

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED JAN 7 1976  
DATE ENTERED MAY 3 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

\*\*

HISTORIC  
Triangle Hotel and Bar  
AND/OR COMMON  
Flatiron Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
551 First Avenue South  
CITY, TOWN  
Seattle  
STATE  
Washington  
VICINITY OF  
\_\_\_\_\_  
COUNTY  
King  
CODE  
53  
CODE  
033  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
#7 - Honorable Brock Adams  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Professional Offices

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME  
The Flatiron Associates  
Tonkin and Greissinger Architects  
STREET & NUMBER  
551 First Avenue South  
CITY, TOWN  
Seattle  
STATE  
Washington  
VICINITY OF  
\_\_\_\_\_  
98104

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
King County Administration Building  
STREET & NUMBER  
Fourth Avenue and James Street  
CITY, TOWN  
Seattle  
STATE  
Washington

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
None  
DATE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
CITY, TOWN  
\_\_\_\_\_  
STATE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

---

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

The Triangle Hotel, now commonly known as the Flatiron Building, was commenced in 1909 and completed in 1910 for Seattle real estate figure, Victor Hugo Smith. Designed by local architect C. A. Breitung, the three-story brick hotel was sited on the northern edge of a tidal basin which was filled in during the first decade of the 20th Century for purposes of commercial and industrial development. The building is distinctive because of its triangular shape and surface enrichment. Rusticated Flemish bond brickwork, late medieval pointed arches, and projecting window bays combine to suggest a commercial "Tudor" style. The building currently houses professional offices of the owners, who are embarked on a multi-phased program of stabilization and restoration.

The Flatiron Building is located in the E $\frac{1}{2}$  Section 6, T.24N., R.4E., of the Willamette Meridian. It is situated on the south 48.74 feet of Lot 8, Block 327 in the Seattle Tidelands Addition. The triangular shape of the lot is dictated by trackage on Railroad Way South, which intersects with First Avenue South at a diagonal immediately south of the property. Elevated above Railroad Way South is a double-decked ramp leading to the Alaskan Way viaduct, a limited access highway sited along the waterfront a block to the west. The building's principal facade, fronting on First Avenue South, is opposed by a nearly contiguous block of contemporary brick-faced mercantile and warehouse facades ranging from three to seven stories in height. The property's immediate neighbor to the north is a long, one-story retail structure faced with scribed brick. The property falls one block outside the current official southern boundary of Pioneer Square Historic District in this area, namely: South King Street. However, it is located in a special review district on the periphery, which is a salutary factor in terms of conserving the neighborhood's integrity. Among proposed new uses for the Flatiron Building are a cafe and rathskeller which would be installed in the ground story and basement. It is expected that demand for adaptive uses of this kind will be enhanced upon completion of the King County Domed Stadium, now under construction one block to the southeast.

Conforming to the outline of its lot, the building plan is triangular and has a truncated apex measuring less than six feet across. The First Avenue facade measures approximately 48 feet; the west, or Railroad Way frontage is 56 feet; and the north, or rear elevation measures 28 feet. Below grade, the east wall of the basement extends an additional six feet under the sidewalk.

The basement is concrete, and the ground story frame and spandrel beam are also cast in place and have a brick and pebble-dashed stucco exterior veneer and a steel spandrel beam. Second and third stories are of brick masonry construction with wood framing. As a result of seismic damage suffered some ten years ago, a serpentine crack has shown up in the south bearing wall. Although turnbuckles have been used to stabilize the walls thus far, the present owners are seeking to further redress the problem.

The ground story facade is organized into two wide bays on either side of a narrower central bay. Principal entries are framed within the northernmost bay. Clerestory window openings above the spandrel beam are Tudor arches with mullions. A string

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED JAN 7 1976	
DATE ENTERED	MAY 3 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

course projecting slightly at the top of ground story concrete walls is decorated with a band of lozenges of copper-green ceramic tile. Second and third story walls are faced with dark red brick laid up in a Flemish bond in which clinker headers were used at random. The brickwork is "rusticated" with nine regularly spaced projecting belt courses. The uppermost stratum is enlarged, as it is composed of basketweave diagonal brick coursing between two narrow belt courses. Window openings of the facade are contained in three frame projecting bays with decorative brackets and zinc-coated sheet metal veneer. The cornices of these bays consist of a cavetto molding pierced by pointed Gothic arches. The walls are capped by a high flared, or corbelled parapet concealing the built-up roof. Its topmost course is a cast-in-place concrete beam tinted to match the brick and ornamented with a raised foliate design. Narrow, elongated openings in the truncated apex, or south end of the building, have round arch heads. They are fitted with double-hung window sash and are framed with strips of slightly raised or projecting brickwork. Radiating bricks framing the arches were "battered", or tapered to achieve a finer jointing. At the ground story on this end the spandrel beam is supported by a pair of hollow cast iron columns with Romanesque cushion capitals which flank the corner bay. On the west face of the building upper stories are lighted by round-arched and trabeated openings alternating with two projecting window bays similar to those of the facade.

The ground story interior space contains its original finish materials: ceramic tile floor, marble baseboard, plaster walls, and fir trim. During the years when the space was occupied by Western Union's "C" Branch, a lower ceiling was added at the spandrel level and the clerestory windows were opaqued. This addition was recently removed, and a decorative painting in the plaster of the original ceiling was revealed in the process. Typical interior finish of the upper stories consists of plaster walls; fir baseboards with moldings, chair and picture rails, capped window and door casings, and five-panel stile and rail doors. A section of original stair railing remains. Partitioning of the upstairs has been somewhat modified over the years, and it is expected that further adjustments will be made in the course of adapting to tenant needs and meeting local building codes.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1909-1910

BUILDER/ARCHITECT C. A. Breitung, Architect

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The former Triangle Hotel (1909-1910) is significant to the city of Seattle as a picturesque example of early 20th Century building in the Tidelands development area. Its triangular shape dictated by its site at the intersection of a main thoroughfare and railroad trackage leading to the wharves of Seattle harbor, the building is believed to be the smallest developed commercial property in the central business district, the hotel and bar served a social function and, therefore, was built with appropriate surface refinement and features of a recognizable period style.

At the turn of the century work was resumed on a plan conceived years earlier for the improvement of Seattle's harbor on Elliott Bay in Puget Sound. Many acres of tideflats of the Duwamish River estuary were filled by dredging and by deposition of excavation materials from Beacon Hill washed down to the waterfront by flumes. The philosophy behind the ambitious and successful development was to allow railroad cars direct access to berthed cargo ships for more efficient loading and unloading procedures. Spurs were run to the wharves from tracks near the waterfront. The Great Northern Railroad was granted the first rights-of-way into Seattle from the south in 1889-1890. The Northern Pacific Railroad followed. Real estate developers were quick to see that the same trackage could effectively serve business and industry located in the tidelands. As litigation was resolved and the tracts were filled in concert with extensive regrading then being undertaken by the city, plats were filed, streets and waterways laid out, and the property values for both filled and unfilled parcels soared in what came to be known as the Tidelands Boom. First Avenue South, an avenue 100 feet wide, was planned as a main channel of road traffic through the business and industrial district of the future. The street began as a pileway, but by 1904 it was a paved boulevard completed for a mile-and-a-half south of the central business district of the day.

Among the many industries to find advantage in level sites close to the heart of the city as well as to railroad and water transportation was the Stetson and Post Sawmill and Planing Mill Company, which held waterfront property west of First Avenue South on which the Flatiron Building is now located. Around 1908 or 1909, Victor Hugo Smith, president of the Peninsular Land and Building Company, acquired the site of the future three-story brick hotel building. In 1909 the Pacific Builder and Engineer, a Seattle-based publication, announced Smith's plan to erect the building at First Avenue South and Railroad Way for an estimated cost of \$15,000. The journal reported, further, that C. A. Breitung was drawing the plans. A construction permit was filed the same year, and the building was completed for an actual cost of \$22,000 by December, 1910.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"A Lot of Worthy Men: Brief Biographies of Republican Candidates", Seattle Press-Times (March 7, 1892), p. 1. Note on Victor Hugo Smith, candidate for city treasurer.

Historic Building Data Sheet prepared for the City of Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board by Walter H. Greissing, July 8, 1974.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 0	5 5,0 1 6,0	5,2 7,1 5,0,5	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Elisabeth Walton Potter, Historic Preservation Specialist

ORGANIZATION

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

DATE

October 1975

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 1128

TELEPHONE

(206) 753-4116

CITY OR TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington 98504

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Arthur M. Skolnick*

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

December 19, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting *W. Smith*

DATE

5/3/76

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

*Charles W. ...*

DATE

5-3-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED JAN 7 1976	
DATE ENTERED	MAY 3 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

Little is known about the building's architect except what has been gleaned from city directories and occasional notices in the Pacific Builder and Engineer. C. A. (Alf) Breitung maintained an office in the Walker Building during this period, and for a time (between 1905 and 1907) he entered into a partnership with Theobald Buchinger. The only other works to Breitung's credit known to date are the Gymnasium of the Jesuit College at Broadway and Madsion Streets (1908), and the Byron Hotel in Bellingham (1912).

Victor Hugo Smith (1854 or 1860 - 1927) is known to have figured prominently in Seattle's real estate development in the years between 1889 and the height of the Tidelands Boom, around 1907. A native of Iowa, Smith arrived in Seattle in 1883 and secured a position with Puget Sound National Bank, where he remained until 1887. For the ensuing two years he was cashier for the Bank of Snohomish in Shonomish County. Upon his return to Seattle in 1889 he launched a career in real estate and loans, and by 1892, the year he was an unsuccessful candidate for City Treasurer, he had formed the brokerage house of V. H. Smith and Company. Smith was one of the incorporators of the Seattle Electric Railway Company and in this capacity he helped to secure the capital for electrification of the street car line which operated on Second Avenue.

The Triangle Hotel was opened for use late in 1910, replete with saloon and eight rooms. The building continued to be operated under that name until 1945. Owing in large part to its accessibility from the docks and railroads, it had eventually become a brothel. The ground story was maintained as a neighborhood tavern known as the Triangle Bar until 1929, at which time the Western Union Telegraph Company located its "C" Branch office in the space. The first branch location to serve the main office of Western Union in Seattle, "C" Branch is believed to have been one of the early urban branch offices established by the telegraph company. Communication with the head office in Seattle at Second Avenue and Cherry Street was conducted via pneumatic tubing. Upon Western Union's departure from the premises in 1954, the ground story was re-outfitted for tavern use, a function which has only recently been phased out. The building's only occupants at present are the owner-architects, who maintain professional offices in the second story.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 7 1976
DATE ENTERED	MAY 3 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

---

Pacific Builder and Engineer, Tidelands and Business Realty Special Supplement(1904).

Post-Intelligencer (March 4, 1927). Obituary article, Victor H. Smith.

"Seattle's Old Triangle Building", Seattle Times Magazine (July 17, 1966), p. 7.  
Article on cover illustration by William Oakes.