

University of Washington
Ethnic Cultural Center

Historic Resources Addendum
3931 Brooklyn Avenue NE, Seattle, WA
January 2009

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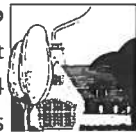


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University of Washington Ethnic Cultural Center Historic Resources

JANUARY 2009

1. INTRODUCTION

This Historic Resources Addendum provides information regarding the architectural design and historical significance of the Ethnic Cultural Center. The building is located at 3931 Brooklyn Avenue NE on the Seattle Campus of the University of Washington. The Johnson Partnership prepared this report at the request of the University of Washington's Capital Projects Office. *See Figures 1-2.*

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Formation of the Office of Minority Affairs and Educational Outreach Program

The University of Washington's Ethnic Cultural Center was built in 1970 to house the various programs associated with the University's new Educational Outreach Program. The Educational Outreach Program was established in 1968, in response to community pressure to increase minority enrollment and ethnic and cultural awareness at the University.¹

Prior to 1968, on-campus political demonstrations were a rarity at the University, with only five incidents noted between 1934 and 1967. In 1968, however, 313 incidents were noted, followed by 197 in 1969, and 230 in 1970, after which on-campus protest declined drastically. Only 19 protests were noted at the University in 1971, and 17 in 1972.²

These on-campus student-led protests generally paralleled national opposition movements in the mid-to-late 1960s focusing on increasing civil rights for African-American groups, growing opposition to the Viet Nam War and its associated military draft; and support for striking California grape harvesters, many of whom were Mexican-Americans. American college campuses became centers of leftist dissent as distrust of basic governmental agencies and traditional institutions grew. University of Washington students became involved in activist organizations such as a local branch of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), as well as forming the University of Washington Black Student Union (BSU).³

In 1968, there were only 63 African-Americans enrolled at the University of Washington out of a total of approximately 32,000 students. This disparity prompted 60 BSU protestors, led by E.J. Brisker, to stage a four-hour sit-in at the University's Administration Building on May 20, 1968, where University President Charles Odegaard and the Faculty Senate executives were then meeting. The students demanded significant changes to University policy concerning increasing opportunities for learning to all Washington State citizens, particularly relating to increased student diversity. Odegaard invited the group to present their concerns to the Faculty Senate on May 23. At that meeting the BSU formally requested the Senate's support in three main areas:

1. "In the area of recruitment of non-white students.
2. The development of programs, i.e., remedial and tutorial, that will aid newly recruited students in making the difficult transition to university life.
3. ...the development of a Black Studies Curriculum."⁴

¹ *The Medium*, "Ethnic Cultural Center," Seattle, WA: University of Washington, February 10, 1972, p. 1.

² University of Washington, Special Collections Card Catalog Periodical Index. After increasing violence, both off and on campuses, dissent diminished due to ideological disharmony within the ranks of protestors, decreasing popular support for further military involvement in Vietnam, and acceptance of new governmental and institutional programs that addressed the concerns of farm workers and African-Americans.

³ Walt Crowley, *Rites of Passage: a Memoir of the Sixties in Seattle* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1995), pp. 46, 114-115.

⁴ Charles E. Odegaard, *A Pilgrimage through Universities* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1999), p. 176.

Also requested were more African-American staff, professors, counselors, and administrators, as well as the appointment of an African-American to every policy-making body on campus.⁵

One of the University of Washington's steps to address these concerns was the development of the Special Education Program, which later became the Office of Minority Affairs. Initial program enrollment was 247 minority and disadvantaged students. Over the years the Outreach Program developed a wide range of services to under-represented and educationally and economically disenfranchised university students.

In 1970, President Odgaard appointed Samuel Kelly as Vice-President for Minority Affairs and program administrator. Kelly, an African-American, had risen through the ranks of the United States Army from Private to Colonel, along the way obtaining a B.S. in Education from Virginia State University in 1959, and an M.A. in History from Marshall University in 1963. During his tenure as an administrator he completed his Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration at the University of Washington and was also appointed to the faculty of the College of Education.⁶

In November of 1970, the University's Board of Regents approved the estimated construction cost of \$239,000 for the Ethnic Cultural Center.⁷ When completed in 1972, it was thought to be the first center constructed by an American University that grouped minority organizations in one building.⁸ The center was intended to establish a physical location where the four major ethnic groups enrolled in the Educational Outreach Program—African-Americans (BSU), Hispanics (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán, MECHA), Asians (Coalition for Equality), and Native Americans (American Indian Student Association, AISA)—could develop relationships and understanding of their different backgrounds. It was as well a location where the predominately white population could learn about their fellow students.⁹ The new building featured four large meeting rooms, 22 study and tutorial rooms, a small library, three snack kitchens, two recreation rooms, and a conference room.¹⁰

By 1972, the program had 28 graduates, and over 1,400 enrolled. At that time Kelly noted:

Indeed, there is no doubt in my mind that one of the major escapes from the barrio, ghetto, or reservation is through educational opportunity in an effort to break the tragic cycle built upon deprivation and dehumanization of a segment of our society. I fervently believe that education is one of the ways to provide for upward mobility.¹¹

In the fall of 2008, the University of Washington had nearly 13,000 minority students out of a total enrollment of 41,405 graduate and undergraduate students.¹² Over 4,500 students benefit from the wide range of services offered through the Office of Minority Affairs Educational Opportunity Program. The Ethnic Cultural Center serves as a meeting area for over 26 student groups.¹³

Building Architect

The University of Washington's Ethnic Cultural Center (1970-72) was designed by Benjamin F. M'Adoo Jr., the first African-American architect to have an ongoing practice in Washington State. M'Adoo also designed the University's Ethnic Cultural Center Theater building (1972) and the Educational Outreach

⁵ Emile Pitre and Verlaine Keith, "In Pursuit of Social Justice" [DVD] (Seattle, WA: UW TV, 2005).

⁶ Black Past, "Dr. Samuel Kelly, Class of 1971: Soldier, Educator, Advocate," BlackPast.org, p. 1. <http://www.blackpast.org/?q=you/dr-samuel-kelly-class-1971-soldier-educator-advocate>, accessed January 23, 2009.

⁷ Dick Dykeman, "Regents approve Center," *University of Washington Daily*, November 24, 1970, p. 8.

⁸ *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, "Ethnic Center For Minority Students Due," August 18, 1971, p. S9.

⁹ *University of Washington Daily*, "Ethnic Cultural Center: welcome mat is out," August 12, 1971, p. 24.

¹⁰ Dykeman, p. 8.

¹¹ *The Medium*, "Ethnic Cultural Center," pp. 8B-9B.

¹² Office of Registrar, "Quick Stats-Seattle Campus, Autumn 2008-Summer 2009," p. 1 (Seattle, WA: University of Washington). <http://depts.washington.edu/reptreq/reports/quick-stats.pdf>, accessed January 21, 2009.

¹³ Office of Minority Affairs, "ECC/T Organizations," p. 1 (Seattle, WA: University of Washington). <http://depts.washington.edu/ecc/orgdirect.html>, accessed January 21, 2009.

Program Instructional Center (1972), located near the Ethnic Cultural Center.¹⁴ McAdoo also completed major renovation projects for the University at Gowen Hall, Smith Hall, Raitt Hall, and Kane Hall.¹⁵

McAdoo was born in Pasadena, California, on October 29, 1920. After attending Pasadena City College and the University of Southern California, McAdoo transferred to the University of Washington in 1944, and graduated from the School of Architecture in 1946. McAdoo's residential designs were published several times as the *Seattle Times*/AIA Home of the Month, beginning with the William Moorhouse residence in July 1949. This was followed by recognition of the John P. Browning residence (1947, Seattle), the Donald Hochberg residence (1954, Seattle), the Kenneth Ota residence (1956, Seattle), the George H. Hage residence (1956, Seattle), and the Herbert Rivkin residence (1955, Mercer Island). Possibly the most recognized work of McAdoo's early career was his own residence at 17803 28th Avenue S, Bothell, a melding of modernism and regionalism.¹⁶ See *Figures 3-5*.

Public service was also an important part of McAdoo's professional and personal life. He served for four years as the Seattle area president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and also gave a weekly radio broadcast on social issues in the mid-1960s.¹⁷ He was active in the Democratic Party and accepted a 1961 appointment as administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (AID) in Jamaica.¹⁸ Upon return to the United States he was involved with the creation of the Latin American Division of the AID before he moved to the General Services Administration's Public Building Service (GSA).¹⁹ While at the GSA, he worked on the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the National Fisheries Center and Aquarium.²⁰

Returning to Seattle in 1964, he worked in the Auburn office of the GSA, where he supervised the design of federal buildings in the Northwest. McAdoo returned to full-time private practice in the late 1960s. Larger architectural commissions completed by McAdoo include the King Country Central Blood Bank (1970, Tukwila), Seattle First National Branch Bank (1970, Wedgwood Neighborhood, a prototype that was also used at Rainier Beach in Seattle and Lake Hills in Bellevue), Ethnic Cultural Center, Seattle (1970-72), Fire Station No. 29 (1972, Seattle), and the Queen Anne Forward Thrust Swimming Pool (1974-78, Seattle).²¹ Some of his other clients included the Boeing Company, the Port of Seattle, Pacific Northwest Bell, Seattle City Light, King Country, Rainier Bank, First Interstate Bank, the Group Health Cooperative of Puget Sound, and the University of Washington.²² See *Figures 6-8*.

McAdoo was licensed to practice architecture in Washington, Oregon, Montana, Alaska, and Washington, D.C. He was a member of the American Institute of Architects, the National Organization for Minority Architects, the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, the Architectural Resources Collaborative. He served on the American Institute of Architects' Historic Preservation Committee, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce Board, the Seattle Environmental Review Committee, the King Country Central Blood Bank executive Board, the Walla Walla College Board of Trustees, the Architectural Resources Collaborative, a minority architecture internship program at the University of Washington, and the Society of Military Engineers.²³ McAdoo was named chairman of the Central Contractors Association, a

¹⁴ Gail Fligstein, "A Place To Go Home To At UW," *University of Washington Daily*, September 21, 1971, p. 2.

¹⁵ *Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce*, "Benjamin F. McAdoo Dies," June 22, 1981, p. 1.

¹⁶ Esther Hall Mumford, "Benjamin F. McAdoo, Jr.," in *Shaping Seattle Architecture: A Historical Guide to Architects*, ed. Jeffrey Karl Ochsner (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1994), pp. 264-266; Capital Projects Office, University of Washington, "Ethnic Cultural Center, Unit I for the University of Washington," Benjamin F. McAdoo Jr., December 14, 1970.

¹⁷ *Seattle Times*, "Benjamin McAdoo, Jr., dies; service Monday," June 20, 1981, p. C22.

¹⁸ Mumford, p. 266.

¹⁹ Mumford, p. 266.

²⁰ *Seattle Times*, "Aquarium to be built in Washington, D.C. has roots here," April 2, 1964, p. 18.

²¹ Mumford, pp. 266-269.

²² *Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce*, "Benjamin F. McAdoo Dies," June 22, 1981, p. 1.

²³ *Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce*, p. 1; *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, "Top Architect McAdoo Dies," June 19, 1981, p. C16; *Seattle Times*, "Benjamin McAdoo, Jr., dies; service Monday," June 20, 1981, p. C22.

predominately African-American contractors group, in 1970.²⁴ McAdoo continued his practice until his death on June 18, 1981, at the age of 60.

3. DESCRIPTION OF SITE, LANDSCAPE, AND BUILDING

The subject site is 160 feet north/south and 103 feet east/west, and is located in Seattle's University District at the southwestern intersection of NE 40th Street and Brooklyn Avenue NE. A one-story building is located to the south of the site and a playfield and single-story building lie to the west. The area between the building and the street contains a concrete sidewalk and a planned landscape of grass, shrubs, and mature deciduous trees. The site slopes down approximately ten feet from the northeast corner to the southwest corner. *See Figures 1, 2, 9-12.*

The paragraphs below describe the original building as it was completed in 1970, from drawings prepared by Benjamin F. McAdoo, Jr.

The subject building is a single-story wood-frame building, nearly residential in scale, resting on standard concrete foundation walls and spread footings. The floor is constructed of plywood on 2x wood joists. Above the foundation, the exterior 2 x 4 walls are sheathed in painted cedar siding with battens. All interior walls are wood-framed. The vented roof structure consists of wood trusses and plywood decking. The roughly rectangular building measures approximately 128 feet in the north/south direction and 70 feet in the east/west direction. The exterior walls extend approximately 10 feet 6 inches from floor level to the roof cant strip, except where the exterior walls extend upward an additional 10 feet to face the east/west running clerestories.

The eastern façade of the building was designed as a long strip of wood-sheathed wall, punctuated by two expressed "sawtooth" clerestories roughly centered in the southern and northern building wings, resting on an exposed concrete foundation wall that extends downward to follow the grade as it gently slopes down to the south. The façade is divided into three parts: southern projecting bay, a central recessed entry, and a northern projecting bay. All three sections are punctuated by vertical wood-sash windows configured with a larger vertical fixed panel over an operable awning window. The southern wing has two outer windows and a pair near the center of the wall. The recessed entry contains a bank of five windows south of the recessed French-door entrance, and another pair of windows flanking the entry's northern side. A narrow wood-framed covered walkway projects eastward from the doorway to the sidewalk.

The northern façade has a recessed central patio area flanked by eastern and western projections. Both projecting sections have four vertical wood-sash windows, each with a larger vertical fixed panel over an operable awning window. The recessed wall section has seven of these windows, creating an almost entirely glazed exterior wall. The two large clerestory windows are visible on this façade, each containing five equally-sized openings.

The western façade of the building is similar to the eastern face, although the central wall portion projects, rather than being recessed. The façade has little glazing, using six vertical wood-sash windows of the same pattern as described above. There are also two ancillary entrances: the northernmost exits the building via a door and a metal security gate, and the southernmost provides access to an approximately 8-foot by 12-foot electrical room as well as leading to a crawlspace. The "sawtooth" forms of the clerestories are visible on this façade, reversed from the eastern façade.

The southern façade of the building is nearly the reverse of the northern façade, although the recessed central section encloses a deck, rather than an on-grade patio. The southern roof surfaces of the clerestory structures are visible above the main roof surface.

The plan of the building is organized around a central courtyard open to the sky, measuring approximately 48 feet square. An axis running north to south contains a pair of bathrooms and a kitchen on each end. A game room and deck area are located at the northern and southern ends of this central axis. The four corners of the building contain multi-purpose rooms of slightly varying size (approximately 30 feet x 28 feet), and smaller study rooms and classrooms. The central portion of the building contains two offices and a library

²⁴ *Seattle Times*, "McAdoo heads Central Contractors," Mar 12, 1970, p. A5.

area west of the courtyard. East of the courtyard is the main entrance, a conference room and four office areas. Throughout the building ceiling and interior walls are covered with gypsum board. Interior trim finishes are kept to a minimum with 1x2 vertical-grain (V.G.) fir used as window and door casing, with a 1x4 V.G. fir or rubber base.

Alterations

A 2000-01 remodel, designed by ARC Architects, altered the original plan of the building, enclosed the deck areas to add office space/storage areas, and reconfigured the game rooms to create a storage room on the southern end of the building and office space on the north. The entrance area was modified, increasing and rearranging the adjoining office areas, and increasing transparency at the entrance with commercial-style glass doors and sidelights. The library area was also modified to accommodate a computer lab. The largest change to the building involved adding a monitor and roof over the interior courtyard, allowing circulation to occur sheltered from the elements, and creating additional interior space. Shelving has been arranged around the concrete flooring of the space, leaving the middle open and furnished with couches, tables and chairs. *See Figures 13-16.*

4. CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

The term “character-defining feature” is used to identify the elements that characterize a building and includes such elements as the building’s overall shape, massing, materials, craftsmanship, functional and decorative details, interior proportions, spaces, and attributes, as well as certain aspects relating to its site, landscaping, and overall environment.²⁵ The character-defining features of the building as originally designed include:

- Low horizontality of the exterior walls used in conjunction with a flat roof.
- Vertical cedar siding with a stained finish.
- Uniformity in the use of vertical wood-sash windows, both arranged along exterior wall surfaces in simple compositional form, as well as functionally to light interior spaces.
- Large wood-framed clerestories forming a “sawtooth” wall profile allowing natural light into the significant spaces.
- A narrow projecting covered walkway at the entrance.
- Central open courtyard and a northern recessed patio and southern recessed deck.

Together these features create a feeling of Northwest Contemporary styling in a more residential scale than was characteristic in larger commercial or academic buildings built during the same period. The building also has a sense of modularity characteristic of a Northwest Contemporary building.

5. PHYSICAL INTEGRITY

The standards and criteria found in National Register of Historic Places Bulletins 15 and 39 were used as guidelines in evaluating the integrity of the University of Washington’s Ethnic Cultural Center. The building as originally completed in 1972 fails to meet the criterion for minimum age for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, but the other standards and criteria were used as a baseline for evaluation.²⁶ The remodeled building retains some of its original character-defining features, including:

- Low horizontality of the exterior walls used in conjunction with a flat roof.
- Vertical cedar siding with a stained finish.
- Uniformity in the use of the vertical wood-sash windows, both arranged along exterior wall surfaces in simple compositional form, as well as functionally to light interior spaces. [same comment as above]

²⁵ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, “Architectural Character, Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character,” by Lee E. Nelson, National Register Bulletin, no. 17. 1991, 1998.

²⁶ The building will be eligible for consideration for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 2022.

- Large wood-framed clerestories forming a “sawtooth” wall profile allowing natural light into the significant spaces.

Significant alterations to the building completed in 2001 enclosed the central open courtyard, the northern recessed patio, and southern recessed deck. Additionally, the entry was modified in a manner not consistent with original form or detailing. The changes significantly altered the building in the areas most accessible to the general public, leaving the user with a very different experience of the space. It is important to note that murals prepared by each of the ethnic groups originally associated with the building are still extant in the larger meeting rooms in the four corners of the building.

6. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The University of Washington’s Ethnic Cultural Center is associated with increasing awareness during the late 1960s of the need to address the concerns of ethnic minorities on the University campus, as well as nationally. When the building was completed in 1972, it was considered the first building to house four ethnic groups in one off-campus center. The building was also designed by Benjamin F. M’Adoo Jr., the first African-American architect to have an ongoing practice in Washington State. M’Adoo’s designs typically contained a connection to the site through a physical emphasis of horizontality and a visual connection through a conspicuous amount of glazing. This building is representational of his later work, although other institutional buildings, including the Queen Anne Swimming Pool, may be considered more significant architecturally. M’Adoo is particularly known for his earlier residential designs, including his own residence completed in 1958, or the George H. Hage residence completed in 1956.

The Ethnic Cultural Center’s physical integrity was significantly impacted by alterations completed in 2001. As mentioned above, although while some significant exterior elements, including a low horizontality interrupted by pronounced “sawtooth” clerestories and the vertical wood siding, remain from the original construction, the alterations eliminated a significant amount of the exterior glazing and the northern and southern patio/deck areas, as well as completely modifying the feeling of the entrance. The easy transition from interior areas to exterior garden spaces was a particularly theme that ran through Northwest Contemporary buildings, and M’Adoo’s residential designs all exhibit this characteristic. Altering these features severely impacts the design intent of the building. Further, the elimination of the open central courtyard further diminishes the original design integrity and the feeling of the user experience by again impacting the transition between interior and exterior garden spaces. Without restoration of these features, the building probably lacks sufficient integrity to be considered an outstanding example of Northwest Contemporary architecture or true to the design intent of the architect, Benjamin F. M’Adoo, Jr.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

No recommendations for future action are offered at this time.

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APPENDIX 1

FIGURES

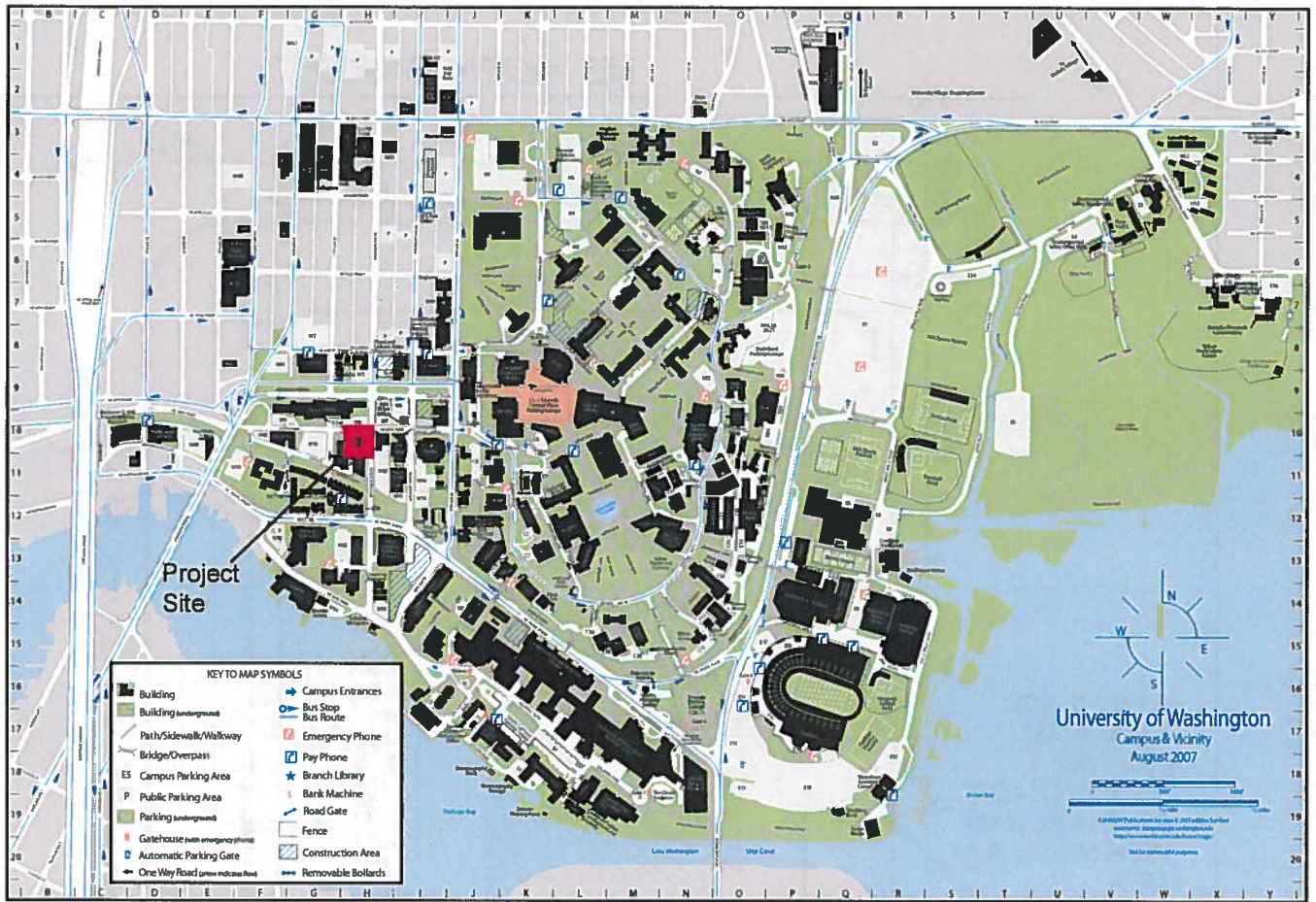


Figure 1 • Location

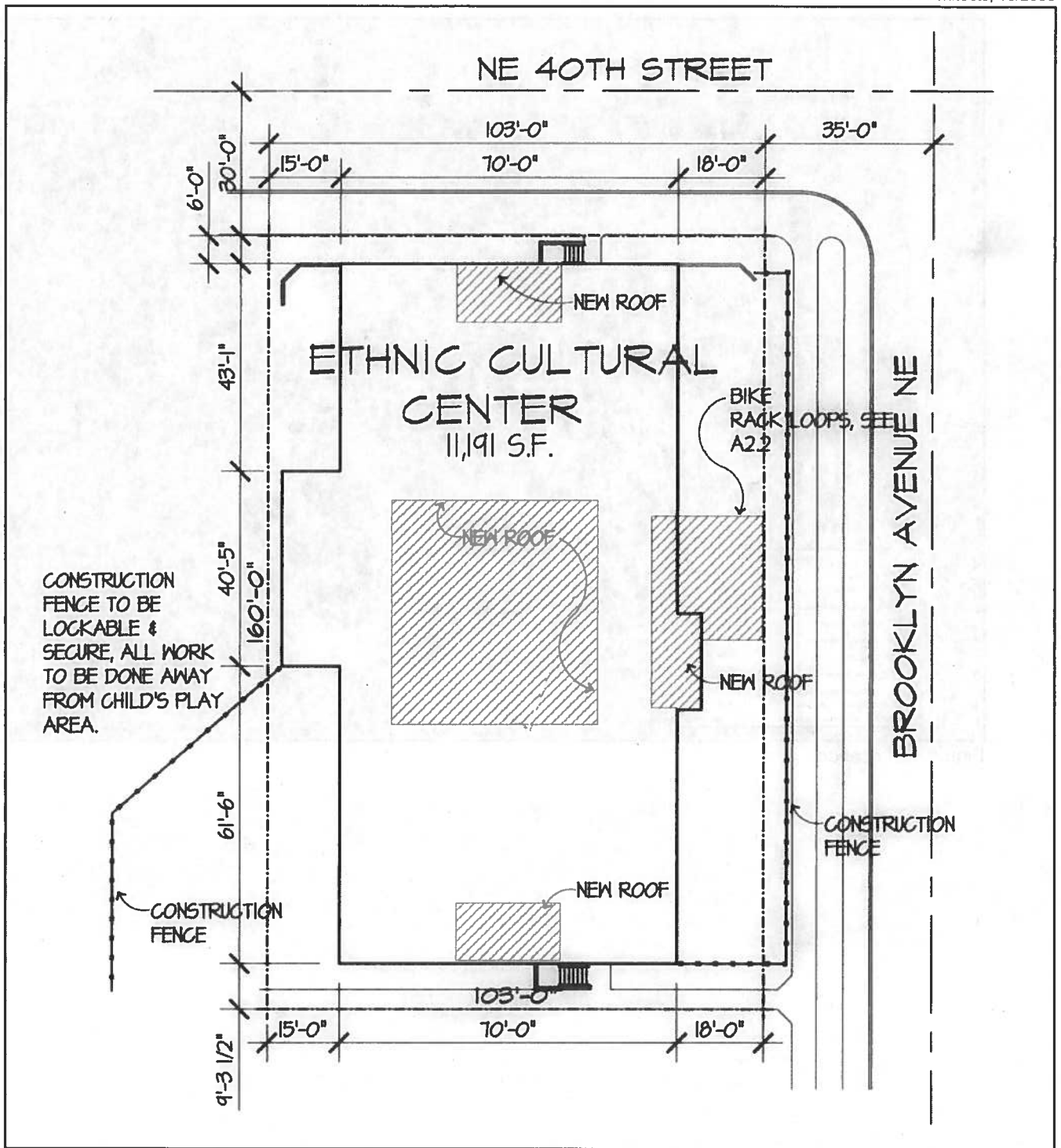


Figure 2 • Site Plan

Scale: 1:30



UW CAUP VRC, Hupy, 1955

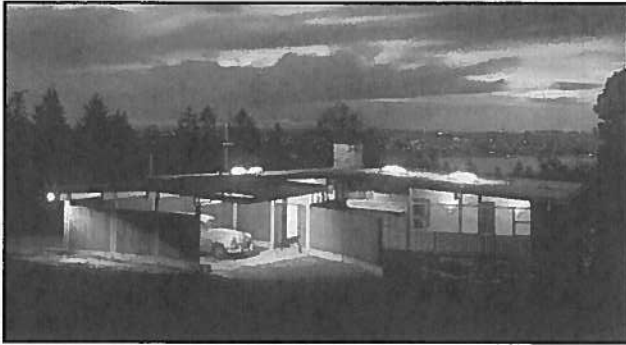


Figure 3 • Herbert Rivkin Residence, B. F. McAdoo (1954)

UW CAUP VRC, Hupy, 1956

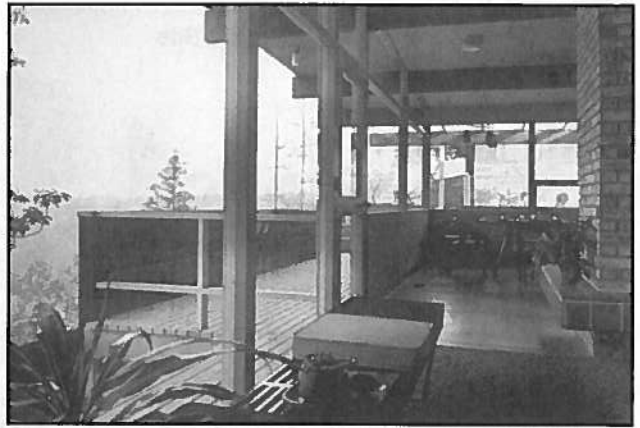


Figure 4 • George H. Hage Residence, B. F. McAdoo (1955).

UW CAUP VRC, Thelma McAdoo



Figure 5 • Benjamin McAdoo Residence, Bothell (1957-58)

UW Digital Coll. Cities and Bldgs Database, eh37, Eric Haley, 2008

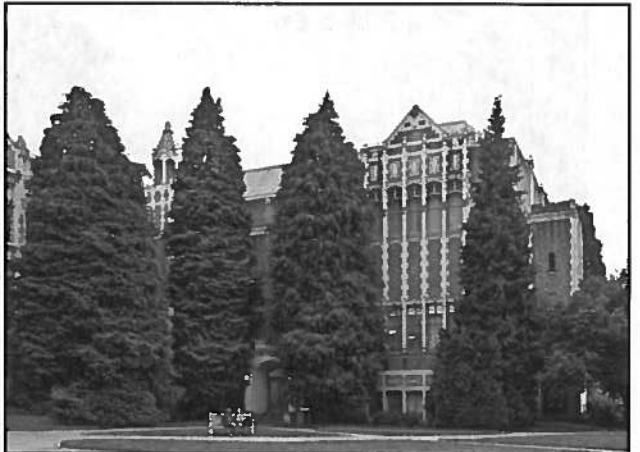


Figure 6 • University of Washington Gowen Hall, designed by A. H. Alberton (1932), remodeled by B. F. McAdoo (1974)

T. William Booth, 1993



Figure 7 • Seattle First National Bank, Wedgwood (1970)

Gregg Krogstad, 1982

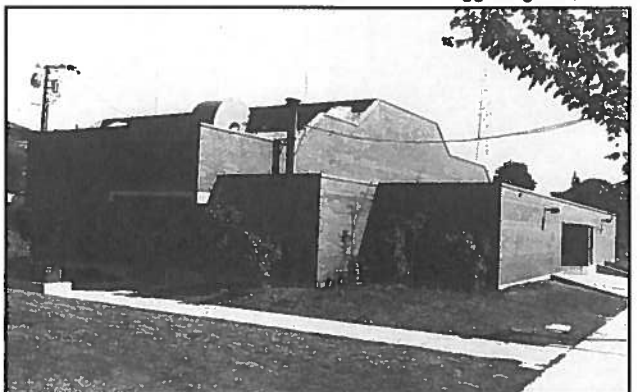


Figure 8 • Queen Anne Swimming Pool (1974-78)

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Figure 9 • Viewing west from University Way NE and NE 40th

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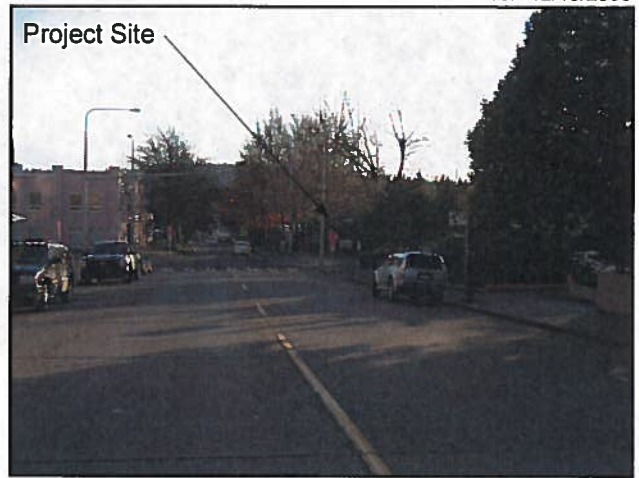


Figure 10 • Viewing south from NE Campus Parkway and Brooklyn Ave. NE

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Figure 11 • Viewing east from NE 40th and 12 Ave. NE

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Figure 12 • Viewing north from NE Pacific St. and Brooklyn Ave. NE

TJP 12/15/2008



Figure 13 • Ethnic Cultural Center viewing northwest

TJP 12/15/2008

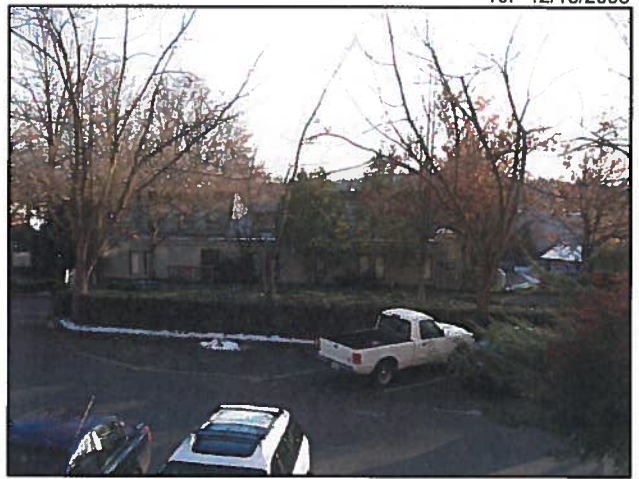


Figure 14 • Ethnic Cultural Center viewing south

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Figure 15 • Ethnic Cultural Center viewing south along western facade

TJP 12/15/2008



Figure 16 • Ethnic Cultural Center viewing west along southern facade

