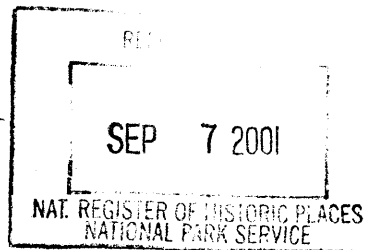


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name TACOMA BUILDING
other names/site number WEYERHAEUSER HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

2. Location

street & number 1015-1021 A STREET not for publication
city or town TACOMA vicinity _____
state WASHINGTON code WA county PIERCE code 055 zip code 98402
053

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide _____ locally. (____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Handwritten Signature]
Signature of certifying official

9/4/01
Date

WASHINGTON STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register
____ 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 of Keeper:
**Entered in the
National Register**

Date of Action:
10/22/01

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

 None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE

Sub: BUSINESS

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: OTHER

Sub: UNDER REHABILITATION

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

 OTHER: COMMERCIAL STYLE (1910)

 MODERN MOVEMENT:

 MIESIAN STYLE (1955)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE :REINFORCED

roof ASPHALT: ROLLED

walls TERRA COTTA, CONCRETE (CAST)

 & BRICK

other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheet

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

1910-1971

Significant Dates

1910

1957

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

POTTER & MERRILL (Arch. for 1910 Bldg)

FREDERICK FROST & ASSOC

(Arch. for 1957 Bldg)

HURLEY-MASON (Builder for 1910 Bldg)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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
- Name of repository:
 Tacoma Public Library, City of Tacoma Public
 Records _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre _____

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	10	542760	5234305	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

_____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)
See Continuation Sheet

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)
See Continuation Sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title MICHAEL SULLIVAN/ VALERIE SIVINSKI, PRINCIPALS

organization ARTIFACTS CONSULTING date JANUARY 23, 2001

street & number 1109 A STREET, SUITE 1 telephone (253) 572-4599

city or town TACOMA state WA zip code 98402

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name LABOR READY CORPORATION

street & number 1060 SOUTH 28TH STREET telephone (253) 383-9101

city or town TACOMA state WA zip code 98409

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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TACOMA BUILDING
PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Narrative Description:

The Tacoma Building is composed of two large, attached commercial structures, a ten-story original portion completed in 1910 and a 1957 twelve-story section that more than doubled the size of the original structure. Each of the two distinct sections reflect their respective architectural eras, although the accommodations made for the 1957 addition reconfigured the internal organization of the 1910 building and eliminated the main entry, rear light well and elevator lobby areas.

The design of the 1910 building was the result of a design competition. Won by the firm of architectural firm of Potter & Merrill, the architects cited French Renaissance detailing as a distinguishing feature of the otherwise straightforward Chicago Commercial style structure. The footprint of the building fit onto a mannerly 100 foot by 100 foot lot and set a pattern for cleanly proportioned symmetrical elements in the overall massing and scale of the building.

The prominent location of the building, at the foot of Tacoma's important 11th Street, provided dramatic views to the harbor at Commencement Bay, an overlook onto City Waterway (Thea Foss Waterway) and an unobstructed gaze at towering Mt. Rainier to the South. As originally conceived, the building program was to house the prestigious Tacoma Commercial Club, several professional offices primarily engaged in the timber industry and the rapidly growing Weyerhaeuser Timber Company. The later would eventually occupy the entire structure and erase most of the lavish public amenities and assembly areas designed for the Commercial Club and Chamber of Commerce tenancies.

The 1910 building rests on a two story deep concrete foundation and is constructed with reinforced concrete framing. Like the Perkins Building across 11th Street to the south, the structure employed a typically over-scaled system of cast in place concrete posts and beams with 1 ½ to 2 ½ diameter steel reinforcing bars wired into cages. Plank forms were used and repeated uniformly on each floor as the building rose during the summer and fall of 1909. The modern concrete skeleton resembled a heavy timber post and beam structure although it more than doubled the height of typical unreinforced masonry commercial buildings built before 1900.

The two-story base of the building is clad in butter yellow colored terra cotta on the primary facades set with wide horizontal false mortar lines and deep set window openings which are symmetrically placed around the second floor level, and the south, east and partial north elevations of the ground floor. The A Street ground level façade has been refitted with continuous terra cotta cladding forming a blank wall where the main entry, storefronts and flanking secondary entrances once were once located. The formal marble faced front entry, ornamental cast iron windows and flanking doors were closed off with the introduction of the new joint main entry in the 1957 section. A concrete plinth wraps around both the west and south lower walls with a light well running between the deck of the 11th Street Sky Bridge and the south wall.

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TACOMA BUILDING
PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Narrative Description: (CONT'D)

The rear east wall of the building is yellow finish brick with glazed quoins up to the cornice table that wraps around above the second floor. On the primary facades the middle floors of the structure between floors three and nine, are distinguished by pilasters and stacked window assemblies expressed in blond terra cotta. These terra cotta relief spandrel panels are found between the floors and within the vertical pilasters. Topping floors three through nine are round arched windows. At the corners, the pilasters are widened with a vertical row of smaller scale windows running up the edge of the west and north elevations. All of the window openings are set with retrofit bronze framed double frame windows installed in 1979. Lost during the window installation were cast iron grilled balcony fixtures on the 10th floor.

Capping the building is a capital floor with a ring of tall divided windows and decorated columns above a bracketed string course. Beneath is an elaborate compound cornice complete with a panel relief frieze, tightly grouped dentils and brackets which support an extended cornice and small parapet wall. On the much plainer east elevation of the building, the string course and cornice continues without the terra cotta detailing and expressed spandrels. The same retrofit metal windows are present on this façade. A vertical patch wall fills the original light well and is constructed of reinforced concrete. A protruding section of the north wall of the 1910 building extends from behind the connected section of the two structures and displays a shallow light well and vertical rows of metal windows roughly aligned with the pattern of the south elevation.

The 1957 section of the building was designed by the New York architectural firm of Frederick G. Frost and Associates. Reflecting the International/Miesian stylistic character of post World War II construction, the 12 story attached section is notable for its vertical aluminum framing and regular pattern of glass and beige wall panels. As such there is a clear effort to create some design compatibility between the older 1910 building and the attached 1957 structure exhibited in the color palette, horizontal window courses and stone work on the base.

The archetypical exterior curtain walls are hung on a concrete structural frame and follows a continuous surface pattern covering the upper floors on the entire west, north and east elevations. The windows are aluminum frame with horizontal mullions dividing the lights by one-quarter top and bottom. Capping the building is a clean squared top with an aluminum square cornice to complete the expressed grid design concept on the exterior.

The 1910 building and 1957 addition are joined together by a blond brick section that houses the joint elevator core and plumbing chase. This section has two vertical rows of windows on its recessed portion and a single row on the eastern most walls. This section of the structure rises approximately two stories above the other two structural parts to accommodate the elevator and HVAC equipment.

On the street level of the 1957 addition, buff travertine stone is used on the wall surface. The plane of the stone wall is slightly recessed from the aluminum grid on the walls above in typical Miesian fashion. The 1957 addition has shallow-set aluminum windows on the ground floor and basement in the rear. The main entry, relocated to the

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TACOMA BUILDING
PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Narrative Description: (CONT'D)

middle of the two structures during the 1957 construction, is defined by square aluminum clad columns, a set of glass doors in a stylistic box arch, a recessed glass wall, and the words TACOMA BUILDING inscribed in the travertine stone walls.

Directly above the entry, a sky bridge launches from the third floor across A Street to a parking garage. The six level concrete parking structure was completed in the late 1980's and displays some design elements that blend with the historic properties on the three other corners of 11th Street and A Street. The structure has deep horizontal reveal lines on the ground level and is colored to match the sandstone used on the U.S. Post Office (SW corner) and Perkins Buildings (SE corner). This structure is not part of this nomination.

With the completion of the 1957 addition, the interiors of the combined buildings were unified in design and finishes. The 1910 portion was refitted with new interior partition walls, suspended ceilings and building systems that reflected the 1950's design of the new addition. Some ornamental plaster work has survived above the suspended ceilings on the 10th floor but the company's wealth and the thoroughness of the architects and contractors during the mid 50's construction largely erased the earlier finishes and fixtures.

As an architectural composition that reflects two distinct periods of large-scale commercial design, the Tacoma Building provides a vivid narrative of contrasting aesthetics, building technologies and concepts of modernity. Each of the two distinct sections of the building display their original design intent and integrity, and together they present a successful blending of compatible design elements and material tones.

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TACOMA BUILDING
PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Narrative Statement of Significance:

The Tacoma Building, finished in 1910 and its addition from 1957, was built as the corporate headquarters for the Weyerhaeuser Company, one of North America's largest wood products enterprises and one of the largest corporate land owners in the United States. The building parallels the company's growth and expansion into the Pacific Northwest and reflects the power and social influence of one of the state's largest employers and most dominant corporate entities.

In 1908 lumberman Frederick Weyerhaeuser purchased two building lots at the northeast corner of what is now Eleventh and A Street (1021 A Street) for the tidy sum of \$40,000. The magnificent site, with panoramic views of Commencement Bay, Mount Rainier, and the Cascade Range, was at the time the site of an ornamental tinsmith's small shop, a stick-framed, ram-shackled home. It included additional outbuildings such as a chicken coop. At the time Weyerhaeuser needed a headquarters for his burgeoning timber empire and he procured the site with the idea of placing a functional two-story, stone building, which would suit Weyerhaeuser's immediate needs adequately (Sandborn; TDL, 1908; TDL, May 5, 1912).

Two of Weyerhaeuser's top executives were repulsed by the idea of the smallish building located in the shadow of the splendid new Perkins building located across Eleventh Street. R. L. McCormick, Weyerhaeuser Timber Company's secretary, and George S. Long, company agent, were avid members of the newly formed Tacoma Commercial Club, a group of local entrepreneurs who were set on the promotion of Tacoma business.

When the Commercial Club's general secretary, O. F. Cospers, made the suggestion (in the club's annual report) of combining their efforts at constructing a new headquarters building with those of a private enterprise, Cospers hoped to create a noteworthy structure upon the Tacoma landscape. The Commercial Club was akin to the Chamber of Commerce but served a more elite social function. Its members were largely affluent businessmen and investors who were seeking a privileged surroundings for "cigars and quiet business". McCormick and Long presented the idea to Frederick Weyerhaeuser who, apparently after several months of negotiation, finally gave the two executives the autonomy to proceed with the joint headquarters option as presented by the Commercial Club (TDL, October 12, 1909). At the start of the construction season in 1909, demolition work was begun and by mid-April the site was adequately prepared for excavation. Rumors began to be spread about the possibility of building a larger headquarters building (TDL, April 18, 1909).

Because of the nature of the agreement between the Commercial Club and Weyerhaeuser, and to allay fears of corruption, the committee overseeing the construction of the new building decided upon a design contest using the American Institute of Architecture guidelines. The benefits were described in the Tacoma Daily Ledger. "*The institute plan, architects say, absolutely does away with [the] opportunity to secure work by fraud or 'gumshoeing' among members of the committee in charge of selecting an architect, and is a guarantee that the very best available services will be secured.*" In all, seven local architects provided sample drawings which included elevations,

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TACOMA BUILDING
PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Narrative Statement of Significance: (CONT'D)

a representative floor plan, a basement plan, plans for the Commercial Club rooms, a cross section of all floors, and an artist's conceptual drawing (TDL, October 3, 1909).

An independent, out of town architect, was hired to perform the design adjudication on behalf of the Commercial Club. The seven entries contained sealed envelopes. These sealed envelopes contained the business card of the firm providing the otherwise anonymous drawings. Only after all entries had been judged upon their merits, would the identifying envelopes be opened disclosing the winner of the architectural contract for construction (TDL, September 5, 1909).

Speaking of the coming contest, architect George Gove noted that:

"An architect must have been out of school a long time not to feel a thrill of interest in the competition for the proposed new Weyerhaeuser and Commercial Club building, the program for which was sent this week to all of the local brethren of the art constructive. This is the first formal competition for the plans of a building to be conducted in Tacoma according to the rules of the American Institute of Architects, and the decision of the building committee to secure plans in this way not only shows the broad spirit in which the members have gone at the problem of securing a worthy home for the organization, but also marks a sharp advance in the artistic development of the city."

Gove added,

"In every office for the next two weeks will be heard stories of the famous competitions of school days and of the offices back East. The same old songs will be heard from the draughtsmen. Ink bottles will be spilled on nearly finished drawings: they will be scorched with falling ashes. The electric lights will be burned later and later as September 20 approaches, and the morning after the hollow eyed men will go about the streets saluting each other with tired but jovial badinage. In some one office there will be rejoicing with all its accomplishments. In every office in town a vacuum sweeper will be needed to clear away the wreck, the house cleaning constantly interrupted by congratulatory calls or such subtle flatteries as: 'Well, yours was a good second anyway.'"

*"These competitions stir the blood of an old draught horse, as you would shake a bottle of old India ink."
(TDL, September 5, 1909)*

With all the plans thoroughly scrutinized, it was time to select a winner. Once the committee agreed with the judge's decision, the corresponding envelope was found. Inside was the business card of the relatively small local firm of Potter and Merrill. Potter and Merrill had beaten out some very stiff and accomplished local architects like George Gove, Frederick Heath, and Ambrose Russell. Everyone was pleased with the outcome of the contest and the selection of Potter and Merrill demonstrated the fairness of the competition.

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**TACOMA BUILDING
PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

Narrative Statement of Significance: (CONT'D)

Potter and Merrill had only set up shop in Tacoma in February of 1909. Potter had worked for Frederick Heath prior to stepping out on his own. He recruited Arthur Merrill, whom he had known while living in Boston, to open a new architectural firm in Tacoma. The association between these men only lasted two years, but during that time frame, they managed to design several noteworthy buildings on the Tacoma landscape. To their credit are the Pacific Car building, the Hillcrest Apartments, the Merit building, the Tacoma Public Market, and Congressman Francis Cushman's residence in North Tacoma (TDL, February 14, 1909 and the Tacoma Public Library building index file). The Hillcrest Apartment Building is the only intact commercial building in Tacoma by the design team. It has a colorful history as the property and residence of landscape painter Abby Williams Hill and displays imaginative flourishes in her terraced penthouse and a formal classical façade fronting on Wright Park.

The Commercial Club gave Potter and Merrill three months to draft the construction plans for the new 10-story headquarters building. Features that attracted the eye of the judge included the ingenious ways that Potter and Merrill had incorporated French Renaissance details to a Chicago Style building.

The building committee was also attracted to the versatility of the façade. The structure of massive, yet delicate, proportion would be equally appealing using cut stone, terra cotta, or marble. The building would have 100 feet of frontage on both A and Eleventh Streets. The interior design took into question future needs and each floor could be easily subdivided, or partitioned. Redundant systems such as heating, electrical, and central vacuum systems meant the building could literally be divided in half without compromising the infrastructure (TDL, October 12, 1909 & March 6, 1910).

The Tacoma Chamber of Commerce begrudgingly threw its support behind the efforts of the Commercial Club, though some chamber members apparently resented the new club's presence (TDL, September 19, 1909). This cooperative agreement apparently allowed the Chamber of Commerce to set up offices in the headquarters as a gesture of solidarity.

In the design of the building the needs of the Commercial Club were fully met with the extravagant appointments found in the club's ballroom which was located prominently on the ninth floor. Here Potter and Merrill envisioned a multi-purpose assembly room; the offices of the Commercial Club's General Secretary and a lavish dining room big enough to accommodate 200 seated members. The partitions on this floor were enclosed in glass to maximize available outdoor light. The Commercial Club shared half of the tenth floor with Weyerhaeuser. The Commercial Club used the tenth floor for a private billiards hall, while Weyerhaeuser's half of the building contained seventeen executive suites.

On the roof was a garden promenade. This feature was the crowning touch to the French Renaissance architectural style that the architects referred to as Louis XIV. The roof top garden promenade is discreetly proportioned and is not evident from the street. The garden promenade contained a kitchen, pantry, and two dining rooms; one

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TACOMA BUILDING
PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Narrative Statement of Significance: (CONT'D)

devoted exclusively to the ladies, the other for the staff. The ladies dining room opened to the elements on warm days to give it a bistro-like atmosphere. The promenade was tiled throughout and was appointed with generous greenery.

The rooftop kitchen contained the latest equipment and a dumbwaiter to service the grand dining room on the ninth floor and the club's Billiards room on the tenth. The Commercial Club also had an exclusive express elevator from the lobby, and private staircases to the assembly room and from the assembly room floor to the rooftop promenade.

Weyerhaeuser occupied half of the ground floor as well as half of the ninth. All of the company executives were located on the ninth floor except the Timber Agent and Company Secretary. Their offices were located on the ground floor so they could have easier access to the basement where the records were kept. Below the clerk's office on the ground floor, a fireproof vault was constructed. It was accessed by a private, spiral, staircase. The timber cruiser's offices were located in the split-level basement floor (TDL, October 12, 1909 & March 6, 1910).

The remaining floors were leased as office space. These offices were lavishly appointed with private lavatories, coat closets, central vacuum outlets and individualized security vaults all conveniently concealed behind one door in each office. All totaled, the building contained 255 offices, the average being 12' x 19' in size. As a result the attention to detail drove the cost of construction up (TDL, October 12, 1909). As work proceeded costs rose to 28 cents a square foot. Then again to 32.5 cents square foot.

The call for bids on the site excavations, the construction of a retaining wall and the grading of Cliff Street was made on January 2, 1910. Potter and Merrill hoped to have the excavation work completed by mid March. From the beginning, the project ran into some unanticipated difficulties. Though the excavation was finished on time, the compacted clay and shale made for some arduous digging. The further down the men dug, the more enormous the boulders they uncovered. Furthermore, the excavations threatened to undermine the foundation of the adjoining Lawrence Hotel located just north of the construction site. The Lawrence Building had to be shorn and braced before the excavation could continue. The excavators erected a steam-powered hoist to extract the debris plowed up by the twelve excavation teams, which worked in shifts around the clock. The contractor dug 15 feet below the A Street grade and 40 feet below the Cliff Street grade (TDL, March 20, 1910). Cliff Street was approximately 80 feet above the Northern Pacific RR mainline. The lower portion of the basement was excavated to accommodate two 150-horsepower boiler engines, two 100kw generators, central vacuum and assorted pumps (TDL, March 20, 1910 & TDL, July 2, 1911). Below the basement forms, nineteen piers were sunk around the foundation perimeter for added stability (TDL, July 24, 1910). While the building was nearing completion, Robert Walker used the difficulties in excavation as a marketing tool by boldly exclaiming to would-be tenants, "The re-enforced concrete foundation rests directly on natural "hard pan" as solid as granite" (TDL, July 2, 1911).

While the basement forms were being prepared, Potter and Merrill awarded the construction contract to Hurley-Mason on May 1, 1910. Hurley-Mason had completed the Perkins building several years earlier and faced stiff

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TACOMA BUILDING
PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Narrative Statement of Significance: (CONT'D)

competition from every commercial general contractor in Tacoma and several well-established companies headquartered in Spokane, Portland and Seattle. Upon receiving the contract, Hurley and Mason immediately set-up a construction barricade, tool shed and on-site construction offices and began work (TDL, June 26, 1910).

On August 7, 1910, the Tacoma Daily Ledger announced that the foundation of the building was ready to pour. A steam derrick and on-site mixing plant were installed to facilitate the concrete work. In the meantime, timbers, sand and gravel arrived by the ton for the construction while the pour continued (TDL, August 7, 1910). The pour took more than six weeks to accomplish (TDL, October 9, 1910) and included new concrete work under the adjoining Lawrence Hotel. Once the complicated foundation work was finished, the framing would be done in quick order thanks to an eager and willing labor pool (TDL, October 9, 1910).

It would be November before everyone agreed upon a name for the building. No one seemed enamored with the unwieldy hyphenated Weyerhaeuser-Commercial Club building name. The name 'Tacoma' was chosen instead (TDL, November 13, 1910). Potter and Merrill elected to use the old-style spelling of the word 'building' in the marquee. Thus, the Tacoma Building became "TACOMA BVILDING." This detail did not go unnoticed from either the public or the press. On May 14, 1911, the Tacoma Daily Ledger printed a rather tongue-in-cheek article entitled, "Yes, Gladys, That 'V' in 'TACOMA BVILDING' Is A 'U'".

It was also about this time that the building committee finally decided upon the appropriate exterior appointments. The committee chose terra cotta over Alaskan marble or Tenino quarry stone. The Tacoma Daily Ledger reported that the, "*first two stories, the tenth, and the main cornice balustrade, will be finished in cream colored terra cotta with a matte glazed surface. The third to the ninth stories, inclusive, will be faced with a buff impervious brick, with cream-colored terra cotta trim*" (TDL, June 2, 1911)."

With much of the interior work still in full swing, Robert C. Walker, Tacoma Commercial Club Building Construction Committee Chair, announced that the building would be the center of the Washington State timber industry. To accomplish this, Walker announced that the fifth and sixth floor tenants would be leased exclusively to logging, timber and lumber industry clients. He writes,

"The owners are quite anxious to make it the headquarters for the lumber industry, not only of Tacoma, but of this portion of the Puget Sound country... Floor plans of the building can be seen, and there is still ample time to make such arrangements so far as partitions and size of rooms is concerned, to suit the varied wants of any prospective tenant."

(TDL, April 9, 1911)

By July 4th, 1911, the Tacoma Building had its first tenants taking up residence. Upon entering the lobby, one was greeted "with American Pavonazzo marble, with Verde Antique marble base. The floor of the lobby was paneled

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TACOMA BUILDING
PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Narrative Statement of Significance: (CONT'D)

with Jasper marble and white Alaska marble. Doors and windows were all of quarter-sawed white oak" (TDL, July 2, 1911). Four Otis elevators serviced the building, one express, one service and two for general purpose (TDL, July 2, 1911).

The Commercial Club threw its first official gala at the newly constructed Tacoma Building on May 6, 1912. The event marked the club taking complete possession of the structure. The clubrooms were finished with hardwood floors covered with lavish carpets, the walls were decorated with tapestries, and the large rooms could be divided by blue and gold portieres monogrammed with the initials T.C.C., which matched the window draperies.

On the 10th floor were the main assembly room, billiards room, library, phone exchange, cloak room and lavatories. In the library was an oversized fireplace with brick hearth. This fireplace, located on the west wall, was trimmed in oak and reached all the way to the ceiling. A second fireplace was located across the building on the east wall. It was a marble fireplace with wood trimmings. The largest fireplace was adjacent to the billiards room. This fireplace had a brick hearth that was fifteen feet long. There were two davenports, one on either side of the fireplace. Over this fireplace mantle was an enormous painted tile scene of Mount Tacoma (Mt. Rainier), giant firs, and seagulls.

The rooms were lighted with ornate half-globe fixtures of hammered bronze fitted with opaque or stained glass and suspended from the ceiling by chains. There were 16 of these fixtures found in the assembly room during the recent rehabilitation. Liberally scattered about were davenports, rockers and settees of rich dark oak, miscellaneous cushioned chairs and writing desks with their chairs. The walls contained ample telephone jacks. If a club member required the use of a telephone, he could use one of the two private phones in the exchange or he could request that a phone be brought to him.

The men's lavatories were located adjacent to the cloakroom. The lavatories were finished in marble with marble basins. The ladies lavatory was located on the ninth floor adjacent to the Ladies Lounge and was similarly finished.

The Billiards room contained eight standard sized pool tables and three enormous oak tables for card playing. It also had a cigar stand and a lengthy window seat along the southern side of the building for players and spectators to lounge.

The dining room on the ninth floor was reached via an elevator or a grand staircase. The walls of the dining room were beset with murals depicting scenes found in and around Pierce County. The dining room was lit with eighteen magnificent fixtures similar to those on the tenth floor. The dining room tables and chairs were of an Early English style. The north wall contained the buffet and silver service, and ample telephone jacks if someone should request a telephone while seated.

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The interior colors were a bit livelier on the ninth floor. The carpets contained more violet and the tapestries were adorned with floral motifs. The furnishings were all mahogany. Leading from the ladies lounge, were two more private telephone booths that separated ladies a ladies dining room. The room was large enough to be divided for private banquets.

The Commercial Club occupied several suites on the eighth floor. The main reception desk and the offices of the Transportation, Industry, and Publicity Committees were located on this floor. Also noteworthy was the club's kitchen facility. The kitchen contained every 1912 modern convenience. Which included an electric silver service polisher, an industrial sanitary dish washer and plate warmers. Aside from typical ranges and broilers, the kitchen also sported steam tables for the preparing of soups and vegetables. "Beside them are the electric appliances for boiling eggs. The button is pushed for a half minute or the half hour, as one wishes, up comes the egg, properly boiled and neatly drained" (TDL, May 5, 1912). The utensils, pots and pans were mainly copper. Two pantries were kept: one for the chef, the other for the baker (TDL, May 5, 1912).

According to a 1912 directory, Robert Walker succeeded in bringing at least five timber firms and four real estate firms to the Tacoma Building. Some of the more noteworthy tenants to take advantage of the new building were railroad contractor, Nelson Bennett, the Wheeler and Reese Lumber Company, the Lumbermen's Information Bureau, and Arthur P. Merrill of Potter and Merrill Architects (Polk).

In 1913, Tacoma Daily Ledger horticulturist, E. R. Roberts, issued a lament concerning the wanton dumping of refuse on Tacoma's bluffs and in Tacoma's gulches. He called upon owners of local area businesses to clean up their grounds. Weyerhaeuser Timber went one step further. The Northern Pacific Railway owned the bluff of land at Cliff Street and 11th adjacent to the Tacoma Building. Weyerhaeuser asked the Northern Pacific to clean up the debris that was accumulating on the otherwise vacant parking strip. The NP refused, so Weyerhaeuser asked the railway to lease the property to them, which they did. Weyerhaeuser then excavated the bluff creating a gradual slope that fell away from the building below Cliff Street. The land was then planted and fenced. The Tacoma Daily Ledger used this act of beautification as a means of shaming the Northern Pacific, as well as other property owners (including the city) into cleaning up their collective acts. All totaled, the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company spent \$500 on what became known as "Tacoma's smallest park" called Schuster Parkway (TDL, November 30, 1913 & January 18, 1914).

By 1923, the influence of the Commercial Club had waned. The Chamber of Commerce was the foremost authority on boosting trade, labor and industry in Tacoma. The clubrooms in the Tacoma Building were taking up much needed space for both the Chamber of Commerce and Weyerhaeuser and in the winter of 1923, remodeling

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of the club floors was underway. As a result the 10th floor would be completely gutted for Weyerhaeuser Timber Company offices. The 9th floor was remodeled to consolidate the operations of the Chamber of Commerce.

The project converted the dining room into a multipurpose room and the rest of the ninth floor was subdivided into executive office suites. Weyerhaeuser used this opportunity to consolidate all the executive offices on the tenth floor. Chamber of Commerce secretary, Edward P. Kemmer noted,

"With the concentration of our office space on one floor and the total elimination of club features of the chamber," Mr. Kemmer pointed out, "we can concentrate on civic, commercial and industrial development. The result should be greater expansion of the business interests of the city."

(TDL, December 23, 1923)

The remodel project, which caused the removal of many of the elaborate features of the Commercial Club, was completed by the end of January (TDL, January 27, 1924). With it began a long tradition of upgrading and remodeling of the Tacoma Building by the Weyerhaeuser Corporation. Later that year, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce announced that it would make itself more amenable to the public by moving their offices to a locale at ground level. With growing ties to the Port of Tacoma and the U.S. Customs Office across the street, they wanted more visibility to encourage shipping and tourism into California. The Tacoma Chamber followed suit by relocating their offices on the ground floor of the Tacoma Building and vacating the ninth floor. This paved the way for further remodeling of the building for Weyerhaeuser. Upon explaining the sudden move, Chamber of Commerce president J.A. Eves told the Tacoma Daily Ledger, "*We are where everybody can locate us readily and every department of the big organization is ready now as in the past prepared to give the best service possible to members of the chamber, Tacoma in general and strangers in the city*" (TDL, October 11, 1925).

Remodeling once again in May of 1930, Weyerhaeuser took out a permit for \$10,000 to rearrange the executive quarters located on the 10th floor (TDL, May 4, 1930). Weyerhaeuser may have conducted this work just to be a good neighbor to the throngs of unemployed who were made destitute by the great depression. By the end of construction season in 1930, Weyerhaeuser Timber Company's remodel costs had grown to \$100,000 of which \$60,000 went directly into laborer wages (TDL, December 17, 1930).

To improve upon the property, Weyerhaeuser replaced the flooring on each floor, replaced the elevators, rewired the building, removed outdated lighting fixtures, and painted anything that did not move. The lobby of the Tacoma building received a thorough make over as well. Charles A. Drew, building manager, ordered marble with a greenish hue for the building's impressive new entryway. The Tacoma Daily Ledger reported that the ceiling of the lobby was decorated in silver leaf, which reflected the Indian reds and contrasting black and pale gold of the ceiling beams and panels. In the article Drew stated that the new lobby ceiling and walls have caused more comments than any other feature of the owner's improvement program (TDL, December 17, 1930).

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Weyerhaeuser hired the architectural firm of Lea-Pearson and Richards to conduct the next phase of remodeling which took place in 1949. The MacDonald Building Company was awarded the contract for construction to rework the first, second, eighth, ninth and tenth floors. The floor plans were rearranged, the offices were sound deadened, and all the exterior plate glass windows were replaced with thermo-pane glass.

The Chamber of Commerce moved out of the building they once co-owned and Weyerhaeuser took over the space vacated on the first floor by rearranging the offices and the lobby. The most noticeable difference was found on street level where the two side entrances to the building were sealed up. New marble and flooring was added to the lobby. The project was to be completed by April of 1950 (TDL, November 10, 1949).

Growing rapidly in the prosperous post war economy, on May 1st, 1955, Weyerhaeuser purchased the Lawrence Hotel located adjacent to the Tacoma Building from Tacoma lawyer, J. Charles Dennis for \$140,000. The 65-year old Lawrence Hotel was reported to be in poor condition. Aside from the rundown state of the hotel, the building contained an office supply store, furniture store and a liquor store. Weyerhaeuser immediately shut the operations down and began architectural and engineering studies on building a new Tacoma Building. The new plans called for a twelve story modern structure with basement garage facilities (Tacoma Public Library Building files and TNT, August 15, 1955).

The Weyerhaeuser Timber Corporation hired the noted New York City architectural firm of Frederick G. Frost and Associates of to design and oversee the development of the new Tacoma Building. A sketch of the proposed Frost addition was released to the general public via the Tacoma News Tribune in November, 1955 (TNT, November 17, 1955). The new Tacoma Building was 12-stories, framed in concrete with modern, commercial style, exterior window walls giving the building a finished, yet un-decorative appearance (TNT, September 23, 1956).

The new Tacoma Building was completed in the early part of 1957 at an estimated cost of \$700,000 (TNT, July 1, 1956). The two buildings combined had a floor space of about 144,000 square feet. Weyerhaeuser used this floor space to accommodate roughly 600 employees (TNT, December 18, 1998). At the time, the company was rapidly developing markets for pulp and paper board that by 1957 made up one-third of its net sales. The decision to keep its headquarters in Tacoma represented a major affirmation of the city's status and in the years that followed, when most retailing moved to the regional shopping mall, kept the downtown streets busy with foot and automobile traffic.

The newly constructed section of the building was the only large commercial structure of its style and scale built in downtown Tacoma during the 1950's. Although Urban Renewal projects were driving some building demolition in the downtown, no large construction sites were created and there was relatively little growth in white-collar jobs and employers.

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Other remodeling projects in the building took place in 1966, where the 10th floor of the 1910 section was decorated with a new executive lobby trimmed in hardwood. In 1978, the then unused roof top promenade was remodeled to house building utilities. New air-conditioning units and new carpets for both sections were also installed at that time. The next year, Weyerhaeuser hired Donald Burr, to modernize the building further and add more parking space to the garage.

As the Weyerhaeuser timber empire grew and diverse subsidiaries were added, even more space was required. Weyerhaeuser completed a subsequent headquarters building located in Federal Way, Washington in 1971. The pace of Weyerhaeuser's growth was such that by 1976, Weyerhaeuser filled their new headquarters building and was using all the vacated space at both the old and new Tacoma Buildings as well (TNT, February 22, 1976).

Slowly over the next twenty-five years, the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company began developing a business campus surrounding its headquarters in Federal Way. Then in March of 1998, Weyerhaeuser made an announcement that all of Tacoma feared. After 100 years of conducting business in Tacoma, Weyerhaeuser's would cease to exist in Tacoma. The Tacoma Building was put up for sale, and plans to relocate the remaining Weyerhaeuser employees to Federal Way were unveiled. Tacoma City Councilman Kevin Phelps was dismayed. He feared that not only was Tacoma losing a solid employment base, but that much of Weyerhaeuser's philanthropy would go with it. Tacoma Voice reported Catherine Rudolph noted that "*It would be a tragedy if they left the city entirely. Solid economic development doesn't just mean bringing in new employers. It means stopping the leaks in the dam first. We need a strong jobs retention program*" (Rudolph). The 600 employees located at the Tacoma Building had made Weyerhaeuser the second largest employer within the city of Tacoma. By June of 2000, Weyerhaeuser completed its exodus from Tacoma.

The Tacoma Building was quietly purchased in the summer of 2000 by another international corporation, Labor Ready Corporation, for use as their corporate headquarters. Labor Ready Corporation is, as of this writing, renovating the structure with plans for occupancy in mid 2001.

The Tacoma Building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A for its longstanding association to the Weyerhaeuser Company. The building is also significant under criterion C as an excellent example of a 1910 Commercial Style building. The 1957 Weyerhaeuser Company headquarters addition serves as an example of the Modern Movement, Miesian style architecture and survives as one of the city's only large 1950's structure of note.

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Lots 1 to 4, in Block 1001 of MAP OF TACOMA, WASHINGTON TERRITORY, according to plat filed for record February 3, 1875 in Tacoma Pierce County Washington.

Together with the West 20 feet of Cliff Avenue abutting thereon as vacated by ordinance No. 370 of the City of Tacoma.

ALSO TOGETHER with that portion of A Street abutting Lots 2 and 3 in block 1101; of said Plat as vacated by City of Tacoma Ordinance No. 2289 recorded April 11, 1963 under Auditor's No. 8304110318, described as follows:

Commencing at the Northwesterly corner of the said Block 1101; thence Southerly along the Westerly line of said Block a distance of 37.2 feet to the true point of beginning; thence Westerly at a 90° angle 4.00 feet; thence Southerly parallel to the Westerly line of said Block 1101 25.75 feet; thence Easterly 4.00 feet to a point on said Westerly line 25.75 feet Southerly from the true point of beginning; thence Northerly 25.75 feet to said true point of beginning. Situated in the County of Pierce, State of Washington.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

The building occupies a downtown urban site platted into blocks and lots. The footprint of the building follows the lot plat boundaries.