



The City of Seattle

## Landmarks Preservation Board

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

### REPORT ON DESIGNATION

LPB 389/10

Name and Address of Property: **YWCA Building**  
**1118 Fifth Avenue**

Legal Description: Lots 1 and 4, Block 17 of C.D. Boren's Addition to the City of Seattle, as per plat recorded in Volume 1 of Plats, Page 25, records of King County;

Situate in the City of Seattle, County of King, State of Washington.

At the public meeting held on September 15, 2010, the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the YWCA Building at 1118 Fifth Avenue as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following standards for designation of SMC 25.12.350:

- C. It is associated in a significant way with a significant aspect of the cultural, political, or economic heritage of the community, City, state, or nation; and*
- D. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, period, or of a method of construction; and*
- E. It is an outstanding work of its designer; and*
- F. Because of its prominence of spatial location, contrasts of siting, age, or scale, it is an easily identifiable visual feature of its neighborhood or the city and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood or the City.*

### **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

#### *Site, Setting and Urban Context*

The Young Women's Christian Association Building (YWCA Building), now commonly known as the Downtown YWCA, is prominently located within the downtown Seattle commercial core at the southeast corner of the intersection of Fifth Avenue and Seneca Street. It occupies the entire northwest quarter of a city block. The Hotel Vintage Park (and modern parking garage), which was constructed in 1922 and originally known as the Spring

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**The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods**

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Apartment Hotel is situated immediately to the south on the southwest quarter block. A north-south alley runs along the east (or rear) elevation of the YWCA Building and bisects the entire block. A modern highrise hotel is located to the east on the northeast quarter block. The Women's University Club – also designed by E. F. Champney (1922) occupies the southeast quarter block. The ornate Fairmount Olympic Hotel (1924) occupies the entire city block directly northwest of the YWCA Building, at the opposite corner of the intersection. Directly across Fifth Avenue to the west is the non-historic Olympic Hotel parking garage. Directly across Seneca Street to the north is one of Seattle's mid-century modern masterpieces, the IBM Building and Plaza (1962-64) designed by Minoru Yamaskai with Naramore, Bain Brady & Johanson. Due to the scale, massing and architectural character of the YWCA Building, it contrasts with its immediate surroundings and is a distinctive component of the streetscape and the downtown urban environment.

The Downtown YWCA is an eight-story building that was designed and constructed in 1912-1913 to house a wide variety of uses, specifically for the benefit of women and girls, including transient hotel accommodations and athletic, social and educational facilities. The building measures 120' x 120' at the basement level; it is "U" shaped from the first through the fourth floor level with a lightwell oriented to the south; and is "L" shaped from the fifth through the eighth floor levels with the "L" open to the southeast. It exhibits a three-part vertical block façade composition and highly distinctive Italian Renaissance Revival style architectural features and details. The site slopes gradually to the northwest along both Fifth Avenue and Seneca Street.

### *Exterior Appearance*

The steel-reinforced concrete structure has a full concrete foundation and basement and is primarily clad with variegated red and light-buff color brick, smooth light grey granite and buff color terra cotta trim and ornament. The north and west elevations are nearly identical in three-part vertical block composition with a distinct base, shaft and cap. Each principal elevation or façade is divided vertically into seven bays with the base and the cap dominated by particularly distinctive Renaissance-inspired, tall arched window openings. The building has a flat roof and the cap is terminated by a prominent denticulated terra cotta cornice. A highly ornate terra cotta roofline balustrade with an elaborate cartouche at the center of the Fifth Avenue facade was removed after the 1949 earthquake.

### *Fifth Avenue and Seneca Street Elevations*

The building base extends two stories and encompasses the bulkhead and basement level windows located toward the northwest corner of the building. Smooth granite laid with flush mortar joints distinguishes the lower portion of the bulkhead at the basement window level, which is separated from the upper portion of the base by a wide terra cotta watertable course that is glazed with a speckled-granite color and finish. Matching historic brass plaques are located at each face of the stone course at the northwest corner of the building; each is inscribed with "YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION." The remainder of the base up to the third floor level is distinguished by light-buff color brick cladding with dark mortar laid in a common bond. The base is capped by an intermediate cornice decorated with buff color terra cotta acanthus leaf ornament. The base is dominated by seven bays of Italian Renaissance-inspired, tall arched window openings with brick voussoirs and arched brick

trim. The wooden windows are set in tripartite vertical groups with wide mullions; at the first floor level with a central rectangular panel flanked by narrower side lights and at the second floor level with panels fitted to the arched head. Wooden spandrels decorated with a cross pattern define the second floor level within each opening.

A formal original entryway is located within the central bay on Fifth Avenue; it is highlighted by a rusticated brick surround. A second recessed formal entryway is now located within the central bay at Seneca Street. Originally, the formal Seneca Street entryway was located in the adjacent bay to the east; a variation in the bulkhead trim indicates where it was previously located. Modern flat entry canopies and wood trimmed door assemblies have been installed at both entrances. The Fifth Avenue entry canopy includes ornate brackets that mirror original modillion brackets at the seventh floor balcony above. Original ornate lantern-type light fixtures flank both of the current formal entrances.

Original buff color terra cotta medallions with sculpted images of kneeling women holding books or shields also flank both doorways. However, because a third entryway was originally designed and located within the third bay from the west on the Seneca Street elevation, presumably in order to balance the composition of this elevation, there are four medallions on Seneca Street elevation. Since this third doorway was actually well above grade, it does not appear to have ever functioned as such; a variation in the bulkhead trim also indicates where it was located. The storefront level portion of the easternmost bay at Seneca Street has been remodeled and recessed to include a modern painted aluminum storefront. The lower portion of the southernmost bay at Fifth Avenue has been remodeled and recessed to include sets of metal delivery bay doors.

The shaft extends four floor levels (third/fourth/fifth/sixth) and is distinguished by variegated dark red brick laid in a distinctive Flemish bond that contrasts with the light-buff color brick cladding at the base. Sets of windows correspond with each bay; they include terra cotta sills and wood frames and are the original wooden, double-hung 1/1 type. Terra cotta moldings accentuate the top of each of the third floor level window openings. Small diamond-shaped brick and terra cotta panels decorate recessed brick spandrels at the fifth and sixth floor levels. The shaft is separated from the cap by a distinctive terra cotta belt course decorated with a balustrade ornament that corresponds with the window bays above. The belt course includes a narrow balcony that extends the width of the central bay at the Fifth Avenue elevation; it projects out from the façade and is decorated with the same balustrade ornament.

The building cap at the upper two floor levels (seventh/eighth) is also clad with dark red brick laid in a Flemish bond. It is distinguished by broad Italian Renaissance-inspired arched window assemblies; within each opening are recessed sets of windows that extend to both floor levels. The lower (seventh floor) units are rectangular and the upper (eighth floor) units are arched. The sets of windows are separated and trimmed by tall slender terra cotta colonettes with ornate Corinthian capitals; they are surmounted by an arched terra cotta panel with oculus windows above. All of the terra cotta is light-buff color. The windows units are the original wooden, double-hung 1/1 type. A narrow horizontal string course at the springline unifies each of the arched openings, which are surmounted by ornate arched terra cotta mouldings.

### *East (Alley) and South Elevations*

The east (alley) elevation and the south elevation are utilitarian in character. The east elevation is complex due to varied footprint at multiple floor levels. It is generally divided into seven structural bays. The distinctive stone and brick cladding and typical terra cotta detailing and ornament treatment extends one bay length in at the north end of this elevation and includes the distinctive typical arched window features at the base and cap. The steel-reinforced concrete walls at all of the stepped portions of the rear elevation are finished with painted concrete plaster or stucco. The windows at the east elevation are mostly original wooden, double-hung units primarily set in unframed individual openings. Modern hollow metal doors have been installed at some original door openings. Other minor window and door alterations appear to have occurred on this elevation. The lower floors of the south elevation abut the adjacent garage building; at the upper portions typical façade cladding and ornament wrap the corner and the remainder of the visible wall is finished with painted concrete plaster or stucco. Windows at this elevation appear to be original wooden, double-hung with a two-over-two configuration.

### *Non-Historic Exterior Alterations*

All of the original basement level windows at the Fifth Avenue and Seneca Street elevations, which originally included Roman cross grills, have been removed (including the grills) and replaced with glass block panels. During a remodel project undertaken in 1944 extensive alterations were made to interior stairwells and exitways, including the formal entryways at Fifth Avenue and Seneca Street. The three original entryways all included sets of doors with side lights that were in a plane almost flush with the façade; these doorways were surmounted by a transom light, an ornate broken pediment head inscribed with YWCA signage and a mezzanine window flanked by sidelights. The lower portions of these assemblies were entirely removed – including the ornate pediment heads - the doorways were reconstructed and recessed, eliminated or relocated and modern doorway assemblies were installed. However, during a subsequent 1980s era remodel, those doorway assemblies were removed and the current historically compatible wood and glass doors with traditional sidelights were installed.

A highly ornate terra cotta roofline balustrade with an elaborate cartouche (also inscribed with a YWCA sign) was located at the center of the Fifth Avenue façade; it was removed after the 1949 earthquake. Historically, neither of the entryways had awnings or canopies. During a 1952 remodel, arched plastic awnings/canopies were installed over both of the major entrances; however those have been also been removed. During the 1980s era remodel, non-obtrusive flat canopies, one with metal scroll brackets, were installed. During the 1952 remodel, an original exterior courtyard (with skylights to the swimming pool below) located within the “U” shaped wings of the first and second floors was infilled to create a two-story gymnasium and day care play area. A modern storefront has been constructed in one former window bay and a delivery bay in another. Modern Y-W-C-A letter signage is attached in vertical locations at two separate building corners, one facing east (at the alley) and one facing north (at Seneca Street).

### ***Significant Interior Features and/or Finishes***

The interior of the building has been repeatedly remodeled and updated to serve changing organizational needs.

The basement level originally included the full-length swimming pool and related support facilities, as well as storage, mechanical and laundry facilities. The basement level was extensively remodeled in 1952. The swimming pool, laundry area and locker facility are no longer in use and a portion of the pool has been in-filled. Reportedly, some original decorative tiles in the pool area remain in place.

The first floor interior originally included an elegant and splendidly proportioned lobby that was entered from Fifth Avenue. Concrete and plaster Corinthian columns extended from the first floor through the second floor level and a balcony with a decorative balustrade overlooked the lobby. The lobby included coffered ceilings, ornate pendant light fixtures, an elaborate inglenook and fireplace and a distinctive mosaic tile floor. During the 1952 remodeling effort, the lobby was entirely altered and the fireplace and inglenook were removed. The second floor level balcony opening was infilled to create additional office space. All of the lobby finishes and features were removed and/or covered over. The original lobby area now consists of partitioned rooms with low dropped plasterboard ceilings, recessed lighting, plasterboard walls and vinyl flooring. The first floor originally included two parlors that were used as a music room and reception room; they are currently used for private office purposes. The elevator lobby that was directly accessed from the original Seneca Street entrance has also been modernized. The former assembly hall/auditorium at the southeast corner of the first floor has been converted for use as a daycare classroom. Reportedly, the room retains the original stage and remnants of the decorative ceiling cornice and concrete and plaster Corinthian columns remain in place.

The second floor originally included formal rooms oriented toward Seneca Street; three were used as clubrooms and there was a library, lounge and public tearoom space. During the 1952 remodel, these spaces were partitioned into offices and a conference room and the tearoom was closed. The former clubrooms reportedly retain remnants of portions of decorative ceiling cornice and medallions, pilasters, and original wood frame, arched windows and trim. However, during the 1952 remodel, fluorescent lights were placed over the medallions, and some of the windows were covered.

During the 1952 remodel, the fourth floor hospital suite, and the kitchen, cafeteria, and dining rooms on the sixth and seventh floors were closed. The original seventh - eighth floor gymnasium (which extended between the two floors) and a balcony/running track were infilled to provide space for additional hotel rooms. Vocational training classrooms were originally located on the third and fourth floors. They were also closed to make room for additional hotel units. During the 1952 remodel, small kitchens were added on all the residential floors. A tennis court was originally located on the roof top of the building. It is currently closed. Currently, rooms on the fourth through eighth floor levels are used for extended stay occupants, while the third floor level functions as an emergency women's shelter.

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Seattle YWCA has a lengthy history of community service and social activism, providing services and assistance to women and families since 1894 and during the particularly difficult periods of World War I, throughout the Great Depression and World War II eras. The Downtown YWCA Building is the largest and the oldest YWCA facility in Washington State and has been continuously used since construction by its original occupant organization for its intended purposes. However, as the organization has evolved the building has been updated in order to meet the ever-widening professional, recreational, emotional interests and needs of the women and families it serves.

The YWCA Building possesses particular historic significance as the early 20<sup>th</sup> C. headquarters of a major national women's organization and for its associations with local community service and social activism. Furthermore, the building exhibits distinct architectural character; it is a notable example of Italian Renaissance-inspired Beaux-Arts design and an excellent example of the work of a particularly skilled Seattle architect, Édouard Frère Champney. Although important interior spaces within the YWCA Building have been significantly altered, the exterior of the building is relatively well-preserved.

### ***Historic Context***

The YWCA Building is associated with a crucial period in downtown commercial development between 1902 and 1920 when dramatic commercial and residential real estate development occurred due to local economic prosperity and the Klondike Gold Rush. During this period the downtown commercial district expanded northward in tandem with explosive population growth and suburban residential development. Modern urban architectural scale began with the construction of the earliest steel-frame highrise buildings and the establishment of a concentration of banking enterprises and department stores along Second Avenue from Cherry Street to Pike Street. The initial regrading of Denny Hill and the commercial redevelopment of the former University Grounds (University/Metropolitan Tract) were major factors that facilitated northward and eastward commercial expansion. While the original late 19<sup>th</sup> C. residential district had been almost entirely composed of single-family homes, it did evolve to include several meeting and fraternal halls and numerous churches. This pattern continued despite the ever-increasing commercial real estate development of the old residential properties throughout the early decades of the twentieth century. Several major new churches, fraternal halls and club buildings - typically designed by leading architects - were constructed in the commercial district as it was redeveloped.

The YWCA Building is located among a considerable number of extant downtown commercial properties that date from this era including numerous hotels, several small banks, specialty and department store buildings, business blocks and distinctive early highrise commercial buildings. A few other clubhouses or club-related buildings and a few theaters from this era also remain. However, a similarly emblematic building constructed during this era - the original YMCA Building (c.1908) located at Fourth Avenue and Madison Street - has been demolished.

### ***Seattle Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) History***

As an organization, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) has a history of over 110 years of community service in downtown Seattle. The YWCA was originally established in Great Britain in 1855 with a dedication to serve the needs of working class women throughout the world. In 1866, the first YWCA in United States was founded in Boston. The Seattle YWCA was established on February 17, 1894 by Mrs. Dees Daniels, who had some prior experience with the YWCA in Washington D.C., along with a group of 27 other concerned Seattle women.

During this era of economic hardships and dislocation, vulnerable young women were arriving in Seattle in search of employment. Mrs. Daniels and her supporters were intent upon providing a wholesome environment for young women, and assisting "the working girl" toward self-reliance and independence. Within 10 months, the organization had 100 members. The YWCA mission was to offer a secure environment for the ever-increasing number of self-supporting women who were migrating to fast-growing urban centers - like Seattle - during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first trained YWCA secretary was Ella Devoe, who was hired to manage the association and coordinate services. Members and officers from newly established YWCA organizations in Seattle, Tacoma and the University branch met on December 7, 1894 for the first Washington State YWCA convention. An early statement of purpose noted:

*"The membership of the YWCA is open to every moral girl or woman, irrespective of religious faith...its friendship is ready for every woman who applies for help...its ultimate object is to help the girl toward self support."*

As waves of young women arrived from small towns and rural communities the Seattle organization created an early traveler's aid program – meeting girls as they arrived by train - to ensure that they found proper and safe housing, healthy meals and recreational opportunities. During the earliest years, the YWCA focus on providing social services quickly expanded to include employment counseling, job training and housing assistance. From its beginning, the Seattle YWCA adapted its services and facilities to meet immediate community needs. After the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, the YWCA – working in tandem with the Seattle Chamber of Commerce - took an active role in assisting refugees by providing food, shelter and clothing to over 2,000 people who arrived in Seattle after fleeing the destruction in San Francisco. Thus, began a model for future emergency housing programs provided by the organization.

The YWCA encouraged its members, including working and professional women, young married women and girls to become active in various association classes and a wide variety of YWCA clubs. The idea was to keep girls interested in various subjects and activities and prevent them from being attracted to questionable amusements. There was a Culture Club for young black women, a Japanese Club for women of Japanese heritage, and women interested in world fellowship activities could join the Cosmopolitan Club. Working women formed a Federation of Industrial Clubs open to female employees of department stores and manufacturing companies. YWCA teachers gave lunch hour sewing classes and conducted

discussion groups for members at various local work places. Girls that were between the ages of six and sixteen participated in Saturday only clubs. All members had opportunities to contribute toward charitable efforts, serve as volunteers, attend entertainment events and participate in intramural athletic activities offered through the YWCA

During the 1890s, the organization was initially located in a small storefront space – donated by Mrs. Shorey - at 1104 ½ Second Avenue, near Spring Street; they provided a lounge and operated a cafeteria where 10-cent lunches were served. In 1901, the operation moved to the Curtis Building at Second Avenue and Union Street and in 1904 it moved to the former quarters of the Rainier Club in the Seattle Theater building at Third Avenue and Cherry Street. By 1906, the Seattle YWCA had a membership of nearly 1400 women. During this period the organization acquired several houses including cottages located on Queen Anne Hill in order to provide boarding facilities for girls. They also acquired (or leased) a cottage at Fifth Avenue and Seneca Street that was used for these purposes; it would become the site of the subject building. They also purchased eighteen acres of property on Bainbridge Island and established as a summer camp facility, which was known as Camp Yeomalt.

By 1909, the YWCA was housed in a large, one-story brick building (later known as the Otis Building) located at the northeast corner of Fourth and Seneca on the former University Grounds (Metropolitan Tract), just to the south of the Metropolitan Theater.

Early in the century, members of the Seattle YWCA began to seriously consider the construction of a downtown building that could meet the various needs of the organization and appropriately house all of its activities. Under the leadership of board president Mrs. Emma Wood, the YWCA board devised a fundraising campaign in order to finance the construction a new permanent building. They began by seeking outright donations from working girls and women throughout the city and then began a campaign to canvas local businessmen. One of their most innovative efforts was the establishment of a restaurant and hostess house at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition. During the summer of 1909, this enterprise netted a profit of \$12,000 and enabled the organization to make a down payment on building lots at Fifth Avenue and Seneca Street, which cost \$60,000. The organization subsequently undertook a whirlwind five-day campaign in 1911, as teams of members and trustees conducted a fund-raising competition. They also promoted a “Buy-a Brick” campaign - selling individual bricks for a dollar - and were able to sell all 93,000 bricks required to clad the upper portions the new building.

Fundraising literatures notes that in 1912, the Seattle YWCA operated twelve departments that reportedly assisted some 22,000 girls and women at an expense of approximately \$42,000.

In 1916, with the construction of the new eight-story building the YWCA hotel facilities had served 8,799 young women, average age 23. Approximately 500 beds were provided for free and 5,705 free meals had been served. The price of rooms ranged from \$3 to \$7 per week with room and board and use of the laundry, sewing room and other home comforts. The swimming pool was used by over 30,000 visitors with 3,792 having free swims. The gymnasium was used by over 23,000 visitors and some 12,000 members attended classes and club activities. A vocational training program was housed on the third and fourth floor levels where classes in millinery, dressmaking, cafeteria work, manicuring, and salesmanship were

held. A home economics program prepared girls for marriage or for domestic work. The YWCA also developed relationships within the local business community in order to arrange for job placements and promote better workplace conditions for women.

Over the subsequent many years, sufficient revenue was generated from the tearoom and cafeteria, Turkish baths and swimming pool, gymnasium, hotel and classes and vocational programs to help fund the on-going operations of the building. Outside contributions were used to support welfare work, provision of emergency services and temporary shelter, counseling and guidance work and employment assistance. In addition to providing employment counseling, job training and housing placement, the organization actively pursued obtaining voting rights for women, racial/gender equality and fair pay in the work place.

During World War I the YWCA was a focal point for displaced workers and their families, service men and women, and others experiencing difficulties and seeking assistance. During the depression era, despite a drastically reduced organization budget, the YWCA offered free typing and business classes for girls in need of skills and continued to provide shelter to homeless young women. During World War II the Downtown YWCA Building functioned on a 24-hour schedule in response to community needs; it offered classes, club and recreational activities around the clock due to the war effort. During the following decades YWCA programs and services expanded and evolved to meet changing community needs by creating new recreation and camp programs, focusing on equal rights and civil liberties issues, opening additional homeless shelters, transitional housing and daycare facilities.

Today, the YWCA continues to serve the community through programs housed in its historic Downtown YWCA Building. The modern mission of the YWCA of Seattle · King County · Snohomish County is to advance the quality of life for women of all ages, races, and faiths, and their families. In support of this mission, the YWCA provides services to meet critical needs, promote self-sufficiency, reduce violence, and achieve equal opportunities for all people. The YWCA serves some 50,000 women and families every year with programs to end homelessness, create jobs, care for children and youth and prevent violence. In 2003, the YWCA opened a modern transitional housing facility and emergency service center located in the downtown Belltown neighborhood.

### ***YWCA Building History***

The YWCA Building was designed by Édouard Frère Champney in collaboration with A. Warren Gould; however, Mr. Champney is primarily credited with its design. A May 1912, newspaper article states that Mr. Champney had been chosen to prepare the plans for the building and that Mr. Gould would primarily assist with the construction supervision. An elaborate rendering signed by E.F. Champney was published in *The Pacific Architect* in August 1912 showing the initial design concept. The rendering indicates that Champney's initial design for the building had it more formally oriented to the Seneca Street with an elaborate roof garden, penthouse and tower element extending the building height an additional two floor levels. The upper floor levels at the shaft and cap appear to have been configured in an 'H' shaped plan. While the concept differs from what was ultimately designed by Champney and constructed, there are also a great many similarities. The design of the base, shaft and cap to the delicately molded cornice line is essentially the same as that

constructed in terms of bay spacing, facade composition and fenestration, especially the Italian Renaissance inspired upper floor level windows. The actual shaft is taller and the upper floor levels of the principal elevations are matching without the “H” recess as shown. *The Pacific Architect* also included the first floor plan concept; the basic interior configuration and formal entryway locations are very similar to what was constructed. The 1912 rendering was subsequently revised to show the actual final exterior design.

The architectural drawings were prepared – some drawn and initialed by E.F. Champney – between January and May of 1913 and the new Seattle YWCA Building was constructed during the latter part of 1913 and early 1914. It was completed at a total construction cost of between \$325,000 and \$350,000 and formally dedicated on May 24, 1914. At the time of its construction, the new Seattle YWCA Building was the only fireproof YWCA building on the West Coast. It was elegantly appointed with furnishings primarily donated by friendly benefactors and the YWCA clubs. The modern eight-story facility made it possible for the organization to further promote the social advancement and economic independence of women, especially those working and/or living in downtown, through education and training opportunities and recreational activities.

The YWCA Building was designed to house a wide range of services, educational and recreational activities offered exclusively for women and girls. The new building included a formal lobby with fireplace, a large theater/assembly with stage; hotel accommodations for up to 180 short-term transient guests and/or semi-permanent boarders; a public tea room; a large sixth floor level cafeteria; two private dining rooms; various social and music rooms; a full-length swimming pool at the basement level; a two-story gymnasium with track at the seventh and eighth floor levels; a chapel; and childcare facilities, in addition to office, club and classroom spaces. The vocational training program was housed on the third and fourth floor levels. Meeting rooms, lobbies, corridors and some other interior spaces included ornate coffered ceilings, ornate light fixtures and decorative plaster and wood trim and tile flooring in keeping with the eclectic Beaux-Arts design mode.

In 1944, the building underwent a remodeling project designed by Naramore & Brady Architects that involved alterations to all of the interior stairwells and exitways. At that time the original ornate entryways and surrounds at both Fifth Avenue and Seneca Street were removed and the entrances were modernized. In 1949, the building was damaged by a major earthquake and the highly ornate terra cotta roofline balustrade was subsequently removed.

In the early-1950s the building was again remodeled (according to a design drawings prepared by Robert L. Durham and Associates) and updated to address then-current organizational needs and the evolving mission of the organization. Most of the distinctive original interior spaces, features and finishes were altered and modernized as additional meeting and residential spaces were created. In mid-1980s, portions of the building were renovated by Stickney Murphy Architects, who introduced historically compatible wood and glass doors and non-obtrusive entry canopies.

*Édouard Frère Champney and August Warren Gould*

The Seattle YWCA building is a notable local example of eclectic Italian Renaissance inspired Beaux-Arts style design. The building was designed by Édouard Frère Champney (1874-1929), one of the few Pacific Northwest architects to possess formal École des Beaux-Arts academic architectural training. Édouard Champney was born to American parents in Ecouen, France, a northern suburb of Paris. His father was a well-known landscape and portrait painter and his mother was the author of children's books, travel literature and historical romance novels that were often illustrated by her husband and her son. Champney was educated in the United States at Harvard University where he received a B.A. in 1896.

He attended the École des Beaux-Arts in 1899 and 1900 and then returned to the United States where he worked for a succession of prominent and influential East Coast architecture firms, including: Carrere & Hastings; E.L. Masqueray; and Hornblower & Marshall. He also worked in the Office of the Supervising Architect for the federal government in Washington D.C. During this period he was involved in the design of large scale projects including mansions in Palm Beach, Florida and Newport, R.I. as well as public buildings and cathedrals. His skills and knowledge enabled him to participate in the design of Beaux-Arts eclectic style buildings at several lavish turn-of-the-century expositions. He is known to have worked on Buffalo Pan American Exposition (1900) and the St. Louis – Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904) where he was involved in the design of the Transportation and Agriculture Buildings, the Cascade and the Terraces. He worked as a designer for the U.S. Government Pavilion (destroyed 1903-04) at the Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland, Oregon.

In 1907, Champney came to Seattle to serve as chief designer for the San Francisco firm of Howard & Galloway – with principal architect John Galen Howard – in order to supervise design projects for the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition held in 1909. This was a significant responsibility as Howard & Galloway were contracted to supervise the design of the entire exposition. He would remain in Seattle practicing architecture for nearly twenty years and maintaining memberships in the local AIA chapter, the Architectural League of the Pacific Coast, and the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects.

In 1909, Édouard Champney formed a brief but successful partnership with August Warren Gould that produced several notable Seattle and Vancouver B.C. commissions. In 1909, Gould & Champney put forward a beautifully rendered “Proposed Plan for Grouping the Public Building of Seattle” that was clearly based on Champney's Beaux-Arts sensibilities and Gould civic interests. The partnership was dissolved c.1913, during the period when the YWCA Building was under design and construction, as A.W. Gould had become seriously embroiled in professional ethical controversies related to the failed *Bogue Plan* and his design commission for a downtown King County Courthouse.

Gould appears to have played a limited role related to the design of the YWCA Building and may have been only involved in the construction supervision. While it is unclear the extent to which Gould contributed to the design of the subject building, his name is included in the title block for the architectural drawing and he is mentioned in several press clippings. The initial published rendering (August 1912) that was delineated by Champney shows a taller and more elaborate Beaux-Arts style design than that which was ultimately constructed;

however, both the initial design rendering and the final design are indicative of Champney's École des Beaux-Arts training, professional background and particular design skills. Champney subsequently designed another notable Beaux-Arts style building, the Tacoma Elks Temple (1914-15). He was also involved in the design and supervision of buildings and grounds at the Pan Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco between 1912 and 1914.

Champney maintained offices in Seattle until 1926 and often served as an associate architect on large or prestigious projects designed by other firms, including the nearby Women's University Club (1922), which he worked on in conjunction with A.H. Albertson and prepared published renderings of the design. He moved to Berkeley, California in 1926, but did return periodically to Seattle in order supervise the initial construction phase of Saint Mark's Cathedral for the San Francisco architecture firm of Blackwell & Brown.

August Warren Gould (1872-1922) was born in Nova Scotia, Canada. There is some indication that he may have received some architectural or structural training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; however, he began his professional career in Boston as a building contractor. By the late 1890s, he began to practice architecture in Boston. He arrived in Seattle in 1903 and clearly possessed a strong knowledge of the latest construction techniques. Two of his early projects were the innovative 12-story, steel-frame American Savings Bank/Empire Building (1904-06, destroyed) and the ten-story Standard Furniture Company Building (1907, altered). Gould's architectural career in Seattle was varied, but highly productive. It included the almost three-year partnership with E. Frère Champney, when his structural and construction expertise complimented Champney design skills. He was a civic activist, heavily involved with the creation of the Municipal Plans Commission and a supporter of the defeated *Bogue Plan*. He was expelled from the Washington State Chapter of the AIA over a purported breach of ethics in securing the King County Courthouse Commission; however he went on to design the original five-story portion of King County Courthouse (1914-17); and to design the distinctive polychromatic terra-cotta-clad Arctic Building (1913-17) in addition to other noteworthy local commercial buildings and residences.

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***The features of the Landmark to be preserved include:***

The exterior of the building.

Issued: September 23, 2010

Karen Gordon  
City Historic Preservation Officer

cc: Sue Sherbrooke, YWCA  
Vernon Abelsen, LPB  
Stella Chao, DON  
Diane Sugimura, DPD  
Cheryl Mosteller, DPD  
Ken Mar, DPD



YWCA Building, 1118 Fifth Avenue, c. 2011



YWCA Building, 1118 Fifth Avenue, c. 1936