



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

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

LPB 139/91

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

Name and Address of Property: James A. Moore Mansion
811 - 14th Avenue East

Legal Description: Capitol Hill Division #1, Block 6
Lots 1 and 2, N 1/2 of Lot 3, N 1/2 of Lot 22, all of Lot 23

At the public hearing held on July 17, 1991, the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the James A. Moore Mansion as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following criteria of Ordinance 106348:

Section 3.01(2): It is associated in a significant way with the life of a person important in the history of the 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

James A. Moore built his mansion/home in 1903 on the southwest corner of 14th Avenue East and East Aloha. The house sits on a large lot extending to 13th Avenue East. The lot slopes down about 20 feet to 13th Avenue. The basement, finished in rough-cut stone, was fully exposed on the west side. A garage, fronting on 13th Avenue, was built later. A historical photo reveals no special site development such as gardens. The present driveway, entered from 14th Avenue and extending along the north side of the house, was built later.

The house was founded on sandstone foundations, which were visible, because the first floor was set about four feet above street level. The floors were supported with wood joists, bearing on unreinforced brick masonry. Above the first floor the walls were made of brick: four cores thick up to the second floor and three cores thick up to the third floor. The brick walls were extended up to four gables: two on the east and one each on the north and south

sides. Three of the gables were capped with decorative relief made of sheet metal. Cap-trim on the gable-walls appear to have been sheet metal. Three slender brick chimneys vented the many fireplaces in the house.

A tall roof enclosed the third floor and attic above. The roof was originally covered with slate and had large sheet metal ridge caps. Five roof-formers were covered with wood shingles. Below the enclosed gutters were square dentils and a deep wood band.

A covered veranda, beginning at the entrance, extended north and curved around the corner in a continuous line, ending at the northwest corner of the house. Originally the veranda was sheltered by a nearly flat roof which was supported by rough-cut stone columns and wood columns in the Tuscan style -- paired with the pillars. The edge of that roof was defined by a stone balustrade. Within the balustrade there were carved curving forms, which recall details found in 16th and 17th Century French burger-houses.

The exterior elevations reflect the designs of late nineteenth century British designer Richard Norman Shaw, because of the roof lines, highly decorated gable ends, and windows -- tall and narrow in proportion with large transom lights above. Each window is an undivided, large glass light. Horizontal stones (croisettes) divide the windows from the transoms. Each transom, in turn, is capped by a large stone lintel. The sills are also stone. Exceptions to the rectilinearity of the windows are a vertical oval window over the entrance and a round window on the rear facade.

The Moore residence is a study in contrasting materials, textures and colors: light stone against brick, horizontal porches and vertical windows and the picturesque distribution of various elements. One bibliographical source suggested that Moore copied the style from houses in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he grew up.

More likely, the style was an extension of Architect W. D. Kimball's own work. An example is a police station of Kimball's design in Milwaukee, WI (shown in *American Architect and Building News*, 20 September 1890); that building had the same picturesque qualities as Moore's house. Kimball's other projects in Seattle were the Hansen Baking Company, the Baker Building (not extant), and the Trustee Building (not extant). Kimball was an important designer, and the best example of his talent is the Moore house.

The house was severely damaged in a fire in the 1970's. Recent work inside has included extensive structural reinforcement of the walls and floors. Consequently, all the interior finishing has been built in the last five years. The plans of the first and second floors remain virtually intact, however. The first floor plan gives one a sense of spaciousness without large dimensions. Each floor is only 2100 square feet. From a central hall one enters a parlor on the left or the living room on the right. The dining room is west of the living room and has a series of windows curving around the northwest corner. Also, from the hall one ascends a great double staircase to the second floor. The kitchen and pantry (both totally

modernized) are at the southwest corner. The hall, living room and dining room were recently panelled in cherry wood in a traditional manner but a current design.

The second floor plan is arranged essentially as originally built. The third floor contained a ballroom or playroom and servants sleeping rooms, including rooftop patios, but these rooms were greatly altered before 1970. In recent years the attic was converted into additional living space, but none of it is visible from the streets.

Moore's mansion was once more splendid than the present exterior condition belies. From outside, the house appears to be intact except for the veranda roof -- a significant part of Kimball's composition.

SIGNIFICANCE

The site is significant to Seattle for three reasons: during the thirty years (1886 to 1916) that James Alexander Moore (1861 - 1929) lived in Seattle he made major contributions to the city's development; his architect William D. Kimball was an important architect for other buildings; and his house is a good example of the style of Richard Norman Shaw.

The history of Moore's involvements reads like a Capitalist's adventure story. Several of the venerated areas of Seattle owe their existence to Moore's genius for recognizing potentially profitable developments and realizing them through substantial and well conceived improvements. His own home, carefully sited and designed, standing in the middle of one of his developments, is testimony to his concern for quality and his stature in the community.

Moore's home was built on the 14th Avenue East, called "millionaires' row", sharing the locale with other prominent Seattle pioneers: Parker, White, Stuart, Skinner, Eckstein, Cobb, Burwell, Mercer and others.

Moore's tangible accomplishments in Seattle read like those of few other pioneers in the city. He initiated the active management of the University Tract. He caused Congress to enact special legislation allowing him to build the Ballard Locks, which was the forerunner of the new Government Locks (1914-1917). His development of housing tracts on Capitol Hill, Madison Park, Renton Hill, Rainier Beach (1891), Latona (platted 1889), Brooklyn Addition (platted 1890), University Heights (platted 1906) and University Heights Addition (platted 1906) were extensive. He employed a development method that was progressive for its time; he installed all the infra-structure (water and sewer lines, drainage, and paced streets and sidewalks) prior to platting the tracts and selling the lots.

In all respects Moore was a builder. He said that building was his hobby. After incorporating the Moore Investment Company in 1897, his focus was on the city core. His three finest surviving examples are the Moore Theatre and the New Washington Hotel (now the Josephinum), and, of course, his own home (1903). His First Avenue Arcade and

Arcade Annex were on the site of the new Art Museum. The Lumber Exchange and eight other buildings within the Central Business District were parts of his "hobby": the Estabrook Building, the Second Avenue Arcade, the original Washington Hotel on Denny Hill, the Hotel Lincoln at Fourth and Madison, the Amherst Building, the Whitcomb Building, the Post Intelligencer Building, the Franklin Building, the Curtis Building, and the Lumber Exchange. He kept a large summer retreat, built in the Neo-classical style, north of Pasco, Washington, where he had a 1200 acre real estate development.

Moore's building accomplishments were so tremendous that his own house should be a landmark of pioneering initiative. For example, Moore advanced the notion of washing 7.5 million cubic yards from Denny Hill into Puget Sound; thereby creating buildable property worth millions. The San Francisco Chronical, 22 May 1929, noted Moore's death and his "spectacular career; [He] was credited with the creation of a billion dollars in property values in Seattle, the Northwest and Florida. . .John Perry, publisher, formerly of Seattle wrote: "I watched Moore, by his own sheer power and organizing ability, raise the skyline of Seattle from that of a city of 100,000 to a city of more than a quarter million". His handsome appearance and generous charitable ways were also eulogized.

Moore amassed a fortune with his projects. The most promising was his Western Steel Corporation, which he located at Irondale (near Port Townsend) after an abortive effort to establish it at Kirkland. He built Irondale to house his workers. Some streets, which remain in place, were named for his family. He established the first west coast steel production using bog iron from Vancouver Island and cooking coal from mines east of Tacoma. The mill was successful for several years and provided iron for all the local buildings in Seattle. Most noteworthy was that his iron was used by Moran Shipyards to build the battleship Nebraska. Eastern bankers caused financial difficulties and pricing below cost from eastern mills (also owned by the same bankers) caused the closure of Moore's mill. He lost almost all his fortune. That setback caused him to seek development opportunities in Florida after 1916.

There are many adventures and misadventures in the Moore story, and only the highlights are presented here. His name appeared almost weekly in local newspaper, but one of the common impressions gleaned from the many articles about him is that he was a man of great enthusiasm and encouragement to others, especially to other entrepreneurs who were helping to build Seattle during this period of rapid growth. Today Seattle enjoys Moore's legacy in only a few remaining buildings, the ship canal, and the Regrade.

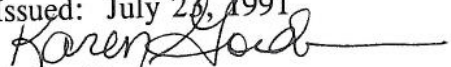
Moore's architect, William D. Kimball, designed several other substantial buildings in Seattle: the Hansen Baking Company (Independent Telephone Company. 1902) and the Northwestern Telephone and Telegraph Company (Town of Whatcom, now Bellingham, 1902), the Bordeaux Residence (800 14th Avenue East, across from the Moore Mansion), and the Hanford Residence on North Capitol Hill. His design for a "South Side Police

Station in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (1890) bears some resemblance to the Moore Mansion in the windows and dormers (perspective and plan attached).

The features of the Landmark to be preserved, include:

The entire exterior of the building, including the site.

Issued: July 20, 1991


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KG:dlv

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