

FINAL

PORTFOLIO OF THE DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE WORK OF BERT SMYSER

HOUSE OF TOMORROW PROJECT AS A PART OF THE CLARKS CREEK PROPERTY ACQUISITION PROJECT

PRODUCED FOR PIERCE COUNTY

April 2023



FEMA



This project is funded by Pierce County and the Flood Mitigation Assistance (CFDA #:97.029 [Flood Mitigation Assistance]) grant from FEMA and Washington State Emergency Management Division. The publication does not constitute an endorsement by FEMA or reflect FEMA's views. The language used in the document reflects the historical context and documented events and occurrences.

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COVER | Smyser (left), Helen Smyser (center), and an unidentified man in front of New Exposition Hall, July 28, 1941 (Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio D11673-22).

ABSTRACT

Pierce County (County) has retained Environmental Science Associates (ESA) to create a portfolio of the design and architecture work of Bert Smyser. This effort is being undertaken as a part of the Clarks Creek Property Acquisition Project (Project). The purpose of the Project is to mitigate repetitive flood losses to the building located at 4907 66th Avenue E near Puyallup in unincorporated Pierce County, Washington (also known as the House of Tomorrow).

The County received a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that is administered by Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD) to help fund the Project. The house has flooded multiple times and sustained damage in each event and has therefore been deemed a repetitive flood loss property. Because of the federal funding, the Project must comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106). As part of the Section 106 process, in 2016 the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) determined the House of Tomorrow is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). This resulted in a finding of Adverse Effects to a Historic Property due to the planned removal (demolition) of the building. The House of Tomorrow is not currently listed in the NRHP or the Pierce County Register of Historic Places.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA; Appendix C) was authored and signed in 2021 by eight Signatories to resolve those Adverse Effects to the House of Tomorrow and to satisfy FEMA’s responsibilities pursuant to Section 106 as implemented through a Programmatic Agreement executed with EMD and DAHP.

This portfolio of Smyser’s design and architecture work (Portfolio) has been developed to fulfill the mitigation requirements in Section I, Part A.2 of the MOA: “historical research on Bert Smyser, the House of Tomorrow’s designer, builder, and original owner; and compile a portfolio of his design and architecture work.” Smyser’s designs and architecture work were identified through archival research, and all available details on these works are included in the following sections, including historic images and contemporary photographs for those resources that are still extant.

The Portfolio includes 38 of Smyser’s projects, as identified through archival research. Five buildings are documented (three of which are currently extant); documentation includes information such as address, construction year, building use(s), a brief history of the building, physical description, and historic and current photos. Thirty-three other design projects were identified and include showroom and window displays, exposition and fair displays, parade floats, and conceptual designs. Information on these projects includes, where identified, address or location, historic context, description, and historic photos. This Portfolio also includes a biography of Bert Smyser and a historic context to frame his life and work.

The authors of this report meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualifications Standards for Architectural History and History.

This project is funded by Pierce County and the Flood Mitigation Assistance (CFDA #:97.029 [Flood Mitigation Assistance]) grant from FEMA and Washington State Emergency Management Division. The publication does not constitute an endorsement by FEMA or reflect FEMA's views. The language used in the document reflects the historical context and documented events and occurrences.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Pierce County (County) has retained Environmental Science Associates (ESA) to create a portfolio of the design and architecture work of Bert Smyser (Portfolio). This effort is being undertaken as a part of the Clarks Creek Property Acquisition Project (Project). The purpose of the Project is to mitigate repetitive flood losses to the building located at 4907 66th Avenue E (also known as the House of Tomorrow) near Puyallup in unincorporated Pierce County, Washington.

1.1. Project Background & Regulatory Environment

The current owners of the House of Tomorrow, Jeremy and Maureen Shuler, engaged the County and entered into the County’s Property Acquisition Program. Through this program, the County purchases “river related, flood-prone and flood damaged properties from willing sellers,” often through Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grants (Pierce County 2022b). The program typically addresses properties that will likely result in large flood insurance claims, and “removing the structure also prevents the continual cycle of properties being damaged and repaired, sold to uninformed buyers, and then damaged again” (Pierce County 2022b).

The County is in the process of acquiring parcel #0420191024 (4907 66th Avenue E) and is planning on removing the House of Tomorrow and ancillary structures on the parcel. The County received a grant from FEMA, administered by the Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD), to help fund the Project. The house and property repetitively flood, and these events have damaged the house and resulted in repetitive flood loss damages. The current and past property owners have filed several flood damage insurance claims over the years. The removal (demolition) of the buildings from the flood hazard area will eliminate future flooding impacts.

Because of the federal funding, the Project must comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106), as implemented by 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 800. As a part of the Section 106 process, it was determined that the House of Tomorrow is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and the planned removal (demolition) of the building will result in a finding of Adverse Effects to a Historic Property. The building is not listed in the Pierce County Register of Historic Places or in the NRHP, although it was determined eligible for listing in the NRHP by the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) in 2016 (Houser and Trautman 2007, 2018). A determination of eligibility qualifies the building as a historic property and requires FEMA to consider the Project’s potential effects on the property, whether or not it is listed in the NRHP.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was authored to resolve the adverse effects to the House of Tomorrow and to satisfy FEMA’s responsibilities pursuant to Section 106 as implemented through a Programmatic Agreement executed with EMD and DAHP (Appendix C). The County, FEMA, DAHP,

EMD, Docomomo US/WEWA¹, Pierce County Landmarks and Historic Preservation Commission, Washington Trust for Historic Preservation, and Puyallup Historical Society (Signatories) have entered into the MoA. ESA, in partnership with Northwest Vernacular and Richaven Architecture & Planning, as well as Maul Foster & Alongi (MFA), were retained by Pierce County to help fulfill the terms of the MoA. The MoA requirements include:

- A Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) Documentation Level I of the House of Tomorrow. Standards for HABS documentation (as published in the Federal Register September 29, 1983, Vol. 48, No. 190, pp. 44730-34) are set by the National Park Service and defined in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Architectural and Engineering Documentation* (National Park Service 2022a).
- A portfolio of Bert Smyser’s work, including a biography and documentation of his other known work.
- A profile of Bert Smyser for use by DAHP and Docomomo US/WEWA.
- A feature article about the House of Tomorrow and Bert Smyser, including photos.
- Narrated walk-through amateur video of the interior and exterior of the building and property, highlighting architectural details and spaces as well as landscaping.
- An open house for interested parties to view the House of Tomorrow.

In addition to the aforementioned elements, the MoA also stipulates that prior to demolition, the County will provide the Puyallup Historical Society an opportunity to “salvage select small architectural elements for their collection” and “make a good faith effort to contact local historic architectural material salvage or recycle organizations or companies and provide them a reasonable opportunity to salvage select materials from the House of Tomorrow” (Unknown Author 2021:5). A copy of the MoA is included in Appendix C.

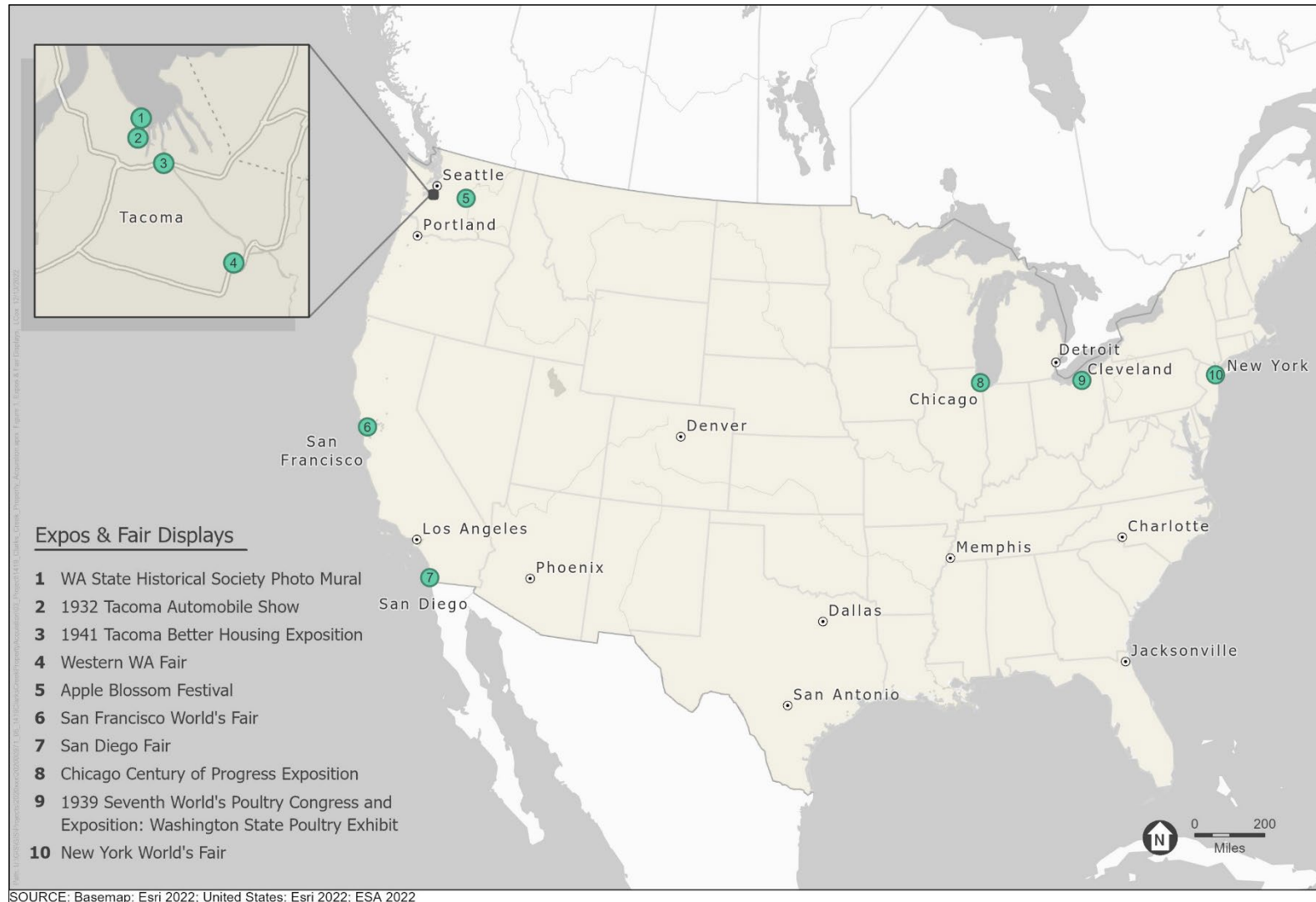
1.2. Scope of Portfolio

The Portfolio of Smyser’s design and architecture work (this document) is designed to fulfill the mitigation requirements of Section I, Part A.2 of the MOA: “historical research on Bert Smyser, the House of Tomorrow’s designer, builder, and original owner; and compile a portfolio of his design and architecture work.” Smyser’s designs and architecture work were identified through archival research, and all available details on these works are included in the following sections, including historic images and contemporary photographs. Other details include location information, date of construction, a physical description, historic context, and construction information. His work can broadly be grouped into several different types: architectural designs (Section 4), showroom and window displays (Section 5.1), exposition and fair displays (Section 5.2), parade floats (Section 5.3), and conceptual designs (Section

¹ Docomomo US/WEWA is the formal name of the organization; it is an acronym for the documentation and conservation of buildings, sites, and neighborhoods of the modern movement in Western Washington.

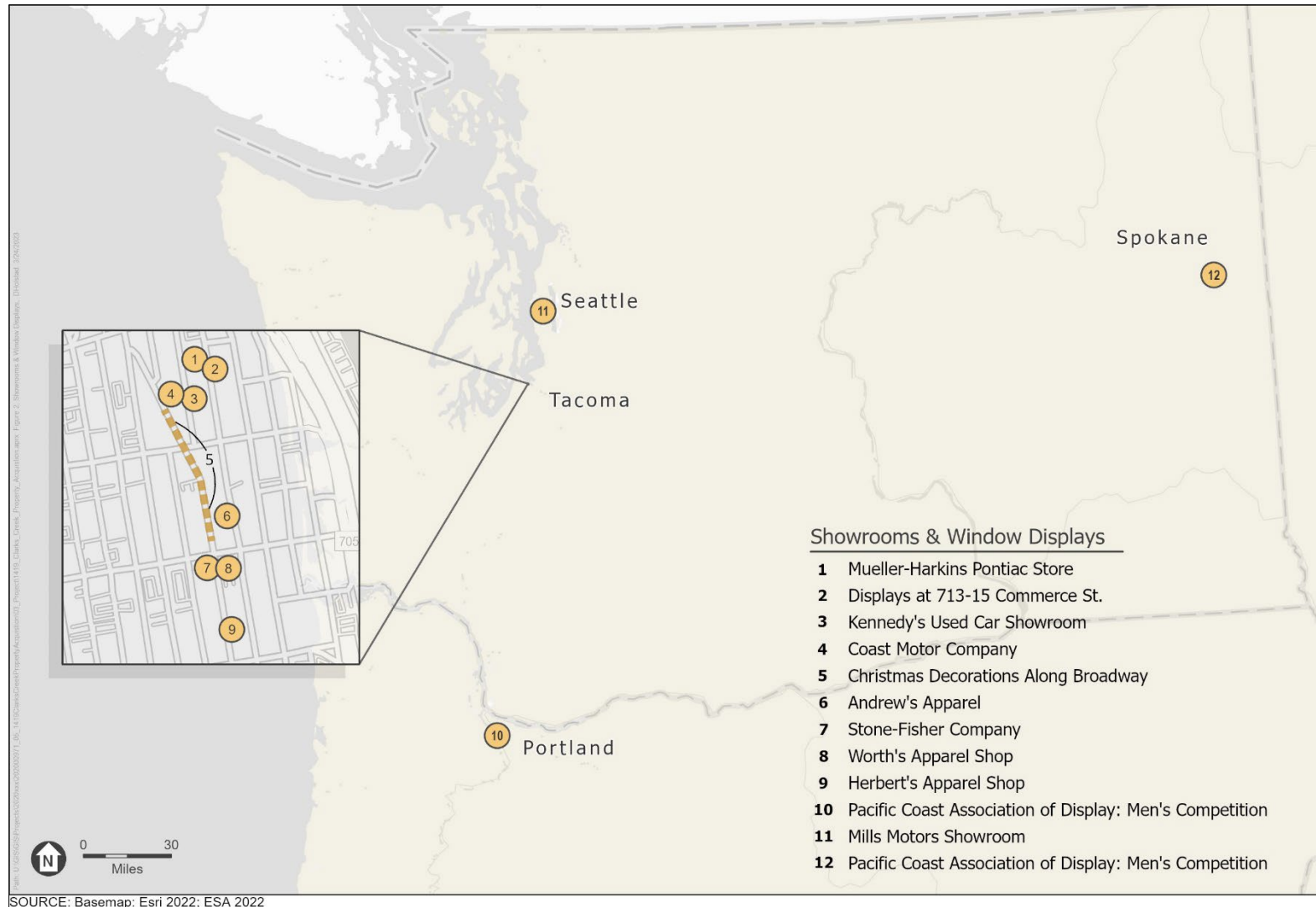
5.4). This Portfolio also includes a biography of Smyser and historic and architectural contexts to place his work into an appropriate framework.

Bert Smyser lived most of his life in and near Tacoma, Washington. While many of his projects were in the vicinity, he also worked on some projects, including displays and parade floats, throughout the country, as illustrated in Figure 1 through Figure 3.



Prepared by ESA 2022

Figure 1
Locations of known Smyser exposition and fair displays.



Prepared by ESA 2022

Figure 2
Locations of known Smyser showroom and window displays.

2. METHODS

Prior to the documentation undertaken as a part of this Project and included in this Portfolio, there was relatively little existing documentation that provided more than a cursory overview of Smyser’s life and work. Preparation of this document largely relied on archival research to create a biography and inventory of his work. Few of his projects are extant, but those that are were documented in their current state. The following sections of this Portfolio detail Smyser’s life and work; a summary of his projects is included in Appendix D.

2.1. Existing Documentation

Little known formal documentation exists of Smyser’s work. The two documents identified through research are the National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the building at 2102 South Tacoma Way, commonly known as the Coffee Pot Restaurant or Bob’s Java Jive (Staaaz 2013), and a feasibility study conducted for the building at 4907 66th Avenue E (the House of Tomorrow), which was prepared during a previous phase of the Clarks Creek Property Acquisition Project (Tetra Tech 2018). In addition, Michael Houser, State Architectural Historian at DAHP, has previously conducted research on Bert Smyser and shared his findings.

2.2. Archival Research

To identify Smyser’s various designs and to develop a biography, archival research was conducted in phases. First, a list was developed of repositories that could potentially have information. A full list of repositories that were contacted and/or with holdings that were reviewed is included in Appendix A and includes municipal agencies; libraries; non-profit organizations, historical societies, and museums; and newspaper holdings. Those with research staff, including Tacoma’s *The News Tribune* archives, Tacoma Public Library Northwest Room, and Pierce County Assessor, were contacted with a broad request for any information about Smyser’s life, designs, and/or any other pertinent information. Coupled with the information in the existing documentation, ESA was able to begin a list of known Smyser designs and projects.

Following this initial round of research, extensive research through digitized newspapers was performed. Initially, searches were performed using “Smyser,” variations such as “Smyzer,” and similar keywords to both expand the list of known designs/projects and to begin a biography. Additional searches were then performed for the individual designs to identify additional information on specific projects. Simultaneously, other repositories or organizations, such as Tacoma’s Daffodil Festival and the New York Public Library, were searched and/or contacted for information specific to individual projects. Many assisted with research and scanned and sent relevant documents.

Of particular note and deserving of specific thanks are the staff at the Tacoma Public Library Northwest Room and the Washington State Historical Society (WSHS), both of which allowed in-person research. In addition to the library’s online repositories that are cross-referenced, librarians were able to pull books within the collection that referenced either Smyser or his designs. This information provided further

support for the list of Smyser’s designs, and also helped clarify some potential misinformation (possible conflation of multiple projects). Staff at the WSHS allowed perusal and photography of their photograph collections, which yielded valuable documentation of some of Smyser’s designs. They additionally reviewed their collections to see what may have happened to the physical objects – both murals and possibly dioramas – that were part of Smyser’s work.²

Archival research identified five buildings designed by Smyser, three of which are extant. Additionally, 15 showroom and/or window displays were identified, nine exposition displays, seven floats, and two conceptual designs. For the showroom and window displays, very few of the newspaper articles or other documentation included addresses, which was a common practice in the first half of the 20th century. To identify where the buildings/stores hosting his showroom and window displays were located, the Building Index maintained by the Tacoma Public Library Northwest Room was invaluable. It cross-references buildings, newspaper articles, architects, and stores housed within the building, along with available photographs; this allowed the identification of nearly all of the buildings/stores where his work occurred to precisely locate his projects. For those that could not be identified using the Building Index, additional highly specific searches of archival newspapers and cross-referencing of other buildings were employed. Due to the impermanent nature of exposition/fair displays, parade floats, and non-physicality of conceptual designs, the team relied on historic documentation and imagery to describe these resources.

2.3. Physical Documentation

Other buildings designed by Smyser that are still extant were documented and photographed from the public right-of-way. Field equipment included data collection devices with a high-quality digital camera. All visible materials were verified while in the field and recorded where not clear in the photographs. All structural information was verified against available historic information to clarify any alterations over time. Although the House of Tomorrow is privately owned, the team had permission to enter for the larger Project, and the interior was also documented and photographed.

For those buildings that housed Smyser’s showroom/window displays, aerial imagery and assessor records were used to identify which buildings are still standing. Those that are standing were photographed by ESA staff; buildings that had window displays were photographed from the public right-of-way.

² Unfortunately, no details were found pertaining to the specific resources, and the staff all generally agreed they were no longer in the Society’s collections.

3. BIOGRAPHY

Bert Alan Smyser (1893–1987) was a designer and sometimes-architect based in the Tacoma area. He is known to have worked on at least five building designs but was better known as a window dresser and exposition display designer. Some career highlights include his work on Washington State’s displays at the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition and the San Francisco and New York 1939/1940 World’s Fairs. He is also well known for the Coffee Pot Restaurant / Bob’s Java Jive, which is listed in the NRHP and is a City of Tacoma Landmark.

3.1. Early Life

Bert Alan Smyser (Figure 4) was born on June 11, 1893, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, to Charles (December 4, 1869–March 29, 1950) and Emma (nee Snyder, 1868 – 1942); he also had an older brother, Ray L. (*The News Tribune* 1950a; Washington Secretary of State 2022a). By 1897, the family had moved to Tacoma and lived at 1932 S G Street, and Charles worked at a cigar factory at 2140 Jefferson Avenue (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1897; U.S. Census Bureau 1900a).³

At the age of 16, Smyser began his design career at the Kennedy Brothers Arcade, a department store located at the corner of 13th and C Streets in downtown Tacoma in 1909 (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1909; Lund 1974). In a 1974 interview, he said he walked into the building “and said he wanted a job as a window dresser. ‘I told them I’d even help out for nothing’” (Lund 1974). By the following year, however, he was employed as a window dresser at the Stone-Fisher Company, a dry goods department store, at 11th and C Streets; by that year, his father was a traveling salesman for the Sperry Flour Company (a mill), and Ray was a musician with the orchestra (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1910; U.S. Census Bureau 1910). Stone-Fisher, later Stone, Fisher & Lane Department Store, was founded in Tacoma in 1891 and expanded to Seattle, Olympia, and Bellingham over the following decades (Seattle Department of Neighborhoods 2022a). Smyser appeared to have a knack for window dressing; in 1911, Stone-Fisher won first prize for best store decoration during “carnival week” in July (Tacoma Public Library 2022j). Carnival week was the “Carnival of Nations” hosted by the Tacoma Commercial Club and Tacoma Chamber of Commerce – a four-day festival held during the first week of July and coinciding with the 4th of July (Tacoma Daily Ledger 1911).

³ The 1900 census is the only record to identify Smyser as “Herbert.” Given the range of documents, including newspaper articles, other census data, tombstone, and his death record on file with the Washington State Secretary of State, it appears “Bert” was not a nickname, but rather Smyser’s full name, and “Herbert” here is a mistake.



Source: *Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1918

Figure 4
Bert Smyser in 1918, when he was around 25 years old.

Smyser married Velma Arlene Anderson, whom he met at work, on Tuesday, July 28, 1914, when he was 21 and she was 19. Velma, the daughter of Andrew Anderson and Amanda Magnuson, both immigrants from Norway, was a clerk at Stone-Fisher (Washington Secretary of State 2023; Washington State Archives 2022a).⁴ By 1916, the couple lived at 2010 J Street; their first child, Allen Bert Smyser, was born on May 13, 1916, followed by a daughter, Arlene Velma, on September 30, 1917 (Washington Secretary of State 2022b, 2022d).

In late 1918, a Tacoma committee on window displays was established by the Division of Advertising of the federal government's Committee on Public Information (CPI), and Smyser was appointed as the committee's chair. The CPI was the propaganda agency for the government during World War I, utilizing all forms of mass communication (e.g., newspapers, movies, pamphlets) to sway public opinion to support the war effort. Tacoma's local committee on window displays oversaw and regulated all window displays in Tacoma that advertised Liberty Loans (i.e., war bonds sold by the government to defray the

⁴ Some sources cite Amanda's maiden name as Madsen, but according to her death certificate, it was Magnuson (Washington Secretary of State 2023).

costs of war) and “other government calls upon the public” to ensure consistent government messaging to the public (Tacoma Daily Ledger 1918). Smyser’s appointment to the local window display committee suggests his status amongst his peers, even as a young man in his mid-20s (for more information on the Committee’s work, see Section 6.2).

Smyser continued to be at the forefront of window dressing, and in 1924 and 1925 he won several awards as a part of the window display contests held by the Pacific Coast Association of Display Men. At the second conference in 1925, he was elected second vice president of the group (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1925). By this time, he was manager of the window display department at Stone-Fisher.

The following year, in 1926, the Display Men of Tacoma organization voted Smyser chair of a committee to oversee the displays of downtown stores as a part of the Community Chest campaign. The Community Chest was a fundraising drive for local charities and social agencies; it was the precursor to the United Good Neighbor Fund and later United Way of Pierce County (Tacoma Public Library 2023). According to an article in the *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, members of the committee (which also included W.C. Willoughby of McCormack Brothers Department Store, E. Donnelly of Feist & Bachrach Dry Goods Store, and Clayton Leonard of The People’s Store, a department store) “not only will decorate their own windows for the chest, but will offer suggestions to stores having no display men” (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1926). In 1929, the Pacific Coast Association of Display Men elected him first vice president (*The Oregonian* 1929).

3.2. Smyser Display Service

Sometime between 1926 and 1929, Smyser established Smyser Display Service (Figure 5), headquartered at 2016 South Tacoma Way (Smith 1986; *Seattle Times* 1929). The company, which designed and made advertising displays, was incorporated in 1937 by Smyser (president), Leo Teats, and Asahel Curtis (vice president; *The News Tribune* 1937; *Seattle Times* 1937, 1938a) and was also referred to as Smyser Display Corporation. Velma Smyser also held an interest in the company (*The News Tribune* 1939b). Over the years, Smyser Display Service employed a large staff, reaching 30 at its height. The company worked on a variety of projects including floats and exposition displays, described as “outdoor advertising displays” in 1939, in Washington, Oregon, and California (detailed in the following sections; *The News Tribune* 1939c; Smith 1986).



Source: *Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1934c

Figure 5
Advertisement for Smyser Display Service in the *Tacoma Daily Ledger* in 1934.

By the time of the 1930 census, the Smyser family had moved to 3919 N 30th Street (U.S. Census Bureau 1930). Their daughter Arlene, who attended Stadium High School and was a part of the school newspaper team, suffered from severe scoliosis that necessitated a spinal fusion surgery. Surgery occurred on or near June 27, 1934, and Arlene died as a result at age 16 (Stadium High School 1933; Washington Secretary of State 2022b).⁵ Allen Smyser also attended Stadium High School and worked on the yearbook committee and was in pep band (Stadium High School 1934).

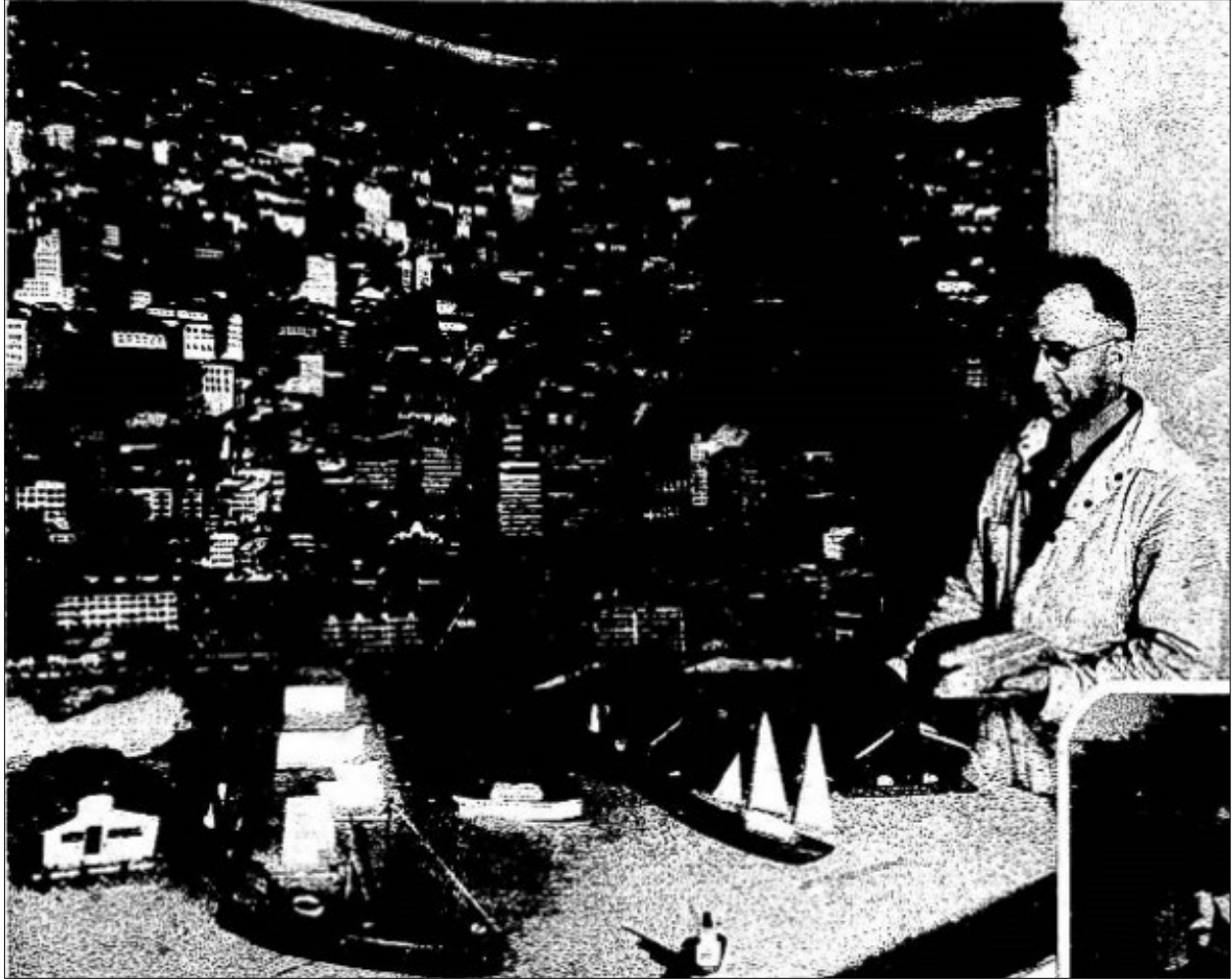
Although Smyser was responsible for a variety of work across his career, some of his more notable projects were designs for the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition and the San Francisco and New York World's Fairs in 1939/1940 (Lund 1974, Figure 6 and Figure 7). He designed and built the displays for the Washington State exhibits for the fairs (additional details in Sections 5.2.2 and 5.2.3). He was also expected to design the American pavilion for the 1942 World's Fair in Rome as well, but as he stated in a 1974 interview, "Hitler kicked that one out of my lap" (Lund 1974). The fair was canceled as a result of the German and Axis troops invasion of the Soviet Union in June of 1941 (Milano 2020).

⁵ The noted cause of death on Arlene's death certificate was "probably surgical shock" (Washington Secretary of State 2022b).



Source: *Kennewick Courier-Reporter*
1938

Figure 6
Chapin D. Foster, chairman of the Washington State Progression Commission, signs the contract for the San Francisco and New York World's Fairs. Commissioner E.B. McGovern is center, Bert Smyser is to the right.



Source: *Seattle Times* 1938b

Figure 7

A display for the 1939/1940 Fairs with Smyser holding a model of the *M.V. Kalakala* ferry boat. The full page of images can be found in **Figure 64** and a larger copy of the article is in Appendix B.

Velma Smyser filed to divorce her husband in 1939, and the process was finalized on May 10, 1940. As a part of the divorce, Velma levied a charge of infidelity (claiming a three-year affair that did not end after she spoke with both parties)⁶ and sued her soon-to-be-ex-husband over the division of assets; the case was brought to court in late October 1939 (*The News Tribune* 1939c, 1939d). While the divorce was agreed upon by both parties, Velma claimed their assets were around \$70,000, while Bert claimed a much lower amount of \$20,000 (approximately \$1.48 million and \$425,000, respectively, in 2022 dollars; *The News Tribune* 1939c; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2022). The two parties settled after one morning in court, prior to the conclusion of Velma’s testimony. In the settlement, Velma received \$1,000, \$75 a month for the following three years, and \$50 a month for the next two years (approximately \$21,000, \$1,600, and \$1,000 in 2022 dollars, respectively), in addition to property on Chambers Creek, the “family home at 3919 N 30th street, and an insurance policy” of unspecified type (*The News Tribune* 1939b; U.S.

⁶ The woman with whom Smyser was having the affair is not named in identified records, but it was likely Helen Frick (additional details below on Helen).

Bureau of Labor Statistics 2022). In return, she relinquished all ownership in the Smyser Display Service “and other property” (*The News Tribune* 1939b). She sued him for a second time in 1941, claiming he withheld investment and other financial information from both her and the court at the time of their divorce (*Tacoma Times* 1941b). In early June 1942, Velma was awarded around \$6,000, which was half of the money credited to Smyser for the investments (*The News Tribune* 1942e).

Less than a week later, Charles Smyser, Bert’s father, brought a suit against his two sons, claiming Bert owed him \$6,507.15 and Ray owed him \$9,921.37 (\$118,234.92 and \$180,271.29 in 2022 dollars, respectively), although Velma Smyser contested the validity of Charles’ claim (*The News Tribune* 1942e; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2022). The judge noted that “the testimony showed that Bert Smyser had sent his father to the attorney to bring the suit,” and that “the entire proceedings [were] tainted with collusion and is but part of the subterfuge practiced to prevent” Velma’s payment (*The News Tribune* 1942e).

In the midst of these court cases, Smyser remarried. Less than a month after his divorce was finalized, on June 5, 1940, he married Helen Frick (Smyser v. Smyser 1943; *The News Tribune* 1939b; *Tacoma Times* 1941b). Helen (Figure 8), born August 3, 1897, was the daughter of Swiss immigrants Alfred Frick and Laura Malm (identified in census records as being born in “Switz-German L.”), and had an older brother, Anton. By 1910, Helen’s mother Laura had remarried August Svenson, with whom she had another child, Lela. The family lived on Helen’s stepfather August’s farm in Pierce County (U.S. Census Bureau 1900b).

On November 12, 1919, Helen married her first husband, Charles A. McGee, a physical education director at Lincoln High School in Tacoma (Washington Secretary of State 2022g). Details are unclear, but by 1940 Helen was widowed and living with her mother (U.S. Census Bureau 1940). Although it is unknown when she started, Helen spent most of her career as an officer (duties unknown) at Smyser Display Service and was identified as the company’s secretary-treasurer in 1954, although Smyser regularly credited her as his co-designer (*The News Tribune* 1954b; J. Shuler 2022; M. Shuler 2022; Washington Secretary of State 2022b).



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio D11673-22

Figure 8
Bert Smyser (left), Helen Smyser (center), and an unidentified man in front of Smyser's New Exposition Hall, July 28, 1941 (see Section 4.4).

In 1941, the Smysers completed work on the House of Tomorrow, which would remain their residence until their deaths. The building was constructed on land owned by Helen's mother, Laura Svenson, although she gifted them the land in 1944 (for more information on the building, see Section 4.5). Although current records list Smyser as the architect of record for the House of Tomorrow, along with his other projects (see Section 4), he regularly credited Helen as a co-architect on the projects and considered the two of them as equals in the building design (J. Shuler 2022; M. Shuler 2022).

Allen Smyser, Bert's son, also worked at Smyser Display Service until at least 1940 (National Archives at St. Louis 1947; *The News Tribune* 1945). He attended the College (now University) of Puget Sound and the University of Washington. Following his parent's divorce, he lived with his mother. In November 1941, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy, where he met Hope Cotter (*Tacoma Times* 1941c). Hope attended Burdette College in Boston and undertook her Navy training in Iowa (*The News Tribune* 1943). The two were married on December 3, 1943, at the home of Allen's mother, Velma, at 3919 N 30th Street (*The News Tribune* 1943; Washington State Archives 2022b). At the time of their wedding, Hope was stationed in Seattle, while Allen was in Port Huenema, California. Research has not revealed what occurred, but Allen was married a second time in 1956 to Jane O'Julian (Washington Secretary of State 2022h).

In March 1953, Helen and Bert Smyser were indicted in federal court on three counts of tax fraud for evading corporate income taxes, presumably for the Smyser Display Service (*Seattle Times* 1953; *News Tribune* 1954a). They were set to go to trial in late June 1954, but Smyser changed his plea to guilty to the first count of the indictment just four days before the trial (*News Tribune* 1954b; *Seattle Times* 1954). The U.S. attorney then dismissed the other two indictments against Smyser as well as all three against his wife. It appears the most severe of the charges was claiming an \$88.68 loss for “the company in 1946 when actually net income was \$7,033 upon which a tax of \$1,517.63 should have been paid”; in 2022 dollars, that would equal a \$1,430 loss while the net income would translate to \$113,448 with a tax of \$24,480 (*News Tribune* 1954a, 1954b; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2022).

Vincent Russo, who was the U.S. attorney in the case, noted that the government would move to dismiss the other two charges and all charges against Helen Smyser, which appears to have happened. One of the newspaper articles about the fraud noted that the maximum penalty for tax evasion was five years in prison, a \$10,000 fine, or both (*Seattle Times* 1954b). Bert Smyser was sentenced to one year in prison and a \$1,000 fine (just over \$11,000 in 2022 dollars) in August 1954 (*Seattle Times* 1954b; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2022). It is unclear if Smyser served any prison time and, if so, where he served.⁷

3.3. Post-Conviction for Tax Fraud

Following Smyser’s conviction, his work appears to have fallen off significantly. The only projects he appears to have worked on during this time were theoretical and included ideas for the 1962 Seattle World’s Fair (also known as the Century 21 Exposition). He proposed moving the event from Seattle to Auburn and sketched a centerpiece structure that resembled a flying saucer on a tripod with an attached monorail (see Section 5.4.2 for more details on these plans). In 1961, Smyser converted his workshop into a motel (additional details included in Section 4.2), further suggesting his design and architectural commissions had dried up and he may have needed additional income. It appears he was at least moderately successful in the motel business, as he was elected president of the Tacoma Motel Association in 1967 (*The News Tribune* 1967).

At some point in his career, Smyser gained the nickname “Bullnose” for his penchant for rounded corners (Lund 1974). It appears this name may have also been in reference to other things – he has been described as having had a rather loud, up-front personality. Helen, in contrast, was characterized by a family acquaintance as a kind but quiet woman (M. Shuler 2022).

Helen Smyser died on July 10, 1981, at the age of 80 (*The News Tribune* 1981; Washington Secretary of State 2022c). Bert died six years later, on February 14, 1987, at the age of 93 after suffering from a fall; he was buried four days later in the Tacoma Cemetery located at 4801 South Tacoma Way (*The News Tribune* 1987a, 1987b; Washington Secretary of State 2022a).

⁷ Washington Secretary of State corrections department records do not have any listings for Bert Smyser, indicating he did not serve time in a state prison. The Smysers were indicted in a federal court (tax fraud is typically considered a federal crime), and as such, if Smyser did serve time, he was likely incarcerated in a federal prison; if so, the particular prison has not been identified (Pettit 2022; Washington Secretary of State 2022e).

4. ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNS

Five architectural designs by Smyser have been identified. Three are currently extant and all are or were in the greater Tacoma area. According to the American Institute of Architect's (AIA) historic directories from 1955, 1962, and 1970, Smyser was not a registered architect (Gane 1970; Koyl 1955, 1962).

4.1. The Coffee Pot Restaurant / Bob's Java Jive, ca.1930

Address: 2102 South Tacoma Way
Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington
Tax Parcel: 7005000170

Historic Name: The Coffee Pot Restaurant
Current Name: Bob's Java Jive

Historic and Current Use: Restaurant and Bar

Resource Type: Commercial
Extant: Yes

Construction Date: between 1929–1930
Architect(s): Bert Smyser
Builder: Carl Minch

Style: Mimetic/Programmatic

No. of Stories: 2

Foundation: Concrete
Roof Material: Asphalt
Cladding: Stucco
Structural System: Wood platform frame
Plan: Irregular

4.1.1. History

The Coffee Pot Restaurant, which is shaped like a coffee pot, was originally owned by Dr. Otis G. Button (1888–1956), a local veterinarian. He purchased the land in August 1929 and hired Smyser Display Service to construct the building. Several sources cite a construction date of 1927, but Button's purchase date suggests it was not built until ca.1930 (Pierce County Assessor 2022b; *The News Tribune* 1989). The building was prefabricated and constructed in sections off site, brought to South Tacoma Way, bolted together, and covered in stucco (Staaaz 2013; *The News Tribune* 1982). Originally a restaurant, it quickly became a popular destination and common belief holds there was a speakeasy in the rear of the building

during Prohibition; it was also a drive-in at one time early in its history (Davis and Eufrazio 2008:156; Staaaz 2013).

Harold W. Elrod purchased the building in 1940 and added a single-story addition to the rear (south), along with a dance floor and new bar, and introduced live entertainment (Flood 2013:98; Staaaz 2013). In 1955, after passing through several owners, it was purchased by Robert and Lylabell Radonich, who renamed it Bob’s Java Jive and redecorated the interior in a Polynesian style (Davis and Eufrazio 2008:156).

One of the many artists to play at the Java Jive was the Ventures, a Tacoma-based band. When they started performing in the late 1950s, “the bar and small dance floor left little room for more than a single entertainer” (Halterman 2009:25). The Radonichs built a bigger stage to accommodate the two musicians, but it remained cramped. Other entertainment throughout the years included go-go dancing, karaoke, and briefly, two chimpanzees named Java and Jive who played drums (Davis and Eufrazio 2008:156). When local musician Neko Case was a bartender, she tried to convince Radonich to book the rising star band Nirvana but was told “I don’t want that loud noise in my place no way” (Bryan 2021). The building was also featured in the 1990 movie *I Love You to Death* and provided the set for Keanu Reeves and River Phoenix for the film’s scene of the actors planning a murder.

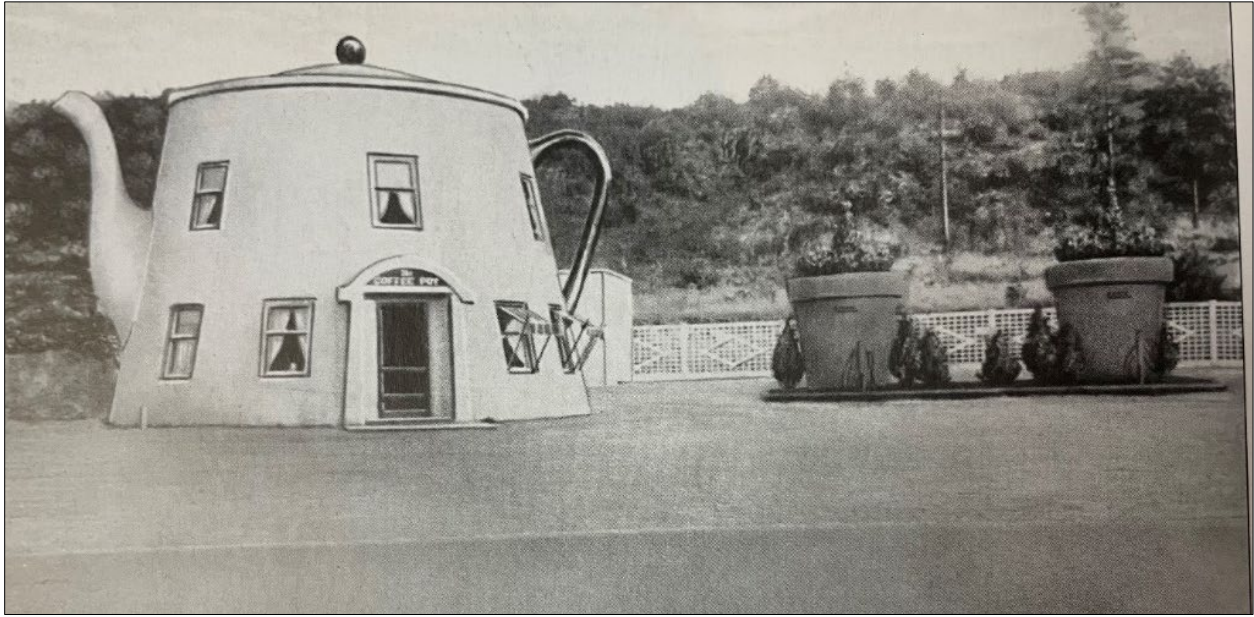
The building was designated as a City of Tacoma Landmark in 2003 and listed in the NRHP in 2014 (Staaaz 2013).

4.1.2. Physical Description

Historic

The Coffee Pot Restaurant is a 25-foot tall, two-story building, shaped like a coffee pot, with a 30-foot diameter (Figure 9 through Figure 11). The walls are angled slightly inward, with a handle and spout; a band surrounds the top of the building, and the roof is a shallow cone shape with a ball on the top (creating the top of the coffee pot), although the roof details are mostly obscured from the right-of-way due to the height of the building. When it was first constructed, the restrooms were located in nearby flowerpots (Figure 9 and Figure 10), with “Mom” and “Pop” labels. Aerial imagery indicates they were demolished or relocated by 1955 (NETROnline 2022). The postcard in Figure 9 appears to be a sketch (likely Smyser’s) overlaid on a photograph.

In 1940, a banquet hall was added to the rear (south), and a second story with three apartments was added shortly thereafter. In 1956, a pool room was added to the west of the 1940 addition. The 1940 addition was damaged by fire in 1996; it was rebuilt and is currently a single-story mass (Figure 12). Following the fire, several small additions were added over the years (visible in Figure 13).



Source: Reiter 2007:86

Figure 9

An undated postcard of the Coffee Pot Restaurant and flowerpot restrooms; it appears to be a composite image that combines a sketch and photograph, possibly before the restaurant was constructed on the site.



Source: Flood 2013:98

Figure 10

An undated but likely early photograph of the Coffee Pot Restaurant and flowerpot restrooms.

Current

The following description is taken from the NRHP Nomination Form (Staaaz 2013). There appear to have been few, if any, alterations in the subsequent years, and the current building appears overwhelmingly the same as that described in the nomination:

The coffeepot stands approximately twenty-five feet tall with a diameter of twenty-eight feet at the base. It is a two-storey wood framed structure with an exterior of smooth stucco. The circular pot tapers inward as it moves up towards the roofline. The roof consists of a shallow, overhanging rim and round central peak resembling a coffee pot lid. The rim originally had round edges, which are now squared off, likely to hide the electrical cables for the exterior neon accent lights that were added at a later time. The slightly rounded peak of the roof is topped with a round ball, designed to resemble a knob.

The pouring spout and handle are approximately twenty feet tall. The spout starts approximately three-and-a-half feet above the base of the coffee pot on the east side of the building and curls out to a “V” cut opening. The handle, on the opposite side, arches in a half heart design to a point about three and a half feet above the ground. Both features extend no higher than the rim of the roof.

The windows, placed symmetrically on the main façade, are one-over-one double hung vinyl. The first floor contains six windows, while the second floor has five windows.

The single door entry is recessed and is highlighted by an arched pediment supported on solid wall pilasters. The pediment is arched with flared ends and has a slight overhang. The main entry door is a half lite paneled door.

At the rear of the building is a large one story addition. Extending 15[feet] wide x 55 [feet] long, the structure was originally built in 1940 as a one-story banquet hall. Shortly thereafter a second floor was added housing three apartments. Its present one-story configuration is the result of a fire in 1996. The rear wing, constructed of CMU [concrete masonry unit] block has a gable roof covered in asphalt shingles. Windows on the east façade have been covered with plywood. To the rear and NE corner, small shed style additions have been added.

Attached to the west façade of the rear addition is a 26 [feet] x 32 [feet] pool room added in 1956. This wood frame structure has a flat roof and a single fixed pane window on the west façade. The exterior is clad with T-1-11 siding.

Inside the Coffee Pot Restaurant/ Bob’s Java Jive is a fest for the eyes, converted to a jungle theme in 1968. The first floor of the main coffee pot space contains an L-shaped bar with built in bar stools and small kitchen space. Covered from floor to ceiling in a variety of pictures, murals, stickers, toys and nick nack’s, the main bar area is highlighted by leopard and tiger covered drawers and bar panels. The ceiling boasts painted and applied stars as well as money, business cards and handwritten messages. A

small, but efficient kitchen is located in the southeast corner, and beyond is a near ladder-like stair access to the second floor.

Upstairs is a small apartment divided into five spaces: bedroom/living room, closet, kitchen, bath, and entry landing. The walls are smooth plaster finish with some 50's era wallpaper. Moldings are original and have a simple design. The kitchen and bath area retain their original wooden plywood cabinets and cast iron sinks. A door through the kitchen leads to a stair area that allows access to the roof of the rear wing.

The rear 1940s banquet wing contains a small [raised] stage area and several built-in booths. The dance floor is 12 [inch] sq. tiles. Walls and ceilings are painted a variety of colors and surfaces are covered in a variety of materials from plywood, acoustical panels, and salvaged wood. Décor, painted in neon, is found on multiple surfaces. The far south end of the wing contains small restrooms and an apartment which now serves as storage.

The pool room, added in 1956, has an open truss ceiling and features several murals depicting mountains and masted sailing ships. Painted by Bob Radonich, the murals are now covered in graffiti, bearing the signatures and messages from thousands of patrons. A simple brick fireplace with raised hearth and raised firebox is found on the west wall. This boasts as 1950s era Dodge truck window rain shield as a fireplace hood. The room has several built-in booths, stand-alone tables, a pool table, "cocktail table style" video games, and a pin-ball machine. Divided by a short half wall the room is open to the dance floor and stage area to the east. Surfaces are spray-painted with neon paint.

4.1.3. Additional Details

Although most records cite Smyser as the designer of the Coffee Pot Restaurant, a 1986 *The News Tribune* article cites Kay Shinn as the architect (Smith 1986). Details in this 1986 article do not align with other information about Smyser or his designs, and as such likely do not reflect what happened during the building's design and construction.

According to the article, Shinn was an employee at Smyser Display Service in 1926. Workmen were clearing neighboring land and one came in for a drink. According to Shinn, a workman told him that they were going to construct a building shaped like a hot dog, with concrete molding over framed wire mesh, which both deemed "a cornball idea" (Smith 1986). Instead, Shinn contacted the owners and suggested a coffee pot and provided a quick sketch of the idea. Reportedly, the owner "was happy about the drawing and took it to his architect" (Smith 1986).

Smyser did not build his adjacent workshop at 2016 South Tacoma Way until 1934, and no other records suggest the company was based on South Tacoma Way until then. Additionally, there is no suggestion that the workshop ever had a bar or public gathering space. All other records indicate that Button purchased the land in 1928, and preparation for construction (i.e., clearing the land) would not have occurred prior to the purchase.

Although Smyser may have had input from others at his company about the building's design, the details of this article are inconsistent with other records.



Photo by ESA 2022

Figure 11
Looking southeast at the Coffee Pot Restaurant, 2022; later additions are hidden behind the building and fencing.



Photo by ESA 2022

Figure 12
Looking east at the Coffee Pot Restaurant, 2022; the mass with the mural is the pool room.



Photo by ESA 2022

Figure 13
Looking north along the east façade of the Coffee Pot Restaurant rear additions, 2022.

4.2. Smyser Display Service Workshop, ca.1934

Address:	2016 South Tacoma Way Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington
Tax Parcel:	7005000110
Historic Names:	Smyser Display Service Workshop Smyser Hi-Way-Tel Motel Smyser Motel
Historic Uses:	Workshop, offices Motel
Resource Type:	Warehouse Offices Display Workshop Motel
Extant:	No – demolished between 1994 and 2002
Construction Date:	ca.1934 (original) ca.1941 (office)
Architect:	Bert Smyser
Style:	Streamline Moderne
No. of Stories:	1
Foundation:	Poured concrete, continuous
Roof Type:	Flat
Roof Material:	Unknown
Cladding:	Concrete; brick
Structural System:	Wood frame
Plan:	Irregular

4.2.1. History

Smyser, through Smyser Display Service, was granted a permit in October 1934 to build a warehouse, at the estimated cost of \$500 (approximately \$42,000 in 2022 dollars; *Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1934b; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2022). Other records list a construction date of 1927 (Tacoma Public Library 2022d). Following its construction, Smyser’s building served as the offices and workshop for Smyser Display Service (Edrington 1940). Dioramas for the 1939/1940 San Francisco and New York World’s Fairs (Section 5.2.3) were created in the building, as was the Tacoma Utilities Float for Tacoma’s Daffodil Parade of 1936 (see Section 5.3.2).

The building caught on fire Friday, August 9, 1940 and was almost completely destroyed (*The News Tribune* 1940b; *Seattle Times* 1940). The severity of the fire was attributed to the flammability and combustible nature of many of the paints and other materials used in the floats and displays. The damage amounted to \$35,000, or approximately \$740,000 in 2022 dollars (*Tacoma Times* 1940b; U.S. Bureau of

Labor Statistics 2022). A year later, in August 1941, Smyser was granted a permit for a \$1,600 office for the building (*Tacoma Times* 1941a). Although it is not specified, this does not appear to be an addition but rather a remodel to add an office to the damaged building. A 1974 article notes that Smyser had to rebuild the building, although he was able to retain the walls (Lund 1974).

In ca.1961, Smyser converted the building to a motel, probably due to a dearth of display work following his conviction of tax fraud (Lund 1974; Tacoma Public Library 2022d). Some records suggest that Bert and Helen lived in the building during the 1970s, but this appears to be temporary as they were living in the House of Tomorrow in 1978 (Lund 1974; *The News Tribune* 1978). In 1974, brick veneer was added to the building (Tacoma Public Library 2022d). Smyser repurposed many of the displays from the 1939/1940 San Francisco and New York World’s Fairs to decorate the building, which were on display in 1974. When Smyser was interviewed that year, the journalist noted that the World’s Fairs “murals, photos, state insignias and dioramas [...] decorate[d] the motel lobby walls,” and it was reportedly one of the few places that any of the displays could be found at that time (Lund 1974).⁸ By 1989 (two years after Smyser’s death in 1987), the building had been closed and “the murals [had] been lost in time, as [had] a large replica of the state capitol at Olympia” (*The News Tribune* 1989). The building was demolished sometime between 1990 and 2002 and the parcel is currently vacant (NETROnline 2022; Tacoma Public Library 2022d).

4.2.2. Physical Description

By 1977, when it was a motel (Figure 14), the flat-roofed building was three stories and generally symmetric (no photographs or records describing the building prior to its conversion have been identified). The center three-story mass appears to have been incised concrete, with a decorative parapet, and features windows at the curved corners. There are also fixed windows above 2 light sliding windows. Curves were common throughout the building – “it’s not easy to find a square corner in Smyser’s motel” according to a 1974 article (Lund 1974).

The brick entry was a single story, with glass block flanking the recessed entry, concrete steps with rounded sides, and an angled projecting flat awning with a sign that read “Smyser Motel.” Flanking the entry were symmetric two-story masses, each symmetric with a stepped parapet and brick veneer. The brick is laid in a running bond, with yellow and red variegated bricks at the middle and slightly variegated red brick above and below. Records indicate that the brick here and at the entry were not original, and it is likely the building was entirely concrete, as seen on the three-story mass when it was first constructed. The Streamlined Moderne styles that Smyser often utilized likely would not have mixed materials in such a way.

These flanking masses have centered entries with arched windows and flat projections that provide protection. At the second story are 2 light sliding windows; windows flanking the entries are all different and include 4 and 10 lights of different sizes and paired 1/1 sash. To the rear (south) of these two-story

⁸ Several of the displays were also installed at the WSHS in 1946 – see Section 5.1.9 – and it is not known if the displays Smyser installed in his motel are the same or different. Records indicate that the displays installed at the WSHS were purchased and not loaned, suggesting they would not have been returned to Smyser. However, according to staff at the WSHS, none of the displays remain in their holdings. It is possible they are the same, although additional research would be needed to verify either way.

masses is a secondary three- and two-story mass, recessed behind the centered three-story mass. Partially visible on a secondary façade to the west is an additional composition similar to those flanking the main entry, and what appears to be a curved patio cover near the southwest corner of the building.

By 1994, the awning had been removed and replaced with a flat fabric awning, with a “Motel 21” sign above. The building had been closed for approximately four years at the time the photograph (Figure 15) was taken, and the windows had been boarded up by this time.



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, BU-2501

Figure 14
Smyser Motel, 1977.



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, BU-12266

Figure 15
Smyser Motel, 1994.

4.3. Century Ballroom, 1934

Address:	1406 54th Avenue E Fife, Pierce County, Washington
Tax Parcel:	0320018018 (current, approximate) ⁹
Historic Name:	Century Ballroom
Historic Use:	Ballroom
Resource Type:	Music/dance venue
Extant:	No – destroyed by fire 1964
Construction Date:	1934
Closed:	1956
Destroyed:	1964
Architects/Engineers:	Russell and Lance
Design/Interior Decoration:	Bert Smyser
Owners/Builders:	Mac Manza and Jimmy Zarelli / Century Amusement Corporation
Contractor:	Bonne Macdonald
Style:	Streamline Moderne
No. of Stories:	1
Foundation:	Unknown
Roof Type:	Flat and Curved
Roof Material:	Wood
Cladding:	Concrete Block (unconfirmed)
Structural System:	Unknown
Plan:	Rectangular

4.3.1. History

Through the 19th century, social dancing generally fell into one of two categories: lavish private balls, with complex dances such as the quadrilles necessitating dance instructors; and dance floors in concert saloons and other similar establishments, where there was an abundance of liquor, ragtime and jazz, and “loose women” who had reputations as prostitutes and criminals (Gault 1989:1). The first decade and a half of the 20th century saw an increased interest in less formal dances, such as the foxtrot, and by 1920 it was the country’s second most popular recreation (Gault 1989:2-3, 13). There were, however, few venues that filled the gap between private ballrooms and saloons, and “after some entrepreneurs observed that millions of Americans were drawn to lavishly decorated movie theatres, they decided to capitalize on this idea by constructing magnificently decorated ballrooms,” and by 1920 every large city in the country had at least one ballroom (Gault 1989:13, 133). By this time, most cities had banned the sales of liquor in

⁹ It is unknown if the parcel boundaries were altered following the demolition of the building. Parcel 0320018018 is generally the location of the Century Ballroom although it may not encapsulate the entirety of its location.

ballrooms to minimize the classist and racist stigma around dancing (Gault 1989:2, 4). Generally, dance halls had exterior “flashing bulbs of many colors and bold neon signs,” with large marquee (Gault 1989:7).

Dances typically started around 8 p.m., and “twelve dances or sets an evening were common, consisting of three to five numbers each with a couple of minutes between sets to facilitate an exchange of partners” (Gault 1989:9). Ballrooms, like other establishments, were strictly segregated, although many bands with Black musicians played at the venues.¹⁰ As a result, every major city had at least one Black ballroom (Gault 1989:236-238). The popularity of ballrooms declined after World War II, with a rising interest in television and changing music tastes drawing audiences elsewhere.

The building was owned and operated by the Century Amusement Corporation, specifically Mac Manza and Jimmy Zarelli; the corporation was a group of Pierce County businessmen (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1934e; Tacoma Public Library 2022c). According to a page of *The News Tribune* advertising the Century Ballroom’s opening, which included Figure 16, the building’s architect/engineer was Russell and Lance, a local architectural firm, although the Smyser Display Service was responsible for the “exterior design idea and interior decorations” (*The News Tribune* 1934b). Russell and Lance was one iteration of a local architectural firms that had a variety of names over the years; Gaston C. Lance (1877–1964) joined the company as a drafter and Ambrose J. Russell made him a partner in 1930. More information on the firm is included in Section 5.1.6 (Houser 2011).

The advertisement for the building also noted some of the other contractors and features:

- Harrison Brothers (a company that supplied fuel, sand, gravel, and excavation), was responsible for the 11,000 cubic yards of gravel for the parking area.
- Furniture, rugs, and drapes were purchased from Rhodes Brothers.
- A grand piano and associated General Electric sound system were installed by Schiller, described as “the latest and most up-to-date equipment. Four powerful loudspeakers and two velocity microphones will carry the music and announcements to every corner of this gigantic Century Ballroom” (*The News Tribune* 1934b).

The Century Ballroom opened on Saturday, December 29, 1934, and was reported to be the largest ballroom in the Pacific Northwest (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1934d). It was modeled after the Washington State exposition at the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition, which Smyser also designed (information about the exposition is included in Section 5.2.2), and was considered “ultra modern” (Figure 17; Gault 1989:173). The business lost money for the first eight years, until the start of World War II (Heritage League of Pierce County 1992:21). According to available records, Smyser did not own the building, but he participated in management for a number of years.

¹⁰ There are several documented cases where white performers invited Black musicians to listen to their set, and management physically restrained and enacted violence against the Black artists. One such event in Kansas City in late 1945, when Cab Calloway was denied entrance to see Lionel Hampton, resulted in virtually every Midwest ballroom instituting a “white band policy only” until 1951 (Gault 1989:238).

Like many other Depression-era ballrooms, the Century regularly sponsored marathon dancing; the first lasted for eight weeks and the second lasted twelve weeks (both occurred in 1935). Marathon dances (or dance marathons) emerged during the 1920s as feats of human endurance and continued through the Great Depression. Couples danced nearly non-stop for hundreds or thousands of hours, competing for prize money. In addition to the prize, “participation in a dance marathon meant a roof over [contestants] heads and plentiful food, both scarce during the 1930s” (Becker 2003). A walk-a-thon (another name for a dance marathon) was also held in 1935 at the Century Ballroom, which lasted from June 27 to August 21 and had an estimated 154,630 spectators, who each had to pay an entry fee. The winning couple, Helen Tyne and Bob Blixeth, were awarded \$1,000, or approximately \$21,665 in 2022 dollars (Gault 1989:173; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2022). The building primarily hosted dances, although there was an auto show in February 1935 (Tacoma Public Library 2022c). It came under new management in August 1938, and starting the following year hosted a variety of musicians for the following two decades (Tacoma Public Library 2022c). Advertisements for the venue in various newspapers listed the following performers:

- 1939: Buddy Rogers (twice)
- 1940: Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, and Phil Harris
- 1941: Kay Kyser, Ozzie Nelson, Fats Waller, and Gene Krupa
- 1942: Connie Stevens, Kay Kyser, Louis Armstrong (twice), Les Hite and the Cotton Club Orchestra, Tommy Dorsey, and Ted Fio-Rito
- 1943: Jack Teagarden
- 1944: Bob Willis and his Texas Playboys
- 1946: Gene Krupa, Spike Jones and his City Slickers (including Helen Greco), Jack Teagarden, and Bob Willis and his Texas Playboys
- 1947: Roy Acuff, Les Brown Band, King Cole Trio with Frankie Roth, Gene Krupa, Duke Ellington, Charlie Barnet, Buddy Rich, Woody Herman, and Count Basie
- 1948: Nat King Cole Trio and Cab Calloway and his Seven Cab Jivers
- 1949: Gene Krupa, Tommy Dorsey, Lionel Hampton and his Orchestra, Woody Herman, Nat King Cole, and Lawrence Welk
- 1950: Grand Ole Opry Show (featuring Roy Acuff and Hank Williams), Gene Krupa, Count Basie and his All Star Sextette, and Lionel Hampton
- 1952: Duke Ellington
- 1953: Dinah Washington and Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey
- 1955: Johnny Otis with Etta James and Richard Berry and the Crowns and Earl Bostic

Some artists, such as Duke Ellington, played swing-shift double headers, with an early performance and a second crowd at a show that ran past midnight (Lund 1974).¹¹ During World War II, the first shift ran from 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., and the second shift (for the swing shift employees) started at 1:30 a.m. (Heritage League of Pierce County 1992:21). Ellington and his wife, Edna, stayed at the Winthrop Hotel at 773 Broadway in downtown Tacoma during at least one visit, which was segregated, but Smyser talked management into letting them stay. Other Black bands stayed on a railroad sleeping car on the Tacoma tideflats, also arranged by Smyser. “It sounds strange,” he said in 1974, “but the musicians really like the arrangement. They even had porter service” (Smyser in Lund 1974).

It also appears that Smyser hosted many of the musicians at his personal home, the House of Tomorrow (J. Shuler 2022). Systematic segregation practices for Black performers were very common; and musicians often faced difficulties in securing lodging, were subject to racist treatment at ballrooms (and other places), and even struggled to be paid to perform in some cases (Gault 1989:236).

The most popular performer at the Century Ballroom, according to attendance numbers, was Tommy Dorsey, who performed in 1942 and returned in 1949. He drew a crowd of 4,752 attendees (Heritage League of Pierce County 1992:21). Like other ballrooms, the popularity of television and rock and roll music began to draw customers away from the Century Ballroom during the 1950s. Dorsey’s return in 1953 drew less than 10% of his earlier crowd (Gault 1989:174). The Century closed in 1956. The building operated as a shopping mall for a time and was destroyed by fire in 1964 (Flood 2013:94). The following year, in November 1965, a new building opened on the site, which housed a grocery store (*Tacoma News Tribune* 1965).

4.3.2. Physical Description

The Century Ballroom was modeled after the Washington State Building at the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition, “intended to carry out the modernistic atmosphere” of the fair (more information on the Exposition can be found in Sections 5.2.2 and 6.3; *The News Tribune* 1934a, 1934b; Tacoma Public Library 2022c). The building was 40 feet tall, 20,000 square feet, and over half of that was devoted to the “spring” maple wood dance floor (between 8,000 and 11,000 square feet – records differ), “designed to make dancing easier” and reportedly the largest west of Chicago (Gault 1989:173; Heritage League of Pierce County 1992:21; *The News Tribune* 1934a, 1934b; *Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1934e).

The building cost \$28,000 to construct (approximately \$620,000 in 2022 dollars), and could officially accommodate 4,000 people, although Tommy Dorsey’s show, along with others, demonstrated that more people could fit (Heritage League of Pierce County 1992:21; *Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1934d; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2022). The \$2,600 heating system (approximately \$554,000 in 2022 dollars) was installed by Al Davis of Birchfield Boiler (Heritage League of Pierce County 1992:21; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2022).

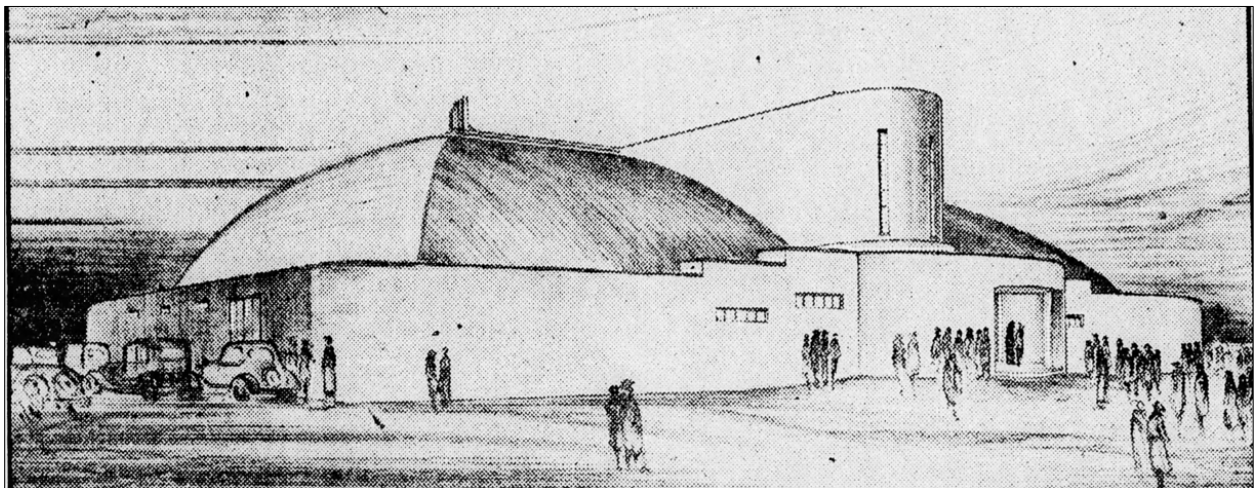
¹¹ Lund (1974) discusses the concerts as occurring at the New Exposition Hall, but no other records corroborate bands with this level of name recognition performing at the Hall (nor are there any contemporary advertisements that confirm the information), and it is very likely these shows took place instead at the Century Ballroom.

Early advertisements for the building noted that “not only is the Century the largest ballroom in the Northwest, it is also the most up to date, it is claimed. Modernistic in every detail, its furnishings, design and decorating scheme promise to dazzle the dancers” (*The News Tribune* 1934b).

The building appears to have been a wood structure clad in plywood with a vaulted wood ceiling rising above a parapet wall. The parapet emphasized the break between the walls and roof – counterintuitively by hiding the join – and visually separated the two elements (Figure 18). Centered on the symmetrical façade was a large entry in a small projecting mass with rounded corners, flanked by walls with a simple stepped parapet and narrow horizontal windows. Centered above the entry was a large oval mass bifurcating the roof with narrow vertical windows. Originally, the exterior of the building was painted white and lit with floodlights (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1934d).

A photo taken shortly after the building was completed (Figure 19) shows that the walls were either incised and/or had narrow paint bands horizontally across the walls of the building, with the top of the parapet similarly painted. Large text reading “CENTURY BALLROOM” was painted on the wood roof, and signs for the February 1935 Auto Show were hung on the walls and tall center mass. An article shortly before opening noted the building’s “distinctive features include two towers, on either side of the building, which extend 50 feet into the air. The exterior, including the rounded roof, will be finished entirely in white and will reflect the bright rays of powerful floodlights which will be focused on the building” (*The News Tribune* 1934b).

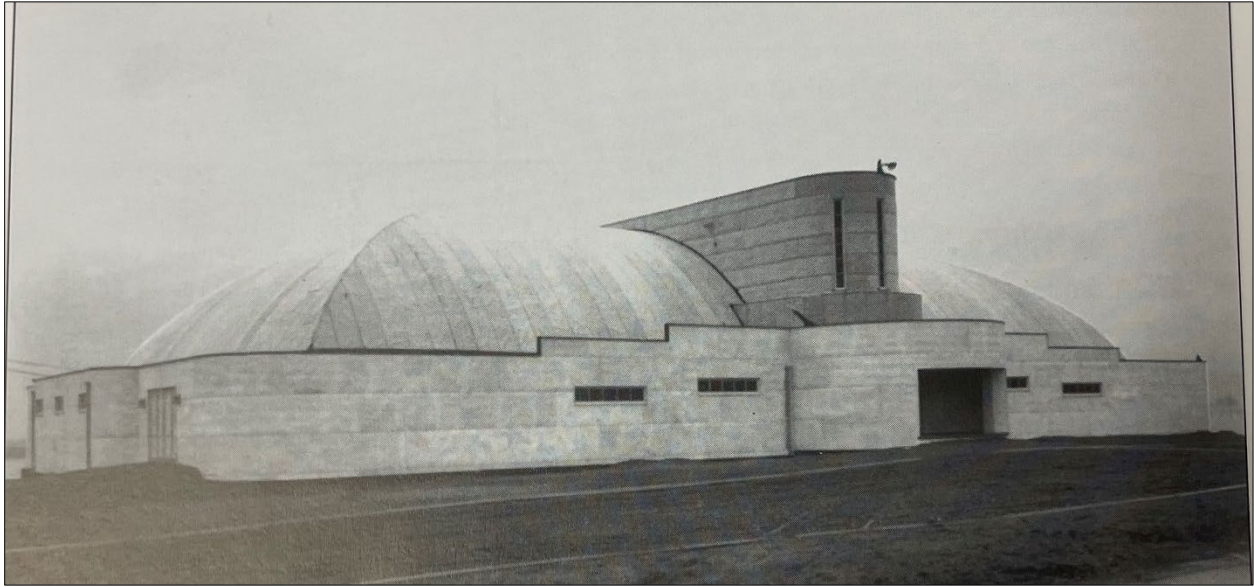
Inside, Smyser had “distinctive decorations and light effects,” which were also described as “modernistic decorations and unusual lighting effects” (*The News Tribune* 1934b; *Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1934d). Panels, likely plywood, covered interior walls in a running bond pattern (Figure 20), with a simple raised stage for the orchestra and a curved wall behind the musicians with decorative panels or possibly windows. A new orchestra shell was installed in 1937, but beyond this, little information about the interior of the building has been found (*Tacoma Public Library* 2022c).



Source: *The News Tribune* 1934b

Figure 16

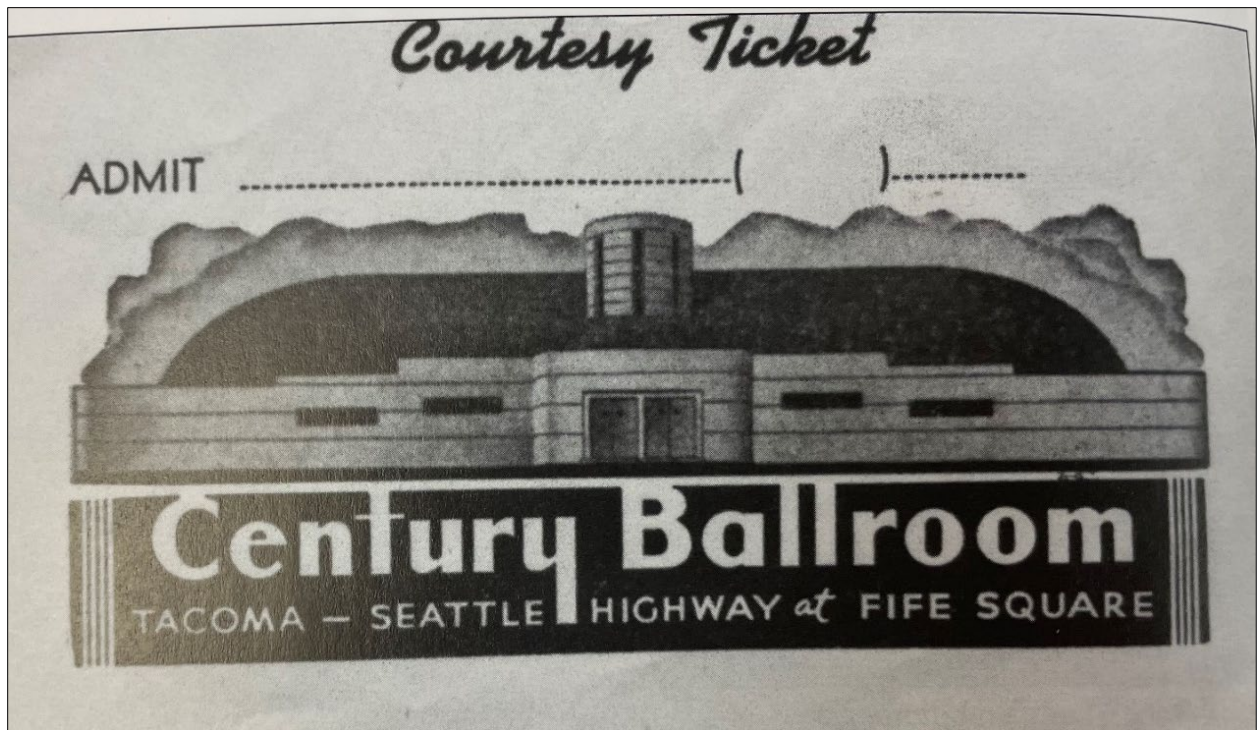
A drawing of the Century Ballroom in *The News Tribune* published near opening.



Source: Flood 2013:94

Figure 17

An undated photo of the Century Ballroom nearing completion.



Source: Kaelin 2011:88

Figure 18

An undated courtesy ticket for the Century Ballroom.



Source: Kaelin 2011:87

Figure 19
The Century Ballroom in late 1934 or early 1935.



Source: Kaelin 2011:88

Figure 20
A ca.1935 photo of the stage inside the Century Ballroom.

4.4. New Exposition Hall, 1940–1941

Address:	1616-32 E 26th Street / 2610 E Bay Street / 1640 Bay Street Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington
Tax Parcel:	4715011171
Historic Name:	Pacific Ice Arena (New) Exposition Hall
Current Name:	Northwest Soccer and Sports Center; The Soccer Center
Historic Use(s):	Exposition hall Indoor sports arena Aircraft assembly plant
Current Use:	Indoor sports arena
Resource Type:	Commercial building
Extant:	Yes
Original Construction Date:	1931
Building Completion:	1940–1941
Architect/Engineer:	Bert Smyser
Style:	Streamline Moderne
No. of Stories:	1
Foundation:	Concrete
Roof Type:	Curved/Barrel
Roof Material:	Laminated Wood
Cladding:	Plywood (historic) Crimped Metal (current)
Structural System:	Wood Frame
Plan:	Rectangular

4.4.1. History

Construction on this building began in 1931, before Smyser was part of the project. Originally intended as an ice skating rink, work was abandoned when the Great Depression began to impact the Northwest (Lund 1974). Smyser purchased the property in late 1939 or early 1940, which included the skeleton structure of the original building that was described as a “scant shell,” for use as “a new and modern athletic arena” (Figure 21; Edrington 1940; *Tacoma Times* 1940a). According to Smyser, the project was started when “the downtown establishment complained that ‘Tacoma didn’t have a civic center,’” so he decided to start one (Lund 1974).¹² A permit for work was issued August 19, 1940, for an estimated \$10,000 “transformation” (about \$212,500 in 2022; *The News Tribune* 1940c; U.S. Bureau of Labor

¹² The article notes that this impetus was in 1941, but this notably post-dates Smyser’s involvement with the building according to articles of the time.

Statistics 2022). He completed the building, enlarging it to 73,000 square feet with seating for up to 10,000 people. Smyser Display Service occupied space at the front of the building, with the rear available for indoor sports, such as tennis or basketball, or expositions (*Tacoma Times* 1940a; Tacoma Public Library 2022f).¹³

According to Smyser, the New Exposition Hall was named after Tacoma’s original Exposition Building, which was destroyed by fire in 1898, and would serve the community and fulfill Tacoma’s need for a large indoor space to host events such as “shows, expositions, indoor circus, conventions, various sports events and tournaments, graduation and other ceremonies” (Edrington 1941a; Lund 1974; Tacoma Public Library 2022g). This statement to the Tacoma Real Estate Board was emphasized by the “large number of letters recently mailed to Mayor Harry P. Cain in which the need of a civic auditorium of real size was placed at the head of a long list of things urgently needed for the improvement and betterment of local conditions” (Edrington 1941a). Bad weather delayed pouring part of the concrete floor and some exterior work until just before opening, but, contrary to some public fears, it opened on time (Edrington 1941a; *The News Tribune* 1941e). Smyser owned and operated the building, hosting a variety of events to fill the city’s need.

The first event hosted in the building was the 1941 Tacoma Better Housing Exposition, and the opening of both the hall and exposition occurred at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, February 15. The dedication ceremony featured prominent community members, including Mayor Harry P. Cain, who put his hand and footprints into a cement square and signed his name (Tacoma Public Library 2022b).¹⁴ The nine-day Better Housing Exposition included musical entertainment and “various exhibits on display” where visitors could “see what makes the modern home tick” (*The News Tribune* 1941a). Additional information on the exposition is included in Section 5.2.4.

The next exposition hosted in the building was in early March of that same year. Smyser reproduced the boardwalk in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and constructed a boardwalk down the center of the building, flanked by amusement park rides, including a Ferris wheel, merry-go-round, and miniature cars. On both the ground floor and upper balconies were “all types of stands where customers may enjoy themselves to the limit” (*The News Tribune* 1941g). Style and beauty “parades” were held in the evenings on the boardwalk, with other entertainment provided such as clowns and masquers (*The News Tribune* 1941g).

The building also hosted dance bands, such as Ran Wilde. Initial reports stated the floor could accommodate 1,000–4,000 dancers, with 3,000–4,000 spectators in the balcony (*The News Tribune* 1941h). Other events included a “Merchants and Manufacturer’s Show of Progress” in November 1941; a Globetrotter’s basketball game January 8, 1942; University of Puget Sound and Pacific Lutheran University basketball games; wrestling shows; and the opening celebration of the 1942 Daffodil Festival, which included a revue, pageant, and a ball (*The News Tribune* 1941i, 1942a, 1942b, 1942c, 1942d; Metcalf 1941; *Tacoma Times* 1941d).¹⁵ Elliott Metcalf, a reporter for *The Tacoma Times*, claimed the only other facility in the Pacific Northwest nearly as good for watching sports was the University of Washington pavilion (today known as the Hec Edmundson Pavilion or the Alaska Airlines Arena at Hec

¹³ Smyser was still operating his warehouse on South Tacoma Way at this time. This appears to be a second office space, or perhaps became the primary office (not production) space, although this has not been verified.

¹⁴ Mayor Cain marking the square can be seen in Figure 72.

¹⁵ Due to the war, there was no parade that year, and Smyser attempted to host the first indoor Daffodil Festival.

Edmundson Pavilion), although he pointed out the views from the “bad seats” at the New Exposition Hall were still excellent and implied they were better than the pavilion (Metcalf 1941). The building was also memorialized in a 1939 parade float for the Tacoma Golden Jubilee Parade (see Section 5.3.5).

The largest gathering was on October 24, 1941, at the Community Chest Jeep Jubilee, which saw 10,000 audience members in the building, exceeding the initial expected capacity. Three-thousand folding chairs were added to the floor to accommodate everyone (Lund 1974). Shortly thereafter, however, with the entry of the U.S. into World War II, the federal government occupied the building. Smyser was forced to rent the building to the government for \$750 a month, or around \$14,180 in 2020 dollars – “I’ve made more than that in one night there” he later said (Lund 1974; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2022). The building was first used for shipyard storage, and later was used by Boeing to “manufacture B-17 bomber parts for planes being assembled in Seattle” and later wings for B-29 planes (Lund 1974; Tacoma Public Library 2022m).

To accommodate these wartime needs, the interior was stripped of the seating, and when the building was returned to Smyser, he found it was not economically feasible to reinstall the seating, and “leased it out for warehouse use to several firms over the years” (Lund 1975; Tacoma Public Library 2022f). Some of these later uses included a mattress factory for Tacoma Sleepmaster (unknown date); temporary storage for furniture dealer Weisfield & Goldberg from approximately October 1947 through February 1948 while its downtown store was being remodeled; and Tacoma Motorfreight Service in November 1947 (Tacoma Public Library 2022f, 2022g, 2022h). Research has not revealed when Smyser sold the building.

The setting of the hall changed in the late 1950s and early 1960s with the construction of Interstate 5 (I-5). The first segment of I-5 in Washington State opened in Tacoma in December 1960, and construction continued throughout the remainder of the decade, with the final Tacoma link opening in January 1967, connecting the city to Seattle and Everett beyond (Dougherty 2010). It was during this time that the setting of the New Exposition Hall changed significantly. I-5 is located approximately 300 feet south of the building, and the nearby roads were re-configured to accommodate the construction and new on- and off-ramps. It currently houses indoor soccer and a martial arts space.

4.4.2. Physical Description

Historic

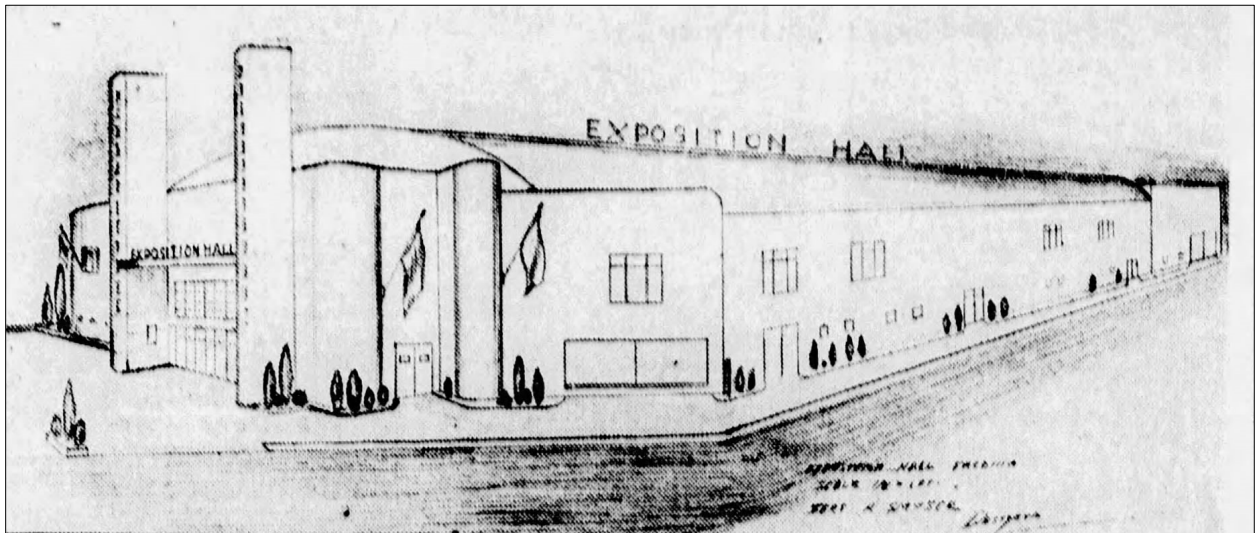
A 1974 article about Smyser describes the construction of the building: “With visions of a sports-and-entertainment utopia dancing in his head, Smyser watched 30,000 board feet of plywood, 160,000 board feet of 2-by-4s, and 3½ tons of 20-penny nails complete [an] exhibition hall with the round corners in front. ‘People said I had bought a white elephant. So I painted the building white’ he said” (Figure 21; Lund 1974).

When completed, the building was 305 feet long by 130 feet wide, primarily housed in a long, single mass underneath a curved laminated roof (Edrington 1940). The front (west façade) was composed of a series of asymmetric curved corners with what were reportedly “the world’s tallest ticket booths” flanking the entry (Lund 1974). The booths, tall oval structures attached to the façade, had narrow vertical windows, and it appears a ticket window was on the inside of the left (north) booth. Between the ticket

booth towers was a large, curved awning with “EXPOSITION HALL” in neon letters; it can be seen in Figure 22 and Figure 23. The entry composition was made up of four pairs of doors that appear to be wood, with two stacked windows above each door. Additionally, Smyser purchased adjoining land and regraded and surfaced it to provide parking for up to 1,000 cars (Edrington 1940; *The News Tribune* 1940d).

Inside (Figure 24 and Figure 25), there was a 90-foot-wide stage at the rear (west) of the building, and 21-foot-wide balconies extended down the (north and south) sides (Edrington 1940; *The News Tribune* 1940d). Large wood panels covered the main floor, while the balcony flooring was more utilitarian wood boards with round metal railing (Tacoma Public Library 2022e). Wavy acoustic panels, lights, and a speaker system were suspended from the ceiling. Near the entry was a desk or some other sort of permanent furniture, with graduated round disks on either side of a rectangular mass (see Figure 25).

When Smyser was required to rent the building to the federal government in the early 1940s and it was converted to a factory, the bleacher-style seats were donated to Lincoln High School (Tacoma Public Library 2022e). Part of the World War II or later alterations appear to include the removal of the balcony’s railing (Figure 26 and Figure 27;). At some point, it appears a second floor was installed (South Sound Martial Arts 2022).



Source: *The News Tribune* 1940d

Figure 21

A sketch of the New Exposition Hall in *The News Tribune* on August 22, 1940.



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio D11673-24

Figure 22
New Exposition Hall, July 28, 1941, looking southwest at the primary east and secondary north façades. Today, I-5 would be visible in the background.



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio D11673-23

Figure 23
New Exposition Hall, July 28, 1941, looking northwest at the primary east and secondary south façades.



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio D11673-18

Figure 24
New Exposition Hall, July 28, 1941, looking east toward the front entry.



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio D11673-12

Figure 25
New Exposition Hall, July 28, 1941, looking west from the front entry.



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio A30283-1

Figure 26
New Exposition Hall, November 1, 1947, looking southwest at the primary east and secondary north façades.



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio A30210-5

Figure 27
New Exposition Hall interior, October 25, 1947. At this time, Weisfield and Goldberg were using the building as a temporary location.

Current

The form of the New Exposition Hall has generally remained the same, with the curved roof mass and front (east) mass with rounded corners. At some point between 1947 and 2008, the ticket booths were truncated, and currently only extend slightly above the roofline with what appear to be flat caps with a slight overhang (Figure 28). The entire building has been covered in corrugated metal with ribs, painted various shades of blue and off-white. The “EXPOSITION HALL” sign has also been removed and the entry composition changed. Currently, the only entry is a set of paired metal commercial doors on the far left (north) that have been covered with painted plywood and infill above. To the right (south) of the entry is a grouping of five large single light fixed windows, three of which are boarded up. Above these windows and the entry is a grouping of seven single light fixed windows.

Between the ticket booth towers is a large sign for the building, the “Tacoma Soccer Center,” at the roofline. Just around the northeast corner is a secondary entry (Figure 29) that appears to date from Smyser’s construction of the building (it appears in the 1940 sketch seen in Figure 21), although it is not captured in any historic images. The entry (it is unclear if it is currently an operable door, but clearly is

designed for one) is flanked by curved, tall glass block windows, with voids for windows to either side that are currently boarded up. Curved concrete steps lead to the entry. The entire composition is covered by a fabric awning with the logo of the Tacoma Stars. There are several utilitarian single and paired metal doors, along with garage doors, across the north and south façades.



Photo by ESA 2022

Figure 28
Looking generally west at the primary east façade of the building.



Photo by ESA 2022

Figure 29
The secondary entry near the northeast corner of the building on the secondary north façade.

4.5. House of Tomorrow, 1941

Address:	4907 66th Avenue E / 4907 Clarks Creek Road Puyallup, Pierce County Washington
Tax Parcel:	0420191024
Historic and Current Name:	House of Tomorrow
Historic and Current Use:	Single-family residence
Extant:	Yes
Construction Date:	1941
Architect:	Bert and Helen Smyser
Style:	Streamline Moderne
No. of Stories:	2
Foundation:	Poured concrete
Roof Type:	Flat with parapet
Roof Material:	Rolled composition
Cladding:	Textured exterior plywood with vertical channels
Structural System:	Wood stud framing; concrete block
Plan:	Irregular

4.5.1. History

Sometime between 1919 and 1929, the land on which the House of Tomorrow sits was acquired by August and Laura Svenson, Helen Smyser’s mother and father-in-law. Following Helen’s father August’s death in 1925, her mother Laura took ownership of his land (Washington Secretary of State 2022f). In 1940, Helen married Bert Smyser. Smyser then built the plywood House of Tomorrow in 1941 on the property owned by his new mother-in-law.

Although the building was originally slated to be featured during the 1941 Tacoma Better Housing Exposition, it was not completed in time for the February 1941 event. Instead, it was highlighted during the “Atlantic City Board Walk” event, held at Smyser’s New Exposition Hall in March 1941 (see Sections 4.4 and 5.2.4 for additional details). The house takes its name from both the pioneering nature of plywood’s use as a building material and the style. A 1941 feature article (Figure 30) says “for a long time we have been hearing about plywood homes, but it remained for Bert Smyser [...] to build one that really looks like our conception of what a plywood house should be like. Mr. Smyser has built a home which is streamlined from front to back, from ground to the roof, and is as modern as milady’s next fall chapeau” (*The News Tribune* 1941c).

On December 29, 1944, Laura Svenson signed a quit claim deed to the property, gifting ownership of the property to her daughter Helen and Helen’s husband Bert for “love and affection” and one dollar (Pierce County Auditor 1944). The Smysers owned the house for the remainder of their lives. Helen died in 1981 and Bert died in 1987. Upon Bert’s death, the House of Tomorrow property was bequeathed to David Smyser, Bert Smyser’s grandson through son Allen Smyser (Pierce County Auditor 1987). The building

has flooded several times since its construction; Smyser wrote a letter to the editor of *The News Tribune* in 1978 in favor of dredging the Puyallup River and mentioned the house had flooded four times since construction. Pierce County records also note it flooded at least six times between 2008 and 2016 (*The News Tribune* 1978; Pierce County 2022a).



Source: *The News Tribune*
1941c

Figure 30

Images of the House of Tomorrow, as seen in a 1941 *The News Tribune* article about the building. Moving clockwise from upper left: looking southwest at the building, looking north in the living room, the bedroom with staircase visible through the open door, and kitchen. A larger copy of the article can be found in Appendix B.

4.5.2. Physical Description

The physical description of the House of Tomorrow provided here is a summary derived from the HABS documentation of the building that is a part of this Project; more details can be found in that document (Pratt et al. 2023). From the road, the 1,012 square foot house appears to be a single story, but the upper floor is obscured from the right-of-way, and there is both a basement and subbasement. The main bedroom takes up the entirety of the upper floor. There is one bathroom on the main level, and the subbasement contains a half-bath (toilet and sink) and a bedroom.

The set-back from the road with a front lawn and the house's Streamline Moderne appearance convey a modest scale, traditional single-family home. In contrast, views from the creek convey a complex design integrated into and seeking to capitalize on the scenic qualities of the setting. The building's Streamline Moderne design contrasts with nearby Craftsman-influenced farmhouses.

The house has a generally rectangular plan, with the primary west façade facing 66th Avenue E and the rear east façade overlooking Clarks Creek. The outer corners of the building are curved, with varied wall and roof planes evident on each façade. Due to grade and setback of the second story, only one story is generally visible above grade on the primary west façade, with just a small section of the second story's south end visible (Figure 31). The second story, basement, and sub-basement are clearly visible from the rear (east) and north and south sides (Figure 32 and Figure 33).

The front stoop serves as the principal building entrance, leading to the first-floor entry hall. Placed near the center on the front façade, the entrance is in the recessed portion of the façade. A flat roof with a low parapet projects out over the stoop. A pair of curved 2-inch diameter painted metal poles support the roof's southwest corner, and glass block sidelights flank the entrance. Concrete steps ascend to a concrete landing flanked by low brick planters with a flush panel solid core door opening to the interior. The north sidelight consists of three stacked square ribbed glass blocks with a painted wood brick molding. The south sidelight consists of a five-by-five grid of translucent square ribbed glass blocks stacked behind a round frame opening with a curved painted wood brick molding.

The building is primarily clad in textured exterior plywood with vertical channels, with painted brick veneer laid in a running bond at the northwest portion of the house. At the curved northeast wall corner, brick ends are cut at an angle to create a segmented curve with projecting and offset header joints. The basement's north façade is composed of concrete block.

The fenestration pattern for the building is irregular and driven primarily by internal configuration and ventilation needs rather than an exterior pattern or symmetry. Windows consist of original faceted, original glass block, added aluminum, and vinyl replacing wood sash windows. Most window openings have painted wood lug sills and projecting painted wood moldings with rounded corners over the window openings. Faceted windows utilize individual glass lights as chords (line between two points on a curve) within the overall curved arc of a window opening. Each light is supported only at the top and bottom, with the outermost lights having jamb support. Vertical edges are beveled to create the angle for the next chord. These windows are original and the most visually distinctive. They occur at the first story at the outer northwest (living room, 5 lights) and southeast (kitchen, 5 lights) corners and convey the overlapping influence of building form and internal function(s).

The interior layout consists of the main living spaces on the first floor, including the entry hall, living and dining rooms, kitchen, and bathroom. The bedroom, sun porch, and walk-in closet are on the second floor. The basement consists of the garage and shop area with the recreation room, bedroom, a half-bath (toilet and sink), and other secondary spaces in the sub-basement. The basement is offset from rather than below the first floor, and instead resides below the second floor. The basement and second floor are offset vertically from but not a full story below or above the first floor, respectively.

The first floor has an L-shaped plan with the west portion at grade level and the south and east portions one story above grade. The entry hall has an L-shaped layout and serves a key circulation role and receiving space for visitors. The volume is shared by a stairway and an L-shaped hallway linking all the rooms on the first floor. To the left (north) of the entry is the living room. Off of the hallway that extends from the entry are (moving counterclockwise from the entry) the dining room, kitchen, bathroom, and staircase to the basement.

Mahogany veneer plywood clads the entry walls (Figure 34). The triple-layer plywood has 1/16-inch thick layers and is stained in alternating bands of light and dark with a horizontal round backed groove every 16 inches. The grooves do not cut through the full thickness of the outer veneer layer. The stairway to the second floor is a prominent visual feature within the entry hall and first floor. The open, straight run stairway ascends to a landing providing access to the second-floor bedroom. The bookcase serves to extend the wall along the north side of the stairway providing separation from the living room. A curved chrome railing extends along the south side of the stairway. Stair treads are Douglas fir or similar, and mahogany veneer plywood clads the risers.

The ceiling is stepped above the hallway and stairway. Pressed fiber acoustical panels with an imprinted floral design and linear edging at each panel finish all horizontal surfaces. Stained mahogany boards trim out each of the four vertical steps with a curved board above the curved closet wall. This upper ceiling portion contains the rectangular metal ceiling-mounted light fixture illuminating the space. Flush panel hollow core mahogany veneer doors provide access to the closet, stairway to the basement, and the bathroom.

The living room has a rectangular layout with a short leg at the south end connecting to the entry hall (Figure 35). The northwest corner is curved. The room's north wall extends beyond the wall plane of the rest of the house, enabling a northeast corner window with views to the north and east. A fireplace and display case are both located on the east wall. The stained Douglas-fir or similar plywood ceiling steps (three total) up toward a center raised panel, with two additional steps at the south end of the room above the leg. The steps follow the curvature of the northwest corner. The fireplace has a Vitrolite glass mantel, and a stained mahogany casing with rounded edges wraps the edges of the mantel. An added pellet stove and metal surround are set within the mantel. The hearth, with square black ceramic tiles, extends the width of the mantel and projects into the living room.

The dining room has a rectangular layout and serves as the access point for the south deck. A closet with a curved outer corner projects into the space at the northwest corner. Oak flooring matching the size of the living room, but with an added darker stained finish, extends throughout the space and into the closet. A cove light (LED, multicolored) set behind the prominent cornice along the south and west walls provides indirect lighting. An added chandelier suspended by a chain from the ceiling and plugged into a

wall outlet is located above the dining table. The board along the ceiling above the cornice consists of oak or mahogany and was originally stained and later partially painted.

In the bathroom, the walls are enamel-coated hardboard (Colotyle). The sheets are installed horizontally with chrome bands connecting the sheet edges with wider chrome bands at outer corners, and shallow horizontal grooves in the panels extend around the room. The vanity is set within a curved wall alcove clad with Colotyle (a warm, orange-tan tint), on the south side of the room. The vanity consists of a base of two sets of drawers flanking a seating space with a full width counter. The outer corners of the painted (matching the walls) plywood base are rounded. The counter is stained mahogany with a clear Plexiglass top. There is a recessed square metal light with a frosted lens, and an oval mirror in a chrome frame is mounted to the wall above the vanity. The sink adjacent to the vanity has exposed chrome plumbing below, and a rectangular mirror with a decorative three-groove cross-hatch in the upper left corner and set in a chrome frame hangs above the sink. Lumiline or similar wall brackets flank the mirror. The built-in recessed tub is set between the east wall and the built-in shower. A border of black square tile wraps along the top edge of the bathtub. The built-in shower consists of a tiled stall with white, composite paneling on the upper walls and ceiling, a textured translucent glass panel on the east side, and glass door. The outer corner consists of a stained mahogany post. The walls above the glass panel and door are Colotyle.

The kitchen has a rectangular plan and is characterized by curved walls, cabinets, and soffits (Figure 36). The curved southeast window adjacent the breakfast table is the focal point upon entering the room and provides views of the yards and Clarks Creek and a rock weir. The curved north wall with the built-in ironing board and pantry serves as a prominent visual feature within the room. Walls consist of the same enameled hardboard (Colotyle) as the bathroom, with horizontal grooves painted dark blue. Chrome bands occur at all sheet joints. The doorway to the entry hall does not have a door and does not appear to have ever had one. Counters and appliances are arranged in an L-shape along the south and west walls, creating the kitchen triangle with the sink on the south wall below the window and the stove and refrigerator along the west wall. Cabinets above the counters and flanking the refrigerator utilize doors, with drawers located below the counters along with two pull-out bread boards. The northeast corner contains a separate set of cabinets, curved under-counter shelves, and a small counter. The double-basin, enameled iron cabinet sink has a tall apron and back with curved front corners. The painted plywood cabinet below the sink has curved outer corners matching the sink. Counters throughout the kitchen are added cultured stone with a white ceramic tile backsplash. A through-wall vent is on the south wall. Opening the vent door turns on the fan. Lighting is provided by a pendant light with a white and gold painted metal conical reflector and a recessed fixture above the sink.

The bedroom occupies most of the second floor, with a corner window at the northeast corner. Hardwood flooring matching the living room extends throughout the space. Walls have texture applied over the plywood and are painted, like the living room. Unpainted corrugated metal sheets clad the west wall. A mahogany base matching the living room extends around the perimeter walls. The walk-in closet is east of the bedroom and consists of a central walkway flanked by closets. Top-hung flush panel hollow-core mahogany veneer doors open to the two closets, and between them, on the east wall, is a window that faces toward Clarks Creek. There is an enclosed sun porch at the north end of the bedroom. A flush panel hollow-core mahogany veneer door with a porthole window opens from the bedroom to the porch.

The designed landscape, attributed to Bert Smyser, conveys the influence of Clarks Creek on the pattern of use by the Smyser family, and the role of site topography in shaping both landscape and building spatial organization. A private yard surrounds the building to the south and east and has a variety of features, perhaps most notably the fireplace patio and water features, but also includes retaining walls with homemade plaques, small staircases, greenhouse, lighting, pumphouse, sheds, and chicken coops (the last of which was a post-Smyser addition).

The brick fireplace serves as the focal point for the roughly 500 square foot concrete patio along Clarks Creek (Figure 37). The brick and stone fireplace faces west and consists of a large central hearth with a brick mantel. Four clay chimney pots project above the chimney. Angled brick wings with concrete caps extend out from the hearth. The north wing functions as a food preparation area and includes a sink with cabinets below and a storage area. The south wing contains a small oven with an ash catch below and a round metal coal holder for baking with a low grille area.

The landscape's water features provide an important aesthetic component that is tied to the natural hydrologic system. Water faucets are located near the south yard light and recessed into the retaining wall on the east side of the driveway. Clarks Creek is the main water feature and is attributed as having shaped much of the topography that the design utilized to create spaces within the landscape. The salmon-bearing creek brings associated plant and animal life, contributing to the visual and auditory setting, as well as exhibiting seasonal changes, including water level changes and loss of foliage, that influence the experience of the site. The creek extends along the east side of the property. Vegetation patterns in historic aerial photographs from 1941, 1957, and 1968 suggest that prior to development of 66th Avenue E, the creek arced at least 90 feet west of the roadway. Remnants of this pattern remain north of the driveway leading to 4902 66th Avenue E and in the topography of the south yard. The creek provides the setting for the fireplace patio area and is prominently featured in the view from the curved kitchen window adjacent to the breakfast table. The rock weir is just over 70 feet upstream from the house and slightly east of the property boundary. The auditory qualities contribute to the experience of the site. Construction of the rock weir based on the current owner is attributed to Bert Smyser. The rock weir consists of large rocks built out from either side of the creek bank.

The building generally remains as it was constructed in 1941. Alterations to the exterior of the building include siding replacement due to flood damage, replacement of most of the southern deck, replacement of most of the windows with vinyl (with some fenestration changes as well), new wall scones at the entry, a new garage door, enclosure of the second-floor sun porch, and new parapet flashing, along with re-roofing. On the interior, changes include the removal of the wallpaper and textured paint; new flooring in the entry hall, bathroom, and kitchen; new lighting in the dining room, kitchen, and bathrooms; and new finishes in the second-floor bedroom. Additionally, several outbuildings have been added to the north of the house, and a new concrete wall has been constructed directly south of the building, likely for flood mitigation.

4.5.3. Additional Details

An article and sketch in Tacoma's *The News Tribune* identified the firms involved in the construction and furnishing of the building (*The News Tribune* 1941f):

- The local Cavanaugh Lumber Company supplied the house’s doors and glass brick and following World War II emerged as a key building supplier in the post-war residential building boom.
- Modern Supply Company supplied the house’s plumbing.
- The Light Department of the City of Tacoma (today’s Tacoma Power) provided the electric range and hot water heater. Graybar Electric Company furnished the electric refrigerator in the house.
- Washington Hardware Company, a longtime Tacoma business, provided the hardware and kitchen sink cabinet for the house.
- W.P. Fuller & Company provided the house’s wallpaper and window sash.
- The Seattle-based Washington Venetian Blind Company provided the venetian blinds for the house.
- Phil H. Burrows Company provided the shrubbery at the house. Philip (Phil) H. Burrows was a landscape gardener who lived in Tacoma.

Additionally, the Colotyle Corp. of Seattle provided Colotyle for the house’s bathroom and kitchen. Colotyle was an applied finish on hardboard that provided a low-cost alternative to tile. A 1939 advertisement for Colotyle in the *Seattle Times* references the company’s use in model homes in Seattle, Bellingham, Los Angeles, Portland (Oregon), and Everett. It also mentions the “ultra-modern home by Smyser Display Company” in Tacoma (*Seattle Times* 1939b). It is unclear what level of detail Smyser had put into this “ultra-modern” house, and if it was a direct predecessor of the House of Tomorrow.



Photo by Northwest Vernacular 2022

Figure 31
House of Tomorrow primary west façade.



Photo by Northwest Vernacular 2022

Figure 32
Looking southwest at the secondary north and rear east façades of the House of Tomorrow.



Photo by Northwest Vernacular 2022

Figure 33
Looking northeast at the secondary south façade of the House of Tomorrow and Clarks Creek (to the right/east).



Photo by Northwest Vernacular 2022

Figure 34
House of Tomorrow main entry, looking west at the front door
down the hallway.



Photo by Northwest Vernacular 2022

Figure 35
Looking north from the entry at the House of Tomorrow living room.



Photo by Northwest Vernacular 2022

Figure 36
Looking southeast at the House of Tomorrow kitchen.



Photo by Northwest Vernacular 2022

Figure 37
Looking south across the patio with the fireplace to the right (west) and the House of Tomorrow slightly visible to the south in the background.

5. OTHER DESIGNS

This section details Smyser’s known non-architectural designs. Based on comments in contemporary newspaper articles, however, he had many more that were not as thoroughly documented at the time (*The News Tribune* 1940a; Lund 1974).

5.1. Showroom & Window Displays

Smyser began his career as a window dresser in 1909 and “decorated many a store window” during the course of his career (Lund 1974).

5.1.1. Stone-Fisher Company, Tacoma Rose Society Competition, 1913

Address/Vicinity:	Stone-Fisher Company, 1104 Broadway Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington
Tax Parcel:	2011060010
Year:	June 1913
Placement:	First Place

History

This display was an entry in the Tacoma Rose Society Competition in June 1913. The Society was established in 1911, although “rose activities” in the city had been occurring for at least 20 years prior (Tacoma Rose Society 2022). It regularly hosted shows through at least the early 1940s (the 1941 or 1942 show saw 700 entries and 4,000 visitors) and was also a part of the re-imagining of the rose garden at Tacoma’s Point Defiance Park in 1912 (*The American Rose Magazine* 1941–1942; Ehrmantraut 2020). It appears this was a part of the society’s larger third annual rose show of that year, which included “more than 50,000 roses transforming the National Guard Armory into a fairyland of fragrant petals,” expected 2,000 vendors, and 44 prizes (*Seattle Times* 1913). Many of the downtown Tacoma stores entered, including the M. & M. hat store and the Canadian Pacific Railroad Office (*The News Tribune* 1913). Smyser’s window was awarded first place.

Physical Description

According to an article in *The News Tribune*, the display included “choice roses of a large number of varieties in vases prettily distributed over the large corner window, with a statue and fountain in the center background of evergreen” (*The News Tribune* 1913). The accompanying photo (Figure 38) shows what appears to be two women and three children, and possibly an additional adult, among the roses, evoking the imagery of people enjoying a rose garden. There also appears to be a faux stream (to the far right in the image) and an American flag (middle left). One of the competition judges, William B. Coffee, was quoted: “there was little doubt of the superiority of the Stone-Fisher window. It was exceptionally good and all rose lovers should see it” (*The News Tribune* 1913).



Source: *The News Tribune* 1913

Figure 38

Stone-Fisher, Tacoma Rose Society Competition, 1913.

5.1.2. Pacific Coast Association of Display Men Competition, 1925

Address/Vicinity:	Multnomah Hotel, 319 SW Pine Street Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon
Tax Parcel:	P647228
Year:	1925
Placement:	Prize, novelty drape; and first place, swimming suit display

History

Research has revealed little about the Pacific Coast Association of Display Men, but the contact information was care of Frederick and Nelson Department Store in Seattle in 1931, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce's list of commercial and industrial organizations of that year (U.S. Department of Commerce 1931). The Association held its first annual convention in Spokane, Washington in 1924,

which Smyser also attended (see Section 5.1.9). The Pacific Coast Association of Display Men continued to hold conventions until at least 1935 (The Oregon Historical Society 2022; *Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1925).

Physical Description

Smyser designed at least two displays for this competition: a “Kerchief Girl” novelty display, part of a non-competitive demonstration, and a photographic competition. The review in the *Tacoma Daily Ledger* does not provide any additional details for the former, apart from the fact he received “high praise” from the judges (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1925). Entries in the photographic competition were photos of window dressings on display in individual cities; it is not known what display Smyser entered or if it was one of the displays for which he won a prize.

Smyser won a prize for “best novelty drape on a wax figure” and another for the best swimming suit display (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1925). The *Tacoma Daily Ledger* article did not provide any details about these winning display(s).

5.1.3. Kennedy’s Used Car Showroom, 1927

Address/Vicinity:	753 Broadway Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington
Tax Parcel:	2007050130
Year:	1927

History

B.H. Kennedy began selling cars in Tacoma in ca.1911, and over the following years gained a reputation as “one of the best posted men in this field in the west” (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1927). By 1927, he was working for Studebaker, a wagon and automobile manufacturer, but around August of that year decided that used cars were a more promising business venture. Research suggests he refurbished the space he was already occupying, as opposed to moving to a new location (Figure 39). He hired Smyser to oversee the interior, which was characterized by the *Tacoma Daily Ledger* as “unsurpassed [...] on the Pacific coast, from the standpoint of artistic decorations and lighting effects” (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1927).

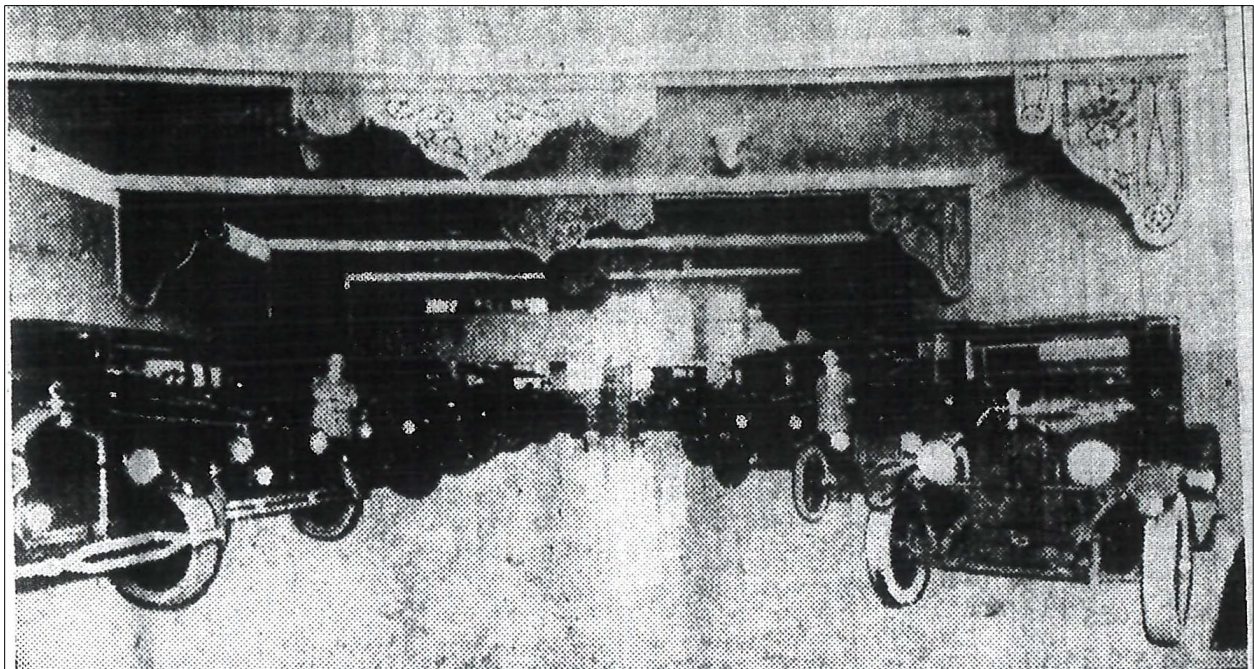
Physical Description

The 4,000 square foot showroom had elevated offices “in the rear, giving the appearance of a still larger place,” and there was a newly constructed adjoining store, which appears to have been owned by Kennedy with plans to rent it out (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1927). The associated photo (Figure 40) shows exposed framing with what appears to be decorative woodwork at alternating beam and wall intersections and hanging from the centers of the beam. The 1927 *Tacoma Daily Ledger* article notes that Smyser was “well known for his ability to obtain unique color combinations and tasty designs,” suggesting the interior was colorful, but given the black-and-white print, this can only be surmised and not confirmed (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1927). By 1996, the building had been subdivided and was no longer a showroom, and it currently houses multiple antique shops (Figure 41 and Figure 42).



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, BU-12668

Figure 39
Kennedy's Used Car Showroom, unknown date.



Source: Tacoma Daily Ledger 1927

Figure 40
Kennedy's Used Car Showroom, interior, 1927.



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, BN-4

Figure 41
753 Broadway, August 9, 1996.



Photo by ESA 2022

Figure 42
753 Broadway, 2022.

5.1.4. Mueller-Harkins Pontiac Store, 1935

Address/Vicinity: 723-725 Broadway
Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington
Tax Parcel: 2007050061
Year: 1935

History

In late 1934 or early 1935, the Mueller-Harkins Company “became the exclusive Pontiac dealer in Tacoma” (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1935a). R.A. Mueller, president, decided a new home was needed to “do justice to the line” (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1935a). He leased the 1914 building at 723-725 Broadway and had the building remodeled, hiring Silas E. Nelson as the architect and the Smyser Display Service for the interior decoration (Figure 43). The store opened on Saturday, January 5, 1935.

Physical Description

According to the *Tacoma Daily Ledger* article, Smyser used “trimmings” repurposed from the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition (see Section 5.2.2). Research has not revealed additional information about what Exposition details were reused, how they were altered, or what the interior looked like. The article does, however, describe the overall store: “The new Pontiac store is reflective of the modernistic school of art which was brought to the fore by the Century of Progress and makes an establishment unique not only in Tacoma but on the entire Pacific Coast” (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1935a). The 6,500 square foot building was “handsomely finished” with Duro-Tile floor in maroon (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1935a). In addition to the sales floor, there were also offices (connected to the sales floor) and a service department, along with a large Pontiac neon sign.

The building is still extant, although it has been significantly altered. It has been stripped of all exterior ornamentation and re-faced with what appears to be faux stucco panels. For many years, it was used as a parking garage and by the early 2000s had gained the moniker “Graffiti Garages,” as it had become a place for graffiti artists to practice. In 2013, all Broadway-facing openings were boarded up with painted plywood (Tacoma Public Library 2022).

Additional Details

This was the fifth Mueller-Harkins Company store to open. In addition to their main office, which was located across the street from 723-725 Broadway, other stores sold Buick, Cadillac, and LaSalle cars (all located on Broadway); GMC trucks (on Broadway); one devoted to used cars (also on Broadway); and a Puyallup location that sold a variety of General Motors vehicles (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1935a).

Architect Silas E. Nelson, born in 1894 in Wisconsin, apprenticed at Gove and Heath, a Tacoma-based firm, starting in ca.1910. Following his service as an architect in the U.S. Navy during World War I, Nelson returned to Tacoma and established his own firm in ca.1920. Over the course of his career, he designed a variety of buildings generally in and around Tacoma, including libraries, office buildings, schools (including buildings on the University of Puget Sound campus), St. Albans Girl’s Camp, and over 150 houses (Ryan 2017:16; Tacoma Public Library 2019). He was “known for his Tudor Revival and

Colonial Revival home designs and was published in a number of national magazines and plan books during the twenties and thirties” (Ryan 2017:16). He retired in 1971 and died in Tacoma in 1987.



Source: Tacoma Public
Library 2022f

Figure 43

723-723 Broadway, looking at the rear of the building from Commerce Street, 1966.

5.1.5. Mills Motors Showroom, 1935

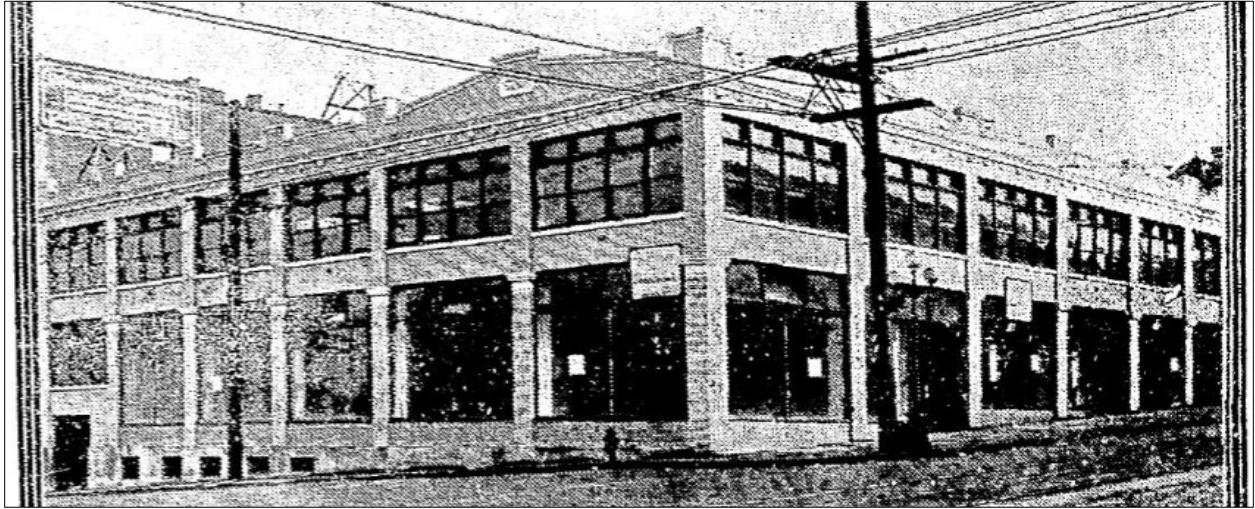
Address/Vicinity: 500 E Pike Street
Seattle, King County, Washington
Tax Parcel: 8804900865
Year: 1935

History

When the Mills Motors (a DeSoto-Plymouth dealership) automobile showroom on Pike Street in Seattle opened, Smyser provided the designs. The *Seattle Times* article does not specify if he only designed the opening celebration designs or the more permanent interior, but describes the week-long festivities as having “had that indefinable air of a wedding in full swing [...] or the festive atmosphere of a garden party” (*Seattle Times* 1935). Decorations for the opening in 1935 included Persian rugs, pink bunting, and “festooned ribbon-work” (*Seattle Times* 1935).

Physical Description

The brick and concrete building at 500 E Pike Street was constructed in 1917 (Figure 44; *Seattle Times* 1917).¹⁶ It was built as an automobile showroom, according to an announcement in *The Seattle Times*. The building is a fairly typical showroom from the early 20th century, with a shaped parapet and large display windows. The windows were altered in 1956, it was converted to an office and warehouse, and the use has subsequently changed over the years to meet tenants' needs, although most of the alterations appear to have been to the interior (Figure 45; Seattle Department of Neighborhoods 2022b).



Source: *Seattle Times* 1917

Figure 44
400 E Pike Street shortly after completion in 1917.



Photo by ESA 2022

Figure 45
400 E Pike Street.

¹⁶ Some records (notably Gallacci 2004 and King County Assessor 2023) note a construction date of 1924, but the 1917 *Seattle Times* article announcing the opening confirms a build date of that year, as noted by DAHP.

5.1.6. Andrews Apparel, 1936

Address/Vicinity: 923 Broadway
Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington
Tax Parcel: 2009050034 (current)
Year: 1936
Building no longer extant

History

In early 1920, S.A. Andrews leased a portion of the 1890 building at 923 Broadway for a ready-to-wear clothing store. It opened on August 14 of that year, with Stephanie Lewitus as part of the management team (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1920a, 1920b). The two-story space was remodeled (Figure 46) in 1930 “in keeping with the progressive spirit of the company,” and by this time Mame Welmar was the assistant manager (“in complete charge of the shop”) and a buyer for the store (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1930). The store was remodeled again in 1936 in a joint effort between Smyser Display Service and local architects Russell, Lance & Muri (*The News Tribune* 1936a). *The News Tribune* article suggests the architecture may have been a collaborative effort between the two firms.

Physical Description

The 1936 redesign of Andrews Apparel shop drew heavily from the “modern” architectural inspiration of the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition (*The News Tribune* 1936a). Today known as Streamline Moderne, it is a style inspired largely by the new technology of the time, particularly the aerodynamics of transportation, and is generally focused on shape, not decoration (see Section 6.4 for more information on the Streamline Moderne style, and Section 5.2.2 for information on the Exposition). *The News Tribune* article on the reopening offered a detailed description of the store’s interior:

Straight lines with curved or rounded corners are noticeable on all sales, fitting or stock rooms, wall and showcases. The painting in the store is what is known as off white with silver moldings highlighted with light Dutch blue. Visitors will doubtless observe that the molding is inverted and used for the first time anywhere in the Andrews shop. This produces a weird effect of color reflecting upon the silver.

*The rounding of all corners thus obliterating the lines of division between adjoining spaces gives the limited width of the store the desirable effect of spaciousness. All fitting rooms and shops have been placed to overcome an otherwise unbalanced effect and the entire interior of the store was planned to solve the problem of offering the store’s merchandise so that everything would follow a natural sequence and the customers would find shopping a pleasure in an environment of refinement, distinction and extreme good taste (*The News Tribune* 1936a).*

Smyser was also responsible for the lighting in the store, which was all custom designed. *The News Tribune* called out the “special column light fixture lights the foyer and give a lofty inviting atmosphere upon entering the shop. Aluminum grills of modern design conceal the ventilation system [... and] give an artistic appearance to the entire shop” (*The News Tribune* 1936a). The ventilation grilles can be seen in

the upper right image in Figure 47, in the upper left. All the furniture was custom-made by William L. Davis Sons Company, described as “of modernistic type, finished white with overglaze of yellow” and “fitting room windows [were] all equipped with off white Venetian blinds,” and the company also provided the carpets (*The News Tribune* 1936a). The building was demolished sometime between 1980 and 1990, according to aerial imagery (NETROnline 2022).

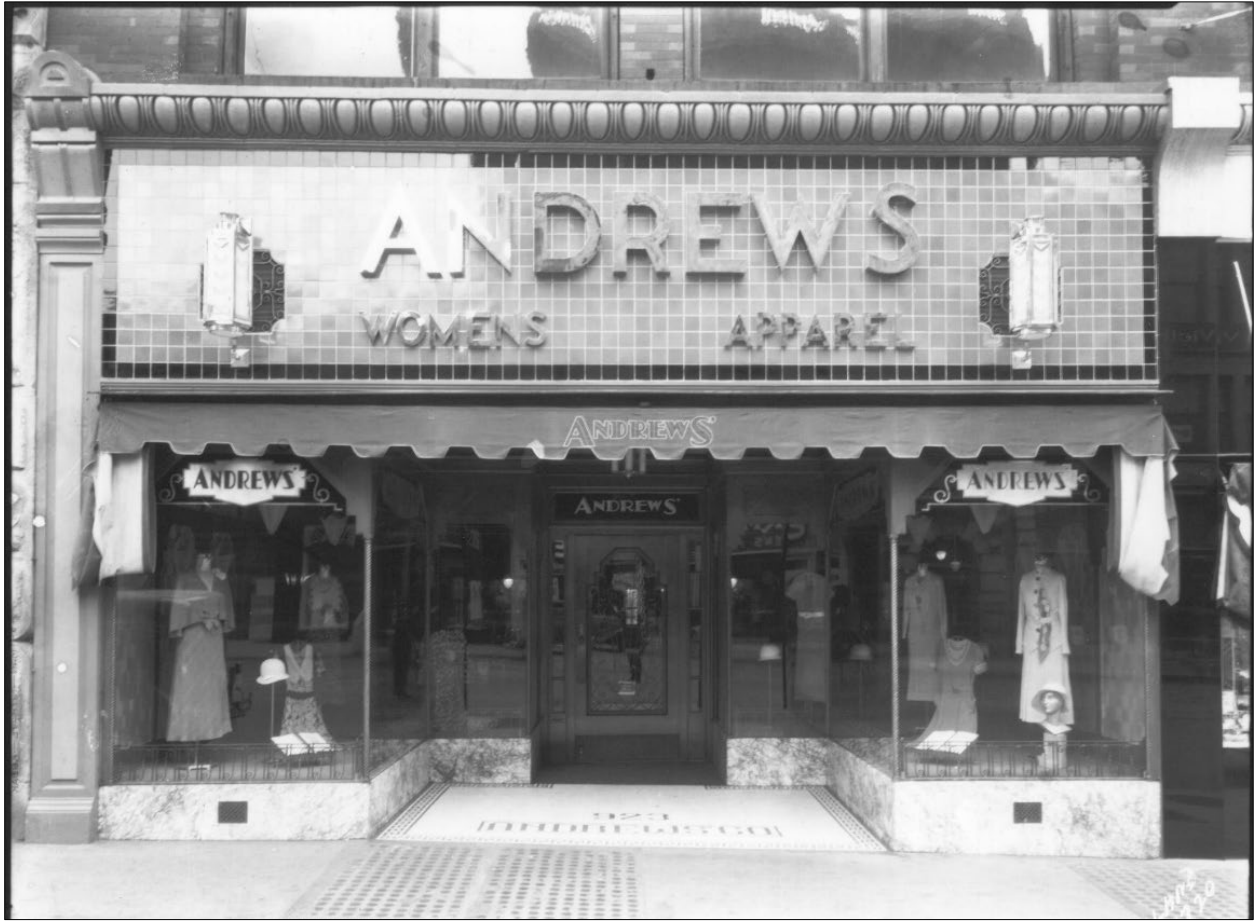
Additional Details

Lighting in the shop employed Lumiline footlights in the windows, the first in the country to do so according to Smyser (*The News Tribune* 1936a). The Andrews Apparel redesign is the first identified example of Smyser utilizing rounded corners, both as described in the article and also seen in the accompanying images (Figure 47).¹⁷

Local architectural firm Russell, Lance & Muri also worked on the redesign of the Andrews Apparel shop. Ambrose James Russell (1857–1938) studied architecture at the University of Glasgow and the Parisian Ecole des Beaux Arts and apprenticed with the internationally known H.H. Richardson. By 1928, he had moved to Tacoma and established a series of partnerships with other local architects, including Albert Sutton, Frederick Heath, Walter Spalding, and Everett Babcock (Houser 2011; McClintock n.d.:III-10). In 1928, Russell hired Lance Gaston (1877–1964) as a draftsman in his firm, and recognizing his “talent, Russell mentored him and in 1930 made him partner” (McClintock n.d.:III-10).

Gaston, born in Romania and educated in Paris, traveled throughout Europe as a young man and worked as a blacksmith, machinist, draftsman, printer, carpenter, journalist, and French teacher, among other occupations. He arrived in Seattle in 1908 and “helped produce the statue of Chief Seattle [located in Tilikum Place in Seattle’s Belltown neighborhood]. He is also said to have designed the Chinese Pavilion for the Alaska, Yukon & Pacific Exposition” in 1909, and also worked for a local film studio before taking a job with Russell (McClintock n.d.:III-10). Irwin Muri joined Russell & Lance in 1935 or 1936. He graduated from Tacoma’s Stadium High School and studied architecture at the University of Oregon and the University of Washington. The three men “designed a number of apartment, church and school buildings in Tacoma” (McClintock n.d.:III-10). Following Russell’s death in 1938, Lance and Muri continued the firm and brought on John E. McGuire.

¹⁷ Smyser was not responsible for the building design at the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition. As such, he would not have had a chance to employ rounded corners on the structure, even if he would have. The Andrews Apparel project appears to have been his first (or one of his first) opportunities to include rounded corners and other Streamline Moderne features on a project.



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, BU-13732

Figure 46
Andrews Apparel shop, as seen on June 16, 1932, prior to the remodel.



Source: *The News Tribune*
1936a

Figure 47
Andrews Apparel store, featured in a 1936 *The News Tribune* article; the rounded corners as seen in the upper right corner would become a feature of Smyser's over the course of his career. The portrait is of S.A. Andrews, store owner.

5.1.7. Worth's Apparel Shop, 1936

Address/Vicinity: 1107 Broadway
Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington
Tax Parcel: 2011050010 (current)
Year: 1936
Building no longer extant

History

The building at 1107 Broadway was constructed in 1904 and housed a variety of businesses over the years (Tacoma Public Library 2022i). On Friday March 20, 1936, Worth's Apparel Shop opened in the building, featuring the "newest and smartest fashions," including dresses, coats, suits, and millinery (*The News Tribune* 1936b). The store was managed by Margaret Lancaster, assisted by Gladys Kroh and Ruth Osten. According to a congratulatory advertisement in *The News Tribune*, Smyser Display Service was responsible for the new store design, with other local firms including contractor C.W. Jones (located at 1311 South Tacoma Way), Ault Electric Company (located at 3920 S 10th Street), painting and paperhanging by Danielson-Skattum (located at 705 S J Street), and rental agents George D. Poe & Company (*The News Tribune* 1936b).

Physical Description

Little information is available about the shop's design. An image of 1105-1107 Broadway taken in 1926 (Figure 48), prior to the opening of Worth's Apparel Shop, shows a two-story building with mezzanine and prominent commercial windows centered in the building and at each corner, and what appear to be two deeply recessed entries. The building, along with those adjacent, was demolished in the early 1970s, and in 1974 the current building was constructed on the parcel (NETROnline 2022; Pierce County Assessor 2022a).



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, BU-10909

Figure 48
1105-1107 Broadway, 1926, prior to the opening of Worth's Apparel Shop.

5.1.8. Herbert's Apparel Shop, 1936

Address/Vicinity: 1151 Broadway
Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington
Tax Parcel: 2011050141 (current)
Year: 1936
Building no longer extant

History

Herbert Bachrach entered the mercantile business in ca.1916, and 20 years later, in 1936, he took over the space at 1151 Broadway from the F. & B. Economy shop. Smyser was in charge of the design and drew heavily from the “modernistic” style seen at the Chicago Century of Progress Exposition (see Section 5.2.2 for information on the Exposition).

Physical Description

Herbert's Apparel Shop was located in a building that spanned 1149-1153 Broadway, which was constructed in 1916 by builders Feist & Bachrach and contractor Knoell Brothers (Tacoma Public Library 2022a). A photograph from the opening in *The News Tribune* (Figure 49, left) shows a deeply recessed entry with long display windows featuring black glass and a neon sign (*The News Tribune* 1936c). The windows were deepened, and new backdrops installed, along with new lighting throughout the entire store. The Apparel Shop's ready-to-wear department with its Streamline Moderne entry (Figure 49, right) was located approximately halfway down the store on the left and described as a “stream-line effect” that extended throughout the interior (*The News Tribune* 1936c). Although research has not revealed how long Herbert's Apparel Shop remained in the space, it appears the black glass front remained until at least ca.1963, as it can be seen in Figure 50. The building is no longer extant but stood until at least 1970 (Tacoma Public Library 2022a).

Additional Details

According to a congratulatory advertisement in *The News Tribune*, Smyser Display Service was responsible for the store design, with contractor C.W. Jones (1311 South Tacoma Way), general electrical contractors Ault Electric Company (3920 S 10th Street), painting and paperhanging by Danielson-Skattum (2910 N Union), and millwork by Pacific Millwork Company (S 30th Street and Sprague Avenue), the first three of whom he also worked with on Worth's Apparel Shop (Section 5.1.7). All of the labor and materials were sourced from Tacoma (*The News Tribune* 1936c).



Source: *The News Tribune* 1936c

Figure 49
Herbert's Apparel Shop at opening, exterior (left) and interior ready-to-wear department, 1936.



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, BU-14959

Figure 50

1149-1153 Broadway, the former Herbert's Apparel Shop, in ca.1963.

5.1.9. 1946 Washington State Historical Society Photo Murals, ca.1946

Address/Vicinity: Washington State Historical Society (today Washington State Research Center)
315 N Stadium Way
Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington

Tax Parcel: 0321321001

Year: ca.1946

History

In 1946, S.A. Perkins, president of the WSHS and a “millionaire industrialist-publisher,” gifted the organization a historic photo mural display depicting early Washington State locations, events, and persons (*Spokane Chronicle* 1946; *The News Tribune* 1946).¹⁸ The display was comprised of 15 photographs reproduced and enlarged to approximately 7 feet tall by 4 to 16 feet long and oil colored. Most of the photo negatives had been purchased by the WSHS in 1943. Records do not specify where the other negatives came from. The effort of enlarging and coloring the images was expected to take several

¹⁸ Murals are not exclusively paintings; they are a large-scale graphic applied to a wall. In this case, they were large photos mounted to the walls.

months to complete. This effort was similar to work undertaken for the 1939/1940 San Francisco and New York World’s Fairs; some images of the process can be seen in Figure 64 (*The News Tribune* 1946). In order to create the large-scale images, negatives were printed onto multiple panels, which were then carefully connected to create the full mural. After the assembly, an artist would add color to the image using oil paints. The present location(s) of the photo murals has not been identified by current WSHS staff, and it is possible that they were deaccessioned at an unknown date (Price 2022).

Physical Description

The original installation of the photographs at the WSHS, designed and overseen by Smyser, was “somewhat similar to that followed in the Washington buildings at the San Francisco and New York expositions” (*The News Tribune* 1946). They were installed in Washington Hall, the first room visitors entered after passing through the main entry. The entry and Washington Hall were both located on the third floor (the building has since been altered and the layout is no longer the same; Price 2023).

Figure 51 through Figure 54 show the photos installed in the WSHS. Although none are dated, Figure 51 and Figure 52 appear to be the original installation (due to their similarity to the written description; see below), designed by Smyser, while the others appear to be later configurations. Images of some of the individual murals are found in Figure 55 through Figure 58. *The Spokane Chronicle* (1946) included a list of the murals:

- Portraits of American explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, reproduced from their journals (seen installed in Figure 51).
- Whitman Mission in ca.1840 (shown installed in Figure 51), an early Methodist mission near today’s Walla Walla.
- Spokane in 1873 (seen installed in Figure 51 and individually in Figure 56); 8.5 feet tall by 10 feet long, “showing Spokane falls with a small frame settlement rising from its banks” (*Spokane Chronicle* 1946).
- The Jackson Courthouse in 1845, built by John R. Jackson, first settler north of the Columbia River (seen installed in Figure 52).
- Ezra Meeker and his ox team on the Oregon Trail in ca.1906 (seen installed in Figure 52 and individually in Figure 58); 6.5 feet tall by 16 feet long. Meeker “crossed the continent in 1906 and again in 1910 by ox team to seek public support for marking the Oregon trail” (*Spokane Chronicle* 1946).
- Portrait of Elisha P. Ferry, Washington State’s first governor (seen installed in Figure 53).
- Tacoma in 1874 (seen in installations in Figure 53 and Figure 54 and individually in Figure 55).
- Washington State capitol buildings, showing the original capitol building in 1889, an 1853 image of the legislative building, the second capitol building (no date), and the “new” capitol building, taken in 1928 (seen installed in Figure 53 and Figure 54).

- Portrait Robert Gray, the first American explorer of the Columbia River in 1792 with the *Columbian* (Figure 54).
- Portrait of Michael T. Simmons, founder of Tumwater, an early American town in Washington (seen in Figure 54).
- Seattle’s waterfront in 1875 (seen in Figure 57).
- Portrait of Isaac Stevens, Washington Territory’s first territorial governor.
- Fort Okanogan, the first American outpost in what is now Washington State, established 1811.
- Fort Nisqually, an 1833 fur trading outpost established by the Hudson’s Bay Company in what is now DuPont.
- Fort Vancouver, a Hudson’s Bay Company trading post established on the Columbia River in 1825.

An article in *The News Tribune* noted that the only accompanying display cases at the WSHS would be those associated with Smyser’s displays, with the center of the hall clear, and the potential for new lighting and “redecorating of the walls” (*The News Tribune* 1946). Several postcards from between 1946 and 1952 on file with the WSHS show some of the individual photographs (Figure 55 through Figure 58) and what appears to be the original installation (Figure 51 and Figure 52). It is unknown if the images show the original installation or a later layout, but they appear to be in line with *The News Tribune* article description. The postcards showing an exhibit (Figure 51 and Figure 52) identifies them as the “Perkins Murals” in reference to their donor. This installation appears to be relatively simple, with the photos taking center stage at the top of the room and minimal display cases around the room’s perimeter. At the time Figure 51 and Figure 52 were taken, the photo murals were installed in Washington Hall.

Note: some of the images below of the installation include photos not obtained via Perkins’ gift. It is unknown where these come from, and/or if Smyser had any role in their production or installation.



Source: WSHS

Figure 51

Postcard of the installed photos at the WSHS (undated). From left to right, photos are of early Spokane, Lewis and Clark, a partial oblique view of the original Tacoma Hotel at the mezzanine seen to the left of the chandelier, Chief Seattle (view partially obstructed by the chandelier), and Whitman Mission.



Source: WSHS

Figure 52
Postcard of the installed photos at the WSHS (undated). From left to right, images are of Meeker and his oxen, Fort Nisqually, and the Jackson Courthouse.



Source: WSHS

Figure 53

Undated photo (likely taken between 1946 and 1956) of an event at the WSHS; note the addition of photographs below the mural panels. From left to right, panels are of Elisha P. Ferry, Washington's first capitol buildings, and early Tacoma.



Source: WSHS

Figure 54
Undated photo (likely taken between 1946 and 1956) of the installed photos in an exhibit at the WSHS. From left to right, murals are of an early Washington politician, Washington's first capitol buildings, early Tacoma, Michael T. Simmons, and Captain Robert Gray.



Source: WSHS

Figure 55
Postcard of the early Tacoma mural.



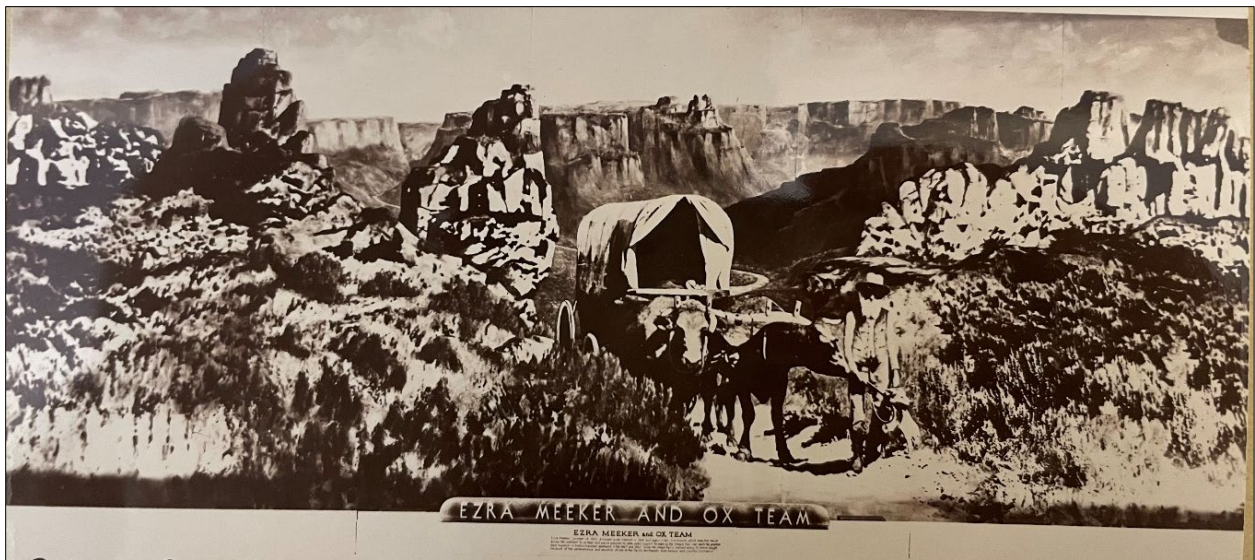
Source: WSHS

Figure 56
Postcard of the early Spokane mural, at Spokane Falls.



Source: WSHS

Figure 57
Postcard of the early Seattle mural.



Source: WSHS

Figure 58
Postcard of the Ezra Meeker and ox team mural.

5.1.10. Additional Displays

In addition to those already listed above, research has revealed limited information on the following Smyser displays, in chronological order:

- 1911: In July 1911, Stone-Fisher won first prize for best store window (designed by Smyser) during “carnival week,” sponsored by the Tacoma Commercial Club and Tacoma Chamber of Commerce (Tacoma Public Library 2022j).
- 1918: On April 12, 1918, the United States Treasury Department accepted a design by Smyser (then working for Stone-Fisher) for a Liberty Loan display window. Smyser’s plan called for “a battlefield and two forts on wallboard. Above one fort is Uncle Sam and above the other is the kaiser [Kaiser Wilhelm II]. The fixtures are operated mechanically so that each time the kaiser appears Uncle Sam raises his rifle and fires” (*The News Tribune* 1968). No records about the installation or duration of the display, nor its location, have been identified.
- 1924: On February 24, 1924, the Chrysler Six automobile went on display at the Coast Motor Company automobile dealer, located at 740 Broadway. Smyser “arranged a fine setting” for the car, and it was officially revealed at 10 a.m. (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1924).
- 1924: Smyser participated in the first annual Pacific Coast Association of Display Men contest, held in Spokane in 1924. He was awarded two first place prizes (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1925). The following year, he would go on to win additional first place prizes at the same contest (Section 5.1.2)
- 1933: Smyser Display Service was awarded a contract for decorating the Broadway corridor, one of Tacoma’s major downtown commercial corridors, for Christmas 1933. According to the *Tacoma Daily Ledger* article, the emphasis was “on lighting effects along with cedar ropes and other greenery” (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1933c). No additional details about the location (at what cross streets the decorations started and ended) have been identified. Fisk Flag & Decorating Company was awarded a contract for decorating Pacific Avenue, another major downtown commercial corridor.
- 1940s: The main auditorium of the United Service Organizations (USO) at 713-715 Commerce Street “was decorated with transparencies by the Washington State Progress Commission” during the 1940s (Figure 59). The Commission was responsible for the state’s exhibits at the 1939/1940 San Francisco and New York World’s Fairs (see Section 5.2.3). It is unclear if Smyser was responsible for the auditorium’s decoration, or if it was simply his work that was installed (Tacoma Public Library 2022k).



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library,
General Photograph Collection HBS-002

Figure 59
Black servicemen and women in the USO main auditorium at a
(segregated) dance in August 1944.

5.2. Exposition & Fair Displays

Smyser was responsible for a number of displays at various expositions and fairs, including the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition and 1939/1940 San Francisco and New York World's Fairs. He was also planning to design the American pavilion for the 1942 World's Fair in Rome, although it was canceled due to World War II (Lund 1974).

5.2.1. Tacoma 1932 Automobile Show

Address/Vicinity: State Armory, 1001 S Yakima Avenue
Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington
Tax Parcel: 2010150010
Year: March 10–13, 1932

History

The Tacoma unit of the National Guard sponsored an automobile show in 1932 to benefit an unemployment relief fund, planned as “the most prestigious and inviting [auto show] of any ever before

offered” in Tacoma (Bowlin 1932; *Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1932a). The 1931 show was the most successful to date “from both a standpoint of the dealers and the public” and in order to surpass it, various “surprises” and “finer entertainment” were planned (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1932a).

Organized by Captain C.W. Van Rooy, the show displayed “more than 50 brand new models” along with equipment and “living mannequins who will model the latest styles” (Bowlin 1932; *Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1932b, 1932c). Many – “practically all,” according to the review in the *Tacoma Daily Ledger* – manufacturers sent representatives “to aid their dealers in putting on proper displays” (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1932b). Special exhibits were rush-shipped from similar shows in New York and Chicago. Tacoma’s show, which ran from March 10–13, featured different entertainment every day, including “singers, dancers, bands, orchestras, male choruses and vaudeville artists” (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1932c). It was rumored that manufactures were planning on unveiling brand new car series (this was speculation prior to the show; subsequent articles neither confirm nor deny; *Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1932c).

Physical Description

Smyser was responsible for the “elaborate” and “brilliantly lighted and decorated auditorium,” along with the show’s color scheme (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1932b, 1932c). The announcement in the *Tacoma Daily Ledger* described the armory as a “riot of color” with “the most elaborate decorative scheme [...] of any show that Tacoma has seen” (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1932b).

5.2.2. 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition

Address/Vicinity: Chicago, Cook County, Illinois
 Years: May 27, 1933–October 31, 1934

History

The Century of Progress was “originally envisioned as a showcase of American economic and innovative strength” (Foretek 2017). By the time it opened, however, the Great Depression had struck the nation and its primary goal had shifted to provide hope and economic stimulus. It was so successful in this goal that President Franklin Roosevelt successfully lobbied for a re-opening in 1934. E.F. Benson “had charge” of the exhibit (exact duties unknown), and the display was supervised and installed by Smyser (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1934a, 1935b). The fair’s guidebook described it as a “huge experimental laboratory” where builders and the public could see the materials, aesthetics, and infrastructure (such as ventilation) of the future (Unknown Author 1933:23). The Century of Progress is largely credited with bringing the Streamline Moderne style to the country’s attention, and it made a considerable impact on Smyser as well. Additional information on the Exposition is included in Section 6.1.

Physical Description

The Exposition’s Federal Building housed the displays from the states that had provided displays. The exposition’s guidebook described it thusly:

Where the north Lagoon curves around at Science Bridge, a three-pylon building [the Federal Building] stands on Northerly island, chromatic yet stately. Above its gold dome

three pylons, fluted towers 150 feet high, typify the three branches of United States Government legislative, executive and judicial. This is the building for which Congress made appropriation to house, develop and maintain the story of Government activities a story which might be said to be the crowning chapter of the story of science, and its application by industry to the welfare of the people, which *A Century of Progress* tells. On the west front of the building a plaza extends to the lagoon, and a 40-foot span to an embarcadero used by dignitaries of state to disembark for a visit to the building. At its back, and in V-shape seeming to embrace it, is the States Building, with its Court of States, thus typifying the increased feeling of loyalty of the citizens to the Union. The United States Government Building is 620 feet long and 300 feet wide, and you enter it into a rotunda 70 feet in diameter. Over it is a 75-foot dome. About the building are sunken gardens which fill the open part of the “V,” forming the Court of States (Unknown Author 1933:85-86).

The guidebook continues on to explain that in previous expositions, each state had its own building, which “resulted in some useless expenditure, and participation on an elaborate scale by some, by a scanty representation by others, and by no participation at all in the case of many” (Unknown Author 1933:89). To provide the impression of solidarity both with each other and the federal government, all of the states were given space within a single building.

There were a variety of Washington State displays, designed by Smyser, bringing “her story of rich mines, agriculture, the natural scenic beauties of Puget Sound, Mount Rainier and the Inland Empire in pictures framed in native woods,” and Smyser served as both the supervisor and installer of the displays and designed the decorations (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer* 1933; *Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1934a; Unknown Author 1933:89).

Acclaimed nature photographer and one of Smyser’s business partners Asahel Curtis provided several of the photographs installed as a part of the exhibit (*The Olympian* 1980). Many of the photographs were colored and printed on glass and illuminated (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer* 1933). Figure 60 shows a non-photographic display featuring a cake contributed by seven southwest Washington counties, with a replica of the state capitol as the topper. Imagery printed on the cake included florals, wildlife such as birds and an elk, forest scenery, and a ship (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1933b). Arlene, Bert Smyser’s daughter, was photographed next to the cake and provides some scale, suggesting the cake was approximately six feet tall (Arlene was around 16 years old at the time the photo was taken). Other displays included a model of the Grand Coulee Dam and the Seattle Art Museum (now the Seattle Asian Art Museum; *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* 1933).

The Washington displays also included a large state map, created by Washington State highway commissioner Lacey Murrow, which showed the state’s road system with principal irrigated areas and samples of a variety of state products were displayed including grains, poultry, oysters, lumber, and minerals (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer* 1933). The primary display appears to have been a large oil-colored photographic mural, according to a *Tacoma Daily Ledger* article, and was imagined as “on the larger scale” that would have been “outstanding” (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1933a). The exhibit also included a section for Tacoma, as seen in Figure 61, which included a variety of photographs.

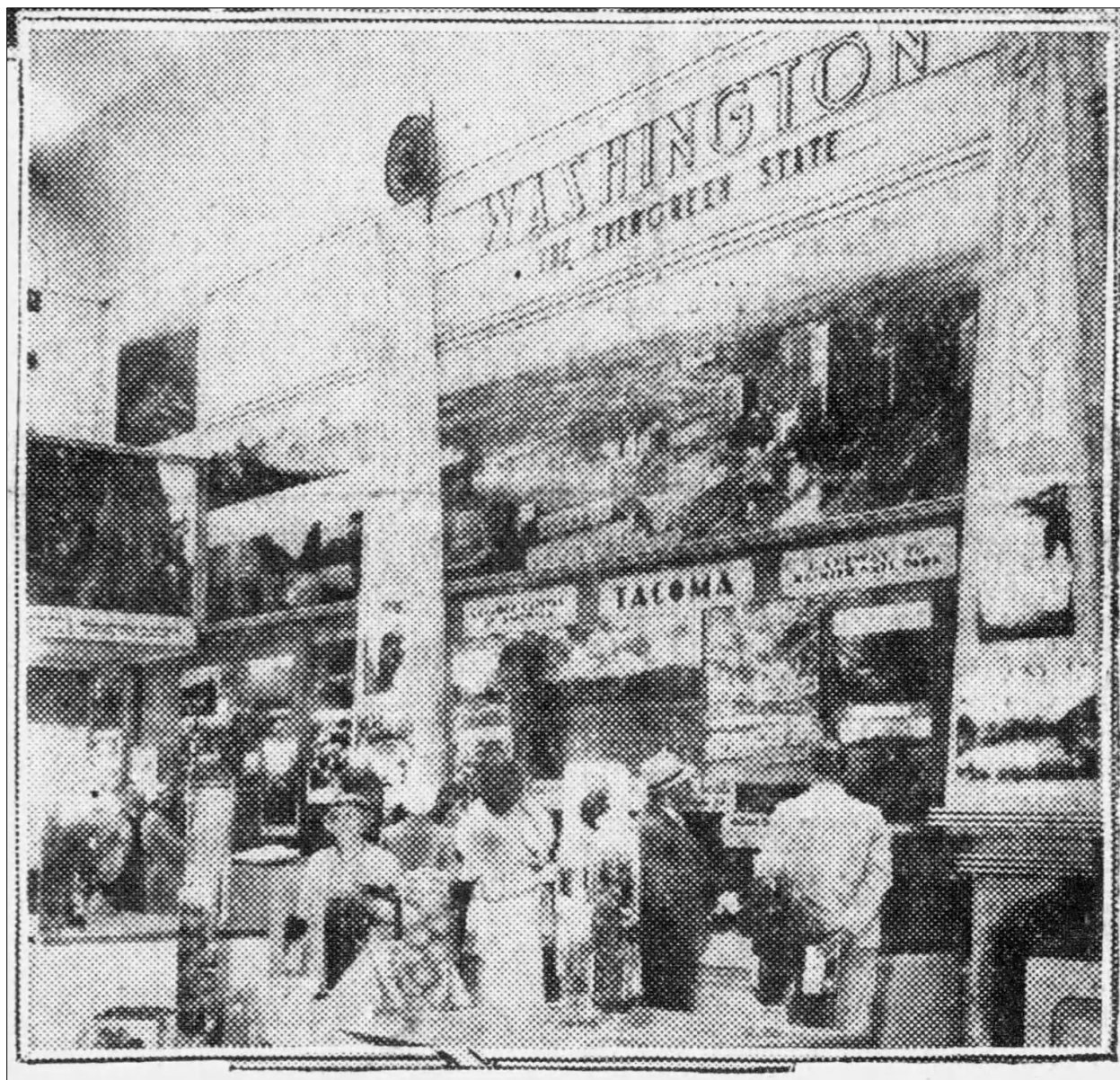
Additional Details

Smyser repurposed parts of the Exposition’s displays for another project completed for a Pontiac dealer in Tacoma (see Section 5.1.4), and elements were also shown at the Western Washington Fair (also known as the Puyallup Fair, today the Washington State Fair) in 1935 from September 16–22 (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1935b, 1935c). In late September 1934, Smyser also presented on the display at the Pacific Coast Association of Display Men conference, which was held at the Winthrop Hotel in downtown Tacoma (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1934a).



Source: *Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1933b

Figure 60
Washington State cake display at the Chicago Century of Progress Exposition, 1933. Arlene Smyser, Bert and Velma’s daughter, is also pictured.



Source: *Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1933b

Figure 61
Tacoma display at the Chicago Century of Progress Exposition, 1933.

5.2.3. 1939/1940 San Francisco & New York World's Fairs

Location: San Francisco (Treasure Island)
Years: February 18–October 29, 1939 and May 25–September 29, 1940

Location: New York City (Flushing Meadows)
Years: April 30, 1939–October 27, 1940

History

The Washington State displays for the San Francisco (Golden Gate International Exposition) and New York World's Fairs, both of which opened in 1939, were contracted together and awarded to Smyser Display Service. Smyser created duplicate displays for the fairs (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer* 1939; *Seattle Star* 1938a). The contract amount, split evenly between the two events, was \$70,000, or approximately \$1.47 million in 2022 dollars, some of which came from the private sector (*Daily Olympian* 1938; *Spokesman-Review* 1938; *Seattle Times* 1938a; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2022). Smyser competed for the project with both in- and out-of-state firms, and his choice to use Washington State materials and labor was a deciding factor in his selection (*Seattle Times* 1938a). Smyser personally oversaw the diorama installation in early February in San Francisco, and from there continued to see the New York installation in March (*Seattle Star* 1938b; *Seattle Times* 1939a). The San Francisco World's Fair opened February 18, 1939, and the New York World's Fair opened April 30, 1939 (*Seattle Times* 1938a). This was the only time in which two fairs occurred in the same year (see Section 6.3).

Physical Description

The two displays at the fairs were “virtually identical in content,” with the only substantial difference being accommodation (*Seattle Times* 1939c). The display at the San Francisco fair was located in the Hall of Western States, and Washington was allotted 6,000 square feet “and an option on 20,000 feet of outdoor space” (*Seattle Star* 1938b; *Seattle Times* 1938a). In New York, however, Washington had its own building, a white Colonial Revival style structure located “on a curve in Rainbow avenue, where it may be seen for half a mile” and surrounded by maroon buildings (Figure 62; *Seattle Star* 1938b). At night the building was lit; Washington was the only Pacific Coast state represented at the fair (*Seattle Star* 1938b; *Tacoma Times* 1939a). The exhibit room in New York was oval, with murals and transparencies reaching the ceiling (*Seattle Times* 1939c). Interior views of both exhibits can be seen in Figure 63 (San Francisco upper left, and New York upper right).

The display utilized Asahel Curtis' photography as a part of the exhibits, which were designed to “produce Washington state, its scenic attractions and resources in the most natural form possible” (*Daily Olympian* 1938). An article in the *Seattle Times* offered some additional planned details, noting the exhibit “will portray the state's scenic beauties and industrial areas, with mural photographs as backgrounds,” and nine of these included animated dioramas (*Colville Examiner* 1938; *Seattle Times* 1938a). “Millions of persons at the New York and San Francisco fairs next year will receive perhaps the most effective geography lessons in their lives when they visit the Washington state exhibits. They will gaze in admiration upon portions of the ‘Evergreen Empire’ reproduced right before their eyes” (*Seattle Star* 1938b). At the center of the exhibits was an information booth, where visitors could register and offered the option of having a booklet mailed to them, “describing in more detail the scenic, recreational, agricultural, industrial and cultural advantages” of Washington (*Seattle Star* 1938b).

Twelve photo murals were created for each fair, totaling 2,800 square feet, one of which can be seen in the upper left in Figure 64 and in Figure 65 (Golden Gate International Exposition 1939:72; *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* 1939). This particular mural shows a group of elk in the Olympic Mountains and measured 12 feet long and 10 feet high (*Seattle Times* 1938b). Another mural undergoing assembly of a yachting scene is shown in the two upper right images in Figure 64. Photo panels, measuring 38 inches wide by 10

feet long, were printed, trimmed and mounted, and finally colored by artist Zerby Strong (seen in the upper left image). In the image, Ruth Houston is shown rinsing a panel in a trough using a garden hose.

A *Seattle Times* article describes the general construction of the dioramas: “a curved photographic or painted background and a modeled foreground” (Figure 66; *Seattle Times* 1938b). The most elaborate diorama appears to be one of Mount Rainier, located opposite from the entrances, that stood 28 feet tall and was animated “with cars moving along the highways and waterfalls in action [and with] sunrise, midday and sunset lighting effects” (*Seattle Star* 1938b; *Tacoma Times* 1939a). An image of this diorama can be seen middle left in Figure 63 with Priscilla Pelton, an exhibit staff member, standing between the photograph background and modeled middle and foreground. Although dioramas were described as “pictures you can get inside,” it is unlikely the general public could pass through the dioramas like Pelton (*Seattle Times* 1939c).

A *Seattle Times* article (Figure 64) shows three dioramas in Smyser’s workshop. One is of the Grand Coulee Dam, with revolving lights giving the effect of moving water (bottom right image in Figure 64 and Figure 67). One depicts Seattle’s waterfront and skyline, which can be seen in the middle left image; Smyser, standing to the side, is holding a model of the Washington State Ferries’ *M.V. Kalakala* ferry boat. Another diorama under construction is seen in the middle right image, showing artists M.D. Bearden and L.D. UpDyke coloring the scene; the completed model was 10 feet wide, 8 feet 4 inches high, and 6 feet deep (*Seattle Times* 1938b). The largest depicted Mount Rainier, seen in Figure 68 (*The News Tribune* 2000, 2013). Other dioramas included lumbering, fishing, and apples, and the average size was 6 feet tall, 10 feet wide, and 5 feet deep (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer* 1939; *Seattle Times* 1939c).

Another model was a “replica of a mine in operation from which the visitor may learn about the seventy-five known minerals essential to the” state’s mining industry (Unknown Author 1939:169). In addition, 72 transparencies, each 24 x 30 inches, were produced for the fairs. Images were printed on film and colored (middle bottom image in Figure 64) and displayed with an electric light shining behind them (*Seattle Times* 1938b).

The Washington State display also had a map showing all of the counties, 16 x 10 feet (possibly seen under construction in Figure 69 and installed in Figure 70) with a scale of a half inch to a mile. Overlaid on the map was a piece of glass, on which were marked cities, main highways (indicated by red neon), railroads, and airlines (*Seattle Star* 1938b; *Tacoma Times* 1939a, 1939b). Transparencies highlighted the region’s industries, environs, and recreational activities. Attendees could “press a button and light up any of the counties on the map. At the same time, a corresponding legend box alongside the map will be lighted so that one may read the information given about any particular county,” while other buttons lit up the highways (*Seattle Star* 1938b; *Seattle Times* 1939c). Behind the map was a mural of Mount Rainier, 16 feet high and 8 feet wide (*Tacoma Times* 1939c). The map (as seen in San Francisco in Figure 70 and lower right in Figure 63) was reportedly “the largest and most outstanding” diorama at the San Francisco fair (*Tacoma Times* 1939c).

The Washington State map was created in Smyser’s workshop, as were the mechanical and electrical features, while the murals were produced in Curtis’ studio, located in the Colman Building at 811 1st Avenue in downtown Seattle (*Seattle Star* 1938a). Smyser “reconditioned” both exhibits in early 1940, although it is not clear what this work entailed (*The News Tribune* 1940a). He supervised the work in

New York and sent some of his employees to San Francisco. The firm “won much praise for the splendid exhibits” (*Tacoma Times* 1939d).

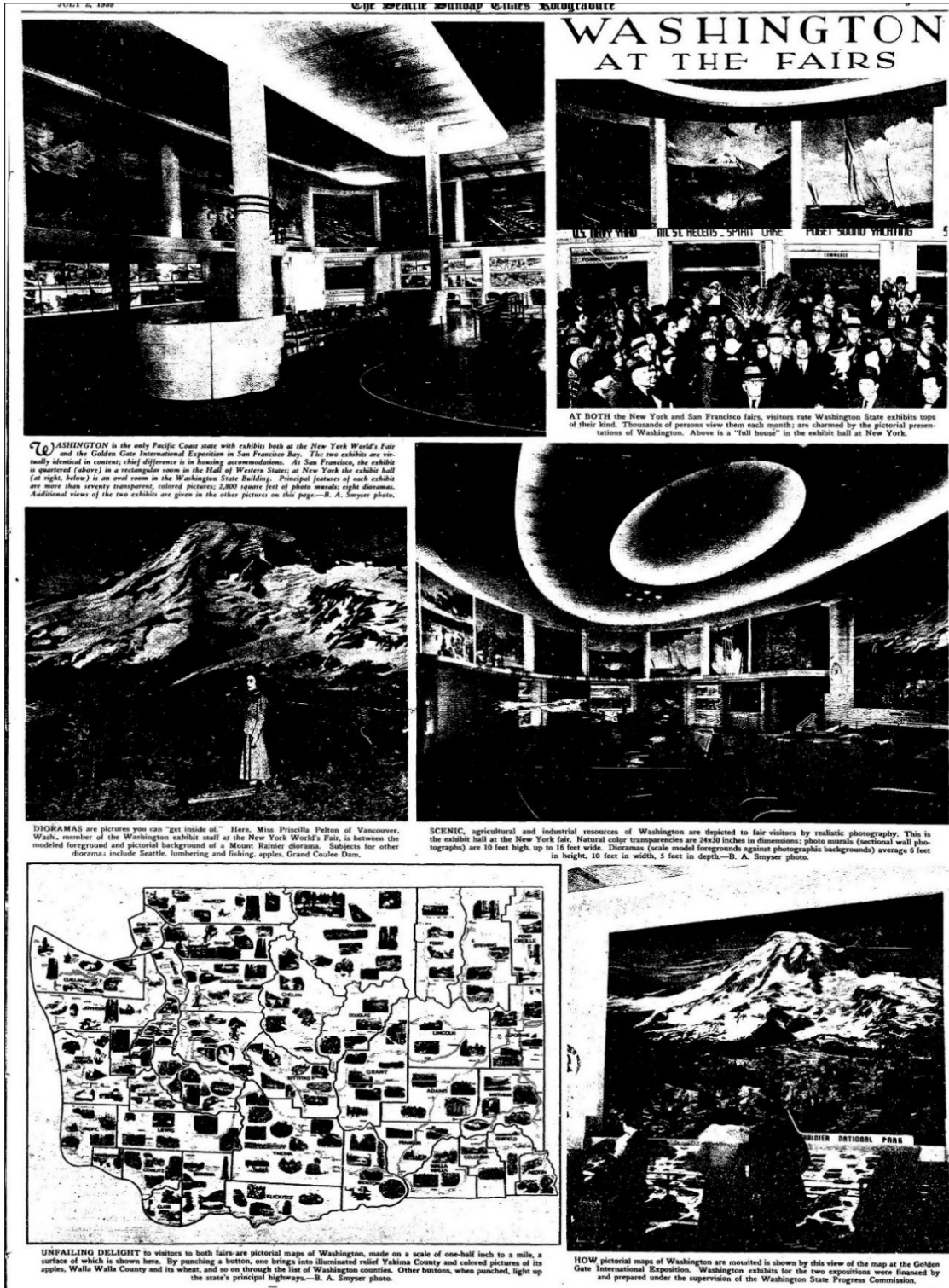
Additional Details

Smyser retained ownership of many of the murals, photos, state insignias, and dioramas that were part of the 1939/1940 World’s Fairs and in 1974, displayed them in the lobby of the Smyser Motel at 2016 South Tacoma Way (additional details about the building are included in Section 4.2). It appears, however, that the WSHS owned two of the dioramas, which were held in storage from at least 1974 and installed in February 1979 as part of the newly dedicated Cheney Hall at the WSHS in Tacoma (Lizberg 1979). The dioramas depicted logging and mining operations in the Cascade Mountains; both included “the appropriate landscape of the particular facility, plus the facility itself, in intricate detail. Backgrounds for each were fashioned from enlargements of” Asahel Curtis’ photographs, which appears to be similar to the way in which they were displayed at the World’s Fairs (Lizberg 1979; *The Olympian* 1980). It is unknown when they were removed, and appear to have since been deaccessioned from the WSHS’s object collection (Price 2022).



Source: Michael Houser, personal collection

Figure 62
The Washington State building at the 1939/1940 New York World’s Fair.



Source: Seattle Times 1939c

Figure 63

Washington State exhibits at the San Francisco and New York World's Fairs. A larger copy of the article can be found in Appendix B.

The Seattle Sunday Times Rotogravure

NOVEMBER 27, 1938

Preparing Washington Exhibits For 1939 World Fairs



THRONGS OF SPECTATORS AT TWO 1939 WORLD FAIRES—the Golden Gate International Exposition at San Francisco and the New York World's Fair—will view a wide variety of photo murals, dioramas and transparencies stressing Washington State's industrial, recreational and scenic advantages. One of the twelve photo murals to be exhibited at each fair is seen above, with Artist Lerby Strong coloring the photograph. Showing a band of elk in the Olympic Mountains, the mural is 10 feet high and 12 feet wide. Other pictures on this page show the state's exhibit in the making.



PREPARING A PHOTO MURAL for coloring, Anabel Curtis, Seattle photographer, and his wife trim four matching panels of a Puget Sound yachting scene. When ready for Artist Strong to color, the mural will measure 10 by 12 feet. Washing one of the print panels (left) in the Curtis studio is Ruth Houston. She uses a long trough and a garden hose to wash the picture panel measuring 26 inches wide and 10 feet long.



A DIORAMA IN THE MAKING shows a Washington mining scene with Artists M. D. Bearden (left) and L. D. Updyke coloring the scene in a Tacoma workshop. This curving diorama is 10 feet wide, 8 feet, 4 inches high, 6 feet deep. A diorama is composed of a curved photographic or painted background and a modeled foreground. Nine will be shown at each exhibition.



SEATTLE'S WATERFRONT and skyline will appear in one diorama. Here Bert A. Smyser, in whose Tacoma shop the dioramas are being completed, places tiny ships along the waterfront. In his hand is a model of the ferry Kabbala.



THIS IS A TRANSPARENCY—a Washington harvest scene—being colored by Eva Curtis. An electric light shines through the colored film, measuring 24 by 20 inches. Seventy-two transparencies will be on display in the State of Washington exhibit at each of the world fairs.



GRAND COULEE DAM IN MINIATURE and in completed form is to be one diorama among exhibits on which the state is spending \$5,000 at each fair. Revolving lights give an effect of moving water.—Times photos.

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LOOKS LIKE TWICE AS MUCH!—When you see this beautiful new Wahl-Eversharp Pencil set you'll wonder how it can cost only \$5! Only about as much as you'll pay for a good fountain pen alone! The pen is exquisitely styled, has 14K solid gold nib, ink-view window, lever-on filler—and you'll fall in love with its writing smoothness! The pencil that matches it is Eversharp's famed Repeating Pencil—"The pencil you can sharpen with your thumb!" Choice of four colors: Green, red, gold wax and black pyralis. The pen alone, \$3.50. The pencil, \$2.00. The set—only \$5! Ask to see the Pencil Set. Remember—it's **Wahl-Eversharp!**

Source: Seattle Times 1938b

Figure 64

A variety of dioramas and murals being prepared for the San Francisco and New York World's Fairs. A larger copy of the article can be found in Appendix B.



Source: Michael Houser,
personal collection

Figure 65
A portion of the Washington State display at the 1939/1940 New York World's Fair.



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio D7836-1

Figure 66
Packing dioramas for the San Francisco and New York World's Fairs.



Source: Taylor 2013

Figure 67
Washington State Senator Homer Bone (second left), Mrs. Bone (third left), Washington State Progress Commission member E.B. McGovern (right), and Mrs. McGovern view the diorama of the Grand Coulee Dam on May 1, 1939 at the New York World's Fair.



Source: *The News Tribune* 2007

Figure 68
A Mount Rainier diorama under construction for the San Francisco and New York World's Fairs.



Source: *Seattle Star* 1938a

Figure 69

A portion of the state map (one of two duplicates) being prepared for the San Francisco and New York World's Fairs. On the wall is an Asahel Curtis photo mural of the San Juan islands, which was later reused in the USO auditorium (see Section 5.1.9).



Source: *Tacoma Times* 1939c

Figure 70
The Washington State map with Mount Rainier mural in the background at the San Francisco World's Fair.

5.2.4. 1941 Tacoma Better Housing Exposition

Address/Vicinity: New Exposition Hall
 1616-32 E 26th Street / 2610 E Bay Street / 1640 Bay Street
 Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington

Tax Parcel: 4715011171

Year: February 15–23, 1941

History

The first event held in Smyser’s New Exposition Hall (see Section 4.4) was the 1941 Tacoma Better Housing Exposition that was jointly sponsored by *The Tacoma News Tribune* and the Tacoma building industry (Figure 71; *The News Tribune* 1941a). Both it and the building opened at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday evening, February 15, in “a really gala affair” with “many well known personages and high officials” (Figure 72); *The News Tribune* 1941a). Prominent community members including Tacoma Mayor Harry P. Cain, publisher of *The Tacoma News Tribune* Frank S. Baker, Pacific First Federal Savings Bank president J.T.S. Lyle, Lumber Promotions Inc. manager Don Hartman, and, of course, Bert Smyser were all in attendance (*The News Tribune* 1941e). Entertainment – “every day will be a gala affair” said Smyser in a *The News Tribune* article – included a “big-time floor show and orchestral music,” although they were truncated so visitors could maximize their time at the booths hosted by local and out-of-town firms (Edrington 1941a; *The News Tribune* 1941a). It was expected that visitors would “see what makes the modern home tick,” and on opening night the building was packed until closing at 10:30 p.m. (*The News Tribune* 1941a, 1941e).


The exposition was intended for people interested in building or purchasing a new house to see the newest building materials and home equipment, although it appears that the two financing booths, run by Pacific First Federal Savings Bank and the National Bank of Washington, saw a significant amount of traffic (Edrington 1941b). There were several hundred exhibits that included building materials; heating devices; electric, gas, and oil appliances; furnishings; draperies; floor coverings; insulation; wallboard coverings; paint; and roofing materials (Edrington 1940).

In an event review, *The Tacoma News Tribune* journalist Charles Edrington noted that at that time (February 1941), Tacoma was “enjoying the highest peak of home building ever seen in the history of the city. More homes are being planned, built, and completed at this time that was dreamed possible three short years ago” (Edrington 1941b). Smyser had intended that his House of Tomorrow would premiere along with the exposition, but the building was not ready in time and it debuted at the next exposition held in the New Exposition Hall.

THE TACOMA NEWS TRIBUNE
SECTION B TACOMA, WASH., FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1941

1941 Tacoma Better Housing Exposition

EXPOSITION HALL, EAST BAY AT 26TH STREET
SATURDAY, FEB. 15 to SUNDAY, FEB. 23
Open Continuously from 2:00 to 10:30 p. m.
Grand Opening, Saturday, February, 15th, at 7:30 P. M.



CHARLES R. EDRINGTON
BUILDING AND REAL ESTATE EDITOR

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--	---	--	--

Source: *The News Tribune* 1941]

Figure 71
An advertisement for the 1941 Tacoma Better Housing Exposition with a list of participating companies.



Source: Northwest Room at The
Tacoma Public Library,
Richards Studio D10894-1

Figure 72
Tacoma Mayor Cain signs his name in wet cement at the opening of the 1941 Tacoma Better Housing Exposition and New Exposition Hall, February 15, 1941.

5.2.5. Additional Exhibits & Displays

In addition to the displays listed above, research has revealed the following information on other Smyser projects:

- 1934: By November 1934, Smyser had developed displays for the Western Washington Fair (today the Washington State Fair) in Puyallup and the Northwest Furniture Show in Tacoma (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1934c).
- 1935: According to a *Seattle Times* article, Smyser was responsible for “exhibits at the San Diego fair” in 1935 (*Seattle Times* 1935).

- 1938: Smyser Display Service was hired by the Harbor Plywood Company, a plywood and veneer plant, in Aberdeen, Washington to create a display “showing the uses to which plywood can be put” (Fairbairn 1986:76; *The News Tribune* 1938). It was a traveling display that started in Indianapolis, traveled through the east, and then the south.
- 1939: Smyser Display Service was responsible for the design and construction of the Washington State poultry exhibit at the 1939 Seventh World’s Poultry Congress and Exposition in Cleveland, Ohio. Smyser, with help from his son Allen, installed the display in late July (*The News Tribune* 1939a; *Tacoma Times* 1939d).
- 1940: Smyser Display Service was hired in early 1940 to build and install an exhibit for the Liberty Orchards Company at the New York Fair (*The News Tribune* 1940a). Although unconfirmed, this was most likely the 1939/1940 New York World’s Fair (Section 5.2.3). Several years later, in 1953, Smyser designed a parade float for the company (Section 5.3.4).

5.3. Parade Floats

While it is unknown what initiated Smyser into the world of parade float design, during the course of his career he “built too many lavish parade floats to count” (Lund 1974).

5.3.1. Tacoma Railway & Power Company Float, 1919

Year:	June 30–July 7, 1919
Parade:	Pacific Northwest Peace Jubilee
Location:	Tacoma
Designer:	Bert Smyser

History

The Pacific Northwest Peace Jubilee ran from June 30 to July 7 of 1919 in Tacoma, with a parade on the last day. It was both a celebration and a fundraiser, with proceeds going to “an auditorium as a memorial to the soldiers, sailors and marines” who served in World War I (Central Labor Council of Seattle and Vicinity 1919). It appears that no such auditorium was ever constructed, and possibly even that the event lost money (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1921; *The News Tribune* 1952). However, in 1929, the Boulevard of Remembrance was established along Pacific Highway (State Route 99) between Camp Lewis (today Joint Base Lewis-McChord) and Tacoma. Approximately 500 oak trees were planted, “many with monument stones and plaques” (Denfeld 2010). Over the following years, many of the trees were removed for road expansion, and in the 1980s the few remaining trees received protection; acorns from the original trees were also used to start new plantings, which were planted at Fort Steilacoom Park in Lakewood, Washington and are still extant (Denfeld 2010; City of Lakewood 2021).

Physical Description

According to a 1919 article in the *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, Smyser’s “novel car” for the parade was designed as a “huge basket of natural flowers. The background was composed of rhododendron, the state flower, and countless roses were worked in to blend the color. The rim and handle of the basket were of

Scotch bloom [sic] to aid contrast, which was caught together by a bow of pink and green chiffon with a card bearing the name Miss Vera Hanson, the Tacoma Railway & Power Company’s candidate for Miss Columbia” (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1919).

Additional Details

The rhododendrons used for the float were from an area near Hood Canal, and for the flowers to be fresh, several Tacoma Railway & Power Company accountants rode out the morning before the parade and returned “after a strenuous trip with an abundance” of flowers (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1919).

5.3.2. Tacoma Utilities Float, 1936

Year:	April 18, 1936
Parade:	Daffodil Parade
Location:	Tacoma
Designers:	Bert Smyser, Walter H. Sutter

History

The Daffodil Festival traces its roots to April 6, 1926, when Mr. and Mrs. Charles Orton invited “civic leaders from 125 towns in Western Washington” to their home in rural Sumner for a garden party (The Daffodil Festival 2002). The Sumner area was full of daffodil fields at that time, and the annual event continued to grow in size. In 1934, Lee Merrill, part of the group’s founding members, suggested the event expand to include a parade, with automobiles and bicycles covered in the daffodil blooms. The festival typically included a ball and parade, along with other festivities. Currently, Daffodil Festival events include parades, the Princess Promenade and Tea, and Queen’s Coronation, which are held in Tacoma, Puyallup, Sumner, and Orting between February and May (The Daffodil Festival 2022).

Physical Description

Smyser prepared a float for the 1936 Daffodil Parade for Tacoma Utilities (Figure 73 and Figure 74; today Tacoma Public Utilities). Smyser’s warehouse served as the construction location for the “big float,” with Walter H. Sutter, a scenic designer, in charge (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1937). According to a description in the *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, the float’s theme was “power [...] first symbolized by three plunging horses, made with varying shades of flowers to give a dappled effect, which will be out in front of the 60-foot float. The body of the float will carry an electric generator, also made of daffodils, the armature or ‘insides’ of which will revolve, made of contrasting flowers. At the rear of the float will be a huge electric bulb, with radiating rays of light symbolized” (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1936). The horses, according to the *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, were the classical depiction of power (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1937).



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, Chapin Bowen Collection G20.1-119

Figure 73
Tacoma Utilities Float in the Daffodil Parade, April 18, 1936.



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio D2513-5

Figure 74
Daffodil Parade, April 18, 1936, looking north on Pacific Avenue likely near S 10th Street; the Tacoma Utilities float is in background.

5.3.3. Tacoma Light Department Float, 1937

Year:	1937
Parade:	Daffodil Parade
Location:	Tacoma
Designers:	Bert Smyser, Walter H. Sutter

History

The history of the Daffodil Festival is described above in Section 5.3.2. The Daffodil Festival in 1937 included a ball, parade, and various displays of daffodil varieties (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1937). For the 1937 festival, Smyser designed and constructed a float for the Tacoma Light Department (today part of Tacoma Public Utilities) and collaborated with Sutter on the float, as they had on the previous year's Daffodil Parade float (see Section 5.3.2).

Physical Description

The Tacoma Light Department's float in the 1937 Daffodil Parade was an impressive feat, "depicting in daffodils Tacoma's creation of power from the waters of [the] Olympic mountains" (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1937). Smyser and Sutter ran tests at the department's shops, turning it "into an experimental laboratory" and developed waterfalls, lighting effects, and other float features (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1937). Plans for the float included a 1,200-pound battery, 25,000 daffodils, and "enough water for a lake" (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1937).

5.3.4. Aplets and Cotlets Float, 1953

Year:	1953
Parade:	Portland Rose Festival
Location:	Portland, Oregon
Designer:	Bert Smyser

History

Smyser was hired to design the Aplets and Cotlets float for the 1953 Portland Rose Festival parade (McCready 1953). Aplets and Cotlets was owned at the time by Liberty Orchards company, for which Smyser created a display in 1940 the New York World's Fair (*The News Tribune* 1940a). The company was founded in 1920 in Cashmere, Washington by Armenian refugee immigrants Mark Balaban and Armen Tertsgian. Using surplus apples from their orchard, they created Aplets, an apple and walnut confection based on locoum (better known in the U.S. as Turkish delight), shortly followed by Cotlets, made with apricots and walnuts (Liberty Orchards 2022). The company grew over the following decades and remained a family business until 2021, when it was sold to Russian food company KDV Group (Ryder-Marks 2021). Smyser had previously (in 1940) designed an exhibit for the company for a fair in New York (Section 5.2.5).

Physical Description

While no descriptions of the original float have been identified, it is known to have included oxen, which were reused for Seattle Seafair’s float in the 1992 Daffodil Parade. The 1992 float was designed by H. John Benham, an experienced float maker, and won first place (*The News Tribune* 1992; Savelle 1992). Benham’s reconfigured 62-foot float can be seen in Figure 75 and includes a front portion with a rider, possibly intended to represent a Native American, on a horse, followed by the oxen pulling a large covered wagon. The float has a plaque on the front that reads “DISCOVER THE GREAT PACIFIC NW” and is covered in flowers and greenery (*The News Tribune* 1992). It is unknown if this design was similar to Smyser’s 1953 float.



Source: *The News Tribune* 1992

Figure 75
Seattle Seafair’s float, designed by H. John Benham, in the 1992 Daffodil Parade, which reused Smyser’s oxen built for his Aplets and Cotlets float in the 1953 Portland Rose Festival parade.

5.3.5. Additional Float Designs

In addition to the float projects listed above, research revealed brief information on additional Smyser-designed floats.

- 1939: the Construction Council of Tacoma entered a float depicting Smyser’s New Exhibition Hall (see Section 4.4) in the 1939 Golden Jubilee Parade in Tacoma (Figure 76). Although unconfirmed, it is very likely the float was designed and built by Smyser.
- 1940: Smyser Display Service was hired to design and build the “theme section” of the Wenatchee Apple Blossom festival parade, held on April 27, 1940 in Wenatchee, Washington.

The News Tribune article also notes he “came home with several more private float contracts” (*The News Tribune* 1940a).

- 1950: Smyser designed the grand sweepstakes float for the Apple Blossom Festival in Wenatchee in May 1950 (*The News Tribune* 1950b).



Source: Northwest Room at The Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio D8652-36

Figure 76
Smyser’s New Exhibition Hall in float form for the Tacoma Golden Jubilee Parade on July 22, 1939. The driver’s head and steering wheel can be seen just in front of the building.

5.4. Conceptual Designs

Following Smyser’s tax fraud conviction in 1953, it appears he did not receive any more commissions, and he turned to conceptual designs. Two such projects have been identified, both related to the Seattle World’s Fair in 1962 (Century 21 Exposition), suggesting that his interest in displays and design had not waned.

5.4.1. 1961 Auburn World’s Fair

Year Designed: ca.1958

By late July 1958, Seattle had been selected to host the World’s Fair, but Lieutenant Governor John Cherberg, the Tacoma City Council, and Bert Smyser all proposed the site of the fair be moved to a site somewhere between Seattle and Tacoma (Callaghan 2012; Duncan 1958). According to a 1958 *The News Tribune* article, the idea was started by Cherberg. Smyser proposed that the fair be held at Auburn’s U.S. Army Depot property, which included 590 acres and 70 acres of buildings and “a sweeping view of Mount Rainier” (Duncan 1958). Additionally, the site was served by four rail lines, the Stuck (now White) River, already had installed sewer lines, and neighboring land could accommodate 100 acres of parking. Because of World War II, the 1939/1940 San Francisco and New York World’s Fairs were the last time the U.S. had hosted such an event: “an unprecedented 22 years” (Callaghan 2012; Fresno State 2022).

Given Smyser’s previous experience, “folks listened, at least folks in Tacoma and South King County who had combined in a campaign to wrestle the fair from Seattle” (Callaghan 2012). Smyser claimed that a World’s Fair in Seattle would be “second rate” as a result of “poor transportation, parking and housing facilities, plus the high cost of demolishing property,” and that three years would not be enough time to complete all of the needed work (Duncan 1958). Despite the efforts of those living to the south, Seattle retained hosting duties.

Smyser had a variety of ideas for an Auburn World’s Fair, including: (1) timing the opening of I-5 between Seattle and Tacoma to coincide with the fair;¹⁹ (2) building a “gigantic” Seafair-land, similar to Disneyland; (3) holding Kentucky Derby tune-up (preparation) races at the nearby Longacres racetrack in Renton; and (4) building a 60,000-seat sports stadium, originally proposed by Cherberg (Duncan 1958). Perhaps most iconic of his ideas, however, was a proposal for a “futuristic, sky-high restaurant” and associated transit system that would circle the fairgrounds and provide a “breathtaking view of the countryside” (Duncan 1958). Smyser proposed rocketship-like cars (Figure 77 and Figure 78) that would wind up to a restaurant at the top of a tower.

Background

Many World’s Fairs (see additional details in Section 6.3) considered a new, iconic design as an integral part of branding. This started with the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris, which introduced the Eiffel Tower, and was followed by the Ferris Wheel at the 1893 Colombian Exposition. According to Erik

¹⁹ The first segment of I-5 opened in Tacoma in December 1960, but was not completed until 1967 with the final Washington segment connecting Tacoma to Everett (Dougherty 2010).

Larson in his 2003 book *The Devil in the White City*, 1893 fair officials wanted to “out-Eiffel Eiffel.” The tradition continued and included the Trylon and Perisphere at the 1939/1940 New York World’s Fair,²⁰ the Atomium for Expo 58 in Brussels, and the Magic Fountain of Montjuic for the 1929 International Exposition of Barcelona.

Edward Carlson, a chief organizer of the 1962 World’s Fair, was inspired during a 1959 trip to Germany. Drawing on designs for the Stuttgart Television Tower (a needle-like structure with restaurant at the top in Germany) and the Atomium, Carlson challenged designers to create a visual centerpiece for the 1962 Fair. Although many designers, architects, and builders were riffing on the general shape, Carlson and Jim Douglass, another Fair organizer, approached architects John Graham and Company for preliminary designs. Graham, credited with including the concept of a revolving restaurant, then “turned to [Victor] Steinbrueck to develop the structure’s architectural character” (Ochsner 2014:304). Steinbrueck’s August 24, 1960 drawing is generally considered the first architectural rendering of what was ultimately built in Seattle.²¹ Although Carlson prompted designers to develop drawings, there are no identified records of a formal open competition. Several of the designs “can be categorized as elaborations upon the ‘tethered balloon’ or the ‘spiked flying saucer’ concept,” and were like Smyser’s design (Gordon 1998:3; Ochsner 2014:304).

²⁰ As seen in Figure 83.

²¹ Some debate surrounds the Space Needle design, but today it is generally considered to have been designed by both Steinbrueck and John Graham, Sr. See Ochsner (2014) for additional details.



Source: Duncan 1958

Figure 77
Smyser's sketch for a restaurant and aerial-rail suspended rapid transit system (see Section 5.4.2) at the World's Fair, which he recommended take place in Auburn.

5.4.2. Aerial-Rail Suspended Rapid Transit System, 1964

Year Designed: Unknown, likely ca.1958
 Patent Filed: August 27, 1964
 Patent Issued: 1966

In April 1966, Smyser was granted a patent for a suspended rail transit system that was a type of monorail (Lund 1974; Smyser 1966). It was designed alongside his other ideas for the 1961 Auburn World’s Fair (Section 5.4.1), and was integrated into his elevated restaurant, seen in Figure 77.

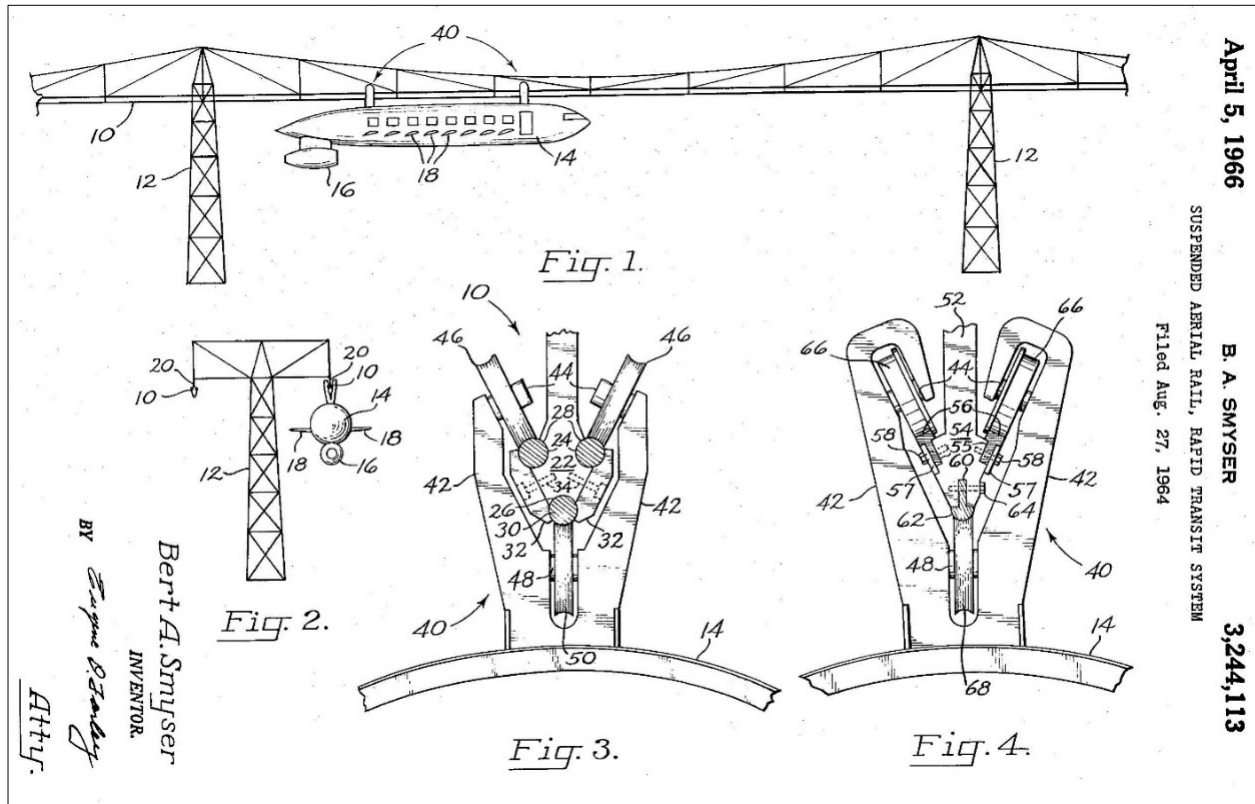
Smyser saw existing designs as expensive and prone to cars swaying. His design was “relatively fast and inexpensive to build; [...] relatively free from problems of car swaying and buffeting; [...] used to span natural obstacles such as wide rivers and canyons; and [...] operated at a high rate of speed with a high degree of safety” (Smyser 1966). The system was designed to provide transportation for his conceptual designs for the 1962 World’s Fair (Section 5.4.1). It would transport visitors around the fairgrounds, providing views of both the fair and the natural scenery, before winding up the base of a tower and ending at a restaurant (Figure 77).

The system had an overhead composite track with a pair of horizontal tracks or cables, with a stabilizing section between and beneath the horizontal tracks, all supported by towers, as seen in his patent illustrations (patent figures 1 and 2) in Figure 78. Suspended cars hung from the track, and a third wheel was attached to the side that ran along the lower stabilizing track; the cars had capacity for 50 to 60 passengers. Cars also had “a plurality of laterally extending vanes or fins” to reduce the car’s weight while traveling at high speeds and minimizing stress on the track (Smyser 1966). The system was powered by a “suitable” motor attached to the cars. The exact method of propulsion is not specified, but the patent references both a jet and rocket system (Smyser 1966). The practicalities of using either source of locomotion in a semi-urban environment, where thrust is produced by high velocity super-heated gas, is no small feat, and is not directly addressed in the design. While the visual impact and associations with futurism with these engines are significant, it is also likely that their choice was informed by the desired function of the system, namely high speed travel. Neither jets nor rockets are particularly efficient or useful at low to moderate velocities, and the design mentions a high rate of speed multiple times, suggesting that this system was designed for much faster transport than other contemporaneous monorail systems. Jet engines are most advantageous at speeds of 300-600 miles per hour (mph) and are extremely inefficient under 200 mph (NASA 2021). The overall design provides for multiple options not just in propulsion but also for attachment; patent illustrations (patent figures 3 and 4) in Figure 78 show alternative ways the car could be attached to the overhead track (Smyser 1966).

Background

Like the Space Needle (see Section 5.4.1), the idea for a “futuristic mode of transportation” was an early concept of Fair organizers, and “it was felt that a monorail could fit the Fair’s focus on modern

technology” (Gordon 2003:2). Various companies presented their designs for selection in 1959; while identified records do not include Smyser in the list of applicants, he may have done so.²²



Source: Smyser 1966

Figure 78
 Illustrations in Smyser’s aerial-rail suspended rapid system patent. Callout numbers refer to individual elements cited in the patent.

²² Those listed as providing designs include the St. Louis Car Company, Monorail Inc., Goodyear with Stephens-Adamson, Northrop, Alweg International, Passenger Belt Conveyors Inc., and Lockheed Aircraft (Gordon 2003:2, *Seattle Times* 1959a, 1959b).

6. HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Bert Smyser’s career spanned from 1909 to the mid-1960s. This section provides a broad historic and architectural context for considering the economic and cultural setting during his career, and their potential influences on his work. Smyser, who largely designed in the Streamline Moderne style, appears to have been introduced to the style at the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition, like many fair visitors. The histories of the style and fair are intertwined, and, like everything else, are based on previous and contemporary events.

6.1. General Historic Context

World War I (known at the time as the World War or the Great War) began in August 1914 following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian empire. Although the U.S. initially remained neutral, it supplied war materials primarily to Great Britain and France including arms, munitions, raw materials, and food. With Germany’s supply lines cut off by the Allies (Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy, and others), Germany began attacking shipping routes around Britain and Ireland, but stopped after the British civilian *Lusitania* was torpedoed by German forces in May 1915. When Germany resumed submarine warfare two years later, the U.S. officially entered the War on April 6, 1917. Washington State’s economy benefited from the U.S. sending supplies to Allied Powers, particularly as “lumber and wheat prices climbed to record levels and the demand for flour and processed salmon kept new mills and canneries humming. Wood and steel shipbuilding grew from a minor industry to second only to lumber in the Northwest economy. Seattle, Tacoma, and Vancouver built new shipyards, first for European customers, then for the U.S. government” (Wilma 2004). Pro-war propaganda produced by the U.S. government during the time included messaging through the use of display windows, which Smyser participated in (see Section 6.2).

Russia withdrew from the War in October 1917 due to the Bolshevik Revolution, which also sparked fears that a similar event was imminent in the U.S. (Wilma 2004). This fear was pronounced in the Northwest, as local anti-war protesters had been vocal throughout, to the extent that Washington State (among others) passed an anti-syndicalism statute in 1917 that limited espousing “views and opinions that differed from or opposed those of the government” (Mineshima-Lowe 2009). Fighting ended in November 1918, following an infusion of Allied resources in the western front, and officially ended when Germany signed the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919.

Although popular depictions of the 1920s in America paint the decade as a gilded age, it was also a time of stark economic division. For those in rural areas of the United States, the 1920s started with a recession as European farmers began production and altered the global farming economy (Thulin 2021). The year 1920 was the first census year in which more people lived in cities than in rural areas, but for those who either did not move to a city, were African Americans, or were recent immigrants, the 1920s “were roaring as in a roaring fire that was burning people out” (Peter Liebhold in Thulin 2021). Over 40% of Americans earned a living below the “minimum family subsistence level,” as economists of the time

called it, which amounted to \$1,500 annually, or an approximate average of \$24,500 in 2022 dollars (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2022; Zeitz n.d.).

Blue collar workers, on the other hand, saw their work weeks fall from nearly 56 hours to 44, but their wages rose by 25% (Zeitz n.d.). The widespread adoption of electricity and the advent of the assembly line and other mechanization resulted in higher incomes, more things to buy, and more time in which to enjoy them (Thulin 2021; Zeitz n.d.). The increasing use of electricity would later be represented in Smyser’s parade floats for the Daffodil Parade in 1936 and 1937 (see Sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3).

By the end of the decade, “American families spent over 20% of their household earnings” on things like refrigerators, ready-to-wear clothing, factory-made furniture, cars, and entertainment, including movies and radio, both of which boomed in popularity during the decade (Zeitz n.d.). Advertising became its own industry and included a sophisticated and intertwined system that included lines of credit and consumer research and utilized print advertisements, window displays, and mail order sales (Lefebvre and Burclaff 2020). The rise in consumerism was aspirational in more than a material way:

“The proliferation of advertising—alongside the maturation of the publishing, music, and film industries—exposed citizens to a new gospel of fun that was intimately associated with the purchase of goods and services. ‘Sell them their dreams,’ a prominent ad-man intoned. ‘Sell them what they longed for and hoped for and almost despaired of having. Sell them hats by splashing sunlight across them. Sell them dreams—dreams of country clubs and proms and visions of what might happen if only. After all, people don’t buy things to have them.... They buy hope—hope of what your merchandise might do for them’” (Zeitz n.d.).

Nation-wide, the 18th Amendment’s prohibition of alcohol (and enforcement via the Volstead Act) went into effect in 1920, but in Washington, residents had already passed a statewide prohibition in 1914 that went into effect in January 1916. The manufacture and sale of alcohol was banned, but individuals with permits were allowed to import 12 quarts of beer or two quarts of hard liquor every 20 days from other states. In 1917, however, the U.S. Congress banned shipping any alcohol through the government postal service, and the following year Washington enacted a “bone-dry” referendum, which ended the permit system (Becker 2010). Exceptions were made for alcohol consumed as a part of religious services and prescription medication, which often contained high levels of alcohol (Lerner n.d.; Hagley Museum 2022).

Following Washington State’s and the subsequent national prohibition laws, the state experienced a rise in black-market alcohol production, bootlegging, church attendance (due to alcohol consumption permitted for religious services), criminal convictions, pharmacies (supplying alcohol-based medicine prescriptions), deaths due to unregulated alcohol, and, ironically, intemperance. There was also a decline in tax revenue as there was no longer revenue from sales tax on alcohol. There was also a decline in Washington’s burgeoning wine industry, which had begun in earnest approximately a decade prior (Becker 2010; Lerner n.d.; Luxton 2021; Perdue 2015). Washington State repealed the state prohibition law in 1932 (although it retained the prohibition of sale to minors), and in 1933 prohibition ended at the federal level (Becker 2010).

During Prohibition, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) “took it upon itself to enforce the Volstead Act and act upon anti-immigrant hostilities,” particularly in rural areas across the nation (Thulin 2021). The terrorist organization emerged following the end of the Civil War and saw waves of increasing and decreasing dominance and presence. The KKK rose in power during the 1920s; by 1925, there were over 5 million known members and it “controlled politics in Indiana, Texas, Oklahoma, and Colorado [and] was enormously powerful in several other states,” including California, Oregon, and Georgia (Caldbick 2019; Zeitz n.d.). Although Black communities were the most explicitly targeted by the KKK, a variety of people were targeted based on ethnicity, employment, and religion, among others. It supported the passage of the 1924 Immigration Act (also known as the Johnson-Reed Act), which enacted strict immigration quotas, required visas prior to arrival, and “effectively cut off all immigration from Asia,” and was firmly rooted in the eugenics movement (Diamond 2020).²³ In Washington State, the KKK exploited and played up fears about immigrants, particularly Asians and Asian Americans, as well as aversions to unions, liberals, and the unemployed. By 1921, there were five known KKK groups operating in Tacoma alone, although it began to decline after 1925 when its “apocalyptic vision of an America overtaken by racial minorities, Communists, immigrants, and immorality proved illusory” (Caldbick 2019).

Although the Great Depression started on October 29, 1929, with the Wall Street stock market crash, it took nearly a year for the severity to take hold in Washington and the Puget Sound (Wilma 2002). Massive layoffs began in June 1930 and included virtually every sector: maritime, lumber, manufacturing, coal mining, fishing, and flour milling. Workers who retained their jobs typically did not see a reduction in their wages, but employers cut their hours. By the fall of that same year, “local charities were at their limits serving free meals to long lines” and overtaxed (Wilma 2022). Generally, white collar and municipal or military employees retained their jobs, and the impact “varied according to industry, class, race, location, and luck” (Gregory 2019). The number of farmers in Washington increased during the Depression, “as people who years before had left farmsteads for city jobs returned, moving in with relatives or friends” (Gregory 2019). This return to farms had a significant impact on Black and Asian American farmers, who were pushed out of jobs formerly shunned by white people and subsequently led to decreased employment opportunities for them.

By 1933, Washington’s average unemployment rate was 33%, significantly higher than the national rate of 25% that same year. It was also in 1933 that Franklin Roosevelt assumed the presidency, and, with Congress, established a variety of emergency measures and programs that would come to be known collectively as the New Deal. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), designed to reduce employment among young men, significantly altered national parks – in a nine-year period (1933–1942), it constructed more infrastructure in the parks than in the entire history of the National Park Service, (established 1916), including roads, employee housing, and comfort stations (National Park Service 2000). Large New Deal projects in Washington included the construction of Bonneville and Grand Coulee dams on the Columbia River, the latter of which was later memorialized by Smyser in the 1939/1940 San Francisco and New York World’s Fairs.²⁴ In Tacoma, work included street and sewer improvements, bridge and trail construction (including the original Narrows Bridge), and the relocation and recreation of Fort Nisqually

²³ The Johnson-Reed Act was not the first law to limit immigration in the U.S. – one of the most significant was the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act – but earlier acts were limited in their ability to tightly regulate all immigration.

²⁴ As seen in Figure 67

from the DuPont area to Tacoma’s Point Defiance Park (The Living New Deal 2022). In addition to the variety of infrastructure projects the New Deal funded, measures also included resources for artists. “Work relief was one of the goals, but leaders of these programs often also hoped to sponsor indigenous, regional talent and encourage the growth of a national, popular artistic culture” and employed artists, actors, photographers, musicians, and filmmakers (Kindig 2009).

During the 1930s and Great Depression, the U.S. also saw a rise in civil rights movements. The National Industrial Recovery Act, part of the New Deal, gave workers the right to join unions, which revitalized declining memberships throughout the country and state. Strikes, particularly the 83-day-long Northwest 1934 waterfront strike that froze virtually all trade on the West Coast, sparked a wave of organizing and strikes across a variety of industries, ranging from cannery workers to journalists to loggers. The 1934 strike, organized by the International Longshore Warehouse Union, included longshoremen in Washington, Oregon, and California who participated in a walkout that halted shipping from Bellingham to San Diego and created a supply crisis for Alaska and Hawaii (Gregory 2009).

Unions not only represented better wages and working conditions, but by the end of the decade were also considered a key to genuine democracy. Established organizations in the Northwest were bolstered by unions, the Communist Party, and the left wing of the Democratic Party, and included the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, and the Anti-Defamation League. It was also during this time that Filipino Americans and Japanese Americans began organizing (Gregory 2009). One of the most significant non-labor rights established in Washington State was the rejection of a 1935 bill that would have made mixed-race marriages illegal, which “signaled the start of a civil rights alliance that would win other victories over the next decade and a half, including the struggle to win jobs in Boeing and other defense industries during World War II, the fight to force stores, restaurants, and hotels to serve people of color, and the campaign against racial housing covenants” (Gregory 2009).

By 1937, Washington State employees had returned to 93% of their 1929 average income, higher than the national average of 88% (Gregory 2009). With another war looming at the end of the 1930s, however, Washington emerged as a leader in air and watercraft production, bolstered by the cheap energy from the new dams on the Columbia River. This new regional industry increased after the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, which launched the U.S. into World War II. People flocked to Washington for jobs. In 1940, the state population stood around 1,736,000, but just three years later had increased by an estimated 500,000, and by the end of the 1940s, the population stood at 2,378,500 (Findlay 2022a; Schmid 1944:299). Nearly every county in the state saw a population increase and some kind of wartime production effort (Schmid 1944:300-301). Although ship and aircraft construction (particularly at Boeing) became far more prominent and important to the area’s employment, lumber, agriculture, mining, and fishing, along with supporting labor such as restaurants, laundry service, and retail boomed during this time, as did the military (Schmid 1944:302-303). Between 1943 and 1944, airplane and ship contracts alone “were valued at three times the total of all manufacturing in the state in 1939” (Warren 1999).

With many of the men fighting in different places throughout the globe, women began entering the labor force in much greater numbers than previously, and eventually made up approximately half of the

workforce.²⁵ Smyser and his second wife, Helen, worked closely together at Smyser Display Service, and he also employed several women, primarily artists, over the years. Most photos of his workshop, however, show men. The war diversified the workplace in terms of race as well: “African Americans came to the Northwest during the war to work in shipyards and airplane factories in Portland and Seattle; Latinos came to work on farms and ranches; [and] Indians left reservations in substantial numbers to work in cities and enlist in the armed services” (Findlay 2022a). This, in turn, changed the diversity of the state – while not everyone who worked in Washington during the war stayed, many did. Additionally, restrictions on Chinese immigration were lessened in 1942, and that same year the federal government entered an agreement with the Mexican government to allow seasonal farm workers to enter the country.

On the other hand, Japanese and Japanese American residents were uprooted from their homes in April 1942 as authorized through Executive Order 9066, which forcibly removed over 100,000 people of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast to incarceration camps for the duration of the war. By the 1930s, approximately three-fourths of all produce in the Puget Sound region was grown on Japanese and Japanese American farms (Marsha 2017). Following Executive Order 9066, some internees had neighbors who helped maintain their farms while they were held in the concentration camps, but most were forced to sell their land before leaving, often for far less than it was worth. Many white businessmen in Bellevue (along with other places throughout the Northwest and the county) seized the land and opportunity, and “began the suburban and urban development that has built the city to what we know today. With the farmers forced out, the cleared farmland became available for upscale shopping centers and housing developments made accessible with new highways” (Marsha 2017). When interned families returned after the war, those who still owned land faced sabotaged wells, burned property, and finances too meager to purchase equipment.

World War II ended on September 2, 1945, when Japan signed formal surrender documents (the war in Europe had ended on May 8 that same year when Germany surrendered). Among a host of changes this brought to the world and the region, including servicemen returning home and a housing boom, Northwest residents also discovered the work at Hanford, located in southeast Washington, that was instrumental in producing plutonium for the atomic bombs used against Japan during the war. World War II radically changed the state, and arguably “represented a turning point for Pacific Northwest society” (Findlay 2022a). Although the war was over, Boeing had emerged as a backbone of the economy, the demographics of the state had shifted, the workforce was more integrated gender-wise, and the region was emerging as a significant contributor to the Pacific Rim economic system (Findlay 2022b). In many ways, the end of the war had little impact on the Northwest’s manufacturing with the subsequent start of the Cold War. Work at Hanford expanded, and additional reactors were constructed until 1959, with at least one reactor remaining in operation through 1987 (U.S. Department of Energy 2022). The Cold War also kept defense-related activity relatively high in the state, as did other wars including the Korean and Vietnam Wars (Findlay 2022b). The area was an ideal supply depot, as both Seattle and Tacoma had large ports, both well-established and founded in the 1910s.

Although production in the Northwest did not see a significant decline following the end of World War II, the state, along with the country, entered a radically different period at the end of the War. Enrollment at

²⁵ It is worth noting that the perception of a housewife, both before and after World War II, is rooted in the idea of whiteness as the standard of normalcy. Black, Brown, Indigenous, and Asian women were typically wage-earners to help support their households, even during peacetime.

the University of Washington doubled from 7,000 in 1945 to 14,000 in 1946 (Findlay 2022b). A significant need for housing arose to accommodate the influx of people who remained in or relocated to the Northwest after the war, coupled with a lack of construction during the Great Depression when resources were directed away from domestic construction in order to support war efforts: at the start of the Depression (1930), there were 330,000 housing starts in the country, but just three years later it had fallen to 93,000, starting the post-war era in acute housing shortages in some areas (McAlester 2015:588).

Prior to and through World War II, home ownership remained out of reach for most people. Banks typically required at least 50% down payment and repayment of the loan typically within five to seven years (Rothstein 2017:63). To help the middle class purchase homes, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) was established in 1934. The FHA established 20-year terms and much lower down payments, and for veterans, no down payment was required. It also insured bank mortgages up to 80% of the purchase price, providing “incentives that reduced the risks for housing developers” (Boyle 2017:8). One of the requirements for insurance, however, was an FHA appraisal that “included a whites-only requirement,” and “judged that properties would probably be too risky for insurance if they were in racially mixed neighborhoods or even in white neighborhoods near [B]lack ones that might possibly integrate in the future,” a process that would eventually become known as redlining (Rothstein 2017:63-64). Not only did this systematically establish segregated housing throughout the country, it also de facto kept non-white families from purchasing property with the advantages that white families did.²⁶

Between the end of the war and 1954, over 13 million houses were constructed. At the same time, automobile production grew by over 400% (Boyle 2017:8). Marriage and birth rates exploded, not only in the U.S. but also “in virtually the entire Western industrialized world” to the point where the annual birth rate in some countries doubled (Bavel and Reher 2013:257). Popular culture, along with veterans returning to the domestic work force, promoted an image of women’s “traditional” return to role of housewife and mother. All of these factors led to the growth of suburbs with relatively little new development in cities. This “centrifugal movement of people to the suburbs” became the most characteristic and significant shift in the mid-century decades (Schmid 1944:75). Houses were “designed to accommodate active, young families, while the neighborhood itself incorporated space for parks, schools, and cul-de-sacs and street arrangements that slowed traffic and created a family friendly environment” (Boyle 2017:9). Consumerism, and the widespread introduction of appliances such as irons, washers and dryers, lawnmowers, and televisions into the home, were standard (Ohio State University 1999:7).

6.2. Context for Window Displays

The earliest recorded shop display window in Europe was installed by Frances Place in 1801 in his London tailoring business. At the time, it was considered a “reckless extravagance,” but Place later wrote that he “sold from the window more goods [...] than paid journeymen’s wages and the expenses of housekeeping” (Robertson 2011). Generally speaking, however, displays were a rare exception (in both England and the U.S.) until the mid-to-late-19th century. Most large-scale stores were wholesale, and in

²⁶ Redlining and the wider practice of housing discrimination are significant and complex historical policies that are only briefly presented here; for a full understanding of the influence on institutional and individual racism, generational wealth via real estate, and the physical way our communities have been shaped since before its founding, see Rothstein (2017) for an in-depth discussion.

retail, “the necessary staples that customers requested were folded and stacked on tables, or on simple wooden shelves behind counters [and ...] the assistance of a salesperson was required to access the merchandise, and little thought was given to displaying merchandise for impulse buying” (Ohio State University 1999:2).

By the 1880s, retail began to be more lucrative for stores than wholesale. Harry Gordon Selfridge is generally credited with the concept of popularizing window dressings and displays when he oversaw changes to the Marshall Field’s store in Chicago in 1883 (Ohio State University 1999:3; Strickland 2021:1). In addition to ripping “out the counters and high shelving that traditionally housed piece goods in the store interiors and instead [piling] merchandise on tables in the center of the main floor to make it more accessible to the customers,” he also installed large windows flanking the main entry and displayed goods to attract customers (Ohio State University 1999:3). The idea quickly caught on, and numerous manuals and guides were developed to help store owners and managers. Although window displays in the 19th century were very different from those that would come later, stores embraced them as a new form of custom advertising that would draw people into the establishment.

Early window designs often featured innovative uses of stock, such as bridges built from spools of thread and mountains constructed from piles of hats, but it was generally not considered a highly skilled job, and window dressers were just above porters in the store hierarchy (Strege 2009:3). This changed at the turn of the century when Marshall Fields, an upscale department store, hired Arthur Fraser in 1895; Fraser revolutionized the display style and eventually developed displays that featured a limited number of goods displayed in a museum-like setting (Ohio State University 1999:3-4). He also introduced elaborate backgrounds in 1913, drawing influences from stage sets and contemporary art movements (Figure 79). In the first five years that Fraser worked at Marshall Fields the window dressing staff quadrupled, and by 1916, 50 people were employed in the department (Strege 2009:4).



Source: WTTW 2022

Figure 79

An Arthur Fraser window display from November 1925 at Marshall Fields.

Window dressing emerged as a legitimate art form, a shift largely attributed to Fraser and Gene Moore, the latter of whom started in the industry in the mid-1930s and is perhaps best known for his displays at Tiffany & Company (Ohio State University 1999:6). Moore's windows mixed "the extraordinary with the ordinary. [He] placed legendary Tiffany jewelry with unexpected, everyday materials like household string, popcorn, and even a toy dump truck," as seen in Figure 80 (Tiffany & Company 2022). During the later part of the 20th century, companies also often hired well-known artists such as Andy Warhol and Salvador Dali, particularly as art movements shifted toward surrealism. Store windows served as an

important advertising medium, and in addition the clothing for sale, “they promoted current events, movies, operas, and art gallery openings” (Ohio State University 1999:7).



Source: Tiffany & Company 2022

Figure 80

A Gene Moore-designed Tiffany & Company window display from 1957.

The federal government also utilized window displays as a part of propaganda during World War I. Woodrow Wilson established the Committee on Public Information (CPI), sometimes known as the Creel Committee, in April 1917 when the U.S. entered the war. The aims of the CPI were to “make every American a participant in the war effort” and provide “an intellectual justification” for the country’s involvement (Neumann 2009). In 1918, the CPI appointed Smyser chairman of a Tacoma committee to make sure “window displays advertising [...] Liberty loans and other government calls upon the public” would be “regulated harmoniously throughout the city” (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1918). Smyser expected full cooperation from all window dressers and store owners and commented that “it is interesting to note the importance which the government places in displays in store windows to reach the people with its messages” (*Tacoma Daily Ledger* 1918). Following the end of the war, the CPI’s reputation declined with the general conclusion that it “had oversold the conflict and had created a climate that suppressed

legitimate dissent” and it was viewed “as an example of mistakes to be avoided” when Roosevelt created the Office of War Information when the country entered World War II (Neumann 2009).

Window displays continued to be an important part of advertising through the 1950s (Figure 81). Particularly in the post-war era, windows were used to educate customers about new products as well as sell them. Common appliances on display included irons, washers and dryers, and televisions (Ohio State University 1999:7). As more and more families purchased televisions, however, advertisers could bring the window to the customer. In this way, they could reach far more people than those walking by a traditional store window (Ohio State University 1999:7; Stregre 2009:8). As a result, the industry’s reliance on window displays declined, and the practice largely fell to the wayside.



Source: St. Amand 2022

Figure 81
Crowds in 1952 at a St. Louis department store.

6.3. Context for World’s Fairs and Expositions

Broadly, the goals for World’s Fairs can be divided into three eras: industrialization (1851–1938), cultural exchange (1939–1987), and national branding (1988–present) (Wong 2022). The 1851 Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations (also known as the Great Exposition or the Crystal Palace Exhibition) in London is generally considered the first World’s Fair, although the roots can be traced to at least the 17th century’s agricultural fairs and festivals. These small-scale events gave way to “festivals dedicated to showing off what individuals and groups of mechanics were able to accomplish through new innovations” and continued to grow over time (Robert Rydell in Yuko 2021).

By the time of the Crystal Palace Exhibition, which attracted approximately 6 million visitors, the rise of industrialization had prompted worries by some about a changing world. The Crystal Palace Exposition’s goal (along with subsequent fairs) was to illuminate the future under continued industrialization (Lobell 2022; Yuko 2021). To frame industrialization and other developments as progress, fairs in the second half of the 19th century featured “the spoils of colonialism [...] with ‘human zoos’ featuring Indigenous residents of colonized countries reinforcing racist conceptions of Western and white supremacy” (Wong 2022). Non-Western and indigenous cultures and traditions were presented as less advanced and a foil to the lifeways offered by growing industrialization. Fairs generally ran for approximately six months, a trend that held until at least the middle of the 20th century.

By the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition (sometimes referred to as the White City; Figure 82), World’s Fairs included displays of how machinery was constructed instead of simply showing the working object. This approach allowed manufactures to demonstrate “the quality of their goods and justify the price of the final product” and “instill confidence in consumers who may still be hesitant about mass-produced items” (Allison C. Marsh in Yuko 2021). The Columbian Exposition was the largest World’s Fair to date, with approximately 27.5 million tickets sold during its 179-day run, representing between 12 and 16 million visitors (Lobell 2022). It was also the first to include pavilions dedicated to different countries, with 46 nations participating (Lazzaretto et al. 2017:12).



Source: Library of Congress, control no. 2007663371

Figure 82

A panorama view of the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress.

In 1928, the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) was established to supervise World’s Fairs and oversee the timing, location, and protocols for countries working together. The BIE also established classifications for fairs, separating “World Expos” from smaller “Specialized Expos” (BIE 2022). The latter of these encompasses smaller and more focused fairs, ranging in topic from building trades, urbanism, agriculture, to hygiene. Specialized fairs occurred much more often than World’s Fairs, and often several were held in a single year across the globe.

Following the success of the Columbian Exposition, fairs were held all over the world. There was no set schedule, but they generally occurred at least once every two or three years. In the U.S. they were often held to commemorate an event and offered an opportunity for smaller communities “to step onto the world’s stage,” often by debuting new technology (Lazzaretto et al. 2017:13). Post-World War I Fairs introduced new architectural styles, as opposed to the revival styles – often Neoclassical in the U.S. – featured at earlier fairs. The Art Deco style gained its name from Paris’ 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Moderne (International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts), which offered a large-scale venue for the new, “smart” but not “pretty” style (Gordon 2008:5; McAlester 2015:582). Subsequent fairs are largely credited for popularizing the Streamline Moderne style (details on the style can be found in Section 6.4), particularly the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress and 1939/1940 San Francisco’s and New York’s Fairs (Gordon 2008:5). Smyser designed displays for all

three of these fairs, and it appears that his first introduction to Streamline Moderne was at the 1933 Chicago fair.

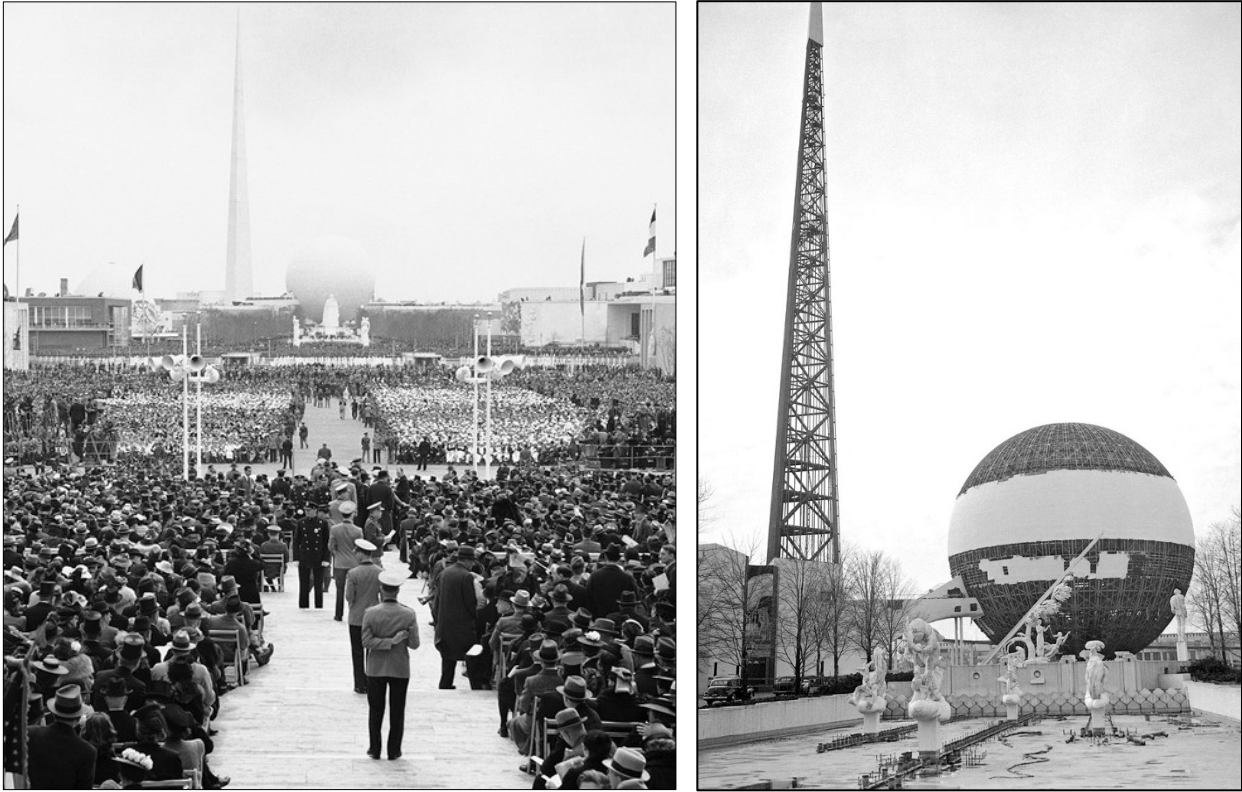
Similar to earlier fairs, the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition “was envisioned as a showcase of American economic and innovative strength. By the time it opened, though, it took on a very different role; providing hope to Americans enduring the worst depression the country had ever seen and stimulus for an economy in desperate need” (Foretek2017). The fair ended on November 1 but was so effective in its goals of hope and economic stimulus that President Franklin D. Roosevelt successfully lobbied for a re-opening in 1934 (Foretek 2017).

The architecture of the Century of Progress reflected “what [was] being done in the present, and what may happen in the future,” not what happened in the past (Unknown Author 1933:22). The buildings were uninterested in decoration, and instead were designed without windows and “unbroken planes and surfaces of asbestos and gypsum board and plywoods and other such materials on light steel frames” (Unknown Author 1933:22).²⁷ The entire fair was designed as:

a huge experimental laboratory, in which home builders and manufactures can study, and from which they might borrow for their buildings of the future. Windowless, these buildings assure, by virtue of the advancement in the science of interior lighting, that on no day of the Fair, no matter how dark and gloomy, can visitors be deprived of the full measure of beauty in interiors and exhibits. At the same time, they may point the way for many new departures in economical construction. They exemplify, too, the advancement which has been made in healthful, controlled, filtered ventilation. Architects and exhibitors have constant control over both light and ventilation regardless of the kind or time of day (Unknown Author 1933:23).

This design influence can be seen with the national rise in popularity of the Streamline Moderne style and is reflected at the local level in Tacoma in Smyer’s projects (Grief 1977:36). Immediately following the fair, at least three different local businesses employed Smyser who drew on the new aesthetic, and in some cases re-used portions of his Chicago Century of Progress exhibit (see Sections 5.1.4, 5.1.6, and 5.1.8). The 1939/1940 San Francisco and New York World’s Fairs marked a transition from industrialization to cultural exchange and a more future-oriented position; the theme of the New York World’s Fair was “building the World of Tomorrow” (Lazzaretto et al. 2017:14; Wong 2022). This optimism was cut short by the start of World War II. Icons of the New York World’s Fair, such as the Trylon (a 700-foot-tall three-sided obelisk) and Perisphere (a 200-foot spherical exhibit building), were dismantled (Figure 83) and the 40 tons of steel were repurposed for the war effort (Lazzaretto et al. 2017:14; Taylor 2013).

²⁷ It was common practice for most World’s Fair buildings to be temporary and they were disassembled at the end of the event. Typically, the sole exception was the building that housed artwork, to help protect it.



Source: Taylor 2013, Associated Press Photos

Figure 83

Left, opening speeches at the New York World's Fair, with the Trylon and Perisphere in the background; April 30, 1939. Right, dismantling the Trylon and Perisphere; January 23, 1941.

An Exposition was planned for 1942 in Rome. Known as Esposizione Universale di Roma, or E42, it was intended to “celebrate twenty years of Fascism and the revival of the Roman Empire” in an “attempt to merge past, present, and future” in recapturing the glory of ancient Rome through fascism (Molella 2012). The fair was canceled as a result of “the Axis invasion of the Soviet Union in June of 1941” (Milano 2020). While specialized fairs were held during the 1940s and 1950s, there were no World’s Fairs until 1958.

The first major World’s Fair following World War II was held in Brussels in 1958 and known as Expo 58. Fairs during the Cold War, starting with Expo 58, were optimal venues for the U.S. and the Soviet Union to display their social and technological advances (Lazzaretto et al. 2017:14). The first World’s Fair held in the U.S. after World War II was Seattle’s Century 21 Exposition in 1962. Century 21’s themes were space, science, and the future. Held at the height of the Cold War, it displayed what the world “might look like after embracing Space Age technology and mass consumption” in the 2000s and “asserted the strength of the American way of life” (Wong 2022).

Fairground development necessitated removing a portion of the Lower Queen Anne neighborhood (today known as Uptown), which consisted generally of older multi-family and commercial structures, although some larger buildings were repurposed (Becker 2012). The futuristic vision of the fair was most iconically embodied in the Space Needle, as well as the Monorail, architecture, and exhibits. Surface transportation

was determined by planners to be inadequate to move visitors from their downtown hotels to the fairgrounds, so the Monorail was built as “a modern streamlined ‘train’ wrapped around a single elevated rail” (Stein 2000a). The fair had five themed areas: the World of Science, showcasing scientific advances (Figure 84); the World of Tomorrow, which showed what homes, offices, and transportation might look like in the future; the World of Commerce and Industry, where a variety of countries and domestic manufactures had pavilions; the World of Art, with a variety of art on display; and the World of Entertainment, showcasing dance, boxing, live music, drama, and other forms of entertainment (Stein 2000b). Although Smyser no longer worked as a designer at the time of the 1962 Fair, he proposed several ideas, including a different location and versions of the Space Needle and Monorail (see Section 5.4 for more details).



Source: Seattle Municipal Archives 2022, 73098

Figure 84
The World of Science area at Century 21, designed by Minoru Yamasaki, 1962.

Later World’s Fairs in the 1970s and 1980s were smaller than earlier efforts with “a concentration on solving problems rather than trumpeting triumphs,” particularly with the general lessening of Cold War tensions (Lazzaretto et al. 2017:16). The last U.S.-hosted World’s Fair was the New Orleans’ 1984 Louisiana World Exposition. According to Wong (2022), “America hasn’t hosted a World’s Fair since 1984 because it simply hasn’t seen the medium as worthy of investment. Following the end of the Cold War, when the U.S. emerged as the world’s sole superpower, it became difficult to justify the cost of hosting a grand exposition for the sake of national reassurance and public diplomacy,” although World’s

Fairs still remain popular, particularly in Europe and Asia. Additionally, the fantasy that fairs could offer can now be found in places like theme parks and the internet; and the ambiance, international presence, comradery and friendly rivalry, and awe-inspiring architecture are components of the Olympics (Lydia Mattice Brandt in Wong 2022).

6.4. Architectural Context

Throughout his career, Smyser’s designs regularly employed elements of the Streamline Moderne style, particularly the use of smooth surfaces and rounded corners. Smyser gained the nickname “Bullnose” from his friends for his aversion to round corners (as well as his personality); in a 1974 interview he stated, “I don’t like square corners on things...I like to have them rounded” (Lund 1974). Streamline Moderne was introduced to an American audience on a large scale during the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress. It appears as though Smyser was also introduced to the style at this time. His known designs prior to 1933, such as the Mimetic style Coffee Pot Restaurant (Section 4.1) and decorative interior of Kennedy’s Used Car Showroom (Section 5.1.3), do not reflect Streamline Moderne style design principles, but most of his designs after this time are clearly influenced by the style.

Streamline Moderne is a direct descendant of the Art Deco style. A variety of artistic European architectural styles, including French Cubism, Dutch de Stijl, and Italian Futurism, influenced the Art Deco style, which was first introduced to the general American audience in 1922 (Gordon 2008; McAlester 2015:581-582). Following the start of the Great Depression, however, American architects “adjudged its romantic backsliding a betrayal and perversion of modernism” (Grief 1977:13). In response, they developed a new, modernistic style that drew inspiration from industrial design such as ships, airplanes, and automobiles: all were designed to minimize wind resistance, leading to the descriptor “streamline” (City of Long Beach 2022). Architects were inspired by the economy, speed, and romance of the transportation technology (Carley 1994:226). The 1933 Chicago Century of Progress and 1939/1940 San Francisco and New York World’s Fairs introduced Streamline Moderne to a wide audience that would eventually be embodied in everything from airplanes to hairstyles and glassware (Gordon 2008).

The 1933 Exposition featured a group of 11 model homes “to demonstrate modern architectural design, experimental materials, and new technologies such as central air conditioning and dishwashers” (National Park Service 2022b). One of these buildings was called the House of Tomorrow and designed by George Fred Keck. Keck’s design was a three-story glass-and-steel design, and more in keeping with the International style than Streamline Moderne (White 2017). From the few identified images of this group of model buildings, which are mostly of the five buildings moved to Beverly Shores (an Indiana community located on Lake Michigan) at least one of the buildings, the Florida Tropical house (Figure 85), was designed in the Streamline Moderne style, and the Armco-Ferro House also has features of the style.



Source: Indiana Landmarks 2023; Lee Lewellen, photographer

Figure 85

The 1933 Florida Tropical House designed for the Chicago Century of Progress Exposition. It is currently located in Beverly Shores, Indiana, on the shore of Lake Michigan.

Architecturally, Streamline Moderne buildings emphasize horizontality and employ smooth surfaces and curved corners (Figure 86 and Figure 87). The style strove to contain not “a single detail that could be called extraneous, without embellishment, without a line that did not seem inevitable” (Grief 1977:31). When summarized in 1937, the pillars of the style were: (1) simplicity, (2) unbroken lines, (3) use of pure colors, (4) contrasts in light and shadow, and (5) honesty in materials (anonymous notes from a home economics class in Grief 1977:3). Roofs are almost always flat, and there tends to be very little applied decoration beyond incised or struck horizontal lines. Although buildings were faced with a variety of materials, including concrete, wood, brick, and occasionally glass block, they are typically smooth, with minimal texture beyond the occasional lines. Curved walls and corners are common and again speak to the focus on aerodynamics. Building components, including poured-in-place concrete, hardware, and pipes, are exposed and integral to the design. Glass block is a common feature used both for windows and walls. Round windows, reminiscent of ship’s portholes, can also be found.

As presented earlier, building stalled during the Great Depression and during World War II most resources went to the war effort; construction – particularly housing – was overwhelmingly economical during both the 1930s and 1940s. Once the nation emerged from the war, it faced a significant housing shortage, which the federal government in part addressed through the development of the FHA (more information in Section 6.1). The FHA had established that the Minimal Traditional style was its preferred building design and even provided “publications that showed how to most effectively design” them (McAlester 2015:589). For builders, following the FHA’s outline meant a near guarantee that the loan would be approved, and thus the pre-war Art Deco and Streamline Moderne styles were largely abandoned. Some of the Art Deco and Streamline Moderne principles, however, stayed; the 1940 FHA pamphlet *Principles for Planning Small Houses* employed “the word ‘simple’ four times in its first five

sentences” (McAlester 2015:588). Minimal Traditional buildings are modest, often under 1,000 square feet, with a focus on composition and scale and minimal decoration, avoiding a “restless appearance” (FHA 1940 in McAlester 2015:588).



Source: Spokane City County 2022

Figure 86
The 1938 Streamline Moderne Moen House in Spokane, Washington.
Designed by Albert H. Funk.



Source: Seattle Department of Neighborhoods 2022c

Figure 87
The 1939 Streamline Moderne (former) Coca Cola Bottling Plant in Seattle, Washington. Designed by Jesse M. Shelton and John Graham, Sr.

Smyser embraced the style after (likely) being introduced to it at the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress. He continued to design Streamline Moderne projects throughout his career, utilizing it in showroom and window displays as well as his four post-1933 architectural projects. Even when the style's popularity declined with the onset of the Great Depression, Smyser continued to employ its principles, as seen in his 1964 Aerial-Rail Suspended Rapid Transit System (Section 5.4.2). His own residence, the House of Tomorrow (Section 4.5), is an excellent example of the style and showcases his affinity – with no external clients, the design was not subject to any aesthetic preferences beyond the Smysers'.

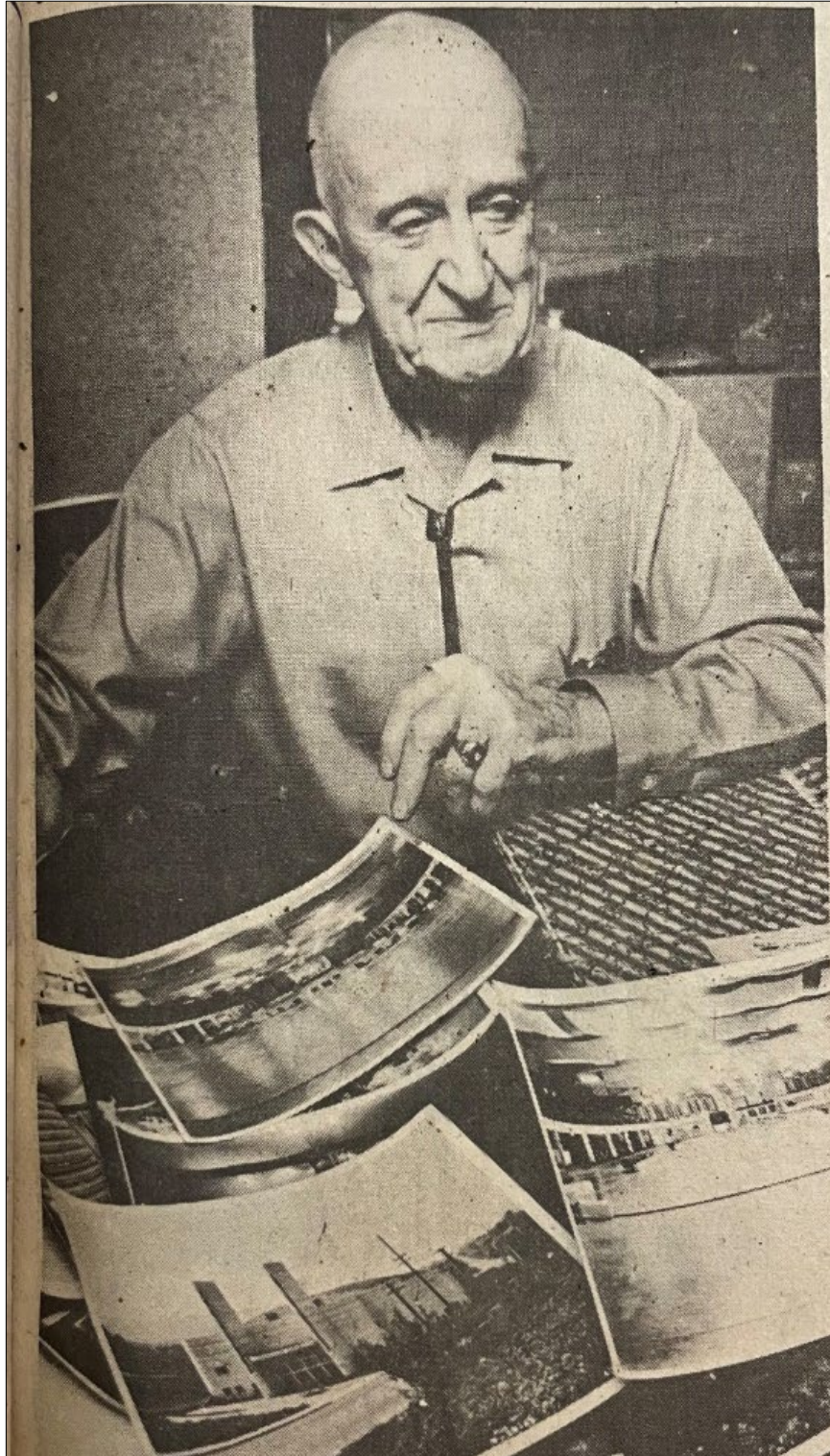
7. BERT SMYSER'S IMPACT

Smyser's swift rise as a window designer at the Stone-Fisher Company, his many prizes, and appointments to various commissions and organizations point to both his skill as a designer and respect amongst his employers, peers, and clients (Figure 88). In addition to the window displays he designed, he also directed other dressers while serving as CPI chairman and helped those stores without someone on staff. Based on records from the time, he was a well-respected and oft-employed window dresser in Tacoma from about ca.1920–ca.1950. Although window displays are not a part of current advertising, they were an integral part of marketing from the mid- to late-19th century through the midcentury. Along with goods for consumption, window displays promoted events, performances, and government activities; they also conveyed current design trends and aesthetics (both in the display of new goods and the elements of compositions). As such, Smyser could likely be considered a tastemaker in Tacoma. Research has only identified Smyser window displays in the northwest, primarily in Tacoma. His only window displays outside of Washington State – as identified – were associated with the Pacific Coast Association of Display Men conference that took place in Oregon.

While window displays typically reflected the day's popular styles, World's Fairs were forward-looking, and many had a central theme of "the world of tomorrow." They provided insight into the newest designs and technologies and proposed ideas about what the world would look like decades in the future. While not all of these visions ultimately came to fruition, the vision influenced new styles. By presenting an aesthetic of what the future was supposed to look like, designers (of all media) had guidance around what would make their looks forward-facing, new, and modern. Smyser's role in designing displays for World's Fairs in the 1930s places him as a contributor to shaping a new design movement. He was, of course, not solely responsible, but was a contributor. A similar contemporary comparison to World's Fairs is Pantone's color forecasting. While the company is anticipating what the popular colors will be in the coming year, many designers use these colors which in turn creates a color trend.

Because window displays and World's Fairs hold far less prominence today than they did in Smyser's time, understanding his impact through a current lens is difficult. However, several local designs that cite the World's Fairs as inspiration underscore the events as helping influence new design (as also noted in other sources cited throughout this document). Smyser's employment with these local firms utilizing Streamline Moderne principals suggests that not only was he well-respected, he may have also been seen as a sort of direct line to the "new."

From today's perspective, it appears that Smyser's most lasting impact is his lone non-Streamline Moderne building: The Coffee Pot Restaurant / Bob's Java Jive. Listed in the NRHP and a City of Tacoma Landmark, it is also a beloved local institution, part of the heart of Tacoma (Bryan 2021; Davis and Eufrazio 2008:156). Its importance is reflected in one statement by Girl Trouble drummer and frequent visitor Bon Von Wheelie, who commented that the building and establishment "is very special and [...] if we lose this, we lose Tacoma" (Bryan 2021).



Source: Lund 1974; Bruce Kellman, photographer

Figure 88
Bert Smyser in 1974, with photos of the New Exposition Hall on Bay Street in Tacoma.

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Appendix A

Contacted Repositories

Table A-1 below lists the repositories that were utilized during the course of this project. It includes repositories with physical and/or digital holdings, as well as organizations whose primary function is not document or information retention but may have limited and/or informal records (e.g., the Portland Rose Festival). Organizations with online repositories are marked as such below. In some cases, in-person research was available and is marked. Some repositories' archivists/staff generously shared their time and helped review the holdings for relevant documents; these also are noted below.

**TABLE A-1
CONTACTED REPOSITORIES**

Name	Online Repository	In-person Research	Archivist Research	Additional Details
Archives West	Yes	No	No	Serves multiple repositories (see Table A-2)
City of Tacoma Historic Preservation Office	No	No	No	Contacted, no response
The Daffodil Festival	No	No	Yes	
Docomomo US/WEWA	Yes	No		
Elks Lodge, Office of the Grand Secretary	No	No	No	Contacted, no response
Historic Tacoma	Yes	No	Yes	
Library of Congress Chronicling America	Yes	No	No	Historic newspapers
Master Builders Association (King and Snohomish Counties Association and Pierce County Association)	No	No		
Museum of History & Industry, Seattle	Yes	No	Yes	
Museum of the City of San Francisco				
New York City Municipal Library and Archives (NYC Department of Records & Information Services)	Yes	No	Yes	
New York City Public Library	Yes	No		
NewsBank	Yes	No	No	Historic newspapers
Newspapers.com	Yes	No	No	Historic newspapers
Pierce County Assessor Treasurer	No	No	Yes	
Portland Rose Festival	No	No	Yes	
Puyallup Historical Society	No	No	Yes	
Seattle Home Show	No			
<i>Seattle Post-Intelligencer</i>	Yes	No	No	
Seattle Public Library	Yes	No	No	
<i>Seattle Times</i>	No	No	Yes	
<i>Tacoma Daily Index</i>	Yes	No	No	
Tacoma Historical Society	Yes	No	Yes	
<i>Tacoma News Tribune / Puyallup Herald</i> (housed within <i>The News Tribune</i>)	Yes	No	Yes	
Tacoma Public Library Northwest Room	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Treasure Island Museum	No	No	Yes	

Name	Online Repository	In-person Research	Archivist Research	Additional Details
University of Washington Libraries	Yes	No	Yes	Special Collections (through Archives West) and Drawings Database (not a part of Archives West)
Washington Secretary of State Archives	Yes	No	No	
Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation	Yes	No	Yes	
Washington State Historical Society	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Archives West serves as the finding aid for multiple repositories throughout the Pacific Northwest as listed below. The entirety of Archives West was searched for information on Bert Smyser.

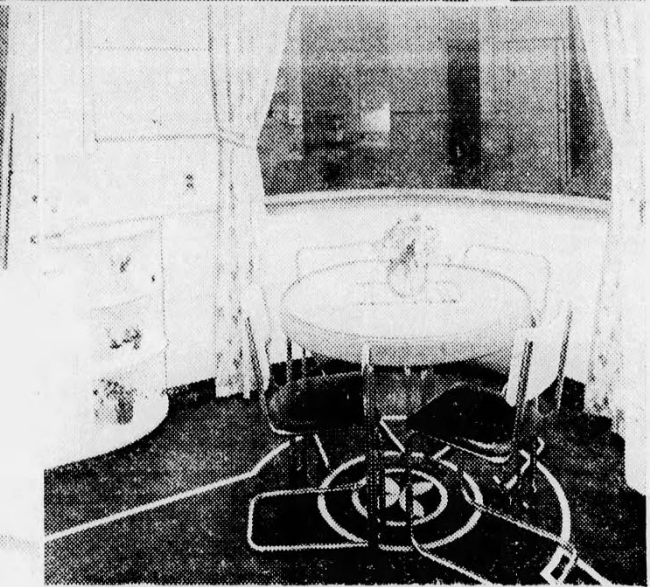
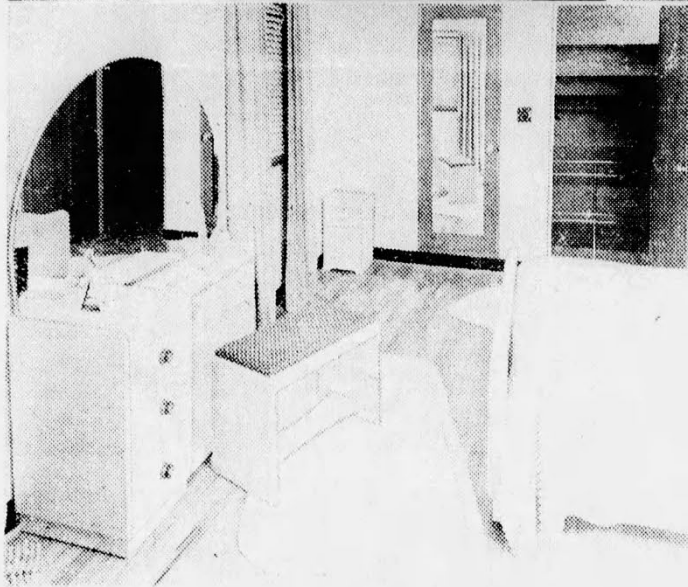
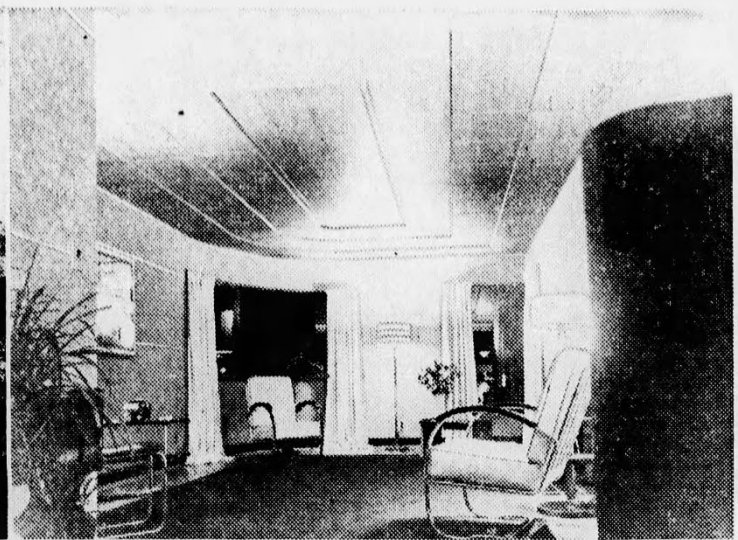
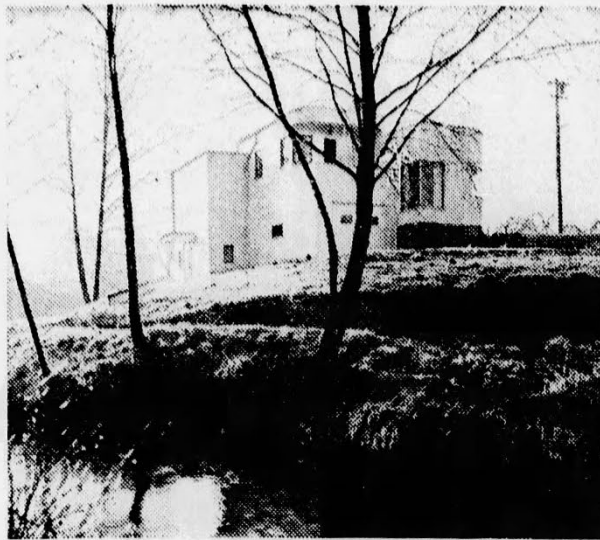
**TABLE A-2
ARCHIVES WEST REPOSITORIES**

Institution	Library / Collection	State
Boise State University	Special Collections and Archives	Idaho
Central Oregon Community College	--	Oregon
Central Washington University	Archives and Special Collections	Washington
Confederated Tribes of the Siletz	Tribal Cultural Collections	Oregon
Eastern Washington University	--	Washington
Everett Public Library	Northwest Room	Washington
George Fox University	Archives	Oregon
Lane Community College	Archives	Oregon
Lewis & Clark College	Special Collections and Archives	Oregon
Montana Historical Society	Research Center Archives	Montana
Montana State University	Merrill G. Burlingame Special Collections	Montana
Museum of History & Industry	Sophie Frye Bass Library	Washington
Oregon Health & Science University	Historical Collections & Archives	Oregon
Oregon Historical Society	Research Library	Oregon
Oregon Institute of Technology Libraries	Shaw Historical Library	Oregon
Oregon Institute of Technology Libraries	University Archives	Oregon
Oregon State University Libraries	Special Collections and Archives Research Center	Oregon
Pacific Lutheran University	Archives and Special Collections	Washington
Pacific University	Archives	Oregon
Seattle Municipal	Archives	Washington
Seattle Pacific University	--	Washington
Seattle Public Library	Special Collections	Washington
Seattle University	Lemieux Library and McGoldrick Learning Commons, Special Collections	Washington

Institution	Library / Collection	State
Southern Oregon University	Hannon Library	Oregon
Tacoma Public Library Northwest Room	Special Collections & Archives	Washington
The Evergreen State College	Malcolm Stilson Archives and Special Collections	Washington
University of Idaho	Special Collections and Archives	Idaho
University of Montana	Mansfield Library, Archives and Special Collections	Montana
University of Montana	William J. Jameson Law Library	Montana
University of Oregon	Archives of Northwest Folklore	Oregon
University of Oregon	Special Collections and University Archives	Oregon
University of Utah	Special Collections	Utah
University of Utah	University Archives and Records Management	Utah
University of Washington	Ethnomusicology Archives	Washington
University of Washington	Government Publications, Maps, and Microfilm and Newspapers	Washington
University of Washington	Media Archive	Washington
University of Washington	Special Collections	Washington
University of Wyoming	American Heritage Center	Wyoming
Utah State University	Merrill-Cazier Library, Special Collections and Archives Division	Utah
Washington State University	Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections	Washington
Western Oregon University	Archives	Oregon
Western Washington University	Center for Pacific Northwest Studies	Washington
Western Washington University	Special Collections	Washington
Western Washington University	University Archives	Washington
Whitman College and Northwest Archives	Archives	Washington
Whitworth University	Archives and Special Collections	Washington
Willamette University	Archives and Special Collections	Oregon

Appendix B

Select Newspaper Articles



The House of Tomorrow Is Here Today —For a long time we have been hearing a lot about plywood houses, but it remained for Bert Smyser, president of the Exposition Hall Company, to build

one that really looks like our conception of what a plywood house should be like. Mr. Smyser has built a home which is streamlined from front to back, from the ground to the roof, and is as modern as milady's next fall chapeau.

Above are four pictures of the house, which is located a block off the new Puyallup river highway at the bridge intersection halfway to Puyallup. Upper left is a view of the exterior taken from the banks of the rippling little stream which wends its way past the home toward the sea via the Puyallup river. The house is built on four levels, each slightly higher than the level below.

Upper right is the handsome paneled living room with the wide curving window and recessed paneled ceiling, outfitted with modernistic chrome and leather furnishings. Lower left is a look-see at a section of the master bedroom, which is on the highest level of the house, being reached by a wide, chrome-railed staircase. The room opens out onto a deck porch overlooking the tiny stream.

Lower right is the dining nook in one corner of a kitchen that would be the envy of any woman of our acquaintance. In addition to the pictured rooms, all of which

are furnished in a thoroughly modern and streamlined mode, and shower room, a large and spacious game room on the extreme lower level, a furnace room, and the large garage.

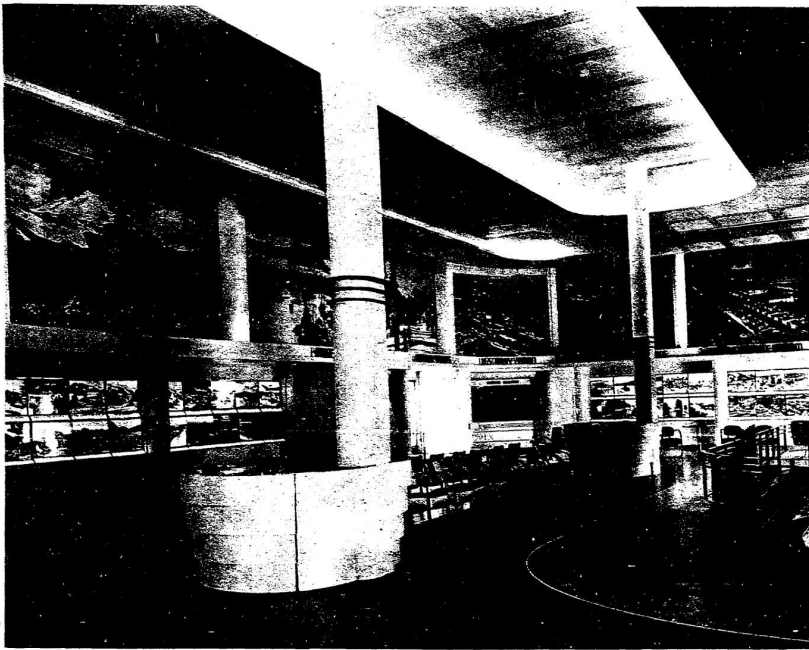
Never have we seen so many closets and places for storage of this and that as have been designed into this lovely home by both Mrs. Smyser and Mr. Smyser. Convenience and comfort seemed to

have been the keynote when the home was designed. While small in size and number of rooms, this all-plywood house has something few much larger homes have ever acquired—charm and character.

DREAMING

OF A HOME OF YOUR OWN?

WASHINGTON AT THE FAIRS



AT BOTH the New York and San Francisco fairs, visitors rate Washington State exhibits tops of their kind. Thousands of persons view them each month; are charmed by the pictorial presentations of Washington. Above is a "full house" in the exhibit hall at New York.

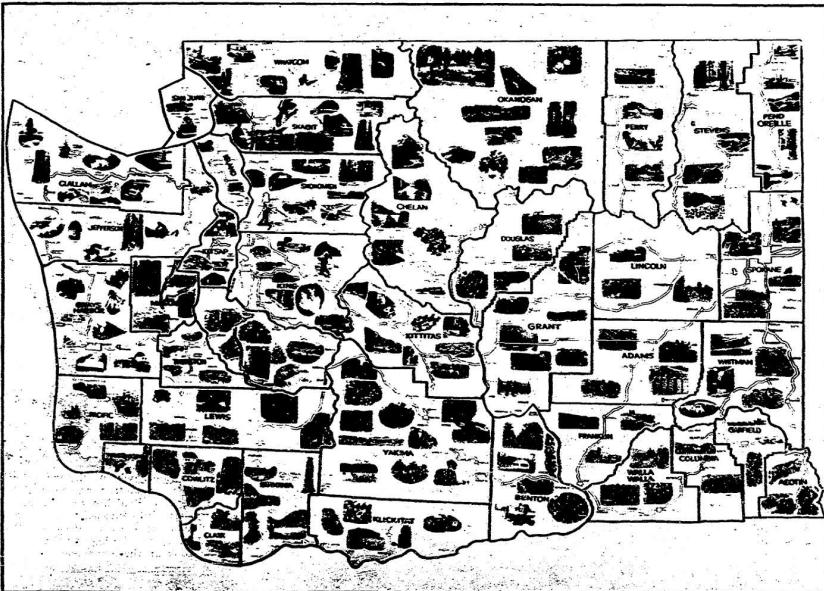
WASHINGTON is the only Pacific Coast state with exhibits both at the New York World's Fair and the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco Bay. The two exhibits are virtually identical in content; chief difference is in housing accommodations. At San Francisco, the exhibit is quartered (above) in a rectangular room in the Hall of Western States; at New York the exhibit hall (at right, below) is an oval room in the Washington State Building. Principal features of each exhibit are more than seventy transparent, colored pictures; 2,800 square feet of photo murals; eight dioramas. Additional views of the two exhibits are given in the other pictures on this page.—B. A. Smyser photo.



DIORAMAS are pictures you can "get inside of." Here, Miss Priscilla Pelton of Vancouver, Wash., member of the Washington exhibit staff at the New York World's Fair, is between the modeled foreground and pictorial background of a Mount Rainier diorama. Subjects for other dioramas include Seattle, lumbering and fishing, apples, Grand Coulee Dam.



SCENIC, agricultural and industrial resources of Washington are depicted to fair visitors by realistic photography. This is the exhibit hall at the New York fair. Natural color transparencies are 24x30 inches in dimensions; photo murals (sectional wall photographs) are 10 feet high, up to 16 feet wide. Dioramas (scale model foregrounds against photographic backgrounds) average 6 feet in height, 10 feet in width, 5 feet in depth.—B. A. Smyser photo.

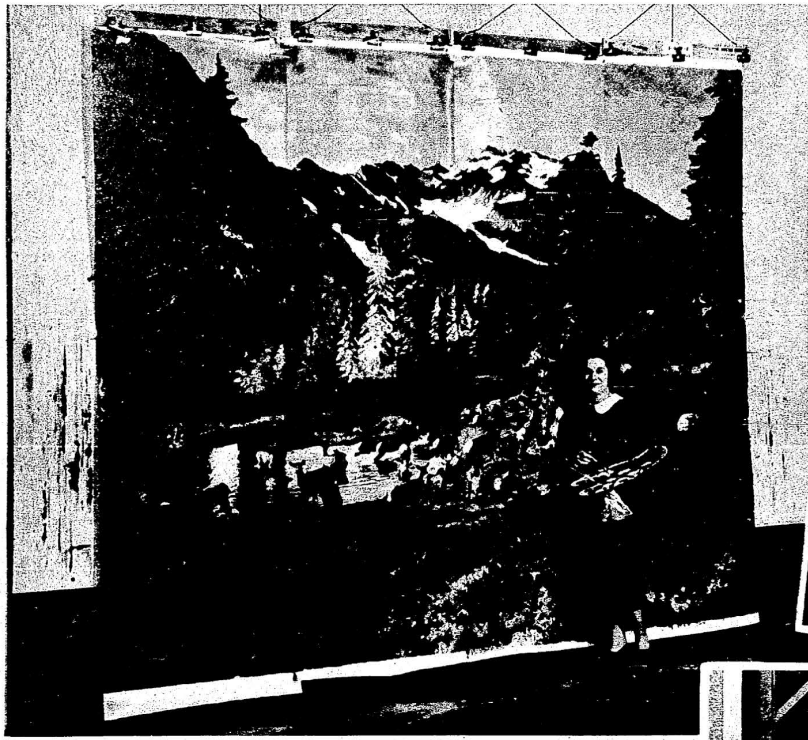


UNFAILING DELIGHT to visitors to both fairs are pictorial maps of Washington, made on a scale of one-half inch to a mile, a surface of which is shown here. By punching a button, one brings into illuminated relief Yakima County and colored pictures of its apples, Walla Walla County and its wheat, and so on through the list of Washington counties. Other buttons, when punched, light up the state's principal highways.—B. A. Smyser photo.

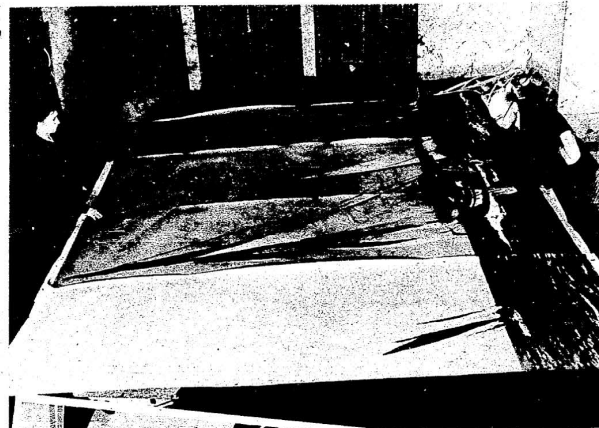


HOW pictorial maps of Washington are mounted is shown by this view of the map at the Golden Gate International Exposition. Washington exhibits for the two expositions were financed by and prepared under the supervision of the Washington State Progress Commission.

Preparing Washington Exhibits For 1939 World Fairs



THROGS OF SPECTATORS AT TWO 1939 WORLD FAIRS—the Golden Gate International Exposition at San Francisco and the New York World's Fair—will view a wide variety of photo murals, dioramas and transparencies stressing Washington State's industrial, recreational and scenic advantages. One of the twelve photo murals to be exhibited at each fair is seen above, with Artist Zerby Strong coloring the photograph. Showing a band of elk in the Olympic Mountains, the mural is 10 feet high and 12 feet wide. Other pictures on this page show the state's exhibit in the making.



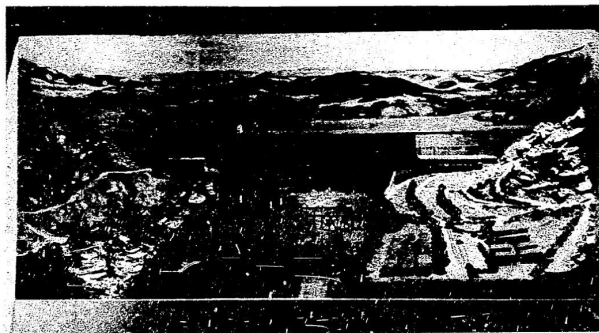
PREPARING A PHOTO MURAL for coloring, Asahel Curtis, Seattle photographer, and his wife trim four matching panels of a Puget Sound yachting scene. When ready for Artist Strong to color, the mural will measure 10 by 12 feet. Washing one of the print panels (left) in the Curtis studio is Ruth Houston. She uses a long trough and a garden hose to wash the picture panel measuring 38 inches wide and 10 feet long.



SEATTLE'S WATERFRONT and skyline will appear in one diorama. Here Bert A. Smyser, in whose Tacoma shop the dioramas are being completed, places tiny ships along the waterfront. In his hand is a model of the ferry Kalakala.



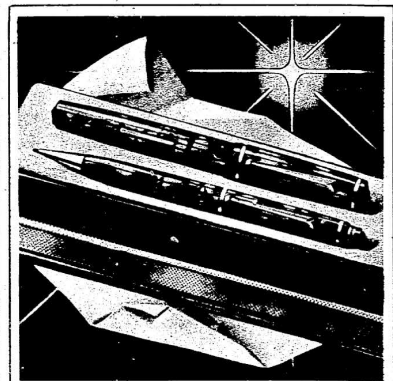
A DIORAMA IN THE MAKING shows a Washington mining scene with Artists M. D. Bearden (left) and L. D. UpDyke coloring the scene in a Tacoma workshop. This curving diorama is 10 feet wide, 8 feet, 4 inches high, 6 feet deep. A diorama is composed of a curved photographic or painted background and a modeled foreground. Nine will be shown at each exhibition.



GRAND COULEE DAM IN MINIATURE and in completed form is to be one diorama among exhibits on which the state is spending \$35,000 at each fair. Revolving lights give an effect of moving water.—Times photos.



THIS IS A TRANSPARENCY—a Washington harvest scene—being colored by Eva Curtis. An electric light shines through the colored film, measuring 24 by 30 inches. Seventy-two transparencies will be on display in the State of Washington exhibit at each of the world fairs.



LOOKS LIKE TWICE AS MUCH!—When you see this beautiful new Wahl-Eversharp Pacemaker set you'll wonder how it can cost only \$5! Only about as much as you'll pay for a good fountain pen alone! The pen is exquisitely styled, has 14K solid gold nib, ink-view window, lever-vac filler—and you'll fall in love with its writing smoothness! The pencil that matches it is Eversharp's famed Repeating Pencil—"The pencil you can sharpen with your thumb!" Choice of four colors: Green, red, gold-satin and black pyralin. The pen alone, \$3.50. The pencil, \$2.00. The set—only \$5! Ask to see the Pacemaker Set. Remember—it's **WAHL-EVERSHARP!**

Kiddie Kraft

KIDDEE KRAFT Jewelry is designed and hand made especially for children... a quality product... an ideal and lasting gift. Each piece is individually hand-crafted with a hand-colored permanent-gift brand. Priced from \$4.99 up.

Look for the Kiddie Kraft Logo

AT LEADING JEWELERS AND DEPARTMENT STORES

Appendix C

Memorandum of Agreement

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
AMONG THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY;
WASHINGTON STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER;
WASHINGTON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION;
PIERCE COUNTY; DOCOMOMO US/WEWA;
PIERCE COUNTY LANDMARKS AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION;
WASHINGTON TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION;
AND PUYALLUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FOR THE FLOOD MITIGATION OF THE RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE AT
4907 66TH AVENUE EAST NEAR PUYALLUP, WASHINGTON**

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) proposes to fund Pierce County (County) through the Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant (FMA) Program, as authorized by the National Flood Insurance Reform Act (42 U.S.C. § 4101), and administered by the Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD) to mitigate the residential structure (‘House of Tomorrow’) located at 4907 66th Avenue East near Puyallup, in unincorporated Pierce County, Washington; and

WHEREAS, the County applied for the FMA grant, Fiscal Year 2016, to mitigate repetitive flood losses to the House of Tomorrow, located in the floodway of Clark’s Creek, through acquisition of the property, demolition of the structure, and restoring the streambank (Undertaking); and

WHEREAS, the County, as part of its grant application and consistent with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. § 306108) (NHPA), initiated coordination with the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation’s State Historic Preservation Office (DAHP), to determine the Undertaking’s effects on historic properties; and

WHEREAS, in a letter to the County dated May 6, 2016, the DAHP determined the House of Tomorrow, a Streamline Moderne styled house built in 1938 (Attachment A, photos), is a historic property eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criteria C and found that the Undertaking would result in an adverse effect as defined in 36 CFR § 800.5(a)(1); and

WHEREAS, FEMA has no objection to the DAHP’s NRHP eligibility determination for the House of Tomorrow and finding of effects for the Undertaking; and

WHEREAS, the Area of Potential Effects (APE), as defined in 36 CFR § 800.16(d), includes the area where structure demolition, utility decommissioning, removal of improvements, and streambank restoration/plantings would occur, along with the viewshed of the House of Tomorrow (Attachment B, map and aerial); and

WHEREAS, FEMA and the County evaluated alternatives to avoid and minimize adverse effects from the Undertaking, including relocation of the structure to an adjacent parcel; and

WHEREAS, FEMA has determined it would be infeasible and costs prohibitive to relocate the structure; and

WHEREAS, EMD as the Recipient and the County as Subrecipient of the Fiscal Year 2016 Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant agreed to participate in this Memorandum of Agreement (MOA); and

WHEREAS, in 2018, FEMA consulted with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, Muckleshoot Tribe, Nisqually Indian Tribe, Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Snoqualmie Tribe, Suquamish Tribe, and Squaxin Island Tribe and invited them to participate in this MOA, which was declined; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, FEMA consulted with the Tacoma Historical Society, Historic Tacoma, Docomomo US/WEWA, Puyallup Historical Society, Washington Trust for Historic Preservation (WA Trust), and the Pierce County Landmarks and Historic Preservation Commission (Landmarks Commission), and invited them to participate in this MOA; and

WHEREAS, the Tacoma Historical Society and Historic Tacoma declined to participate; but

WHEREAS, the Puyallup Historical Society, Docomomo US/WEWA, WA Trust, and Landmarks Commission agreed to participate in this MOA; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with 36 CFR § 800.6(a)(1), on March 7, 2019 FEMA notified the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) of its adverse effects determination and intent to resolve the adverse effects through execution of an MOA; and on April 5, 2019, ACHP acknowledged FEMA's notice and requested a copy of the MOA once executed; and

WHEREAS, on September 21, 2021 the Landmarks Commission convened a virtual public meeting with this Undertaking on the agenda which provided public comment opportunity on the proposed adverse effects mitigation measures, no comments were received through the October 8, 2021 comment period; and

WHEREAS, the Signatories, FEMA and DAHP and invited signatories; EMD, Pierce County, Docomomo US/WEWA, WA Trust, Puyallup Historical Society, and Landmarks Commission (hereinafter referenced as Signatories, Attachment C for Contact Information) agreed to enter into this MOA pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.6(b) and (c); and

NOW, THEREFORE, the Signatories agree the Undertaking shall be implemented in accordance with the following stipulations in order to resolve the adverse effects to the House of Tomorrow and to satisfy FEMA's responsibilities pursuant to Section 106 of the NHPA as implemented through a Programmatic Agreement executed with EMD and DAHP.

STIPULATIONS

FEMA will ensure, in coordination with DAHP, EMD, and the County, that the following measures to mitigate adverse effects are implemented following the effective date of this MOA:

I. MITIGATION OF ADVERSE EFFECTS

A. RECORDATION AND DOCUMENTATION

1. Following execution of EMD's grant contract with the County, the County will complete architectural recordation of the House of Tomorrow before demolition using the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Architectural and Engineering Documentation* in order to produce products acceptable for inclusion in the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) at Documentation Level I (https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_6.htm#s2). The deliverables shall include a full set of measured drawings, high quality digital images, and written history and description of the historic property. Measured drawings shall include but not be limited to a site plan (illustrating landscaping features) with topographic information, longitudinal and transverse site sections, floor plans of all levels, exterior elevations, and longitudinal and transverse building sections as appropriate. Specific detail drawings of elements such as but not limited to ceiling coves, handrails, and stairs shall also be included. Photos shall capture each elevation of the structure; interior spaces, including notable architectural, material, or design features and details; and the home's setting on the property. DAHP shall serve as the official repository for final hard copies of the documentation.
2. The County will complete historical research on Bert Smyser, the House of Tomorrow's designer, builder, and original owner; and compile a portfolio of his design and architecture work.
3. The County will complete a narrated walk-through amateur video of the interior and exterior of the home and property, highlighting architectural details and spaces, as well as landscaping.
4. The County will ensure recordation and documentation work is completed by persons that meet the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualifications set forth in 36 CFR Part 61 for a historian, historic architect, and architectural historian; as determined by FEMA's Federal Preservation Officer, or delegate, through provision of resumes. Once the County has confirmed its team to complete recordation and documentation work, in coordination with the County, FEMA will convene a kick-off meeting with the Signatories for introductions and to discuss recordation work.
5. The County will compile the recordation and documentation materials into two draft reports (one for HABS level 1 and second for Bert Smyser portfolio) within 220 days of EMD's grant contract execution with the County. Digital drafts of the reports will be submitted to FEMA and DAHP for a 30-day review. Final digital and hardcopy reports, that addresses any feedback, will be submitted to FEMA and DAHP within 60 days of feedback. The County will upload the digital copies to DAHP's online WISAARD. Signatories may either access the final reports through WISAARD or will be provided an alternate link to download.

6. DAHP will provide written confirmation of its approval of the HABS Level I recordation materials and Bert Smyser portfolio to the County and FEMA within 30 days of its receipt of the final reports.

B. EDUCATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

1. Using materials from the House of Tomorrow's recordation and documentation, the County will develop the following products for education and public outreach purposes.
2. The County will draft a feature article about the House of Tomorrow and Bert Smyser, including photos. The draft article and supporting material will be provided to Signatories for inclusion or use in historic preservation newsletters, website features, or social media postings. Posting details will be coordinated between the County and the pertinent Signatory, however re-formatting and posting said article will be the responsibility of the Signatory. Outreach and posting venues may include, but are not limited to the following:
 - a) Puyallup Historical Society: <https://www.meekermansion.org/>
 - b) Washington Trust for Historic Preservation – *This Place*: <https://preservewa.org/>
 - c) Pierce County Landmarks and Historic Preservation Commission: <https://www.piercecountywa.gov/5938/Landmarks-and-Historic-Preservation>
 - d) Docomomo US/WEWA: <https://www.docomomo-wewa.org/>
 - e) Heritage League of Pierce County: <http://heritageleaguepiercecounty.org/>
3. In coordination with DAHP and Docomomo US/WEWA and using the recordation and documentation material, the County will develop a profile or biography of Bert Smyser for posting on DAHP's Architect's and Builder Biographies (<https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/research-and-technical-preservation-guidance/architect-biographies>) and Docomomo's Northwest Architects & Designers webpage (<https://www.docomomo-wewa.org/architects/>).
 - a) DAHP and Docomomo US/WEWA will post the profile or biography to their websites.
4. The County will provide DAHP with the amateur video to post on DAHP's YouTube Channel and the County may also post to its YouTube Channel.
5. Within 120 days of the County's closing of the real estate transaction with the property owner, it will schedule and host an open house for interested parties to the House of Tomorrow prior to demolition. The open house announcement will be coordinated amongst Signatories so they can distribute it through their venues.
6. Once Education and Public Outreach activities have been completed, posted, distributed to Signatories or otherwise made available to the public, the County will

notify the Signatories (Appendix C). The notice must be provided no later than one (1) year following EMD's grant contract execution.

C. SALVAGE

Prior to demolition, the County will:

1. Provide opportunity to the Puyallup Historical Society to salvage select small architectural elements for their collection at the Meeker Mansion, at no cost to the County or the grant.
2. Make a good faith effort to contact local historic architectural material salvage or recycle organizations or companies and provide them a reasonable opportunity to salvage select materials from the House of Tomorrow at no cost to the County or the grant.

D. REPORTING

At the end of each month following the execution of this MOA until it expires or is terminated, in coordination with the County, FEMA shall email (Appendix C) a progress update to all parties to this MOA. The update will note activities undertaken for the prior month to carry out the terms of this MOA's, any schedule changes or problems encountered.

II. UNEXPECTED DISCOVERIES

- A. If during demolition, utility decommissioning, removal of improvements, and streambank restoration work it appears that the Undertaking will affect a previously unidentified historic property, including human remains, the County shall immediately notify EMD and FEMA and ensure:
 1. Site work in the vicinity of the discovery stops; and
 2. All reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the discovery are taken until FEMA has completed further evaluation of the discovery in consultation with DAHP, Tribe(s), and any other consulting parties; as necessary; and
 3. If human remains are discovered, notify the local law enforcement office and coroner/medical examiner in accordance with Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 27.44, and protect the remains from any harm.
- B. Upon County notification, FEMA shall immediately notify DAHP, and as necessary, tribe(s) and other consulting parties that may have an interest in the discovery, and proceed with further evaluation as detailed in Stipulation III.B of its Programmatic Agreement with EMD and DAHP.

III. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

- A. If any Signatory objects in writing within the timeframes established under this MOA to any documentation, plans, or other activities undertaken pursuant to this MOA, FEMA shall consult with the party(ies) to resolve the objection. If the objection is resolved within 14 calendar days of FEMA's receipt, the party(ies) will proceed as agreed.
- B. If the objection is not resolved within 14 calendar days of FEMA's receipt, FEMA will request comment from the ACHP pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.7(a)(1) and notify Signatories.
- C. FEMA will consider any ACHP comments received within 30 days after ACHP's receipt of FEMA's request for comments. FEMA will provide signatories and ACHP with a written resolution. FEMA may authorize the County to implement the part(s) of this MOA subject to dispute after resolving the objection. The Signatories are still responsible for implementing all actions of this MOA that are not subject to dispute.

IV. ANTICIPATORY ACTIONS

In accordance with Section 110(k) of the NHPA, FEMA shall not grant assistance to the County if it, or those acting on its behalf, with intent to avoid the requirements of this MOA or Section 106 of the NHPA, intentionally significantly and adversely affects a historic property to which the assistance would relate. However, if after consultation with EMD, DAHP and ACHP, FEMA determines that extraordinary circumstances justify granting assistance despite the adverse effect created or permitted by the County, FEMA shall complete consultation for the Undertaking pursuant to the terms of this MOA.

V. AMENDMENTS

If any of the Signatories to this MOA believe this MOA's terms cannot be satisfied or that this MOA's terms should be amended, that Signatory shall immediately consult with all other Signatories for not more than 30 days to develop this MOA's proposed amendments. This MOA shall be amended only upon the written agreement of all Signatories. FEMA will circulate amendments to all parties and provide a copy of the amended MOA to the ACHP.

VI. DURATION

Unless amended or terminated pursuant to Stipulations V or VII, this MOA will remain in effect for two (2) years from execution or until FEMA and DAHP determine its terms have been fulfilled. The MOA may be extended through the amendment process.

VII. TERMINATION

- A. The MOA may be terminated once FEMA and DAHP determine its terms have been fulfilled. FEMA will notify other Signatories and concurring parties in writing that the terms of this MOA have been satisfied.

- B. If this MOA is not amended, any Signatory may terminate this MOA by providing a 30-day written notice to all other Signatories and concurring party, provided the Signatory seeking termination consults with all other Signatories during this period to seek MOA amendments or other actions that would prevent termination. If all Signatories agree in writing on an alternative to termination, they will proceed in accordance with that alternative process or course of action, consistent with Stipulation V.
- C. Termination of this MOA will require further compliance with 36 CFR Part 800. This MOA may be terminated without further consultation by execution of a subsequent agreement that explicitly terminates or supersedes this MOA.
- D. This MOA will automatically terminate and the terms reconsidered by all Signatories if the terms have not been fully implemented within two (2) years the MOA's execution.


VIII. EXECUTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS AGREEMENT

- A. This MOA will be executed in counterparts, with a separate signatory page to be signed by each Signatory party. Any signature that is transmitted by facsimile or other electronic means shall be binding and effective as the original. Electronic signatures are acceptable provided that the signature is legally binding pursuant to the laws governing that Signatory party.
- B. FEMA will provide each Signatory with a signed original of this MOA. This MOA will become effective upon signature by all signatories and FEMA will file a copy with ACHP.
- C. Execution and implementation of this MOA evidences that FEMA has taken into account the effects of the Undertaking on historic properties, has afforded ACHP a reasonable opportunity to comment on the Undertaking and its effects on historic properties, and that FEMA has satisfied its responsibilities in accordance with Section 106 of NHPA and its Programmatic Agreement with EMD and DAHP.


**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
AMONG THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY;
WASHINGTON STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER;
WASHINGTON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION;
PIERCE COUNTY; DOCOMOMO US/WEWA;
PIERCE COUNTY LANDMARKS AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION;
WASHINGTON TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION;
AND PUYALLUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FOR THE FLOOD MITIGATION OF THE RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE AT
4907 66TH AVENUE EAST NEAR PUYALLUP, WASHINGTON**

SIGNATORY

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

By: SCIENCE A KILNER  Digitally signed by SCIENCE A KILNER
Date: 2021.12.20 14:25:35 -08'00' Date: 12/20/2021

Science Kilner
Region X Regional Environmental Officer

By: JACKIE D PRITCHETT JR  Digitally signed by JACKIE D PRITCHETT JR
Date: 2021.11.18 14:57:32 -08'00' Date: 11/18/2021

Jackie Pritchett Jr.
Region X Hazard Mitigation Assistance Branch Chief

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
AMONG THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY;
WASHINGTON HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER;
WASHINGTON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION;
PIERCE COUNTY; DOCOMOMO US/WEWA;
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AND PUYALLUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FOR THE FLOOD MITIGATION OF THE RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE AT
4907 66TH AVENUE EAST NEAR PUYALLUP, WASHINGTON**

SIGNATORY

**WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC
PRESERVATION**


DocuSigned by:
Allyson Brooks
FF699DFCFDE1425...
By: _____ **Date:** 11/9/2021

Dr. Allyson Brooks
State Historic Preservation Officer

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
AMONG THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY;
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INVITED SIGNATORY

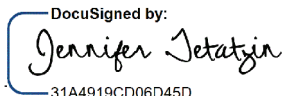
WASHINGTON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

By: Stacey McClain  Digitally signed by Stacey McClain
Date: 2021.10.25 08:36:44 -07'00' **Date:** _____
Stacey McClain
Governors Authorized Representative (GAR)

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
AMONG THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY;
WASHINGTON HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER;
WASHINGTON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION;
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4907 66TH AVENUE EAST NEAR PUYALLUP, WASHINGTON**

INVITED SIGNATORY

PIERCE COUNTY

By:  _____ **Date:** 12/8/2021
31A4919CD06D45D...
Jen Tetatzin
Director, County Planning and Public Works

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
AMONG THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY;
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WASHINGTON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION;
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INVITED SIGNATORY

DOCOMOMO US/WEWA

By: Eugenia Woo Date: 11/10/21
Eugenia Woo
Treasurer, Board of Directors

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
AMONG THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY;
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WASHINGTON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION;
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AND PUYALLUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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4907 66TH AVENUE EAST NEAR PUYALLUP, WASHINGTON**

INVITED SIGNATORY

PIERCE COUNTY LANDMARKS AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

By: Robert Koreis Digitally signed by Robert
Koreis
Date: 2021.10.21 12:22:58
-07'00' Date: October 21, 2021
Robert Koreis
Chairman

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
AMONG THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY;
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WASHINGTON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION;
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INVITED SIGNATORY

WASHINGTON TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION


By: **Chris Moore** Digitally signed by Chris Moore
DN: cn=Chris Moore, o=Washington Trust for
Historic Preservation, ou,
email=cmoore@preservewa.org, c=US
Date: 2021.11.03 15:38:03 -0700' _____ Date: **11/3/21** _____

Chris Moore
Executive Director

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
AMONG THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY;
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WASHINGTON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION;
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WASHINGTON TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION;
AND PUYALLUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FOR THE FLOOD MITIGATION OF THE RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE AT
4907 66TH AVENUE EAST NEAR PUYALLUP, WASHINGTON**

INVITED SIGNAORY

PUYALLUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

By: **Shelly Schlumpf**  Digitally signed by Shelly Schlumpf
Date: 2021.10.21 10:06:41 -07'00' Date: **10/21/2021**

Shelly Schumpf
President

APPENDIX A



Front/west elevation (2017)



North Elevation (2017)

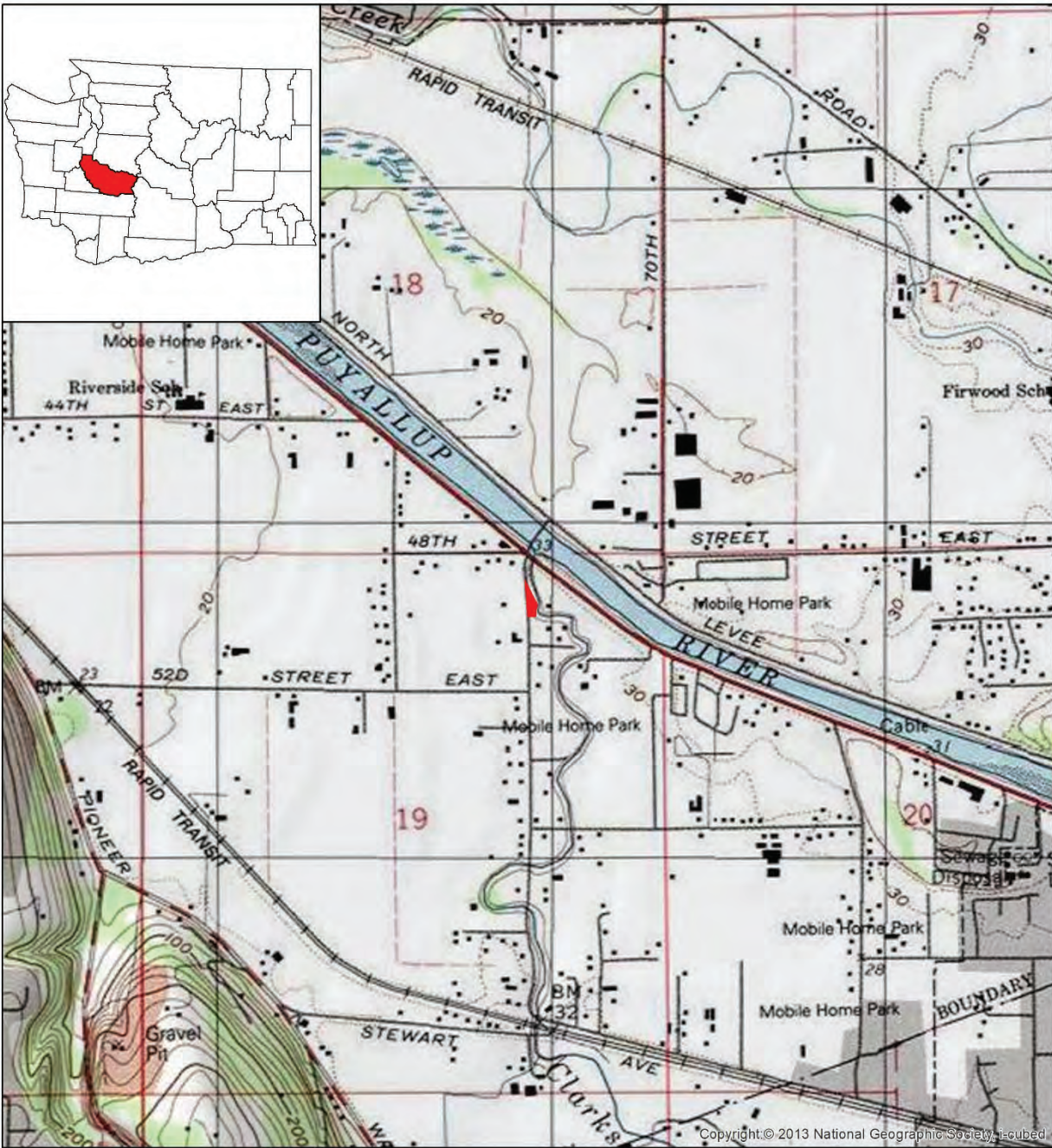


South elevation (2017)



Rear/east elevation (2017)

APPENDIX B



Applicant: Pierce County
Project: Schuyler House

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 10N
1:15,000 Date: 8/2/2021

 APE
 

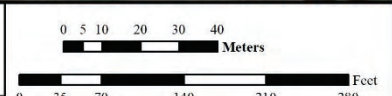


FEMA FEMA, Region X
 130 228th Street, SW
 Bothell, WA 98021-8627




Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Applicant: Pierce County
Project: Schuyler House



 APE

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 10N
1:1,500 Date: 8/2/2021 



APPENDIX C

Agency/Organization	Name	Signatory/POC Email	POC Phone
FEMA Region 10	Science Kilner	Science.kilner@fema.dhs.gov	425-686-5797
WA Emergency Mgmt. Division	Stacey McClain Hina Kilioni	Stacey.McCLain@mil.wa.gov Hina.kilioni@mil.wa.gov	253-533-1249
WA Dept. Archeology and Historic Preservation	Allyson Brooks Nicholas Vann	Allyson.Brooks@dahp.wa.gov Nicholas.Vann@dahp.wa.gov	360-628-2170
Pierce County	Randy Brake	randy.brake@piercecountywa.gov	253-798-4651
Pierce Co. Landmarks Commission	Robert Koreis	rkoreis@uw.edu robertkoreis@gmail.com	253-533-8188
WA Trust for Historic Preservation	Chris Moore Huy Pham	cmoore@preservewa.org	206-624-9449
Docomomo US/WEWA	Eugenia Woo	info@docomomo-wewa.org eugewoo@earthlink.net	206-930-3966
Puyallup Historical Society	Shelly Shlumpf Holly O'Brien	shelly@mainstretelements.com curator@meekermansion.org	253-845-4502

Appendix D

Smyser-Designed Projects

The following is a table of all of Smyser’s identified designs, arranged in chronological order. Information on all the designs is included in this report. The table includes designs for which very little is known – identified in the body of the report under the relevant “Additional Resources” sections.

**TABLE D-1
IDENTIFIED SMYSER-DESIGNED PROJECTS**

Year	Name	Project Type	Location
1911	Carnival Week Window	Window Display	1104 Broadway, Tacoma, WA
1913	Tacoma Rose Society Competition Window	Window Display	1104 Broadway, Tacoma, WA
1918	Liberty Loan Window	Window Display	Unknown
1919	Tacoma Railway & Power Company Float	Parade Float	Tacoma, WA
1924	Coast Motor Company	Showroom Display	740 Broadway, Tacoma, WA
1924	Pacific Coast Association of Display Men Competition	Window Displays	Spokane, WA
1925	Pacific Coast Association of Display Men Competition	Window Displays	319 SW Pine Street, Portland, OR
1927	Kennedy’s Used Car Showroom	Showroom Display	753 Broadway, Tacoma, WA
ca.1930	The Coffee Pot Restaurant / Bob’s Java Jive	Architecture	2102 South Tacoma Way, Tacoma, WA
1932	Tacoma Automobile Show	Exposition	1001 S Yakima Avenue, Tacoma, WA
1933	Broadway Decorations	Street Decorations	Broadway, Tacoma, WA
1933-1934	Chicago Century of Progress	Exposition	Chicago, IL
1934	Century Ballroom	Architecture	1406 54th Avenue E, Fife, WA
1934	Western Washington Fair	Exposition	110 9th Avenue SW, Puyallup, WA
1934	Northwest Furniture Show	Exposition	Tacoma, WA
ca.1934	Smyser Display Service Workshop	Architecture	2016 South Tacoma Way, Tacoma, WA
1935	Mueller-Harkins Pontiac Store	Showroom Display	723-725 Broadway, Tacoma, WA
1935	Mills Motors Showroom	Showroom Display	500 E Pike Street, Seattle, WA
1935	San Diego Fair	Exposition	San Diego, CA
1936	Andrews Apparel	Showroom Display	923 Broadway, Tacoma, WA
1936	Worth’s Apparel Shop	Showroom Display	1107 Broadway, Tacoma, WA
1936	Herbert’s Apparel Shop	Showroom Display	1151 Broadway, Tacoma, WA
1936	Tacoma Utilities Float	Parade Float	Tacoma, WA
1937	Tacoma Light Department Float	Parade Float	Tacoma, WA
1938	Harbor Plywood Company	Exposition	Traveling exhibit
1939	Seventh World’s Poultry Congress and Exposition	Exposition	Cleveland, OH
1939/1940	San Francisco World’s Fair	World’s Fair	Treasure Island, CA
1939/1940	New York World’s Fair	World’s Fair	Flushing Meadows, NY
1940	Liberty Orchards Company Exhibit	World’s Fair	New York
1940	Wenatchee Apple Blossom	Parade Float	Wenatchee, WA
ca.1940	New Exposition Hall	Architecture	2610 E Bay Street, Tacoma, WA
1941	Tacoma Better Housing Exposition	Exposition	2610 E Bay Street, Tacoma, WA

Year	Name	Project Type	Location
1941	House of Tomorrow	Architecture	4907 66th Avenue E, Puyallup, WA
ca.1946	Washington State Historical Society Photo Mural	Interior Display	315 N Stadium Way, Tacoma, WA
1940s	USO Auditorium	Interior Display	713-715 Commerce Street, Tacoma, WA
1950	Apple Blossom Festival	Parade Float	Wenatchee, WA
1953	Aplets & Cotlets Float	Parade Float	Portland, OR
ca.1958	Auburn World's Fair	Conceptual Design	Conceptual design only
ca.1958	Aerial-Rail Suspended Rapid Transit System	Conceptual Design	Conceptual design only