

The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

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

LPB- 470/80

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

Name of Property: Beacon Hill First Baptist Church, 1607 So. Forrest Street.

Legal Description: Hanford's Block 53 Lot 4
T to So. Seattle

At its meeting held November 19, 1980 the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve Landmark Designation of the Beacon Hill First Baptist Church based upon satisfaction of the following Landmark criteria, City Ordinance 106348:

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

Although Ellsworth Storey designed three churches in Seattle (Epiphany Episcopal Chapel, and University Unitarian Church) Beacon Hill First Baptist is essentially non-stylistic and is a more forthright expression of the function "Protestantism" and is much more akin qualities and details of Storey's residential architecture in the city. These characteristics speak clearly of the authorship, e.g., hovering, low pitched roofs, hovering space in the sanctuary, use of stained shingle course and white trim (original skin and detailing) and general character. Although one of the pair of external stair-and-porch approaches has been eliminated by a later addition, the building has been sheathed in asphalt "shakes" and spray painted white, and some detail elements have been lost or removed, none of these changes is irreversible since the basic fabric and form are intact.

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

In its original condition this church would rank among Ellsworth Storey's best works, and relates well to his body of residential work.

Features or characteristics identified for preservation include:

the exterior of the entire structure, and the interior of the sanctuary.

Issued: December 02, 1980

Earl D. Layman, City Historic Preservation Officer

by: Roberta Deering, Board Coordinator

Administered by The Office of Urban Conservation, The Seattle Department of Community Development

**City of Seattle**

Department of Community Development/Office of Urban Conservation

LPB-19/80

Landmark Nomination Form

Name Beacon Hill First Baptist Church **Year Built** 1910
(Common, present or historic)

Street and Number 1607 So. Forest Street

Assessor's File No. 308600 - 3350

Legal Description **Plat Name** Hanford's **Block** 53 **Lot** 4
T to So. Seattle

Present Owner Beacon Hill First Baptist Church **Present Use** religious

Address 1607 South Forest Street

Original Owner Beacon Hill Congregational Church **Original Use** religious

Architect Ellsworth Storey **Builder** unknown

Description: Present and original (if known) physical appearance and characteristics

This church, built for the Beacon Hill Congregational Church in 1910 by locally prominent architect, Ellsworth Storey, is a modest frame structure reflecting several popular early twentieth century vernacular styles such as the "shingle style" and various aspects of the "craftsman movement". Its external form is characterized by intersecting gable roofs, an apsidal end, and a flattened, square based tower centered at the west front. Designed with symmetrical elevations, the north facade originally included a central gable flanked on each side by gabled entrance porches with roof planes of uneven lengths. (An addition, designed by John Mattson in 1931 resulted in the removal of the entrance nearest the apse.) The side elevations are both dominated by large, tudor-arched windows and geometrical gable braces directly beneath the central gables. Fenestration also includes rectangular casement windows at the main floor with slightly arched mullion patterns, and double hung windows at the basement level with vertical mullions dividing areas of unequal width. The tudor arch form is repeated in the tower belfry openings, which are screened by horizontal louvres. Flattened pyramidal roof forms cover the tower and a small attic ventilator. The tower's soffits are visually supported by unique geometrical bracketry. A slender brick chimney, imbedded with four crosses, rises from the southwest corner of the tower. The church is also detailed at the surviving entrance porch with a wood slat screen, a motif common in many of Storey's vernacular designs. Unfortunately, the exterior of the church, originally surfaced in a rich variation of wooden shingle courses has been resurfaced with large asbestos composition shakes. The belfry, however, retains its original stucco surface treatment, subtly embellished by narrow battens.

The interior features intersecting tudor arch vaulted ceilings of plaster and lath construction. The two arched windows at the north and south sides provide ample natural lighting to the interior through yellow tinted-translucent panes, and are supplemented in the apse by square-shaped clerestory windows with Roman mullions. Interior finishes are simple, consisting of painted plaster surfaces and wooden moldings, a dark stained wooden floor, and curving oak pews.

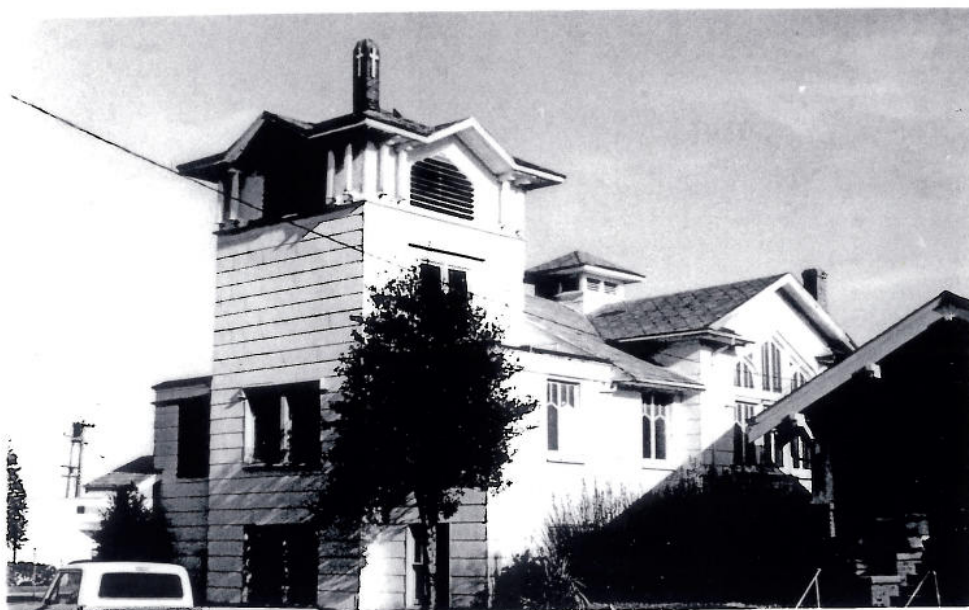
Statement of significance

Despite several unkind cosmetic alterations over its seventy year history, the Beacon Hill First Baptist church remains an important example of Ellsworth Storey's creative approach to architecture in early twentieth century Seattle. At a time when many of his contemporaries were preoccupied with the popular eclectic modes of the day, e.g. "classical," "romanesque," "gothic" and "mission," Storey's work reflected a concern for originality while at the same time satisfying functional requirements. Economical materials were often selected and honestly expressed at both the interior and exterior. Attention to detailing created unique identities for each of Storey's designs.

Storey's Beacon Hill church clearly illustrates these practices. Interior spaces are logically arranged and respond directly to the requirements of a small, protestant congregation. The external form was originally characterized by a strong unity of composition, and an honest, textural use of economical wooden building materials. Much of the original exterior detailing is still very much in evidence, particularly the various forms of gable bracing. The church represents one of the oldest and most unique religious structures in the Beacon Hill community.

The frame church was originally built to serve the Beacon Hill Congregational Church, established in 1903. The 1950's saw a declining membership as younger families moved to the suburbs and older members passed on. Despite the inspired efforts of church youth in obtaining and installing the church's first bell in 1965, the congregation continued to dwindle until in 1966 only 38 members and 10 Sunday schoolers remained. Later that year, the congregation consolidated with the Olivet Congregational Church. The church building was subsequently sold to the Mars Hill Baptist Church, and is presently occupied by the Beacon Hill First Baptist Church.

Photographs:



Submitted by: Office of Urban Conservation staff.

Address 400 Yesler Building, Seattle, WA 98104 Phone (206) 625-4501

Date _____

Reviewed _____ Date _____
Historic Preservation Officer