The City of Seattle
Landmarks Preservation Board
Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649
Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

LPB 90/23

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

Name and Address of Property: **Continental Hotel**
315 Seneca Street

Legal Description: **The westerly 60 feet of lot 2, Block 15, Addition to the Town of Seattle, as laid out on the claims of C.D. Boren and A.A. Denny and H.L. Yesler (commonly known as C.D. Boren's Addition to the City of Seattle), According to the plat thereof recorded in volume 1 of plats, page 25, in King County, Washington.**

At the public meeting held on March 15, 2023 the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Continental Hotel as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following standard for designation of SMC 25.12.350:

C. It is associated in a significant way with a significant aspect of the cultural, political, or economic heritage of the community, City, state or nation.

D. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or a method of construction.

DESCRIPTION

Neighborhood Setting

The Hotel Seattle was built originally as the Continental Hotel. As noted in early advertisements, the hotel is in the center of Seattle's downtown commercial district on Seneca Street between 3rd and 4th Avenues. This is an area of the city that developed initially between 1910 and 1930. Its urban pattern has largely persisted for more than a century, even as the downtown financial core has seen increased density with larger assembled sites and taller buildings built in the post-war period of the late 1950s to the 1970s. During this latter periods open space diminished while alley vacations that allowed for half and full-block sites and larger buildings, were commonly allowed. (Recent projects are typically granted sub-grade vacations.)

The age and size of the buildings that surround the subject property represent the area's 20th century history and also the dramatic change of recent decades. Abutting it on the east there is a small 8,280 square foot, two-story flat roof, Classical style structure at the corner of 4th and Seneca (319 Seneca / 1411 4th Avenue). Built as a bank on a small, 3,060 square foot (.07-acre) site in 1921, this terra cotta-clad building currently contains a coffee shop and a dental clinic.

The property to the south contains the present Hotel Monaco, a thirteen-story, 154,723 square foot building with an underground parking level on a 19,910 square foot (0.48-acre) site at 1101 4th Avenue. This hotel results from the recent rehabilitation of a reinforced concrete office building from 1969. At the southwest corner of the block there is a steel frame building with fourteen stories and 186,768 square feet and three levels of subgrade parking on a 12,210 square foot site (0.28 acre). Dating from 1972, it still serves as an office building. To the west across the alley from the Hotel Seattle, there is another reinforced concrete office building with fifteen stories and 230,000 square feet on a 14,415 square foot (0.33-acre) corner site at 1122 3rd Avenue. Built in 1955, it is a commercial condominium building.

To the northwest of the Hotel Seattle, across Seneca Street at 1200 3rd Avenue, there is an older concrete frame high-rise office building from 1921 with 189,175 square feet and thirteen stories on a 13,320 square foot (0.31-acre) corner site. On the block to the southeast there is the large 25-story W Hotel, at 1111 4th Avenue, built in 1998 on the site of the earlier Gowman Hotel. To the south of it there is the nine-story Hungerford Hotel / Executive Inn at 400 Spring Street, built in 1928.

Among the nearby hotels, the largest is the landmark Fairmont Olympic Hotel, which fills an entire block to the northeast, at 411 University Street, with a twelve-story, concrete frame structure. This Seattle institution, built in 1923-1928, was financed in part by community bond funding. The Beaux Arts Italian Renaissance style hotel contains 450 guestrooms and over 28,000 square feet of event and meeting space, along with retail shops and several restaurants. The Olympic Hotel's original entry was on its south side, on Seneca Street, but it was moved to the north side within a deep setback in the 1980s.

Directly north, across Seneca Street at 1215 4th Avenue, there is the Unico Financial Center, a 28-story office building dating from 1972. This building, presently known as Rainier Square Tower, along with the Olympic Hotel, the 1976 Rainier Tower/Rainier Square, and other buildings are part of the Metropolitan Tract on the original site of the Territorial University of Washington. The tract consists of a 6.23-acre site with over 1.5 million square feet of offices, luxury apartments and retail spaces, and up to seven stories of underground parking. A recent development on the Metropolitan Tract, the 58-story addition to Rainer Square, which opened last year.

In contrast to new construction there are a number of Seattle landmarks nearby that recall the early to mid-20th century development of the city's financial core. They include the Northern Life Tower / Seattle Tower, a 28-story Art Deco style office building at 1212 3rd Avenue (1928), the four-story Brooklyn Building at 1222 2nd Avenue (1903, altered), Federal Reserve Bank at 1015 2nd Avenue (1950), Mann Building at 1411 3rd Avenue (1925-1926), 1411 4th Avenue Building (1929), and Great Northern Building at 1404 4th Avenue (1928-1929). The Leamington Hotel and Apartments (Pennington Hotel, Pembroke, Milner Hotel (1917), at 317 Marion Street, the 1411 4th Avenue Building, and the Olympic Hotel are listed on the National Register.

The Site

(Note: The building and site are set on an angle due to the street grid layout, with Seneca Street to the northeast. For clarity in this nomination, reference north is established in this direction, with 3rd Avenue and the adjacent alley to the reference west, 4th Avenue to the reference east, and the back of the building to the reference south.) The 36,240 square foot building sits on the 60 by 60-foot, 3,600 square foot (0.83-acre), mid-block site on the south side of Seneca Street between 3rd and 4th Avenues. A portion of the original Northern Pacific Railroad tunnel runs below part of the eastern part of the site far below grade.

A 15'-8"-wide paved alley runs along the west side of the building, and the sidewalk along Seneca Street along the north. At this location, the topography slopes steeply downhill from the east to the west, with an overall estimated grade change of 10 feet. This slope is accommodated in mass of the hotel building with steps to its primary entry at the center of the north facade, and its basement level service entry exposed along the west alley.

The Building

The building's square mass is stepped. It fills the 60-foot-wide and 60-foot-deep site at the basement and lower two floors. Above the second floor a step-back, approximately 14.75 feet deep, on the back (south side) provides a footprint of 60 by 45.2 feet and open space for a rear lightwell. In addition, there is a slight recess on the east side at the ninth and tenth floors. The resulting open spaces provide separation from neighboring buildings on the south and east. In addition, the uppermost floor steps further on the east and west to create the building's unique stepped massing, a 35 foot-wide eleventh floor, and an identifiable rooftop sky profile. This massing emphasizes the design's verticality.
The building's primary façade features a Gothic inflected Art Deco style, composed with perpendicular emphasis. A terra cotta clad base level extends to the second floor with masonry of tan colored brick masonry embellished by terra cotta decorative elements, and a distinctive uppermost stepped eleventh floor level and raised parapet.

The structure consists of fire-resistant steel and reinforced concrete framing with a concrete foundation and basement. 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. The structure is five bays wide, and these are clearly legible on the primary north facade: three center bays, each 11.75 feet-wide, and two outermost ones of 12.5 feet. The four bays on the sides vary in width, from 11.25, 14, 14.75 and 18.75 feet. Octagonal concrete posts and perimeter pilasters support the perimeter walls and floor and roof slabs. Typical upper floor heights are approximately 9 feet-tall, while the first floor with mezzanine is 18.3 feet-tall and the basement 12 feet.

The original brick masonry appears to have been a light color, and it appears white in early photos. The brick masonry is coated with a darker color painted paster parge coat. The base below the second floor, which featured the light-color terra cotta cladding, is currently covered by dark colored cementitious cladding ("Marblecrete") added in ca 1962. The lower level terra cotta cladding on the northernmost 20 feet of the west facade, which faces the alley, is treated similarly. The original terra cotta window and door surrounds and the water table band that separates the lower floors from field levels above remain. Windowsills are brick or terra cotta.

The primary north façade contains the building's Gothic Revival inspired decorative features. Here brick inset panels are provided as decorative relief below the paired windows in the center three bays on the second through ninth floors. The top two floors carry decorative terra cotta panels below the windows of the center three bays, and shallow decorative balconies with heavy terra cotta cross railings on the

outer two bays where larger segmental arched head windows heads are provided. Terra cotta is present in the raised parapet with crenulated elements above the center three bays. To the sides, each of the outer bay parapets of the tenth floor features a central gabled peak. While visibility of the elevator penthouse above the eleventh floor is obscured by setbacks, the terra cotta clad crenulated parapets are seen on the sides and back.

Typical windows on the primary north facade feature 1:1 double–hung sash, originally wood framed, and set in individual openings in the two outer bays, and in pairs in the three central bays. The windows above the first floor are non-original dark bronze colored anodized aluminum types with double-hung 1:1 sash, similar to the original wood-frame windows, and fitted with double glazing. The storefront level and mezzanine windows are wood frames and sash that feature divided lites, and these appear to be original.

Most of the openings are rectangular with flat heads, with the exception of low segmental arched head windows at the first-floor transoms and in the three center bays on the uppermost two floors. Single windows extend on the secondary east facade in three vertically aligned openings. They also align in openings on the west facade along with service doors and 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.

The central bay on the south façade, which faces onto Seneca Street, contains a slightly recessed primary entry. Large storefronts are provided on either side, each with a tripartite, arched head transoms. In the easternmost bay there is a secondary entry to the retail space. In addition, there is a solid wood entry door to the basement in the westernmost bay, which leads from a lower sidewalk level to an interior landing and stairs. The original storefront at this basement entry was closed and replaced by the wood door, salvaged from an earlier building, in 1962. Low openings with non-original windows admit light to the basement.

The original hotel design with its identifiable stepped Art Deco massing, subtle modulated façade, and expressive terra cotta decoration has persisted over the past nine decades along with much of its original interior layout. The plan features a first floor vestibule at the main stairs and a small front lobby in the center of the southern two bays along with direct access to the elevator and south stair core. A reception desk is to the west of this core. A retail space is in the eastern two bays behind a tall partially glazed partition. The western bay contains office space, the exit stairs, restrooms, and an enclosed stairwell at the northwest corner leading to the basement. The southern bays, behind the lobby, contain service spaces. A mezzanine fills the western and southern bays. The exterior south seatback, above the second floor, provides a roof deck accessed by a door from the hotel laundry room in the southwest corner. This lower roof deck holds mechanical and communication equipment, as does the adjacent building's roof to the east.

Consistent with the hotel building type, the upper floors contain double-loaded corridors that leads from the central stair and elevator core to the guestrooms, typically five on the north and three or four on the south, and to the east and west corridor ends. Windows at the east end above the second floor overlook a lower neighboring building. The secondary exit door at the west end leads to the exterior stairs with landings that project above the alley on the west facade.

The hotel was built with an estimated 94 guestrooms, each with its own bathroom, on floors two through eleven and retail spaces and the hotel lobby below. A small radio station and sound studio was

constructed on the first floor in 1926, and a café was built soon afterwards in the basement. The hotel currently contains 79 guestrooms including several suites created by combining smaller guestrooms, with seven small rooms and the hotel laundry on the second floor, nine small rooms each on floors three to five, eight rooms each on floors six to ten, and four on the eleventh floor. This top floor contains several larger suites. Corridor walls are finished with non-original wallpaper and carpeting, and guestroom doors have been upgraded to rated, flush types. The transom window openings above these doors are infilled to meet contemporary fire and life safety codes, but what appears to be the original wood door trim and base remain on corridor walls. Most finishes within guestrooms date from recent decades, while the original room layout and spatial qualities remain, with exception of several small guestrooms assembled into suites. Current finishes include carpet, wallpaper, painted wood base and trim, plaster walls and ceilings, and suspended acoustic ceilings. The small bathrooms contain contemporary fittings and tub showers; some of these rooms retain original hexagonal glazed tile flooring and marble thresholds.

Changes through Time

Original drawings of the Continental Hotel have not been discovered in the microfilm records of SDCI, and the earliest permit records date from the mid-1930s calling for a roof sign and/or billboard for the Earl Hotel. (The resulting rooftop sign, dating from ca 1935 to 1961, was removed in the when the property was renamed the Heart of Seattle Hotel.)

Plans by architect George Bolotin, with a permit date of 1957, show the addition of a stair and mezzanine to access a south door to the Earl Hotel. A 1962 permit set for the Heart of Seattle Hotel calls for an interior upgrade with new finishes, mirrors, fixtures, and furnishings, along with a lobby stair to the mezzanine and south exit, and remodeling of first floor western bay to accommodate office and storage rooms. In an attempt to modernize the hotel to meet popular taste, and in anticipation of the 1962 World's Fair, distinct changes were made to the primary facade. The original terra cotta cladding below the second floor was covered, according to the permit drawing by the addition of “plaster on metal lath nailed to existing terra cotta, plaster to have marble chip finish.” In addition, the first floor entries were replaced with “new aluminum frame, anodized” and the eastern one further revised with the addition of a “random wood panel.” According to a drawing, the entry to the basement was changed also: “Remove front (contractor to Install salvaged front from Old Building.)”

In addition, the original central marquee was removed and three thin-shell concrete canopies were added at the entry and storefronts in accordance to a design by structural engineer E. L. Strandberg. A fourth canopy, framed with steel, was added above the basement entry. Original storefront window and entry door openings remained at this time, along with the letter “C” in medallions above the canopies, a reference to the name of the 1926 Continental Hotel.

Other changes to the original hotel include enclosure of the original storefront in the westernmost bay to the basement restaurant as required to meet local liquor service regulations. A new cocktail lounge was proposed for the east retail space as indicated by a drawing by Dohrmann Hotel Systems. In addition, the guestrooms received new finishes and furnishings, selected for their Modern style. The basement laundry was relocated and a restaurant, the Bavarian (later Bernard’s on Seneca) was refurbished in 1962 to 1964 with new finishes and kitchen layout. In mid-1969 the eastern retail space was proposed as a small drug store according to drawings by Street Store Fixtur4es, and in 1984-1985 it was occupied by Buddy Squirrels nut shop.

In 1964 the eastern retail space and mezzanine were enlarged and the lobby received new finishes, glazed partitions, and wood trim and doors in 1964 according to designs by architect Alfred P. Croonquist. Interior elevation drawings suggest that much of this design remains. Later, when the nearby Olympic Hotel underwent rehabilitation in the early 1980s a private club that it had housed was relocated temporarily to the southwest mezzanine. A remnant of this tenant, the "4798 Club" label, remains as door signage.

Newspaper records, city directories and records from SDCI reveal the following changes:

Tenant Improvements

1926	Radio station equipment installed at the first floor
1927	Beauty salon built at first floor retail space, basement coffee shop
1938	Barber shop at first floor retail space
1936-1940	Broadcasting studio built in basement
1949	Remodel for gift shop in retail space
1949, 1956	Office tenant remodel
1969	Street Store Fixtures, drug store
1984-1985	Buddy Squirrel Nuts shop

Building Permit Records

1956-1957	Montgomery elevator modernization
1957	Proposed parking lot (unbuilt)
1957	Entrance and stairs, balcony at lobby, Hotel Earl (George Bolotin, architect)
1962	Alter building; construct marquee; alter basement, first floor and mezzanine; coffee shop and cocktail lounge in first floor the lobby; alter basement and occupy as restaurant, Heart of Seattle Hotel (Theo Damm, architect)
1964	Alter interior of building; alter portion of first floor; erect and maintain D/F sign; new first floor mezzanine lounge and lobby remodel, Heart of Seattle Hotel (Alfred Croonquist, Architect; and Damm, Daum and Associates, Architects)
1965	Alter portion of basement restaurant to create cocktail lounge
1967	Alter first floor, occupy as drugstore (unbuilt); erect and maintain S/F plex sign
1968	Alter portion second floor
1969	Connect eleventh floor to office
1971	Construct partitions; alter lobby, occupy as office
1972	Add plasterboard to corridors, 12 floors
1981	Fire alarm upgrade
1984-1985	New illuminated signs on existing canopy; wiring, retail store signage
1991 & 1995	New natural gas fired boiler required, boiler repair
2007	Install natural gas generator on second floor rooftop to serve adjacent building; structural framing at roof to support roof-top generator

Many permits relate to the elevator: a new elevator and controls in 1967-1968, elevator repairs in 1974, elevator door alteration in 1998, replacement of the elevator machine and hoist ropes in 2000-2001, alternations to the cabled elevator in 2019-2020 and an elevator upgrade in 2022. Recent permits also include rooftop equipment and a wireless antennae, south and west 2nd floor roof (and on the adjacent 51 x 60 building roof to the southeast) in 2011-2013, rooftop communication equipment and a structural frame support for rooftop antennae in 2016-2017, and alterations to a minor communication utility (Verizon) on the rooftop in 2021-2022.

SIGNIFICANCE

Development of Seattle's Central Business District

The part of the city in which the Hotel Seattle is located developed initially as a commercial 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 a nearby opportunity on ten open acres, later known as the nearby Metropolitan Tract. Development of it and other properties continued through early decades of the 20th century as the city's service economy emerged along with its population growth and establishment of land use ordinance that codified the creation of the Central Business District (CBD) as the densest part of Seattle.

Prior to the regrades the steep downtown streets, such as Seneca, were difficult to access. Some mid-block parcels contained wood frame buildings, such as the boarding house built at 315 Seneca Street in ca 1909. Street regrades along 3rd, 4th, and 5th Avenues provided easier construction of new buildings. By the teens, the north-south streets in the CBD had been leveled, paved, and fitted with adequate drainage and sidewalks. Streetcar routes were expanded to run along the more level, pedestrian friendly avenues. By 1941, when the system was dismantled, downtown access was provided on all avenues from 1st to 5th Avenues.

Some parcels were assembled into bigger corner sites with depths extending from the avenues to the north-south alleyways to allow for larger structures. These new larger buildings contained commercial offices and banks that complemented the City's municipal center to the south, and the retail shops and department stores on 2nd and 3rd Avenues to the west.

The City of Seattle compiled building codes as early as 1909, but it was not until 1920 that it established a Zoning Commission. In 1923 it adopted the first land use ordinance. 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 many of Seattle's 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. 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 and theaters. By the end of the 1920s nearly all of the early wood frame buildings were removed, and most of Seattle's oldest residential properties – as well as many of the late 19th century, immediate post-fire commercial buildings outside of Pioneer Square – had been replaced.

While retailing moved further north on 2nd Avenue to Pike and Pine Streets, and later east to 4th and later 5th Avenues, most service businesses and financial institutions remained in the Central business District (CBD). Thus, by the mid-1920s, when the Continental Hotel was constructed, the surrounding blocks contained banks and office buildings along with a mix of small retailers located on the more level, pedestrian-friendly avenues. The many hotels 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 proximity to commerce and to the city's railroad stations and passenger ship terminals. As transportation systems

gave way to automobiles, purpose-built parking garages were constructed and basement parking spaces were created for many of the buildings.

Historic maps and photographs from the end of the 1920s, soon after the Continental Hotel was built, show that the city's commercial core was well established. With the onset of the Great Depression, the era of early 20th century hotel development ended.

A History of Hotels and the Lodging Industry

The concept of the modern hotel 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 and north American cities. However, buildings that offer refuge and temporary lodging to travelers extend back to the thermal baths of classical Greece and the Roman Republic, and to the caravanserai of the Silk Road from Turkey to China and along trade routes from Persia, India, China, and Roman Empire. In the Middle Ages, monasteries and abbeys built inns, hospices and hospitals, and rest stops were built along pilgrimage and crusade routes. Later Inns and staging housed couriers. One of the earliest remaining from this period is the Angel Inn in Grantham, Lincolnshire, England (1312).

In England and France, regulations requiring guest registration date to the 1600s. By this date there were more than 600 licensed inns in England. Similar to caravanserai these inns were often housed in courtyard buildings with guestrooms on an upper floor or on two sides, a kitchen and public room in the front along the roadway, and storage and stables in the back. By the late 1600s traveler guidebooks were published in France, and regularly scheduled stage coach routes were operating in England. These modest accommodations provided multiple beds in each room and multiple guests per bed. There was little privacy and no bathrooms. The 17th and 18th century also saw the establishment of men's clubs, such as l 'Auberge des Trois Rois, Basle, Switzerland (1681), fraternal lodges that offered guestrooms to members, and construction of England's first hotel, the Royal Clarence, in Exeter, Devon (1768).

Holiday resorts were built along Mediterranean coasts and alpine lakes in the 19th century, such as l 'Hotel des Berges built on Lake Geneva (1832), l 'Hôtel des Trois Couronnes in Vevey (1834), and the Baur au Lac in Zurich (1840). Meanwhile public houses (pubs) in England provided lodging along with drinking and dining facilities for more common people. Colonial America inns followed British precedents, and later early roadhouses serve carriage and stage coach travelers in the American West, . Increased tourism, such as the Grand Tour of Europe and more distant travel led to construction of hotels in exotic locales.

By the mid-19th century luxury hotels began to take a prominent place in society. When Le Grand Hotel opened in Paris in 1862, the event involved an orchestra playing La Traviata under the direction of Jacques Offenbach and attendance by Empress Eugenie and other aristocrats. This luxury hotel was built with the first hotel hydraulic lift, lighting supplied by 4,000 gas jets, heating by 18 boilers and over 300 hot air supply vents. Electrical lights were installed in 1890, and central heating by 1901.

The 73-room City Hotel (1794), at Thames Street and Broadway in New York City, is cited as the first purpose-built America hotel. It soon became a venue for social celebrations, including George Washington's birthday in 1798. In 1829, the Tremont House in Boston 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." Meanwhile, the six-story Holt Hotel in New York City (1830) providing a lift for luggage. New hotels with private

bathrooms were built in Kansas City and Philadelphia in 1844 and 1845. The Palmer House, built in Chicago (1870), was the nation's first fire-resistant hotel building. In 1880, the Sagamore Hotel on Lake George provided electricity in all rooms, and by the late 1890s the Netherland Hotel in New York offered private telephones in each guestroom.

Meanwhile, the Palais de Würtemberg in Vienna was transformed into the luxury lodging, l 'Hôtel Impérial, in 1873, and the Grand Hotel Europe opened in St. Petersburg in 1875. These and other grand hotels in European capitals offered private bathrooms, electric lighting, on-demand hot and cold water, and room service along with multiple dining rooms and ballrooms, laundries, and shops.

The lodging industry emerged as a managed business with the first school for hoteliers, founded in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1890. By this time, many hotel builders and operators, such as Cesar Ritz, rose to celebrity status, known by royalty. (King Edward VII, called Ritz, who opened his hotel in the Place Vendome, Paris in 1898, the "king of hoteliers and hotelier to kings.") Ritz Hotels were soon built in Madrid, Barcelona, and London. The gilded age of the late 19th century continued as an era of luxury hotels in urban settings.

Construction of more hotels occurred as train travel began replacing horse-drawn coaches. Railway hotels flourished in the 19th and early 20th centuries with hotel buildings constructed adjacent to station terminals throughout the major cities in England and Europe. American and Canadian railroads also built resorts and grand inns throughout the West as part of their efforts to promote real estate expansion; examples include the Grand Hotel on Michigan's Mackinac Island (1886), Le Chateau Frontenac, Quebec (1893), Chateau Lake Louise (1890) and Banff Springs (1888), Alberta, and Hotel Vancouver (1888, replaced in 1916) as well as El Tovar, the Grand Canyon Lodge (1905), and Glacier Park Lodge (1913). Oher American National Park lodges followed.

The rise in national and international commerce prompted construction of more modest accommodations for traveling businessmen and salespeople. In addition, in cities such as Seattle, with dynamic growth in the early 20th century, residential hotels provided temporary housing for newcomers. Those with dining and entertainment facilities also served resident professionals, much like clubhouses.

A second boom in the western hotel industry followed World War II with construction of the first casino hotels, the first Club Med, and development of hotels by major airlines, which primarily catered to businesspeople. By the 1960s tourism had become a primary economic sector throughout Mediterranean Europe, Scandinavia, Portugal, and later Japan, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. In the late 1970s, China opened to foreign tourists. The post-war decades also saw the proliferation of American motels, notably those built along with the county's interstate highways.

The third boom in the hotel industry occurred in the 1980s with the reconstruction of historic luxury hotels and the trend of differentiation for different clientele. New types emerged also, such as airport hotels, conference hotels, health hotels, time-shares and holiday villages, and Japanese capsule hotels. Business practices from this period include property management and marketing systems and emergence of international chains, loyalty programs, and extended-stay hotels. Recent technology simplified check in and out procedures, global reservation systems, and marketing management. The late 20th century and recent decades has seen increased globalization, and aggregation of many chains: Holyday Inn, Intercontinental, and Crown Plaza merged to create the Six Continents Hotels chain; Marriot acquired Renaissance and Ramada International; Accor with Sofitel and joint ventures built up in

the East and Far East; Forte acquired Méridien; and Starwood (Sheraton) absorbed the Italian Ciga chain and Westin. These chains and independent locally owned hotels have had to compete with private lodging that emerged in recent decades, such as vacation rentals and Airbnb.

The Hotel as a Building Type

Many modest urban hotels and apartment buildings closely resembled commercial office buildings in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with bearing brick structures, double-loaded corridor plans, small rooms with exposure to daylight, windows set in single openings. Small lobbies led to iron-framed elevators and stairs. Exteriors 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. They were typically [still] executed in a modest neoclassical mode with brick cladding and distinctive terra cotta ornament at the base and building cap." Plans retained efficient double-loaded upper floor corridors and repetitive guest rooms, but with separate bathrooms.

Hotel Development in Seattle

By 1853, the settlement community of Seattle had its first hotel, the Felker House, which appears to have been a modest boarding house. By the late 19th century, however, Seattle – like cities throughout the nation – had numerous hotels serving a wide range of guests, including temporary and permanent residents. The late 1880s saw the emergence of elegant hotels, as well as the workingmen's lodgings clustered along 1st Avenue between Cherry and Columbia Streets in close proximity to the city's central waterfront and earliest passenger railway depot.

Hotel development was stimulated by improvements in railroad service that brought immigrants, tourists, and entrepreneurs to Seattle. The Occidental Seattle Hotel (1864, 1887 & 1889, destroyed), offered the city's premier tourist-oriented lodging, though there were many other hotels located in the area. At least a dozen of these hotels were destroyed by Seattle's Great Fire in 1889, which burned most of the Pioneer Square and nascent downtown areas, but within four years some 63 hotels were op0erating. By the turn of the century, tourist and residential hotels lined the west side of 1st Avenue to Pike Street.

After the fire, both the Rainier Hotel (1889, destroyed) between Columbia and Marion Streets on 5th Avenue and the Rainier-Grand Hotel (c.1889, destroyed) at Marion Street and 1st Avenue functioned as major tourist hotels. (The Rainier was built originally as a resort hotel, as was the Denny Hotel (1890-1892, destroyed). These large wood-frame buildings were located above the commercial and residential districts and offered panoramic views of the harbor. Other post-fire tourist-oriented hotels included the Butler Hotel (1893, destroyed) and the Lincoln Hotel (1900, destroyed), which was promoted as a residential hotel with family-style living quarters.

By 1900 many of Seattle's operating hotels served long-term residents rather than temporary visitors, 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, as well as the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific (AYP) Exposition. This fair drew some 3.7 million visitors in

1909. As a result, the 1910 Polk Directory lists over 475 hotels. The buildings varied in size and accommodations to serve every class, from the wealthy to recent immigrants, tourists, transient businessmen, and laborers.

An article in 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. One such building that served transient residential needs was the Leamington / Pembrook Apartment-Hotel (later the Milner or the Pacific Hotel) built on Spring Street in 1916-1917.

Seattle's population grew rapidly from 80,671 in 1900 to 237,194 in 1910, and 321,931 in 1920. While the significant growth from 1900 to 1910 is attributed primarily to annexations, the second decade represents an increase in residents, and a sharp rise in housing needs. By the mid-1920s, the demand for apartment accommodations in Seattle exceeded supply. In 1925 City Building Superintendent Robert Proctor noted in the local business paper, "The phenomenal apartment house . . . development experienced last year was the result of delayed activity, just as now an active hotel construction program is needed to even up the lean years of the past. Investors have avoided hotel development for several years so that now this city is behind with that type of housing."

During the 1920s the city saw a second boom in hotel development with construction of several luxury hotels and large apartment hotels in the CBD. The new buildings were taller than earlier hotels, which were rarely taller than six stories, and often much larger with hundreds of guest rooms. Several, including the Spring Apartment Hotel (Kennedy, Vintage Park, 1922), Claremont Apartment Hotel (Hotel Andre, 1925), and Camlin Apartment Hotel (1926), were designed with kitchen facilities in guestrooms to serve as both hotel lodging and apartment. Along with clubs with residential quarters, such as the Sunset and Rainier Clubs, these buildings began to blur the differences between building types.

Impressive high-style residential hotels were built for upper-income visitors and long-term residents: the Frye in Pioneer Square (1911), the Moore and Camlin at the north end of the downtown retail district, and apartment-hotel buildings on First Hill. These buildings offered attractive, convenient residences in well-managed buildings with housekeeping and laundry services for high income and professional residents. Well decorated common areas, such as lobbies, libraries, rooftop terraces, and dining rooms, were offered along with servants' quarters in a few buildings, such as the Sorrento Hotel (1909), and the former Perry Hotel on First Hill.

The Olympic Hotel surpasses these in amenities and luxury. Built at a pivotal location in the Metropolitan Tract in 1923-1924 it appears to have spurred nearby construction of other downtown hotels, all of which were easily accessed by ship, train, and vehicles. New buildings included the subject building in 1926 and the Hungerford Hotel at 400 Spring Street in 1928. Lower scale hotels included the Leamington Hotel and Apartments (1916-1917), 317 Marion Street, which provided simple kitchenettes within guestrooms. In contrast, the Continental Hotel clearly reflects its owner's intention to serve a transient clientele with limited services and modern rooms.

During this period large hotels were built near the retail core that emerged north of the commercial district: the Vance Hotel (1926), Bergonian Hotel / Mayflower Park Hotel (1926-1927) the Benjamin Franklin Hotel (1928, demolished 1980).

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 built in 1930, was the last major downtown hotel constructed during this era, and the tallest one until the 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 1928 Benjamin Franklin Hotel was demolished for construction of 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 office buildings.

The Original Owner – Developer and Contractor Stephen A. Berg

The original Continental Hotel owner was developer and builder Stephen Berg, a well-known member of Seattle's Norwegian community. 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. He soon moved to Seattle, where he later received naturalization papers in 1913. By 1909 Berg had saved to purchase a parcel of land in north Seattle, at 8029 Ashworth Ave N, for $475, and establish a general contracting business. He married Rachel Tjentland, another Norwegian Lutheran immigrant, in 1910. In 1912 the couple purchased a house at 3402 Woodland Park Avenue N, which later became the site of his office. The Bergs later resided at 4105 Wallingford Avenue N.

Berg's early construction projects include steel framing for the L.C. Smith Building (Smith Tower), residences for E.E. Davis and Fred Wagner, "and many other homes which form the principal ornaments of their respective neighborhoods, pleasing to the eye and constructed with a conscientious regard for real utility and comfort and health of their inmates."

Berg's ambitions and reputation resulted in a biography published by Clarence Bagley in 1916:

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.

Berg's business prospered, and by the early 1920s it had grossed more than one million dollars in revenue. A respected businessman, he was known for constructing and selling moderate sized quality houses. In 1923 Berg commissioned Seattle architects Stuart and Wheatley to design a modest four-unit building on Capitol Hill, at 405 E Olive Street, which he named the Stephensberg Apartments. He sold the building that same year for $90,000, and soon after began developing a far more elaborate and larger building, the Biltmore Apartments at 418 E Loretta Place. Berg initially planned the Biltmore to be

a five-story, $350,000 building, and the city's second largest apartment complex. His ambitions grew, and he had architects Stuart and Wheatley add another story, which increased the building's estimated construction cost to $565,000. The design, a Tudor-Gothic Revival style, concrete frame structure featured brick and decorative terra cotta masonry, a grand lobby, 125 luxury units accessed by two elevators, and fitted with built-ins and modern kitchen appliances. Occupants were served by 24-hour on-site staff, and Berg even had a rooftop antenna to connect to his tenants' radios. In 1925 he built the Biltmore Annex at 113-117 Summit Avenue, also designed by Stuart and Wheatley, to provide associated retail shops to serve the residents.

Upon completion of the Biltmore Apartments, Berg began three large hotel projects: the 10-story Claremont / Andra Hotel, at 2000 4th Avenue, completed in January 1926; the 11-story Continental Hotel (the subject building), completed in December 1926; and the 12-story Bergonian Hotel at 405 Olive Way, completed in July 1927. The Bergonian was a luxury building containing 240 guest rooms, spacious lobby and lounge areas, and a restaurant, and its construction cost $750,000. Despite their historical and architectural significance, none of Berg's have been recognized by a local landmark designation or National Register listing.

In July 1926 Stephen Berg leased or purchased through contract the parcel for the Continental Hotel from landowner Sarah Slyfield. Slyfield had acquired the property in April 1917; records suggest it contained a wood frame boarding house prior to the hotel's construction. Berg's construction crews began excavation of a deep shaft in spring of 1926 to ensure the solidity of the building's foundation over the Great Northern railroad tunnel, which ran below the easterly half of the site. The hotel was built for the cost of between $176,000 and $300,000 (citation differ). Berg owned and operated it through a corporation, the Continental Hotel Company Inc.

As both a builder and property manager Berg assured his apartment residents and hotel guests were well served. His buildings were well designed, and of long-lasting durable construction. He built the nearby retail component to serve the Biltmore Apartments residents, and was known for serving fresh salmon in his hotel restaurants that he had personally caught while sailing.

Berg followed his downtown hotels projects with construction of the Casa Nita Apartments at 12th Avenue and Republican Street on Capitol Hill. By mid-1927 he had developed and constructed seven large buildings. However, his business incurred considerable debt and required multiple mortgages to support its developments. At the end of 1927 he was forced to sell the Biltmore building, after having mortgaged it for well over $100,000, and in 1928 he gave up operation and ownership of the Continental Hotel, Inc. Between 1927 and 1930 his creditors filed over 20 lawsuits against him, and Berg and his wife were forced to forfeit their assets after declaring bankruptcy in late 1930. In May 1934 the company, Continental Hotel, Inc., ceased operating. His marriage strained, Berg retired alone to a farm in Auburn at the age of 43, his wife and children remaining in Seattle. Stephen Berg died on January 5, 1966, at the age of 78.

In addition to his business interest, Berg was active in community and civic activities, in particular those serving the Norwegian community. He was a member of the Lay Association for Lutheran Unity, which believed "that European linguistic, provincial, and racial divisions must give way to American unity" in order for its church to become the country's largest congregation.

<u>Other Property Owners</u>

The hotel property passed through a number of owners in the 1930s through the late-1970s until it was acquired by members of the Neyhart family. Permit records and newspaper citations note:

5/31/1934 – 12/18/1935	William Mackay, (deceased Dec 1935; rename to Hotel Earl)
12/18/1935 – 3/28/1939	Frederick T. Fischer (deceased March 1938)
3/28/1939 – 7/6/1939	Estate of Frederick T. Fischer, John D. Stockton + The Pacific National Bank of Seattle, trustees
7/6/1939 – 12/14/1951	Estate of Frederick T. Fischer, deceased; John D. Stockton + The Pacific National Bank of Seattle, trustees, estate of Lucile C. Fisher,
12/14/1951 – 10/3/1961	Thomas Fischer Gates
10/3/1961 – 11/24/1961	Fred P. Streib, Lee F. Sutcliffe, Kenneth C. Davis, jointly + severally (change of name to Heart of Seattle Hotel)
11/24/1961 – 8/30/1963	Heart of Seattle Hotel Co. Inc. (sister to the 1962 Edgewater Hotel)
8/30/1963 – 1/16/1964	Senfour Investment Co. Inc.
1/16/1964 – 8/13/1965	Republic National Life Insurance Co.
8/13/1965 – 4/25/1977	Pier 67, Inc. (Edgewater Hotel ownership)
4/25/1977 – 2021	Heart of Seattle, Inc., dba Hotel Seattle

Construction History

<u>The Continental Era – 1926-1934</u>

Stephen Berg officially opened the Continental Hotel for business on December 4, 1926 with an evening gala that included a series of live music performances. Entertainment was provided by radio station KFQW from its new studios 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." The 100-watt radio station, at frequency 1380 kHz, was established initially in Knierim's Photo Radio Electric Shop in North Bend in mid-1925, and it broadcasted from the hotel from June 30, 1926 to November 11, 1928. The hotel's first floor was changed to accommodate other uses after the radio studio left.

In an 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 Hungerford / Executive Hotel, built for $500,000. These three hotels, and others nearby were situated within a few blocks of the Olympic Hotel, which had opened in 1924. The Olympic promoted its first-class lodging, ballrooms, and meeting facilities, and over 400 varied size guestrooms. The hotel's construction was partially financed by a public bond, and it garnered considerable pride as indicated by the extensive coverage of its construction and opening.

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 $34,000,000 in construction. Investments in hotels and apartment buildings during this period totaled over $5,777,000. This occurred while the city's economy boomed and its population grew.

In addition to the radio studio within the Continental Hotel, Berg installed other retail businesses within the building, including a coffee shop and café in the basement. The configuration of the lower floors changed with the tenants, which included a beauty salon located in the street-level retail space adjacent to the hotel's main entrance on Seneca Street by 1927. The Polk City Directory identified the hotel's manager as Albert E. Walsh in 1927 and 1928; the 1928 entry describes the hotel as having "100 rooms 100 baths, all outside rooms, coffee shop in connection."

In March of 1928, Stephen Berg turned the hotel over to a "veteran hotel man," Herman A. Greenberg, for $240,000. Greenberg, an owner and hotel operator, made it his permanent residence. Greenburg purchased the land which Continental Hotel Company had leased from the estate of the original landowner, Sarah Slyfied a in October 1930. Greenberg owned the Continental Hotel Inc., until May 1934 when he sold it to a retired salesman, William MacKay.

The Earl Hotel – 1934-1961

Upon purchasing the property as an investment, MacKay leased it to another local hotel operator, Earl Hungerford, who changed the hotel name from the Continental to the Earl. Hungerford had entered the hotel business with his father in ca. 1903. At the time he acquired the Continental Hotel 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 held it through October of 1961. The Earl Hotel added a prominent sign on the rooftop of the building in ca 1935. The sign, a typical feature of hotels in the 1930s through the 1950s, helped identify the building before the era of high-rises. The sign was removed in ca 1961 after the hotel was renamed.

The Earl Hotel faced a significant change in June 1957 when its owner announced plans to construct a new "drive-in" entrance from 4th Avenue with a parking facility for 50 automobiles. The project apparently involved plans for the parcel to the south. Changes noted in the project's permit included installation of an additional lobby stair and a balcony above the first floor level and a waiting area or secondary lobby and entry to the mezzanine level on back (south façade) to serve guests arriving from the parking lot. The parking facility was not built, but the back door remains.

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. Sutcliff and others formed the Heart of Seattle Hotel Co. Inc. the following month to own and manage the hotel. Anticipating increased tourism drawn to the 1962 World Fair the new company announced plans for a $2,000,000 project to be completed by January 1962. The proposed project included alterations and refurnishing of the hotel and construction of an adjacent multistory building, both to be operated as the "Heart of Seattle Motor Hotel."

Alterations to the primary north facade of the original hotel building included recladding of the lower level terra cotta, replacement of a rod-supported flat roof marquee over the hotel entry with a new canopy, installation of a coffee shop and/or cocktail lounge in the east retail space adjacent to the lobby, and a new restaurant in the basement named Bavarian Haus. 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 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. That same year a new lounge was reportedly built on the first-floor mezzanine and other changes 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 performances as noted in newspaper ads from the time.

Hotel Seattle – 1977-Present

In April of 1977, Pier 67 Inc. sold the property to a new owner, Heart of Seattle Incorporated. Despite taking "Heart of Seattle" as its corporate name, the new company, owned by members of the Nyherts family, simplified the hotel's name to "Hotel Seattle." It also hired Fry Interiors, a local company to renovate the interior, including the combination of several corner rooms to create a honeymoon suite. Ads cited specials at Bavarian Haus: a 1987 New Year's Eve special: dinner for two and a room.

Hotel Clientele and Retail Occupants

When it opened in 1925 the nearby Olympic Hotel was seen as the city's first-class lodging, providing ballrooms and meeting facilities, and amenities and rooms that garnered pride from many as noted in extensive coverage of its construction and opening. In contrast, the design of the Continental Hotel suggests Stephen Berg's intent to serve a business clientele rather than blue-collar working class visitors who sought out single room occupancy hotels and boarding houses or upper income and professional visitors who were drawn to storied accommodations offered by the Olympic or Berg's Bergonian Hotel for business or vacation travel and special events. 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 classified print ads in local newspapers beginning as early as 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 US hotel industry of $3.21 per night in 1930, or around $51 in 2022 dollars. In contrast, the more luxurious Bergonian Hotel posted room rates of up to $4.50, while rates at the Olympic Hotel were greater. (Estimated average household income for cities the size of Seattle in 1930 range from $2,450 to $4,000; $55 per was the average weekly union wage, and $42 was the average monthly rent for a single-family house.)

Later print advertisements for the hotel reflected the worsening economic conditions following the stock market crash on October 29, 1929. In December 1929, ads described the hotel as "refinement with economy," and in December 1931 as "economy with refinement" with rooms prices starting 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." The hotel also advertised an option for permanent occupancy in October 1949. The following year, in September 1950, it announced completion of a "complete" renovation. Room prices advertised in The Seattle Times between 1950 and 1956 ranged from $15-$17.50 per week and $60-$70 per month. These rates contrast with the U.S. hotel industry average of $5 per night in 1950 and $10 per night in 1960. By 1958 the Earl Hotel's advertised room rates ranged for $4.50 to $8 per night.

Retail tenants of the former radio studios and street-level commercial unit have varied over time. They included a barbershop in 1938, Seattle Recording Studios in 1936-1940, George Rex Studios (music instruction) in 1940-1945, Central Catholic Gifts in 1949-1951, Communication Workers of America in 1949-1955, and Plus Computing Machines Agency in 1956-1959. In 1984-1985 Buddy Squirrel Nuts opened a shop in the hotel. A coffee shop and cocktail lounge also occupied the space at times.

The Building's Style and Materials

Seattle's remaining buildings terra cotta clad buildings, such as the Continental Hotel, express the design and construction legacy of the early 20th century, while its distinctive stepping massing embodies the period from the mid-1920s through the 1930s.

Design Origins

As noted in the architectural description, the Continental Hotel / Hotel Seattle embodies an eclectic features of a stepped Art Deco skyscraper style along with Gothic revival decorative elements. Despite its ornamentation, the massing of the building represents a departure from historicism.

Many people identify Art Deco primarily as a style of ornament with decorative fluting and reed shapes, horizontal bands, chevrons or zigzags, and richly treated surfaces, including inlays, castings, polychrome glazes, and etched glass. The origins of the style can be traced back to early 20th century European aesthetic movements that sought to break with historicism, such as French Cubism, Dutch de Stijl, and Italian Futurism. Examples of European Art Deco date from the teens, but the 1925 Parisian Exposition des Arts Decoratifs et Industrials Moderns, brought it worldwide attention.

Art Deco architecture also expresses a dramatic break with the past historicism and the traditional Beaux Arts composition of facades with a base, shaft, and cap. In America, the Art Deco style coincided with technical and social changes that impacted building design, in particular with the stepped skyscraper where horizontal layers gave way to a vertical emphasis and receding upper floors.
The realization of the stepped skyscraper came after New York City zoning regulations were passed initially in 1916 in reaction to blocks of tall commercial structures in Manhattan in an effort to retain daylight at the ground plane. The resulting American skyscrapers are exemplified by stepped towers and ziggurat-shape buildings rendered by Hugh Ferris and architectural designs by Raymond Hood with his Daily News Building (1929). The influential Gothic Revival stepped style of the Chicago Tribune Tower (1924-1925), by Hood and architect John Mean Howells, used buttresses and gargoyles on its upper floors, in the so-called "American Perpendicular Style." Hood's American Radiator Building (1924) features brick masonry with stone and terra cotta decoration that, like the Hotel Seattle's original design, appears to be both Gothic and Art Deco.

Other nationally known Art Deco designers include Norman Bel Geddes, Raymond Loewy, Russell Wright, Lorelle Guild, Walter Teague, and William Lascaux. In Seattle, local designers who had previously worked with revival styles began developing eclectic Art Deco and Moderne designs. They included architects J. Lester Holmes, R. C. Reamer, Carl Gould, Earl Morrison, Floyd Naramore, John Graham, Sr., James Schack and A. H. Albertson, as well as B. Dudley Stuart.

American cities that are known for Art Deco architecture include Miami, Tulsa, and Los Angeles. In contrast, Art Deco's presence in Seattle appears more limited as it was introduced late and largely in commercial applications, where it provided a fashionable and urbane identity. But because of the worldwide economic depression, Art Deco's popularity was cut short, and later replaced by buildings embodying "a new machine art: honest, simple, and functionally expressive . . ."

Buildings in downtown Seattle that represent the stepped skyscraper Art Deco style include:

- The Northern Life Tower, 1212 Third Avenue (A. H. Albertson, Joseph Wilson, and Paul D. Richardson, 1928, a local landmark)

- Olive Tower, 1624 Boren Ave, (Earl W. Morrison architect, 1928)
- Roosevelt Hotel, 1531 2nd Avenue (John Graham, Sr., 1928-1930)
- Exchange Building (John Graham, 1929)
- Olympic Tower / United Shopping Tower (Henry Bittman, 192 and 1929)
- Washington Athletic Club, 1325 6th Avenue (Sherwood D. Ford, 1930)
- Textile Tower, 1813 7th Avenue (Earl W. Morrison, 1930)
- Federal Office Building, 909 1st Avenue (James A. Wetmore, 1931-1932)

Outside of downtown buildings that represent stepped Art Deco style include the Meany Hotel / Graduate Hotel in the University District (R. C. Reamer, 1931), Harborview Hospital First Hill (1931), the U.S. Marine Hospital / PAC Med on Beacon Hill (1932). A lower-scale example is the Seattle Art Museum / Asian Art Museum in Volunteer Park (Bebb and Gould, 1932).

Material Features

Traditional exterior materials used in the early 20th century on downtown buildings include cut and polished stone, masonry and cast stone, while technical advancement introduced enameled steel panels, reflective, tempered and laminated glass, glass tiles and glass block, decorative metal screens, and aluminum window frames. Seattle buildings from this period are often clad in terra cotta ("baked earth"), which was also used for decoration because of the plastic nature of its mold-making, variety of textures and colors and reflective glazes. This material also provided a fireproof and weatherproof skin. In the Northwest, local manufacturers of terra cotta, such as the Northern Clay Company, Auburn, and the Denny Renton Clay and Coal Company were organized by 1900. These firms provided materials for many of the region's early 20th century buildings, including the permanent structures at the 1909 Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition. In 1925 the two companies were acquired through mergers by the large California manufacturer, Gladding McBean. By that data terra cotta was produced in a wide range of products and colors, highly glazed or mottled finishes, and decorative shapes from Classical, Beaux Arts, Mediterranean, Gothic Revival, Art Deco and other eclectic styles.

Seattle saw the use of terra cotta on masonry structures as early as the 1890s, as represented by Pioneer Square buildings designed with Sullivanesque and Richardsonian Romanesque elements, such as the Delmar Hotel (1890), Pioneer Building (1892), Arlington Building (1901), Seattle Quilt Building (1904) and City Club (1890/1905) where terra cotta complemented or replaced cut stone.

However, the unique advantages of terra cotta emerged only later with the building of skyscrapers: the material was less costly and far lighter weight than stone, and this 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). These are among the 120 examples of early 20th century Seattle downtown terra cotta buildings catalogued by Allied Arts in 1986. Others that demonstrate the material's expressive range include the Union Stable (1909), Cobb Building (1909), Joshua Green Building (1913), Arctic Club (1914-1917), Coliseum Theater (1916), Terminal Sales Building (1923), Camlin Hotel (1926), Mann Building (1926), Olympic Tower (1929), Old Federal Building (1932), Woolworth Building (1939), Seattle Labor Temple (1942), and Sailors Union of the Pacific Building (1954).

Throughout the 1920s terra cotta continued to be used on smaller scale buildings and concrete frame structures as well as steel framed skyscrapers. This was the case with the Continental Hotel / Hotel Seattle where the fire-resistant and noise-abating concrete frame was finished with brick, and terra cotta used for decorative elements. 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."

With rising production costs and the advancement of the Great Depression the use of terra cotta declined. Its popularity diminished with changing taste and the run-up to World War. Gladding McBean closed its Auburn and Van Asselt facilities and moved their operations to Renton, and it later consolidated manufacturing in a single facility in Lincoln, California. With the rise of post-war Modernism, symbolic decoration was eliminated in favor of abstraction, and buildings received less costly and planer cladding. Thus, the terra cotta buildings that remain in Seattle represent a unique early 20th century period of technological, cultural, and aesthetic change.

The Original Designers – Architects Stuart and Wheatley

The Continental Hotel was designed by architects Bertram Dudley Stuart, Jr. and Arthur Wheatley, whose Seattle partnership was active from ca 1925 to 1930. Other Seattle buildings designed by the firm include the Landham Residential Hotel; and a number of University District buildings: the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity House at 4506 17th Avenue NE (1925); Davison Apartments, a 22-unit building at 5003 15th Avenue NE (1926) and the Levere Apartments at 4105 Brooklyn Avenue NE (1927); along with the Sunset Electric Company Building #3 at 1111 E Pine Street on Capitol Hill (1925-1926, demolished); and the Garfield Building, 715 24th Avenue (1929). After his partnership with Wheatley ended, Stuart went on to establish partnerships with other well-known architects: Stuart, Kirk, and Durham, Architects in 1941 to 1945, and Stuart and Durham in 1941 to 1952.

Buildings designed by Stuart and Wheatley for Stephen Berg include the Biltmore Apartments (1923), Claremont Apartment Hotel (1925), and the Bergonian / Mayflower Hotel (1926-1927), as well as the Continental Hotel. Stuart and Wheatley or Stuart alone is also attributed with the design of the Exeter House Apartments (1927), and the Marlborough Apartments (1926-1927).

Bertram D. Stuart, Jr. (1885 – 1977)

Bertram Dudley Stuart was born in London, England, the son of a local merchant in the Surrey district of Epsom. He spent his early years in Kent, but his educational background has not been verified. By 1910 he was living in Seattle with his mother and stepfather, Arthur Sackville-West was identified as a draftsman in the local directory. (His mother had remarried in ca. 1890. She and her husband migrated to the U.S. and settled in Seattle.) Stuart married in Seattle in 1910.

A talented and very prolific designer, he worked initially as a draftsman for Saunders and Lawton, Architects in 1910 before moving to Canada. He opened his own sole practice in Edmonton, Alberta, and then moved to Vancouver where he and his wife had two children in 1912 and 1914.

Stuart's early Canadian projects involved the Palace of Horticulture for the Vancouver Exhibition Association (1911) and the Forestry Pavilion / B.C. Wood Products Building for the Hastings Park Exhibition Grounds (1913), a rustic Classical style wood framed and log structure designed in partnership with Howard E. White. The two men practiced together in ca. 1913 to 1915, when Stuart moved permanently to Seattle. His other projects in British Columbia include a rooming house for M.K. Nigore (1911), 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), and the Campbell Apartment Block in Vancouver (1914). With Howard E. White Stuart designed a number of other residential projects in Vancouver including the Collingwood Residence for Edward J. White (1912), Point Grey Residence for H. N. Halberg & Co (1912), Point Grey Residence for William W. Ingledew (1913) and a residence for Mrs. Philip W. Burbridge (1913), along with the Watson Bros. Fish Curing Building (1913),

Rowling Apartments (1913), and the Bachelor's Club (1913). In a separate partnership, Stuart designed a Chinese Association Building (1912-1913).

In Seattle he established and operated a sole practice, B. Dudley Stuart, Architect, from 1918 to ca. 1924 before partnering with architect Arthur Wheatley. The two men are credited with many apartment houses and commercial and light industrial buildings as well as a sorority house and the hotel buildings for Stephen Berg. Bertram Dudley Stuart continued to work in several partnerships and as a sole practitioner until 1971. He died in 1977 in Seattle at the age of 92.

Arthur Wheatley (1885 – 1916)

Wheatley, like Stuart, came from England. He was born in Barnsley, Yorkshire, on December 13, 1885, and resided In Britain to at least until 1901 according to 1891 and 1901 census records. In March 1919 he and his wife, Ethel, arrived by ship in the U.S. They soon after came to Seattle from Vancouver, B.C. Wheatly received his naturalization papers in September 1919, and became a citizen in 1930. The U.S. Census from that year noted his family's residence in Seattle and his work as an architect in the industry simply as "houses." In the 1940 U.S. Census he was noted as an engineer working on WPA projects. Wheatley died in Seattle in May 7, 1946, at the age of 61.

Wheatley practiced as a sole proprietor in Seattle from 1920 to 1924 and in association with architect Edward Thomas Osborn in 1923-1924. He joined Stuart in partnership in 1925 to 1930, and was again a sole proprietor from 1931 to 1942. One of his early projects was the Lockhart House (1919-1920), a two-story Colonial style residence at 201 E Boston on North Capitol Hill. Wheatley designed a four-story addition to the 1909 Holland Building at 1415 4th Avenue in 1923. He is also credited for the design of the Central Auto Terminal Project, a six-story Tudor Revival warehouse/retail building in association with Thomas Osborn (1923-1924, unbuilt).

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

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