



## SEATTLE DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOODS

Strengthening Seattle by actively engaging all communities

Andrés Mantilla, Interim Director

# Seattle Historical Sites

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## Summary for 1319 E Union ST E / Parcel ID 2254501275 / Inv #

**Historic Name:** Algonquin Apartments**Common Name:** Helen V Apartments**Style:** [Colonial - Georgian Revival](#)**Neighborhood:** [Central Area](#)**Built By:****Year Built:** [1909](#)

### Significance

**In the opinion of the survey, this property appears to meet the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places.**

**In the opinion of the survey, this property appears to meet the criteria of the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Ordinance.**

This largely intact, elegant apartment building was designed in 1907-09 by the partnership of John Graham and David Myers. The period before the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition was a period of considerable development in Seattle, as the city prepared for the world to visit. This large apartment building was one of the first to be built on the very fashionable Renton Hill, just south of Capitol Hill. According to the Seattle Daily Bulletin (February 17, 1913) it was one of the finest apartment buildings to be located in such a neighborhood, where it was surrounded by mansions of the elite and adjoined the convenient cable car line to both downtown and Lake Washington. It is particularly notable for its size and terra cotta ornament. Units were spacious and elegantly appointed. John Graham, Sr. (1873-1955) is one of Seattle's best known architects. He apprenticed as an architect in his native England and moved to Seattle in 1901. His long career, extending until the 1940s, embraced a wide variety of styles and building types, including many of the city's most important buildings. Several of these were apartments and hotels. His early partnership with David Myers was responsible for the Helen V Apartments (1907). He opened his own practice in 1910 and designed the Rector Hotel (now the St. Charles, 1911), the NP Hotel (1914) and the McKay Apartment Hotel (1914, demolished). His outstanding apartment design is the large Victoria Apartments (1921), prominently sited on Queen Anne. In 1929 he turned to the Art Deco style for the Roosevelt Hotel. Other noted works were the Frederick & Nelson Building (now Nordstrom, 1916-19), the Dexter-Horton Building (1921-24), the Exchange Building (1929-31), the Bon Marche (1928-29), and the U. S. Marine Hospital (now Amazon.com, 1931-34). In the 1920s the building was owned by the Vance Lumber Company, and the interior was remodeled by Victor Voorhees, a prolific architect who did most of Vance's architectural work.

### Appearance

The Helen V apartments is of wood frame construction with red brick cladding and a serpentine façade. It has three stories and a basement, with a generally L-shaped plan around a large landscaped entry court. It originally had a larger lawn and a fenced playfield in front, where there is now a parking lot. The east wing has a three-story polygonal bay facing the courtyard, and two rounded bays on the outside (east façade). The entry bay projects about six feet out from the rear wing. The entry is Georgian in style, with two pairs of fluted Ionic columns supporting a large cornice above the oak door. Above this is a Palladian window with narrow sidelights and tracery in the arched transom. A second entry at the southeast corner of the courtyard is arched with a prominent cornice with modillions. Above this entry are multipaned French doors opening onto a small wrought iron balcony, and a small fire escape. The subtle decorative brickwork includes quoins, a water table and lintels above the windows. Windows are one-over-one double hung wood sash. The east façade has a second metal fire escape and the rear has two sets of semi-enclosed wooden staircases.

## Detail for 1319 E Union ST E / Parcel ID 2254501275 / Inv #

**Status:** Yes - Inventory**Classification:** Building**Cladding(s):** Brick**Roof Type(s):** Flat with Eaves**Building Type:** Domestic - Single Family**District Status:** INV**Foundation(s):** Concrete - Poured**Roof Material(s):** Unknown**Plan:** L-Shape

**Structural System:** Balloon Frame/Platform Frame**No. of Stories:** four**Unit Theme(s):** Architecture/Landscape Architecture**Integrity**

Changes to Windows: Slight

Changes to Original Cladding: Intact

Changes to Plan: Intact

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**Major Bibliographic References**

Polk's Seattle Directories, 1890-1996.

Shaping Seattle Architecture: A Historical Guide to the Architects. Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, ed. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994.

King County Tax Assessor Records, ca. 1932-1972.

City of Seattle, Department of Planning and Development, Microfilm Records.

**Photo collection for 1319 E Union ST E / Parcel ID 2254501275 / Inv #**

Photo taken Sep 12, 2006



Photo taken



Photo taken