

**Members**

Kevin Bartoy, Chair  
Jennifer Baersten, Vice Chair  
Sarah Hilsendeger  
Laurel McQuade  
Anahita Modrek  
Alex Morganroth  
Bryan Rousseau  
Lysa Schloesser  
Jenny Sullivan  
George Zeno  
Deborah Cade, North Slope Ex-Officio  
Gia Mugford, Wedge Ex-Officio



# Agenda

## Landmarks Preservation Commission Planning and Development Services Department

**Date:** October 9, 2024  
**Time:** 5:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Hybrid (see below)

**Staff**

Reuben McKnight, Historic Preservation Officer  
Susan Johnson, Historic Preservation Coordinator  
Tina Nailor, Historic Preservation Intern  
Mary Crabtree, Administrative Assistant

**INFORMATION ABOUT VIRTUAL MEETINGS**

This meeting will be conducted both in-person and virtually. The meeting will occur in the Tacoma Municipal Building, 747 Market St., Room 243 and can also be attended at <https://zoom.us/j/89120046605>, or by dialing +1 (253) 215-8782 and entering the meeting ID 891 2004 6605 when prompted.

Microphones will be muted and cameras turned off for all participants during the meeting, except for the Commissioners and presenters.

	<b>PAGE #</b>	<b>TIME</b>
<b>1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INDIGENOUS LANDS</b>		
<b>2. ROLL CALL</b>		
<b>3. PUBLIC COMMENT</b>		
Written comments are accepted on agenda items via e-mail and must be submitted by 12:00 p.m. on the meeting day. Please e-mail your comments to <a href="mailto:landmarks@cityoftacoma.org">landmarks@cityoftacoma.org</a> , put in the subject line "LPC Meeting 10/09/24", and clearly indicate which agenda item(s) you are addressing.		
<b>4. CONSENT AGENDA</b>		
A. Excusal of Absences		
B. Approval of Minutes: 10/11/23, 10/25/23		
C. Administrative Review:		
• 1008 N. K St. – new garage		
<b>5. PUBLIC HEARING – NOMINATION TO THE TACOMA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES</b>		
A. McCormick Building/Wheelock Branch Library 3722 N. 26 <sup>th</sup> St.	13	
B. Mottet Branch Library 3523 E. G St.	39	
<b>6. BOARD BUSINESS/COMMUNICATION ITEMS</b>		
A. Equity Committee updates	Commission	12      5 m
B. Events & Activities	Staff	12      5 m
<b>7. CHAIR COMMENTS</b>		

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¿Necesitas información en español? 한국어로 정보가 필요하십니까? Cần thông tin bằng tiếng Việt? Нужна информация на русском?  
ត្រូវការព័ត៌មានជាភាសាខ្មែរ? ☎ Contact **TacomaFIRST 311** at **(253) 591-5000**





## Members

Kevin Bartoy, Chair  
 Jennifer Baersten, Vice-Chair  
 Sarah Hilsendeger  
 Laurel McQuade  
 Alex Morganroth  
 Bryan Rousseau  
 Lysa Schloesser  
 Jenny Sullivan  
 George Zeno  
 Deborah Cade, North Slope Ex-Officio

# MINUTES

## Landmarks Preservation Commission Planning and Development Services Department

## Staff

Reuben McKnight, Historic Preservation Officer  
 Susan Johnson, Historic Preservation Coordinator  
 Mary Crabtree, Administrative Assistant

**Date:** October 11, 2023

**Location:** Hybrid – Conference Room 243, 747 Market Street, Tacoma WA 98402 & Zoom Webinar

### Commission Members in Attendance:

Kevin Bartoy, Chair  
 Jennifer Baersten, Vice-Chair  
 Laurel McQuade  
 Bryan Rousseau  
 Lysa Schloesser  
 Deborah Cade, North Slope Ex-Officio

### Staff Present:

Reuben McKnight  
 Susan Johnson  
 Mary Crabtree

### Others Present:

N/A

### Commissioner Members Excused:

Sarah Hilsendeger  
 Alex Morganroth  
 Jenny Sullivan  
 George Zeno

### Commission Members Absent:

N/A

Chair Bartoy called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

## 1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INDIGENOUS LANDS

## 2. ROLL CALL

## 3. PUBLIC COMMENT

McKnight reported that two written comments were received regarding the public hearing and one was received regarding the moratorium.

## 4. CONSENT AGENDA

The agenda was approved as submitted.

### A. Excusal of Absences:

- Sarah Hilsendeger
- Alex Morganroth
- Jenny Sullivan
- George Zeno

### B. Approval of Minutes: 06/14/23

The minutes of the June 14, 2023, meeting were approved as submitted.

**C. Administrative Review:**

- 820 N J St – new garage/shop
- 1018 N. 7th St – minor exterior alterations

**5. PUBLIC HEARING****A. Immanuel Presbyterian  
901-909 North J Street**

Chair Bartoy called the public hearing to order at 5:35 p.m.

McKnight read the staff report as provided in the packet.

Chair Bartoy called for testimony. No individuals addressed the commission.

Chair Bartoy closed the public hearing at 5:39 p.m.

*Vice-Chair Baersten moved that the Landmarks Preservation Commission recommend to City Council that 901-909 N. J St., be included on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, including the exterior of the building finding that it does meet all criteria listed. Commissioner Rousseau seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**6. DESIGN REVIEW****A. 1224 N. I St.  
Siding, porch columns**

McKnight read the staff report as provided in the packet.

Discussion ensued regarding the City's error in issuing the building permit, appreciation for staff and the applicants, the inverted "V" framing element, the railings on the porch, and the windows.

*Vice-Chair Baersten moved that the Landmarks Preservation Commission approve the application for 1224 North I Street as submitted with the addition of the under-eave trim. Commissioner McQuade. The motion passed unanimously.*

**7. BOARD BUSINESS/COMMUNICATION ITEMS****A. Review of moratorium hearing debrief**

McKnight provided an overview of the moratorium public hearing, including Resolution No. 41226, a summary of public comments, potential considerations for the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), and a review schedule.

Vice-Chair Baersten noted that she is the president of Historic Tacoma and has been recusing herself from all conversations on this topic at their meetings.

Discussion ensued regarding Resolution No. 41226; diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); the timeline on Comprehensive Plan code changes; discouraging community members from initiating a nomination; if LPC can work on improving the code and review a nomination if one was submitted concurrently; if LPC has appropriate guidelines to make a recommendation on a nomination; potential effects of a moratorium; and duration and scope of the moratorium; and the communication process between LPC and Planning Commission.

The Commission agreed that they do not support a moratorium.

**B. Equity Committee updates**

Johnson reported that there was a meeting at Evergreen on the Underrepresented Communities Grants for Tacoma's Black Heritage, and noted that there was interest in hearing from Vice-Chair Baersten on other potential grants.

**C. Events & Activities**

- A site visit for the Commission has been arranged on Wednesday, October 18, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. to the Willamette Casket Building.
- A public kick-off meeting for the South Tacoma Mixed Use Center Historic Property Survey is planned for

Tuesday, October 17, 2023, at the Metro Parks STAR Center (3873 South 66th Street) at 6:30 p.m.

**8. CHAIR COMMENTS**

Vice-Chair Baersten requested an update on the Gault Middle School campus.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

\*These minutes are not a direct transcription of the meeting, but rather a brief capture. For full-length audio recording of the meeting, please visit <https://www.cityoftacoma.org/lpc-agenda>.





## Members

Kevin Bartoy, Chair  
 Jennifer Baersten, Vice-Chair  
 Sarah Hilsendeger  
 Laurel McQuade  
 Alex Morganroth  
 Bryan Rousseau  
 Lysa Schloesser  
 Jenny Sullivan  
 George Zeno  
 Deborah Cade, North Slope Ex-Officio

# MINUTES (Draft)

## Landmarks Preservation Commission Planning and Development Services Department

## Staff

Reuben McKnight, Historic Preservation Officer  
 Susan Johnson, Historic Preservation Coordinator  
 Mary Crabtree, Administrative Assistant

**Date:** October 25, 2023

**Location:** Hybrid – Conference Room 243, 747 Market Street, Tacoma WA 98402 & Zoom Webinar

### Commission Members in Attendance:

Jennifer Baersten, Vice-Chair  
 Sarah Hilsendeger  
 Laurel McQuade

Bryan Rousseau  
 Lysa Schloesser  
 George Zeno

### Commissioner Members Excused:

Kevin Bartoy, Chair  
 Jenny Sullivan  
 Deborah Cade, North Slope Ex-Officio

### Commission Members Absent:

Alex Morganroth

### Staff Present:

Reuben McKnight  
 Susan Johnson  
 Mary Crabtree

### Others Present:

Josh Kubitz  
 Sarah Singleton-Schroedel  
 Savannah Heipp  
 Charlie Jorgensen  
 David Stokes

Vice-Chair Baersten called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

## 1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INDIGENOUS LANDS

## 2. ROLL CALL

## 3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Johnson reported that no written comments were received for public comment.

## 4. CONSENT AGENDA

The agenda was approved as submitted.

### A. Excusal of Absences

- Kevin Bartoy
- Jenny Sullivan
- Deborah Cade

### B. Approval of Minutes: N/A

### C. Administrative Review: N/A

## 5. DESIGN REVIEW

### A. Mary Bridge Medical Building (1220 Division)

### ***New Construction***

McKnight read the staff report as provided in the packet.

Discussion ensued regarding the Wedge District boundaries.

*Commissioner Rousseau moved that the Landmarks Preservation Commission conditionally approve the application for 1220 Division Avenue as submitted pending the submittal and review of demolition documents. Commissioner McQuade seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **6. BOARD BUSINESS/COMMUNICATION ITEMS**

### **A. Response to Planning Commission – Moratorium**

McKnight read the staff report as provided in the packet and outlined Commissioner Cade's suggested edits to the draft letter.

Discussion ensued regarding the initial request for feedback and additions and further edits to the draft letter.

The Commission approved the draft letter as amended.

### **B. Equity Committee updates**

There were no Equity Committee updates.

### **C. Events & Activities**

- There is a standing URC meeting at Evergreen State College on the second Wednesday of each month regarding Black Heritage.
- A site visit to the White Shield Home is planned for Wednesday, November 29, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.

## **7. CHAIR COMMENTS**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:08 p.m.





**STAFF REPORT**

October 9, 2024

**PUBLIC HEARING**

General Procedural Notes:

The Landmarks Preservation Commission will hear public comments today regarding a nomination to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places.

**NOMINATIONS TO THE TACOMA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Tacoma Register listing follows procedures defined in 13.07.050, and consists of a minimum of two separate Commission meetings. The initial meeting determines whether the property meets the threshold criteria in the ordinance for age and integrity. If the Commission finds that the age and integrity standards are met, then the Commission may move to have the nomination scheduled for a public hearing and comment period, at which the public may enter comments into the record for consideration. Following the comment period, the Commission may deliberate on the nomination for up to 45 days before recommending to City Council listing on the register, or denying the nomination.

*The purpose of this hearing is to hear public comment regarding the above proposal. For the Tacoma Register nominations, the Commission will use any public comment received to assist in developing its recommendations to City Council.*

**AGENDA ITEM 5A: McCORMICK BUILDING/WHEELOCK LIBRARY (3722 N. 26th St.)**

*Marshall McClintock, Historic Tacoma*

**BACKGROUND**

Built in 1927, the Anna McCormick Building is the original portion of the present-day Wheelock Branch Library. Designed by Tacoma architect Silas Nelsen, the McCormick Building is a fine example of the Tudor Revival style. Subsequent additions were done in 1959 and 1988. The nomination includes the original building and historic additions (1959), exclusive of the interior. The 1988 Wheelock addition, to the east, is set back from the McCormick portion and is not included in the proposed nomination. Marshall McClintock of Historic Tacoma drafted and submitted this nomination, supported by the Tacoma Public Library Board of Trustees.

**PRIOR ACTION**

On September 11, 2024, the Landmarks Commission found that the property appeared to meet the threshold criteria for designation in the ordinance and voted to schedule the nomination for a hearing.

**REQUESTED ACTION**

The purpose of this hearing is to receive public comment on the proposed nomination and, if appropriate, to make a recommendation to Council.

**EFFECTS OF NOMINATION**

- Future changes to the exterior will require approval of the Landmarks Preservation Commission prior to those changes being made, to ensure historical and architectural appropriateness.
- Unnecessary demolition of properties listed on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places is strongly discouraged by the municipal code and requires approval of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

**STANDARDS**

The property is nominated under the following criteria:

*A: Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; as the oldest extant (and second ever built) branch library of the Tacoma Public Library system and association with the development of the same.*

*C: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; due to being a fine example of the Tudor Revival style and being a work of notable local architect Silas Nelsen.*

*E. Abuts a property that is already listed on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places and was constructed within the period of significance of the adjacent structure; due to being located adjacent to Washington Elementary School (listed on the Tacoma, Washington, and National Registers), which has a period of significance from 1906-1949.*

*And G. Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood or City; due to the building being an established, familiar and much-loved feature of the Proctor neighborhood.*

## ANALYSIS

1. The McCormick Building of the Wheelock Branch Library was built 97 years ago, therefore meeting the minimum 50 years old standard.
2. The building retains a moderate to high degree of overall integrity on the exterior.
3. Under Criterion A, the McCormick Building is the oldest extant branch library in Tacoma and represents development of the Tacoma Public Library system.
4. Under Criterion C, the McCormick Building is a fine example of the Tudor Revival style and being a work of notable local architect Silas Nelsen.
5. Under Criterion E, the McCormick Building is located across the street from Washington School, which is listed on the Tacoma Historic Register, and was built within the Washington School's period of significance (1906-1949).
6. Under Criterion G, the McCormick Building appears to be a familiar and established visual anchor for the Proctor neighborhood.
7. The nomination is submitted with the support of the Tacoma Public Library Board of Trustees.

## RECOMMENDATION

The Commission may recommend designation to the City Council, deny the nomination, or defer if additional information is needed. Based upon the criteria listed in TMC 13.07.040, staff recommends that the nomination be forwarded to City Council with a recommendation for designation.

### Sample Motion to Recommend Designation:

*"I move that the Landmarks Preservation Commission recommend to City Council that the **McCormick Building at the Wheelock Branch Library, 3722 N. 26th St.**, be included on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, including the following elements [list elements] finding that it does meet Criteria [Cite Criteria] of TMC 13.07.040."*

### Sample Motion to Deny Designation:

*"I move that the Landmarks Preservation Commission deny the nomination for **McCormick Building at the Wheelock Branch Library, 3722 N. 26th St.**, finding that it does not appear to meet the criteria for designation at TMC 13.07.040 (or state another reason)."*

### Sample Motion to Defer:

*"I move that the Landmarks Preservation defer a decision on the nomination of **McCormick Building at the Wheelock Branch Library, 3722 N. 26th St.** to obtain additional necessary information [specify], to the next regular LPC meeting (or state another reason)."*

## AGENDA ITEM 5B: MOTTET BRANCH LIBRARY (3523 E. G St.)

*Marshall McClintock, Historic Tacoma*

### BACKGROUND

Built in 1930, the Mottet Branch Library was designed by noted Tacoma architect Silas Nelsen in the French Eclectic style. A 1963-64 addition and an expansion of the north wing in 1976 have increased the building's capacity to meet growing demands of the McKinley Hill neighborhood. The nomination includes the original building and historic additions, exclusive of the interior. Marshall McClintock of Historic Tacoma drafted and submitted this nomination, supported by the Tacoma Public Library Board of Trustees.

### PRIOR ACTION

On September 11, 2024, the Landmarks Commission found that the property appeared to meet the threshold criteria for designation in the ordinance and voted to schedule the nomination for a hearing.

### REQUESTED ACTION

The purpose of this hearing is to receive public comment on the proposed nomination and, if appropriate, to make a recommendation to Council.

### EFFECTS OF NOMINATION

- Future changes to the exterior will require approval of the Landmarks Preservation Commission prior to those changes being made, to ensure historical and architectural appropriateness.
- Unnecessary demolition of properties listed on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places is strongly discouraged by the municipal code and requires approval of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.
- Future renovations of properties listed on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places may qualify for the Special Tax Valuation property tax incentive.

### STANDARDS

The property is nominated under the following criteria:

*A: Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; as the second oldest extant (and third ever built) branch library of the Tacoma Public Library system and association with the development of the same.*

*C: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; due to being a fine example of the French Eclectic style and being a work of notable local architect Silas Nelsen.*

*And G. Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood or City; due to the building being an established, familiar and much-loved feature of the McKinley neighborhood.*

### ANALYSIS

1. The Mottet Branch Library was built 94 years ago, therefore meeting the minimum 50 years old standard.
2. The building retains a moderate to high degree of overall integrity on the exterior.
3. Under Criterion A, the Mottet Branch Library is the second oldest extant branch library in Tacoma and represents development of the Tacoma Public Library system.
4. Under Criterion C, the Mottet Branch Library is a fine example of the French Eclectic style and being a work of notable local architect Silas Nelsen.
5. Under Criterion G, the Mottet Branch Library appears to be a familiar and established visual anchor for the McKinley neighborhood.
6. The nomination is submitted with the support of the Tacoma Public Library Board of Trustees.

## RECOMMENDATION

The Commission may recommend designation to the City Council, deny the nomination, or defer if additional information is needed. Based upon the criteria listed in TMC 13.07.040, staff recommends that the nomination be forwarded to City Council with a recommendation for designation.

### Sample Motion to Recommend Designation:

*"I move that the Landmarks Preservation Commission recommend to City Council that the **Mottet Branch Library, 3523 E. G St.**, be included on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, including the following elements [list elements] finding that it does meet Criteria [Cite Criteria] of TMC 13.07.040."*

### Sample Motion to Deny Designation:

*"I move that the Landmarks Preservation Commission deny the nomination for **Mottet Branch Library, 3523 E. G St.**, finding that it does not appear to meet the criteria for designation at TMC 13.07.040 (or state another reason)."*

### Sample Motion to Defer:

*"I move that the Landmarks Preservation defer a decision on the nomination of **Mottet Branch Library, 3523 E. G St.**, to obtain additional necessary information [specify], to the next regular LPC meeting (or state another reason)."*

## BOARD BUSINESS/COMMUNICATION ITEMS

### AGENDA ITEM 7A: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

*Commissioners*

This is a standing agenda item for updates and discussion related to the activities of the Equity Committee.

### AGENDA ITEM 7B: Events and Activities Update

*Staff*

1. September 15<sup>th</sup> – October 15<sup>th</sup> is Hispanic Heritage Month. One of the many events happening in Tacoma is the Festival Herencia Latina, presented by Latinx Unidos of the South Sound and Tacoma Arts Live on Saturday, October 12<sup>th</sup> from 12pm – 5pm. Free community event at the Tacoma Armory. More information: [Festival Herencia Latina - Tacoma Arts Live](#)
2. October is Filipino American History Month. Tacoma City Council made an official proclamation on Tuesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>. According to the City of Tacoma Instagram, "Washington has the fifth largest population of Filipinos in the country, and Tacoma has a unique history and relationship as an important portal city to Filipino Americans."
3. Washington State Historical Society will host "Laban: The Filipino Fighting Spirit" on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 3-7pm. Free community event. [Laban: The Filipino Fighting Spirit - Washington State Historical Society \(washingtonhistory.org\)](#)
4. Tacoma Historical Society's City of Destiny Festival will be Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, 11am-3pm at Edison Square, 5415 South Tacoma Way. Free admission, open to the public. [City of Destiny Festival \(tacomahistory.org\)](#)
5. There will be a presentation on the progress of Old City Hall's rehabilitation from Eli Moreno, at Tacoma Historical Society's Annual Membership Meeting. Monday, October 14<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. 406 Tacoma Avenue South. Please email [info@tacomahistory.org](mailto:info@tacomahistory.org) or call (253) 472-3738 with any questions.
6. The Washington Trust for Historic Preservation presents the 2024 PLACES Conference, October 16-18, in Walla Walla, Washington. More details at [PLACES 2024 \(regfox.com\)](#).

# Landmarks Preservation Commission

## Tacoma Community and Economic Development Department

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747 Market Street ❖ Room 1036 ❖ Tacoma WA 98402-3793 ❖ 253.591.5220

## TACOMA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION FORM

This form is required to nominate properties to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places per Tacoma Municipal Code 13.07.050. Type all entries and complete all applicable sections. Contact the Historic Preservation Officer with any questions at 253-591-5220.

### PART 1: PROPERTY INFORMATION (for 'HELP' press the F1 key)

Property Name	
Historic <u>Anna E. McCormick Branch Library</u>	Common <u>Anna E. McCormick building at the Virginia L. Wheelock Branch Library</u>
Location	
Street Address <u>3722 North 26th St.</u>	Zip <u>98407</u>
Parcel No(s) <u>7475013831</u>	Legal Description and Plat or Addition: <u>Tract A, Block 43 of the subdivision of Section 36, Township 21 North, Range 2 East, W.M. as shown on the Amended map of Second School Land Addition to the City of Tacoma, as per mp thereof, Recorded in Book 7 of Plats at page 79, Records of Pierce County, WA. Les the south 10 feet thereof. (Also known as the North 120 feet thereof of said Blk. 43 of said Amended Plat)</u>
Nominated Elements	
Please indicate below significant elements of the property that are included in the nomination by checking the appropriate box(es) below. These elements should be described specifically in the narrative section of this form.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Principal Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic Additions	<input type="checkbox"/> Historic Landscaping, Fencing, Walkways, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> Ancillary Buildings/Outbuildings	<input type="checkbox"/> Interior Spaces/Other (inventory in narrative)

11/2008

# Landmarks Preservation Commission

## Tacoma Community and Economic Development Department

14



747 Market Street ❖ Room 1036 ❖ Tacoma WA 98402-3793 ❖ 253.591.5220

### Owner of Property

Name Tacoma Public LibraryAddress 1102 Tacoma Avenue SouthCity TacomaState WAZip 98402

Is the owner the sponsor of this nomination?

Yes  No 

### Form Preparer

Name/Title Marshall McClintockCompany/Organization Historic TacomaAddress 701 North J St.City TacomaState WAZip 98403Phone 253-627-4408Email marshalm@q.com

### Nomination Checklist—Attachments

- |                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Filing Fee (payable to City Treasurer)                                                                             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continuation Sheets                                                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site Map (REQUIRED)                                                                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Plans                                                              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photographs (REQUIRED): <i>please label or caption photographs and include a photography index</i>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please indicate):<br><u>Library Board letter of support</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Last Deed of Title (REQUIRED): <i>this document can usually be obtained for little or no cost from a titling company</i> |                                                                                                        |

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Fee Paid \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative (continued)**

**PART 2: PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

**Extent of Changes**

Please summarize the changes to plan, original cladding, windows, interior and other significant elements by selecting the choices below. If the property has been previously documented, these may be indicated on the Washington State Historic Property Inventory Form. These changes should be described specifically in the narrative section of this form.

	Original Materials Intact			Original Materials Intact	
Plan (i.e.: no additions to footprint, relocation of walls, or roof plan)	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Interior (woodwork, finishes, flooring, fixtures)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Original cladding	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Other elements	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Windows (no replacement windows or replacement sashes)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

**Physical Description Narrative**

Describe in detail the present and original (if known) physical appearance, condition and architectural characteristics (use continuation sheets if necessary).

See Physical Description, continuation sheet page 5

### PART 3: HISTORICAL OR CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

#### Criteria for Designation

Tacoma Municipal Code recognizes six criteria of eligibility for inclusion on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places. Please select any that apply to this property, for which there is documentary evidence included in this nomination form.

- A Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D Has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history; or
- E Abuts a property that is already listed on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places and was constructed within the period of significance of the adjacent structure; or
- F Is already individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places; or
- G Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood or City.

#### Historical Data (if known)

Date(s) of Construction 1927 Other Date(s) of Significance 1959, 1988  
Silas Nelsen, Gary  
Architect (s) Knudson (1988) Builder John Wallin Engineer \_\_\_\_\_

#### Statement of Significance

Describe in detail the chronological history of the property and how it meets the criteria for the Register of Historic Places. Please provide a summary in the first paragraph (use continuation sheets if necessary). If using a Multiple Property Nomination that is already on record, or another historical context narrative, please reference it by name and source.

See Statement of Significance, continuation sheet, p. 7.



## Physical Description

The Anna E. McCormick building is now a separately named part of the larger Virginia Lemon Wheelock Branch Library campus located at 3722 N. 26<sup>th</sup> Street in the Proctor Business District and Neighborhood Mixed-Use Center. Note: This nomination does not include any interior elements of the Anna E. McCormick building.

### Site

The 1927 Anna E. McCormick building sits at the southeast corner of the intersection of N. 26<sup>th</sup> and N. Adams Streets. It faces N. 26<sup>th</sup> Street and is across N. 26<sup>th</sup> Street from the Washington Elementary School, which is listed on national, state, and local historic registers. The McCormick building sits to the rear of the level parcel with a small lawn area in front and on its the west side. To the west of the main entrance is a large pin oak tree, planted in 1931 as a “George Washington Bi-centennial Memorial” tree by the Tacoma League of Garden Clubs.<sup>1,2</sup>

In 1987 the large Virginia Lemon Wheelock building, designed by local architect Gary Knudson, was built to the east of the original McCormick building. Special consideration was given to ensuring the two buildings were compatible. The Wheelock building is set back from the McCormick building, but the two are connected via the small 1959 McCormick addition. A large, segmented archway at the street sidewalk references the McCormick building’s entry and shifts attention to the Wheelock building as the main entry. A low brick wall along the street sidewalk visually connects the two buildings and hides an access ramp. The Wheelock building also references the older building with its four triangular dormers in the clerestory. Sculpted brick panels by Tacoma artist Richard Beyer are incorporated into the front façade of the Wheelock building as well as the decorative name at the entry arch.

In 2008, the Proctor District Association and the Tacoma Historical Society commissioned local architect Gary Knudsen (also architect of the 1987 addition) to design a small plaza in the public right-of-way at the northwest corner of the McCormick building site to honor noted developer and philanthropist Allen C. Mason. The plaza incorporates sandstone columns from Mason’s now demolished mansion at 4301 N. Stevens Street set on granite blocks and topped by granite lintels created by stone mason Kerm Schwartz. The center piece is a life-size bronze statue of Mason by local artist Paul R. Michaels. In a short time, the plaza became an established and visual feature of the neighborhood. As the adjacent property owner, Tacoma Public Library supported the creation of the plaza and acts as the liable partner in the on-going insurance and renewal requirements of the Street Occupancy Permit.

### Exterior

This Tudor Revival style library building is a small (32 x 70 ft) one-story, side-gabled brick building with a single dominant mid-façade entry gable and a centered wide wing at the rear. The exterior walls are original brick and terra-cotta with a foundation of poured concrete. The building's primary side-gable roof has a high pitch with terra-cotta capped parapet. The roofing is replacement standing seam metal with two triangular eyebrow dormers in the front slope. A lower, paired gable roof extends over the rear wing. The north (front) façade has

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<sup>1</sup> “League of Garden Clubs to plant memorial tree,” Tacoma News Tribune, 10/31/1931, pg. 3. Note the article calls it a red oak, but pin and red oaks are easily mistaken when young.

<sup>2</sup> Eben Lehman, “A Look Back at George Washington’s Birthday Trees,” Forest History Society, 02/22/2018, <https://foresthistor.org/look-back-george-washingtons-birthday-trees/>, accessed 03/25/2024.

three bays with an enclosed entry porch at the center. The bays on either side of the entry porch have two window openings, each with three, ganged, fixed windows.

The elaborate entry porch has a parapeted front gable and side buttresses with glazed terracotta capstones. The entrance is further embellished with a segmented arch, hood molding with strapwork, and faux quoin surround in glazed terracotta. Above the hood molding is a glazed terracotta panel with the library's original name "Anne E. McCormick Public Library" and smaller panel above that with the date 1927. Inside the entry porch is a double-leaf, wood door with eight panels in each leaf. Over the door is a complex fanlight set in an embellished segmented arch and surround.

The west façade features a three-sided bay with a window on each side and three ganged windows above the bay. In 1987 the original leaded glass windows were replaced with single-light fixed windows with metal frames.

At the east façade is the flat-roofed, one-story addition designed in 1959 by Silas E. Nelsen to provide more office and storage space but which now serves as the connector to the 1987 Wheelock building. Originally the east façade had a bay identical to the one on the west façade. The 1959 addition began at the center face of the bay and extended back and around the rear of the building, connecting on the east side of the centered wing. Originally faced with brick, which remains on its rear wall, the addition's front was given a gray stucco cladding in 1987 to better blend with the Wheelock building and to distinguish it from the original McCormick building. Three ganged windows are above the bay as on the west façade.

The rear façade has seen the most change. The wide wing with the paired gable roof ends with a shallow, square bay with two, small-single pane windows covered with security mesh wire and a flush utilitarian metal door set in a round brick arch with radiating voussoirs. On the west side of the rear of the addition is another flush utilitarian metal door set in a round brick arch with radiating voussoirs and with arch filled in with brick in a crosshatch pattern.

### **Interior**

The interior of the McCormick building has seen considerable change, particularly with the 1987 Wheelock Addition. What had been the main reading room has now been repurposed into two rooms: the children's reading room and a public meeting room. While the walls and vaulted ceiling have been reclad with drywall, the original exposed wood ceiling trusses and braces remain.

## Statement of Significance

The Anna E. McCormick building of the Anna Lemon Wheelock Branch Library was built in 1927 and was the second branch library in the Tacoma Public Library system. It is a fine example of the Tudor Revival style by noted Tacoma architect Silas Nelsen (Criterion C). However, its major significance is its association with the development of the Tacoma Public Library's branch library system and the Proctor neighborhood (Criterion A). Additionally, it sits across the street from and is historically related to the Washington Elementary School that is listed on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, the Washington Heritage Register, and the National Register of Historic Places (Criterion E). Lastly, since its construction, the Anne E. McCormick building has been an established, familiar, and much-loved visual feature of the Proctor business district and neighborhood (Criterion G). Given these associations, the building appears to be eligible for listing on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places.

### Neighborhood Context – Proctor Business District

The general Proctor neighborhood was largely developed from 1890 to 1940. To encourage sales of his platted properties largely north of Puget Creek, noted Tacoma developer A. C. Mason built a streetcar line from downtown Tacoma to Point Defiance Park in 1890. Mason's streetcar passed along N. 26<sup>th</sup> before turning on to N. Washington and later Proctor (originally Jefferson) Streets before crossing Puget Creek. Residential and commercial development rapidly followed along the line.<sup>3</sup>

Also in 1890, Harry Morgan, a tavern owner and notorious vice kingpin, constructed a horse racetrack that was first named Morgan's Memorial Speeding Park and later the Tacoma Speeding Park. The racetrack's stable area was located roughly where the Wheelock Library is today. Morgan died suddenly in 1890, and the former Tacoma chief of police Mart Dillon bought the racetrack. Positioned roughly between N. 15<sup>th</sup> and N. 25<sup>th</sup> along N. Proctor Street, crowds of close to 2000 would attend. In 1896, it became the site for the Pierce County Agricultural Fair. By 1897, the racetrack had fallen into financial hardship. In 1898 the Tacoma Railways Co., the city streetcar company, took it over, and the next year the state land commissioner declared the entire square mile, including the raceway, to be state land obligated to the benefit of public education. The land was platted, and the lots sold.<sup>4</sup> The parcel where the Wheelock library campus sits today falls within the Second School Land Addition.

In 1901 the first, two-room, wood frame Washington School opened at 3701 North 26th St. The Proctor neighborhood continued to grow rapidly. In 1906, architect Frederick Heath designed the two-story Collegiate Gothic Revival Washington Elementary School there. Washington Elementary School is listed on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, the Washington Heritage Register, and the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1908, the Coleman Building (3822-24 N. 26<sup>th</sup> Street) opened as a drug store and grocery store, the first commercial building in what would become the Proctor Business District. Businesses soon filled the 3800 block of N. 26<sup>th</sup> Street and the 2500 to 2800 blocks of Proctor Street, creating an unplanned neighborhood business district. By the 1910s the automobile encouraged development beyond the streetcar lines, and more

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<sup>3</sup> Hunt, Herbert. Tacoma: Its History and its Builders, Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1916, p. 475-76.

<sup>4</sup> Spadoni, Greg. The history of commercial horse racing in Tacoma. 2014. [groupssa.com/ssa/tacomahorsetracks.html](http://groupssa.com/ssa/tacomahorsetracks.html), (accessed 09/10/2019)

businesses opened. Mason Middle School at 3901 N. 28<sup>th</sup> St. opened in 1926. Parents and students from Washington and Mason schools would be pivotal in creating the Anna E. McCormick library in 1927.<sup>5</sup>

### **Institutional Context: The Tacoma Public Library<sup>6</sup>**

The public library movement in the United States largely began after the Civil War. In larger cities, wealthy philanthropists often provided the money for large often monumental, centrally located libraries. These often operated on a subscription basis with little or no public access. However, libraries quickly became seen as worthy public amenities supported by taxation and free of charge. This effort received a major boost in 1883 when steel magnate Andrew Carnegie began his philanthropic effort to build public libraries in smaller cities and towns throughout the United States, Canada, Britain, and other English-speaking countries. He would offer to build and equip public libraries on the condition that the local authority would provide the land and a budget for operations. Ultimately, he would donate some \$60 million and establish over 3,000 libraries.

Tacoma followed this pattern on a smaller scale. In 1886 Ms. Grace R. Moore started a subscription circulating library out of her house. By 1890 this library had moved to a space in a commercial building downtown. In 1893 A. C. Mason built and funded a substantial library of 7,000 volumes at 4203 N. Stevens (now demolished) that he donated to the city in 1898. The city operated the library for only a year before passing it to nearby Whitworth College. The first public library supported by city funds started in 1894 and was located on the fifth floor of the Tacoma City Hall building. Needing more space by 1901, the city began considering a separate building and applied for a Carnegie donation. The result was the 1903 Tacoma Carnegie Library at 1102 Tacoma Avenue South.

In 1905, the Women's Christian Temperance League opened a small library in South Tacoma. Their goal was to provide the young men working in the Northern Pacific Railroad Shops and other industries with an alternative to the many saloons in the area. By 1910, however, area families were clamoring for a larger, more accessible public library. In 1911, Tacoma's first branch library, designed by noted Tacoma architect George Gove, was opened at 3411 South 56<sup>th</sup> Street. It was demolished in 1958 to make way for a larger, modern facility.

Between approximately 1910 and 1920, Tacoma City Library would open temporary storefront branches called "stations" in various locations around the city. Following the demise of the Mason Library, the North End had no other library service until 1916, when a station opened in rented quarters in the Proctor business district. Jacqueline Noel at the city library was instrumental in supporting efforts for the Proctor branch. When she became City Librarian in 1924, she became the driving force in the effort to create branch libraries across Tacoma.

The idea for a branch library in the North End originated with the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) of Washington Elementary School under the leadership of Gail Smith Clark (Mrs. C. Stewart Clark).<sup>7</sup> The plan developed to apply for a Carnegie library donation. The Carnegie program required the local authority to purchase the land for the library site. To raise money and awareness, Washington Elementary PTA and school children began fund drives by selling old papers and rosebuds to raise money. Enthusiasm spread and quickly 735 people, largely from the Proctor area, contributed the \$3,125 by 1920 needed to purchase the site at the

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<sup>5</sup> Gallacci, Caroline & Evans, Bill. Tacoma's Proctor District, San Francisco: Arcadia, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> This section is a summary of articles and summaries in the Tacoma Public Library clipping file in the NW Room of the Tacoma Public Library.

<sup>7</sup> "Clark, Gail S. (Mrs. C. Stewart)", Local History & Biography Index, NW Room, Tacoma Public Library.

corner of N. 26<sup>th</sup> and N. Adams.<sup>8</sup> In the meantime, however, the Carnegie Foundation had ceased funding libraries due to their war relief work in Europe following World War I.

Several years passed as attempts were made to secure funding for a library building. In 1926, Mayor Melvin G. Tennent made a special appeal to Ms. Anna E. McCormick, the wealthy widow of William Laird McCormick. She donated \$25,000 (about \$361,784 in 2019) for the construction of the building, stipulating that Tacoma-sourced materials were to be used.<sup>9</sup>

Local architect Silas E. Nelsen was selected to design the building. He chose to design the small building in the Tudor Revival style for its compatibility with the Collegiate Gothic Revival style of Washington Elementary School. Its parapeted gables, buttresses, glazed terra cotta copings and embellished entry give the building a distinctive presence that belies its small size. Named for its benefactor, the Anna E. McCormick Library was dedicated in 1927 with two hundred children applying that day for library cards. It quickly became a neighborhood icon and remains the busiest library in the city. This building would serve as the reading room and stacks area of the library until 1987 when a substantial new building was constructed to the east.

In 1959, Silas Nelsen designed a small, one-story addition with basement to the 1927 library at the southeast corner. Beginning at the bay window on the east façade, the flat roofed addition wrapped around the southeast corner to the rear. It provided bathrooms, staff area and storage.<sup>10</sup>

Following the passage of a major bond issue in 1984, the Tacoma City Library planned a major addition to its most used branch. Architect Gary Knudsen, working for the firm of McGranahan, Messenger and Associates designed the large 1988 addition that compliments the original building.<sup>11</sup> The much larger addition is set away from the smaller building and connected by a low, flat roofed section so that the addition's size does not overwhelm the older building. The addition's whitish concrete tends to disappear while its brick façade and low wall connect it to the older building.

In 1995 the late Virginia Wheelock Marshall donated \$2.4 million to the Tacoma Public Library. A requirement of the bequest was that the Proctor library be named after her mother, Anna Lemon Wheelock. The library board decided that the new 1988 building would be named the Anna Lemon Wheelock Branch. However, the earlier building, now mainly meeting rooms, would retain the name Anna E. McCormick.<sup>12</sup>

## Biographies

### Silas E. Nelsen (1894-1987)<sup>13</sup>

Nelsen, who had no formal architectural training, had worked with the premier Tacoma architectural firm of Heath, Gove and Bell for five years before starting his own practice in 1917. He was granted a architectural license in 1924. His first known project as an architect is a 1925 Tudor Revival style house at 2420 N. Union. However, he also designed St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church that same year. In this early period and through the 1930s, his designs were largely in the popular revival styles, such as Tudor and Colonial. His

<sup>8</sup> "Wheelock Branch, Tacoma Public Libraries", <http://www.koddler.com/destination.aspx/wa/tacoma/wheelock-branch-tacoma-public-libraries>

<sup>9</sup> "Gives money to build library," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 12/10/1926, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> "McCormick Branch almost ready," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 04/12/1959, p. B2.

<sup>11</sup> "McCormick Library makes another historic mark," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 11/23/1988, p. E1.

<sup>12</sup> "Big bequest present opportunity to library," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 06/02/1995.

<sup>13</sup> Houser, Michael. Silas E. Nelsen," *Architect Biographies*, 2007, [www.dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/research-and-technical-preservation-guidance/architect-biographies/bio-for-silas-e-nelsen](http://www.dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/research-and-technical-preservation-guidance/architect-biographies/bio-for-silas-e-nelsen)

projects were mainly residential, but he also designed several libraries, churches, and commercial buildings as well. In 1930, he designed the Charlotte White Mottet library in the French Revival style.

By the end of the 1930s, Nelsen's work became more modernist with buildings such as Fire Station No. 2 (2701 Tacoma Ave. S.) and Fire Station No. 5 (222 E 26th St.), both listed on the National Register, and the Mueller-Harkins Buick Dealership (455 St. Helens) and the Johnson Candy Company Building (924 M.L.K. Jr. Way).

In the 1950s and 1960s, he primarily worked in the internationalist style. He designed several new Tacoma branch libraries, such as Grace Moore, South Tacoma and Fern Hill libraries as well as the 1952 addition to the Main Library (1102 Tacoma Ave. S.) and the Tacoma Public Utilities Center (3628 S. 35<sup>th</sup> St.). He also designed several buildings at the University of Puget Sound. He had a prolific career, designing over 150 residences, 15 churches, and five libraries. Many of his buildings are listed on the local, state, and national landmark registers.

### **Anna E. (Goodman) McCormick (1850-1935)**

Anna was born in Seneca County, Ohio in 1859 to Daniel and Minerva (Mills) Goodman. In 1867 she married a young railroad clerk, Robert Laird McCormick. They would have two sons, William Laird and Robert Allen, and a daughter Blanche Amelia.

Robert was born in 1847 near Lock Haven, PA. Too young to join the Union Army in the Civil War, his first job in 1865 was as a station clerk for the Pennsylvania & Erie Railroad. In 1868, Anna and he moved to Winona, MN, where Robert took charge of the office of Laird, Norton and Company, a lumber retailer. In 1874, he purchased a lumber yard in Waseca, MN, where he would also serve as mayor. In 1880 he was elected to the Minnesota State Senate, serving two terms. In 1881, he became secretary and treasurer for Frederick Weyerhaeuser's new company Northern Wisconsin Lumber Company. In 1899, McCormick assisted Weyerhaeuser with the purchase of vast tracts of timber in Washington State and with the creation of Weyerhaeuser Timber Co. in Tacoma.<sup>14</sup>

He and Anna moved to Tacoma in 1903. He served as secretary of the Weyerhaeuser Company as well as president of the Lumberman's National Bank of Tacoma and the Lumberman's State Bank of Hoquiam. He was believed to be worth \$5 million dollars when he died in 1911 (~\$27 million in 2019). Anna continued to live in Tacoma and engage in philanthropic activities until her death in 1935. Anna and Robert are buried in Tacoma Cemetery along with their son William.

### **Jacqueline Noel (1886-1964)<sup>15</sup>**

Jacqueline Noel was born in Washington, DC, in 1886 to Jacob and Eleanor Noel. Jacob was a civil engineer and involved with mining businesses in Tacoma. Jacqueline would attend the Pratt Institute in New York City and graduate in 1913, after which she returned to the Pacific Northwest.

She would work as a librarian in La Grande, OR, and Portland, OR, before joining the staff of the Tacoma Public Library in 1914 where she worked as an assistant reference librarian. In 1924 she became City Librarian. Noel was the driving force behind creating the branch library system in Tacoma. She was actively involved in efforts

<sup>14</sup> "Hon. Robert Laird McCormick," *Commemorative Biographical Record of the Upper Lake Region*, Minnesota: J. H. Beers & Co, 1905, p. 27-29.

<sup>15</sup> "Jacqueline Noel" *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, 08/01/2019, accessed 09/16/2019, [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacqueline\\_Noel](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacqueline_Noel)

to create a Proctor branch library, the first under her tenure. By the time of her retirement in 1947, more new branches were opening, and by her death in 1964, many more were operating.

Interestingly, Noel is credited as the originator of the name “Almond Roca” for the chocolate-coated hard toffee with a crust of almonds developed by Tacoma confectioners Harry Brown and J. C. Haley in 1923. Noel suggested using the Spanish word “roca” or “rock” for the candy. Almond Roca was selected to be distributed to U.S. military facilities during World War II and the Korean War.

### **Gail Smith Clark (1889-1968)**

Gail Smith was born in Kansas in 1889. In 1908 she married Charles Stewart Clark, who worked as a bookkeeper and later credit manager for the Tacoma Gas & Electric Light Co. In 1911 she would have a son, Stanley, and some years later in 1923, a daughter Helen. From 1920 to 1928, she and her family lived in the Proctor area at 2201 North Union Street, followed by 3705 North Washington Street from 1929 to 1939 and 4021 North 35<sup>th</sup> Street from 1940 to 1948. In 1949, they moved to University Place, and in 1956 they moved to San Jose, CA.

Ms. Clark was long active in civic organizations. She was president of Washington Elementary PTA and organized the drive to raise the money to purchase a Proctor branch library site. She also volunteered with the Girl Scouts. She was president of the Flower Growers Garden Club and helped form the League of Garden Clubs of which she was an officer. As a chrysanthemum enthusiast, she led the successful effort to have it named the official city flower. She was also general chair of the daffodil festival. In 1935 she ran for the Parks Board. She was also the women’s editor for radio station KTBI (now KTAC) and produced gardening and home economic programs for KTNT radio and TV (KIRO) into the late 1950s.<sup>16</sup>

### **Melvin Green Tennent (1888-1969)**

The popular “Smilin’ Mel” Tennent served two terms as mayor of Tacoma from 1926 to 1934 and was instrumental in getting Anna E. McCormick to donate the money for the Proctor branch library.

Born in Marietta, GA, in 1888 to a farming family, his mother died when he was three. At the age of 10 he started work in a textile mill. A year later he ran away from home after a beating and worked as an errand boy in a foundry in Tennessee (likely living with relatives in the area). At 18, he was working in a foundry in Beaumont, TX, when he traveled to the West Coast.

In 1909 he married Agnes H. Hastings with whom he would have six children. In 1910 he began working in a steel mill in Sedro Woolley, WA, eventually taking a similar job in Seattle where he worked during WWI.<sup>17</sup> Having acquired some capital, he was able in 1919 to take over the lease of a small steel mill in Tacoma. It would become Tennent Steel Casting Company, and operations expanded to Seattle, Everett, and Vancouver, WA. He would also eventually become a Vice-President of Atlas Foundry (now Bradken-Atlas LP) at 3021 S. Wilkeson St.

In 1926, Tennent defeated the notorious four-time mayor Angelo V. Fawcett. Tennent would open the Puyallup Bridge (now the Fishing Wars Memorial Bridge) and be instrumental in the construction of the Narrows Bridge as well as both Seattle floating bridges. He was also a member of the Columbia Basin Irrigation League, advocating for the building of the Grand Coulee Dam. He ran for mayor again in 1940 but was

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<sup>16</sup> “Former women’s editor of radio station KTBI dies,” *Tacoma News Tribune*, 06/01/1968

<sup>17</sup> “Time Machines Mayor M. G. Tennent, man with a lasting smile,” *Tacoma News Tribune*, 02/22/1976

defeated by Harry P. Cain. He then moved to Seattle where he ran for Seattle mayor without success in 1947 and for King County Assessor without success in 1954. He died in 1969 in Seattle.

Interestingly, there is some suggestion that Tennent may have been of mixed race. His brother John M. Tennent appears to have moved to Tacoma in 1919 as well. In the 1910 census, John is listed as “mulatto” but as “white” in subsequent censuses. To date Melvin has only been located in the 1930 and 1940 Federal censuses and is listed as “white” in both. John worked as a meat cutter and died in Tacoma also in 1969.



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Figure 1. Aerial neighborhood view. Nominated property outlined in black.

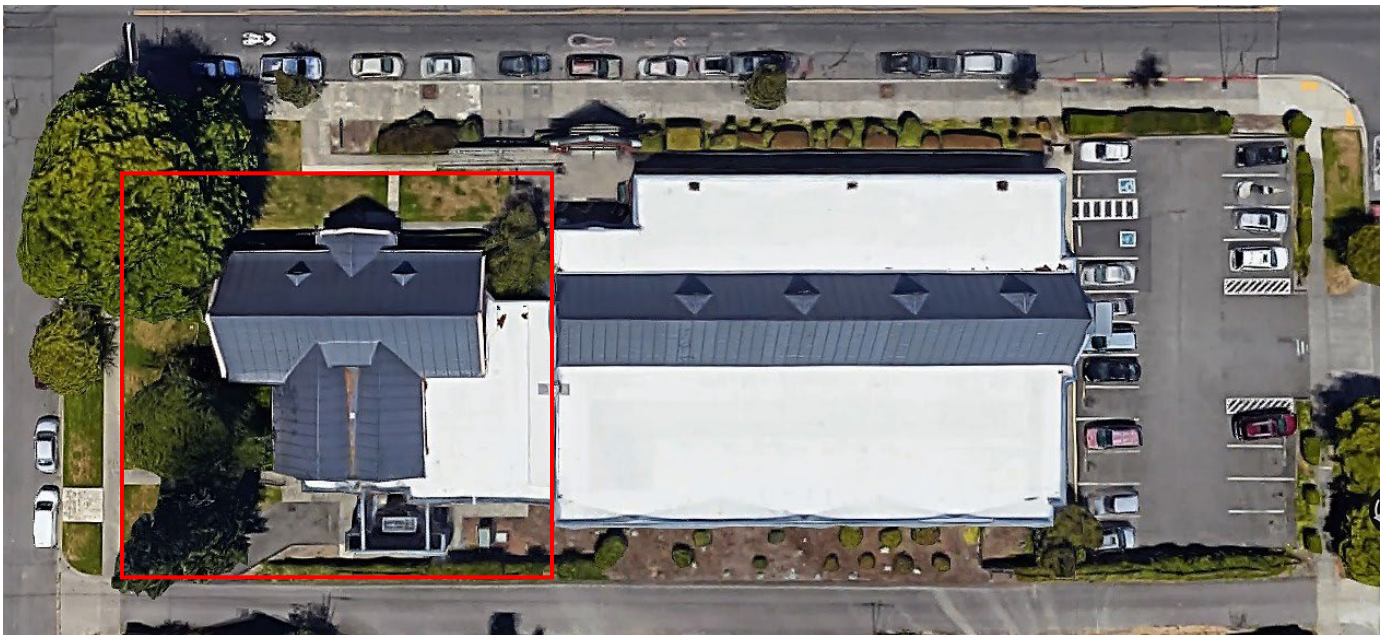


Figure 2. Site map. The nominated building is outlined in red.

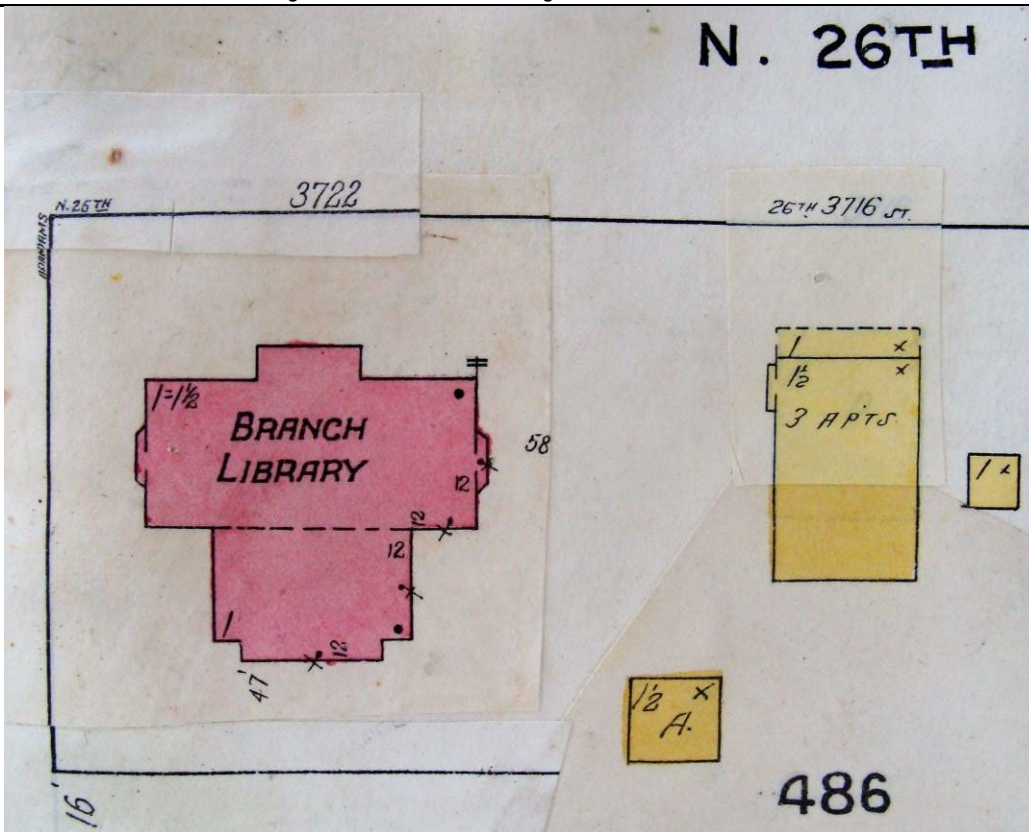


Figure 3. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1912 corrected to 1950, Vol. 1, Sheet 41

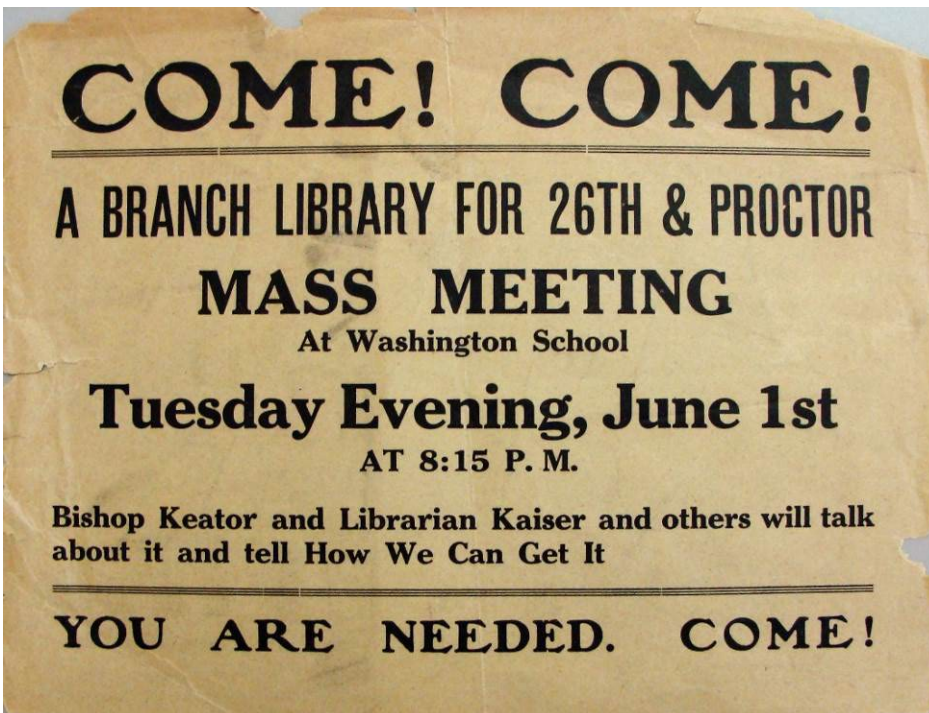


Figure 4. Flier for community meeting, 1920, Tacoma Public Library, NW Room Collection



Figure 5. Anna E. McCormick Library, front façade, 1927 (BU-11835)



Figure 6. Anna E. McCormick Library, front & west facades, ~1930 (BU-11836)



Figure 7. Anna E. McCormick Library, interior, date unknown (BU-11842)



Figure 8. Anna E. McCormick Library, dedication plaque, date unknown (BU-11834)



Figure 9. Anna E. McCormick Library, 1947 (BU-11838)



Figure 10. Anna E. McCormick Library, Note the addition at the left (east façade), 1962 (BU-1844)



Figure 11. Anna E. McCormick Library, 1977, Cultural Resource Survey photo (BU-3133)



Figure 11. Anna E. McCormick Library with addition, 1988 (BU-11845)

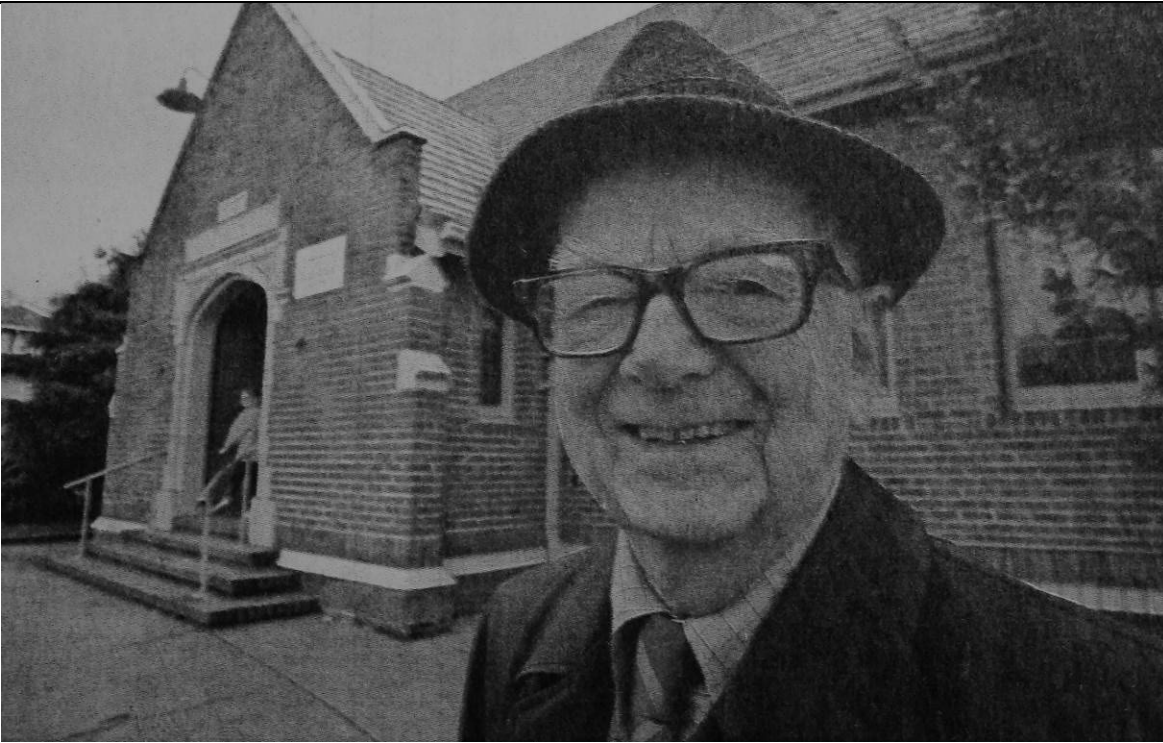
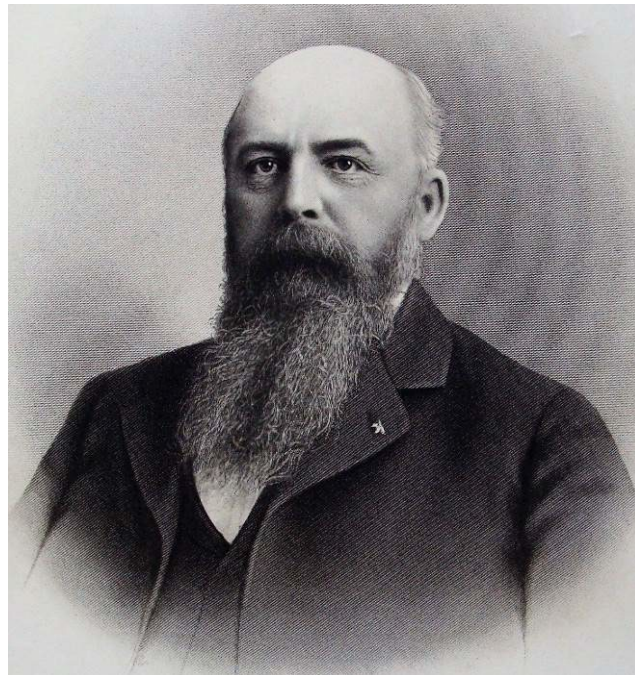


Figure 12. Silas E. Nelsen, "Happy Birthday, McCormick," Tacoma News Tribune, 12/04/1977, p. E1



Figures 13-14. Anna E. and Robert L. McCormick. From W. P. Bonney, *History of Pierce County, Washington*. Chicago: Pioneer Historical Pub. Co., 1927.





Figure 15. Jacqueline Noel, ~1910. City Librarian 1924-1947. (NW Room general collection, G1.1-151)



Figure 16. Gail S. Clark (seated center), 1948 (Richards Studio D34263-2)



Figure 17. Mayor Melvin G. Tennent, 1926 (Chapin Bowen Collection G2.1-040)



Figure 18. Anna E. McCormick building, front (north) façade, 2019



Figure 19. Anna E. McCormick building, west façade, 2019



Figure 20. Anna E. McCormick building, east façade, 2024. Note that the 1927 bay remains intact while the 1959 addition is now clad in gray stucco as the connection with the new Wheelock building.



Figure 20. Anna E. McCormick building, southwest rear façade. Brick section is the 1959 addition. 2019



Figure 21. Anna E. McCormick building, southeast rear façade. Brick section is the 1959 addition. 2019



Figure 22. Virginia Lemon Wheellock Branch Library and McCormick building, 2019



Figure 23. Virginia Lemon Wheellock Branch Library, the 1988 addition, 2019



Figure 24. Allen C. Mason Plaza, erected 2008, 2019

# Landmarks Preservation Commission

## Planning and Development Services Department

39



747 Market Street ❖ Room 345 ❖ Tacoma WA 98402-3793 ❖ 253.591.5220

## TACOMA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION FORM

This form is required to nominate properties to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places per Tacoma Municipal Code 13.07.050. Type all entries and complete all applicable sections. Contact the Historic Preservation Office with any questions at 253-591-5220.

### PART 1: PROPERTY INFORMATION

#### Property Name

Historic Name Charlotte White Mottet Branch Library Common Name Mottet Branch Library

#### Location

Street Address 3523 East G Street Zip 98404

Parcel No(s)	Legal Description and Plat or Addition:
<u>2087270011</u>	<u>Section 09 Township 20 Range 03 Quarter 44 : Tacoma Land Company 1<sup>st</sup> Addition SE of SE 9-20-03E Lots 1 thru 4, Block 8727</u>

#### Nominated Elements

Please indicate below significant elements of the property that are included in the nomination by checking the appropriate box(es) below. These elements should be described specifically in the narrative section of this form.

- |                                                           |                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Principal Structure   | <input type="checkbox"/> Site                                           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic Additions    | <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Landscaping, Fencing, Walkways, etc.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accessory Buildings/Outbuildings | <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Spaces/Other (inventory in narrative) |

#### Owner of Property

Name Tacoma Public Library  
Address 1102 Tacoma Avenue S City Tacoma State WA Zip 98402

Is the owner the sponsor of this nomination? If not, please provide evidence that the owner has been contacted.

Yes  No

Owner Signature, if possible:

#### Form Preparer

Name/Title Marshall McClintock Company/Organization Historic Tacoma  
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# Landmarks Preservation Commission

## Planning and Development Services Department

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747 Market Street ❖ Room 345 ❖ Tacoma WA 98402-3793 ❖ 253.591.5220

### Nomination Checklist—Attachments

- |                                                                                                                                                   |                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Filing Fee (payable to City Treasurer)                                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation Sheets            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site Map (REQUIRED)                                                                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Plans               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photographs (REQUIRED): <i>please label or caption photographs and include a photography index</i>            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please indicate): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Last Deed of Title (REQUIRED): <i>this document can usually be obtained for little or no cost from a titling company</i> |                                                         |

FOR OFFICE USE

Date Received \_\_\_\_\_

Fee Paid \_\_\_\_\_



**Narrative (continued)**

**PART 2: PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

**Extent of Changes**

Please summarize the changes that have been made to the original plan, exterior, materials, cladding, windows, interior, and other significant elements by selecting the choices below. If the property has been previously documented, these may be indicated on the Washington State Historic Property Inventory Form. These changes should be described specifically in the narrative section of this form.

	Original Materials Intact			Original Materials Intact	
Plan (i.e.: no additions to footprint , relocation of walls, or roof plan)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Interior (woodwork, finishes, flooring, fixtures)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Original cladding/exterior materials	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Other elements	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Windows (no replacement windows or replacement sashes)	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>			

**Physical Description Narrative**

Describe in detail the original (if known) and present physical appearance, condition and architectural characteristics of the site (context, location), exterior (all four walls), and interior. Please include a list of known alterations and their dates (use additional sheets if necessary).

See Physical Description, continuation sheet page 5

### PART 3: HISTORICAL OR CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

#### Criteria for Designation

Tacoma Municipal Code recognizes seven criteria of eligibility for inclusion on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places. Please select any that apply to this property, for which there is documented evidence included in this nomination form.

- A Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D Has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history; or
- E Abuts a property that is already listed on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places and was constructed within the period of significance of the adjacent structure; or
- F Is already individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places; or
- G Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood or City.

#### Historical Data (if known)

Date(s) of Construction	<u>1930</u>	Other Date(s) of Significance	<u>1963, 1976</u>
Architect(s)	<u>Silas E. Nelsen</u>	Builder	<u>Standard Construction Co.</u> Engineer <u>n/a</u>
Architectural Style(s)	<u>French Eclectic</u>	Material(s)	<u>Brick</u>

#### Statement of Significance

Describe in detail the chronological history of the property and how it meets the criteria for the Register of Historic Places. Please provide a summary in the first paragraph that lists the relevant criteria (use additional sheets if necessary). This section should include a thorough narrative of the property's history, context, occupants, and uses. If using a Multiple Property Nomination that is already on record, or another historical context narrative, please reference it by name and source.

See Statement of Significance, continuation sheet, p. 7.

## Narrative Continuation

### Physical Description Narrative

The 1930 Charlotte White Mottet Branch Library is located at 3523 East G Street in the McKinley Hill Business District and Neighborhood Mixed-Use Center. The building was recommended for listing on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places in the 2021 McKinley Hill Mixed-use Center Inventory Report. In several neighborhood surveys, the Mottet Library was cited as one of the historic buildings that defined the McKinley Hill neighborhood. Note that no interior elements of the building are included in this nomination.

### Site

The 3857 SF building sits on a 13,000 SF parcel and faces east toward East G Street between East D Street (formerly the alley between E. Harrison and E. Morton) and East Morton Street. Behind it is a small parking lot (~ 6, 200 SF) that now is largely given over to four large mobile storage containers. To the north immediately across East D Street is the former 1920 parsonage (3521 East G St.) of Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church, beyond which is the 1906 church building itself, now Iglesia La Roca Church. To the south and catercorner across East G Street is the 1908 McKinley Park Methodist Church, now the Tacoma Indian Baptist Church (3526 E G. St.).

A small lawn area fronts the building and its south end. In line across the front of the building are four mature trees: two maples at the outside and two hawthorns to the center. On the northeast front, near the exterior door into the north wing, is a magnolia. At the southwest corner of the building by the parking lot entry is another mature maple.

### Exterior

As built in 1930, this one-story, French Eclectic style, library building was asymmetric with a small hip roofed wing on its north side. Today it is symmetric with a compatible east wing added in 1964 and the north wing enlarged in 1976 to match the south wing. The steep hip-on-hip roof is clad in composition singles with the roof of each wing slightly lower than that of the central section. The cladding is brick. All the windows have diamond-paned leaded glass sashes.

### Central section (1930)

The front (east) façade of central section is the primary structure from 1930. Its front and rear walls are about one foot proud of the wings on either side and are clad in a brick of variegated color. Decorative brick quoins project slightly from the corners of the central section's front façade.

The centered main entry is a front gabled, through-the-cornice dormer with a centered, inset entry. The entry is a semi-circular brick arch with a decorative soldier course surround and saw-toothed edge surmounted with a decorative brick header course hood. The brickwork here is quite remarkable. Recessed in the arch is a half-round, wrought iron decorative panel with the library's name. The entry doors are recessed further and consist of two-leaf, single-panel, glazed metal doors surmounted by a half-round window with curved leaded lights. Earthquake bolts are positioned symmetrically across the older central portion. To the left and right of the entry are two mullioned windows with leaded, diamond panes and sandstone sills.

A low concrete open porch with a plain, wrought iron balustrade stretches across the front façade from the north wing to the south wing providing a wheelchair ramp and separate access to the north wing meeting room. Three steps lead up to the primary main entrance.

The rear (west) façade of the central section has two small, mullioned windows set high on the south side. On the north side is a similarly sized three mullioned windows. Both sets of windows have sandstone sills.

### South wing (1964)

The south wing (33 x 31 ft.) was added in 1964. It follows the design of the central section but has a slightly lower roof line and brick cladding of variegated color with somewhat more light color than the central section. On all three sides of the hipped roof of the south wing are centered simple triangular dormers with ventilation louvers. On the front (east) façade are two pairs of mullioned windows of the same height and width as those on the central section but with brick sills. Decorative brick quoins project slightly from the edge abutting the central section and the southeast and southwest corners as well as the sides of windows on the front facade. The south end of the wing has no windows.

On the rear (west) façade are a pair of mullioned windows similar in size and placement to those on the rear of the central section. Both pairs have brick sills. There are no decorative brick quoins on the rear.

**North Wing (1976)**

Expanded in 1976, the north wing (38 x 31 ft.) incorporated and extended the existing north wing of the 1930 building adding a meeting room and extending the basement. Also, the window on the original wing nearest main entrance was converted into a door for exterior access to the meeting room. Consequently, most of the north wing was re-clad with red brick except for a portion of the rear façade. The front (east) and rear (west) slopes of the wing's hipped roof features a simple triangular dormer with ventilation louvers. On the north slope is a skylight.

On the front façade towards the central section is an entry with a brick, segmental arch with a single-leaf, one panel glazed door and a glazed fixed transom in the arch. To the north about six feet are two separate windows of the same size as those in the central section with diamond-paned leaded glass and sandstone sills. Beneath these windows at the foundation is a stairwell to a basement door. Decorative brick quoins project slightly from the northeast and northwest corners of the north wing. The north end of the wing has no windows.

At the northwest corner of the rear façade of the north wing is a single-leaf metal door into the basement as well as a concrete stair with a plain, wrought iron balustrade rises to a stoop with plain entry with a single-leaf, one panel glazed door. To the south of this door is the original variegated brickwork of the original 1930 wing and its two separate windows of the same size as those on the front façade of the north wing with diamond-paned leaded glass and sandstone sills.

**Interior**

As might be expected, the interior of the Mottet Branch Library has seen considerable change over the years. The librarian's desk has been relocated, and the height of the shelving has been reduced. There is now more seating and space for computers. While the original western hemlock woodwork, trim, and trusses have been retained, the vaulted wood ceiling has been painted white.

For a detailed account of changes to the building, see the Building History Section in Part 3: Historical or Cultural Significance below.

## PART 3: HISTORICAL OR CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

### Statement of Significance

The Charlotte White Mottet Branch Library was built in 1930 with sensitive and compatible additions in 1964 and 1976. It is a fine and somewhat rare Tacoma example of the French Eclectic style by noted Tacoma architect Silas Nelsen (Criterion C).

Being the city's third and second oldest extant branch library, it is strongly associated with the development of the branch library system of the Tacoma Public Library. It is also associated with the development of the McKinley Hill neighborhood. Additionally, the building is closely associated with noted pioneer Tacoma and regional businessman Frederick Mottet. Very active in civic affairs, in 1906 he became the first president of Tacoma's Library Board and again from 1926 to 1933. He was instrumental in the development of Tacoma's branch library system. He donated the money for the land, building and furnishings for the new branch library on McKinley Hill in memory of his wife Charlotte White Mottet. (Criterion A).

Lastly, since its construction, Charlotte White Mottet Branch Library has been an established, familiar, and much-loved visual feature of the McKinley Hill business district and neighborhood (Criterion G). Given these associations, the building is eligible for listing on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places.

The Mottet Branch Library is in the McKinley Hill neighborhood, an underserved area of Tacoma in terms of historic preservation, with only four buildings listed on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places: East 34<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge (1937 & 1943), Rhode Holgerson house (1890, 618 E 35TH St.), Engine House #11 (1908, 3802 McKinley Ave.), and McKinley Elementary (1909, 3702 McKinley Ave.). In 2024, the neighborhood lost the Gault Middle School (1926, 1115 E. Division Ln) that was proposed for register listing, to fire. Repeatedly in surveys and online forums, the neighborhood has pointed to the Mottet Branch Library as a defining building for the neighborhood and of the highest priority for preservation.

While the Charlotte White Mottet Branch Library has seen considerable change since 1930, it retains substantial integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The 1964 south wing addition is over 50 years old. The 1976 expansion of the original north wing is now 48 years old. Both additions were sensitively designed to continue Silas Nelsen's original vision.

### Neighborhood Context – McKinley Hill

Following the founding of New Tacoma in 1873 by the Northern Pacific Railroad (NPRR), commercial and industrial activity grew up around what is today the Thea Foss Waterway.<sup>1</sup> Demand quickly increased for more industrial and commercial space around the east end of the waterway. In 1884 the NPRR's Tacoma Land Company made its "First Addition" to the city of New Tacoma. The addition, which includes the site of the Mottet Branch Library, ran from the Thea Foss to East Division Lane between Pacific Avenue to west and the Puyallup Reservation to the east.

The workers at the new businesses and industries near the waterway were eager for nearby housing, which quickly spread up the steep slope of McKinley Hill, making it among Tacoma's oldest neighborhoods. Due to the steep hillside, access to the hilltop was difficult. By 1894, trestle bridges had been built on East 34<sup>th</sup> Street across the Tacoma Eastern Gulch and the smaller gulch to the west, allowing access via the less steep Pacific Avenue.<sup>2,3</sup> Later Interstate 5 would bisect the neighborhood, separating it from the rest of the city.

McKinley Hill is the highest point in the city of Tacoma and takes its name from McKinley Park that donated to the city by the NPRR and named for President William McKinley following his assassination in 1901. In 1903 the Tacoma Railway and Power Company extended a streetcar line up McKinley Hill and along McKinley Avenue to East 30th Street. It was later extended to East 36th Street and eventually terminated at East 64th Street at the Bismarck neighborhood. Rapid development followed along the streetcar line. In 1904, the NPRR constructed the Northern Pacific Beneficial Association Hospital (demolished) for its employees at 801 East Wright Street just above McKinley Park.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hunt, Herbert. *Tacoma: Its History and its Builders*, Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1916, pg. 184ff.

<sup>2</sup> "Matters at the city hall," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 09/06/1893, pg. 2

<sup>3</sup> The shorter E. 34<sup>th</sup> Street bridge was replaced with a concrete bridge in 1936, The longer bridge was replaced in 1943. Both spans are city designated landmarks.

<sup>4</sup> "Building will begin at once," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 06/19/1904, pg. 4

McKinley Hill's public schools also reflect the rapid residential development. The 1886 Hawthorne Elementary School (519 East 28<sup>th</sup> St., demolished) was enlarged in 1913. The 1889 Bismarck Elementary School was enlarged in 1908 with the building of Sheridan Elementary (5317 McKinley).<sup>5</sup> In 1907 Rogers Elementary (1301 East 34<sup>th</sup>) was opened.<sup>6</sup> In 1910, McKinley Elementary (3702 McKinley) opened (now a city listed landmark).<sup>7</sup> In 1913, Lincoln High School (701 South 37<sup>th</sup>) opened (now a city listed landmark).<sup>8</sup> Gault Middle School (1115 E. Division Ln, demolished) would be added in 1926.<sup>9</sup>

McKinley Avenue between E. 34<sup>th</sup> Street and E. Division Lane emerged as the neighborhood's commercial corridor with many grocery, bakery, and butcher shops, variety stores, and drug stores as well as restaurants and bars. In 1915, Tacoma Public Library opened a storefront "station" at 3510 McKinley Avenue. Apartment buildings appeared along McKinley Avenue with the Post Apartments (now McKinley Apts., 802 East 34<sup>th</sup> Street) and McKinley Hall (3407 McKinley) in 1921 and Porter Apartments (3502 McKinley) in 1928. A popular destination was The Park Theatre (3510, then 3506, later 3508 McKinley), a vaudeville and movie theater that opened in 1910 and operated until 1961.<sup>10</sup> The neighborhood continued to grow slowly primarily along McKinley Avenue with small truck farms across the outlying area.

World War II brought a new population influx to Tacoma. In 1943, for example, the federal government opened the 2000 unit, racially integrated Salishan housing development to the southeast of McKinley Hill to house workers. Later it was transferred to Tacoma's Housing Authority, which eventually converted it to low-income housing, where more recently it would serve families immigrating to America. Starting in 2002 and completed in 2015, Salishan was redeveloped into a mixed-income neighborhood of 1,400 housing units, single-family and rentals.<sup>11</sup>

In 1943 the 43<sup>rd</sup> and McKinley Playfield Association was founded to improve the playground (now Verlow Playfield), building a clubhouse and pool by 1946. This would become the East Side Boys Club, eventually becoming East Boys & Girls Club, which continues today at the Eastside Community Center (1721 East 56<sup>th</sup>).<sup>12</sup> Many of the new residents stayed on following the war, and residential and commercial development extended further south of McKinley Hill eventually to Parkland. Timber and wood products industries flourished, and Boeing expanded rapidly with facilities nearby. Starting in 1956, Interstate 5 construction would cut through Tacoma. The Tacoma section was opened in 1962, but subsequent construction would continue for the rest of the decade. It would cut off McKinley Hill from the easy access it had to downtown and the Tideflats with its many industries.

Through the 1970s and 1980s, McKinley Hill, along with the city, experienced urban decline. The railroad hospital closed its doors in 1968, replaced eventually by a senior housing project. By the mid-1970s, the devastating impact of the Tacoma Mall (built in 1965) on the downtown commercial core and neighborhood business districts like McKinley Hill was apparent. Neighborhood shops struggled to compete with national chain stores. The National Bank of Washington branch that opened in 1965 was closed by 1982. The Safeway supermarket closed its doors in the mid-1990s. During the 1980s Tacoma was caught up in a wave of gang crime and violence, much of it centered in nearby Salishan and spilling across East Tacoma. This fueled more flight from the area and a decline in property values and investment. By the mid-1990s social and educational interventions had reduced crime.

More recently, the neighborhood has experienced a revival with an influx of new residents. The McKinley Boosters, organized in 1973, to carry out neighborhood improvement and historic preservation projects. In 1982, they staged the "McKinley Hill Recognition Festival".<sup>13</sup> The idea caught on and the first McKinley Hill Street Fair and Street Dance was staged in 1988 and has occurred every year since. Currently, the Dometop Neighborhood Alliance continues that work.

<sup>5</sup> "Erection of new buildings begun," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 06/07/1908, pg. 22

<sup>6</sup> "Open Rogers school," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 12/15/1907, pg. 31

<sup>7</sup> "Erection of new buildings begun," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 06/07/1908, pg. 22

<sup>8</sup> "Lay new school stone on Monday," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 08/31/1913, pg. 4

<sup>9</sup> "School opening to mark close of big problem," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 03/07/1926, pg. A1

<sup>10</sup> *Tacoma City Directory*

<sup>11</sup> "Salishan, Tacoma, Washington." Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 05/23/2020, //en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salishan, Tacoma, Washington

<sup>12</sup> *Kaleidoscope: A History of McKinley Hill*, 1988, pg. 5-6

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 1988, pg. 1-4

## Institutional Context: The Tacoma Public Library <sup>14</sup>

The public library movement in the United States largely began after the Civil War. In larger cities, wealthy philanthropists often provided the money for large often monumental, centrally located libraries. These often operated on a subscription basis with little or no public access. However, libraries quickly became seen as worthy public amenities supported by taxation and free of charge. This effort received a major boost in 1883 when steel magnate Andrew Carnegie began his philanthropic effort to build public libraries in smaller cities and towns throughout the United States, Canada, Britain, and other English-speaking countries. He would offer to build and equip public libraries on the condition that the local authority would provide the land and a budget for operations. Ultimately, he would donate some \$60 million and establish over 3,000 libraries.

Tacoma followed this pattern on a smaller scale. In 1886 Ms. Grace R. Moore started a subscription circulating library out of her house. By 1890 this library had moved to a space in a commercial building downtown. In 1893 A. C. Mason built and funded a substantial library of 7,000 volumes at 4203 N. Stevens (now demolished) that he donated to the city in 1898. The city operated the library for only a year before passing it to nearby Whitworth College. The first public library supported by city funds started in 1894 and was located on the fifth floor of the Tacoma City Hall building. Needing more space by 1901, the city began considering a separate building and applied for a Carnegie donation. The result was the 1903 Tacoma Carnegie Library at 1102 Tacoma Avenue South.

In 1905, the Women's Christian Temperance League opened a small library in South Tacoma. Their goal was to provide the young men working in the Northern Pacific Railroad Shops and other industries with an alternative to the many saloons in the area. By 1910, however, area families were clamoring for a larger, more accessible public library. In 1911, Tacoma's first branch library, designed by noted Tacoma architect George Gove, was opened at 3411 South 56<sup>th</sup> Street. It was demolished in 1958 to make way for a larger, modern facility.

Between approximately 1910 and 1920, Tacoma City Library would open temporary storefront branches called "stations" in various locations around the city. From 1915 to about 1928, the McKinley Hill library station was in a commercial building at 3510 (formerly 3518, 3520, & 3508) McKinley Avenue.

Jacqueline Noel at the city library was instrumental in supporting efforts for the Proctor branch. When she became City Librarian in 1924, she became the driving force in the effort to create branch libraries across Tacoma. In 1927, the Anna E. McCormick Branch Library opened in Proctor and in 1930, the Charlotte White Mottet Branch Library. Other branch libraries opened in other parts of the city under Ms. Noel's guidance.

## Building History

From 1915 to 1927 the Tacoma Public Library operated a library "station" in a storefront at 3510 McKinley (formerly 3518, 3520, & 3508). Perhaps inspired by Anna E. McCormick's 1927 gift to fund the Proctor branch library, pioneer Tacoma businessman and then Library Board president Frederick Mottet (1854 – 1934) began discussions in 1928 for a new branch library on McKinley Hill. Mottet would donate the \$9,800 (~\$182,107 today) for the land, building and furnishings for the new library in memory of his wife Charlotte (1858 – 1918) and the happy hours they spent horseback riding in the area.<sup>15</sup> Miss Jacqueline Noel, City Librarian, was credited with obtaining funds for the McCormick and Mottet branch libraries.

Tacoma architect Silas Nelsen (1894 – 1987), who had recently completed the Anna E. McCormick Branch Library in Proctor, was selected as architect. Whether specified by Mottet or chosen by himself, Nelsen designed the building in the French Eclectic style building to reflect Mottet's French Huguenot heritage.<sup>16</sup> Referencing older European rural buildings, Nelsen had the brick whitewashed except at the corners, giving the building an antique aspect. The building was small: the main reading room was 32 x 50 ft. with a small 14 x 32 ft. wing on the west side. The roof was clad in cedar shakes. Standard Construction was the builder.

By 1961, the McKinley Hill area had grown significantly in population during the post-WWII boom, adding many more patrons of the small Mottet Branch Library. The Tacoma Public Library board began considering an addition to the Mottet

<sup>14</sup> This section is a summary of articles and summaries in the Tacoma Public Library clipping file in the NW Room of the Tacoma Public Library.

<sup>15</sup> "Library memorial to founder's wife," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 11/24/1970, pg. 3.

<sup>16</sup> "Will dedicate Charlotte Mottet Library," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 11/26/1930, pg. 1.

and Fern Hill Branch Libraries as well as a new library on Portland Avenue (Swan Creek Branch, 3828 Portland Ave., decommissioned 2011).<sup>17</sup> In 1963 citizens approved a \$65,000 bond for additions to the Mottet and Fern Hill libraries.<sup>18</sup>

Local architect Ben Lee Wilson (1930 – 1980) was selected for both additions.<sup>19</sup> The new south wing would add 1200 sf. to the Mottet building. Berrens Construction was the builder. Construction was completed in April 1964.<sup>20</sup> The light-colored brick used in the south wing was a reference to Nelsen's original vision of whitewashed brick.

In 1974, the McKinley Hill Booster Club pushed for an expansion of the Mottet Branch Library's north wing to house a community meeting room. The Mottet Branch was the only city library lacking such a space. The projects estimated cost was \$50,000.<sup>21</sup>

In 1976, local architect Bob Jones was selected to design the 2000 sf, 25 x 32 ft. expansion of the north wing. Leo Finnegan Construction was the builder. The design would include an 800-sf basement and meeting room as well as a small staff lounge, new restrooms, and a small kitchen area. The wheelchair ramp and entrance steps were added at this time. The \$140,000 cost was covered by a grant from Tacoma Community Development and HUD.<sup>22</sup>

In 1989, the library building received seismic upgrading as part of the system-wide project. The earthquake bolts seen on the central section were added at this time. The parking lot at the rear (north) of the building was added as well.<sup>23</sup> Seifert & Forbes of Tacoma were the architects.

In 1994 the Tacoma Public Library board proposed to close the library due to a citywide budget shortfall. McKinley Hill patrons and the Booster Association protested the move vigorously.<sup>24</sup> In the end extra monies were found to keep the library open.<sup>25</sup>

In 2011, the library's interior was remodeled. However, there were some repairs made to windows and exterior brick as well as a new roof with skylights. The library was receiving increased usage to the permanent closure of the Swan Creek Branch Library. The interior remodel included updating the restrooms for ADA compliance, installing wiring for computer workstations, lower shelf heights, adding lighting and sadly painting the Western Hemlock clad vaulted ceiling and trim white.<sup>26</sup>

## Biographies

### Silas E. Nelsen (1894-1987)<sup>27</sup>

Nelsen, who had no formal architectural training, had worked with the premier Tacoma architectural firm of Heath, Gove, and Bell for five years before starting his own practice in 1917. He was granted a architectural license in 1924. His first known project as an architect is a 1925 Tudor Revival style house at 2420 N. Union. However, he also designed St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church that same year. In this early period and through the 1930s, his designs were largely in the popular revival styles, such as Tudor and Colonial. His projects were mainly residential, but he also designed several libraries, churches, and commercial buildings as well. In 1930, he designed the Charlotte White Mottet library in the French Revival style.

By the end of the 1930s, Nelsen's work became more modernist with buildings such as Fire Station No. 2 (2701 Tacoma Ave. S.) and Fire Station No. 5 (222 E 26th St.), both listed on the National Register, and the Mueller-Harkins Buick Dealership (455 St. Helens) and the Johnson Candy Company Building (924 M.L.K. Jr. Way).

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<sup>17</sup> "Expansion of library held needed," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 05/18/1961, pg. 19.

<sup>18</sup> "Branch library needs cost nickel yearly," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 03/06/1963, pg. 1.

<sup>19</sup> "Trustees OK library pact," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 06/14/1963, pg. 36.

<sup>20</sup> "Special events for library week planned," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 04/14/1964, pg. 4.

<sup>21</sup> "Wing for library given approval," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 03/21/1974, pg. 13.

<sup>22</sup> "McKinley Hill library will gain expansion," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 07/04/76, pg. 81.

<sup>23</sup> "Special events planned for library reopening," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 07/29/1989, pg. 10.

<sup>24</sup> "East side holds rally for library," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 09/25/1994, pg. 15.

<sup>25</sup> "2 councilmen hope to double police additions in city's budget," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 12/08/1994, pg. 20.

<sup>26</sup> "Mottet Library renovations to close branch," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 10/13/2011, pg. A4.

<sup>27</sup> Houser, Michael. Silas E. Nelsen," *Architect Biographies*, 2007, [www.dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/research-and-technical-preservation-guidance/architect-biographies/bio-for-silas-e-nelsen](http://www.dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/research-and-technical-preservation-guidance/architect-biographies/bio-for-silas-e-nelsen)



In the 1950s and 1960s, he primarily worked in the internationalist style. He designed several new Tacoma branch libraries, such as Grace Moore, South Tacoma, and Fern Hill libraries as well as the 1952 addition to the Main Library (1102 Tacoma Ave. S.) and the Tacoma Public Utilities Center (3628 S. 35<sup>th</sup> St.). He also designed several buildings at the University of Puget Sound. He had a prolific career, designing over 150 residences, 15 churches, and five libraries. Many of his buildings are listed on the local, state, and national landmark registers.

### **Frederick Mottet (1854 – 1934)**

Frederick Mottet<sup>28</sup> was of French Huguenot heritage, and his parents, Joseph and Phillipine (1816 – 1894), were living in Baden-Baden, Germany, when he was born in 1853. However, his family immigrated to the United States the next year, living in New York City. He had two older brothers: Henry (1845 – 1929) and Louis J. (1846 – 1878). Henry Mottet would become the Rector of the Church of the Holy Communion in New York City, serving in that role for 50 years.

Frederick attended public schools and entered the City College of New York City at 13. Whether by necessity or talent, he became a young astute businessman, entering the woolen goods trade at 16. He soon switched to the grain trade where he excelled, obtaining a seat on the New York Stock Exchange before he could vote.<sup>29</sup> By his twenties Frederick was becoming a wealthy young man. In 1879, he married Charlotte White (1858 – 1918), daughter of Charles White, a shipping merchant he met through business. White was a relative of Sir Edward White of the Cunard Shipping Line.

Mottet also had an early interest in politics. By 1883 he was president of the Young Men's Republican Club of New York City. He was also president of the 12<sup>th</sup> Ward Republican Club. Mottet, however, was a progressive reformer and opposed the corruption he saw rife in the Republican party of the day. In the presidential election of 1884, Mottet joined the "Mugwumps," a reform group that opposed the corrupt Republican presidential nominee James G. Blaine, in favor of then New York Governor Grover Cleveland, the Democrat candidate, who won the election.<sup>30</sup> His support for Cleveland may have been one reason he left New York for Tacoma. His anti-corruption reputation was certainly a reason he was urged to run for Tacoma's mayor three times, all of which he declined.

Charlotte and Frederick arrived in Tacoma in 1887. While his reasons for leaving New York City are unclear, he did not leave his business acumen behind. That same year, he bought out Samuel A. Wheelright's ownership in the heavy hardware and mill supply business of Wheelright & Hunt.<sup>31</sup> Under his leadership the firm grew steadily as the Hunt-Mottet Company into one of the largest wholesale businesses in the Pacific Northwest. Frederick assumed full ownership when his partner, Edward M. Hunt, died in 1895.<sup>32</sup> The Hunt-Mottet Company would continue in business until 2012.

Mottet also became involved in civic affairs. In 1888 he was a founding vestry member of Tacoma's Church of the Holy Communion (demolished), for which he would donate two parcels for the parish house that still stands today (407 South I St.).<sup>33</sup> He was elected president of the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce, the first of three terms, in 1896. He also served as president of the Tacoma School Board. By 1906, he retired from the management of Hunt-Mottet Company, and devoted himself to further civic activities.

In 1906 Mottet served as the first president of the newly formed library board, a position he would hold again from 1926 to 1933.<sup>34</sup> He would oversee the development of the Tacoma Public Library's branch library system. He would also serve on the Tacoma Park Board from 1916 to 1926, serving twice as its president. He is considered the "father of the public playground system" in Tacoma.

His wife Charlotte was struck by illness leaving her wheelchair bound for 12 years before her death in 1918. Frederick passed away in 1934. Following simultaneous funeral services in Tacoma and New York City, he was interred with Charlotte and other family members in Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, New York

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<sup>28</sup> The first name often appears in Tacoma newspapers as "Frederic" but it is "Frederick" in U.S. Census records.

<sup>29</sup> "In memory of Mottet," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 09/30/1998

<sup>30</sup> "Declines to support Blaine," *Monmouth Democrat*, 07/03/1884, pg. 2

<sup>31</sup> "Dissolution of co-partnership," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 06/04/1887, pg. 6

<sup>32</sup> Susan Johnson, "Hunt-Mottet Warehouse," Nomination to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, 2013

<sup>33</sup> "New Episcopal parish," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 01/01/1888, pg. 10

<sup>34</sup> "First meeting of new board," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 08/10/1906, pg. 7

**Jacqueline Noel (1886-1964)<sup>35</sup>**

Jacqueline Noel was born in Washington, DC, in 1886 to Jacob and Eleanor Noel. Jacob was a civil engineer and involved with mining businesses in Tacoma. Jacqueline would attend the Pratt Institute in New York City and graduate in 1913, after which she returned to the Pacific Northwest.

She would work as a librarian in La Grande, OR, and Portland, OR, before joining the staff of the Tacoma Public Library in 1914 where she worked as an assistant reference librarian. In 1924 she became City Librarian. Noel was the driving force behind creating the branch library system in Tacoma. She was actively involved in efforts to create a Proctor and a Mottet branch library, the first under her tenure. By the time of her retirement in 1947, more new branches were opening, and by her death in 1964, many more were operating.

Interestingly, Noel is credited as the originator of the name "Almond Roca" for the chocolate-coated hard toffee with a crust of almonds developed by Tacoma confectioners Harry Brown and J. C. Haley in 1923. Noel suggested using the Spanish word "roca" or "rock" for the candy. Almond Roca was selected to be distributed to U.S. military facilities during World War II and the Korean War.

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<sup>35</sup> "Jacqueline Noel" *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, 08/01/2019, accessed 09/16/2019, [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacqueline\\_Noel](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacqueline_Noel)

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Figure 1. Tacoma South USGS map detail showing the location of the nominated property with blue circle.



Figure 2. Satellite view showing location of nominated property in red.



Figure 3. Preliminary sketch of Mottet Branch Library, *Tacoma Daily News*, 08/10/1930. pg. A10

## Will Dedicate Charlotte Mottet Library



The recently completed Charlotte Mottet branch library, 3617 East G street, will be formally dedicated this evening at 8:15 o'clock, when Frederic Mottet, donor, will present the modern, French cottage type structure to the library board. The public is invited to the dedication ceremony, and the building will be opened for use Saturday at 2 o'clock. Mr. Mottet and Miss K. Doris Olson, librarian in charge of the branch, are shown above, with a view of the new structure below.

Figure 4. Dedication announcement, *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 11/26/1930, pg.1



Figure 5. Mottet Library shortly after construction. 1930. Note the whitewashed brick. (Tacoma Public Library, BU-10241)



Figure 6. Mottet Library about 1960 showing original north wing and whitewash removed (Tacoma Public Library, BU-11855)

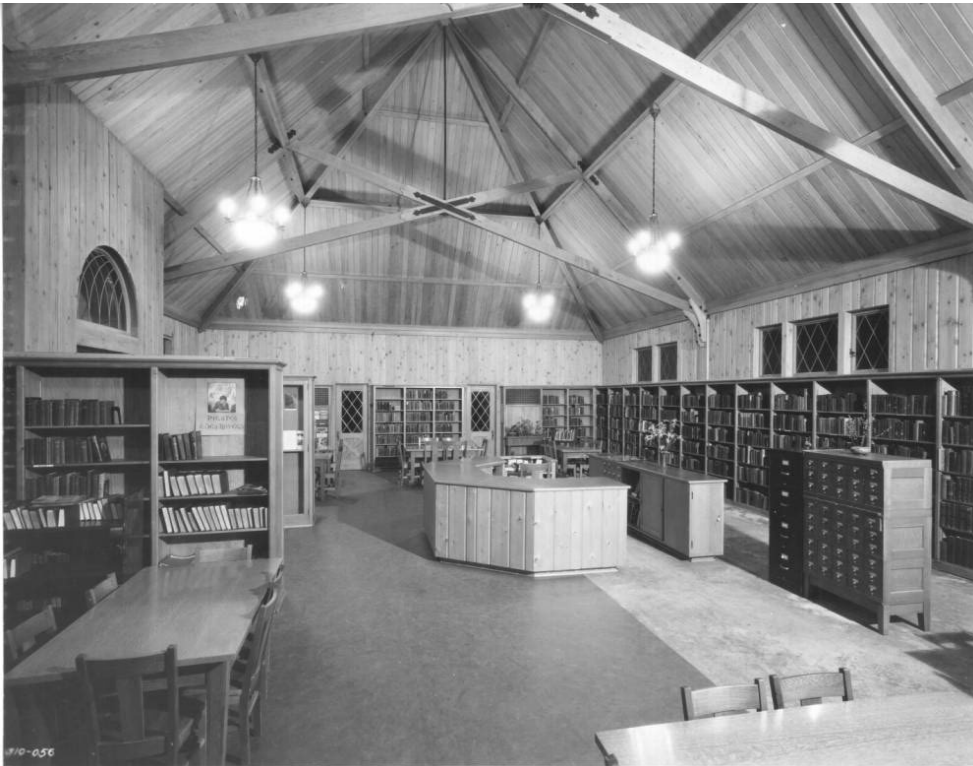
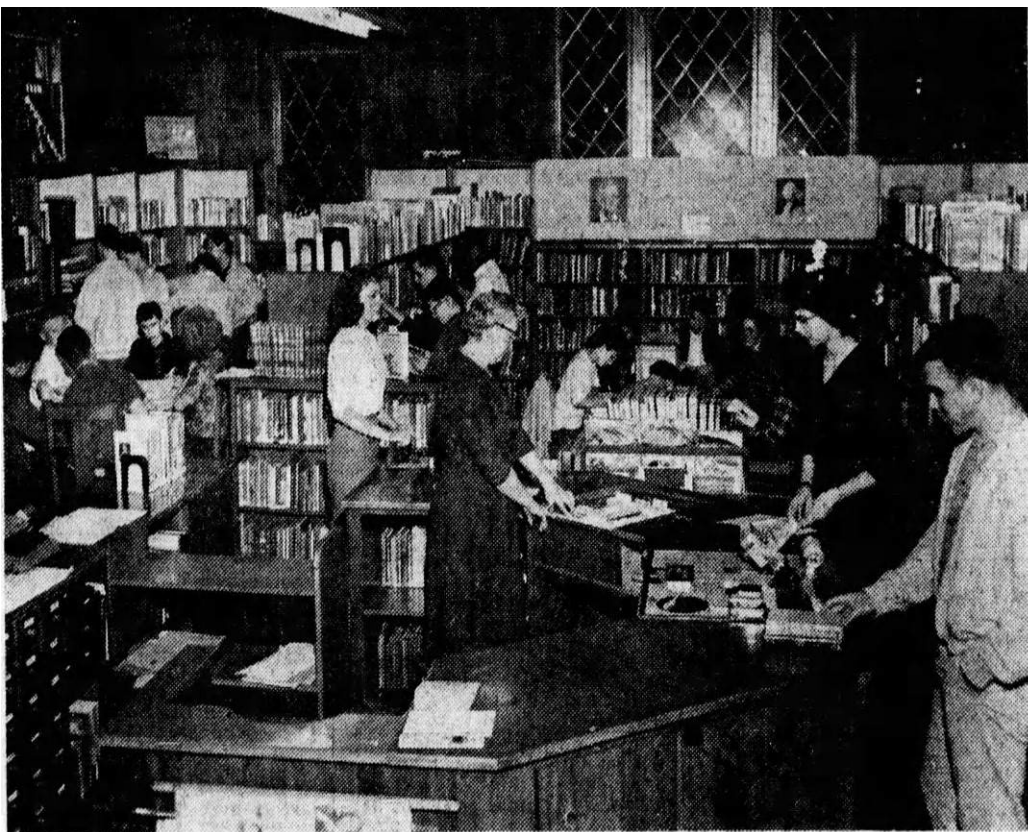


Figure 7. Original interior of Mottet Library showing the western hemlock interior. (Tacoma Public Library, BU-10242)



**CROWDED MOTTET LIBRARY**  
*"Standing Room Only" with But 25 Chairs*

Figure 8. Interior of Mottet Library showing need for expansion, *Tacoma News Tribune*, 03/06/1963, pg. A1



Figure 9. Mottet Library showing the 1964 south wing, 1975 (Tacoma Public Library, BU-14223)



Figure 10. Excavation for expanded north wing, 1977 (Tacoma Public Library, BU-14228)





Figure 11. Newly expanded north wing, 1977 (Tacoma Public Library, BU-14226)



Figure 12. The central section and main entrance of Mottet Library. (McClintock, 2021)



Figure 13. Detail showing the elaborate brickwork of the entry, Note the round earthquake bolts. (McClintock, 2021)



Figure 14. Front façade of the south wing of the Mottet library. (McClintock, 2021)



Figure 15. Northeast rear corner of the south wing of the Mottet Library. (McClintock, 2021)



Figure 16. West (rear) façade of the Mottet Library (McClintock, 2021)



Figure 17. Northeast (front) corner of the north wing of the Mottet Library (McClintock, 2021)



Figure 18. Northwest (rear) corner of the north wing of the Mottet Library (McClintock, 2021)



Figure 19. Interior of the Mottet Library showing the vaulted ceiling and trusses. (McClintock, 2021)



Figure 20. Detail of original truss connection, Mottet Library, (McClintock, 2021)