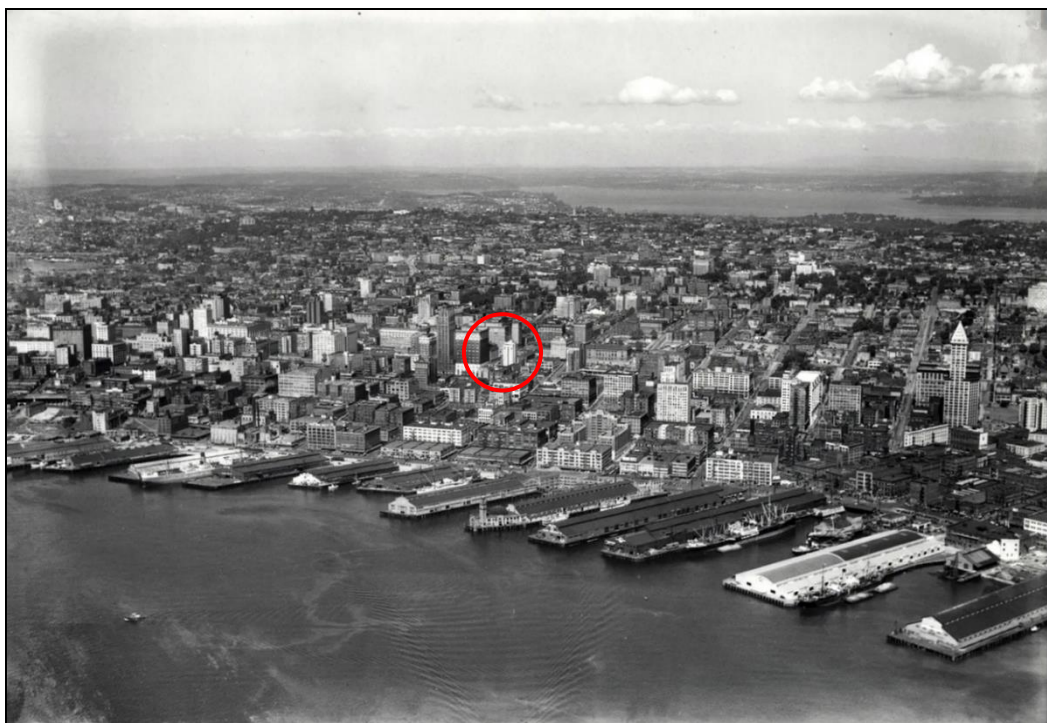


Figure 6. Birds Eye view ca. 1946 showing post-war Seattle's central waterfront, central business district and downtown retail core. The hotel (circled in red) is a small scale, light colored tower in the dense fabric of the city. (Sherrard, *Seattle Times Pacific Northwest Magazine*, August 19, 2021).

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Figure 7. Looking northeast on 4th Avenue from Spring Street in 1950, past the sign of the Hungerford Hotel. The nominated hotel, then known as the Hotel Earl, is noted with a red arrow. The stepped skyscraper Northern Life Tower is in the background (Seattle Public Library, spl_shp_20053).



Figure 8. A similar view from 1960 with a portion of the mid-century downtown public library in the foreground. The nominated hotel is identified by the red arrow. (Seattle Public Library, spl_shp_41102).

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Figures 9 & 10. In addition to the nominated hotel, developer Stephen Berg constructed two other large hotels in downtown Seattle in 1925-1927. All three hotel buildings were designed by Stuart and Wheatly. Above left, the Claremont / Andra Hotel, 2000 4th Avenue [Museum of History & Industry 1983.10.3745]. Above right, the Bergonian Hotel, 405 Olive Way, in 1927 (University of Washington Special Collections SEA2560)



Figure 11. Left, undated photo portrait of Stephen Berg, the original owner and developer of the nominated Continental Hotel. (Photo courtesy of the Berg Family, from Festin, *The Mayflower Park Hotel*, 2014.)

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Stuart & Wheatley Projects



Figures 12. – 15. Projects designed by the architectural partnership of Stuart & Wheatley include numerous apartments as well as commercial buildings. Upper two photos and lower left, apartment buildings from the mid-1920s (University of Washington Libraries Special Collections, SEA2574, SEA2575, SEA2576). Lower right, the Christie & Co. Building at 1516 11th Avenue (University of Washington Libraries Special Collections, SEA2570).

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Stuart & Wheatley Projects



Figures 16. – 18. Other projects by the Stuart & Wheatley include several university fraternity and sorority houses and commercial buildings. Left, the Holland Building, 4th Avenue between Pike and Union Streets in 1923 (University of Washington Special Collections, SEA2572). Upper right, the Chi Omega Sorority House near the University of Washington campus in 1925 (University of Washington Libraries Special Collections, SEA2564). Lower right, a downtown commercial building on 6th Avenue, n.d. (University of Washington Libraries Special Collections, SEA2573).

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Figure 19. Left, a historic ca. 1926 view of the Continental Hotel, from a recent newspaper article (*Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce*, April 7, 2021). This view, looking southeast across Seneca Street, shows the building's primary north façade and the alley to the west. As originally constructed it had a rod-supported central entry marquee, first floor terra cotta cladding and wood storefronts with transoms, and large rectangular storefront opening with an entry to the basement stairs near the west end. Other character-defining features include the stepped massing of the upper floor, subtle recess of the center three bays with modulated planes that emphasize the building's verticality, single and paired, rectangular and arch head windows, and Jacobethan Revival-style terra cotta at upper-level windows, ornamental balconies, and raised parapets. The projections on the west side over the alley are the low walls and landings of the cast concrete exit stairs.

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Figure 20. Left, the King County Assessor's property record card photo of 1936 shows the nominated property when it was known as the Hotel Earl. The prominent rooftop sign, added ca.1935, was removed ca. 1961 when the hotel was once again renamed. (King County Assessor, Puget Sound Reginal Archives)

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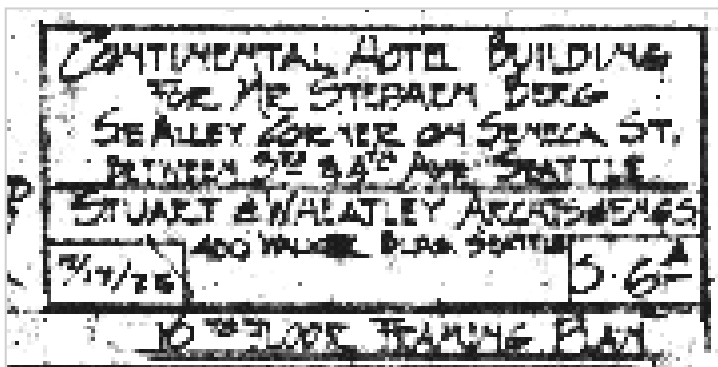
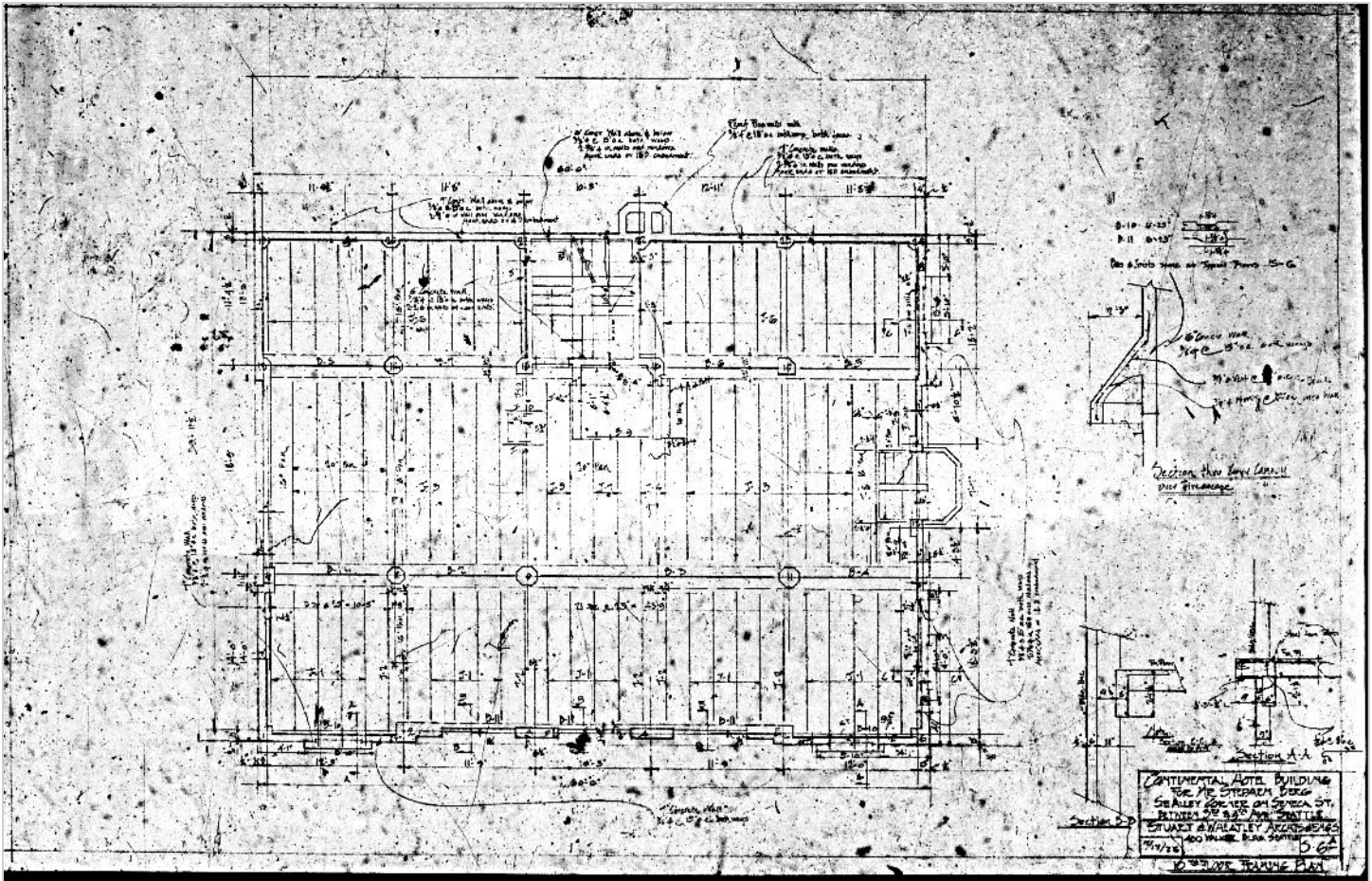


Figure 21. Original 1926 Structural Plan. North is oriented down. Left, an excerpt showing the title block identifying date and the designers of the building, Stuart & Wheatley Architects (City of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections).

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Figure 22. Original 1926 Drawing, Basement Plan (City of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections). North is oriented down.

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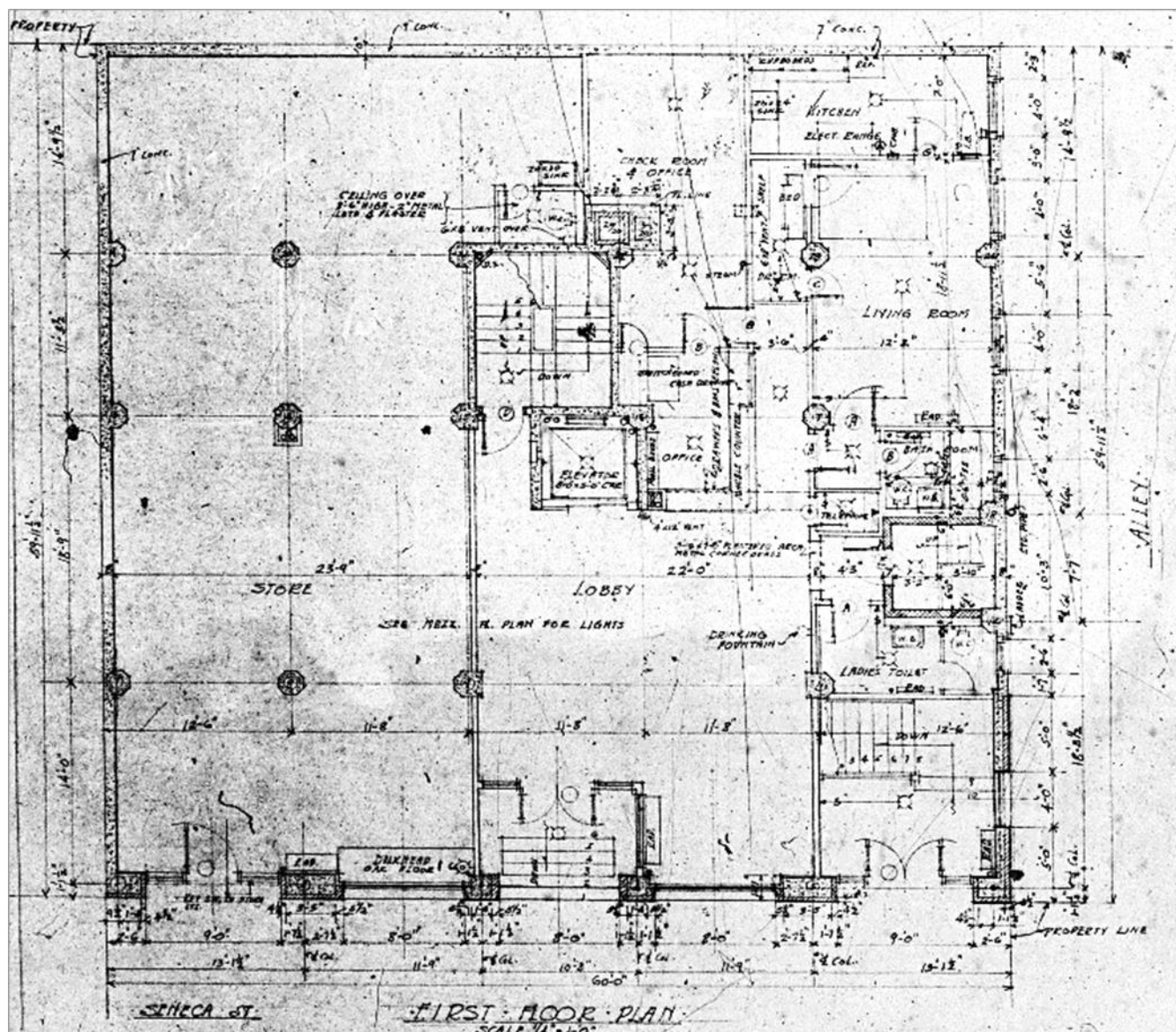


Figure 23. Original 1926 Drawing, First Floor Plan (City of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections). North is oriented down.

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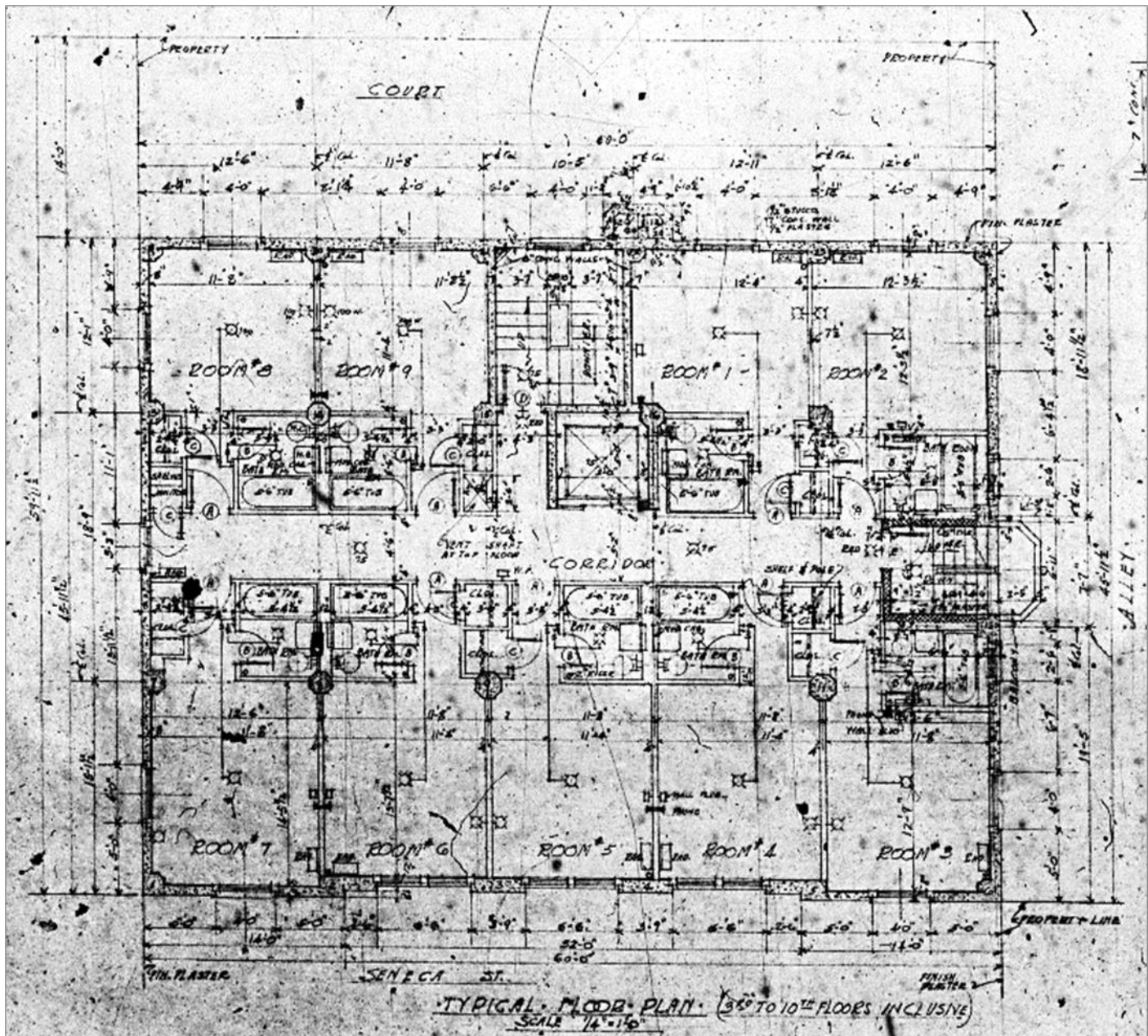


Figure 24. Original 1926 Drawing: Typical Floor Plan (City of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections). North is oriented down.

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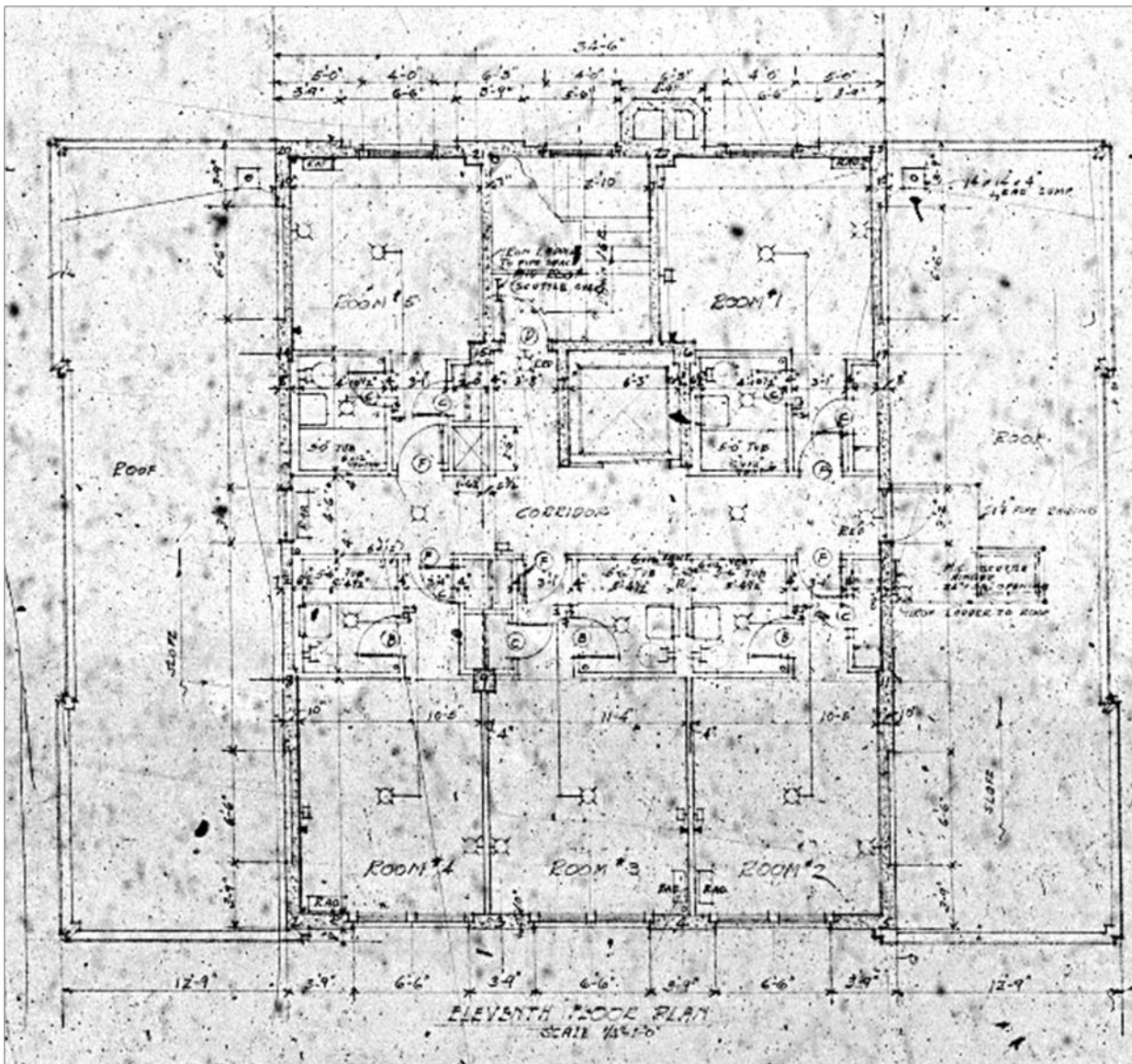


Figure 25. Original 1926 Drawing: 11th Floor Plan (City of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections). North is oriented down.

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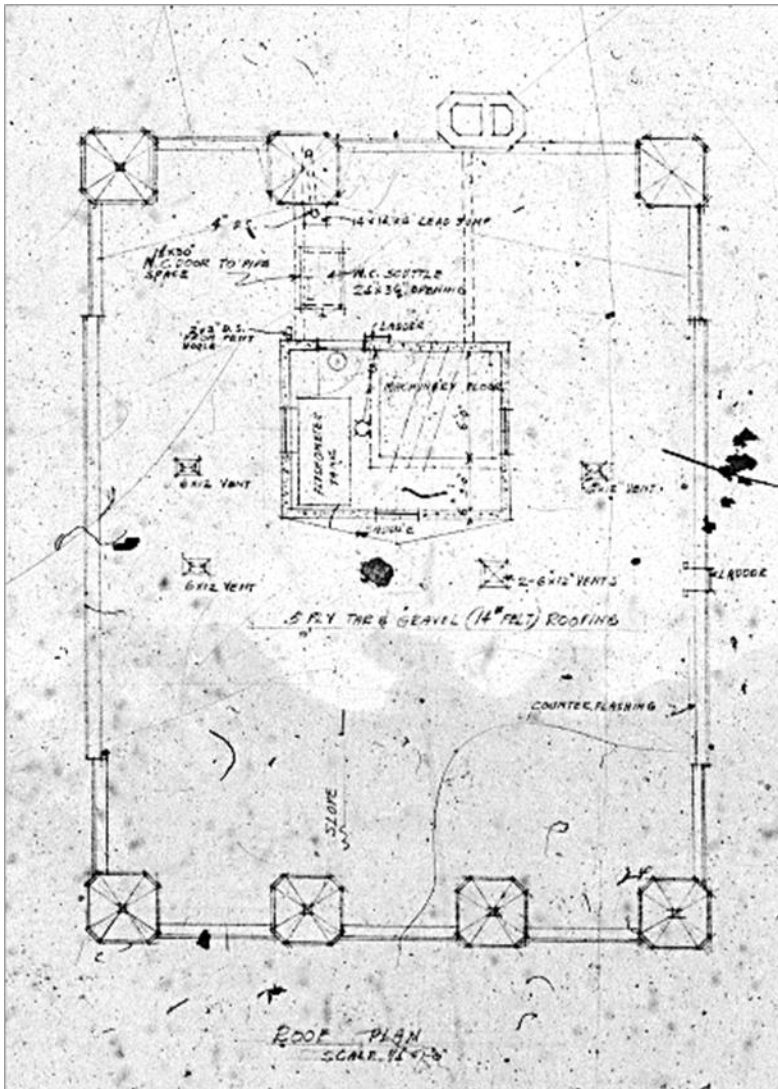


Figure 26. Original 1926 Drawing: Roof Plan. (City of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections). North is oriented down.

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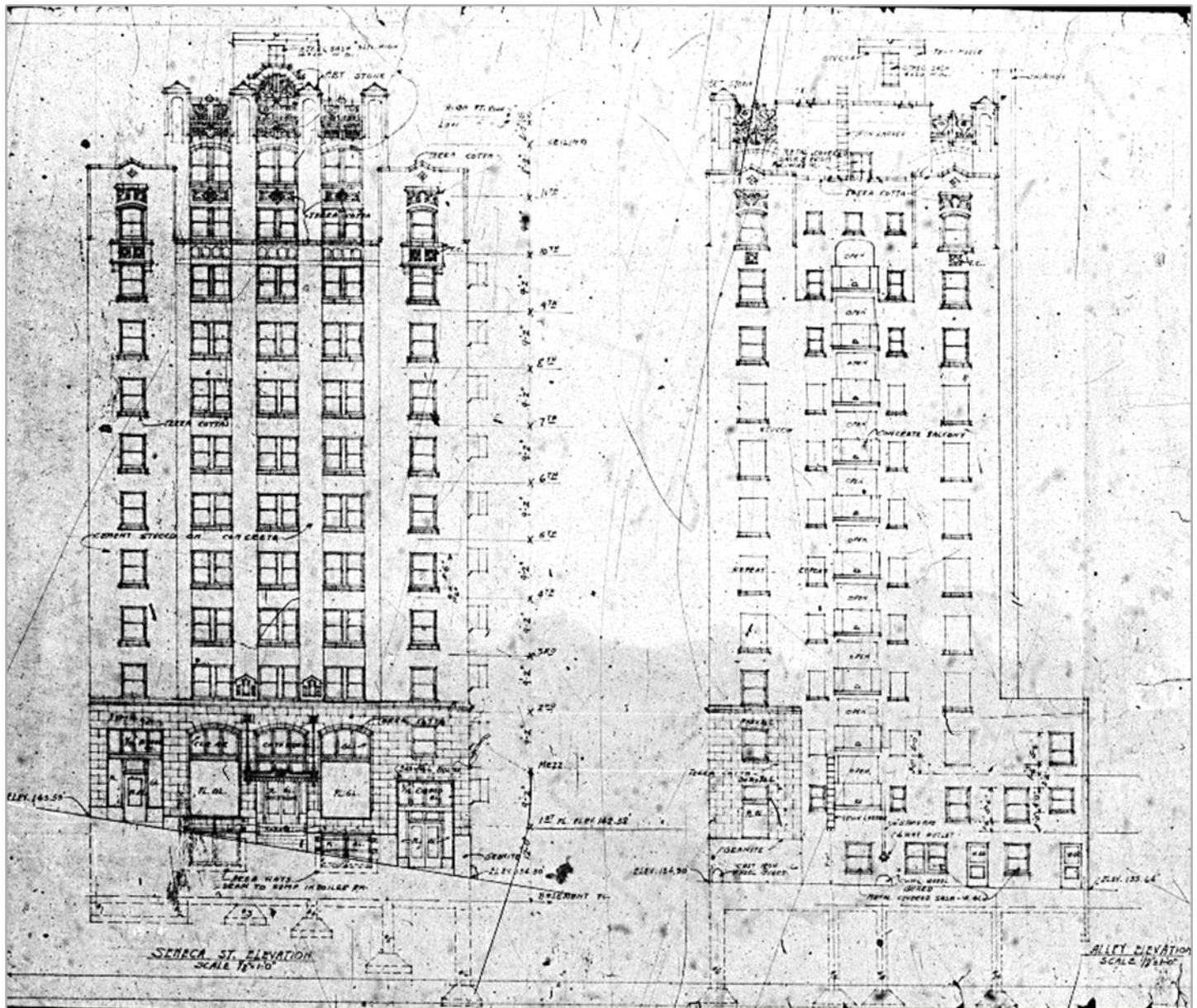


Figure 27. Original 1926 Drawing: North & West Elevations (City of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections).

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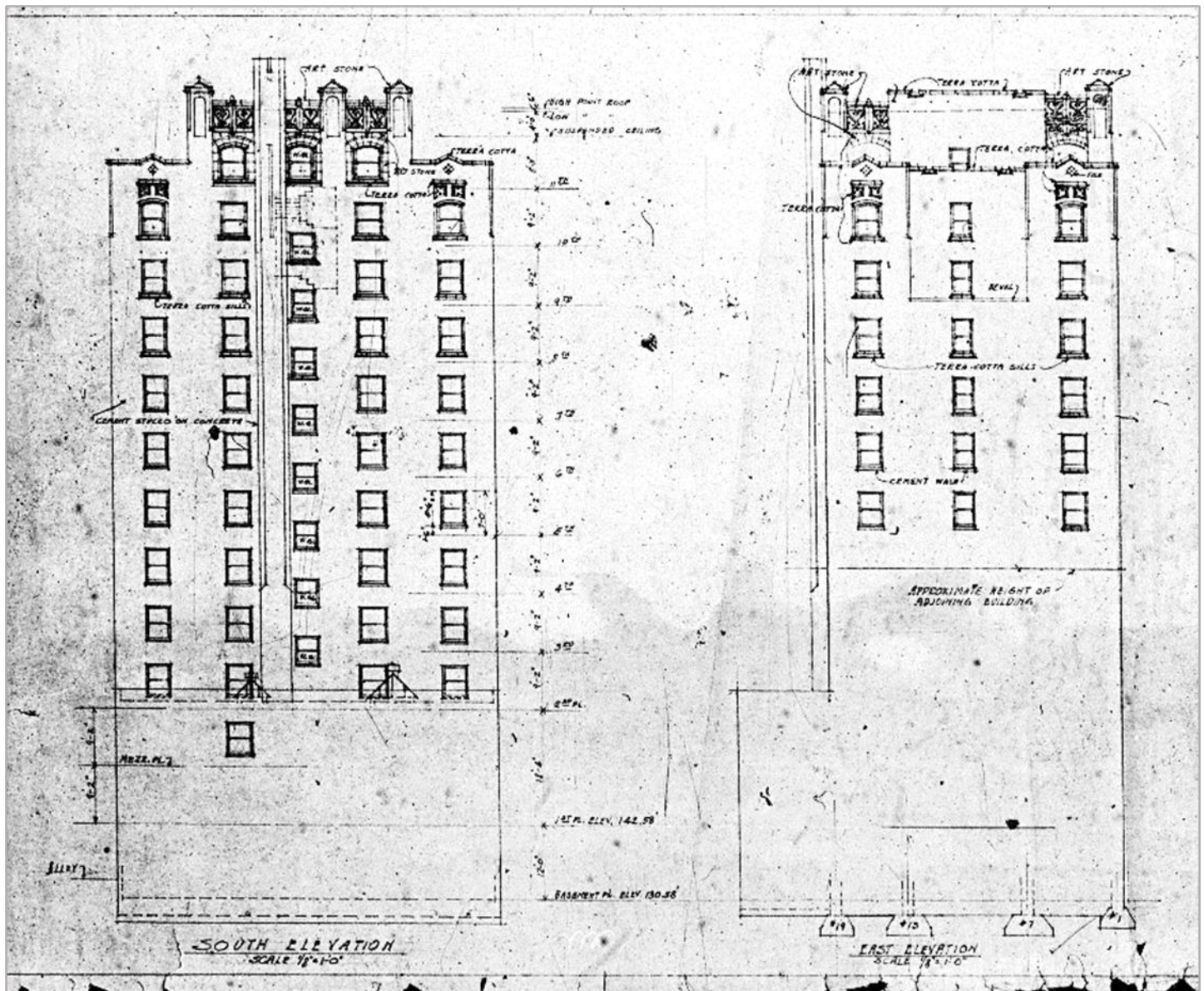


Figure 28. Original 1926 Drawing: South & East Elevations (City of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections).

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Figure 29. A brochure from the 1930s for the nominated hotel after it was renamed the Hotel Earl, extolling its views and features: "Here in Seattle's famed metropolitan center is a hotel that meets every demand of tourist, businessman or family party. The new modern building in itself provides every modern comfort . . . a home-like atmosphere. . . all outside rooms with bath . . . assuring the maximum of natural light and air coupled with an excellent view . . . an abundance of hot water no matter the time of day or night." (Brochure from the collection of the Autry Museum of the West, item 95_142_27.)



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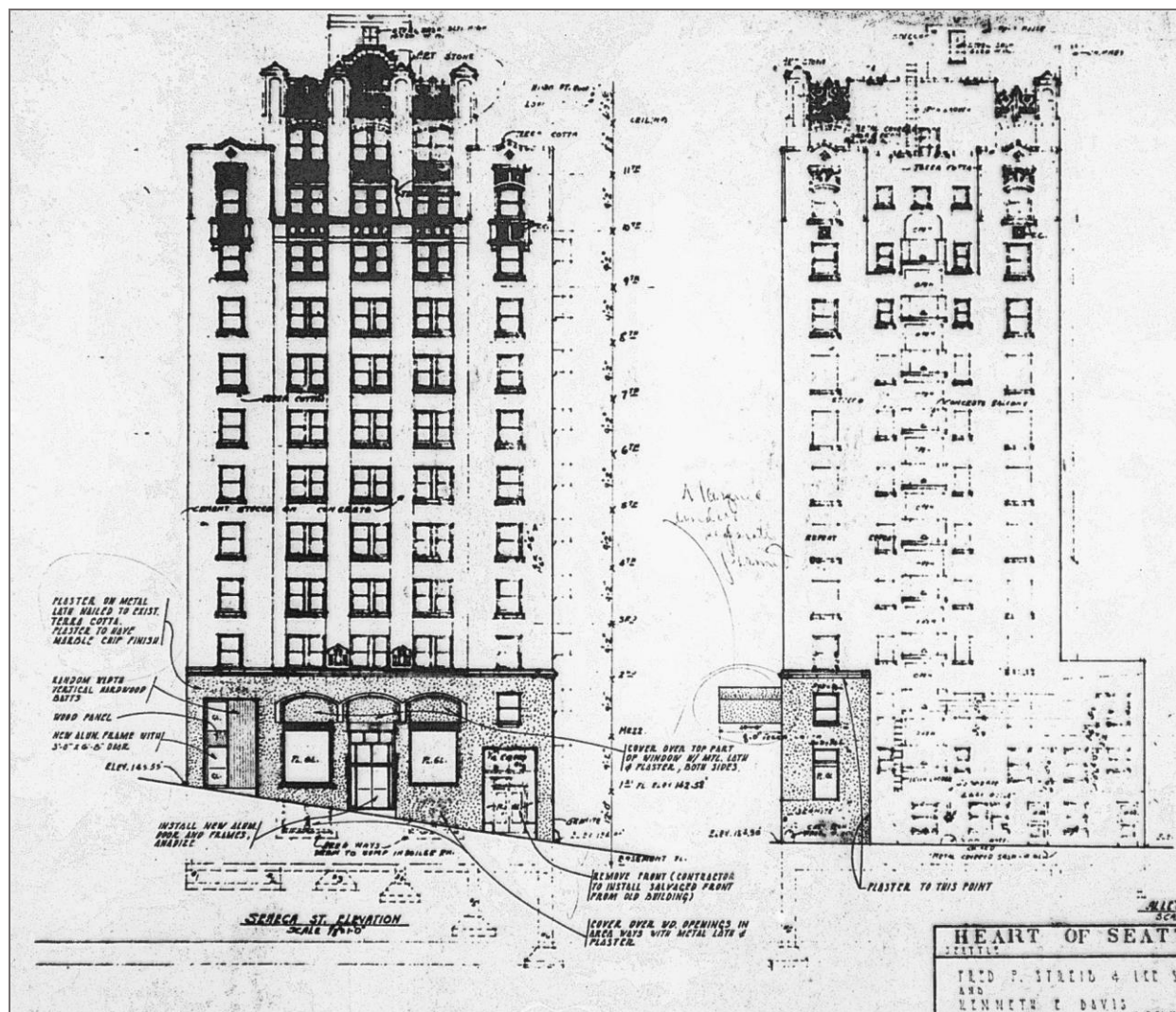


Figure 30. Elevations of the primary north façade and secondary west facade from a permit set from 1962 when new owners of the Heart of Seattle Hotel undertook a “modernization” project. Architect – Alfred Croonquist (City of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections).



Figure 31. Postcard of Heart of Seattle Hotel – 1961-1977

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Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Continental Hotel

City or Vicinity: Seattle

County: King

State: WA

Photographer: Susan D. Boyle, BOLA Architecture + Planning, and Weinstein AU, except as indicated

Date Photographed: Specific dates in 2021 – 2023 as indicated

Description of Photograph(s) and number: See Continuation Sheets for numbers and captions.



0001. Looking southwest from 4th Avenue and Seneca Street at the mid-block hotel. The two-story building in the foreground, at 319 Seneca / 1411 4th Avenue, is a former bank dating from 1922. To the west and south are commercial buildings dating from the 1950s and 1960s. Susan Boyle photographer, February 3, 2022.

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0002. Looking southeast across Seneca Street at the primary north facade and west facade. The photograph was taken before the pandemic closure of the hotel. Kidder Matthews photographer, March 31, 2021.

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0003. Looking west at the east façade. David R. Peterson photographer, June 7, 2023.

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0004. The upper north and east facades and Tudor Revival terra cotta decorative elements. Susan Boyle photographer, February 3, 2022.

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0005. Looking upward at the south façade. Weinstein AU photographer, June 15, 2021.



0006 Looking northeast at parts of the east and south facades, stucco finish and decorative terra cotta. Susan Boyle photographer, April 5, 2023.

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0007. Looking upward at the west façade showing cast concrete exit stairs above the alley. Weinstein AU photographer, June 16, 2021.



0008. Northwest corner on the on the tenth floor roof deck showing a decorative terra cotta panel and parapet caps. Weinstein AU photographer, May 21, 2021.

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0009. Looking south at the lower level north façade showing the arrangement of entries, and non-original cladding and canopies, along with the terra cotta trim band below the second floor windows and cast panels below the paired windows in the central bays above. Susan Boyle photographer, February 3, 2022.

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0010. The central main entry, which opens to the interior stairs to the first floor lobby. Susan Boyle photographer, April 5, 2023.

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0011. On-grade storefront entry on the north façade, into the eastern first floor retail space at 317 Seneca Street. The tenant remained open during the hotel's pandemic closure and vacancy. Susan Boyle photographer, April 5, 2023.

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0012.On-grade westernmost entry, north façade, to the basement. Weinstein AU photographer, June 16, 2021.

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0013. View of the lobby, looking north at the interior stairs that rise from central entry to the hotel lobby, and parts of the south storefront and transom windows. This photograph was taken prior to the pandemic closure and vacancy of the hotel. Weinstein AU photographer, June 15, 2021.p



0014. Interior view of the lobby, looking northeast toward the entry and east retail space. This photograph was taken prior to the pandemic closure and vacancy of the hotel. Weinstein AU photographer, June 15, 2021.

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0015. Left, looking southeast in the lobby at the elevator door and entry to the adjacent retail space. Weinstein AU photographer, June 15, 2021.

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0016. Looking southwest in the lobby at the reception desk, elevator doors, and a portion of the partition wall between the lobby and east retail space. Weinstein AU photographer, June 15, 2021.

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0017. Left, looking south at the interior of the painted concrete main interior exit stairwell. Weinstein AU photographer, June 15, 2021.

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0018. Looking west at the painted concrete exterior exit stairs with low surrounding wall and pipe railings. Susan Boyle photographer, September 2, 2021.

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0019. Looking north at the interior stairs to the basement. Weinstein AU photographer, June 15, 2021.

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0020. Looking east in the basement restaurant space. Weinstein AU photographer, June 15, 2021.



0021. Upper floor double-loaded corridors, the 8th floor. Weinstein AU photographer, June 15, 2021.

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0022. Looking west on the 11th floor. Weinstein AU photographer, May 21, 2021.

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0023. Looking east on the 4th floor at the typical window at the east end. Susan Boyle, photographer, July 30, 2021.



0024. Interior of an 11th Floor guestroom, north side, showing arched head windows and typical non-original finishes. Such as suspended ceiling systems, carpet, wall coverings and trim. Weinstein AU photographer, June 16, 2021.

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0025. Interior of an 8th floor outer corner guestroom with windows on the north and west. Weinstein AU photographer, June 15, 2021.



0026. Interior of a typical suite at the southwest corner, 8th floor, assembled from two smaller single guestrooms. Wall finishes, carpet and lighting are non-original. Weinstein AU photographer, June 15, 2021.

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0027. Below left, a typical guestroom bathroom, this one in Room 801, showing an original bathtub, and non—original fixtures and finishes. Susan Boyle photographer, September 30, 2021.

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Property Owner: (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Win Forever LLC, Butch T Cougar LLC, and Spirit of Troy LLC, c/o Collin Hagstrom, Partner, Westlake Assoc.

street & number 1200 Westlake Avenue North, Suite 310 telephone (206) 505.9436, (206) 898.2725

city or town Seattle state WA zip code 98109

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.