Tacoma’s Other Dome

In November 1983, a citizens’ committee, Save Our Station, was formed to help preserve Tacoma’s historic Union Station railroad depot. The week of its formation announcement, SOS held its first fundraiser inside the neo-classical structure. Although this event was hastily organized and held on a stormy fall night, more than 200 people each paid $15 to subsidize a group dedicated to preserving their town’s landmark.

Tacoma City Councilman Tim Strege had arrived from “back east” to dedicate money, time, or expertise to SOS, which would add to “over a hundred prominent individuals who have either donated money, time, or expertise” as of March 1984. What drew these people to volunteer, lend their names, or contribute to SOS, was a perceived role the station would play in Tacoma’s “revitalization” and the emotional appeal the 74-year-old monument has for many long-time Tacoma residents.

Union Station was an appropriate place for SOS to throw a party. The first party held there was its inaugural ball on May 1, 1911. The party was as much a christening for SOS as of immigrants, men and women in uniform, and students, all of whom became as much a part of the station’s history as their memories made it a part of their history.

Northern Pacific president Howard Elliott had arrived from “back east” to dedicate the railroad’s newest investment. After Johnson’s military band played a triumphant Sousa march, Elliott began his speech in the spacious rotunda area of the depot.

The building’s monumentality, accented by a large skylight at the dome’s center, must have added drama to the occasion. When the sun had set, 2300 electric globes in plaster coffers lit the inner rotunda, which rose more than seventy feet above the floor. Theatrical lighting was appropriate for a depot in which, for 74 years, the daily drama unfolded in the lives of departing and arriving industrialists, politicians, immigrants, men and women in uniform, and students, all of whom became as much a part of the station’s history as their memories made it a part of their history.

Tacoma’s historic Union Station was an appropriate place to celebrate the city’s City of Destiny” had finally arrived; its design of the domed, symmetrical, Beaux-Arts building. A stark contrast between the November 1983 fundraiser and the May 1911 inaugural gala was the location of the events. The ball was held in the high drama of the rotunda, accented by the lighting; SOS was forced to hold its event in the dark, crowded confines of the concourse level. The rotunda area is closed to the public, the skylight was painted over during World War II, and the 2300 globes are dimmed due to faulty wiring. Rainwater has significantly deteriorated the plaster inner rotunda, causing some of it to fall on the cracked terrazzo floors seventy feet below. The outer copper dome was built without expansion joints, and as a result, the dome has leaked since the day the depot opened. In addition to ceiling leaks throughout the building, heating and electrical systems must be replaced, and sprinkler and ventilating systems must be installed when the building is rehabilitated.

Time is running out on the depot, broadcasts SOS in its news releases and direct mail; its last tenant, Amtrak, plans to vacate this summer. When the building is vacated, Burlington Northern Railroad, will “shut off the heat, board the building up, and defer maintenance. If carried on long enough, slow deterioration could prove as destructive as a wrecking ball,” reads the SOS literature.

At the SOS fundraiser there were stories about the depot, reminiscences of a landmark long-time residents talk about as if the station were an old friend. In a town like Tacoma, currently undergoing a cultural and developmental “renaissance,” many of its boosters, old and new, would loathe to lose such a symbolic structure strategically located adjacent to the city’s downtown core.

**continued on page eight.**
JUNE/JULY ISSUE

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Typesetting: Western Typographers, Inc.

Printing: Consolidated Press

Photography: Jerry Simmons, modern Union Station; Sally Oen, portraits of Nelson, Bassetti; special thanks to historians James Frederickson for obtaining historical photos of Union Station.

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Column of Many Orders

Rebecca Barnes

RICHARD MEIER'S SWING THROUGH Seattle was certainly treated as an architectural event. His appearances included a breakfast, a luncheon, a dinner, a town hall meeting, and a day-long presentation of his work and views. What could have been the highlight of the day was actually the most disappointing. A forum preceding the lecture had the potential of being an informative and in- siteful event, allowing for a fuller understanding of the architect and his work. It became, however, a painfully clear that a number of Arne Bystrom's hand-picked panellists took advantage of the opportunity to attempt to elevate themselves through an unfortunate provincial display. It was evident that Keith Rolle and David Fukan, two of the panelists, found themselves among a group of intimidated, self-conscious architects incapable of addressing architecture at Meier's level. A much deserved and pronounced moan arose from the audience when a call for "another round of questions for Keith Rolle and David Fukan" was declared.

Once the paranormal questions had been exhausted, the discussion opened to the audience at which time the level of discussion rebound. Meier was asked about the subsequent complexity of the building diagram as compared to his earlier work. His response was honest and straightforward: he had become bored with the simplicity of his earlier work and needed an added dimension to explore and advance his own set of architectural predilections.

It is quite refreshing to observe an architect today who believes as strongly as Meier does in his objectives and manifestations of his work. While he has been criticized for being "fashionable," he has dealt with this in an art so unashamedly manner. The evolution of his work and the consistently high level of quality of his projects speak more of an attempt to achieve time-less qualities through a vigorously tested vocabulary than of one to gain approval in today's architectural confusion.

-Tim Carlander

A UNIQUE PROJECT TO DESIGN AND BUILD a Peace Park on the Soviet Union is being sponsored jointly by Ploughshares (returned Peace Corps Volunteers working for peace) and the Washington Architets for Social Responsibility. Proponents anticipate US/USSR reciprocity, high profile impact, and construction in Fall 1985. For details, and/or to help out, call Andrew Gulding at 680-1133.

If rumors come true, as they so often seem to be, the next fade in downtown development projects is bound to be pedes-trian tunnels, and not on the site, out of mind. These anti-urban links are the latest thing to be braced in a population of a no-growth underground which may connect all four John Graham buildings (Sherraton, Stimson Center, etc.), the proposed Convention Center, the proposed second Union Tower, and the Rainier Square passage. At the other end of downtown, Martin Selig expects to connect Columbia Square/Columbia Center and SeaFirst Fifth Avenue underneath Fifth Avenue. Is it the rain or the scent of jagers that is most to be avoided? Here's hoping Seattle City Council will look down as they step in their pedestrian protective efforts.

DEAR EDITOR, ARCADE magazine is nicely printed, pleasantly written, and it does well at informing the community about architectural education, the existing parks, Sydney and Nicaragua, but what about the real architectural problems the town is coping with? (Or maybe not coping with.) Seattle has the potential for solving archi-tecturally the commuting problem, the pollution problem, the housing problem, the Convention Center problem, the Waterfront problem, etc., and your magazine ought to focus on these subjects, and call upon the architectural community to be come involved, to actively participate and perform the social responsibility which is especially critical in this time of rapid change.

Andrea Brass

IF A STITCH IN TIME SAVES NINE, they haven't put much effort into saving the environment. The latest thing is the�-urban links, some things are being done to solve the problem of pollution. A very nice effort is set to connect Columbia Square/Columbia Center and SeaFirst Fifth Avenue underneath Fifth Avenue. Is it the rain or the scent of jagers that is most to be avoided? Here's hoping Seattle City Council will look down as they step in their pedestrian protective efforts.

THE END OF ARCHITECTURE AS WE know it may be the hidden message in a recent UPI story about a developer suing his architect for designing someone else's "virtually identical" building across the street. Builder Donald Trump of Manhattan's Trump Plaza claims that architect Imre Nathans and Olson/Hodges' design 'is the same as the Plaza's design and 'appropriated' Trump's reputation. Trump believes he played a creative role in the design of his tower and that the design features of his building belong to him. Although to any architect the case would seem Trumped-up, the New York State Supreme Court found enough per-son merit in the argument to stop construction on the "copy" and order the architect into court to "argue why the (new tower) should be allowed to be built." A Trump win could mean the future of Post-Mod- ernism will depend entirely upon an inter-pretation of the statute of limitations; con- textual design may be a jailable offense. The design process may have to be sweated in veils of mystery and incoherent architec-tural gibberish, and professional design journals may have to use language in such a way as to obscure the meaningful visual elements of any architectural composition to avoid congruence between visual images and the associated verbal descriptions.

"VERY MUCH A GENRE PIECE" is HOW Daniel Solomon, IAIA (San Francisco ar-chitect and UC Berkeley prof) assessed Seattle's Draft Downtown Plan at Spring Design Workshop at the UW in April, setting the more-philosophical-than-practical tone of the critique of six team project proposals. The idea of the workshop jointly produced by the College of Architecture and Urban Design, the Seattle ALA, BLUEPRINT for Architecture, and The Gang of Five was to spark discussion of the Plan's pros and cons through a design charrette and public review.

While by far the hardest work was done by the architect and student members of the design teams, it was the discussion among the jury and members of the audience which provided the real substance of the event. The subjects of debate, rather than being the wonders or horrors of what the drawings revealed, were the attitude toward controlling design expressed by the Plan; the architect and UC prof's position in the development process.

"(San Francisco architect and UC Berkeley prof) assessed Seattle's Draft Downtown Plan at Spring Design Workshop at the UW in April, setting the more-philosophical-than-practical tone of the critique of six team project proposals. The idea of the workshop joint- ly produced by the College of Architecture and Urban Design, the Seattle ALA, BLUEPRINT for Architecture, and The Gang of Five was to spark discussion of the Plan's pros and cons through a design charrette and public review.
scraped, a large element of Jane Jacobs' romance with street life, and some elements of the brothers Krier and Colin Rowe's emphasis on positive shaping of figurative public space, a reaction to 60's figurative public space, a reaction to 60's New Urbanism and 70's New Urbanism and 70's social and political concerns. But Seattle's waterfront exposed the significant and per-turbing everyday activities of people who performed the necessary functions of the city's existence. This contrast with the highly technical, mechanical methods of today's shipping and cargo handling which appear to have all but eliminated people from the downtown waterfront.

(Victor Steinbrueck, UW Architecture Professor Emeritus)

If a city can make one of its parts home, then Seattle's home is its central waterfront, and further development should be guided by that image. (If we succeed in making a better home out of our downtown waterfront, the benefits may reach beyond Seattle itself. Seattle's success could provide a useful model for other cities seeking a meaning beyond economic value for their redeveloping waterfronts.) (Malinda Rohan, Executive Director of Waterfront Awareness)

Seattle's history has been influenced by the people at the right time. Everything about this city carries the effect of those people who decided that they were going to change things — and did.

(Fred Short, shorebound maritime historian)

Our local institutions reflect a desire to divide the maritime from the city. We've established separate municipalities to manage maritime associations at every level — for example, Maritime Seattle for maritime activities, and its waterfront exposed the significant and purposeful everyday activities of people who transported goods, that is the fresh shifts in philosophical stances...
HISTORIC PRESERVATION: What Every Architect Should Know

The utility of a building often survives beyond the original function. A waterfront pier became a retail shop, an old school is rehabilitated as elderly housing. Offices of the 1900s are the offices of the 1980s. The increased frequency of these transitions demands a greater involvement in historic preservation by design professionals. The viability of adaptive reuse has been paralleled by an increased public expectation that significant parts of our built past will not be lost. Responding to the movement toward historic renovation, government has become involved in preservation, more involved than many designers realize. Historic preservation, once a haven for romantic architect-types, now requires teamwork with regulators, national and local, who have review powers and resources that can transform an era into an individual landmark. (In Seattle, this occurs through the Office of Historical Landmarks, 5th and Pine Streets; and Pike Market Design Review Boards.) Seattle's Preservation Board promotes review and approval rehabilitation projects utilizing investment tax credits. (See the list which follows.)

Big Grandaddy

The big grandaddy of them all is The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a Washington, D.C. based group with a paid staff which serves as a clearinghouse for national and historic变成了个别历史建筑，变成了某个建筑。

Affiliates


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The Trust organizes work closely with government agencies, the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service and state Historic Preservation Offices, which house a roster of preservation professionals and distributes technical and informational materials. These state-level activities are coordinated with the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service and state Historic Preservation Offices through the Western Regional Office, 808 Alaska Bldg., Seattle 98104. The National Park Service reports that its Western Regional Office includes a roster of preservation professionals and distributes technical and informational materials to 24 participating states.

Technical Information

Technical information for building preservation comes from a variety of sources: organization, proposal, and other technical and informational materials. The National Trust for Historic Preservation maintains a clearinghouse for technical and informational materials. The United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, among other organizations, maintain clearinghouses for technical and informational materials. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has established a clearinghouse for technical and informational materials.

How to Make Contact

Agencies and organizations interested in contacting the National Trust for Historic Preservation should contact Susan J. Boyle, 808 Alaska Bldg., Seattle 98104; 206-448-2770. The National Trust for Historic Preservation provides a clearinghouse for technical and informational materials. The National Trust for Historic Preservation maintains a clearinghouse for technical and informational materials.

And Where to Go

There are numerous organizations and agencies that offer designers and preservationists information about the historical context, problems, and things that work with historic buildings.

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Third Avenue Rehabilitated

For the last fifty years, Third Avenue has been a street without an identity. Fifth Avenue has the image of fashionable downtown shops, and Fourth Avenue has become the front door for many of the downtown's newest and best business addresses. Even First Avenue has its own identity, originally one of cheap hotels, has become the front door for many of the downtown's largest retail shops, and Fourth Avenue serves as the focal center of emergency access routes for fire truck and ambulances, it houses a credible collection of pawn shops, surplus stores, “adult books,” dresses. Even First Avenue has its own identity. The city's major emergency access route for fire trucks and ambulances, it houses a credible collection of pawn shops, surplus stores, “adult books,” and financial centers it is not a neighbor of but, not a focal point for downtown growth. Third Avenue, however, is about to change. It may soon become the most notorious street in downtown Seattle; First Interstate Tower has just been completed. 1311 Third Avenue opened just last year, and four additional projects are being pursued by developers.

By the early 1990s, Third Avenue will be one of Seattle’s best downtown addresses. The primary driver of change along Third Avenue will be METRO’s proposed transit tunnel (aligned underground with Third Avenue and Pine Street), a major public improvement project which could be the catalyst needed to recreate Third Avenue. The tunnel will be designed for both bus and rail transit capabilities and have five or six underground transit stations.

Since the project will involve major surface improvements, as well as underground tunnel and station construction, considerable attention must be given to ensuring that the design is an artistic addition to the cityscape as well as a functional improvement for transit operations. Similar recent large-scale transit improvements in Portland, Oregon, and Denver, Colorado, are strong design statements that create new urban environments along their routes. However, the appeal of these projects has begun to diminish both functionally and visually. The creation of completely designed settings continues the 1980s urban renewal mentality, which promoted tearing out the old and replacing it with something new and “beautiful.” With these class new environments which disrupt familiar settings continue the 1950s urban design. In Seattle great emphasis is placed on conserving existing buildings and structures and on public design solutions which respect the function of the setting rather than stand out from it. The city's most successful and popular projects (for example, the Pike Place Market where public reaction in Seattle to projects like these likely would be unique and intense because of the "Seattle attitude" toward urban design. In Seattle great emphasis is placed on conserving existing buildings and structures and on public design solutions which respect the function of the setting rather than stand out from it. The city's most successful and popular projects (for example, the Pike Place Market where

A more understated approach to urban design reinforces the city's complexity by introducing new elements which help make sense of a street's activities.

A successful “Seattle-style” Third Avenue transit project will require the same solid, common-sense thinking both about the proposed public and transit improvements along the street and the enhancement of the historic setting and Third Avenue's purposeful role as one of downtown's few north-south streets. A well-planned design, which incorporates transit improvements while respecting the existing street, can become a rich urban concept. Such a plan should mature with age and continue to reveal new facades over time, continually improving itself.

The technique most difficult for strong designers to handle well is the effective use of understatement as a major urban design concept. However, this use of understatement is probably the most significant feature in Seattle's best urban design projects. To achieve it, problems must be solved sympathetically with the basic purpose and historic character of an existing environment, long before grand new ways to interpret the situation are considered.

Seattle's Third Avenue in 1984 is in need of a stronger identity.

Seattleites approved a low-key plan for the Public Market's restoration in opposition to a proposal for a new Market and high-rise residential complex. Illustrate this attitude. In other well-received public and private efforts, the conservation of Pioneer Square's historic buildings and the rehabilitation and expansion of older buildings in Cornices Development Company's Waterfront Center Project have been more effective, with the concept of improving a familiar setting rather than creating a new design concept.

A more understated approach to urban design reinforces the city's complexity by introducing new elements which help make sense of a street's activities. A successful “Seattle-style” Third Avenue transit project will require the same solid, common-sense thinking both about the proposed public and transit improvements along the street and the enhancement of the historic setting and Third Avenue's purposeful role as one of downtown's few north-south streets. A well-planned design, which incorporates transit improvements while respecting the existing street, can become a rich urban concept. Such a plan should mature with age and continue to reveal new facades over time, continually improving itself.

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Seattle's understated approach contrasts strongly with the past approaches to public improvements where the new project stands out in the existing urban environment. A good example is the Portland, Oregon, Bus Mall. The new mall replaced an existing downtown street, adding broad brick sidewalks, granite curbs, artwork, new transit hardware, and many buses. The mall design created a new atmosphere which contrasts the street's original mixture of building types and architectural styles. This strong design statement lies like a bright new Persian carpet in the city's transit corridor and magnifies the usual disharmony between buildings, storefronts, and signs that the original street had welded together. What many designers who are trained to make such strong design statements tend to forget is that good urban design is most often an exercise in restraint and attention to the existing historic elements of a setting, not the imposition of a new will.

Often projects such as the Portland mall are designed in plan and pattern (paving patterns tend to become an overly important unifying tool). Designing by plan does not adequately address the multi-dimen-

4  Semi-Gothic exhibit at Iglesia de San Francisco, Alameda and Pacific.

5  Seattle sculpture exhibition in Rawlings Sculpture Garden; opening reception  June 12 - 9:30 p.m.  Free.


With its formation, SOS leadership promised to sponsor a public bond issue to preserve the station, assuring taxpayers public accessibility as a payback. In November 1983, Councilman Strege sponsored a resolution authorizing the Tacoma City Manager to seek an option from BN to negotiate purchasing the station for one dollar. Once this option was in hand, SOS planned to sponsor a $7 million bond issue to provide the City with capital needed to bring the building up to code. Then, the City would have the option to lease or sell the building to a private interest on the condition that business would make tenant improvements and preserve part of the building for a public use. Once rehabilitated, Union Station would compliment BN's future development on sixteen vacant acres surrounding the depot.

With the public concern and pressure generated by SOS, Strege's resolution passed the Tacoma City Council. But BN balked at selling the station and its underlying land for a nominal cost. (For nearly a decade BN has been willing to give the depot to the City of Tacoma, but unwilling to part with the property underneath it.)

Without an option agreement from the owner, there can be no public bond issue, and lacking the leverage of public financing, SOS has appeared to lose direction, momentum, and a purpose.

Five months, more than $10,000, and one thousand participants after SOS's formation, its leadership claims a victory, albeit in a roundabout fashion. Burlington Northern is about to initiate a Request For Proposal to find a development scheme suitable for the station's restoration and its integration into the sixteen acres of vacant land around it. SOS Co-chair Linda Bowman claims her citizens' committee was instrumental in pursuing BN to seek the RFP.

"I feel very good about what [SOS has] been able to accomplish. At the time we spoke with Burlington Northern at the beginning of our effort, we were advised that they had many stations around the country and [Tacoma's Union Station] really didn't have any special significance for development. However, they have made [cooperation between SOS and BN] a priority," says Bowman.

"SOS has made [BN] aware of how strongly we feel about it and about the key role it can play in the redevelopment of our city," she adds. "I guess I disagree with Linda [Bowman]," says Steven Wood, Vice President, Law and Government Relations of Glacier Park Company, the wholly-owned real estate subsidiary of BN.

"Tacoma's Union Station is one of about 20 projects [Glacier Park] has going on around the country, and it doesn't have any greater or lesser priority than any other projects. We're going through the same process to try and determine if it's economically viable to do anything [at the station and its site]." 

"Certainly, the SOS group has not been responsible for Burlington Northern taking one position or another — it's the task force. The Tacoma City Council task force [on Union Station] piqued our interest, and that's who we're participating with. The SOS group are not members of the task force," says Wood.

Yet Bowman claims SOS was largely responsible for bringing about the formation of the task force composed of representatives from the City's planning and community development departments and the city manager's office. The task force's duties are to envision a suitable development for the station, find a means for that realization, and determine how the station and its surrounding property fit into the scheme of downtown Tacoma's urban plan. Through the influence of SOS co-chairs and Councilman Strege, SOS set in motion a series of events that eventually led to the task force's formation, claims Bowman. One such event was a $12,000 grant from Governor John Spellman to help finance a study on the station.

"It's hard to say — it's a chicken-and-egg thing," says Wood, referring to whether SOS's or BN's development plans came first. When pressed about Bowman's claim about SOS influence on the task force, Wood retreats a little, but adds, "BN had taken a look at the station long before SOS came around. And because we have sixteen acres of land in a metropolitan area, [we ought to be able to make some money off it, right?"

"And the people of Tacoma had the depot successfully designated on the National Register [of Historic Places] before SOS days.

"All we know is: this is a project that we have, and if we come up with a good development plan, it looks like it's going to make money, and if it gives the rate of return that we expect on our projects, we're going to do it."

"And if it doesn't," concludes Wood. "Then we're going to have to think of some other solution or maybe think about [developing] it in the future some time."

If BN's RFP proves profitable; if the railroad attracts a developer who gives it the required rate of return; then Bowman would consider SOS a success; the building will have been saved. Even if BN develops the building privately and restricts public use, "I still would feel that development of it would probably not have taken place without SOS," says Bowman. If the building is developed privately without public funds, Bowman hopes, along with others, to "appeal to BN's sense of fairness" to allow public participation in determining a use for the depot and provide public space in the historic monument.

"However, I think it's up to the land owner to decide the ultimate use for which the land ought to be used," says Wood. "So, we see our job [to present] something that's consistent [with] the architectural integrity and, for lack of a better word, to 'appeal to BN's sense of fairness' to allow public participation in determining a use for the depot and provide public space in the historic monument."

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Frank Petrich
Frank Petrich is a freelance writer who lives and works in Tacoma.
The Dome’s Destiny?

The first concern is to retain the historic structure in all of its majesty, while restoring it as a vital element of downtown Tacoma.

The current condition of the interior of Tacoma's Union Station site. Photo by Jerry Timmons.

 Forces within the city of Tacoma and Glacier Park Company cannot and will not remove the Tacoma Union Station from the state, the City of Tacoma, we are extremely fortunate. Despite its removal from the state, the City of Tacoma has recently commissioned a new rehabilitation study to generate and examine ideas for the station's future use. The study, just completed by TRA Architects, fills the hole left by the aborted Cornerstone Phase II Rehabilitation Study. Following up on the Rehabilitation Potential Study, it deals with the potential and plagues in publicly proposed development schemes for the structure and its site. We should hope the study will contribute impetus for the successful reuse of the station.

Perhaps a more dynamic step has been taken with the formation of the Tacoma Union Station Task Force. The task force, representing Glacier Park executives and Tacoma city officials, has met frequently this year to actively seek a means of redeveloping the station. The task force has prepared a Request for Proposal, which recently has been distributed to private developers. Glacier Park is willing to consider a very small parcel to facilities to state development. They wish to retain ownership of the land and to remain involved in any project launched involving the station, ideally in a partnership with an independent developer. Consequently, the RFP is a solicitation of schemes, both financial and architectural, for development of the parcel. The development proposals are due at the beginning of the next month, and the City of Tacoma hopes to receive the next step in the station’s second coming out.

The envisioned redevelopement of the Tacoma Union Station would be a preservation project on a grand scale. Given the visibility of the station's future use, the City of Tacoma has recently commissioned a new rehabilitation study to generate and examine ideas for the station's future use. The study, just completed by TRA Architects, fills the hole left by the aborted Cornerstone Phase II Rehabilitation Study. Following up on the Rehabilitation Potential Study, it deals with the potential and plagues in publicly proposed development schemes for the structure and its site. We should hope the study will contribute impetus for the successful reuse of the station.

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The envisioned redevelopemen
ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

An Interview With Ibsen Nelsen and Fred Bassetti

The following is an interview with Ibsen Nelsen, a longtime Seattle architect, and Fred Bassetti, two longtime Seattle architects. Both of them have worked on many historic preservation projects. Nelsen is associated with Pioneer Square, the Pike Place Market, and the Boeing Museum of Flight. Because historic preservation is important to all architects, we chose to interview them rather than some other "preservation experts" in this area. We thank them for their cooperation and assistance on this.

Ibsen Nelsen: Historic preservation is important, cities grow incrementally over time. If we preserve the best architecture of each period, cities should get better.

Fred Bassetti: I agree. Both of us believe historic preservation is important.

Interview With Ibsen Nelsen

Marsha Back: Is there any inherent value in keeping some of the bad of the past? IN: Well, that could be. However, I don't feel badly about tearing down an old building, if the one that replaces it is better. But in the end, a building that will never be prevalent again. The Clearance approach gave urban renewal a bad name. It's too bad, for the social problems in Pioneer Square, but it definitely represents an attitude toward building that will never be prevalent again. And it was the building in which most of the state's governors had lived. There was never any question in my mind that it should not be demolished.

Caroline Petrich: When you're designing a new building, you're given a project and you go at it. Do you ever project yourself into the future and your building as it progresses through time?

IN: Yes, sometimes. When I designed Morris Graves' house in California, I suggested to Morris that because of his position we'd have to be careful of what we did because we would have some kind of signals here. I feel quite strongly that architecture should be a part of the continuum of history. We might make more progress if we took, as a goal, to design the most unsurprising buildings we could.

IN: It's not to diminish the idea of originality, but buildings should have something to do with the culture in which they occur. In Morris' house, I was thinking of the Christian religions, of the frame house, of the frame house. The balloon frame was invented in Chicago in 1820 by George Washington. He designed a number of buildings, and invented the idea of the wood-frame house. It was a system meant to coincide with the invention of the wire nail. The wood-frame building is America's fundamental contribution to Architecture. It is one reason why restoring the Boeing Company's Red Barn as a museum is im-

portant. It's a turn-of-the-century wood-frame, industrial building and has become a cultural icon because of its rarity, but also because of its chance attributes as architecture. It is located on an historic site - the Meadows Race Track, site of the first flight in Seattle in 1911. It is also the birthplace of one of the world's great industrial companies - certainly one often most important in air and space.

(The conversation drifted to local examples, crucial Pioneer Square.)

Fred Bassetti: Pioneer Square was started by Alan Salisbury and Ralph Anderson when they thought that little building at the corner of First and Jackson. About 1950 I guess it was. I thought they were crazy! And we thought, well, by 1968-70, the whole Pioneer Square would be gone. When we did the Action Better City program (1948), it seemed like it was in the works.

MB: What happened?

FB: I think it was one of those do-gooder things. When they built that park, it became a haven for drifters, and a lot of people turned off. My present lawyer had his office here; he loved it. But he couldn't handle having all the clients approach from the winos. He just gave up and left for a slick new building.

IN: The City's vision for Pioneer Square was to clear the site. A number of people have pointed out that the City gets more times in property taxes than it did before restoration but returns little in serv-

ices. The City has the responsibility to solve the social problems in Pioneer Square, but seems to be ignoring it, hoping it will go away. Then there been people on various committees who have thought there was something picturesque about "street people": that they are part of the scenery. It's the fundamental problem of Pioneer Square.

FB: There's a lot of sympathy, and rightly so, for the derelicts. But what about the people who have invested money in the area - the people who owned shops and houses. It's not the big corporations. It's our citi-

zens - many have invested their life savings in opening a shop. The social problem is killing them. Look what happened to the Kissells' City Loan Pavilion Restaurant.

IN: Is there some reason why the City didn't want people to invest money down there?

FB: I don't think the City ever said that, did they?

IN: No, except for one initiative. Ben Er-

ich was a great man in town forty to fifty years ago (he was the uncle of John Dierich, who was kicked to jail after Wa
tergate). About twenty to thirty years ago, Ben Erlichman came up with a proposal for Pioneer Square. The plan was touted by the City, by the newspapers, as this great development-renewing Seattle. They were going to wipe out everything. The City did actually wipe out a couple of blocks of old buildings. There was then a tendency on the part of some developers and the City to do things in a massive way, go in with massive money. When Alan Black, Ralph Anderson, Dick White, and others did it on a small piecemeal basis, there was some heart put into it. That really worked.

IN: The clearance approach gave urban renewal a bad name. It's too bad, for the Market. Urban Renewal can work. The Market Urban Renewal project is a major factor in saving Seattle's downtow-

n. It was one of the few things that attracted people to the downtown. If the Market had disappeared, who knows what would have happened?

FB: It would have been like Tacoma.

FB: The Market was saved because of citi-

zen initiative. The initiative provided a detailed program for control. It was the pattern for the Pioneer Square renewal project.

MB: It was controlled by the citizens. What about the private investors?

IN: The ordinance which gave the Market its direction was written by the citizens who got together the initiative. Victor Steinbrueck was the mover - and he inspired creative people to join him. They created a market which set a pattern, became a vehicle to preserve Seat-

tle's vitality - it's downtown.

FB: It was very close, a narrow miss.

MB: Gasoline in the bulldozers, right?

FB: We didn't know which way it was going to go. It finally came to a vote, and it carried fairly well, the Friends of the Mark-

et initiative. It was something. We have a little bit of history in some of our stat-

ements that led to getting a lot of votes. Boy, there were going to be a lot of new hotels right there where the Triangle Building is, at Pike Place and Pine Street.

CP: Who designed it?

FB: Two of the most progressive architects in town were involved with that plan. And they really got it at us.

MB: Those were the progressive thinkers: Urban Renewal, they were mov-

ing ahead and tearing down the old build-

ings.

CP: Does that mean that historic preserva-

tion is just recently become an issue, whereas it was before it was just an afterthought?

FB: Less than that! You go back to the 30s, and I remember being in school and read-

ing about slum clearance in Roosevelt's Administration. Get rid of the slums, tear out the slums. That was the point: get peo-

ple out of the slums because that's where crime is bred and all that. We didn't realize until much later when we grew up a bit. /n:

If we preserve the best architect-

ure of each period, cities should get better.

FB: Yeah, right. Each official in turn takes the credit himself, but George really de-

serves the recognition. He really knew how to do it.

IN: He took the Market apart and put it back together again. I put in new plumbing, inven-

tions, new plumbing, new structure, new electrical system, and all the while kept the Market in operation, made it all work. Yet he has never been recognized for it. The AIA has ignored him.

FB: He spent about $15-20 million without it being noticed. The character of the Mar-

ket is still there. You know it's a marvelous thing. Here Seattle did this and while Paris tore out their own human place, their market, Les Halles. They did exactly what some were proposing to do here - sterile! It is the Market Historical Commission, and has been and continues as a very, very important aspect of the Market's preservation. It is a miracle to save the run-down Market, and to renovate it success-

fully. In the end, the Market thrived because buildings are destroyed over time, incrementally.

A slicker designer picks up his hammer, the building gets worse; the painter picks up his paint brush, the building gets worse; and it reflects the direction of the bureau-

crats who eventually ruin all our public buildings. In a short time, really, the Mar-

ket can be completely ruined by make-

shifting, tinkering.

The function of the Market Historical Commission is to see that it is the Market they are preserving over the years. Would you let food carts set up in the main Mar-

ket arcade? The Commission here to tell them "No!". The food carts were totally out of place and probably might have been appro-

nated at Northgate.

FB: The Market succeeds because it's a place for a certain function, the food carts are not just to go just to work. There are probably more restaurants and exotic people there per square foot than anywhere else in the world!

IN: Pioneer Square is a successful area because it has a uniform collection of simi-

larly scaled buildings aligned on the street - right out to the sidewalk. So the overall design for the area, the urban design, is based on uniform alignment of buildings of similar height. This is the continuity which makes the open spaces meaningful - Occidental and Pioneer Squares. It, together with the uniform turn-of-the-cen-

tury brick architecture, unifies the area - one of the few places in the city with contin-

uity of an urban quality.

CP: How does historic preservation affect the community? Conversely, how does the community affect historic preservation?

FB: I think people really care. I suppose we can write off the eighty percent who don't pay any attention. You know the Market, it's there, you go buy groceries. But for the leaders who count, in molding opinion, it thinks it matters, and it will affect their lives and their children's attitudes toward it. I know my kids are unduly influenced by those who come to care about the city. They love the Market and Pioneer Square, and they'll still stay with them for the rest of their lives.

IN: A lot of people do love the Market but
What's more important than romance in this world? Our hearts need fulfilling.

What's more important than romance in this world? Our hearts need fulfilling.
The primary goal of a shopping street is to attract and colorful storefront tile bands. Were used to important tasks. For example, the primary activities. Understanding and respecting the District. Two non-design features were active retail and social area which did not help support the district's basic role as an

**continued from page five...**

moting uniform storefront design guidelines, designers can soften the impact of new design elements on an existing setting. On the other hand, a more understated approach to urban design reinforces the city's complexity by introducing new elements which help make sense of a street's activities. Understanding and respecting the street's purpose are the designer's most important tasks. For example, the primary goal of a shopping street is to attract and lead customers to stores. A good project provides a setting that allows this to happen. An example is a streetscape design project for Seattle's Broadway Business District. Two non-design features were most important: the small retail shop set up and redesign Third Avenue not just as a transit facility, but as a basic urban public improvement.

**Gerald Hansmire**

Gerald Hansmire is a Seattle architect and urban design firm, MAKERS, which prepared a concept design for the proposed Westlake transit tunnel station.

**Sketches provided by MAKERS.**