

24N 4E S

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	
DATE ENTERED	

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

HI 128

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Pioneer Building, Pergola and Totem Pole

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Seattle

VICINITY OF

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Washington

46

King

33

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

King County Auditor's Office

STREET & NUMBER

County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Seattle

Washington

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

National Register of Historic Places

DATE

June 6, 1970

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

OAHP, National Park Service

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Washington,

D. C.

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

While Pioneer Square is not the birth place of Seattle, it does mark the heart of the city's early commercial development and the actual physical development of the city per se. It was from this location that the city expanded and grew into the queen city of the Pacific Northwest.

Pioneer Square Place itself marks the location of Henry Yesler's mill, which was built in 1853 and provided Seattle's economic beginnings. Logs cut on First Hill were skidded down to what is now Yesler Way (hence the term Skid Road) to the mill, where they were sawn for local use, and for export by ship down the coast to San Francisco. While the site was originally on the waterfront, filling gradually moved the shoreline westward. In the late 1880's, the City was engaged in realigning its streets which make a sharp bend at Yesler Way, and the former mill site was condemned to provide a public square, as well as the requisite bend in First Avenue. Following a court battle, A. C. Yesler sold the land to the City. In the 1890's the public square area was made into a park by the City, and trees were planted by ladies' organizations. From this point, Pioneer Square became the traditional point of focus for civic activities and celebrations, a role it enjoyed for many years. The area surrounding (now the Pioneer Square/Skid Road Historic District) became the retail, business and commercial center of the Northwest.

The site of the Pioneer Building was the location of Henry Yesler's (one of the City's founding fathers) home for thirty years. It was deeded to Yesler by Carson D. Boren, another of Seattle's founders, to induce Yesler to bring his mill to the city. The Pioneer Building was designed by Elmer Fisher, who was architect for many other Seattle buildings following the 1889 fire. Excavating for this building's foundation was begun prior to that fire, but the building was not completed until 1892. Now considered the city's most significant historic building, the Pioneer Building was the number one prestige office address during the 1890's and early 1900's.

The six-story building is of brick masonry and stone construction, (with internal early steel and cast iron structural members) in the Romanesque Revival style. The interior is finished with tooled millwork, iron grilles, natural oak paneling, and ceramic floor tiles. The interior atmosphere is open and light, due to twin light wells beneath large skylights. Every floor between the second and sixth has balconies opening onto the light wells. The building was equipped with Seattle's first electric elevators, now restored and still in use.

The Pioneer Building housed the Puget Sound National Bank, headed by Jacob Furth, leading financier of the period and the only "boss" the city has ever had. It also housed offices for no less than forty-eight (48) mining firms during the

(Continued)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Alaskan Gold Rush. Many of the city's leading lawyers, doctors, investment firms, and insurance companies had offices in the building. During the prohibition period, the building housed one of Seattle's finest speakeasies.

On May 5, 1946, Yesler Estates, Inc., sold the building to Manson Bacchus II, for \$315,000. Bacchus in turn sold it in 1951 to Robert Shapiro, Louis Shapiro and Sam Buttnick for \$75,000. The property was purchased by the present owner, Theta Company for \$500,000. The upper floors had been empty since the early 1950's.

The building was restored in 1974 over a nine-month period, (Ralph D. Anderson and Partners, Architects) and officially opened on November 1, 1974. Cost of the restoration was \$1,750,000. Despite the age of the building, it was found to be structurally sound and did not require major design changes. Exterior restoration consisted mainly of sandblasting the brick and stone to regain the original appearance. Nearly all original interior fittings were cleaned and retained. Improvements in the form of air conditioning, heating, carpeting, and a sprinkling system were added. With many professional offices and restaurants housed in the building, the Pioneer Building is once again becoming a number one prestige address in Seattle.

The Pioneer Square Pergola was built in 1909 as a waiting shelter for patrons of the Yesler and James Street cable cars. The design of the cast iron and glass structure, with wrought iron ornamentation, was the result of an architectural competition. It represented further development of this important public space. The ornamental iron columns, capped with ball-type luminaires, provided ventilation for the large underground restroom. The pergola was restored in 1972 through a gift of \$150,000 from United Parcel Service, which had its beginnings in the Pioneer Square area. The restoration included the totem pole, grass area, iron fences and benches of the park.

The underground restroom was constructed circa 1910 and was, reputedly at the time of its construction, the most lavish of its kind west of the Mississippi. Although sealed up at the present, the restroom and its fixtures are still extant. They await only the necessary funds to accomplish restoration.

The totem pole in Pioneer Square has a long and checkered career. The original pole was stolen from Tlingit Indians on Tongass Island, Alaska, by leading Seattle citizens on a Chamber of Commerce excursion. It was donated by them to the City and was unveiled at this location on October 10, 1899, as a memento of the Alaska Gold Rush. However, the Indians from who it was stolen filed charges and the

(Continued)

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U.S. Marshal arrested the guilty members of the excursion party. Though the Indians asked \$20,000 damages, the case was quashed in court. The guilty parties were fined \$500, and the City retained the pole. In 1938, the original pole was burned in a fire set by vandals. At that time the remains were shipped to Alaska and a reproduction was carved by Indian craftsmen. With official tribal blessings, the new pole was dedicated at a Potlatch Celebration.

The Chief Seattle Fountain in Pioneer Square was designed as a drinking fountain and watering rough. It has three levels and was intended for people, horses, and dogs, each at his own level. The fountain is surmounted by a bronze bust of Chief Sealth (Seattle), for whom the city is named. The bust was sculpted in 1909 by James Wehn.

This information supplied by Earl Lehman, City Preservation Officer, Seattle, Washington.



# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Pioneer Square is the heart of the old city of Seattle and contains some of the handsomest Richardsonian-Romanesque facades in the Northwest. The best preserved structure is the Pioneer building by Elmer H. Fisher, architect. The pergola remnant in the center of this complex is a beautiful cast iron umbrella that was once a much larger shelter for transit passengers.

The quality of Pioneer Square is discussed in Space, Style, and Structure.

The style of the historic old business districts of Puget Sound cities is predominantly Richardsonian Romanesque with a few Gothic Revival, Italianate, and Renaissance Revival buildings. Water Street in Port Townsend, the Pioneer Square (Skid Road) Historic District in Seattle, and portions of Tacoma still contain a pleasing abundance of buildings of this type which are being preserved and finding good use.

Richardsonian Romanesque is, of course, a round arch style with much rock-faced masonry. Since good stone was less available locally than brick, buildings in the style here are usually of brick, sometimes specially molded with tile or terra cotta architectural details. Sandstone was obtained from Chuckanut, Wilkeson, Tenino and the San Juans. Well-detailed and maintained stone buildings have endured; however, there are buildings which have suffered considerable deterioration from the weather. In a few cases, stucco was applied over brick and formed to give the appearance of stone, which shows how far wrong an architect can go in trying to do the right thing. Richardsonian buildings have a considerable sense of massiveness and weight which appears a reasonable expression of stone. They gave an outward appearance of order and organization, and of understanding of their purpose, whether it be commercial, governmental, or religious.

In 1889, most of downtown Seattle burned to the ground to be rebuilt almost immediately in brick and stone, with Richardsonian Romanesque being the most popular of styles. The most prominent architect working in a variety of styles, particularly Richardsonian, was Elmer H. Fisher, who did many of the Pioneer Square Historic District buildings, as well as others along First Avenue. Although Fisher was the architect for a great many of Seattle's buildings of this busy period of growth, his life is lost in obscurity and little is known except that he was responsible for a few buildings later in Victoria, British Columbia. His work and other local buildings lacked the originality and refinement of similar structures in St. Paul, Chicago, and on the East Coast, however derivative they may be.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Space, Style, and Structure, Building in Northwest America, Thomas Vaughn, editor, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, 1974, pp. 356-358.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The National Register form details the history of Seattle's growth.

"In the spring of 1853, Henry L. Yesler was encouraged to begin operating his steam sawmill at the location of the northwest corner of First Avenue and Yesler Way (Pioneer Square). This was Seattle's first and major industry. As lumber was selling for \$60/thousand board feet in California, the new community prospered.

Yesler's donation claim included a narrow corridor encompassing what is now Yesler Way--the street from which the term Skid Road was derived. When the skid road was used to skid logs down to the mill, it was a 49% grade. When improved, it was eased to a 15% grade, to accommodate wagons and the Yesler-Leschi cable car which started from Pioneer Square. Most of the early settlers, and many of the Indians, worked in Yesler's mill.

The area that is known as the Skid Road and Pioneer Square was the heart of the community for more than the first half century of the town's existence. During this period, Seattle became the major city in the northwest quarter of the nation.

June 6, 1889, Seattle suffered a major disaster when all of the docks and most of the business district were burned down. But immediate reconstruction and wide-spread publicity after the fire brought hordes of new people and much additional business. Statehood on November 11, 1889 made it possible for the town to spend money in public work, and the citizens declared their intentions to rebuild the Skid Road area into the most beautiful city center in the world.

Because of the massive rebuilding within a short period after the fire, and partly because of the influence of one architect, Elmer H. Fisher, there is great homogeneity of style and construction in the Skid Road - Pioneer Square architecture. Although he is virtually unknown today, Fisher appears to have been responsible for the design of at least sixty buildings in Seattle, many of which were located in the Skid Road area.

Seattle and this historic area prospered during the last decade of the 19th century, always due to lumber, but also from other factors. James Hill's initiation of the operation of a combination of rail and shipping put Memphis cotton into Shanghai 197 days faster than any other means of transportation. The gold rush of the Klondike and Nome brought not only miners, but business, and shipping to Seattle as the nearest large port. Seattle built ships for Alaska trade, and also became the center of the Mosquito Fleet of small steamers in Puget Sound.

(Continued)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Following World War I, business moved northward out of the Skid Road, and the area gradually fell into lower uses. By the Depression of the 1930's the area became an almost forgotten district."<sup>2</sup>

Today a vital restoration is once again bringing life to the old district in Seattle.

<sup>2</sup>National Register form, Margaret A. Corley

NHL  
 PIO RLYG  
 Pioneer King  
 35

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Morgan, Murray, Skid Road. New York: The Viking Press, 1960.

Speidel, William G., Sons of the Profits. Seattle: Nettle Creek Publishing Co., 1967.

Bagley, Clarence B., History of Seattle. Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1916.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,0	55,018,0	5,27,21,2,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Carolyn Pitts, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Historic Site Survey Division, National Park Service

2/22/77

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1100 L Street, NW.

202/523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Washington,

D. C.

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ LOCAL \_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

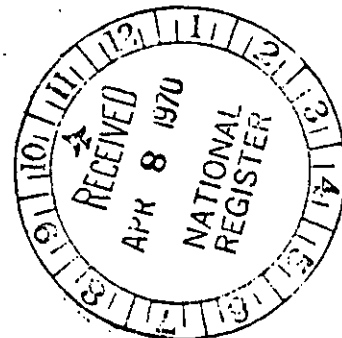
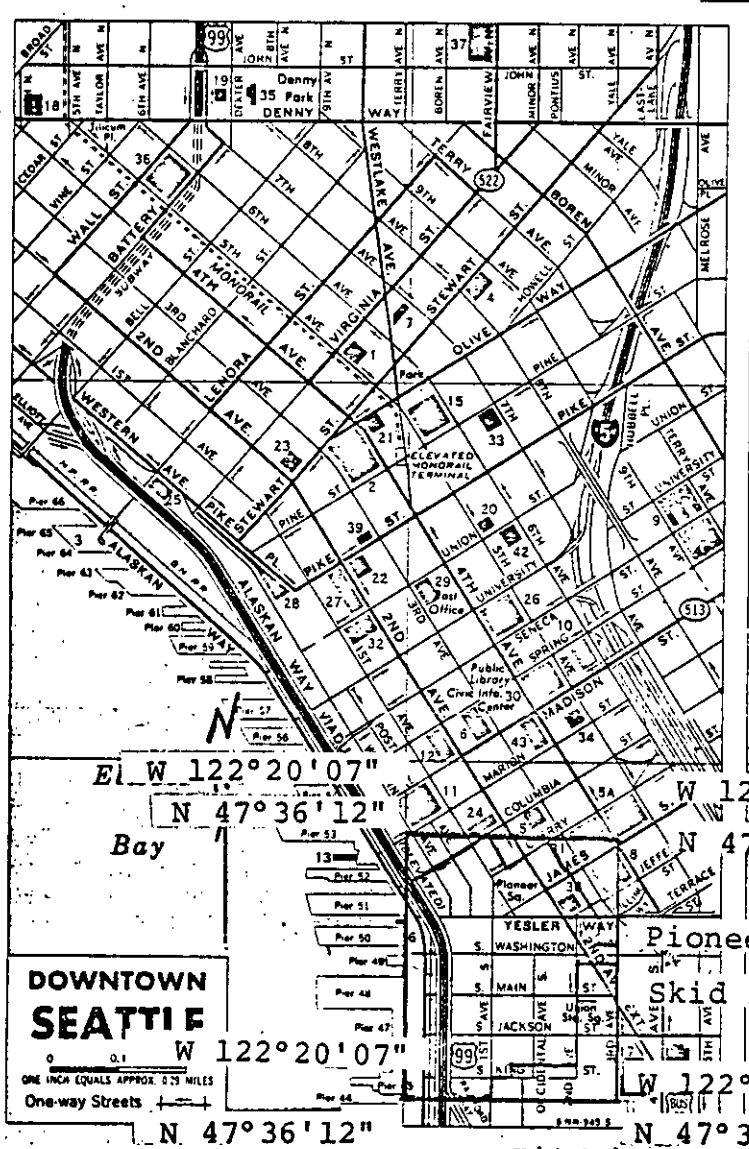
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

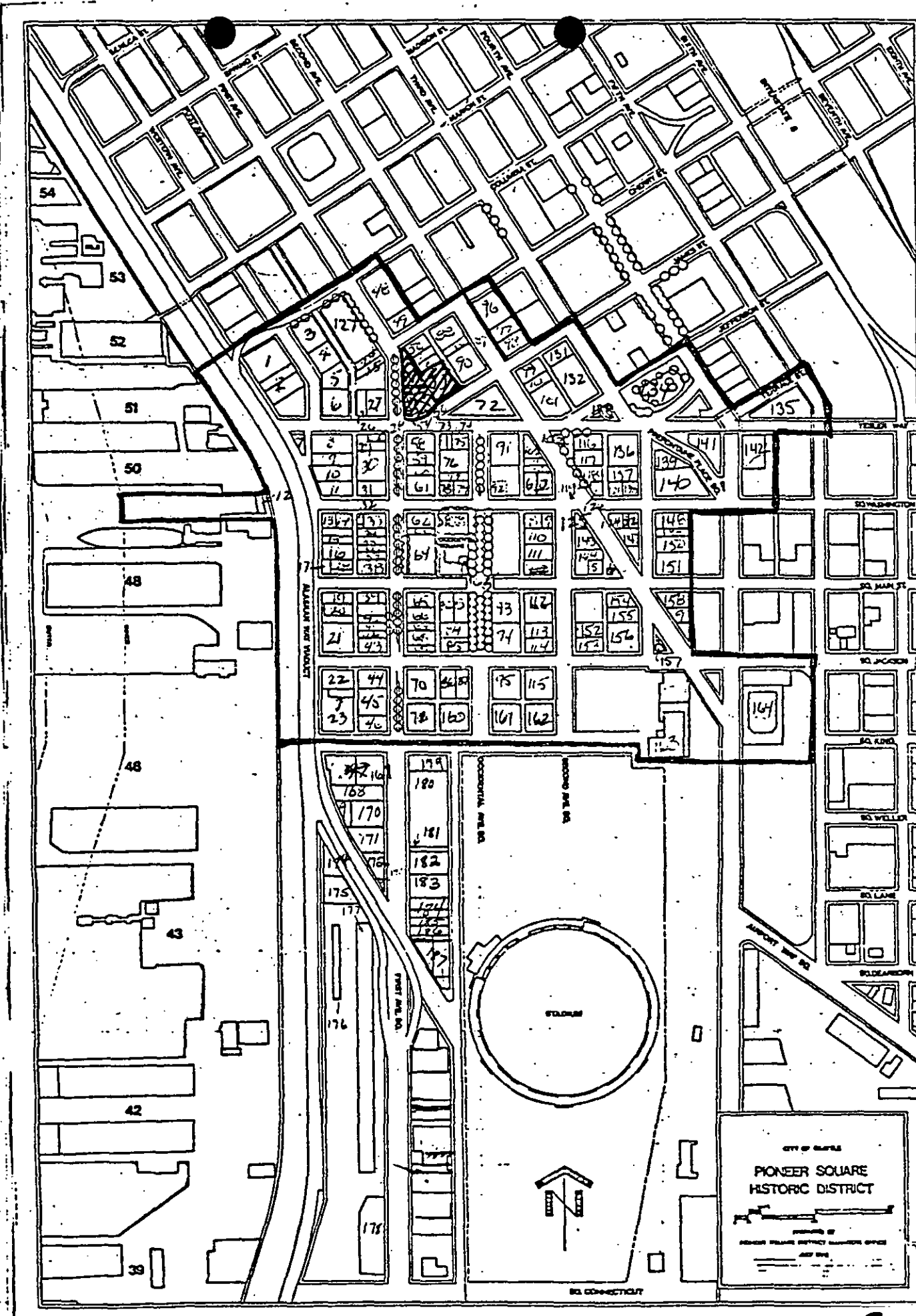
DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER





CITY OF SEATTLE  
**PIONEER SQUARE  
 HISTORIC DISTRICT**  
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON LIBRARY ARCHIVES  
 1988

BOUNDARY MAP  
EXHIBIT "A"



22"

RION ST.

WESTERN AVE

1ST AVE

COLUMBIA

2ND AVE

CHERRY ST.

JAMES ST.

3RD AVE.

VIA DUCT  
ALASKAN WAY

POST ST.

POMER PIKE

YESLER

WAY

S. ALASKAN WAY

VIA DUCT

1ST AVE. S.

S. WASHINGTON ST.

AVG. S.

ST.

S. MAIN

OCCIDENTAL

ST.

S. JACKSON

ST.

2ND AVE. S.

2ND AVE. EXTN. S.  
3RD AVE. S.

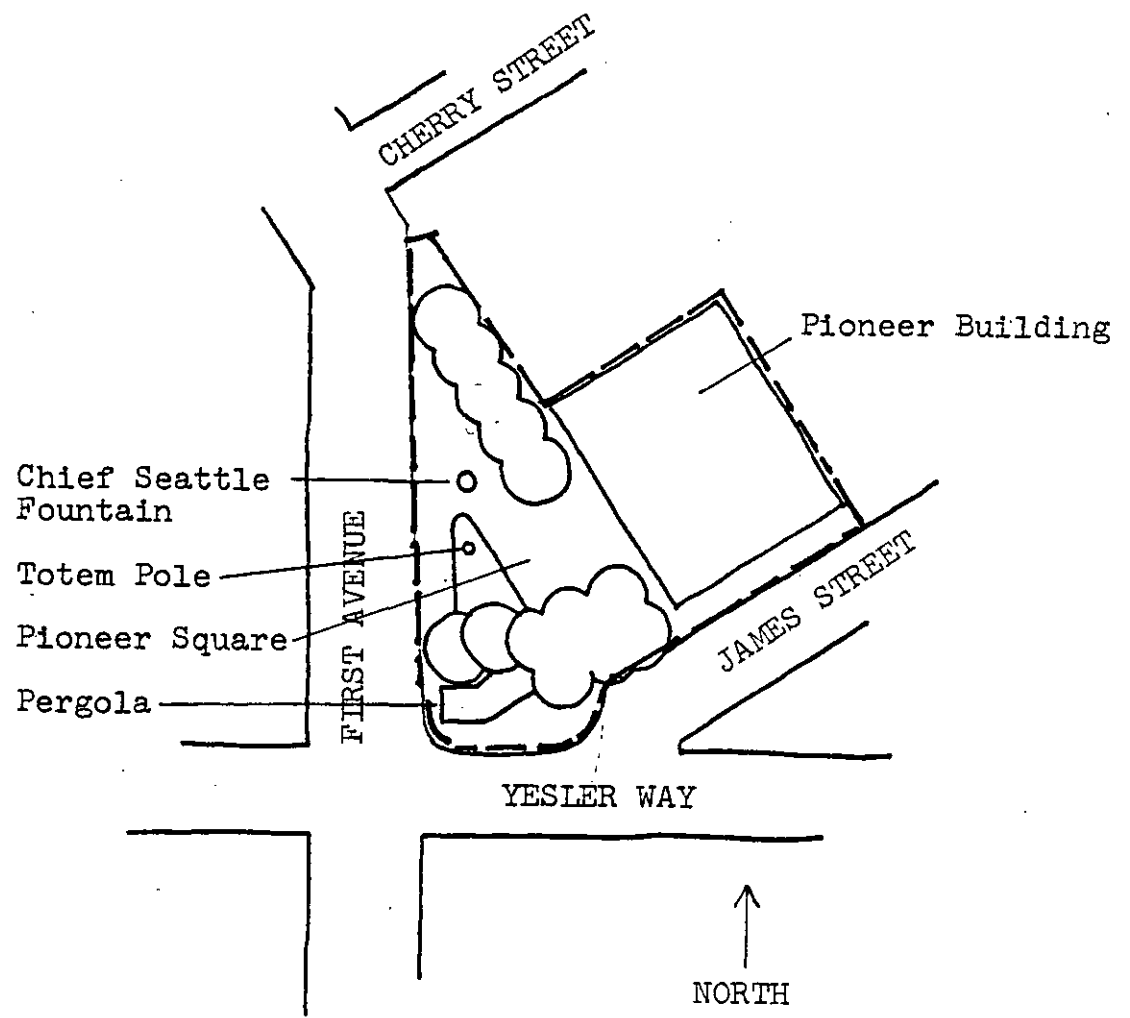
S. KING

ST.

DIAFEEB SQUARE - SKIN DADD

77

PROPOSED PIONEER SQUARE  
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK SITE







Pioneer Building, Pergola and Totem  
Pole  
Seattle, Washington  
Photo credit: Seattle Engineering  
Department



Pioneer Building, Pergola and Totem  
Pole  
Seattle, Washington  
Photo credit: John W. Snyder



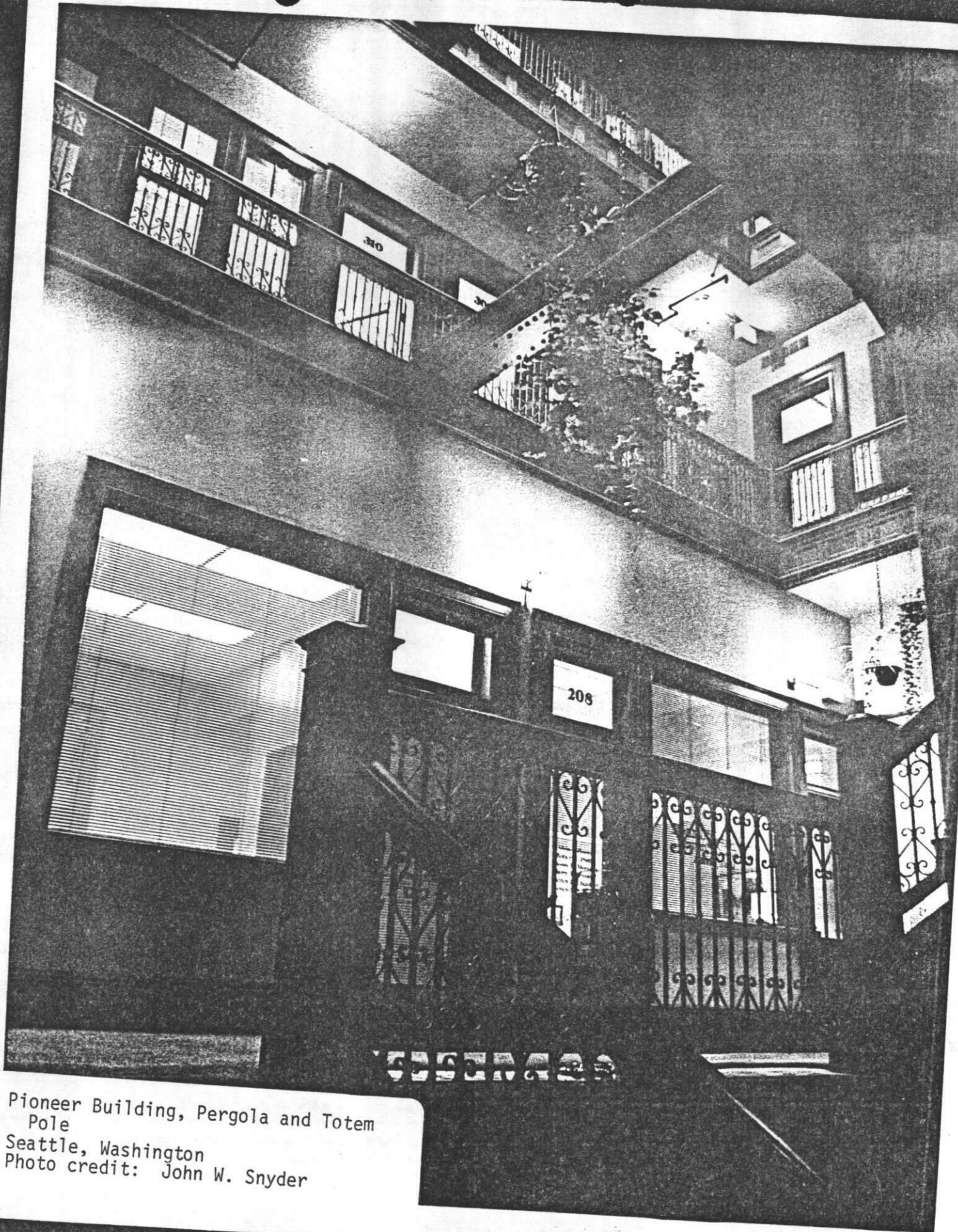


Pioneer Building, Pergola and Totem  
Pole  
Seattle, Washington  
Photo credit: John W. Snyder



Pioneer Building, Pergola and Totem  
Pole  
Seattle, Washington  
Photo credit: John W. Snyder





Pioneer Building, Pergola and Totem  
Pole  
Seattle, Washington  
Photo credit: John W. Snyder

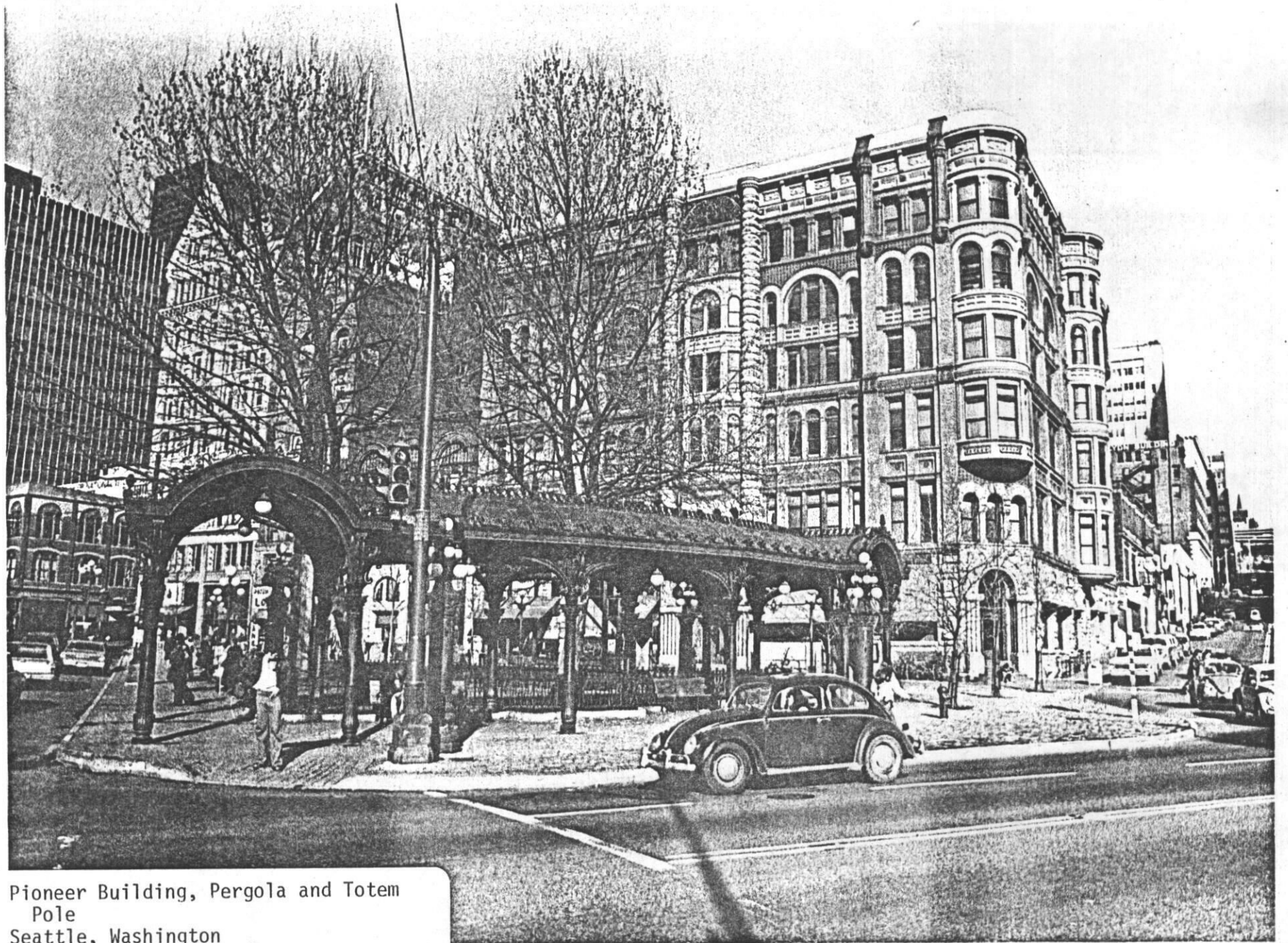


Pioneer Building, Pergola and Totem  
Pole  
Seattle, Washington  
Photo credit: John W. Snyder





Pioneer Building, Pergola and Totem Pole  
Seattle, Washington  
Photo credit: Seattle Office of Urban Conservation



Pioneer Building, Pergola and Totem  
Pole  
Seattle, Washington  
Photo credit: John W. Snyder





Pioneer Building

Seattle, Washington  
photo credit: NPS, Charles Snell



## Iron Pergola and Totem Pole

**26** In the heart of Pioneer Square, the land from which Seattle's industrial base grew, stand the Iron Pergola and the Tlingit Indian Totem Pole. This property originally hosted the city's first mill, built in 1853 by Henry Yesler. A massive street-straightening project in the 1880s led the city to condemn the land, which it then turned into a public square. The Totem Pole first appeared in 1899, after members of the Chamber of Commerce, vacationing in Alaska, stole it from Tlingit Indians. The men gave the object to the city as a gift, but the tribe justly sued for its return and \$20,000 in damages. The courts found the men guilty of theft but fined them only \$500 and allowed the city to retain ownership. In 1938, the pieces that remained after vandals set the Totem Pole on fire were sent back to Alaska, where Tlingit craftsman graciously carved a reproduction. The new pole was soon dedicated, with tribal blessings, at a Potlatch celebration and has since remained unharmed on Pioneer Square. It now stands as symbol of the complicated relationship between American Indians and European Americans. Nearby is the elaborate Iron Pergola, which began in 1906 as a stop for the Yesler and James Street Cable Car Company. Designed by Seattle architect Julian Everett (whose other work included the Leamington Hotel and Apartments), today the Victorian-style structure serves a more recreational purpose by providing shade for visitors to one of the city's most popular public places. A 1972 restoration returned the Iron Pergola to its former elegance, and it remains one of the most memorable features of this historic area.

*The Iron Pergola and the Tlingit Indian Totem Pole are located at Pioneer Square, at the intersection of First Avenue and Yesler Way. The structures and the park are open to the public. Pioneer Square is owned and maintained by the Seattle Park Department.*



*Historic photograph courtesy of Seattle Engineering Department*



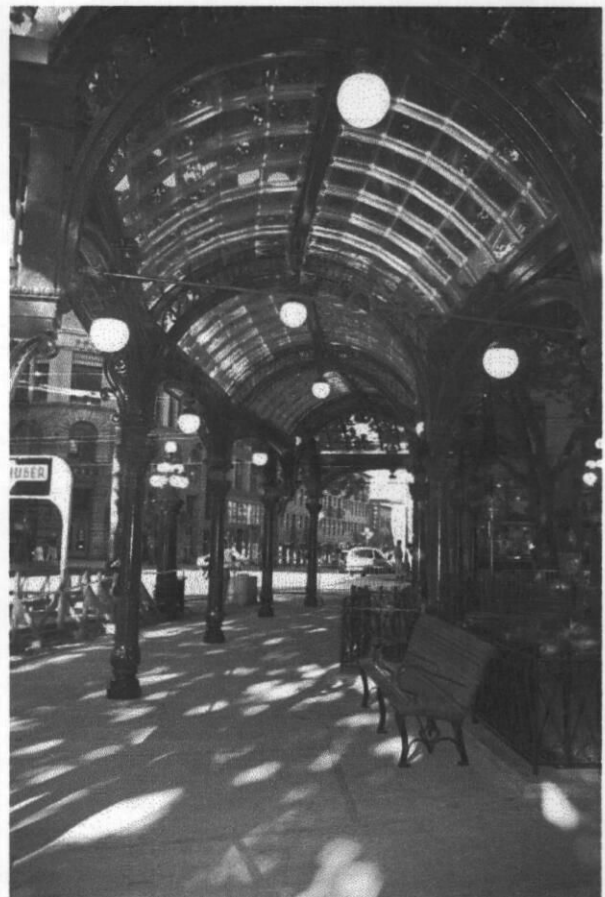
*Photograph courtesy of Seattle Urban Conservation Division.*

[Previous Site](#) | [Next Site](#) | [Downtown Map](#) | [Seattle Map](#) | [Seattle Itinerary Home](#)

STATE OF WASHINGTON HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER'S  
THIRTEENTH ANNUAL AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT  
IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

March 7, 2003

Pioneer Square Pergola



rwaa

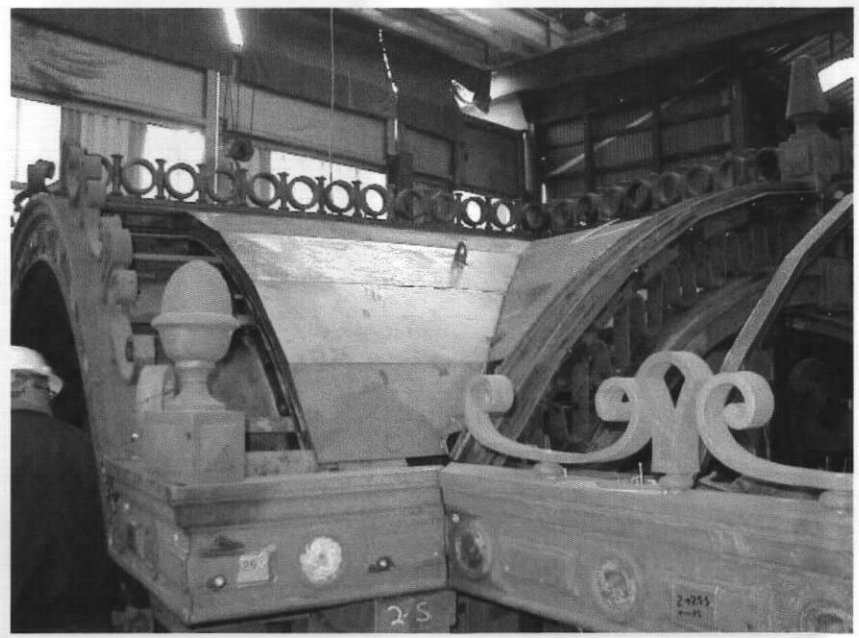
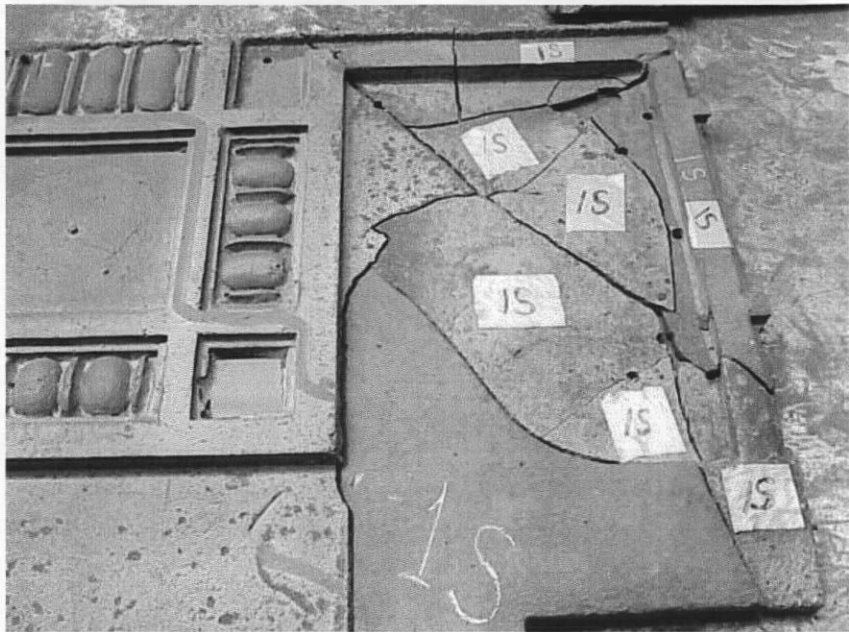
**Ron Wright & Associates / Architects, PS**

1932 First Avenue, Suite 616 Seattle, Washington 98101















RENEE C. BYER / P-I

Larry Henderson, a hazardous-material technician working for the Department of Parks and Recreation's environmental services, takes samples of metal from the pergola yesterday to test for asbestos and other substances.

# Remnant may be gone next week

BY KERY MURAKAMI  
P-I reporter

Like on most days in the past seven years, Penny Truitt led her Underground Tour group through Pioneer Square.

And because old habits die hard, they stopped yesterday in front of the pergola — even though it lay fenced off in a heap of iron and cracked glass.

Most of the massive cast-iron canopy continued to lie where it fell Monday when

a truck clipped it, destroying the glass-topped structure that had stood for 90 years.

Just as she has done before, Truitt explained to the group that the pergola was built on restrooms.

"I'm very sad about it," she said of the icon's destruction. "It was one of my favorite parts of the tour."

Seattle's sorrow over its fallen landmark also lingered in messages collected in a

book at the Underground Tour, as well as on the impromptu shrine left on a wire fence separating the pergola from its public.

There appeared a wreath of holly, a bunch of tulips, a portrait of the pergola in its prime and black ribbons.

But as early as next week, the pergola may be gone. City officials don't know how much of it will ever come back.

City park Superintendent Ken Bounds

said the city yesterday authorized a contractor, Seidelhuber Iron & Bronze Works, to begin planning how to carry the wreckage away — leaving the Chief Seattle statue standing alone.

Bounds said the pieces probably will be removed early next week. Yesterday, the city began testing the pergola for lead-based paint and asbestos, which will dictate how the pieces will be moved.

SEE PERGOLA, B3

## PERGOLA: 'Our intent is to rebuild it as faithfully as possible'

FROM B1

"One question is when we'll do it. We'll probably need a crane, but we won't want to shut down a busy downtown street in the middle of the day," Bounds said.

Once it is moved, park spokeswoman Dewey Potter said, the city must decide whether the pergola can be restored.

"Our intent is to rebuild it as faithfully as possible. Hopefully, we can reuse the ornamental pieces and the glass," Potter said.

He did not know how much a restoration would cost.

The pergola gets another visitor

this morning, when the executive director for Xpress Enterprises, whose driver knocked over the landmark, is expected to survey the damage.

The official, Dave Parker, called Mayor Paul Schell on Tuesday to apologize and accept full responsibility.

Most of the messages the Underground Tour is collecting for Schell urged the mayor to restore the landmark.

"Would Paris restore (the Eiffel Tower)? You bet," wrote Anita of Seattle.

P-I reporter Kery Murakami can be reached at 206-448-8029 or kerymurakami@seattle-pi.com

Seattle P.I.  
Jan 18, 2001



# City needs the pergola back

## Symbol deserves restoration

When the Pioneer Square pergola crashed to the ground this week, the hearts of many longtime Seattle residents fell with it.

It wasn't just a sad sight. The 91-year-old structure's collapse was an emotional blow to anyone who has come to love the city for its history and character. The pergola represents Seattle's pre-tech personality as much as anything humans have built here.

When we want visitors to understand Seattle, we send them to Pioneer Square and the Pike Market — a neighborhood and an institution that have endured with their most-attractive qualities largely intact.

The glass-and-cast-iron pergola serves hardly any practical purpose but providing a bit of shelter. Yet it suggests — perhaps a bit too romantically, given its origin as the entrance to a public restroom — the optimism of an emerging city. It's a familiar and comforting landmark, a cultural reference point so recognizable that its toppling became a national story.

*More than anything else the pergola is the symbolic heart of a city grown sleek and rather full of itself.*

▼ Forgive us the dopey sentimentality, but there aren't that many opportunities these days for dopey

sentimentality about the city. Growth and opportunity occupy our civic agendas, and the new monuments seem not to inspire. Maybe they need 90 years to grow on us, but time hasn't helped any of the existing city and county buildings.

So we were a bit concerned when Seattle Mayor Paul Schell at first suggested that if the pergola can't be restored or replicated, something else might be created to mark the city's birthplace — another "landmark."

"There's going to be something here that symbolizes Pioneer Square," the mayor was quoted as saying.

A day later we were relieved by the mayor's promise that the pergola would be restored. After all, what could possibly symbolize Pioneer Square more eloquently than its original structures?

Community support will be important in rebuilding the pergola as the stylish canopy we've come to love. More than anything else the pergola is the symbolic heart of a city grown sleek and rather full of itself. That's why it's so important that the pergola be restored to its place and appearance. Anything other than the original design just won't be true to Seattle's heritage.

— DONALD R. NELSON

Puget Sound Business Journal  
Jan. 22, 2001

# Rebuilding a shattered Seattle landmark

By Peyton Whitely  
SEATTLE TIMES

SEATTLE — In the industrial part of the city, an archeological-like restoration is taking place. It's one of the most unusual jobs ever done in the Pacific Northwest, and perhaps the country: repairing the Pioneer Square pergola, piece by broken piece.

The pergola, a famous Seattle landmark and meeting spot, was flattened in January when an 18-wheel truck making a sharp turn

rammed into it. A Victorian-style, iron-and-glass structure, about 60 feet long and 16 feet high, the pergola was built in 1909 as a cable-car stop and a grand entrance to an underground restroom that was abandoned and sealed off decades later.

Now the pergola is being put back together in a metalworking building at Seidelhuber Iron & Bronze Works, where its roof is stretched across the floor on temporary wooden supports. The ac-

tivity is reminiscent of a scene from an Indiana Jones movie, with workers trying to piece back thousands of chunks that broke off the central structure.

The work is being done without the benefit of original plans. Instead, workers are using old drawings and other documents to guide them. While some of the 1909 documents do exist and were used in a 1972 restoration, they are not numbered.

"There are no measurements at

all," said the company's president, Heidi Seidelhuber. "It's probably the most unusual thing we've ever done."

Seidelhuber said she is about a third of the way done drafting new designs from the old documents. She also plans to install a complex new steel skeleton inside the old structure, forming an invisible support system that will allow it to withstand forces such as an earthquake, or maybe another truck.

If work progresses well, the pergola should be back in shape by Christmas.

That the pergola can be restored at all is something of a wonder.

"It was almost put together like a carpenter would do it," Seidelhuber said, except that the individual pieces were formed of cast iron, not wood. Almost no two pieces are alike, and the columns are different heights.

"It goes around a corner, but it does not go around in any regular fashion," Seidelhuber said, showing how a metal piece would be part of a cornice. "It almost defies the modern mind."

After the accident, thousands of pieces were collected, put into buckets, and painstakingly matched to individual areas of damage. Seidelhuber showed how a particular piece could be welded seamlessly back into position.

Seidelhuber said she doesn't know how much the work will cost. The project is being paid for by a trucking-company insurance carrier; original estimates put it above \$1 million.

The progress is good news in the Pioneer Square area, which has been beset in recent months by everything from riots during Mardi Gras celebrations in February to an earthquake days later.

"We're excited and committed to getting it back up," the deputy mayor, Chuck Clarke, said at a recent briefing on plans to restore the pergola.

"This is a community you can knock down, and it gets right back up again," said City Councilman Richard Conlin.



Heidi Seidelhuber, contractor for rebuilding the Pioneer Square pergola, called the accident that took down the 1909 structure "a blessing in disguise." Photo by Sam Bennett

## An extra-strength Pergola

By SAM BENNETT  
Journal Staff Reporter

Twenty months after it crashed to the ground, the Pioneer Square pergola stands stronger than ever.

"It will hit back this time," said Dan Johnson, attesting to the pergola's ability to withstand another strike from a truck or wayward motorist.

On Saturday, fencing around the First and Yesler landmark will be removed and the pergola re-opened in a 10 a.m. ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Funding for the \$3.8 million project came from insurance companies Liberty Mutual and AIG.

They insured the U.S. Xpress Enterprises truck that clipped a corner of the pergola in January 2001 and brought it down. The new structure exceeds Federal Emergency Management Agency seismic guidelines and conforms to the seismic standard in the city's 1997 building code.

Johnson, the reconstruction project manager with Seattle Parks and Recreation, said doing a test assembly at Seidelhuber Iron & Bronze Works made final assembly on-site much smoother.

"I can just imagine if we had to sit there with a crane blocking traffic in Pioneer Square for months" as pieces were erected

and removed for adjustments, he said.

Instead, Heidi Seidelhuber and husband, Terry Seaman, catalogued hundreds of broken pieces and intact parts, as Seidelhuber began the painstaking process of creating 20 as-built drawings and 70 pages of detailed reassembly drawings.

At 16 feet tall and 60 feet long, with 12 columns and 16 arches, the finished product weighs in at 100,000 pounds — 40,000 more than its 1909 predecessor.

The additional 40,000 pounds of continuous steel serve as a new inner skeleton, as designed by Skilling Ward Magnusson Barkshire, with Ron Wright and Associates/Architects. The original cast iron is attached as cladding. By using a special lid over the historic underground "comfort station," the new design transfers loads from the pergola horizontally. This avoids the need for support columns in the restrooms, which may someday be renovated.

The original pergola columns were held down with .75-inch bolts. Seidelhuber believes one of the columns had been struck by a vehicle, after she discovered a watermelon-size chunk had been taken out and replaced with concrete and debris.

The Xpress truck collapsed the structure by pulling the corner down and twisting its center of gravity. Before that collision, repairs to the cast iron were dif-

ficult because the cast iron provided the structural support.

Structurally speaking, the collapse was "a gift in disguise," she said.

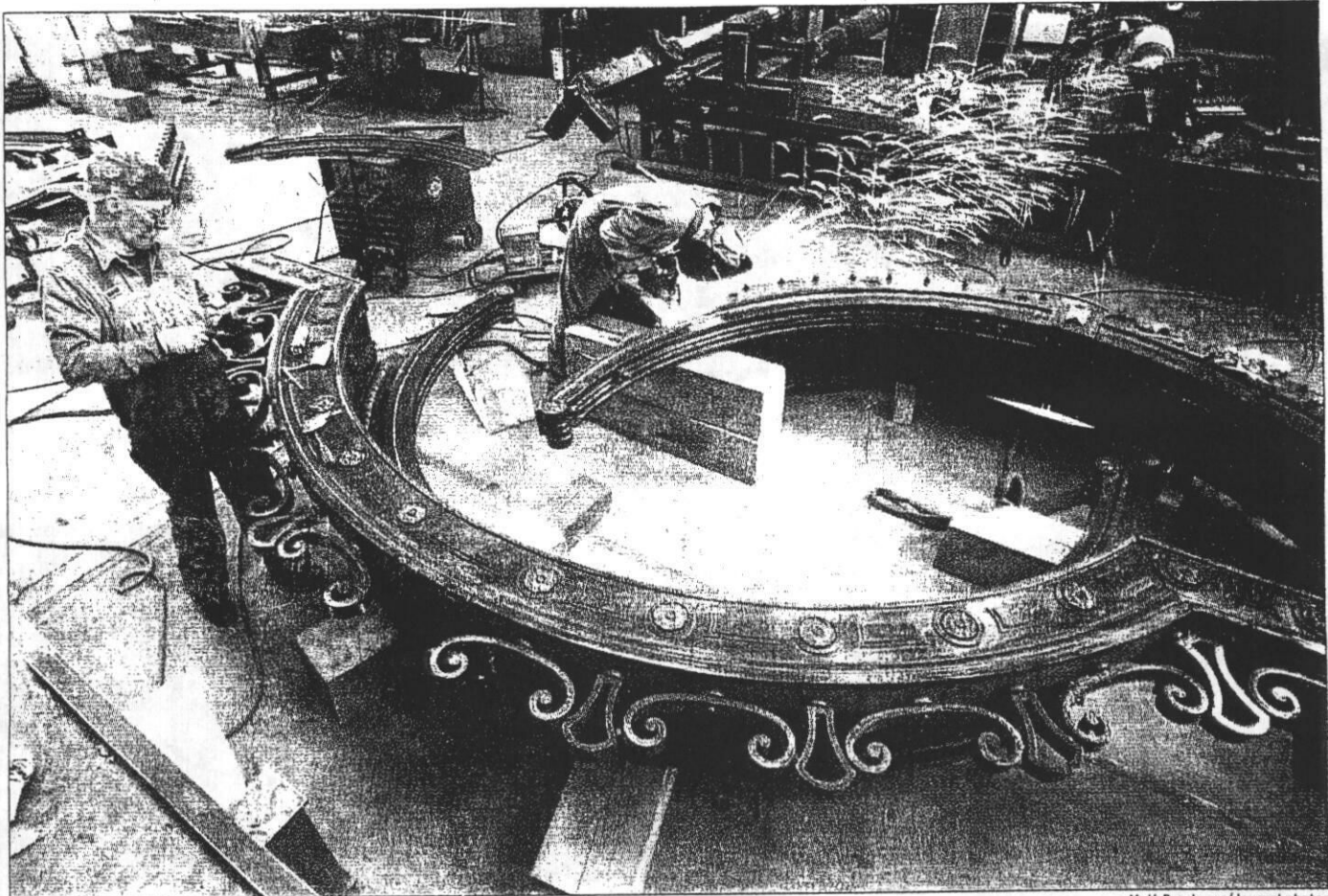
From Wright's perspective, the challenge for the rebuild was ensuring Seidelhuber's restoration techniques complied with National Park Service Standards — because the pergola is on the National Historic Landmark register.

Expecting to sign-off on the building today, Wright said he was glad to finally have the project finished. "We acted as architects, but we were more the glue that held everybody together."

The players were many, including Seidelhuber Iron & Bronze, general contractor; Anthony Construction, on-site assembly supervisor; Corona Steel Erectors, erectors; Long Painting, painting; Queen City Sheet Metal and Roofing, copper flashing; Herzog Glass, glazer; Pan Geo, geotechnical engineer; Mayes Testing Engineers, on-site inspection; Certified Inspection, in-shop inspection; Ballard Brass, castings; Nordby Woodwork, casting patterns; Ness Crane, Nelson Trucking; Nassau Rockmount, cast-iron welding technology and materials; Alaskan Copper & Brass, copper roofing; Dulux, Devco paint systems supplier; and Bush Roed & Hitchings, surveyor.



# Pergola piece by piece



Matt Brashears/Journal photos

Shop ironworkers Sam Peterson of Pacific, left, and Vasiliy Melguy of Federal Way Bronze Works in Seattle on Thursday. The pergola will be transported to Pioneer Square on June 17 for reassembly.

## *Hobart couple bet their home they could rebuild landmark*

By Dean A. Radford  
Journal Reporter

SEATTLE — Heidi Seidelhuber and Terry Seaman bet their home and wedding rings that they could put Seattle's historic pergola back together again.

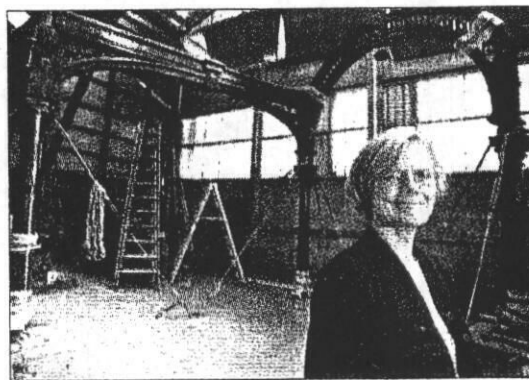
At times during the last 18 months, it seemed the Hobart couple would lose that bet.

"I felt tremendously at risk," Seidelhuber said. "There were times when I felt we were building a Frankenstein."

But starting June 17, the pergola, the grand entrance to a one-time underground bathroom, will rise in Pioneer Square, painstakingly reassembled piece by piece after a semi-truck ripped it from its moorings in January 2001.

The work will take weeks because of the intricate task of reassembling the pergola's 16 arches on-site and installing a new glass roof and electrical system.

The family-run Seidelhuber Iron and Brass Works of south Seattle seemed like the log-



'I felt tremendously at risk. There were times when I felt we were building a Frankenstein.'

SEIDELHUBER IRON AND BRASS WORKS PRESIDENT HEIDI SEIDELHUBER, LEFT, STANDING IN FRONT OF A PORTION OF THE PERGOLA

ical choice to restore the landmark at the corner of First Avenue South and Yesler Way. It had taken on the task once before, in 1972.

Seidelhuber is the granddaughter of company founder Frank J. Seidelhuber. She is now the president and Seaman, her husband of 33 years, is vice president. Together, they

are well-known community activists in the Maple Valley area.

The company that insures the trucking company is paying the cost of the \$3.4 million renovation, a far cry from the early estimate of about \$1 million.

# Pergola

CONTINUED FROM A1

But no one knew then what Seidelhuber knows now. She and her husband took a leap of faith — using their home and their possessions as collateral for a performance bond that guarantees they could do the job.

The darkest moment came about two weeks ago, when large sections of the pergola just didn't want to go together.

She hired Corona Steel Erectors of Tacoma to assemble the pergola in her shop and finally at Pioneer Square.

The structure is held in place by strong wires attached to the shop's concrete floor.

She has re-created the uneven nature of Pioneer Square's brickwork and concrete with short wooden stands. Still the pergola, made at a time when design standards were somewhat lax, defied Seidelhuber.

"They (Corona) figured out stuff and we figured out stuff," she said. "We were awfully deep into that project to abandon it."

A lot of "figuring out" was needed to put this Humpty Dumpty together again. One long-time employee quit in frustration.

It was Seaman who got the company the job, but it fell to Seidelhuber to return the pergola to its former glory.

"I was saying, 'no, no, no, no,'" she said. "I didn't want something high profile. My job is the nuts and bolts."

She said yes, and now almost 18 months later she and her crew and subcontractors are about ready to unveil a quake-resistant (and hopefully truck-resistant) pergola.

Her attention to detail is what got the job done. But before she could put the pergola back together again, she had to figure out how it was put together in the first place nearly 95 years ago.

The result was 20 as-built drawings made from clues from the broken pieces and the parts of the pergola that remained intact. From those she did 70 pages of detailed drawings showing how to reassemble even the most minute part of the pergola.

She catalogued hundreds, if not thousands of broken pieces and parts that remained intact. She and her crews used more than 99 percent of pieces in the reconstruction.

She couldn't just toss a stray ornament into the trash. Rules for historic preservation require an exact replication. She had to cast some new work was monitored closely

by the insurance company paying for the work. That ended when the company realized that too many cooks would spoil the renovation.

"You needed one human being who had the big picture," she said. Because of that, there was a time the city of Seattle didn't want a bus to hit her.

Now, with her job nearly done and her wedding ring safe, "I can be hit by a bus and it (the pergola) will still go up," Seidelhuber said.

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# Rebuilt pergola 'a gift' to history and civic pride

Many say driver who collapsed it did Seattle a favor

BY BOBBI NODELL  
Seattle Times staff reporter

Pergola pride was bursting yesterday as hundreds gathered to celebrate the restoration of the historic cast- and wrought-iron structure in Pioneer Square that was flattened 19 months ago by an errant truck driver.

Hundreds of companies and workers were involved in the complicated task of rebuilding the pergola, a job many thought would be impossible. Dozens of laborers joined the celebration as



GREG GILBERT / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Heidi Seidelhuber, whose company led the reconstruction of the Pioneer Square pergola, celebrates with hundreds of others yesterday.

PLEASE SEE *Pergola* ON B 6

Seattle Times Aug 18, 2002

# Rebuilt pergola called gift in disguise to city

## PERGOLA

CONTINUED FROM B 1

The public marveled at the shiny new structure with a bright copper roof and a Dixieland band played "The Ballad of the Pergola."

"This really is a happy day for the city in more ways than one," said Seattle City Council President Peter Steinbrueck. He called the pergola a symbol of rejuvenation in an area of the city beaten down by a string of disasters in 2001, including the Nisqually earthquake and a death during Mardi Gras celebrations.

The pergola, rebuilt at a cost of \$3.9 million, is much stronger than before. The structure has a 40,000-pound steel skeleton and the base is welded to steel plates embedded in the ground.

Now if a truck hits the structure, it could damage the ornate cast- and wrought-iron, but the steel structure will remain in place, so repairs will be easier.

Many of the laborers and dignitaries celebrating the restoration of the pergola yesterday said the truck driver did Seattle a favor.

The structure, built in 1909, probably would have collapsed in the earthquake just a month later, noted Seattle City Councilwoman Jan Drago.

The columns holding up the pergola were hollow and held in place by just four screws three-eighths of an inch in diameter, said Heidi Seidelhuber, whose firm, Seidelhuber Iron & Bronze Works, reconstructed the buckets of shards.

"The accident will have been a gift in disguise to the city if we can make the pergola survive longer because of the work we have done," she said.

Seidelhuber said she invited officials at the truck driver's company, U.S. Xpress Enterprises of Chattanooga, Tenn., to the celebration. They declined.

"We wanted them to come," she said. "We all have a fondness for them."

Seidelhuber said the trucking company and its insurance company, Liberty Mutual, stepped forward right away to pay for a replacement. She said the company also showed a lot of humanity to its inexperienced truck driver, Pete Benard, whose 18-wheeler hit the pergola early in the morning of Jan. 15, 2001.

Seidelhuber said she sent U.S. Xpress copper rosettes like the ones adorning the pergola and asked the company to give one to Benard.

For the city, the rebuilding of the pergola became a tribute to civic pride and teamwork. There were so many pieces of cast iron that they could cover Pioneer Square Park, said Seidelhuber. Her firm put the pieces together and cast what they couldn't recover.

Doug Ausink of Queen City Sheet Metal and Roofing said he remembered driving by the wreckage and saying, "I pity who has to fix that thing."

His company, which did the restoration of the pergola in 1972, ended up playing a big part in the effort by constructing the complicated copper roof.

At Seidelhuber's foundry, 14 workers were pulling 10-hour days to get the mammoth job done. The lead ironworker, Bob Fertado, was set to retire the week the pergola came down, but he postponed his retirement and came back after open-heart surgery to work on the project.

A shop class at Seattle's Ingraham High School donated cast-iron rosettes they made at a foundry run by farmer John Bitney. The rosettes were handed out at the celebration.

Anthony Construction, Corona Steel Erectors, Wright, Long Painting, Nassau Rockmount, Ballard Brass, Long Painting, Ron Wright and Associates, and Herzog Glass were also key players.

Many of the workers put their name on a copper plaque that's welded into the structure and others put their names or tools into a time capsule embedded in the pergola.

The onlookers were impressed. Ivanka Legat, 56, dressed in turn-of-the-century clothes for the occasion.

"I think they did an excellent job," she said. "I come from Europe and I like preserving. Seattle doesn't have many landmarks."

The pergola was built to shelter fancy underground comfort stations to accommodate the influx of out-of-town visitors for the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, the city's first big international fair. The restrooms still exist but have been sealed off. The structure is an internationally known Seattle landmark.

Longtime Seattle resident Meredith Snyder drove in from Maltby, Snohomish County, to show her support.

"I love the city, and this part still feels like Seattle to me," she said.

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