



The City of Seattle

LPB-65/82

Landmarks Preservation Board

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

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

NAME OF PROPERTY: The Ramsing House, 540 N. E. 80th Street.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Green Lake Electric Add., Block 10,
Lot 16, 17, 18.

At the Public Hearing held on April 7, 1982 the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Ramsing House as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following criteria of the Landmarks Preservation 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 this house is in need of some restoration (windows, porch, etc.), basically it retains its true Victorian plan and forms. Its particularly significant and unusual aspect is its unique and overall use of fancy-cut, machine sawn shingles, which cover almost every surface except windows, doors and roofs, but not excepting eaves and soffits.

Features of the Landmark to be preserved include:

the entire exterior of the structure, with special concern for the fish-scale shingles, and protection of the grounds from the front of the house to the street.

Issued: April 20, 1982.

Earl D. Layman
City Historic Preservation Officer

by:

Roberta Deering
Landmarks Preservation Coordinator

cc: Mr. & Mrs. E. Ramsing
Wm. Krippaehne, Jr.
William Justen, DCLU



LPB- 28/82

City of Seattle
Department of Community Development/Office of Urban Conservation

Landmark Nomination Form

Name Ramsing House Year Built 1908
(Common, present or historic)

Street and Number 540 NE 80th Street

Assessor's File No. 287860 1495

Legal Description Plat Name Green Lake Block 10 Lot 16, 17, 18
Electric Addn.

Present Owner Eric V. Ramsing Present Use Residence

Address Same 98115 Tel: 522-0065 "a.m."

Original Owner Unknown Original Use Residence

Architect Unknown Builder Unknown

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

The Ramsing house is a storey and a half structure of complex planform and massing, capped with a hipped embellished with several gables and dormers. The porch in its present form was either added or remodelled prior to 1937, and the window sash (not the openings) have undergone a number of changes through the years. The house today is painted a barn red. The most outstanding and startling aspect of the house is the remarkable use of fish scale and fancily sawn shingles: on the walls, on the gables, on the barge boards and on the under surfaces of the eaves! To our knowledge this is the only such example of such lavish use of decorative shingles in the city .. or else where.

VICTORIAN ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

"Victorian" is an after-the-fact design category (customary) applied to the architecture and decorative arts which were created generally during the reign of Queen Victoria, 1840-1901. More importantly, this was an era of great industrial growth in the Western world, and in addition in the United States a period from the cataclysm of civil war to renewal of national unity, westward expansion and growth. Coincidentally, this period also corresponds to Seattle's founding and its rapid growth through normal pioneering activities and responding to the northern Gold Rushes.

The architecture of the period made lavish use of wood, terra cotta and brick, cast iron and other increasingly mass produced/machine produced materials. Designs, whole buildings or parts, became readily available through catalogs, and thus culture was readily transferable to the raw and young frontier.

Because of the slow decline of Pioneer Square, our first CBD, Seattle has a rich heritage of Victorian commercial architecture. Early photographs reveal that we also had an exuberant variety of Victorian houses, from modest workers' cottages to flamboyant mansions of the wealthy and of the city's founders; we were a worthy competitor of Victorian San Francisco! Equally as significant were richly detailed and pinnacled churches, schools, academies, theaters and stores, mostly created in machined wood. Regrettably, fires, progress, freeways, and housing projects have decimated most of this rich past.. this makes the remaining Victorian houses all the more important to analyze, recognize and preserve.

The mansions and churches are all gone. Remaining to us are a dwindling number of modest (workers') cottages

- modest two storey houses
- fairly elaborate two-story houses
- farm houses
- a few simplified Italianate houses

Those that are being presented for designation consideration have been selected because:

- they demonstrate basic characteristics of Victorian proportions and form;
- They are essentially intact and preserved (original or restored elements and materials);
- they incorporate machine produced elements such as elaborately cut shingles (fish scale, etc.), colored glass panels, balusters and posts, bracketry, window and door casings, molded brick, etc.

Queen Anne houses which represent a transition, but gradual, out of Victorianism, will be considered separately.

Properties as they are presented more often than not will be seen as contrasting examples, rather than in groups of the same type; scheduling is always subject to adjustments necessitated by owner contact, research problems, etc.

Statement of significance

Although the Ramsing house has suffered from remodellings and "improvements", its most worthy aspect is its unique and over-all use of fancy-cut, machine sawn shingles. As such it is a unique example of our Victorian heritage.

Photographs:



Office of Urban Conservation
Requested by Owner

Submitted by: _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Date _____

Reviewed _____ Date 02/28/82

Historic Preservation Officer