

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Washington
COUNTY:	King
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	JUL 12 1974

**1. NAME**

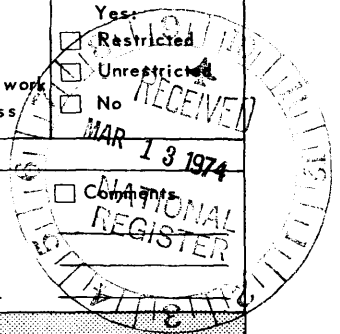
COMMON:	Bell Apartments
AND/OR HISTORIC:	Austin A. Bell Building

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: 2326 First Avenue			
CITY OR TOWN: Seattle		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: #1 - Honorable Joel Pritchard	
STATE Washington	CODE 53	COUNTY: King	CODE 033

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Storage</u>



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME: Samuel Israel	STATE: Washington
STREET AND NUMBER: 4200 Airport Way South	
CITY OR TOWN: Seattle	
STATE: Washington	
CODE: 53	

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: King County Auditor's Office	COUNTY: King
STREET AND NUMBER: County Courthouse	
CITY OR TOWN: Seattle	
STATE: Washington	
CODE: 53	

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY: Municipal Art Commission List of Historic Buildings	STATE: Washington
DATE OF SURVEY: 1969 <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local	
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Municipal Art Commission	
STREET AND NUMBER: Municipal Building	
CITY OR TOWN: Seattle	
STATE: Washington	
CODE: 53	

STATE: Washington	ENTRY NUMBER: JUL 12 1974	DATE
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Austin A. Bell Building is a four-story structure of brick with terra cotta ornamentation. Both brick and terra cotta are of a distinctive reddish-orange color and the mortar joints are narrow. It was designed by Elmer Fisher, the architect who would later create many of the buildings in the Pioneer Square District of Seattle. Although Fisher's Pioneer Square designs are strongly Richardsonian, the Bell Building is less so and has some interesting Gothic features as well.

The ground floor served as commercial space and window openings are large. Slender cast iron columns frame the recessed doorway. Wooden decorative panels appear above the transom of the double doors. A single door in an arched entry way at the south end of the building face provides entrance to the floors above. Cast iron columns support the small arch and a decorative wooden panel also appears above the doorway.

Rock faced stone columns on either side of the doorway and store front continue for the first story only and then are extended by brick pilasters to the full height of the building. The brick pilasters above the doorway continue above the fourth story to form a small tower. The tower is flat roofed but this may not have been the original form.

Window openings are deeply recessed. Windows occur in sets of three above the commercial section of the ground floor and in pairs on either side of bordering pilasters. Single windows are placed on each floor above the south doorway. All windows on the second floor are tall and rectangular; the central group of three windows is separated by cast iron columns. The same pattern is repeated on the third and fourth floors although flanking openings on the third floor have segmental pointed arches and the narrow fourth floor window are fully arched. Terra cotta decorations appear above window openings on the second and third floors.

A high parapet extends above the fourth floor and it is composed of a more coarse brick than is the rest of the facade. The pilasters continue through the parapet and the central pilasters extend above it. Between the central pilasters and recessed within a brick equilateral arch is a terra cotta wheel window design flanked at the base by terra cotta fillets filling out the base of the arch.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1889 to present**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Few buildings have such a close connection with their builders as does the Bell Building. Dominating other structures in the area, one writer has described it as "having the dour, brooding aspect of the unhappy man to whom it was a monument".

Austin Americus Bell was the only son of William N. Bell, one of the founders of the city of Seattle. The elder Bell's landclaim became the community of Belltown, later surrounded and annexed by Seattle. Austin, the second male child born in the pioneer village, began his life in a log cabin about opposite the site of the building which bears his name.

At his father's death in 1887, Austin inherited a portion of the estate which continued to increase in value and he became known as a wealthy man. His business prospered as well as his home and family life, yet he was plagued by feelings of ill health. His father had been ill for years prior to his death and his mental condition had deteriorated as well. Austin thought he saw signs of his father's sickness in himself and traveled extensively seeking to restore his health.

In 1889, he was planning the construction of a new brick building -- the one which now bears his name -- on some of his property to replace an existing wooden structure. During one spring evening, he took a buggy ride with his nephew and discussed his contemplated investment, the success of which was virtually assured. The following morning, he went to his office and locked the doors behind him. He then drew out a revolver and shot himself in the temple. He left a letter to his wife, telling her that he did not consider life with poor health worth living. Mrs. Eva Bell completed the building in her husband's honor, placing upon it his name.

The Bell Building is significant also as an example of the work of architect Elmer Fisher, who designed many of the structures in the Pioneer Square Historic District. Scots-born Fisher studied architecture in Massachusetts, practiced in Minnesota and Colorado and designed many buildings in Victoria, B.C., before moving to Seattle in 1888. He remained in the Seattle area after the major fire of 1889, and is credited with the design of some 54 structures as the city rebuilt. His extant buildings are this outstanding architect's only monument, for virtually no information about the man is now available.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Bagley, Clarence B., History of Seattle. Chicago, S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1916.  
 Chisom, Charles B., The Bell Building, paper for arch. course, 1962.  
 Kelly, James, The Bell Building, paper for Architecture course, University of Washington, 1966, in Architecture Library.  
 Korbein, J.R., The Bell Building, paper for arch. course, 1964.  
 McDonald, Lucile. "Monument to an Unhappy Man," Seattle Times, May 14, 1967.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

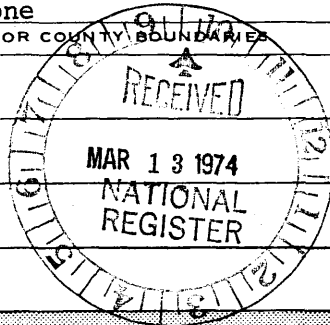
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		N47° 36' 50"	W122° 20' 45"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

14/549180  
5273400  
CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Margaret A. Corley, King County Liaison

ORGANIZATION: Seattle Historical Society DATE: June, 1969

STREET AND NUMBER:  
2161 East Hamlin Street

CITY OR TOWN: Seattle STATE: Washington CODE: 53

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Charles H. Odegaard  
 Title Director - Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission  
 Date March 7, 1974

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

AK Martensen  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 7/12/74

ATTEST:  
Ronald M. Greenberg  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 7-12-74

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

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Washington	
COUNTY King	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
JUL 12 1974	

(Number all entries)

#8 - Significance  
Bell Apartments

The Bell Building is significant as a structure of post-fire architecture, as a monument to a man important in the development of the city and as a valuable example of the work of a locally prominent architect.

