

SURVEY-INVENTORY FORM
COMMUNITY CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY

1. NAME
Historic Washington Gas & Electric Building

and/or Common General Mortgage Building

2. LOCATION UTM References: Kelso, WA-OR Scale: 1:24,000
 Street & Number 1346 Fourteenth Avenue Zone 10 Easting 505120
 Northing 5109210
 - not for publication

City, Town Longview - vicinity of

State Washington County Cowlitz

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership: public private both
 Status: occupied unoccupied work in progress
 Present Use: agriculture commercial educational entertainment government
 industrial military museum park private residence
 religious scientific transportation other:

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

Name Stephen H. Ostling

Street & Number 2402 West Lynnwood Drive

City, Town Longview - vicinity of State Washington
 98632

5. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Long-Bell Files in the Longview Public Library, Longview History Room
 Lutz, Philip. Personal Interview with the former building owner. Longview. March, 1985
 MacPherson, George, Architect. Washington Gas & Electric Building Construction Drawings.
 Longview. August, 1928.

6. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title Michael L. Neuschwanger, Architectural Apprentice.

Organization City of Longview Date March 12, 1985
 Urban Services & Permits Department

Street & Number 1525 Broadway Telephone 577-3330

City or Town Longview State Washington

98632

7. DESCRIPTION

Condition: excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed
Circle one: unaltered altered
Circle one: original site moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance
attach photo

The Washington Gas & Electric building occupies a corner slot, fronting Fourteenth Avenue to the west and Broadway to the north, along its long side. The building is serviced by an alley to the east and a parking lot along its side wall to the south. The building is similar to the other buildings along Broadway in its size and scale and functional type. The two story building measures 50 by 120 feet with 7 bays on Broadway, and three bays on Fourteenth Avenue. The building entry and stairhall is in the central bay of the Broadway facade. The hall is flanked to the east by three stores and to the west by the showroom, without store entries on that side. The showroom entry is in the central bay of the Fourteenth Avenue facade. The structure is poured in place concrete frame, on a concrete raft foundation. It is faced entirely in cream colored, glazed terra cotta tile panels.

The classical treatment of the principal facades give the building the appearance of being a full three stories in height. It is in fact two stories, with a full mezzanine level related to ground floor retail spaces. Monumental pilasters support a full entablature including a projecting boxed cornice, dentils and frieze, decorated in foliate patterns (see continuation sheet)

Verbal boundary description: Lot 16, Block 86,
Longview Addition #2
50'X120'

Acreage: Less than One Acre

8. SIGNIFICANCE

Specific dates April / 1928 **Builder/Architect** Arch. George MacPherson

Level of significance: local

a. History

The Washington Gas & Electric building was built to be the regional headquarters for the company. The building was designed by George MacPherson, a Longview architect who was responsible for several commercial buildings in the city. Perhaps MacPherson's finest work in Longview, the building is a sophisticated example of terra cotta tile construction, the only building in the city faced entirely of the material. The only other intact example from settlement of MacPherson's commercial work is the Big Four Furniture Company building, which was a facade renovation to the Lumberman's Bank.

The Washington Gas & Electric Company operated its showroom in the bays fronting 14th Avenue, leasing three bays as shop space and the second story as office space. The regional headquarters was moved to Tacoma before the completion of the building and (see continuation sheet)

b. Evaluation of Significance

The Washington Gas & Electric Building is significant to the City of Longview as an exceptionally fine example of a stylized Classical Revival architecture in the business district. Designed by local Architect George MacPherson, who was active in the settlement period, the building is unique as the only structure in the city faced entirely in terra cotta tile. By aspects of its spatial type and by its position in the city, the building exhibits affects of the city planning efforts. Built and operated by the Washington Gas & Electric Company, it is representative of one type of investor the Long-Bell Lumber Company sought to invest in its speculative, planned city.

SURVEY-INVENTORY FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

1. NAME Washington Gas & Electric Building

7. DESCRIPTION - continued

cast in relief. The pilasters are fluted, resting on plain granite pedestals and terminating in stylized, foliate capitals, which are flush with the architrave. The vertical emphasis of the pilasters is reflected in the transomed mullion work of the paneled bays. The paneled transom beam supports tile mullions which run unbroken through the second floor to the architrave. At the second floor line, slightly recessed panels act as lintels to mezzanine windows and as sills to the second story openings. The architrave forms the lintel of second story windows which are transomed over pivoting single sash windows. Mezzanine windows are the same, with the exclusion of the transom. Ground floor display windows are plate glass, running continuously from slightly recessed granite kick plates to the transom beam. Store entries are recessed, inset symmetrically within each bay.

The building has been altered by the addition of a small retail entry into the southern bay of the Fourteenth Avenue facade. The building and the showroom entries have lost the original doors and the side and transom lights. The granite kickplates of the showroom bays have been faced in polished steel. The ground story interiors have been largely altered, particularly by hung ceilings. The stairhall and second story, while altered, retain much of the original plaster walls, wood doors and trim.

8. SIGNIFICANCE - continued

consequently, the building functioned as a branch office to the company. Morris Wasser of the General Mortgage Company bought the property in 1945, operating a title company in the building for several years.

Currently, the building retains a type of use similar to the original, with shops in the ground floor and offices in the second story. Although the ground story showroom bays have undergone minor changes, the building facades retain a high degree of its original integrity.