Bleitz Funeral Home 316 Florentia Street, Seattle Seattle Landmark Nomination





BOLA Architecture + Planning Seattle

January 4, 2017

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Cover: ca. 1920s view: Museum of History & Industry, image no. 1980.6877.67; current view: BOLA Architecture + Planning.

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The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649 Seattle WA 98124-4649 Street Address: 700 5th Ave Suite 1700

Landmark NOMINATION Application

Name (common, present, or historic): Bleitz Funeral Home

Year built: 1921

Street and number: 316 Florentia Street

Assessor's file no.: 197320-0006

Legal description: Parcel A: Lots 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and portion of Lots 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 in

Block 78 of Denny & Hoyt's Supplemental Plat, according to the plat

thereof recorded in Volume 3 of Plats, Page 3, in King County,

Washington, described as follows: Beginning at the Northwest corner of said Lot 6; Thence South along the West line of said Lot, 120 feet to the Southwest corner thereof; Thence East along the South line of said Lots 6 and 7, 60 feet to the Southwest corner of said Lot 8; Thence East along the South line of said Lot 8, 90 feet; Thence Northwesterly in a straight line to the Northwest corner of said Lot 10; Thence North along the East line of said Lot 7 to an intersection with the Southwesterly line of a tract of land condemned by the Northern Pacific Railway Company, in King County Superior Court Cause No. 66230; Thence Northwesterly

along said Southwesterly line to the Point of Beginning.

Plat name: Denny & Hoyt's Supplemental Block: 78 Lots: 1 – 10

Present owner: Warm Springs Investors, LLC Owner's address: 13 Central Way, Suite C

Kirkland, WA 98033

Present use: Funeral Home

Original owner: Jacob J. Bleitz, and James and Lawrence Blitz

Original Use: Funeral Home Architect & Builder: Unknown

SEE ATTACHED for physical description, statement of significance, and photographs

Submitted by: Susan D. Boyle, AIA, Principal Address: BOLA Architecture + Planning

159 Western Avenue West, #486

Seattle, WA 98199

Phone: (206) 447.4749

Date: December 23, 2016

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Bleitz Funeral Home 316 Florentia Street, Seattle Landmark Nomination

BOLA Architecture + Planning January 4, 2017

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

This landmark nomination report on the Bleitz Funeral Home at 316 Florentia Street has been prepared at the request of the current owner, Warm Springs Investors. The property is located southeast of the Fremont Bridge, near the northeast corner of Queen Anne Hill, and across the Ship Canal from the commercial core of the Fremont neighborhood. The original building on the site, which dates from 1921, had single-story addition constructed in 1989.

This nomination was prepared to determine the building's local landmark status through a review by the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board. The report provides a description of the building's history and architecture, and summarizes the development of the surrounding neighborhood. It also provides an overview of the funeral industry in Seattle during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and comparable facilities in the city. No information has been discovered about the original designer or builder, but the report includes a biographical sketch of the original owner, Jacob J. Bleitz. A bibliography is provided at the end of the text, followed by historic and contemporary images.

Research

Research for this project was undertaken in June with the site visit and preparation of the report in early December 2016. The report was prepared by BOLA Principal Susan Boyle and Senior Architect Matt Hamel, with research assistance by Preservation Intern Meagan Scott. Research involved acquisition and reviews of design drawings and permit records; site visits and photo documentation of existing conditions, and discussions about the building's use with the current operator. Sources included the following:

- Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) drawing and permit records
- City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods (DON) Historic Property Inventory (HPI) forms and
 the historic context statement for Queen Anne Hill, and Washington State Department of
 Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) WISAARD Historic Property Inventory forms
- King County i-Map property documentation and vicinity map, and tax assessor's property record cards from Puget Sound Regional Archives
- Historic photographs from digital collections of the Seattle Municipal Archives (SMA), University
 of Washington Libraries Special Collections (UWLSC), and the Museum of History and Industry
 (MOHAI)
- Historic Baist, Kroll and Sanborn maps, Polk Directories, and current Google aerial maps
- Seattle Daily Times and Seattle Times archival articles, and the current Daily Journal of Commerce

Local and National Landmarks

Designated historic landmarks are those properties that have been recognized locally, regionally, or nationally as important resources to the community, city, state, or nation. Official recognition may be provided by listing in the State or National Register of Historic Places or locally by the City's designation of the property as a historic landmark. The City of Seattle's landmarks process is a multi-part proceeding of three sequential steps involving the Landmarks Preservation Board:

- 1) submission of a nomination and its review and approval by the Board
- 2) a designation by the Board
- 3) negotiation of controls and incentives by the property owner and the Board staff

A final step in Seattle's landmarks process is approval of the designation by an ordinance passed by the City Council. All of these steps occur with public hearings to allow input from the property owner, applicant, the public, and other interested parties. Seattle's landmarks process is quasi-judicial, with the Board ruling rather than serving as an advisory body to another commission, department, or agency.

The process does not include consideration of future changes to a building, the merits of a development proposal, or continuance of any specific occupancy, as these are separate land use issues. The evaluation process does not allow for consideration of any anticipated upgrade, or future project costs. Designated landmark properties in Seattle include individual buildings and structures, building assemblies, landscapes, and objects. Under this ordinance, more than 450 individual properties have become designated landmarks in the City of Seattle.

Seattle's Landmark Designation Process

The City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (SMC 25.12.350) requires a property to be more than 25 years old. It also must have "significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, state, or nation, if it has integrity or the ability to convey its significance." Age and integrity are considered threshold standards in evaluating a property.

Seattle's ordinance also requires a property meet one or more of six designation criteria:

| Criterion A. | It is the location of, or is associated in a significant way with an historic event, which has had a significant effect on the community, City, state, or nation |
|---------------------|---|
| Criterion B. | It is associated in a significant way with the life of a person important in the history of the City, state, or nation |
| Criterion C. | It is associated in a significant way with a significant aspect of the cultural, political or economic heritage of the community, city, state or nation |
| <u>Criterion D.</u> | It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, period or method of construction |
| Criterion E. | It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder |
| Criterion F. | It is an easily identifiable feature of its neighborhood or the city due to the prominence of its spatial location; contrasts of siting, age or scale; and it contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of its neighborhood or the City. |

2. PROPERTY DATA

Address: 316 Florentia Street

Seattle, Washington 98109

Northeast end of Queen Anne Hill, near the Ship Canal on the north Location:

side of Florentia Street, between the Fremont Bridge and Nickerson

Street

Tax Parcel Number: 197320-0006

Legal Description: Parcel A:

> Lots 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and portion of Lots 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 in Block 78 of Denny & Hoyt's Supplemental Plat, according to the plat thereof recorded in Volume 3 of Plats, Page 3, in King County, Washington,

described as follows:

Beginning at the Northwest corner of said Lot 6;

Thence South along the West line of said Lot, 120 feet to the

Southwest corner thereof;

Thence East along the South line of said Lots 6 and 7, 60 feet to the

Southwest corner of said Lot 8;

Thence East along the South line of said Lot 8, 90 feet;

Thence Northwesterly in a straight line to the Northwest corner of said

Lot 10:

Thence North along the East line of said Lot 7 to an intersection with the Southwesterly line of a tract of land condemned by the Northern Pacific Railway Company, in King County Superior Court Cause No.

66230;

Thence Northwesterly along said Southwesterly line to the Point of

Beginning.

1921, 1960 (marquee),1962 (garage), 1989 (addition), **Original Construction**

1991 (addition)

Mortuary and Funeral Home Original and Present Use:

Unknown Original Designer: Original Builder: Unknown

Site and Building Areas: 14,138 net square foot building and 27,720 square foot / 0.64 acre site

(King County Parcel Viewer)

Original Owner: Jacob J. Bleitz and Irene C. Bleitz Later Owners:

Irene C. Bleitz (1939-1955)

James Bleitz (1955–)

Uniservice Corporation (1990-1995) Services Corporation (1995–2016) Warm Springs Investors, LLC

Present Owner:

Doug Waddell and Bill Pollard Owner's Representative:

13 Central Way, Suite C Kirkland, WA 98033

3. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Development of North Queen Anne Hill

The property is located adjacent to the southwest abutment for the historic Fremont Bridge (1917), and northwest of Westlake Avenue North and Nickerson Street. It is situated near the northeast edge of Queen Anne Hill. The Lake Washington Ship Canal is about a half-block away to the north (Figure 1).

Seattle's Queen Anne Hill rises over 450 feet in elevation above the city center, and its south slope and plateau were some of the earliest areas to undergo residential development with the construction of many blocks of single family residences in the late 19th century. Development along the northern, lower edge of the hill followed a different pattern, however. Graded parts along the west side of Lake Union serving as a rail spur line and roadbed. The northern part of the hill was once a gentle slope to what was once a drainage ditch. This area was graded also to support construction of early roadbeds and nearby commercial and industrial buildings that followed the construction of the ship canal in 1917. Nearby businesses included lumber mills and ship-building and ship repair yards. These were interspersed with small workers' cottages. Further to the southwest, Seattle Seminary was established by Free Methodist pioneers in the early 1890s; it grew and was renamed Seattle Pacific College in 1915. The campus of Seattle Pacific University is located approximately six to eight blocks from the subject property.

Throughout the 20th century, development of the immediate area in which the Bleitz Funeral Home is located was impacted by the nearby rail line and bridge and converging roadbeds that brought vehicular traffic and congestion to the intersections of Dexter and 4th Avenues N, and Nickerson and Florentia Streets (Figures 1-2 and 23). Surrounding commercial development emphasized auto-related businesses throughout most of this period. A retail gas and service station was located on the parcel to the south, across Florentia Street, from 1925 to 1931, and another similar station on the parcel to the west at 224 Nickerson Street (from 1957 – 1967). To the southeast there was a dry cleaner at 314 Nickerson Street and another auto repair facility from 1920 to 1925; this property presently houses the Nickerson Street Saloon. Another service station was located to the south at 2917 Dexter Avenue N.

To the northwest, at 3031 2nd Avenue N, was an auto repair shop (from 1946 – 1975), while on the site of the Ponti Seafood Grill (the restaurant to the north at 3014 3rd Avenue N) there was a blacksmith's shop in 1922, followed by an iron works, which operated on the same property between at least 1925 and 1980. On the south side of Nickerson Street was another auto repair shop, at 307 Nickerson Street, from 1929 to 1960, and the Enterprise Dry Cleaners at 301 Nickerson Street, at the presently site of Kinsella Woodworks (SouthEarth Strategies, February 10, 2016, p. 1-2).

The Early Funeral Industry in Seattle

The earliest history of funeral homes in Seattle is not documented in this report, but it is known that undertakers as a profession operated in the city in the late 19th century. Edgar Ray Butterworth was one of Seattle's first undertakers. A successful coffin salesman by the time he moved to Seattle in 1892, he bought a controlling interest in an existing undertaking business. In 1903, his company – E. R. Butterworth & Sons – moved into the Butterworth Building at 1921 1st Avenue, Seattle's first purposebuilt mortuary building. (The Butterworth Building, located within the local and National Register boundaries of the Pike Place Market Historic District, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971.)

An early business was operated by Bonney and Stewart, Funeral Directors and Embalmers, who reportedly maintained a parlor at 3rd Avenue and Columbia Street in Seattle's Pioneer Square in 1900 (Michelson, PCAD). Both the Butterworth Company and the Johnson & Hamilton Company were

originally located on 1st Avenue in downtown Seattle (Figure 38). Butterworth moved to 1600 Melrose Avenue (Figures 42 and 44-46) and Johnson & Hamilton moved to 1400 Broadway in 1912. By this date Capitol Hill had become a popular location for funereal homes. Bonney-Watson Funeral Home moved to 1702 Broadway from an earlier downtown location at Columbia Street and 3rd Avenue sometime before 1914. In 1922, Butterworth & Sons built a second mortuary at 300 East Pine Street on Capitol Hill. This move represents an apparent trend of funeral parlors moving from the downtown locations to new buildings in rapidly growing residential areas. As the result of this relocation, some funeral homes stressed residential designs to fit into their neighborhoods, such as the Green Lake Funeral Home (Figure 49), and the Columbia Mortuary in Columbia City (Figure 47). The Johnson & Hamilton Funeral Home, at 1103 E Madison, was built in the mid-1920s (Figure 48).

Jacob Bleitz had moved to Seattle from Wichita, where he worked as an undertaker, and established his business as a local mortician in 1904, with funeral home business in the Green Lake area. By 1908 he and John Rafferty Company had established an undertaking company at 617-621 Kilborne (near 36th and Phinney) in the Fremont neighborhood. (Later references in the *Polk Directory* and obituaries cited it as a funeral home.) The business advertised its affordable services: The Bleitz-Rafferty Co. Has Brought the Cost of Funerals Down to Where IT OUGHT TO BE,' citing costs of an "\$85 Trust Price Casket" for \$35 and cremation service for \$20, and a "complete funeral" for \$47.50 (*Seattle Star*, February 18, 1915 and June 24, 1915). This business continued until at least 1919, but ceased operations by 1921, the same year that the Bleitz Funeral Home opened at 316 Florentia Street in the Queen Anne neighborhood (Figures 16 and 17).

While funeral homes were common in Seattle through the late 19th century, cremation did not become popular until the early 20th century. Arthur Wright established a crematorium on Queen Anne Hill in 1898, the first in the state, and built a columbarium (crypt) for 800 niches around that same time. In ca. 1904, he established the Washington Cremation Society. Over the following 17 years, seven crematoriums were established in the city (Engler, 2012). Wright's mortuary was replaced with a larger building in 1930, allowing for a full range of services, including burials, funeral services, cremation and inurnment. By the 1950s, the term "undertaker" had fallen out of use in the city business directories, having given way to the less macabre "funeral director" according to the 1953 *Polk Directory*,).

Various funeral-related businesses were established in the greater Seattle area in the late 19th through the first half of the 20th century, typically near residential neighborhoods. The following funeral home buildings in the Seattle area (cited in chronological order) recall the history of these businesses and the architectural expressions of their buildings. (See also **Figures 42-49**.)

- The Johnson-Hamilton funeral home, 2127 1st Avenue (1902)
- Hoffner, Fisher & Harvey Funeral Home, 508 N 36th Street (1902)
- Manning's Funeral Home, 1634 11th Avenue (1902)
- Johnson-Hamilton Funeral Home/Colonial Chapel 1400 Broadway at Union Street (ca. 1912)
- Yarington's/White Center Funeral Home 10708 16th Avenue SW (1918)
- Butterworth Mortuary (ca. 1903 at 1921 1st Avenue, relocated to 300 E Pine Street (1922)
- Washelli Crematory & Columbarium, 111th and Aurora Avenue North (ca. 1922)
- Johnson-Hamilton Funeral Home, 1103 E Madison Street (1926)
- Acacia Memorial Park, 14957 Bothell Way NE (1928-39)
- Arthur A. Wright & Son Mortuary & Columbarium, 520 W Raye Street (1929)
- Forest Lawn Crematorium & Columbarium, 6701 30th Avenue SW (1947)
- Bonney Watson Mortuary, 1732 Broadway Avenue (1962)
- Washelli Columbarium Corporation, 11111 Aurora Avenue (1970, new buildings)

The Original Owners, Jacob J. Bleitz and the Bleitz Family

Jacob J. Bleitz established the Bleitz Funeral Home in 1904. Bleitz was born in Sandwich, Illinois, around 1865 (Figure 4). He received his training from the Chicago College of Embalming in Illinois, graduating in 1900, and practiced for several years in Kansas. He came from Wichita to Seattle in 1904, and continued working as a mortician in the funeral industry, establishing a location near Green Lake (Seattle Daily Times, February 27, 1939). In early 1906, Bleitz moved his business to the Fremont area, partnering with Edgar Ray Butterworth, an established Seattle undertaker. Their business operated under a few different titles, including Bleitz & Butterworth and Fremont Undertaking Company; Bleitz & Butterworth. The latter business title raised conflicts with a nearby competitor, M.O. Carton, who had been operating his business as Fremont Undertaker (Washington Reports, April 10, 1911).

Bleitz and Butterworth stay partners only until in September1906. For a period of about two years, Bleitz operated the Bleitz Undertaking Company. However, in November 1908; J.J. Bleitz and J.W. Rafferty joined to incorporate Fremont Undertaking Company (*Seattle Times*, November 11, 1908). (This name again stirred up conflict with the operators of Carton's business, and a lawsuit ensued over the claim to the business name.) The undertaking company operated as a tenant of the Doric Masonic Lodge on 317 Kilbourne Street, present-day N 36th Street (Doric Lodge History). Bleitz and Rafferty ended their partnership in 1919, and Bleitz then established his own business (Bleitz Undertaking & Cremation Co.), moving two blocks down on the street to 315 Kilbourne (*Seattle Star*, August 22, 1919, p. 10 and October 3, 1919, p. 11). It was from this site that he relocated to the building on 316 Florentia Street in 1921. According to Polk Directory listings, John Rafferty later opened a funeral directory business at 3518 Fremont Avenue, along with other partners Clark and Putnam, in 1953 to 1968.

Jacob Bleitz family was active in the community as a member of the Free Mason Society at Green Lake Lodge and later the Doric Society in Fremont. Irene C. Bleitz, his second wife and co-owner of the funeral home, was a member of the local Ladies' Literary and Music Club and the Central Presbyterian Church, and hosted social functions. After the new funeral home location on Florentia Street was constructed, Jacob and Irene moved from their residence at 8610 8th Avenue NE to 318 Florentia Street, presumably to an apartment above the funeral home. Soon after the couple moved to 1900 Magnolia Boulevard in 1929. (Jacob and Irene were involved in at least one other funeral business, the Greenwood Funeral Home, according to the 1937 *Polk Directory*.) Jacob and Irene had a daughter, Jeanne, and two sons, James C. (identified also as Jasper and Jas) and Lawrence L. Bleitz (*Seattle Times*, February 26, 1939). According to *Polk Directory* listings, James began working in the family business in 1922 as an assistant in Bleitz Undertaking Company. Lawrence became an assistant in 1927, along with James' wife, Margaret. For a short period after 1932 Lawrence's wife, Ebba M. Bleitz (also listed as Effa M.), joined the business as an embalmer-mortician.

For several decades the Bleitz Funeral Home was closely connected with a local member-owned association, the People Memorial Benefit Association, which was organized as a non-profit cooperative in to provide low-cost funeral services to its members. As noted on the PMA website:

It was in Seattle at the end of the great depression that small group of citizens, outraged by the high prices and high pressure sales tactics of the funeral industry, banded together to form PMA ... An outspoken spiritual leader, named Rev. Fred Shorter from the Church of the People in Seattle's University District rallied other like-minded citizens together to create an alternative. This was at the height of the cooperative movement ... Prevailing funeral customs stressed embalming, display of the body and burial in a costly casket. The founders of PMA felt these practices ostentatious and emphasizing the material rather than spiritual aspects of death. Their aim was to present a meaningful and beautiful

service at a fraction of the cost ... On January 12, 1939, the PEOPLE'S MEMORIAL Association was formally organized [Note: This would have occurred shortly before Jacob Bleitz's death.] ... The biggest problem facing the newborn non-profit was finding a mortuary willing to do business with it. Fortunately, James C. Bleitz, president of a funeral home at the foot of Queen Anne Hill, had an open mind and a strong sense of business integrity. . . Memorial Societies such as PMA remained controversial for many years. At one point, PEOPLE'S MEMORIAL Association was even accused of being part of the communist movement! Even Bleitz was wary of having his name publicly associated with a reformist organization. Not until 1957 was there a written contract between his funeral home and the PMA.

On February 25, 1939, Jacob Bleitz died suddenly of a heart attack. After his death his widow, Irene, continued to own the business until her death in 1952, while his sons, James and Lawrence Bleitz, maintained and operated the business, as the funeral director and mortician respectively, along with other family members. In the 1948/1949 *Polk Directory* both men were listed as funeral directors.

The King County property tax record card indicates the property was purchased for \$13,000 by James C. Bleitz on December 14, 1955. The 1960 *Polk Directory* indicates the business had incorporated. The family members involved in it at that time included Jas C. Bleitz, president, Mrs. Dorothy Bleitz, secretary, and Lawrence L. Bleitz, treasurer. In the 1970 directory James was still listed the company president while the vice president and treasurer was Roy Moe, and Harriett Bleitz was the secretary. By 1979 the family's interests had ended, and Rita Moe had become the company president, along with Tom Rollin, the vice president, and John R. McCarthy, the secretary-treasurer.

This finalized PMA contract would have been made with Lawrence Bleitz, the company's president. The PMA later contracted with several other funeral businesses in the Seattle area. In 1990 Uniservice Corporation of Portland, Oregon, purchased the property. Uniservice, a nation-wide funeral company, was acquired by the Services Corporation of Houston, Texas, in 1995. At that time the Bleitz funeral home was one of ten that it operated. The funeral home property and a nearby separate vacant site were recently sold to the current owner, a local development company for \$4.2 million. While the funeral home continues to operate for the time being, a restrictive covenant as part of the sale agreement prevents this use in the future (*Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce*, January 3, 2017).

The Building's Eclectic Style

The original two-and-a-half story funeral home is a combination of a vernacular building with an eclectic revival style front facade. It appears to have been the work of a designer, although the identities of the original designer or architect and builder remain unknown, and no original design drawings have been discovered.

Stylistic features of the main building include the simple massing, the hipped roof with gabled side dormers, and evenly spaced window openings. The front, south-facing façade featured a carved bargeboard along the front of the shingle-clad gabled dormer. The cross-gable dormers at the roof, which opened into the attic, once contain decorative half-timbering on the east and west ends, and the porte cochere at the middle of the east side is detailed with exposed wood framing and brackets – all features of a Craftsmen style design.

The most visible design features are provided by the outermost wall and vehicle portal on the south facade, which face onto Florentia Street, which makes up a Mission-style false front. At the center the light colored stucco-clad wall of the building extends to create a two story a stepped parapet with a small

gable, detailed with diamond and square medallion tiles, and a stylized clock face. The stucco or concrete also includes projecting horizontal trim bands and water table trim. This entry portico features a slight pointed arch, cited in several surveys as reminiscent of the Tudor Revival style, along with an arch shaped alcove for a decorative urn. The false front element extends to a vehicle entry portal at the east end of the south facade extends beyond the building mass, with a similar arched opening, raised parapet with gabled center, and banded piers and a cheekblock. The formality of the stepped walls is clearly visible from the roadbed and sidewalk and nearby bridge.

The design of this building seems to contrasts with the design styles of other funeral homes in Seattle from the early 20th century (Figures 32-49). Most were created using more identifiable revival styles, often with classical elements and details. These buildings used Greek and Roman precedents to connote a sense of permanence and eternity. The buildings suggested, through the symbolic use of historical styles, a lasting legacy. Also in contrast, there are some other funeral homes that appear as large residences, set in bucolic landscape settings.

While it was designed in an effort to "match" the original design, the west addition from the late 1980s appears Post-Modern in style, particularly on the interior with the mix of contemporary and classical styled decorative elements and the highly compressed spatial qualities of its lobby space.

Construction History

Earlier buildings on the site of the Bleitz Funeral Home included a residence, which was positioned near the back of the parcel near the existing parking lot, and a storage shed to the west. These dated from 1917, and were demolished for the building's construction. The original funeral home was built in 1921 at a construction cost of \$16,492 (SDCI permit records). (See Figure 3, which identifies the phases of construction.) Major changes include the three-car garage, which was added in the rear in 1960-1962, and the 5,000 square-foot single story addition along the original building's west side, designed by KSWA Architects, and built in 1989-1991.

In August 2005 the original pipe organ was removed from the building and donated through the Pipe Organ Foundation to the Blessed Seelos Catholic Church in the ninth ward of New Orleans as part of the recovery efforts following Hurricane Katrina. Embalming occurred on the property until 2007 (Bleitz Funeral Home of Seattle website).

SDCI permit records, noted below, cite the many changes over the past 55 years:

| June 1960 | "Replace Deteriorated Porch for Bleitz Funeral Home," New Entrance marquee; Weisbeck and Konzen Architects and Consulting Engineers |
|----------------|---|
| March 12, 1962 | New garage addition; Weisbeck and Konzen Architects and Consulting Engineers, stamped by Arnold R. Weisbeck, architect |
| May 22, 1969 | Remodel of cremator for Dave Larson, contractor; Edwin R. Gamon, architect |
| July 16, 1978 | Shoreline substantial development permit to est use for future constr of accessory office addition" |
| March 4, 1985 | Add cooler to garage; Stjern Contracting |
| Sept. 24, 1986 | Shoreline substantial development permit (to establish) use for future constr of accessory office addition |

| October 18, 1988 | "A Commercial Addition for Bleitz Funeral Home," James Hartman, Architect, Addition of one story office area to mortuary (includes work in basement) |
|------------------|---|
| March 13, 1989 | Install mechanical equipment for building addition |
| 1991 | "A New Addition for Bleitz Funeral Home, KSWA Architects, AIA |
| Sept. 10, 1992 | Construct handicap ramp; KSWA Architects, Greg Parsons |
| Sept. 23, 1992 | Install HVAC system |
| Oct. 30. 1992 | Install 10x4 sign |
| March 16, 1993 | Construct basement and 1st floor addition, and interior alterations; Remove 3 existing crematory retorts, add 2 new retorts in new addition KSWA Architects |
| January 12, 1994 | Install ductwork; Design Air, Ltd. |
| Sept. 15, 2004 | First floor renovation and addition and second floor renovation; Leitzke Architects, stamped by Leonard Leitzke, architect |
| Nov. 7, 2006 | Install mechanical unit; Merit Mechanical Inc. |

Changes to the original Bleitz Funeral Home include the major addition on the west side, and a small addition on the north end of it, which date from 1988 and 1992, and the installation of standing seam metal roof panels. The design of the west addition overtly adapted some of the design elements in an effort, as noted on permit drawings, to "match existing." This mimicry focused largely on the false front components of the original building rather than its simple hipped roof gable form. It included double-glazed, painted wood framed windows with divided lites. The construction of the addition, with wood framing, differed from the concrete structure of the original building, and the newer windows do not feature the same deep wall placement or the brick window sills and surrounds of the original building. The form and Post Modern style of the addition, a low single story, contrasts with the original building mass.

Prior Surveys of the Property

The Bleitz Funeral Home property has been the subject of several recent surveys. A survey form was developed for the DON Historical Sites Inventory (Inv. #QA0004), along with a 2002 HPI form for DAHP's database, WISAARD. The city survey form indicates that the building has sufficient significance and appeared to meet the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places and the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Ordinance, and that it is also located in a potential historic district. DAHP has not yet undertaken a review of the HPI form to determine if the property is eligible for National Register listing. (Because of its location, the property was not included in the Historic Seattle-sponsored urban surveys of Queen Anne Hill or Fremont by Nyberg and Steinbrueck in 1975.)

The Bleitz Funeral Home website recognizes the building's architectural features, noting that, "the Tudor-style funeral home is located at the cusp between the scenic Fremont and the elegant Queen Anne neighborhoods of Seattle. The City of Seattle considers the original building to meet the criteria of a historical landmark."

4. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Neighborhood Context and Site

The subject property is located in Seattle's Queen Anne Hill neighborhood, in close proximity to Fremont due to the Fremont Bridge. The 27,720 square foot site makes up all of Block 78 of Denny and Hoyt's Supplement (King County property report). It contains five rectangular-shaped lots (No. 1-5) on the western 150' and five truncated lots (No. 7-10). The block is on the north side of Florentia Street. Its overall dimensions are 300' along the south, 120' along 3rd Avenue North on the west, 150' along an alley to the north, and 194' along the diagonal east line (**Figures 2 and 3**).

A dead-ended alley runs along the back (north side) of the property. Adjacent to the east, is a tract condemned by the Northern Pacific Railway Company which creates a triangular wedge at the east half of the property. To the west is 3rd Avenue North. Across Florentia Street to the south there is a triangular parcel at 318 Nickerson Street, that contains a two-story, wood framed commercial structure with a tavern/café and coffee stand, and large patio (Figures 12-15).

Historical records indicate that fill material was added to the property, likely during the construction of the nearby Lake Washington Ship Canal (Figures 5-10). The source of the fill material was not included in the available records (SoundEarth Strategies, February 10, 2016, p. 1). The site where the building stands is relatively flat, with a gradual slope approximately 5' down from south to north. The adjacent lot to the northeast along the ship canal is heavily vegetated, and slopes steeply down to the north, with an overall estimated grade change of approximately 22' to the ship canal (Figure 11). The building is situated to the east of a paved parking lot, finished with asphalt/concrete and striped with seven aisles for tandem parking. A service drive extends along the building's east side, via the entry portal, and wraps around to the north to connect to the dead-end alley on the north (Figures 31-32).

Landscaping features of the site include four mature street trees in the planting strip along Florentia Street, and evergreen foundation plantings, including rhododendron and juniper. The east lawn is framed by a low hedge along the sidewalk, and taller hedges and shrubs along the east, adjoining property line. Low rockery walls create raised plant beds flanking the south entry portal (Figures 24-25). A low hedge separates the west parking lot from the sidewalk. The balance of the site is paved for parking and vehicle access. A narrow wood-framed stair along the north facade links the parking lot with the alley.

The entire site currently is in a C2-40 zone, and the four easternmost lots make up part of a designated archaeological buffer area. Portions of the site are also designed a Shoreline Habitat zone, which make it subject to Shoreline Zoning restrictions, and a Steep Slope area, which requires confined development. A portion of the site is also within an Urban Stable overlay zone that calls for fostering of water-related activity and maximizing views of the water. The property also is within an area cited as a Frequent Transit Zone, which allows reduced parking with new development.

The Original Building

The original building was a rectangular-shaped, two story, stucco-clad concrete and wood framed structure with a full basement and an attic, capped by a hipped roof, with gable roofed dormers at each of the four sides. The original footprint measured 38' by 80', with the shorter dimension along the south (front) and north (back). A 17'-wide vehicular portal with a shallow pointed arch, known as a Tudor arch, extended east from the southeast building corner. A simple wood-framed, gabled porte cochere provided a covered entry on the secondary east facade. The secondary west facade faced onto the parking lot, and included windows, but no access door (Figures 16-19).

In 1963, a 40' by 42' flat roofed, concrete four-car garage and storage structure was excavated into the grade west of the original structure. Aligned with the north facade and facing north, it provided access to the original building at the basement level (Figure 21). This addition was largely unseen.

Historic tax assessor's records do not indicate the original roofing materials. The building appears to have been covered with either cedar or asphalt composition shingles, and had shaped gutters and downspouts by the mid 1930s. The current roofing consists of aqua colored metal panels with a distinct standing seam pattern. Soffits are open, and feature shaped rafters. A large sign, reading "Bleitz Funeral Parlors" was installed along the ridge of the main roof, and is shown in the 1937 assessor's photo; by 1960 the sign was modified to read "Bleitz Funeral Home." The gabled roof dormers on the east and west were originally finished with vertical half-timbering, visible in a contrasting color, but are currently painted a consistent color. The south gable features a carved bargeboard trim, and painted wood shingle siding. Each of the dormer gables has a decorative vertical wood post with shaped ends at the ridge joint and in plane with the barge boards, extending above the ridge, and below the barge board.

The primary south facade faces Florentia Street (Figure 24). Along the sidewalk the perimeter wall extends to a stepped parapet, which conceals the hipped roof. Details in the stucco or concrete include projecting horizontal trim bands and a water table, medallion tiles, and a clock face at the center, which is accentuated by a small gable in the parapet. Above the parapet is the gabled dormer, which contains a three-unit window, with six lites each. The wall is clad with painted shingles, and has a decorative carved barge board. The symmetrical composition contains a central entry portico, with a prominent arch-shaped opening, stepped parapet, arched alcove for a decorative urn, and stained glass doors and stained transom. Flanking the portico there are 9'-6" by 5' wide multi-lite wood windows, with paired casements containing transoms within a single opening, surrounded with rowlock brick sills and heads, and stacked brick jambs.

The vehicle entry portal extends from the building's southeast corner. The original portal, including the arched opening, the stepped, gabled parapet, and the banded pier courses, matched the front entry portico. By the mid 1930s, the stucco was painted a light color, while the window frames, brick sills, projecting trim bands, and medallions were painted a darker color.

The front entry portico was replaced in 1960 with a simpler form, composed of stucco-clad concrete block piers with flat-top terminations. A flat roof above the entry eliminated the Tudor arch. At that time a 16' deep by 16'4" wide marquee was installed that covered the sidewalk, and a ceramic tile applied to the entry steps. Apparent in the 1960 tax record photo is a clear intent to "modernize" the design through monotone paint color (Figure 20). At some point after this date, the entry portico was reconstructed to match the original details, and the marquee replaced with a steel-framed fabric canopy.

Currently the original west facade is largely obscured by the 1988 addition (Figure 22). It contained a gabled dormer north of center, with half-timber detailing, a horizontal window with four units of six lites each, flat barge boards, and a horizontal trim band at the pediment level. Three wood paired casement window units provided light to the chapel at the first floor level. Smaller windows at the second floor are 8:1 and 6:1 double hung wood sash.

The secondary east facade remains largely intact (Figure 25). Its gabled dormer matches the west one with vertical half timbers. (The effect of this detail is lessened due to the monotone paint color scheme.) The symmetrical composition includes the wood-framed porte cochere and side entry. The porte cochere is 16' x 10', with exposed rafters, a flat soffit, and non-original standing seam metal roofing. The entry, accessed by concrete steps with radiused treads, has a pair of multi-lite wood doors with a decorative metal screen, and a wood transom. Original windows are typically 6:1 wood-framed double- hung sash at the second floor, and 1:1 sash at the first floor. The southernmost window bay features the same larger

paired casements and transoms as on the south facade at the first floor, and a pair of casements at the second floor. Only these southernmost windows have full brick surrounds; the balance have brick rowlock sills, and stucco returns at the jambs and heads.

On the north facade, the driveway drops the grade to the basement level (Figure 26). The original structure maintains its symmetry and features, including a gabled dormer, clad with painted shingles, and containing a three-unit window of six lites each. A small gable breaks the eave of the main hipped roof at the center. Pairs of double hung sash flank the center bay at first and second floors, with a single unit at the center of the second floor. At the first floor, a single multi-lite wood door leads to a small wood-framed Juliet balcony. (This may at one time have been an exit stair, but there is no access to grade at present.) All the openings have brick surrounds and sills, set flush with the stucco, and currently painted. A non-original roll-up garage door is provided at the basement level. At the northeast corner, the foundation is chamfered at the basement level, presumably to allow vehicular access at the tight corner.

Additions

In 1988, a highly visible, one-story, flat-roofed addition measuring 42' wide and 72-6" deep was constructed on the west side of the original building (Figures 22 & 27-32). Set above the 1963 garage, it was attached to the original building at the north and south ends, with an open space between the two building masses (Figure 28). The addition was constructed with wood framing instead of concrete, but the finishes and details of the addition are highly replicative of the original structure, and the primary south facade composition derived from the original portal and entry, with the stylistic features applied to both the south, west and portions of the north façade). The style of the addition reads as a diminutive version of the original building's taller south facade.

Another wood-framed addition was constructed in 1991 on the north side of the 1988 addition to provide space for two new crematory retorts. It extends 17'-6" to the north, and is 42' wide to match the width of the 1988 addition. This is primarily a one-story structure at the basement level, but a smaller wood framed tower structure extends up to conceal the two retort flues and a stair, rising to a height of 35' above grade (Figures 31-32). The stucco and details on this portion are similarly replicative, as are the projecting bands, and medallions.

The 1988 addition to the west is separated from the original with a glazed hallway, set back from the primary facades. The mass of the addition is diminutive, but it matches the size of original windows and detailing. It contains a projecting block with metal lantern on the west end to mimic the edge of the vehicle portico.

The 1988 addition contains casement and transom window units, which somewhat match those on the original south facade. A concrete access ramp with metal railings was constructed in 1992 at the southwest corner of the 1988 addition, and leads to the entry portico (Figures 29-30). At the north end of the 1988 addition's west facade, there is another entry with a small projecting portico, Tudor arch opening, and is topped by stepped parapets. A 1992 addition at the north end extends up to the level of the first floor window sills with similar stucco finish and projecting coping on the parapet. Above this addition is a small tower, containing the retort flues, which extends above the parapet of the 1988 addition. The tower, similarly detailed with stucco, projecting bands, and medallions, is tied back to the addition via an interior stair, framed between the flue stacks.

The west portion of the original north facade is connected to the 1988 addition by a one-story wall at the first floor level. The 1992 addition projects northward at the basement level, with two large louvers for the retort air intake, and a canted northeast corner. The stuccoed wall matches the projecting line of the water table band, with a parapet and projecting coping above. Set back is the flue tower, also stucco-clad,

banded, and decorated with medallions. It contains a single multi-lite wood window unit at the center, serving the interior stair between the flues.

The Interior

The layout and finishes of the interior of the original structure remains relatively intact with exception of the entry sequence. Presently the primary lobby in the later addition accesses an anteroom, which is fitted with leaded doors (Figures 33-34). This space leads to the chapel along the west side of the original building. This space, used for funerals and memorials, is the largest in the building (Figure 35). It is flanked on the east by small sitting rooms, which accessible by a hallway. The building was provided with a pipe organ originally, and it was apparently located in one of the east rooms.

The original east entry from the porte cochere enters along the first floor hall. An office is in the southeast corner, adjacent to the anteroom. The casket elevator to the basement is located in the northeast portion of the building, and additional service spaces are located along the north end of the chapel. The first floor has 12'-tall ceilings, with plaster and lath wall and ceiling finishes. Public spaces are detailed with paneled wainscot, crown molding, and leaded Tudor arch head doors. Fir floors identified in the historic tax record have been covered with carpeting throughout.

The 1988 addition on the west contains offices, arrangement rooms and restrooms, organized by a double-loaded corridor. The entry lobby in the addition is a Post-Modern design, with Roman arched openings, columns, and pyramidal skylights (Figure 36). Finishes are painted gypsum walls and ceilings, and carpet. A hall leads east from the lobby to the original anteroom, and looks north into the open space between the original and addition.

Historic records indicate the original owners lived on-site in the 1920s, presumably on the second floor. The present second floor of the original building contains service and storage spaces. It is accessed by a stair in the anteroom, and contains one large room above the chapel, and smaller spaces accessed from a double loaded corridor. There is no kitchen space, and only a toilet room. The ceiling height is 9'. Finishes include painted plaster and lath walls and ceilings, carpet and wood flooring (Figure 40). The unfinished wood-framed attic is a cruciform shaped space due to the dormers, with sloped ceilings of exposed sheathing. Two small partially finished office spaces are at the north and south ends.

The configuration of the basement and funeral preparation spaces has been reconfigured multiple times. In 1969, two new crematory retorts were added in the northeast corner. These were removed along with a third in 1992, and the current configuration was created, with two retorts in the north addition separated by a new interior stair. One vehicle bay with a roll-up garage door is located along the original north wall. The ceilings are 9'. Exposed concrete walls and floor slabs indicate the original structure, wood framing at the 1988 west addition, and a suspended acoustical tile ceiling in the north crematory addition. Walls are exposed concrete or drywall finishes (Figure 41).

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6. GRAPHICS

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Fig. 50 King County Assessor's property record card, 1937

Unless otherwise noted, all current images are by BOLA Architecture + Planning and date from December 12, 2016.

Site Map and Site Plans

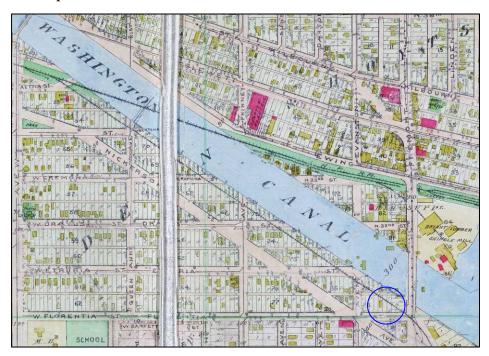
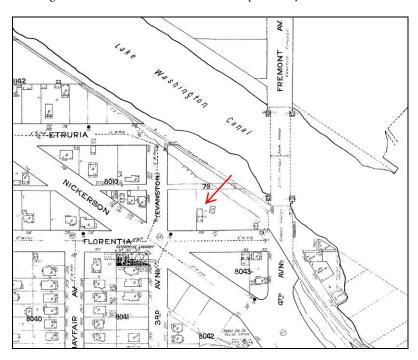


Figure 1. Above, an excerpt from the 1912 Baist Map, Plate No. 13, with the site of the 1921 Bleitz Funeral Home building circled in blue. (Map courtesy the DorpatSherrardLomont blog).

Figure 2. Below, an excerpt from the 1905 Sanborn map showing the site with two earlier buildings – a residence and shed (Sanborn map courtesy the Seattle Public Library website).



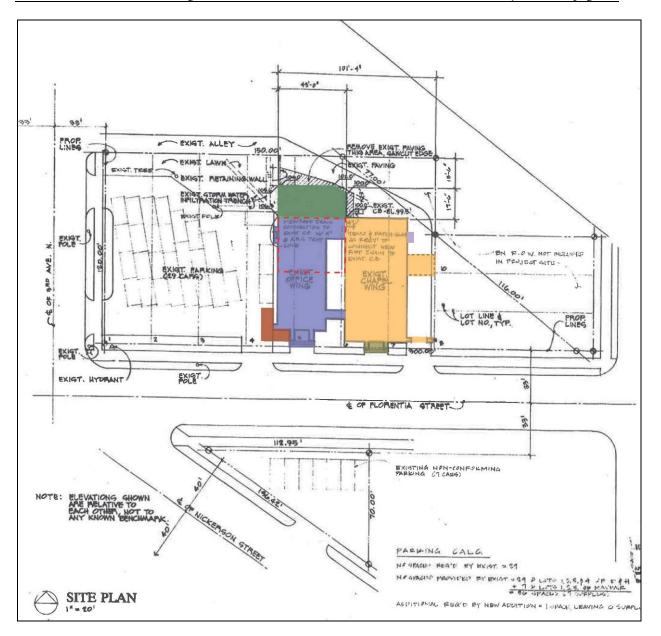


Figure 3. Above, the site plan. This site plan, part of a permit drawing from 1991 by KSWA Architects, has been modified with the addition of colors to indicate the building's construction chronology:

- The gold colored rectangle is the original rectangular building with a side portal and porte cochere on the east, which dates from 1921.
- The olive green color indicates a marquee that was added to the south entry in 1960, but since removed.
- The small lavender square indicates a new near the northeast corner, which was added in 1962.
- In slate blue, the addition on the west side is identified. This one-story office addition was built in 1988.
- The ADA-accessible ramp at the south corner is identified by the terra cotta color. It was added in 1992.
- The dark green indicates the crematory addition on the back (north) in 1991. As part of that project some changes were made to paved areas, while the parking lot remained.

This plan shows parking on a separate parcel on the south side of Florentia Street that is <u>not</u> part of the nomination. The Burlington Northern Railway property to the north is also separate.

Historic Images

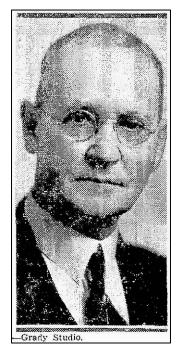
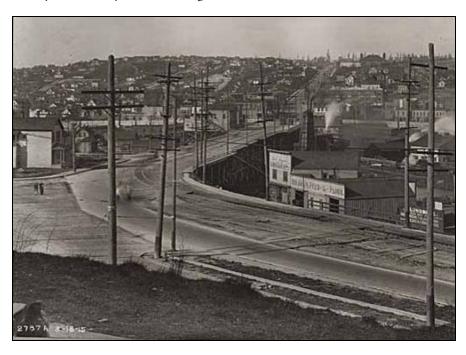




Figure 4. Above left, an undated photo of the original owner, Jacob J. Bleitz (courtesy of Seattle Times).

Figure 5. Above right, construction of the Great Northern railroad trunk link at 3rd Avenue and Nickerson Street, August 2, 1912 (Seattle Municipal Archives [SMA], 6114).

Figure 6. Below, a 1915 view of the earlier Fremont Bridge, looking northeast from the south side of the ship canal, showing some of the residential and commercial development in the area (Museum of History and Industry [MOHAI image SHS9200).



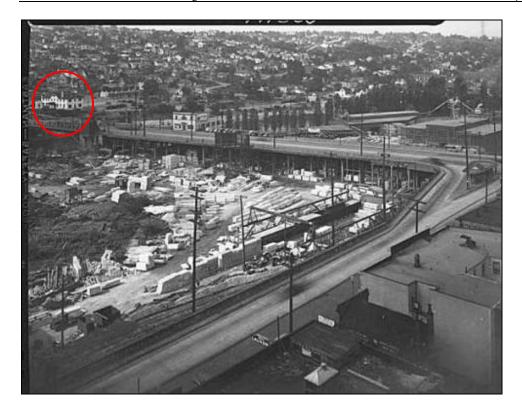
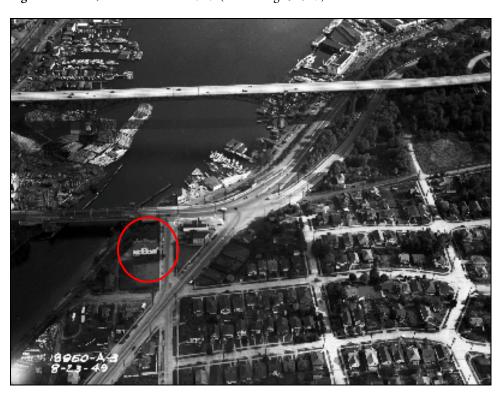


Figure 7. Above, looking southwest at the Fremont Bridge, 1944. The subject building, in the upper left, is circled. (MOHAI image 1983.10.14974.1).

Figure 8. Below, an aerial view in 1949 (SMA image 54367).



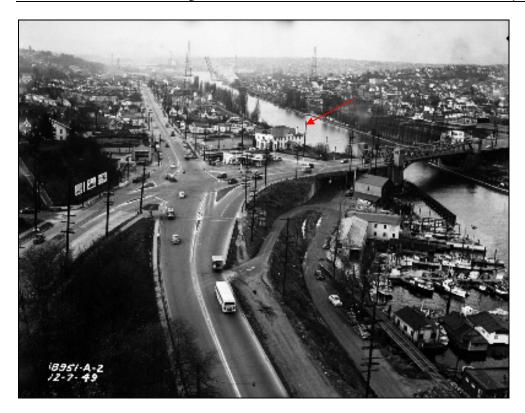
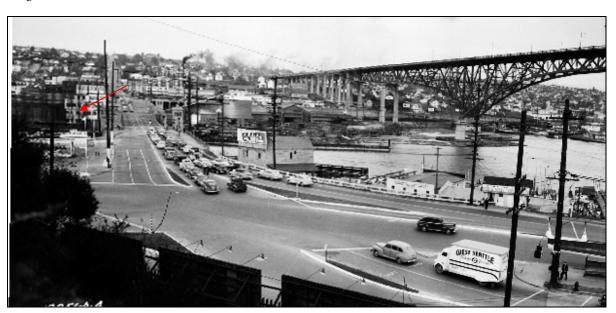


Figure 9. Above, looking northwest, in 1949. The subject building is noted by a red arrow (SMA image 54371).

Figure 10. Below, a composite view looking north across the Fremont Bridge at Nickerson Street and Westlake Avenue N in 1949. The subject property is identified by a red arrow, although the building is not visible (SMA images 54373 and 54370).



Current Neighborhood Context Views

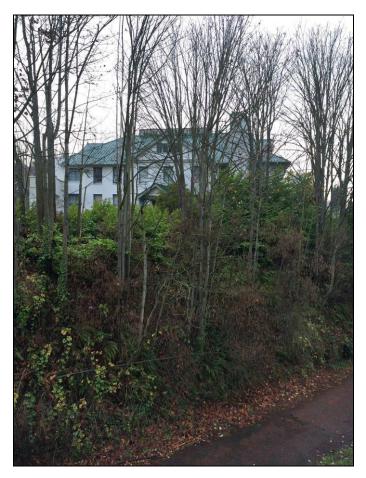


Figure 11. Left, looking west at the building with the South Ship Canal Trail visible in the foreground.

Figures 12 & 13. Below left and right, context view looking northwest from 4th Avenue N at the Nickerson Street Saloon, a separate property on the south side of Florentia Street. The subject building, the Bleitz Funeral Home, is in the background, to the right in the right photograph.







Figure 14. Above, looking southeast at the intersection of Nickerson and Florentia Streets.

Figure 15. Below, looking north across the Fremont Bridge at the intersection of 4^{th} Avenue N and Florentia Street.

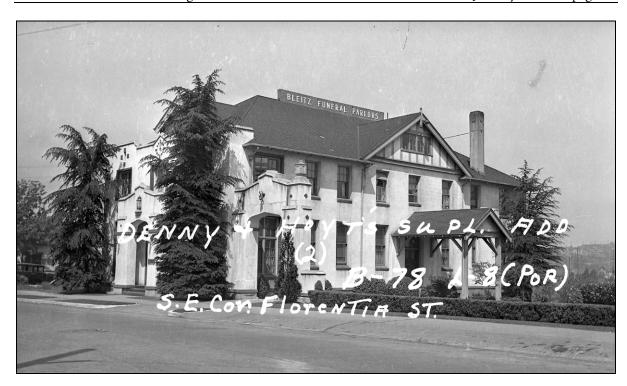


Historic Images of Bleitz Funeral Home



Figures 16 & 17. Above and below, the subject building in ca. 1920s (above, Bleitz website, www.bleitzfuneralhome.com/who_history; below, MOHAI image 1980.6877.67).





Figures 18 & 19. Above and below, King Co. Tax Assessor's photographs, 1937 (Puget Sound Regional Archives).

The view below, looking northeast at the building's orignal west facade, has been obscured by a recent addition.

Note the original half-timbering treatment in the upper gable ends, and the original chimney near the building's northeast corner, and the shingle roofing materials

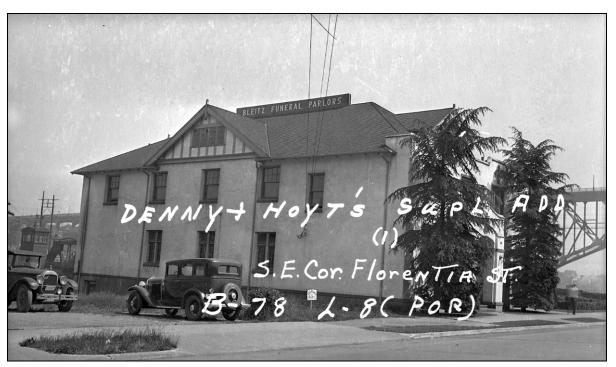




Figure 20. Above, a 1960 King Co. Tax Assessor's photograph. By this date the half-timber treatment in the side gable end had been painted, and a new Modern style marquee added to what was then the main entry.

Figure 21. Below, a 1963 King Co. Tax Assessor's photograph 1937 (both photos, Puget Sound Regional Archives).





Figure 22. Above, a King Co. Tax Assessor's photographs of the 1989 addition under construction with the original building in the background right (Puget Sound Regional Archives).

Current Aerial View

Figure 23. Below, a 2013 King County i-Map view of the area. The subject building is noted by a red arrow.



Current Views of the Exterior



Figure 24. Above, looking northwest at the primary south and secondary east facades.

Figure 25. Below, looking generally west at the side yard and secondary east facade.





Figure 26. Above, looking generally southeast at the back (north facades) with 1988 west addition to the right and 1991 crematory addition in the foreground. The original building (left to the east) is distinguished from these additions by its massing, roof shape, materials, and details.

Figure 27. Below, looking northeast at 1988 office addition (left) and the original building (right).





Figure 28. Above, looking north at the link between the new section (left) and portion of the original west facade (right).

Figures 29 & 30. Below left and right, looking east (left) and north (right) at the new main entry to the 1988 addition.









Figure 31. Above, looking east at the (new) west facade.

Figure 32. Left, looking west along the north facade.

Current Interior Views



Figures 33 & 34. Above, view looking south at the former main entry door, above, and below, looking northwest toward the current hall from the entry, and into the chapel space.

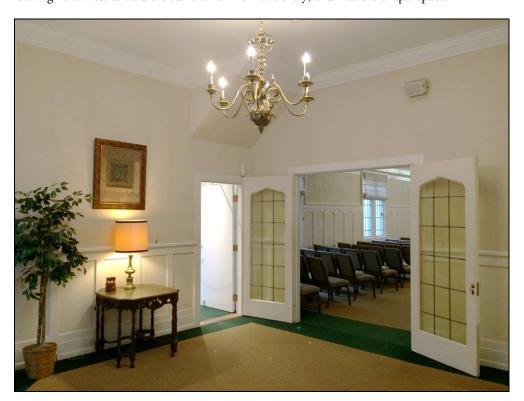






Figure 35. Above, looking north in the original chapel space/viewing room.

Figure 36. Left, looking west at the main entry lobby in the 1988 addition with its Post Modern style decorative elements and sky lit space.







Figure 37. Above left, looking north through the windows within the corridor leading to the original building from the lobby in the 1988 addition, with a view into the open space between the original building (left) and the office addition.

Figure 38. Above right, interior view looking northwest within an office space in the new addition. Trees that are visible through the window are located to the north of the property.

Figure 39. Left, interior view of the back corridor in the 1988 office addition.



Figure 40. Left, interior of a second floor space at the northwest corner of the original building.

Figure 41. Below, view looking west in the basement at retort and equipment in the lower level of the 1991 crematory and 1988 office addition.



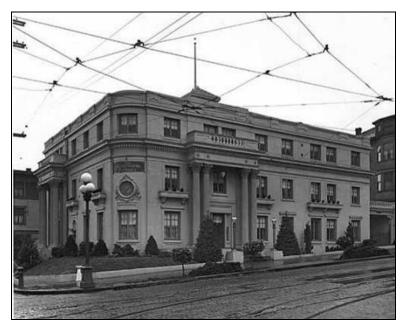
Historic Funeral Home Buildings in Seattle



Figure 42. Above, the Butterworth Building at 1921 1st Avenue, photographed prior to 1917 (SMA image 31718).

Figure 43. Below, Washelli Crematory & Columbarium, ca. 1922 (Engler, October 28, 2013).









Figures 44 & 45. Top and middle, the Butterworth mortuary at 1600 Melrose Avenue on Capital Hill. Top, ca. 1923 (MOHAI image 1983.10.2561.3) and middle, 2006 (Joe Mabel photographer, wikicommons).

Figure 46. Left, the funeral auditorium within the Butterworth mortuary in 1943 (MOHAI image 1983.10.14552.2).

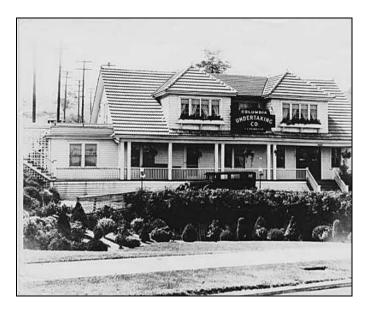


Figure 47. Above, the Columbia Mortuary on Rainier Avenue S and S Alaska Street ca. 1930 (Rainier Valley Historical Society image 93.001.060).

Figure 48. Below, a 1937 Tax Assessor's photo the Johnson Funeral Home at 1103 E Madison Street (the present Seattle University Lynn Building).

Figure 49. Bottom, a 1938 *Polk Directory* ad for the Green Lake Funeral Home.





The following pages contain the 1937 King County Tax Assessor's record and select drawings.

