

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 90001864

Date Listed: 12/18/90

Victorian Apartments
Property Name

King
County

WA
State

N/A

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Antoinette A. Lee
Signature of the Keeper

12/18/90
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Statement of Significance: The property is nominated as locally significant.

Criteria Consideration B should be marked because the property was moved in 1908.

This information was confirmed with Leonard Garfield of the Washington State Historic Preservation Office.

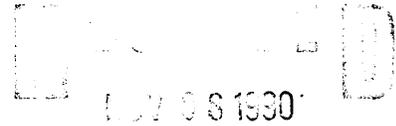
DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

1564

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name 512-522 S. Twelfth Street (historic street address)
other names/site number Victorian Apartments (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 1234-1238 S. King Street not for publication
city, town Seattle vicinity
state Washington code WA county King code 033 zip code 98144

3. Classification

| | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Ownership of Property | Category of Property | Number of Resources within Property | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | Contributing | Noncontributing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> district | <u>1</u> | _____ buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State | <input type="checkbox"/> site | _____ | _____ sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure | _____ | _____ structures |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object | _____ | _____ objects |
| | | _____ | _____ Total |

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Jacob E. [Signature] Date 10/24/90

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. Quinn [Signature] 12/18/90
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling
work in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN
Other: vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick, concrete
walls wood
roof other: built-up
other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Victorian Apartments building is located southeast of Seattle's central business district in an area that developed as a residential neighborhood following the city's disastrous fire of 1889. Built in 1891, the structure was originally situated on a corner lot about three blocks away, but was relocated to its present site in 1908 when extensive regrading of the area occurred. The two-story, wood building is rectangular in plan and contains twelve apartment units. An example of late Victorian vernacular design, the building retains all of its original features, including bands of patterned shingles and decorative spindlework. There have been no significant alterations during its hundred-year life, and the historic building fabric remains intact.

The apartment building was originally located on a corner lot at the intersection of South 10th Avenue (then called 12th Street) and Weller Street. The west facade, with its gabled porches and window bays, faced 10th Avenue. The short south elevation faced Weller Street. The neighborhood was a mixed residential area--with single family homes, duplexes, rowhouses, and apartment buildings--but not densely developed. The newly built (1889) South School sat perched on a high bank on the neighboring block to the south of the Victorian Apartments.

While the area was being regraded in 1908, the building was moved three blocks northeast to King Street and sited mid-block between 12th Avenue and Rainier Avenue. Its orientation remained the same, with the short south elevation facing King Street and the major west facade facing an open yard that extended to the property line. The area is still mostly residential, although there are some commercial uses as well as light manufacturing nearby.

The apartment building is rectangular in plan, measuring approximately 60 feet by 113 feet. It is two stories in height, with a low unfinished basement. There is no perimeter foundation. Construction is post and beam, and the supporting posts rest on small concrete pier blocks or on wood footings atop stacked bricks. The exterior walls are sheathed with horizontal drop siding and vertical board skirting. The flat roof has a low slope to the east and is covered with built-up roofing material. Decorative brackets are evenly spaced under projecting eaves on the west and south sides. The north and south elevations are unadorned, their only

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Architecture

Period of Significance
1891

Significant Dates
1891
1908

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Victorian Apartments building is significant as the only unaltered pre-1900 structure of its type remaining in Seattle. Built during a period of rapid growth that changed a frontier village into a thriving city, the building is representative of one type of housing that accommodated families in the residential areas encircling the central business district, then located in Pioneer Square. With its two-story window bays, repeated gables, decorative shingles and spindlework, the 1891 building is a fine example of late Victorian vernacular design. Because of changing land use patterns, most of these early apartment houses have been demolished, and the handful that remain have been extensively altered. The Victorian Apartments is an intact example of a once prevalent building type that has now disappeared from our cityscape.

From the earliest days of Seattle's foundation, when founding fathers Arthur Denny, Carson Boren and Doc Maynard platted the townsite, the district south of Yesler Way was considered less desirable than the area to the north. During the early decades following the establishment of the settlement in 1851, businesses and residences centered around the nucleus of Henry Yesler's sawmill complex on the waterfront at the foot of Mill Street (later Yesler Way). By the mid-1870s, when the town's population was approximately 3,000, about 30 per cent of the inhabitants lived in the two blocks on either side of Yesler and within four blocks of the water. The understanding of Yesler as a dividing line subsequently became more marked, as those with established positions in the city's business and civic community built residences as well as churches and cultural centers north of Yesler, while a more transient population and those outside the conventional establishment occupied housing and carried on their affairs south of Yesler. The Chinese, the first dominant minority group, were clustered in the few blocks south and east of First and Yesler. Farther to the east, a disparate population of other ethnic and racial minorities--including other Asians, Jews, African-Americans, and immigrants of diverse origins--established homes and businesses.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Chin, Doug and Art. Up Hill: The Settlement and Diffusion of the Chinese in Seattle, Washington. 1973. Typescript in Special Collections, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington.
- Costello, Gilbert S. Pioneer Schools of Seattle: The South School. vols. 1 & 2. 1945. Typescript and scrapbooks at Seattle Public Library.
- Phelps, Myra L. Public Works in Seattle. A Narrative History. The Engineering Department, 1875-1975. Seattle, 1976.
- Photograph Archives, Special Collections, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington.
- Reiff, Janice L. Urbanization and the Social Structure: Seattle, Washington, 1852-1910. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1981.
- Sale, Roger. Seattle: Past to Present. Seattle, 1976.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A

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| Zone | | | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | |

C

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B

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| Zone | | | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | |

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 12 and west 48.87 feet of Lot 11, Block 2, Syndicate Addition to the Plat of Seattle.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the city lots that have historically been associated with the property since its placement on this site in 1908.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Shirley L. Courtois, Architectural Historian

organization _____ date August 1990

street & number 4021 E. Highland Drive telephone 206 - 325-9346

city or town Seattle state WA zip code 98112

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

features being widely spaced window openings, four on each of the two stories. All windows have simple surrounds and one-over-one light, double-hung wood sash.

The plain box-like appearance of the building is relieved by the characteristic late Victorian features of the west facade, where six square two-story window bays project from the wall plane. Each is capped by a small gable roof and features fishscale shinglework at the gable ends and spandrels. Three projecting porches are likewise adorned with gable roofs and the same shingle coverings as well as spindlework friezes and turned posts. Paneled doors below glazed transoms provide entry to the three small skylighted halls and stairways.

Each entrance services four apartments, two on each floor. The units extend the full width of the building, each having a rear entrance from porches on the east elevation. All units have a west-facing living room that includes a window bay, a dining room, bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen. The end units also have a second bedroom. Interior walls and ceilings are surfaced with plaster. Millwork is typical of the period, including wide window and door surrounds with complex profiles and decorative corner blocks. Vertical tongue-and-groove wainscoting appears in the entry halls and kitchens. The configuration of the units, the interior wall surfaces, the stairways and hallways all retain their original appearance.

At the rear of the building there are three separated bays consisting of two-story flat-roofed open porches, each serving a group of four apartments. The wooden porches are badly deteriorated and no longer meet city fire and building codes. A proposed rehabilitation of the building will replace the rear porches in kind, upgrade the plumbing and mechanical systems, and stabilize the foundation. All exterior features and interior unit configurations, wall surfaces and millwork will remain essentially unaltered.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2

When the city's population reached 10,000 in the mid-1880s, the boundaries of the incorporated area had been pushed to the north, south and east, but most of the citizenry still lived near the center of town. East of the 8th Avenue eastern boundary of Maynard's original plat, new additions were platted in 1871 and 1882, and the Syndicate Addition was included in 1884. In that same year, Dr. T.T. Minor, M.V.B. Stacy and John Leary formed a Building and Loan Association, bought 175 lots in the area, and began constructing houses for sale or lease. To accommodate the educational needs of the families moving into the area, the Catholic community built the Academy of the Holy Names at 7th and Jackson in 1884, and the public School Board formulated plans for a new and larger South School to be located at 10th and Weller. In the late 1880s new residents were arriving at the rate of 150 a week and the population had grown to more than 42,000 by 1890.

Photographs and maps of the period show the area south of Yesler as far east as 12th Avenue to be a diverse mix of residential types--single family houses, duplexes, rowhouses, apartment buildings, and cheap tenements. While none of these had the architectural distinction of the high style mansions and apartment houses located north of Yesler, they nonetheless embodied the characteristic features of late Victorian vernacular design that gave a certain homogeneity to the neighborhood.

In comparing the Victorian Apartments to other contemporary buildings of its type, it is apparent that it is neither as elaborate in form and detail as some (such as the Scurry Flats, a High Victorian example, long since demolished) or as plain and undistinguished as others (such as those marked "tenements" and "cheap" on the Sanborn maps). In its own way, it is a representative example of the kind of middle-class rental housing that was provided at moderate cost in the 1890s for a growing market. Its significance today rests on the fact that it is the only unaltered example of such housing that remains from an important period of Seattle's growth.

When the Victorian Apartments building was erected in 1891 on Block 2 of the Syndicate Addition, the immediate area was well established but not densely developed. In the Syndicate and adjacent additions, whole blocks were vacant, while some contained a few buildings, and others were almost fully developed. The uneven terrain probably contributed to spotty development, as some lots required extensive reshaping before construction. Most of the streets had been roughly graded, although King Street between 6th and 8th was an untouched steep incline that obstructed movement.

The neighborhood remained in this state until 1907 when the massive Jackson Street regrading project began. The project actually included the

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 3

regrading of the east-west streets of Jackson, King and Weller and the north-south streets from 6th Avenue to 12th Avenue. The gradient of Jackson was reduced from 15 per cent to five per cent, with the deepest cut, 85 feet, occurring near its intersection with 9th Avenue. The purpose of the regrading was two-fold: to provide easier access from the downtown core to the Rainier Valley and beyond to Lake Washington, and to open an immediately accessible area for expanding the business center. The first goal was accomplished, but the second was never achieved as the main business district shifted north from Pioneer Square rather than east.

Hundreds of houses and multiple-unit dwellings as well as commercial buildings were demolished in the course of the regrading project. A plan was proposed by real estate promoter L.H. Griffith to move a large number of buildings to the nearby Hill Tract on the eastern slope of Beacon Hill as it descends to Rainier Valley. But this scheme never gained support from the property owners and was abandoned. A few of the buildings, including the Victorian Apartments, were moved to permanent locations outside the regrade area. Some were skidded over to one side and returned to their original locations when work was completed. But the majority of the structures, including the Academy of the Holy Names and eventually the South School, were demolished.

The Victorian Apartments building was moved east of 12th Avenue, just outside the regrading project area. As work on the regrading was completed--the Jackson Street project in 1910 and the Dearborn Street regrade in 1912--the neighborhood was redeveloped. The Chinese, who had earlier been confined to the western end of the district, moved easterly up Yesler and Jackson, clustering around 12th and King Street. The Japanese, now the city's largest minority, moved eastward as well, establishing homes, businesses, churches, cultural centers, and the Japanese Language School at Weller and 14th Avenue (National Register, 1982). With its continuing diverse population, the area became known as the International District, with the smaller core area designated the Chinatown Historic District (National Register, 1986). Dramatic changes in the social and physical fabric occurred with the relocation of Japanese-Americans during World War II and with the construction during the 1960s of Interstate 5, which sliced through the center of the community along a north-south alignment between 8th and 10th Avenues.

Since many unpretentious apartment houses of the period were not given identifying names, no historic name for the building can be determined. Because of its distinguishing stylistic characteristics and especially because of the rarity of such examples in Seattle, the building has come to be known as the Victorian Apartments. It was designated a City of Seattle Landmark under the name Victorian Row Apartments in 1979.