UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Seattle, Washington

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SEP 2 to 1978
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INVENTORY -	NOMINATION I	FORM	DATE ENTER	ED VEC 14	1978
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1 NAME	THE MEE ENTINES	30W EETE 7	Elo/IDEL OE	3110110	
HISTORIC				•	
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AND/OR COMMON		<del> </del>		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
Chelsea Apartments	or The Chelsea				
2 LOCATION					
STREET NUMBER	9				
620 West Olympic P	laee			T FOR PUBLICATION	
clfy. town Seattle, Washingto	n	congressional district vicinity of lst - Joel Pritchard			
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3 CLASSIFICA	TION				
CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS		PRESI	ENT USE
DISTRICT	PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED		AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
X_BUILDING(S)	X_PRIVATE	UNOCCUPIED		COMMERCIAL	PARK
STRUCTURE	ВОТН	X_WORK IN PROGR	RESS	EDUCATIONAL	PRIVATE RESIDENCE
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBL	E	ENTERTAINMENT	RELIGIOUS
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	BEING CONSIDERED	X_YES: UNRESTRIC	CTED	INDUSTRIAL	TRANSPORTATION
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4 OWNER OF	PROPERTY				
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	Management Co., Inc				
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#### CONDITION

**CHECK ONE** 

**CHECK ONE** 

\_\_EXCELLENT

X<sub>FAIR</sub>

\_\_DETERIORATED
\_\_RUINS

\_\_UNEXPOSED

\_\_UNALTERED
X\_ALTERED

X\_ORIGINAL SITE
\_\_MOVED DATE\_\_\_\_\_

#### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Begun March 1907 and completed in late August of the same year, the Chelsea Family Hotel was commissioned by Charles Russell Collins, locally important as a consulting engineer and a specialist in the natural-gas industry; and was designed in the manner of the English Renaissance style by Seattle architect Harlan Thomas, who later became the director of the School of Architecture at the University of Washington. The general contract for the Chelsea was let to A.E. White with the plumbing contract awarded to J.W. Manway, the electrical to Agutter & Griswold, and the heating to Adam & Moffatt. In 1976 the Chelsea was acquired by its present owners, The Chelsea Associates, and is currently undergoing a major rehabilitation to reverse the deterioration caused from thirty years of neglect.

The Chelsea Family Hotel, commonly known as the Chelsea Apartments or The Chelsea occupies the major portion of lots 6 and 7, Block 27, George Kinnear Addition to the City of Seattle according to the plat recorded in Volume 24, of Plat 62 King County, Washington. Located on an imposing site at 620 West Olympic Place on the south-westerly slope of Queen Anne Hill it commands a view of the city, Puget Sound, Mount Rainier and the Olympic Mountains. An avenue lined with small-scale apartment buildings interspersed with single-family dwellings, West Olympic Place is a continuum of apartment-house architectural styles dating from the early 1900's through the 1970's. The steeply inclined site measuring 104 x 125 feet occupies the southwesterly corner of the block with the building's major facade fronting on West Olympic Place overlooking Kinnear Park, an 1887 Seattle landmark. remainder of the quarter block to the east is occupied by the Skyline apartments, ca. 1970. The rear elevation of the Chelsea is separated from the adjoining property by a paved concrete service area and a retaining wall which accommodates the steeply-rising incline to the north. The northern-half of the block is filled with single-family dwellings. The Chelsea elevation facing Epler Place (now called 7th West) looks out across a cobblestone-paved street to the Olympic Plaza Apartments -- a circa 1970 five-story concrete structure.

The Chelsea is a four-story frame building with a basement under the east wing. building's mass measures 95 x 112½ feet with the width of the west and east wings measuring 39 feet and 35 feet respectively. The courtyard includes an area 21 x 66 feet. U-shaped in plan with a courtyard between, the two wings are joined at ground-level by a one-story three-arched loggia. The loggia and the lower half of the ground floor are faced with dark-maroon-colored clinker brick. The rest of the facade is of rough stucco referred to in 1907 terms as rough-cast concrete. The window surrounds and quoins on the first story are clay-colored brick. Before the rehabilitation the entire building above the clinker brick was painted a dusty pink color. The painted brick has been cleaned and the stucco surfaces painted beige. Originally it is thought the stucco was gray in color. Each wing facade is articulated with a pair of three-sided angular bays beginning immediately above the ground floor and running continuously up the facade to the roof cornice. Originally in the center section of each wing at the second-floor there was a balcony, below which is a fire door that is not part of the original design. The building terminates with a flat tar roof, delineated by a slightly projecting ornamented cornice surmounted with a parapet wall which supported a wooden arbor. None of the arbor and only remnants of the cornice and parapet-wall remain. The present rehabilitation includes the restoration of the exterior surface; reinforcement of the west wing foundation supports; and the installation of concealed sprinkler system, and completely new electrical, plumbing and heating systems to meet code requirements.

Form No. 10-300a (Rev. 10-74)

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Purportedly a source of inspiration for the Chelsea, elements of the English Renaissance style are apparent in the U-shaped plan, symmetry of the facade, projecting bays, transom fenestration dominating the facade, decorative motifs expressed in the strap-work like cornice design, filigreed fretwork balustrade, and the exterior surface treatment. These features recall the Elizabethan stately homes of Longleat and Hardwick Hall. In spite of the architect's conscious efforts to create a building echoing the English Renaissance style and a name to fit, the elements can be interpreted in a variety of ways thus it is impossible to unequivocally categorize the Chelsea as being an example of one particular style. The Italian influence of the tiled-roof loggia and the baroquelike manner of the enriched ornamentation under the bays are examples of the eclectic characteristics.

The tri-partite organization of elements as an underlying theme is evidenced in the massing of the volumes, the vertical and horizontal divisions of the facade and the spatial organization. The major elevation consists of two symmetrical wings joined by a third element -- a gabled-roof loggia. The wing facades are divided vertically into thirds. Beginning at the second story and terminating under the slightly-projecting roof cornice the center section is flanked on either side with bays. Horizontally the wing elevations are divided into three zones: the foundation and first story, the area between the first floor and the cornice and the area incorporating the parapet wall and arbor. Access to the building accommodates the sharply inclined site and provides a sequential movement through space. Entry is through the loggia into the courtyard and either through a recessed ground-level entry centered between two stairways or up a flight of stairs to the second-floor-lobby entrance.

The three-arched loggia and the second-floor-lobby entrance as well as the ornamented bay detail, wall medallions, diamond-patterned-leaded glass transom windows, decorative cornice design, and the parapet wall which supported the wooden arbor are features that contribute to the architectural character of the building. Each arched opening of the loggia is surmounted by a rectangularly-shaped leaded and stained glass panel, the center one incorporating the name "Chelsea" in its design. The gabled roof is covered with clay tile which has been newly cleaned, repaired and re-laid. The second-floorentry facade repeats the three-arched theme of the loggia in which a round-headed doubleleafed door is centered between two arched windows. The openings are separated with pilasters visually supporting an architrave detailed with dentil molding. The surface of the under side of each bay is ornamented with a molded-plaster baroque motif--a center elleptical medallion surrounded by foliated scrolls and fruit garlands interlaces with a ribbons. On the vertical surface just above lie two horizontal s-curved scrolls joined with a shell form at the center. Circular plaster medallions recalling the same style as the bay ornamentation have been newly cast using one of the few existing ones as a pattern. They are placed at equally spaced intervals on the walls just below the The cornice frieze is a geometric pattern cut out of wood and applied to a backing board about twelve inches wide. The alternating pattern of elliptical and concave-diamond-shaped forms runs along the perimeter of the roof line. Many pieces of the

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the pattern are missing. Rising above the roof is a stucco-walled parapet, inset with a geometric fretwork design constructed of two-inch wooden members forming a square which is divided diagonally, horizontally and vertically into sections. The stucco-faced posts are the only remaining physical evidence that a shaded-roof-top garden once existed. Based on early photographs and the existing clues there appear to have been four arbor-covered areas on the roof of each wing. Square posts supported cross-beams which held the wooden rafters. The ends of the beams and rafters tapered inward from top to bottom. One less rafter in the east-wing sections (8 instead of 9) could reflect the variance in the width dimension of the two wings.

Owing to the conversion to apartment use in 1917 and the numerous subsequent alterations. the original interior floor plan is nearly indiscernable. The first floor dining and salon spaces have been replaced by individual living units. The one interior element that still exists in its nearly unaltered state is the staircase which connects the first and all the intermediate levels with the roof. Hiding behind its understated design elements is the fact that it alone is the controlling factor responsible for the coherence, unity and strength of the interior spaces. The second-floor-lobby spaces have been altered and the size reduced, but the current rehabilitation project has returned a portion of the common areas to its original size. The beams with their simple molding details supported by simple doric columns which had been hidden behind alterations, have been uncovered and give a sense of scale to the space and hinting at what the original effect might have been. Immediately inside the second-floor lobby entrance is a white masaic-tile floor with a contrasting brown border design. The simple brass doorknobs and backplates have been cleaned and polished and are being re-used. Chelsea understated in its design and its architectural details has strong spatial qualities.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AF	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW					
PREHISTORIC	-ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	_LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION			
1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE			
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE			
1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	_SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN			
1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER			
1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION			
<del>X</del> -1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	_OTHER (SPECIFY)			
••	ere e	INVENTION					

SPECIFIC DATES March 1907

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Owner/Builder: Charles R. Collins Architect: Harlan Thomas

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Chelsea family hotel built in 1907 is significant to the city of Seattle as an urban design element magnificently sited opposite Kinnear Park on Seattle's Queen Anne Hill. It is an example of turn-of-the-century Seattle apartment house architecture inspired in part by the English Renaissance style and designed by Harlan Thomas, an early Seattle architect who later became director of the University of Washington School of Architecture. Upon its completion as a residential family hotel for a life-style available to the upper middle class some of Seattle's prominent citizens were among the first residents. Its construction was motivated by the economic momentum generated in anticipation of the 1909 Alaska-Pacific Yukon Exposition. The original owner, a locally-prominent consulting engineer Charles Russell Collins, was an expert in the development of the natural gas industry. Collin's wife, Anna Irwin Chapin Collins, was one of a group of eight women who founded the Seattle Children's Orthopedic Hospital. Visually, architecturally, and culturally the Chelsea links Seattle's past and present.

Reached by a ten-minute ride from downtown Seattle on the old Kinnear Park car line, the Chelsea Family Hotel, located at 620 West Olympic Place, was described as "Seattle's scenic hotel sited in a chateau-like setting overlooking Kinnear Park" by the newspapers and promotional material of the day. Beyond the estate-like grounds of the park one has a panoramic view of Puget Sound, the snow-laden Olympics and Mount Rainier. The Chelsea marked the introduction of a multiple-family dwelling structure into a single family neighborhood and set the pace for future development. Serving as a neighborhood cornerstone, it is one of few surviving structures built during the first decade of the twentieth century; spatially it provides a definitive element for Kinnear Park and set the scale for succeeding structures. The boulevard on which it is sited (West Olympic Place) embraces a range of apartment-house architectural styles dating from 1907 - 1977.

At the turn of the century Seattle was beginning to prosper as the result of the Alaska-Yukon gold rush and was rapidly becoming known outside the northwest. By 1907 plans were being formulated for the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition and for the influx of expected visitors. The siting of the Chelsea was carefully chosen for its appeal to the upper middle class who could afford the life style and amenities it could provide. The location was easily and quickly accessible by street car and yet far enough removed from the noise and grime associated with the bustling city streets. It was the first, and perhaps the only, residential family hotel building to be built on Queen Anne Hill. It provided home-like accommodations which included maid and dining service and individual salons for the entertainment of residents' guests. Both residents of long and short term duration were welcome. The following quote was used as the closing thought in promotional brochure:

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPH	ICAL REFERE	NCES		
Bagley, Clarence. History of	Seattle, vol. 3	3		
Biography Files, (Meany Pione Collection, University o				Northwest
(see attached)				
10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA  ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY LES  UTM REFERENCES				
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11 FORM PREPARED BY		**************************************		<del></del>
Miriam Sutermeister- Archite	ctural Historian	1	5-19-78	
ORGANIZATION W. M. Management Co. Inc.			DATE (206) 522-4075	
STREET & NUMBER			TELEPHONE	
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STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIG	GNATURE Jean	ne po	Welch	
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GE :

"Come! Let us seek an inn
Where good provender
Is set forth -And where the eye
May rest upon
The simple Majesty of Nature."

The Chelsea Seattle ca. 1909

In a 1913 edition of a local newspaper an advertisement appeared announcing the existence of a Montessori school at the Chelsea. It is known that children of prominent Queen Anne families attended a private school there. According to an early newspaper acount some of the first residents of the Chelsea were: Mr. and Mrs. Bo Sweeney, he being an attorney who served as Assistant Secretary of the Interior under Woodrow Wilson; Mr. and Mrs. William Hickman Moore, who later became Seattle's first family when Mr. Moore was elected mayor in 1910; William Penn Harper of Philadelphia who founded the mortgage company of the same name: Duncan G. Inverarity manager of the Coliseum Theater; and of course the original owner Charles Russell Collins and his family. The Chelsea held a place of prominence at least until 1914. With the advent of the automobile, the family-hotel concept began disappearing and by 1917 the Chelsea was converted to an apartment house and used as such continuously until 1977 when it was temporarily vacated to facilitate the rehabilitation project.

Charles Russell Collins (1863 - 1937), born in Philadelphia, moved to Seattle in 1896 to become general manager of Seattle Gas and Electric Light Company, a position he held until 1900 when he formed his own consulting firm, specialists in the natural gas industry. As a consulting engineer he was involved in large engineering contracts in the northwest. The Colson Construction Company for which he served as president, constructed the north trunk and Rainier Valley sewer projects. He was vice president of the Hurley-Mason Company which built the Camp Lewis Contonment in 1917. He assisted in the layout for the Claus Spreckles gas plant in San Francisco. He was part owner as well as supervisor of the construction of the Everett Gas Plant and served as construction supervisor for the Citizens' Gas, Light and Power Company of Seattle. In 1907 he was a member of the Board of Directors of the Y.M.C.A. and from 1908-1910 he served as treasurer of the A.Y.P. Exposition. He belonged to the Seattle Chamber of Commerce and was a secretary and a trustee of the Rainier Club. Anna Irwin Chapin Collins (1863-1945), also a native of Philadelphia, married C.R. Collins in 1891. was one of eight women who in 1907 pioneered the organizing of the Children's Orthopedic Hospital. She served as its treasurer, trustee, and honorary trustee. member of the First Hill Orthopedic Guild. The Anna Chapin Collins Orthopedic Guild was named for her.

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Harlan Thomas (1870-1953) was an early Seattle architect whose primary interest lay in architecture but whose administrative ability was tapped in his term as mayor of Monteclair, Colorado, a Denver suburb; as president of the Washington State Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (1924-1926); and in the latter part of his career as director of the University of Washington School of Architecture (1928-1940). His avocation as a water-color painter was a talent that he utilized throughout his professional career and one that after his retirement from the University became a major pursuit culminating in a one-man show at the Henry Gallery. His architectural style drew heavily on European sources for inspiration and might be interpreted as the reflection of a search for an individualized architectural expression.

Harlan Thomas was a native of Des Moines, Iowa and at the age of nine moved with his family to Fort Collins, Colorado. He entered Colorado State College in the fall of 1886, but in 1888 upon his father's death was forced to withdraw. For the next three years he served as a carpenter's apprentice and as an architectural draftsman. In 1891 he re-entered College and in 1894 was granted his Bachelor of Science Degree. While still a college student he was chosen as designer of two buildings on the Colorado State College campus (Fort Collins): one the Agriculture Hall which has since been demolished; the other being the Industrial Arts Building. During the years between 1896 and 1906 he alternately practiced architecture and traveled to Europe. In 1906 he moved his family - a wife and two children - to Seattle where he designed his own residence on Queen Anne Hill at 1401 - Eighth West, and during the same year he designed the old Mt. Rainier Lodge at Longmire which was destroyed by fire in 1926. In March 1907 plans were announced for the Chelsea family hotel which was completed around September first of that year. As far as is known the Chelsea appears to be Thomas' first major building in the city of Seattle.

His work showed a diversity in building types and styles. His style embraced elements of European architecture and his fondness for the Italian style (particularly the southern Italian domestic) repeatedly revealed itself in his work. The direction his work took reflects a preference for the Romanesque rather than the Beaux Arts classicism and in his later years the influence of the modern movement was apparent in the first unit of Harbonview Hospital and in Bagley Hall at the University of Washington. His architectural work includes residential, commercial, educational (high schools and university buildings), and religious structures. He is credited with the Chelsea, Rosita Villa and Apartments as well as the Seventh Church of Christ Science all on Queen Anne Hill, and in downtown Seattle the Sorrento Hotel, Corner Public Market Building, Chamber of Commerce Building and with the Engineering Department the Montlake Bridge. About four years after arriving in Seattle he formed the Thomas, Russell and Rice partnership (1910-1912) and later (1925-1936) he was a principal in the firm of Thomas, Grainger and Thomas. Perry Johansen, a former student, became a close friend. also was Floyd Naramore with whom Thomas collaborated on the design of Bagley Hall at the University of Washington and who was later a partner in the firm of Naramore, Bain, Brady and Johansen.

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The Chelsea is architecturally significant as a link in the history of Seattle apartment house architecture and as a point of beginning in the Seattle career of Harlan Thomas.

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#### **CONTINUATION SHEET**

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The Cartoon - A Reference Book of Seattle's Representative Men. Frank Calvert, editor. 1914

A Local Habitation and a Name. Seattle. Historical Society Accession #6296. Promotional Material. Sherman Printing, ca. 1909.

### Pacific Builder and Engineer

"Contracts awarded by Harlan Thomas. . . " March 2, 1907 "C. R. Collins, Treasure for A.Y.P.E. . . . " May 8, 1909 ". . . North Trunk Sewer Bid. . . " February 3, 1912

Seattle Hotel Topics. "Hotel Chelsea". March 5, 1910.

#### Seattle Times

"C.R. Collins' Family Hotel" March 3, 1907

". . . Montessori School" November 26 & 27, 1913 "Sweeney Family Return" August 11, 1907

"Seattleites to Reside on Oueen Anne Hill" August 25, 1907

"Men Who are Interested in the New . . . " February 10, 1907 "Death Summons Collins" August 23, 1937.

### Seattle Post Intelligencer

"Buys Site for Family Hotel: C.R. Collins having plans drawn" February 21, 1907.

"New Family Hotel under Construction . . . " March 10, 1907.

"The Chelsea . . . Ready for Occupancy" August 31, 1907

"Architect Turned Painter Has First 1-Man Show" September 8, 1953.

". . . Harlan Thomas . . . " September 8, 1953.

Wolfe, W.C. & Co. Sketches of Washingtonians. ca. 1906.