REPORT ON DESIGNATION   LPB 250/16

Name and Address of Property: Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Garfield Exchange –
1529 4th Avenue West

Legal Description: Lots 1, 2, 3 and the North 10 Feet of Lot 4 in block 38 of Law's Second
Addition to the City of Seattle, according to the Plat Recorded in Volume
1 of Plats at Page 53A, in King County, Washington.

At the public meeting held on April 20, 2016 the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation
Board voted to approve designation of the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Garfield Exchange
at 1529 4th Avenue West 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 Context

The subject property is situated near the top of Queen Anne Hill at an elevation of 415'. It is
within a residential neighborhood, in close proximity to two commercial arterials - W Galer
Street one block to the south, and Queen Anne Avenue N four blocks to the east. The
character of the immediate neighborhood is also provided by the surrounding buildings and by
mature landscaping of trees and well maintained gardens. Most of the blocks north of W Galer
Street, such as the one containing the subject property, were originally platted with north-south
alleys, while older plats to the south are without them. Garages are provided typically along
the alleys, with few positioned on the primary sides of the houses.

The blocks surrounding the Exchange building consist largely of older single family houses designed in a range of styles – Victorian and Queen Anne, Colonial and Tudor Revival, Classic Box and Shingle and Arts and Crafts – along with some low-rise multi-unit residences dating from the mid-century, and a few recent contemporary houses. Notable among these houses is the historic H. Ambrose Kiehl House at 421 W Galer Street (1903). Nearby houses, which are cited in the City of Seattle's Historical Sites Survey as having potential significance, include Four Square style residences at 314 and 318 W Galer Streets (1906 and 1905 respectively), 656 W Galer Street (1907), 606 W Blaine Street (1907) and 716 W Garfield Street (1908); an Arts and Crafts-Swiss Chalet style residences at 717 W Garfield (1914), and vernacular houses at 619 W Blaine Street (1902) and 411 W Galer Street (1903). The database survey results also include the Georgian Revival style Sagamore Apartments at 621 W Galer Street (1917) and the Tudor Revival apartment house at 400 Blaine Street.

Several institutions are situated nearby. Immediately to the north, across W Garfield Street, is the landmark Queen Anne Public Library, at 400 W Garfield Street (1911-1913). This library was built with part of a 1911 $70,000 Carnegie grant, which funded construction of it and the Columbia branch library. The site was selected by the Seattle Library Board in 1912 after extensive community controversy over the location. At that time, the top of Queen Anne Hill was a rapidly growing residential neighborhood. Colonel Alden Blethen, a Queen Anne resident and owner of the *Seattle Times*, contributed $500 to purchase the site, with the city paying the balance of $6,500.

The library, designed by architects Somervell and Harlan Thomas in a late Tudor Revival style, was renovated in 2006 – 2007 under the "Libraries for All" program (BOLA, Queen Anne Library Landmark Nomination, 2001, p. 13-15). The building's primary facade faces south onto W Garfield Street, with a raised entry porch and main entry similar in its formality to that of the exchange building. To the west of the library, there is the Queen Anne United Methodist Church, located at 1606 5th Avenue W, which dates from ca. 1905.

On the west side of the same block as the subject building stood the original Seattle Fire Department Station No. 24, at 1520 5th Avenue W (1903, closed 1949, demolished and replaced by a four-unit dwelling in 1958). Approximately two blocks to the southeast, there is another phone company property, owned by Century Link, at 1503 3rd Avenue W, which contains an operations building and tall cell tower structure dating from 1956 to 1985. West Queen Anne Playfield is about two blocks to the northeast, while the historic West Queen Anne School, at 515 W Galer Street (1895-96 and 1916) is two blocks to the southeast.

The two properties closest to the Exchange building are single-family residences. Abutting it on the south, across narrow side yards, there is a small Tudor Revival style house at 1525 4th Avenue W (1922). To the west, across the alley, is an older Craftsmen style dwelling at 1532 5th Avenue W (1914).

The Site

The site is a relatively flat parcel of 120' by 100.68,' with a total of 12,000 square feet. It slopes slightly downward, with an overall grade change of 9' from the northwest to the southeast corner elevations of 410.67' and 401.06' respectively. It contains the subject building, along with a paved driveway at the building's northwest corner, entered from W Garfield Street. The front yard setback on the primary (east) side of the property, along 4th Avenue W, is 15'-2," while the side yard setback on the primary (north) side, along W Garfield Street, is 15'-0" wide. These yards with finished turf increase the site's apparent size as the lawn extends beyond the property line onto the public-right of way to the paved, 6'-0" wide sidewalk. The sidewalk is located 7'-0" beyond the property line on the east and 12'-0" on the north. To the west is an estimated 16'-wide paved alley serving the subject property and residential lots in the same block. It also provides access to the back. A residential lot with a single-family house abuts the site to the south.

Landscaping is well-maintained and consists of lawn at the east and north yards and various shrubs and perennial ground covers near the stair leading from the east sidewalk to the front entry. An outstanding feature of the landscaping is the mature coastal redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) situated near the northeast corner of the property. It measures 53" in diameter and is considered "Exceptional" per City of Seattle's Director's Rule 16-2008, according to an arborist's report to the owner (Tree Solutions, April 22, 2015). The date of the tree's planting is unknown, but it likely dates from after the early 1930s as it is not shown in photographs taken soon after the building's initial construction as a two-story structure in 1921, nor in the 1937 King County Assessor's property record card photograph.

Some damage has occurred to the brick exterior stair walls and an existing retaining wall on the north of the exterior stair that leads to the main entry, where original masonry materials are missing. The owner's representative has noted that this damage has been apparent, but stabilized, for some years.

Along the south side of the building, there is a paved service walkway that provides access to the building's courtyard and what was once a coal chute off the adjacent alley. This walkway was not a feature in the original construction, and drawings indicate it may have been added in ca. 1950. Presently, the walkway is entered through secured chain-link gates, and there is a chain-link fence along the south property line that encloses the outdoor space. The courtyard is currently used for storing maintenance materials.

Two underground tanks were located in the north side yard, one of which was shown in the original site plan dating from 1929. According to Glenn Osako, the SPL's Capital Improvement Program Manager, these tanks contained two different types of oil one to start and operate the building's heating system. The exterior tanks were removed in response to State of Washington Department of Ecology guidelines by September 30, 2015. One smaller tank is in the basement where it has been emptied and cleaned, and buried 5' below grade.

The Structure and Exterior Facades

Note: In this report, building levels are referred to as "first floor," "second floor" and "third floor" in accordance with renovation drawings prepared in 1977 by Seattle architects Wright, Gildow, Hartman and Teegarden. Earlier documents prepared in 1921 and 1929 use the terms basement floor," "first floor," and "second floor." Notes on the 1929 drawings indicate that the building was designed to accept an additional floor ("future third floor."), or what actually would have been a fourth story.

Constructed as a two-story building in 1921, with a third floor addition in 1929, the PT&T Garfield Exchange / Seattle Public Library Queen Anne warehouse is a simply-massed, flat roofed, concrete-framed structure with brick exterior walls. Overall building dimensions are approximately 80'-3" north to south, and 104'-0" east to west. These are indicated on the 1929 drawings, along with a note, "dimensions including projection of base of bldg." The plan creates an asymmetrical, U-shaped footprint, and contains a total of 23,040 square feet, including an unfinished partial basement of 5,280 square feet. The partially-concrete-paved courtyard that opens to the south has a width of 18'-7" and a depth of 35'-5." The courtyard's southeastern corner is located 35'-11-1/2" from the southeast corner of the building and its southwestern corner is located 50'-3-1/2" from the southwest corner of the building. The west wall of the courtyard contains the brick chimney for the boiler.

Finish floor-to-floor heights, as noted on the original drawings, are: basement floor to first floor, 11'-3"; first floor to second floor, 15'-3"; second floor to roof, 14'-9." These accommodate the floor slabs and structural beam depths.

The major exterior materials consist of wire-cut, rug-faced clay brick in a variegated color mix ranging from light buff to reddish orange to dark blue/purple, with deeply-raked, vertical gray mortar joints on the primary facades; red common brick on the secondary facades; off-white terra cotta trim at the main entrance, window sills, and exterior stair wall copings; and painted steel or wood window frames. The original terra cotta cornice consisting of crown and dental moldings has been removed and replaced with a flat band of light colored, rough-aggregate finished cementitious material. The loss of the original cornice is one of the few changes to impact the original exterior character of the building.

The roof contains a flat-roofed stair penthouse near the center south side, and is surrounded by a brick parapet approximately 4' in height. Both the penthouse and parapet are sheathed with what appears to be a recently installed, built-up bituminous material coated with silver metallic paint. From the roof level there are panoramic views of the Queen Anne neighborhood and southward of the Seattle skyline. At various times, the roof has also housed communications-related superstructures, such as the 60'-foot-high "Aluminum Tube Tower" shown on the 1977 renovation drawings. (Historic drawings dating from April 30, 1950 indicate that there may have been a "Radio Tower Platform," with cable extensions placed on the rooftop around that time.)

The overall appearance of the primary facades on 4th Avenue W and W Garfield Street is one of restrained neo-classicism alluding to earlier, more richly-ornamented Beaux Art structures, primarily through the visual importance given to the principal entrance located on the second floor on the east side of the building. Here, the terra cotta door surround is of a large scale that signals the building's point of entry and creates a strong sense of arrival at the top of the double exterior staircase leading from the sidewalk. The fine Greco-Roman detailing of the glazed pieces includes a substantial cornice supported at either end by scrolled brackets, between which runs a course of dental molding, and a molded horizontal panel. Each of the molded header and jamb pieces, which return into the exterior vestibule, displays a single circular medallion that, in the aggregate, provide a visual rhythm that also serves to break down the doorway's imposing scale. Molded vertical side panels complete the entryway design.

The original double entry door with wire glass lites and fixed transom has been replaced by a functional, securable flush metal door surrounded by a metal infill panel. A notable feature of the exterior vestibule, which is clad entirely in terra cotta, is the original marble-lined telephone box on the south wall, probably originally used for communication with the building's interior. An entry is situated below the main entry, where is concealed by the exterior stair, and entered through a brick side arch.

The roughly-textured panelized brick exterior walls, with their earthen colors and use of diverse bond patterns, provide a sharp contrast to the smooth, white terra cotta trim and bridge the stylistic gap between Neo-Classicism and the Arts and Crafts Movement. In particular, the mix of hues and tones creates an almost rustic effect that plays against the building's formal massing and the regular placement of the window openings. The patterning of the brick masonry is one of the building's most character-defining features. Beginning at grade and proceeding upwards, it is arranged as follows on the primary facades:

- At the first floor, English Bond culminating in a header course at the water table.

- Above the water table, a full soldier course surmounted by a half soldier course.

- At the second floor, English Bond interrupted by large window openings and brick wall panels of approximately the same size as the window openings. These panels have fields of English Bond contained by one-and-a-half soldier courses at the top and bottom and stacked full bricks at the sides of mostly lighter hue, providing contrast and the suggestion of framing.

- At the third floor, a repetition of the second floor pattern.

- At the top of the facade, English Bond above the cornice replacement material.

The high quality of the mason's work and use of matching masonry materials requires careful observation to identify the transition between the original 1921 two-story building and its third floor addition, which was constructed in 1929-1930. In contrast to the materials on the primary

facades, the secondary facades on the south and west consist of common red brick masonry, with typical mortar joints, laid in a Common Header Bond pattern.

The large, paired window openings, taller on the second floor where the double-hung sashes are topped by transoms, set up a strong, steady rhythm on the two primary facades. This effect is enhanced by the continuation of the brick wall plane vertically between the window pairs, rather than the use of double window assembly in walls set back from the wall plane. The double-hung wood windows on the second and third floors are 3:3 types. The vertical dimension of the lites is about twice the horizontal, creating a vertical emphasis that plays against the strong horizontality of the building mass. The Second floor window transoms and the first floor awning windows are also divided into three lites.

At the northwest corner of the building and southeast corner of the courtyard, where the wire-cut face brick of the primary facades turns the corner and transitions to common red brick on the secondary facades, the brickwork pattern creates the effect of quoining, not only through the difference in color and texture, but also by the staggered endpoints of the rows in groups of four to suggest traditional stone quoining. Subtle details, such as this one, provide additional interest to the simple building form.

Two other interesting features of the secondary facades are the hoisting beam at the third floor loading door, which projects over the alley, and the roll-up steel fire shutters installed above the south-facing windows between the courtyard and the southwest corner of the building. The window openings on these facades and in the courtyard all have the same type of terra cotta sill pieces as the primary facades, giving the more utilitarian parts of the exterior some of the refinement of the public-facing facades.

Interior Layout and Features

All three floors of the building comprise largely undifferentiated space, signifying its original commercial or light-industrial use, but also well suited to its function as a storage facility sine the late 1970s. The courtyard and main stair hall divide the rectangular shaped southwest area from the remainder of the building volume, creating smaller spaces in that corner of the plan on each level. On the 1929 drawings, the larger, L-shaped open area that takes up more than three quarters of the plan is labeled "Apparatus Room" and the smaller areas are called "Operating Room" and "Operators' Rest Room." The latter, which is located directly outside the women's toilet room, probably contained a lounge area with comfortable seating or even cots for female employees. This was a common element in workplaces of that time, and its presence reflects the period's social conventions that saw women as more fragile than men and requiring special facilities or amenities. Ancillary spaces include the toilet rooms the boiler room and, on the third floor, a room currently used as an on-site office.

The toilet rooms contain the original porcelain fixtures, including pedestal sinks for washing, mop sinks for cleaning, and flush-valve toilets; ceramic mosaic floors; and "subway" tile wainscoting with molded edge and trim pieces. The white and gray-veined marble slab stall partitions are supported by overhead metal rails, and are hung with single-panel wood doors

affixed to them with heavy butterfly hinges that appear to be nickel-plated, as do the latches and plumbing fittings.

In general, the floors are of exposed concrete at the first floor and linoleum or vinyl tile flooring at the upper floors. Walls, partitions, and column surrounds are typically painted plaster, although in some areas on the south and west perimeter walls the plaster has been removed, exposing the common brick where there appears to have been water intrusion. The original drawings mention painted plaster and lath on 2" metal furring on walls and ceilings and linoleum flooring. Some wood window trim has been removed also at these locations. Ceilings are typically exposed concrete framing members and the underside of floor slabs, all painted white. The interior doors are typically three-panel wood type with patinated brass hardware. Most of the original steam radiators are extant. HVAC, fire sprinkler and electrical systems were added later. The sprinkler pipes and conduit remain exposed, but there is no longer a mechanical HVAC system. Instead, large space heaters were added by the Library to keep the building minimally warm.

The main stairway is fitted with a finished oak handrail between the first and second floors and a metal pipe type handrail at the stair penthouse. Bases and thresholds at the second and third floors are of the same gray-veined marble as the toilet stalls.

Interior features of particular interest are small niches placed at various locations on the perimeter walls. These are trimmed in brick, shelved in slate and were serviced by gas pipes, now capped, controlled by brass valves on the wall a few inches to one side. On the original drawings dating from September 10, 1929, they are labeled as "Soldering Niches." (Within the exterior vestibule of the main entry, there is a similar shaped niche, but it is marble-clad.) Other original items, on the south perimeter wall windows, which are in close proximity to the property line, are the manually-operated release mechanisms for the exterior, coiling steel fire shutters.

Notes on the 1920's drawings identify another feature that was particular to the building's original function as a telephone exchange. This consists of a row of "cable slots" along the north perimeter wall at the Apparatus Room and "cable holes" at various other locations, cut through the concrete floor to allow cabling to rise up through the building. Original framing plans indicate that the floors were heavily reinforced to hold heavy equipment.

A second exit stair and elevator, added in the late 1970's, are located at the north east corner of the building. These circulation elements are in poor condition and were not accessed during the site tour.

Changes to the Original Building

On-site observations, and SPL-provided drawings and DPD permit records indicate the original phased construction, and changes that have been made to the 94 year-old building:

Date	Description
1921	Plans Prepared by Building Department, Office of Chief Engineer, The Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company
September 10, 1929	Addition to Garfield Office, Stairwell & Details
January 24, 1942	Diesel Oil Tank Engine, Air Vent, Exhaust and Areaway
January 30, 1950	New Passageway Across Court & Miscellaneous Toilet Changes, 2nd Floor
April 30, 1950	Radio Tower Platform
March 2, 1961	Closed Cable Slot (south masonry wall and 4'-1" by 3'-* steel window)
December 7, 1977	Seattle Public Library, Queen Anne Facility Renovation, 15320 Fourth Avenue West, Seattle (by Wright Gildow Hartman Teegarden, Architects & Planners, Seattle), Permit No. 573876

Drawings from the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Co. from 1950 include the addition of aluminum tube framed antenna on the rooftop tower, with a 4' square platform and guy wires to roof corners.

Despite its internal remodel and loss of the cornice and original entry door(s) the building retains some of its original character. Interior finishes are in poor condition, and the owner has reported that considerable lead paint and asbestos-containing materials are present, requiring mitigation or abatement. In addition, an upgrade to address the unreinforced masonry construction is strongly advised for any future occupancy.

SIGNIFICANCE
Historic Overview of Queen Anne Hill

Before pioneer settlement began in the 1850s, members of the Puget Sound Salish tribes occupied much of Seattle, including parts of Queen Anne Hill. Settlers claimed much of the land in the 1870s and 1880s, and its dense forests were cleared for timber. In 1883, the south slope and upper hill area, on which the warehouse is located, was annexed to Seattle. The neighborhood was known alternately as Queen Anne Hill, Nobb Hill, Queen Anne Towne, and Galer Hill. Seattle's late 19th century saw the construction of many large estate homes on the south slope of the hill.

During the period of 1880 to 1890, about 65% of the land that makes up Queen Anne Hill was subdivided, and most of it was platted into narrow, single-family lots, typically 30' by 120', and sold for around $300. These lots, on the top of Queen Anne Hill, were aimed at middle-class buyers. Larger lots on the south slope commanded higher prices. For example, a 125' wide corner lot was advertised in 1890 for $2,760. At this time, similar large view lots on Capitol and First Hills were advertised for $5,500 and $10,000 (Reinartz, p. 73 – 75). Seattle boomed during this decade, and its population grew from only 3,533 to more than 80,000. In response, the city expanded northward. In 1883, Seattle extended its city limits north from the previous line, along Galer Street, to McGraw Street on the top of the hill. In 1890, it expanded again, to annex the entire hill north of McGraw Street and west of 3rd Avenue W. By 1889, there were sufficient residents on the top of the hill to warrant construction of the West Queen Anne Elementary School (1889-1916), followed by the first phase of construction of Queen Anne High School (1909).

By the turn of the century, a commuter ferry ran on Lake Union connecting Queen Anne Hill passengers to the city's downtown. Soon afterwards, the Lake Union Road was built on planks above the marshy lakeshore to connect Queen Anne and Fremont to central Seattle. An 1891 bird's eye map of the city shows Queen Anne Avenue, and then known as Temperance Street, terminating at the south edge of Highland Drive due to the steep slope. By this date, the hilltop was platted, but sparsely settled, with a few dwellings clustered around the extension of Queen Anne Avenue, along a few streets near Howe Street, and the west to 3rd Avenue N.

Nineteenth century development on the hill was limited by the lack of water and transportation difficulties. In 1899, Queen Anne experienced a water drought that lasted for several weeks. That year, the two privately owned water companies that supplied water to the top of the hill had maintenance problems and halted water to the area. Angry residents demanded that city government form a municipal water company. The top of the hill, which rose to an elevation of 520 feet above sea level, was selected for one of the city's three earliest in-town facilities. The first tank was constructed in 1901, at 1st Avenue N and Lee Street, providing public water to nearby residents and to those at lower elevations.

In 1902, public transportation was made accessible when a counterbalance streetcar was inaugurated along the street, renamed Queen Anne Avenue. Impacts of the streetcar system were felt throughout the city, and the routes reinforced rather than initiated urban growth (Fuller, p. 79-80). The top of the hill continued to grow denser with more residences,

churches, and schools, while a commercial center began to develop around 1900 along Queen Anne Avenue on the top of the hill. Residential development quickly followed. As a result, most dwellings in the neighborhood were built in 1900 to 1920. Four streetcar lines served the hilltop by 1920. In 1923, the City passed its first zoning laws, which reinforced this development pattern. Most of the city's residential growth after this time was in neighborhoods to the east of Capitol Hill, north of the Ship Canal and Union Bay, and in Magnolia, West Seattle, and south on Beacon Hill and Rainier Valley.

Parks played an important role in the neighborhood by providing open space amenities and attracting new residents. Donated by local real estate developers and residents, they included the Evergreen/David Rodgers Park (1883), Kerry Park (1907), the Reginald Parson's garden (1956), and the nearly four-mile long, Olmsted Brothers designed tree-lined streets along the crest of the hill (1906-1916).

Queen Anne Hill has long been home to many middle and upper income residents. According to the 1900 U.S. Census, its housing stock was primarily single-family residences, with 95% of all dwellings built between 1899 and 1930. Housing was made up by single-family residences, or in small apartment houses with fewer than 20 units, and home owners occupied 50%-59% of all dwellings. About half of these dwellings were owned outright and half were mortgaged. Residences had amenities and services such as central heat (in 80% - 89% of the dwellings) and refrigeration (in 50%-59%). Residents of Queen Anne Hill were well educated, with 32% having completed four or more years of college (Schmid, p. 163). These people likely made up the market for early telephone service.

Because of its early development, there are a number of historic institutions on Queen Anne Hill. According to the Queen Anne Historical Society, there are presently at least 53 designated City of Seattle landmarks or properties listed in the State or National Registers on the hill.

Landmark properties in the vicinity of the Garfield Exchange include Seattle Public Library, at 400 W Garfield Street (1913 – 1914), directly north of the subject property; West Queen Anne Elementary School, at 1401 5th Avenue W (1894 - 1916, rehabilitated as apartments in 1982); Queen Anne High School, at 201 Galer Street (constructed in phases, 1909 - 1959, and rehabilitated as dwellings in 1981); Bethany Presbyterian Church (1927) at 1818 Queen Anne Avenue N; the Coe School at 2424 7th Avenue W (1905 – 2001); and the Hay School (1905 – Present). Accompanying the emergence of these institutions were strong community organizations. The Queen Anne Improvement Club was established in 1901, followed by other civic organizations – the Knickers, Men's Club, and Women's Single Tax Clubs, the Orptic and Fortnightly Club, the Nomadic Circle for writers, and the Townsend Club for retirees. The Queen Anne Community Club was organized in 1922, evolving from other improvement clubs.

Historic houses on Queen Anne Hill include several impressive residences on the south slope: the Stuart/Balcom House (1926; a designated City of Seattle Landmark) at 619 W Comstock Street, the Riddle House built at 153 Highland Drive (1893), and the Ballard/Howe House at 22 W Highland Drive (1906; a designated a City of Seattle Landmark), the Black Residence at 615 W Lee Street (1909), and the Victoria Apartments at 100 W Highland Drive (1921). Also

of historical and architectural significance is Olmsted-designed Queen Anne Boulevard (another designated City of Seattle Landmark. Some of these properties are cited in a 1975 historic inventory and survey map (Nyberg and Steinbrueck).

Also in the vicinity is the Masonic Hall, a half-block north of the Garfield Exchange Building at 1608 4th Avenue W. Established as Masonic Lodge No. 32 in the early 1920s by Queen Anne residents and members Lambert Peterson, Sheldon Smith, Willis Shadbolt, Sheldon Babcock, Floyd Smith and John Blackford, the building dates from ca. 1905 when it was constructed by the Sunset Telephone Company as one of its eight exchange buildings ("Seattle Freemasons History," Queen Anne Masonic Lodge 242).

The Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company in Seattle

Alexander Graham Bell (1847 – 1922) is credited with the invention of the telephone in 1876. He also established the Bell Telephone Company in 1879 and the American Telephone & Telegraph Company (AT&T) in 1885. Within a decade, the Bell Telephone Company served over 60,000 customers in cities with populations over 10,000. Telephone service in Seattle and Portland in the mid-1880s, while the earliest local exchanges began opening in early 1878.

The earliest of the local companies included the Seattle Automatic Telephone Exchange, the Independent Telephone Company, and the Sunset Telephone-Telegraph Company ("Sunset"). Sunset was incorporated in Seattle in March 1883 when an exchange franchise was granted to a Californian businessman, E. W. Melse. The Sunset Company occupied rented space in the Western Union Telegraph office, but it soon moved into its own building at 2nd Avenue and Cherry Street (present site of the Alaska Building).

Sunset initially provided phone service to 71 businesses and 19 residential customers, with an installation charge of $25 and monthly service at $7 for businesses and $2.50 for residences. In 1889, Sunset had 318 subscribers. By the following year, the company served the entire city of Seattle. Its subscriber base rose to 3,612 by 1899, and over 28,500 by 1910. In 1893, the company constructed the first Seattle-Tacoma to Portland toll line, with lines to California to follow (Wilma in HistoryLink, 9.24.1999). The company merged with three other telephone companies in Oregon and California in ca. 1900 to create a new entity with $16,000,000 in assets (*Seattle Times*, 5.16.1900). While the business was known officially known as the Pacific States Telephone Companies, the local firm was still referred to as "Sunset" until at least 1907. (The company changed is name in 1900, but reversed this in 1909.) .

By 1907, Sunset employed nearly 400 women as operators at its eight exchanges in Seattle, who handled between 46,000 and 50,000 phone calls annually. Its earliest exchanges buildings included those on Queen Anne (at 1608 4th Avenue W) and Renton Hill (roughly centered around 18th and Madison), and in Fremont and South Seattle. Increased demand for telephones was clearly apparent, as a Sunset manager noted: "It has been necessary to enlarge our equipment so frequently that our offices are constantly torn up, and that is their condition now" (*Seattle Times*, 9.22.1907).

By 1917, Sunset served all of Washington and northern Idaho. That year, the merged companies became known as the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph (PT&T) Company. It appears that early operations were managed from the firm's Portland office. This document cited a total of 830 employees of telephone companies in Washington and Oregon that operated in Washington. Those in Seattle included the Independent Telephone Company, Postal Telegraph Cable Company, Western Union Telephone & Telegraph, and Citizens Independent Telephone Company, in addition to those in Portland – the NW Long Distance Telephone Company, the Sunset Telephone & Telegraph Company. PT&T was the giant among them, with 475 employees (Washington State Industrial Insurance Department, 1911-12). By the beginning of 1911, there were over 12,250 telephones in service in Portland, a city with 212,290 residents (*The Oregonian*, 1.11.1911, cited in Alameda Old House History blog, 3.1.2012), while in Seattle there were over 28,500 telephones in service in 1910 for a population of approximately 240,000.

By 1907, AT&T was pursuing a goal of "One Policy, One System, Universal Service," and purchasing all of its competitors. (This "network" of smaller companies was also referred to as the Bell System or Bell Companies.) Although the exact date on when AT&T acquired the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company has not been discovered, it occurred sometime by 1921. A company publication from that year, "The Pacific Telephone Magazine," describes the relationship: "The American Telephone and Telegraph Company is the parent company; it maintains and directs for the Bell System - the research, investigation, experiments, manufacturing departments, accounting, and financial operations, and exercises control over all policies and over all functions general or common to all… like the centralized national government at Washington, in its control of policies and functions general or common to all of the states, which binds them together" (The Bell System, p. 22).

By the early 1920s, the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company operated in California, Oregon, Washington, and parts of Idaho and Nevada. A company publication from that date notes that by that it had over 850,000 operating "stations," which included company and private exchanges and individual phones. Meanwhile, AT&T began operating lines and offering telephone service between the U.S. and Cuba in 1921, followed by international service between North America and Europe in 1927.

The Bell Companies (known also as the Bell System) believed that people provided better service than machines. As they acquired competing firms during the early 20th century, they replaced any automated dial services with manual operator switchboards. In 1921, however, the companies installed the first large panel switch in Omaha, Nebraska. Soon after they began utilizing automatic switching equipment, acknowledging that the manual operators could not keep pace with the increasing demands.

Western Electric (acquired initially by the Bell Telephone Company in 1881) manufactured all of the equipment for the Bell System, and it also served as the companies' purchasing agent. Individual telephones were leased—not owned—until the 1980s. (However, in the 1980s, Western Electric began selling the phone housing to subscribers, but the mechanical components were still owned and maintained by the company.) AT&T went on to establish Bell Labs, known officially as the Bell Telephone Laboratories, in 1925. Over the years Bell

Labs contributed to the development of the transistor, laser, fax machine, calculators, the photovoltaic cell (the first digital scrambled speech transmission system and used during WWII), C and C++ programming languages, and the UNIX operating system. "The demand for telephone service increased tremendously during the 1950s and 1960s. To meet this demand, Western Electric built additional factories…. in the Seattle area … [with] a large facility in Kent. At its peak, the Kent facility employed over 1000 people. This facility repaired telephones and telephone equipment for the entire state of Washington and northern Idaho" (Telecommunications History Group, "Western Electric Display").

For most of the 20th century, AT&T monopolized the telephone industry, due in part to the fact it owned most of the operating lines. A federal 1913 ruling allowed competitors to use these lines, but this only discouraged other companies from building their own lines. AT&T's monopoly was considered to be a "natural" one— that is, more beneficial to the public with service by just one company than multiple. By 1940, 17 operating companies were a part of the Bell System, and about 80% of homes with telephone service were served by one of the Bell companies. 1956 marked the first erosion of this monopoly, which continued to crumble until 1982, when an anti-trust suit was brought against the company

The Building's Construction History

The first exchange to serve the Queen Anne neighborhood was built in ca. 1917 by Sunset/Pacific Telephone & Telegraph. That 5,330 square foot, two-story building was located on a 7,200 square foot site at 1608 4th Avenue W, a half-block north of the subject property. The exchange buildings' locations, within residential neighborhoods, reportedly were chosen in part to save the cost of extensive wiring. This exchange served the company's needs until 1923, when the first phase of the Garfield Exchange at 1529 4th Avenue West was completed. The earlier exchange property was later sold to the Masonic Lodge No. 32, which remodeled and opened it as a lodge hall in 1924.

PT &T purchased the nearby vacant site of the subject building in April 1920. "It [was] expressly designed to house the machine switching equipment. It was commenced in May, 1921, and completed during the following September at a cost of $138,000" (*Seattle Times*, 9.2.1923). The Garfield Exchange first went into service at midnight on September 2, 1923, when it took over 6,100 lines from the older exchange office. At that time, "Seattle subscribers [placed] half a million local telephone calls every day. Thirty-five thousand of these [originated] in the Garfield district" (*Seattle Times*, 9.2.1923). The subject building was originally constructed to serve as a telephone exchange, with banks of equipment and large switchboards run largely by women operators. When it opened, the *Seattle Times* cited it as the new "Garfield District machine switching central office" (9.2.1923).

The Garfield Exchange building appears similar to three others that were built in Seattle by PT&T in the 1920s. They were located at 4136 Meridian Avenue N in Wallingford and at 6315 Rainier Avenue S, just south of Columbia and Hillman Cities. Reportedly, the company built another exchange in West Seattle, but its location has not been confirmed. (The remaining presence of the earlier eight Seattle exchanges that were constructed by the Sunset Company, have not been verified either.)

The three extant PT&T exchange buildings feature Beaux Arts and classical revival design elements, but the Queen Anne building has a more elaborate east facade, with a projecting entry porch with symmetrical opposing stairs, and an entry surround embellished by ornamental terra cotta. Constructed for heavy equipment use, all three buildings are made with steel and concrete framing and deep reinforced concrete floor slabs. Their construction was relatively fire-resistant, with masonry cladding and concrete fireproofing. Windows were typically large, wood framed double-hung types. The power plant and mechanical house equipment were located in the basement or lowest floor, with operating and apparatus rooms and the operator's retiring room on the first floor. Additional similar rooms were provided in the building when it was expanded in 1929 with construction of another floor level.

In addition to the exchange buildings, the PT&T Company constructed a ten-story Renaissance Revival style office and exchange building at 1200 3rd Avenue at Seneca Street in 1921, with three additional floors in a second phase in 1926. The building's design, by the Seattle architecture firm of Bebb and Gould in cooperation with the company's in-house architect/engineer, E. B. Colby, was one of Carl Gould's largest early commissions (Booth, in Ochsner, 2014, p. 489). It was also the first of the Bebb and Gould's commissions from the company, with others for at least five office and exchange buildings in Tacoma, Olympia, Longview, Yakima, and Centralia (Michelson, PCAD). Of these, the Art Deco Longview building, at 1304 Vandercook Way, appears to be the most refined. Dating from 1928 – 1929, its design "reflected Pacific Telephone & Telegraph's desire to be in the vanguard of modernity" (Booth in Ochsner, 2014, p. 214).

The typical exchange buildings accommodated telephone use as an everyday occurrence. The earliest telephones were "hardwired to and communicated with only a single other telephone (such as from an individual's home to the person's business)" ("Telephone Exchange," Wikipedia). By the 1890, phones were hardwired to an exchange office, where switchboard operators would plug the calling party's jack into the receiving party's, after learning the desired number. This allowed anyone to place a call to any other phone with just a single line connected to their own phone. (In 1891, subsequent adaptations and expansions allowed for development of the automated switch, which performed the same function as an operator; a familiar example of this type of automation is embodied in the rotary telephone.)

The Garfield Exchange building remained in service through the early 1960s. It was abandoned by its owner, Pacific Northwest Bell, in early 1967, as the company no longer needed the equipment and found that the "demolition costs and restrictive zoning offset the commercial value of the land….After this initial appraisal…the phone company asked the Queen Anne Community Council to find an organization acceptable to the community that could use the building. The council rejected several commercial ventures in favor of the library" (*Seattle Times*, 9.6.1978).

The property was offered to Seattle Public Library in late 1976, as a donation valued at $260,700, and its ownership was officially transferred on October 29, 1976. In April of 1977, the library sought federal funding to renovate the Main Library and prepare the subject

building for storage use; the submitted grant applications included $368,318 for the Queen Anne storage building:

> The materials, documents and other library items which have been stored in the downtown building's basement will be placed in storage at the Queen Anne building, which is near the Queen Anne Branch Library. The 23,000-square-foot Queen Anne building was used by Pacific Northwest Bell for its Atwater exchange until more sophisticated systems were installed. It was given to the library earlier this year. Work at that building will include fire and safety modifications, installation of an elevator, improvements to electrical and heating systems and installation of shelving. The structure is built to hold heavy equipment, and thus can take the weight of the stored books and other material (*Seattle Times*, 4.24.1977).

Seattle Public Library undertook the renovation of its 1960-era Central Library in 1979, with $2.3 million in funding derived from a federal grant. That project followed the opening of its new storage facility on Queen Anne Hill and allowed for reuse of the former storage areas in the downtown building.
Presently, only the Rainier Avenue building, which is owned by Century Link, is associated with the telecommunications industry. The 20,016 gross square foot, three-story Wallingford Exchange was sold by Pacific NW Bell to a private owner in ca. 1980, and was transformed into artist residences with workshops. Its tall interior floors with 9' to 10' foot-heights, and fire-resistant construction have worked well for this adaptive use.

The Original Designers

The original designer of the 1921 drawings has not been identified, but it was produced by the Office of the Chief Engineer in the San Francisco office of the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company. The structural engineer from the company's Seattle office, Arthur D. Codington, developed the drawings from 1929 and 1930. Little has been discovered about Codington. He does not appear to have been a resident of Seattle, as indicated by the *Polk Directory* of 1923. In that directory, PT&T is cited with C. O. (Charles) Myers, Manager; W. J. Phillips, Division Commercial Superintendent, H. J. Tinkham, Division Superintendent of Plat, and E. L. Breene, Division Superintendent of Traffic. The company's administrative offices were all in the downtown Telephone Building, constructed in 1921. Manager Myers resided in a large house in the prestigious Mt. Baker neighborhood at while the other senior men lived in middle class neighborhoods according to their residential addresses.

The 1921 PT&T publication includes an article featuring ten new buildings, including the Garfield Exchange (five in California; one in Oregon; and four in Washington: West and North Seattle, Rainier, and the subject building). It describes the general design of PT&T's buildings:

> It is necessary [when the exchanges are in high-class residential areas] to make so wide a departure from the conventional design for a building of this kind through the medium of architectural treatment and embellishments, in order to conform to the surroundings, that its finished appearance completely disguises the fact that is a

telephone-exchange building. There is a similarity, however, in all exchange buildings with regard to the floor-plan arrangement, which much be such as to permit a satisfactory layout of the equipment, which, in fact, is the base of the design. From this point the design and construction details involve providing the most suitable type of construction, the greatest amount of natural light and ventilation, heat, fire protection, and other requirements for the comfort of the employees; also, provision must be made in the initial construction to make additions readily, with the least inconvenience to existing conditions and service, by lengthening or widening the building or erecting additional stories … Practically all of the buildings erected within the last fifteen years show only part of the ultimate design. For this reason, in telephone buildings that are to be erected in business, semi-residential, and unrestricted districts, the use of ornamentation is avoided as much as possible without detracting from appearance, because embellishment that would appear correct and pleasing in the initial size of the building would be out of proportion when the building was enlarged …It must be said that these buildings are designed not only to satisfy immediate requirements, but also to provide reserve accommodations sufficient to meet a considerable increase in equipment before structural additions are necessary (p. 23 – 26).

Women as Switchboard Operators

The first telephone operators were teenage boys, who were soon replaced by young women. With few employment options they were willing also to work under extreme rules with strict discipline. The earliest operators often worked 12 hour shifts, and followed strict dress and deportment requirements. They went through training school to become operators, although most learning happened at the switchboard: "It takes a girl about two weeks in the training school before she can take even a minor position on the long switchboard…After two months she is fairly proficient, but it takes six months, as a rule, before she becomes really skilled" (*Seattle Times,* 9.22.1907).

Ideal candidates worked "quickly and intelligently," and were hired for their "acuteness of their hearing, for the quickness of their hands and eyes, and above everything, for the poise of their nervous systems," and were "nervy…neither one who is in the least forward nor of too placid a temperament"; the women … were described as "nearly always of the nervous type—all nerves and nerve, all quickness of perception, alertness of intelligence and even anxiety of nature. But she is, as well, all decision of character, all energy, all self-possession" (*Seattle Times*, 9.22.1907).

According to recruitment and training films dating up through the 1960s a potential telephonist (switchboard operator), had to be between 15 and 51 years of age, relatively tall, and in good health. She had to be able to speak and write clearly and accurately. Interviews included testing for hearing, eyesight, and spelling; voice tone, clarity, and diction (to create the "voice with smile"). New operators were technically trained and also taught the "gentler qualities of unfailing courtesy." A *New York Times* article from June 11, 1899 describes the pay scale: "A telephone girl starts…at $3 a week [$77.85 today], listening in at first, and finally taking the case in slack hours. She is raised gradually according to her capacity until in two or three years, if she is bright and quick, she reaches the top of operatorhood, $9 a week [$233.55].

The Supervisors get about a dollar a week more, the pay of monitors is $12 [$311.39]. An expert chief operator can rise to about $18 [467.09].”

Historic newspaper articles indicated that the exchange buildings were typically fitted with lounges as well as restrooms with space for socializing and resting. Regardless, consistent behavior, uniform appearance and voice, punctuality and loyalty were paramount in the work, which was seen as an extension of the phone company. Gradually, the operators were given specific statements to make, most notably to inquire, “What number, please?”

Despite these restrictions, many women continued to work as switchboard operators throughout the 20th century. At the peak of their employment at AT&T in the late 1940s, women made up 98% of the 350,000 operators. These women became more empowered as labor laws changed and their career options expanded, proud of their work and the power of their positions. (Consider Lily Tomlin’s Laugh-In character, Ernestine, from the late 1960s.) “In response to equal rights legislation, telephone companies began hiring for ‘non-traditional’ jobs. This meant that women could become installers and repair technicians, while ‘boys’ could once again be operators” (“Photographs, Operators,” Telecommunications History Group).

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

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