

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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INTERAGENCY RESOURCE DIVISION
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 on separate sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name McIlvaine Apartments
other names/site number Vance Apartments

2. Location

street & number 920 S. 9th Street not for publication
city or town Tacoma vicinity
state Washington code WA county Pierce code 053 zip code 98405

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.)

Mary M. Hampson 1/31/95
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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 certifying official/Title 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:)

for
Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper
Entered in the Date of Action
National Register 3.16.95

McIlvaine Apartments
Name of Property

Pierce County, Washington
County and State

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 incl. previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Non-Contributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	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

Hilltop Neighborhood

0

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Italian Renaissance

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

STUCCO

roof ASPHALT: built-up

other _____

Narrative Description

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

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.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

Period of Significance

1909-1945

Significant Dates

1909

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

John P. Larkin, Architect

J.E. Bonnell, Contractor

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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 Engineering
- Record# _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository:
City of Tacoma OHP

McIlvaine Apartments
Name of Property

Pierce County, Washington
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM References on a continuation sheet.)

1	<input type="text" value="10"/> Zone	<input type="text" value="5"/> <input type="text" value="41"/> <input type="text" value="050"/> Easting	<input type="text" value="52"/> <input type="text" value="33"/> <input type="text" value="230"/> Northing	3	<input type="text"/> Zone	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Easting	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Northing
2	<input type="text"/> Zone	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Easting	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Northing	4	<input type="text"/> Zone	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Easting	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cloantha Copass / Gerald K.B. Eysaman
organization eysaman + company date August 20, 1994
street & number 405 Sixth Avenue, N° 200 telephone (206) 272-5924
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.)

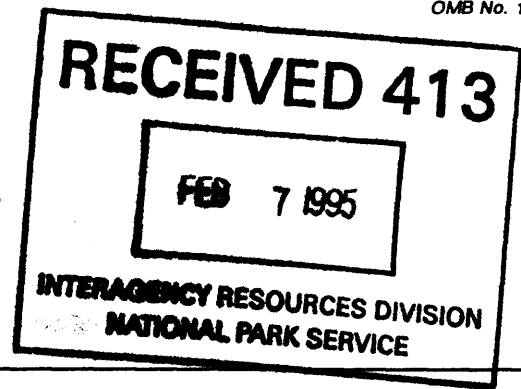
Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1



The McIlvaine Apartments
Pierce County, WA

Hilltop Neighborhood MPN

Description

The McIlvaine Apartments is a three story, seven unit brick and stucco apartment building. Designed by architect John P. Larkins in 1909, the building incorporates elements of Italian Renaissance details. Slightly raised above the street with a full concrete basement, the building's compact and utilitarian plan maximizes floor space and light to all units, while the Italianate detailing adds interest to the building. The McIlvaine Apartments remains in excellent condition and retains most original exterior and interior decorative details and the original floor plans. The property represents the sub-type "multiple dwelling" of the property type "Residential Resources" described in the Hilltop Neighborhood Multiple Property Nomination.

SETTING

The McIlvaine occupies a prominent corner at the intersection of S. 9th Street and S. J Street. The building is located in the northeastern quarter of the Hilltop, at the southwestern corner of the concentration of larger apartment buildings. The building's narrow setback on the street facades give the structure an urban presence. The east and south elevations are surrounded by the open space characteristic of many Hilltop properties. The building has a dominant presence in a neighborhood comprised of older two story wood frame residential structures and more contemporary commercial properties.

EXTERIOR

The McIlvaine Apartments are a neat rectangular box symmetrically planned around a center axis. The surface planes of the building's elevations are articulated with vertical bays and horizontal banding to help reduce the apparent scale of the building and create visual interest. A full concrete basement firmly roots the building on the slightly sloping surrounding terrain. A continuous concrete water table encircles the building and provides a level base for the first two floors of variegated red brick. A continuous field of stucco lightens the third floor. Above the stucco, a dentiled cornice with a broad trim band caps the structure. Decorative quoining anchors the building's corners and the recessed entry portico. The quoins are gray brick at the first and second stories, changing to red brick at the stuccoed third floor level.

The main entrance, centered on axis, is recessed within a segmental brick arch with an over-scaled decorative concrete keystone. Surface mounted signs flank the entrance with a c. 1940 re-naming of the property to the *VANCE APTS*. Sidelights border the original wooden front door, which has a large single light window. Above the recessed entry at the second story is a large fixed vinyl window installed in 1993; the original leaded with colored glass window is stored in the basement. A terra cotta plaque with a shield inscribed *McIlvaine* is set in the third floor level.

A projecting metal box bay containing a pair of double-hung windows is centered on each side elevation. The bays extend from the first to the third story. Across the rear elevation at each level, are wooden porches connected by a wooden staircase. The third floor porch has a continuous shed

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The McIlvaine Apartments
Pierce County, WA

Hilltop Neighborhood MPN

Description, cont.

roof set beneath the level of the main cornice. Large tri-partite groupings of double hung windows mark the living rooms on the north facade. Smaller windows on the side elevations, also in the living areas, originally had multi-colored leaded glass. The building's original wood windows were removed in 1993 and replaced with vinyl windows; the original windows are presently stored in the basement. The window sills and lintels are painted concrete.

The cornice, third floor stucco, basement, bays, and widow sills and heads were originally painted in a variety of mustard and olive green tones. In 1994, the building was repainted in a new but historically sensitive color scheme.

INTERIOR

The plans, trim, and decorative finishes of the interiors of the McIlvaine Apartments remain largely intact. Each floor has two matched units accessed from a center stair hall; an exterior stair descends to the basement unit. The central stair has decorative wood newel posts and simple square balusters with a rounded wood handrail. All this wood retains the original stain and varnish finishes. An original glass and steel skylight, now covered from the inside, remains atop the stairwell. This skylight extends to cover an enclosed interior light and air shaft ventilating the bathroom in each unit. The closet which originally existed under the stairs at the first floor has been remodeled recently to provide direct access to the new basement laundry room.

A contemporary entrance door to each apartment open to a corridor which runs back toward the rear of the unit. Opposite the entry door, pairs of slender wooden Doric columns sit on raised bases beneath a simple wood frieze. The main room beyond has matching window trim and trim surrounding a wide opening, now infilled with non-historic bifold doors, that opened to the adjacent dining room. The dining rooms all have original wood plate rails. Decorative vertical grained fir trim with the original varnish is typical throughout the units, although the trim in some of the kitchen, bathroom, and storage areas has been painted. In the first floor west apartment, an historic a "Murphy" bed was added in an expanded dining room closet.

Most apartments have a three-part cast metal ceiling light fixture with lozenge shaped lenses in the living room and a matching fixture with two parts in the dining rooms. The bays, projecting from the dining rooms, contain built-in wood seats with lift open storage. A small serving pantry with built in cabinetry connects the dining room and kitchen in each unit. One kitchen retains a pair of original kitchen sinks on decorative metal leg supports. Original six panel wooden doors remain throughout.

The seventh apartment, in the eastern half of the basement, differs significantly from the upper units. The original main entrance to this unit is in the light well along S. 9th Street, with a large double hung wood window and a rear door opening at grade along the eastern elevation.

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The McIlvaine Apartments
Pierce County, WA

Hilltop Neighborhood MPN

Statement of Significance

The McIlvaine Apartments (1909) were commissioned by Alvin C. McIlvaine, designed by architect John P. Larkins, and constructed by J.D. Bonnell, contractor. The apartment building is primarily significant architecturally as a representative example of the small apartment buildings developed in the Hilltop after the turn of the century. The building's construction and use reflect several themes associated with the formation of the Hilltop Neighborhood, including the creation of housing opportunities by small-scale local investors, and providing a range of housing opportunities for working Tacomans. Within the context of the Hilltop Neighborhood Multiple Property Nomination, the associated historic context for the McIlvaine Apartments is "Branching Out: 1900-1930." The McIlvaine's continued use as a multiple dwelling extends its period of significance from its construction in 1909 to 1945, within the time period considered by the Hilltop Neighborhood MPN.

As describe in the previous section, the building continues to reflect the plan and design scheme originally created by the architect and builder. Generally the exterior (with the exception of paint color and window sash) and interior of the building reflect its original appearance. Observation of remaining original features in various units creates a complete and accurate picture of each unit's original interior. The building's historical association is reinforced by its continued use as an apartment structure.

The McIlvaine Apartments reflect the investment of a local businessman in the community. A.C. McIlvaine, the developer, had arrived Tacoma from Pennsylvania in about 1893 and succeeded as a brick and plastering contractor in Tacoma's booming construction industry. A Hilltop resident, McIlvaine lived with his family at 413 South M Street. After 1898, McIlvaine acquired a few small pieces of property at various locations throughout Tacoma, including, in 1906, the future site of the McIlvaine Apartments. The site was centrally located two blocks north of cable line on 11th Street and two blocks east of the growing "K Street" Commercial District.

McIlvaine selected John P. Larkins as the project architect. Larkins was a Chicago architect who came to Tacoma in 1905. After working for a year with another architect, G. W. Bullard, Larkins entered practice for himself. Larkins' independent practice in Tacoma appears to have started slowly. In 1907 and 1908, Larkins known works consisted of eight single family homes, including three on N. Steele Street designed for the Luby Investment Company. Larkins' projects were basic wood homes, with details based on the revival styles popular at the time.

The opportunity to work on a project more substantial than the speculative single-family homes clearly thrilled Larkins. An optimistic Larkins described the planned apartment to a *Tacoma Daily Ledger* reporter in February, 1908. He explained that the proposed brick building would be three stories high, divided into three wings facing on S. Ninth Street, with the wings separated by light

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Section number 8 Page 4

The McIlvaine Apartments
Pierce County, WA

Hilltop Neighborhood MPN

Statement of Significance, cont.

courts. This plan would ensure that each room in the fifteen four or five room apartments would enjoy direct daylight.

Ultimately, McIlvaine opted to finance a much more modest building, and Larkins condensed the three-wing plan into one square building. Nevertheless, Larkins achieved some of his earlier vision. While many other multi-family buildings in the neighborhood at the time tended to look to residential construction for details, this building, with its brick rather than wood construction, and its placement abutting the street on both sides, announced itself as an urban apartment structure. All units did have extensive outside exposure, thereby countering the common perception that apartment living involved crowding and poor ventilation. Exterior details such as the cornice, cast stone lintels, and leaded glass windows lent the property an air of sophistication.

Although McIlvaine was a contractor in the brick and plaster trades, for this project he enlisted the services of the J.E. Bonnell Company as general contractor for this project. James Bonnell ran a prominent Tacoma contracting company. After arriving in Tacoma from Nova Scotia in 1888, Bonnell founded a contracting company which became one of Tacoma's largest by his death in 1930.

McIlvaine's decision to construct an apartment reflected an emphasis on long-term returns rather than the quick but uncertain profits of speculative real estate investment. McIlvaine's pride in his building shows; he installed an elaborate shield with his name on it above the main entry. McIlvaine, who lived only seven blocks from the new apartments, undoubtedly remained involved with the management of his investment.

Occupancy of the apartments over time reflects the Hilltop's role in housing a diverse mix of mostly immigrant working class Tacomans. The occupants of the McIlvaine Apartments worked in a range of service and manufacturing jobs. In 1910, residents of the newly-opened building included the Lawrence Flood, a bank clerk, his wife Margaret who came to Tacoma from the east coast. Lawrence's brother Gary, the manager of a social club, also lived with the family. James and Alexania Maynard, who came from French-Canada and Michigan, lived in another unit. James was a tool manufacturer. The Maynard had boarders from Sweden, Ireland, and Denmark.

In 1920, the apartments continued to house working class people living in a variety of extended family arrangements. None of the tenants had small children, although several households had adult children living at home and working. As was typical for the Hilltop, many of the women worked outside the home to help support themselves and/or their families. James and Connie Lannan, along with son Vernard occupied one unit. James and his son both had jobs tied to Tacoma's World War One era growth: James worked as a house carpenter, while Vernard worked as a laborer in the ship yard. The Pollicks family, from Iowa, lived in a household consisting of an older mother and two single children, both in their forties. The daughter worked as a bookkeeper at a department store, her 69 year old mother worked as a housekeeper, and the son

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The McIlvaine Apartments
Pierce County, WA

Hilltop Neighborhood MPN

Statement of Significance, cont.

worked as a machinist for the railroad. Several other families in the building depended on the railroad for income: the Schlosses were supported by Mr. Schloss's work as a machinist at the railroad shop, while Martin Roper was a baggage handler. Roper's twenty-two year old son lived at home and worked as a riveter at the ship yard. The Martin sisters shared another unit. Immigrants to Tacoma from Iowa, one sister worked as a cashier at the electric company and the other as a stenographer. The Coopers, a couple in their sixties, supported themselves with Mr. Cooper's work a clerk at the newspaper office, and took in a boarder, who was a telegraph operator at the railroad office. A final pair of tenants, John and Catharine Wood, worked as a printer and bookkeeper respectively.

Bibliography

"Death Calls J. E. Bonnell, Contractor," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, March 27, 1930, p. 1.
Illustration. *TDL*, November 21, 1908, p. 20.
"The McIlvaine Apartment House," *TDL*, May 30, 1909, p. 36.
Polk's City of Tacoma Directory.
U.S. Federal Census Records, 1910, 1920.

Verbal boundary description

Lots 1-3, Block 919, New Tacoma

Verbal boundary justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the property.