



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

700 Third Avenue · 6th floor · Seattle, Washington 98104 · (206) 684-0228

LPB 3/89

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

Name and Address of Property: Josephinum/New Washington Hotel
1902 Second Avenue

Legal Description: A.A. Denny's 6th Addition
Block 46, Lots 9 and 12

At the public hearing held on January 4, 1989, the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Josephinum/New Washington Hotel as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following criteria of Ordinance 106348:

Section 3.01(3): It is associated in a significant way with a significant aspect of the cultural, political, or economic heritage of the community, city, state or nation;

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

DESCRIPTION AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Josephinum/New Washington Hotel is an L-shaped structure situated with its principal elevations along Second Avenue and Stewart Street. Its 300 rooms rise eleven floors above a two-story base housing the lobby, dining room, ballroom, and public meeting rooms. In style, the building is inspired by Italian Renaissance palazzos of the late 1400 and early 1500 period. While the upper floors of the hotel are straightforward, faced in beige brick with simple window treatment and very little ornament, the ground floors are richly textured and detailed, both interior and exterior. This corresponds to Italianate palace architecture,

the ground floors of which were usually of rusticated stone punctured by elaborate entrance doors and windows. The New Washington imitates this character with the use of terra cotta panels formed into masonry-like blocks that give the appearance of vermiculated rustication. These blocks form horizontal bands that alternate with beige tone brick bands.

Tall, semi-round arched windows, either singly or in pairs, define the lobby, dining room, and ballroom spaces within the building. They alternate with shorter display windows, accentuated by an exuberance of enriched ornamentation, including segmental window heads and enriched consoles. Garlands are placed above these handsome display windows and at the level of the arches of the high windows. The garland motif is repeated between windows of the floor above and also at the top floor. At the top floor are window surrounds consisting of three vertically aligned garlands on either side of each window. These have the effect of shutters and are reminiscent of the upper floor shuttered windows in the Italian villa.

A copper cornice crowns the building. Originally, much of the roof space served as a terrace, complete with a trellised arbor. In a later remodelling, this area was enclosed and turned into additional penthouse rooms.

Despite remodelling, the lobby and ballroom display an ornate quality and grand scale in keeping with the palazzo characteristics of the exterior. The lobby is two-story high with walls of ivory and gray veined marble. Marble pillars housing sconces (not original) on all four sides surround the central lounge and support a mezzanine or balcony with balustrades that completely surrounds this main floor. From this balcony level, a series of arches connected by vaulting goldleaved and rosette ornamented panels rise to the beautiful coffered ceiling. An ornate gilt bronze and iron chandelier is centered in the ceiling, its frame is original, although its nine lighting fixtures were replaced during remodelling.

The ballroom, now a chapel, is located off the lobby at the south corner of the building. Its walls are wainscotted in green marble and ivory and gray marble as used in the lobby. The coffered ceiling and arched upper story of this room contain some of the most exquisite plaster ornament in Seattle. Ceiling beams extend the width of the room, corresponding to major windows and forming a series of bays. The beams are adorned with guilloche (interlacing bands) and are supported at either end by fruit and flower motif corbels. Window surrounds feature garlands and flower panels. Bay leaf garland borders appear in each bay ceiling area. A shallow mock balcony is placed above the main entrance to the ballroom.

The development of the Josephinum/New Washington Hotel was integral to the extension of Seattle's downtown business district northward into the Denny Regrade. The first Washington Hotel, built from plans by a New York architect A. O. Jennings, had one of the shortest lifespans in the City. Begun in 1889 as the Denny Hotel, delays in financing and building prevented it from opening until 1903. Perched at the top of Denny Hill, its fate had already been sealed when it opened its palatial accommodations to guests; by 1902 the City had agreed on plans for the regrading of the entire hill area to provide for easy commercial development north of Stewart Street. In 1906, after only three years in business, the elaborate, towered hotel was leveled. Immediately thereafter, this new hotel rose just east of the original hotel on cleared and regraded site (about 125 feet lower than the original hotel in elevation) during 1907 and opened its doors in 1908. At the same time, James Moore, former owner of the Washington Hotel, was developing a major theatre and hotel on the adjacent old hotel site at Second and Virginia Streets. Both projects were directed toward the opening of the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition in 1909 and the huge influx of tourists who were expected to need accommodations.

The New Washington Hotel represented an investment of more than \$1.8 million in building, ground, and furnishings. Fourteen stories high, it contained 250 guestrooms and a marble finished lobby and main dining room. The development company, headed by J. Crawford Marmaduke and J.F. Chilberg, spared little in outfitting the hotel with the finest materials, including a gold dinner service consisting of plates, knives, forks, and wine cups that were used on special occasions for important guests.

As Seattle's premier hotel until the construction of the Olympic Hotel in 1921, the New Washington hosted many illustrious visitors. In May, 1908, it was the headquarters of officers of the fleet when it visited Seattle on a world trip. The hostelry, a complete with new furnishings, was the scene of a great civic reception. Admiral Sperry, Commander-in-Chief, made it his headquarters when ashore. One suite, known as the Presidential Suite, was specially furnished. President Theodore Roosevelt stopped there on one of his western tours. It housed President William Howard Taft upon two occasions, also President Woodrow Wilson, President Warren G. Harding, and Vice President Calvin Coolidge. Japanese and Chinese diplomats sampled its hospitality. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was a guest when he was Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Vice President John Nance Garner, returning from the Orient in 1936, stayed at the New Washington. During the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition in 1909, the hotel was filled with notables.

Mr. Marmaduke, who assumed management of the hotel, was also one of its principal occupants. In 1917, a penthouse was built above the top floor as his residence. Marmaduke was known in Seattle as a risk-taker. He had amazed other land developers of Seattle by his daring in the erection of what then were considered skyscrapers. Two earlier monuments to Marmaduke's enterprise were the Alaska Building and the Leary Building in the south part of the business district--both considered pioneers of towering construction.

In June, 1930, a rendering was published in Washington State Architect of a \$700,000 addition to the New Washington Hotel that would extend the original building across the alley to Third Avenue along Stewart Street, making it a block long building. The addition, designed by Henry Bittman, repeated the architectural design of the original, but altered the new roofline by eliminating the traditional cornice in favor of a set back modernistic parapet. Undoubtedly, the economic frustration of the early 1930s caused this project to be put aside.

In 1937, the hotel was sold for \$700,000 to a syndicate that controlled Western Hotels, Inc., an organization operating sixteen hotels in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and British Columbia. The New Washington, with a \$50,000 remodelling, became the "flaghouse" of the Western family of hotels. In 1955, Western sold the New Washington to the Doric Company, which operated Von's Restaurant and owned and operated the Senator Apartment Hotel and the Sorrento Hotel. Western purchased the Olympic Hotel lease and established its main offices in that hotel building. Finally, in 1963, the New Washington was sold to the Catholic Archdiocese as a residence for senior citizens; its name was changed to the Josephinum.

The features of the Landmark to be preserved, include:

The entire exterior of the building, including the roof, and the following areas of the interior: the main lobby and associated balcony/mezzanine (excluding the offices and rooms off the balcony); and ceiling and walls of the ballroom/chapel, including but not limited to the wainscotting, coffered ceiling, mock balcony, corbels and windows.

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KG:dlv

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