

571

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

MAR 5 1993

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 an 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 Montague and McHugh Building

other names/site number The Bon Marche Building/Crown Plaza Building

2. Location

street & number 114 West Magnolia Street not for publication

city or town Bellingham vicinity

state Washington code WA county Whatcom code 073 zip code 98225

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 Ruppert 3/11/93
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
State of 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 the 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 the Keeper

Entered in the
National Register

Date of Action

Alouise Byer 4/29/93

Montague and McHugh Building
Name of Property

Whatcom 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 include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Department Store/Trade

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade-Business

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and early 20th century revival
Neoclassical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Reinforced concrete
walls Reinforced concrete

roof Commercial flat rolled

other

Narrative Description

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

Please see attached 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 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.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce
Architecture

Period of Significance

1926 - 1942

Significant Dates

1927

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

John Graham, Sr.

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Washington State Archives at Western Washington University

Montague and McHugh Building
Name of Property

Whatcom County, Washington
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	1
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5	3	8	4	6	0
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5	3	3	9	7	6	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3

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Zone Easting Northing

4

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See continuation sheet

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 Michael Sullivan/Lynn Hollingsworth

organization Architectural Consultants date October 20, 1992

street & number 19 Orchard Road telephone (206)756-9502

city or town Tacoma state WA. zip code 98406

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Crown Plaza Corporation/ Don McIntyre, Pres.
Crown Point Development/Ken Tiderington, President Principal Contact

street & number 114 West Magnolia Street telephone (206)733-6229

city or town Bellingham state WA. zip code 98225

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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 of 2

The Montague and McHugh Building is a five-story reinforced concrete structure artfully clad in a subtle gray-pink terra cotta. The building sits in the middle of downtown Bellingham and, along with the Mt. Baker Theater, was a centerpiece in the development of the Metropolitan tract in 1926-27. The architect was John Graham Sr., who composed the building in the Neoclassical Commercial style. Among the distinguishing characteristics of the building is the curious pattern of fenestration which is carried out on three elevations, including the facade which faces the rear alley.

The Montague and McHugh Building is located on the corner of Magnolia and Commercial Streets and was, at the time of its opening on July 17, 1927, Bellingham's finest department and dry goods store. The building is nearly square in plan, measuring 125 feet along the Magnolia Street elevation and 110 feet along Commercial Street. The two-story base of the structure encases a main floor and mezzanine and was originally distinguished on the outside by a marquee and arched entries on the Commercial and Magnolia Streets facades.

At the second floor level, a series of notable rounded pediment arches are symmetrically placed around the building on three sides above the base. The arches frame the center window in each three-window bay between vertical piers. A richly ornamented frieze runs horizontally across the top of each bay between the piers. Within each pediment is a cartouche flanked by floral panels. The pediments are supported by elaborate spiral columns and are capped by finials which connect with rising fluted pilasters. Graham very slightly adjusted the spacing of the five bays and arches on each elevation to create visual symmetry and a sense of equal proportion between facades of different width and size.

The upper third and fourth floor reflect a reduced level of detail and ornamentation while continuing the window size and vertical design elements from the second floor. The three-window bays are subdivided by fluted pilasters and the spandrels between the upper two floors are ornamented with a central medallion or large rosette.

The classical entablature of the building includes a simple talon, broad frieze accented by floral motif panels above the primary vertical piers and urn finials above the secondary fluted pilasters, and a distinctive projecting cornice with overhanging dentils and a continuous floral cresting which rises more than a foot above the parapet.

The three fenestrated walls of the building are executed in terra cotta glazed with an unusual gray-pink faux marble. At a distance, or at first glance, the exterior appears to be cut stone, but upon closer examination or review of the original plans, this proves to be a very fine glazed terra cotta. The North elevation of the building abuts a single-story attached brick predecessor and rises above it largely unadorned. The wall is flat and stuccoed and is broken by three rows of windows at the second, third, and fourth levels. The original wood window frames and casing throughout the building remain, but the double-hung sash has been replaced with wood framed double-paned glass in a single panel divided by a break in the same configuration as the original design.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2 of 2

During the period when the building was used as a department store, the windows were painted out and hidden on the inside by partitioning around the central sales floors. With the recent rehabilitation, the windows are clear and once again light the interior on the upper floors. The storefront windows at street level remain in their department store configuration and date to the original construction of the building. The main entrances on Magnolia and Commercial Streets were altered in 1940 when the arched marquee was removed. Flat boxy marble panels from 1940 frame the larger Magnolia Street entry, while the Commercial Street entry is recessed and plain by comparison.

The interior of the Montague and McHugh Building remained as originally designed for little more than a decade and, sadly, most of that time the building was vacant. With the outbreak of World War II, the structure was stripped down inside for use by the Boeing Company as a bomb casing factory. The interior flourishes, such as the theater, were torn out, and the building's basic structural elements were exposed. Certain functional elements exhibited embellishment, such as a terrazzo staircase, a wreathed capital here and there, and a random few sections of hardwood railing or molding, but overall the building relied on its exterior to impart a sense of place and importance. The most recent rehabilitation involved great care to clean and maintain the original exterior surfaces and details. On the inside, the conversion to office and mixed retail uses has also facilitated the inclusion of the remaining original details, while accommodating a creative and compatible adaptive reuse.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1 of 4

Historical Significance

Opening on July 14, 1927, the Montague and McHugh Building has been a bellwether of the social and economic swings of Bellingham, Washington for decades. As the last location for the Montague and McHugh dry goods establishment, the building was erected in an era of prosperity and optimism. However, just a few years after its opening, the deflated department store's doors were shut permanently by the Depression. With this financial calamity, a pattern of original use, vacancy, and adaptive reuse began for the building that mirrored Bellingham's own fluctuations.

The partnership of Montague and McHugh began in the town of Fairhaven, Washington in 1890. Their first store was located on 11th Street, but due to a downturn in the financial stability of that community, the firm moved northward along the bay to New Whatcom. By 1897, Montague and McHugh was established in a new location at the corner of Railroad and Holly Streets. This location proved to be very successful for the business, and the firm prospered and grew along with the newly consolidated city of Bellingham, which included the adjoining towns of Whatcom, Sehome, and Fairhaven.

Shortly after the turn of the century, partner Thomas C. McHugh left Bellingham and moved to Seattle, leaving the running of the store on Railroad Street to co-owner Bernard Montague. Montague, an astute businessman, was active in civic affairs, and a respected merchant and community leader. He was a member of the City's park board, an active worker for the Church of the Assumption, and a member of the Knights of Columbus. After Montague's death in 1923, McHugh kept the store open by operating the business from Seattle. A few years later, McHugh moved back to Bellingham and became involved in the development of the Metropolitan tract in the downtown center.

The Montague and McHugh Building was built by the surviving partner of the firm, Thomas C. McHugh. Upon his return to Bellingham, McHugh became one of the directors of the newly formed Union Trust Company. This bank was formed in 1926 and was the financial base that facilitated the Seattle-based Metro Building Company's purchase of large tracts of land in the downtown retail section of Bellingham. The Mt. Baker Theater was built through the Metro Building Company at the same time the Montague and McHugh Building was being erected one block south on the corner of Commercial and Magnolia Streets. Following the model of the University tract development in downtown Seattle, Bellingham's Metropolitan tract development was a concerted effort to rapidly build the city's land values through the investment of large amounts of capital in downtown construction.

When built, the Montague and McHugh Building represented an investment of over \$300,000 and included only the finest amenities. As the Bellingham Herald noted, the store would "cater to every request," thus becoming "one of the most modern mercantile buildings in the United States."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2 of 4

Besides selling high quality apparel and furnishings, the store included an optician, a beauty parlor, a restroom for mothers only, a musical instrument department, a custom jewelry shop, a shoe shine stand, a tea room, and a public auditorium or ballroom. In a civic-minded spirit, McHugh placed the tea room and the auditorium at the city's disposal for community functions both during and after store hours. The only charges he placed on their use was for food. To allow after hours usage, a special alley entrance was specifically designed to allow elevator access to the third floor for such occasions.

In addition to the services mentioned, the materials and technology included in the building were the finest and most modern available. A pneumatic tube system carried sales transactions and currency to and from the business office at a rate of 32 feet per second. The ballroom had a Zenithern floor that was considered "the finest type for dancing," and was one of only six found in the United States at that time. Additionally, the kitchen in the tea room contained the most modern appliances and had "a new frigid air cooling system." The furnishings in the building included "solid American walnut" fixtures, heavy pile carpeting in a blue and taupe design, Celastaline glass globe lighting, and terrazzo marble floors. As the Bellingham Herald professed, "it has every convenience known to the up-to-date department store, and pleases the eye both outside and inside."

In spite of all the optimism and goodwill expressed by the city at the store's opening, the building was in receivership by 1932. When the disastrous financial bubble that had been built in the 1920's burst, many businesses throughout the city, including the Montague and McHugh, could not survive the resulting Depression. The once successful firm, with its fine and expensive building, went out of business and became a hollow downtown reminder of the city's and nation's deep economic woes. During the rest of the 1930's, the building stood empty, its title held by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. It was not until 1941-42 that new life came back into the structure, again in reaction to a dramatic change in national and world events. First, partial space was rented to a beauty shop, but with the outbreak of World War II, Whatcom County's War Bond Committee occupied the building's ample space. From 1943 to 1946, the Boeing Aircraft Company rented the structure for use as their Bellingham branch, making bomb casings in the war effort. Several period photographs show women at work in the building, assembling bombs.

After the war, and up through 1956, the building was owned first by Montague and McHugh Building, Inc., and then by the Seattle-First National Bank. Both title holders leased the structure to Whatcom County for use as the County's Welfare Department and the City's and County's Department of Public Health. Additionally, a loan company and various music and dance schools also occupied the building during this period. Appropriately, the dance and music schools were located on the third floor where the old Montague and McHugh Department Store had its music department and where the auditorium/ballroom with the Zenithern floor was.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3 of 4

In 1956, the title to the building once again changed hands. The Altstores Realty Corporation bought the building and in 1956 leased it to its affiliate, Allied Stores Corporation. By 1957, the building was completely remodeled and once again being used for the purpose for which it was originally built: a department store. The Bon Marche, a Seattle-based firm, moved into the Montague and McHugh and opened its doors in 1957. The Bon Marche remained in the building until 1987, at which time the store moved into a new location in Bellingham's Bellis Fair Mall and sold the building to the mall's developers as part of the relocation incentive package. The Bon Marche's move to the new mall precipitated the relocation of most of downtown Bellingham's major retail stores, as well as leaving the Montague and McHugh Building vacant once again, amid a downtown visibly wounded by the modern phenomenon of the regional shopping mall.

From 1988 to 1991, the title to the building changed hands three times. Mall developers General Growth Financial, Inc. held the building for a year, then from 1988 to 1991, it was owned by Arthur Watts, a noted Bellingham figure. Finally, in 1991, the building was sold to the Crown Plaza Corporation, the current owners. As downtown Bellingham started to recover from the flight-to-the-mall syndrome that occurred when The Bon Marche left, this last corporation began renovation on the building for mixed office and retail use. Currently, a restaurant and a furniture store are located in the building at street level, and offices are in or are planned for the upper floors.

Architectural Significance

When the Montague and McHugh Building was constructed in 1927, it was one of only two buildings in the city that had been designed by the internationally famous Seattle architect, John Graham, Sr. Using the rich Neoclassical facade ornamentation that adapted so well to Commercial style structures, Graham created a detached building that held its own against the massive Federal Building built across the alley on its east flank, and the elegant Mt. Baker Theater one block north. Both of these structures are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Graham was born on the Isle of Man in 1873. Apprenticed in England, Graham emigrated to the United States and began his practice in Seattle in 1900. Originally noted for designing residential and small commercial buildings (individually or in the partnership of Graham and Meyers), Graham evolved into an architect renowned for his efficient, up-to-date structures that exhibited the fine detailing of the popular Beaux Arts style. However, Graham was not rigid in his designs, and by the late 1920's, his works began to reflect a more modernistic taste. This adaptability was a hallmark of his success.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4 of 4

John Graham, Sr. was the architect for many Seattle-Tacoma area buildings. Included in his major works are: The Frederick and Nelson and The Bon Marche department stores, the Exchange and Dexter Horton Buildings, Virginia Mason Hospital, the Roosevelt Hotel, and the Government Fisheries Building, all in Seattle. He also designed the University Methodist church, the Plymouth Congregational Church, and the Deanery of the Episcopal Diocese of Seattle. Additionally, Graham was responsible for numerous University of Washington Buildings, the Elliott Bay and Seattle Yacht Clubs in Seattle, and the Medical Arts Building in Tacoma. As well, Graham designed many buildings in other cities in the United States, Canada, China, and Japan. For several years before he retired in 1945, Graham was the architect for the Ford Motor Company. In Bellingham, there is one other building designed by John Graham, Sr. This structure is the Bellingham National Bank, designed in 1912. This structure, as well as several other Graham-designed structures, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9; 10 Page 1 of 1

Bibliography

Bainbridge Review, March 24, 1955.

Bellingham Herald, July 11, 1923; July 13, 1927; July 14, 1927; October 21, 1980; News Release Fact Sheet, June 13, 1991.

City Directory, Bellingham, Washington, 1927 to present.

Galen Biery (Photo) Collection, Bellingham, Washington.

John Graham Company, Employee's Manual, 1976.

J. W. Sandison (Photo) Collection, Whatcom Museum of History and Art, Bellingham, Washington.

Koert, Dorothy, and Galen Biery, Looking Back, v. 1, Lynden, Washington: Lynden Tribune, 1980-

Landmarks Preservation Board, private letter to Michael Sullivan, 1988.

National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Mount Baker Theater, May 1976, Whatcom Museum of History and Art, Bellingham, Washington.

Roth, Lottie Roeder and Dorothy H. Johnson, History of Whatcom County, Chicago: Pioneer Historical Publishing Company, 1926.

Seattle Times, March 23, 1955.

Whatcom County Genealogy Society, Bellingham, Washington, cemetery records.

Verbal Boundary Description: The nominated property is a rectangular tract described thusly: beginning at the northeast corner of the intersection of Commercial Street and Magnolia Street, proceed 125 feet along Magnolia Street to the rear alley; proceed 110 feet along the rear alley to the northeast corner of the building; proceed 125 feet to Commercial Street; proceed 110 feet along Commercial street to the point of beginning, said parcel located in the Metropolitan Tract of downtown Bellingham.

Boundary Justification: The nominated parcel includes the entire property historically associated with the Montague and McHugh Building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 1

Montague & Mc Hugh Building

114 West Magnolia Street

Bellingham, WA

All photos by Michael Sullivan, 6/92, Negatives with Sullivan.

PHOTOGRAPH CAPTIONS

#1 West Elevation(Commercial Street)

#2 Angle Elevation (Commercial/Magnolia Streets)

#3 Angle Elevation(Magnolia Street/Rear Alley)

#4 Angle Elevation West and North

#5 Aerial View /North and East