TACOMA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

NOMINATION FORM

This form is required to nominate properties to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places per Tacoma Municipal Code 13.07.050. Type all entries and complete all applicable sections. Contact the Historic Preservation Office with any questions at 253-591-5254.

PART 1: PROPERTY INFORMATION (for ‘HELP’ press the F1 key)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historic Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Name</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Street Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacoma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Parcel No(s). | 0221253000 |
|---------------|

Legal Description and Plat or Addition: Section 25 Township 21 Range 02 Quarter 32: BEG 100 FT S of SW COR of N 35th & Gove ST TH W 120 FT TH S 150 FT TH E 120 FT TH N 150 FT to BEG

Nominated Elements

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

- [ ] Principal Structure
- [ ] Historic Additions
- [ ] Accessory Buildings/Outbuildings
- [ ] Site
- [ ] Historic Landscaping, Fencing, Walkways, etc.
- [ ] Interior Spaces/Other (inventory in narrative)

04/2017

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PART 2: PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Materials Intact</th>
<th>Original Materials Intact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan (i.e.: no additions to footprint, relocation of walls, or roof plan)</td>
<td>Yes ☒ No ☐ Interior (woodwork, finishes, flooring, fixtures) Yes ☒ No ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original cladding/exterior materials</td>
<td>Yes ☒ No ☐ Other elements Yes ☒ No ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows (no replacement windows or replacement sashes)</td>
<td>Yes ☒ No ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Physical Description Narrative

Introduction:
The Wells R. Sears house sits on a .41-acre parcel of land near the corner of North Gove Street and North 35th Streets in Tacoma’s Sherman neighborhood. Set in a residential area, bungalow-style and post-World War II homes surround the home. The 2-story home, with a full attic and basement, is orientated east-west. The house faces the east with the front porch set up on a small hill. The detached front 2-car garage is at the base of the small hill and faces the street. The south side with the stacked 3-window bays overlooks the neighbor's yard (hidden by a laurel bush). The west side faces the alley and includes a 2nd floor access door and the kitchen. The north side overlooks the side yard, a detached 3-bay shop, and two large trees. The Tacoma Daily Ledger newspaper wrote on May 18, 1902, “W.R. Sears will build a residence of eight rooms on a five-acre tract near Whitworth college, which will cost about $4,500. The tract will be improved. It will be a modern, up-to-date house, the wood in the halls and floors being of fir; also a stone cellar and hot water and heat. George W. Bullard prepared the plans and specifications.”

Exterior:
This home is an American Four-Square home with a square, boxy design, a center dormer, and a large wrap-around front porch. The porch boasts three sets of stairs with 2-3 Tuscan columns per box. The wood frame home has a granite foundation, cedar wood clapboard siding with corner boards, and the interior walls are made of lathe and plaster. On both the first and second floors, there is a 3-sided bay stacked on top of each other. The front of the house has a balcony on the 2nd floor, accessible through the front window of each bedroom. The external portion of the 2 chimneys were missing when purchased in 2016. They may have fallen down during the Nisqually earthquake, but this has not been confirmed. There was a windmill to the north of the home by the 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance map. The windmill notation was covered as well as several outbuildings on the property.

Interior:
The inside has some touches of the late Victorian era with beautiful hemlock and fir woodwork. Most of the 44 windows (majority are one over one double hung sash windows) are original (and working!) to the home and include 5 leaded glass windows in the front niche and grand staircase landing. The main floor retains the original details such as 2 working pocket doors, built-in cabinets on either side of the fireplace, Tuscan columns and spindle detailing is used to separate the front and back parlors, and wainscoting and a large built-in with leaded glass in the dining room. The interior doors in the home are original (save 1 on the 2nd floor) as is the front door. Most of the hardware is also original to the home. A boiler and radiators are used to heat the home. The second floor has 4 bedrooms (one bedroom has a small fireplace) and a bathroom. The master bedroom is separated from the fireplace bedroom by a “Jack and
Jill” closet. The bathroom has the original claw foot tub, sitz bath, and marble sink. The attic and basement are rough and largely untouched save for the bedrooms/closets added in the 1940s. One interesting detail is a corner sink (not functioning) on the small landing between the basement and the 1st floor kitchen area. The floors on the main floor have been finished in oak prior to 2016, the second-floor floors and the grand staircase are the original fir.

Modifications prior to 2016:
Although there have been some modifications to the inside of the home, the exterior of the home has been left largely untouched (and subsequently, in poor repair). Here is he list of known modifications:

The home was converted into a boarding house in the 1940s with the dining room converted into a bedroom (all rooms were reverted back to their original use prior to 2016), and one of the upstairs bedrooms converted into a kitchen to service the tenants on the 2nd floor. An exterior door and staircase were added to the servant’s staircase as an outdoor access for the 2nd floor tenants. The large butler’s pantry was converted to a full bath and all elements of the pantry were lost save for two original windows. A bedroom/closet was built in the basement and rented to a local schoolteacher and there was also a bedroom/closet built in the attic.

The Assessor gives the garage a 1905 year of construction (location unknown), but the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps show a garage at the current location only after circa 1945/1950. The current garage is a two-car concrete building with single-pane windows and wooden carriage doors. Another 3-car shop was added to the property in 1975 (brand: Quonset). There was also a metal double door added to the basement at some point.

Restoration after current homeowners purchased the home October 31, 2016:
--Several windows were broken and were replaced with either old glass or modern glass that had the wavy look of old glass. The weights were put back in place so each window functions.
--The porches were restored, and a third staircase was added with the porch extension (during the kitchen/bathroom remodel).
--The plumbing was updated (during the kitchen/bathroom remodel).
--The electrical was updated.
--The boiler was replaced, and all radiators serviced.
--There were significant holes/rotten plaster/water damage in the interior walls that were fixed. The lathe and plaster were restored where possible and very little dry wall was used.
--Carpet was removed throughout the house and the floors were refinished throughout the two main floors and restored where needed.
--The first-floor fireplace mantel was painted in the past so was stripped as much as possible to original beautiful taupe colored bricks.
--The metal basement door was upgraded to a fir door with beveled glass windows to mimic the look of the front door.

The kitchen/bathroom was remodeled in 2018-2019 by MRF Construction with special care taken to preserve the architectural and historic integrity of the house:
--The back porch was enclosed to create a larger kitchen space. The kitchen has new one over one double hung vinyl clad wood windows (Andersen 400 series) to match the original exterior appearance of the house.
--The wrap-around porch was extended to include this addition.
--The full bathroom (in the original butler’s pantry location) was reduced to a ¾ bath. During this remodel, the previously hidden passthrough as well as the small pantry
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window and hardware were discovered. Both were restored to working condition. The end of the hallway now boasts a small nod to the previous butler’s pantry.
--The wood elevator mechanism was also found in the crawlspace between the floors. The builder recreated the wood elevation and it is now in good working order.
--The molding pieces were salvaged and restored where possible and when not possible, meticulously recreated to match the rest of the house. The door frames alone took 17 individual pieces of wood to recreate the original frames.
--The original maple kitchen flooring was taken up and saved for a future project. One interesting note, the tongue and groove boards are stamped “Tacoma”.
--During the remodel, the builders discovered there was a kitchen fire sometime in the past, probably when the kitchen still used a wood burning stove that damaged the pocket door hardware, and is probably reason why the dining room wainscoting on the corresponding wall is different than the other 3 walls.
PART 3: HISTORICAL OR CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Criteria for Designation

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

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

Historical Data (if known)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date(s) of Construction</th>
<th>1902–1904</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Date(s) of Significance</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architect(s)</td>
<td>George W. Bullard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Builder</td>
<td>Wood frame, lathe and plaster walls, and granite foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architectural Style(s)</td>
<td>American Four Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material(s)</td>
<td>granite foundation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statement of Significance

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

Overview:

This house is a good example of an American Four Square by celebrated architect, George W. Bullard. This home is also one of the first homes in the neighborhood and now one of the last that retains the majority of its original architectural elements. This home celebrates life on the outskirts of Tacoma. The first owners were wealthy farmers with every convenience available to them at the time. The Sears Family were local poultry breeders and had their farm on this site. The farm included a windmill that took in water from a nearby creek and fed the pantry with continuous running water for cooling. Very little has been changed in the home over the years either inside or outside. The home retains almost all of its original elements and should be added to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places to preserve it for the future as another example of George W. Bullard’s masterful work and an example of a wealthy Tacoma farmer’s home. Joan Hanson (a resident of the home circa 1948–1949) stated in an oral history that the home was a wedding present from W.R. Sears to his wife and it was similar to the home she grew up in. This oral history also states that the home kiddy-corner to this home (corner of North Gove and North 35th street) was built for the servants that worked in this home. The 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1912 do show this home as existing so this may in fact, be true.

From the Grand Homes Tour 1995 brochure:

This three-story frame house was built in 1902 for W. R. Sears and his wife Katherine, who for a time operated as a poultry breeder on the property and was later a dry good salesman. Architect George W. Bullard designed a home that was described at the time as a thoroughly “modern and up-to-date house” The cost was projected in 1902 to be around $4,500 but the actual contract price was $6,500. The house has a granite foundation that contains a full basement with laundry room, drying rooms, and a wood
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List of Owners:

1. **Wells R. (Russel) and Katherine L. Sears, 1902-1948?** W.R. Sears was born in 1868 and came to Tacoma circa 1902. Mr. Sears bred/raised poultry on the property, later by 1920 was a dry goods salesman. He died November 18, 1931 at his home. Katharine was born circa 1876 and died December 29, 1948 after moving to Portland 5 months previously.

2. **Walter C. and Laura L. Pennington, 1951-1965.** Mr. Pennington worked as the safety inspector for the ASARCO smelter. They rented out the upstairs to their daughter and son-in-law Lloyd M. Hanson and Joan Y. Hanson (married 1948) circa 1948-1949. Lloyd was a firefighter for the City of Tacoma from 1955-1985.


7. **Celena Kathan and Robert Koehne, 2016-current.**

Resources:

Bullard, George Wesley. “Architect” Pacific Coast Architecture Database.


Northwest Room Local History and Biography Index. Tacoma Public Library.


*Tacoma Daily Ledger* May 18 1902, p. 20.

*Tacoma Daily Ledger* November 20 1904, p.20.


Tacoma Public Library, Northwest Room Image Archive.

Tacoma Public Library, Northwest Room, Local History and Biography Index.
Narrative Continuation

This page may be edited or copied as needed. Continued from page _____.

_________________________

After recording return to:
Celena N Kathan
Robert R Koehne Jr.
3334 N Gove Street
Tacoma, WA 98407

Reference: 40177550-804-TT6

BARGAIN AND SALE DEED

THE GRANTOR(S) George Robinson and Chad Page, Personal Representatives of the Estate of DeWitt Edwin Page, deceased

for and in consideration of Five Hundred Fifteen Thousand Dollars and No/100's ($515,000.00),

in hand paid, bargains, sells, and conveys to Celena N Kathan and Robert R Koehne Jr., a married couple

the following described real estate, situated in the County of Pierce, State of Washington:
SEE EXHIBIT A ATTACHED HERETO AND MADE A PART HEREOF.

Abbreviated Legal: (Required if full legal not inserted above) Ptn NW SW of 25-21-2E, Pierce County

Tax Parcel Number(s): 0221253000
Dated: **October 20, 2016**

**Estate of DeWitt Edwin Page**

**George Robinson, Personal Representative**  
**Chad Page, Personal Representative**

**State of Washington**

**County of**

**SS:**

I certify that I know or have satisfactory evidence that CHAD PAGE is the person who appeared before me, and said person acknowledged that he signed this instrument, on oath stated that he is authorized to execute the instrument and acknowledged it as the Personal Representative of the Estate of DeWitt E Page, deceased to be the free and voluntary act of such party for the uses and purposes mentioned in the instrument.

**Dated:**

**Given under my hand and official seal the day and year last above written.**

**Notary Public in and for the State of**

**Residing at**

**My Appointment expires:**

---

**State of Washington**

**County of Pierce**

**SS:**

I certify that I know or have satisfactory evidence that GEORGE ROBINSON is the person who appeared before me, and said person acknowledged that he signed this instrument, on oath stated that he is authorized to execute the instrument and acknowledged it as the Personal Representative of the Estate of DeWitt E Page, deceased to be the free and voluntary act of such party for the uses and purposes mentioned in the instrument.

**Dated:** **October 24, 2016**

**Given under my hand and official seal the day and year last above written.**

**Notary Public in and for the State of Washington**

**Residing at**

**My Appointment expires:**

---

**VICKI J. BARNES**  
**NOTARY PUBLIC**  
**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**COMMISSION EXPIRES**  
**JUNE 9, 2018**
Dated: October 20, 2016

Estate of DeWitt Edwin Page

George Robinson, Personal Representative

Chad Page, Personal Representative

State of Washington

County of Spokane

SS:

I certify that I know or have satisfactory evidence that CHAD PAGE is the person who appeared before me, and said person acknowledged that he signed this instrument, on oath stated that he is authorized to execute the instrument and acknowledged it as the Personal Representative of the Estate of DeWitt E Page, deceased to be the free and voluntary act of such party for the uses and purposes mentioned in the instrument.

Dated: 10-21-2016

Given under my hand and official seal the day and year last above written.

Notary Public in and for the State of Washington
Residing at Spokane WA
My Appointment expires: 12/31/2018

State of Washington

SS:

I certify that I know or have satisfactory evidence that GEORGE ROBINSON is the person who appeared before me, and said person acknowledged that he signed this instrument, on oath stated that he is authorized to execute the instrument and acknowledged it as the Personal Representative of the Estate of DeWitt E Page, deceased to be the free and voluntary act of such party for the uses and purposes mentioned in the instrument.

Dated: ______________________

Given under my hand and official seal the day and year last above written.

Notary Public in and for the State of Washington
Residing at ______________________
My Appointment expires: ______________________.
EXHIBIT A

COMMENCING AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 25, TOWNSHIP 21 NORTH, RANGE 2 EAST, W.M., IN PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON;
THENCE SOUTH 80 FEET;
THENCE NORTH 89°42' WEST 35 FEET;
THENCE SOUTH 100 FEET TO THE TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING;
THENCE SOUTH 150 FEET;
THENCE NORTH 89°42' WEST 120 FEET;
THENCE NORTH 150 FEET;
THENCE SOUTH 89°42' EAST 120 FEET TO THE TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING;

SITUATE IN THE CITY OF TACOMA, COUNTY OF PIERCE, STATE OF WASHINGTON.
Aerial Photo Detail – 2016
3334 North Gove Street House Photos – Historical and Current

Current Site Map - Google Maps - 2020
House During Construction – Circa 1902-1904
ARE YOU THINKING
OF BUILDING?

If so, we can make you a loan payable in monthly installments of 
$400.00, with interest at the rate of 5%% per annum and upon
the assumption of a mortgage thereon, which will be appraised by 
the bank.

DON'T BORROW money upon your estate without thoroughly investigating your plans.

L. R. MANNING & CO.

40 Equitable Building.

Tacoma Daily Ledger Article – November 20, 1904
House and Windmill – After 1904 and Prior to 1912
House and Poultry Farm Image #1 – After 1904 and Prior to 1912
3334 North Gove Street House Photos – Historical and Current

Home and Poultry Farm Image #2—After 1904 and Prior to 1920
Looking thru the Front Parlor to the Back Parlor – Date Unknown
House in the Snow – Date Unknown
Southeast Corner of House - 2020
Northeast Corner of House - 2020
North Side of House – 2020

Note: The set of 3 windows as well as the lower left window are leaded glass
Northwest Corner of House – 2020

Note: The original basement door is hidden by the shrubs

Note: The second-floor exterior door was added when the home was turned into a boarding house (the stairs were removed in the large kitchen/bathroom remodel in 2018-2019

Original Basement Door - 2020
Southwest Corner of House – 2020

Note: The remodeled kitchen added square footage by enclosing the original covered back porch
Quonset Garage on the Northwest Corner of the Lot - 2020
Two Car Garage Located on the Southeast Corner of the Lot - 2020
Photography Index:
Aerial Map – 2016
Aerial Map Detail – 2016
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map – 1912
House During Construction – Circa 1902-1904
Tacoma Daily Ledger Article - November 20, 1094
House After Construction – Circa 1904
House and Windmill – After 1904 and Prior to 1912
House and Poultry Farm Image #1 – After 1904 and Prior to 1912
House and Poultry Farm Image #2 – After 1904 and Prior to 1912
Looking thru the Front Parlor to the Back Parlor – Date Unknown
House in the Snow – Date Unknown
Southwest Corner of House – 2020
Northeast Corner of House – 2020
North Side of House – 2020
Northwest Corner of House – 2020
Original Basement Door – 2020
Southwest Corner of House – 2020
Quonset Brand Garage on the Northwest Corner of the Lot - 2020
Two Car Garage Located on the Southeast Corner of the Lot - 2020