



**TO:** Elizabeth A. Pauli, City Manager  
**FROM:** Reuben McKnight, Historic Preservation Officer, Planning and Development Services  
Peter Huffman, Director, Planning and Development Services  
**COPY:** City Council and City Clerk  
**SUBJECT:** Resolution – Designating the National Realty Building, 1117-19 Pacific Avenue, as a City Landmark and placing said property on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places – April 4, 2023  
**DATE:** March 20, 2023

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**SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:**

A resolution designating the National Realty Building, located at 1117-19 Pacific Avenue, as a City Landmark and placing said property on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places.

**BACKGROUND:**

**This Department’s Recommendation is based on the findings and recommendations of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.**

Built in 1911, the National Realty Building is representative of early skyscraper design in Tacoma, and according to the nomination was the first to use cantilever beam construction in Tacoma. Later known as the Puget Sound National Bank, the building reflects a period of intense growth in Tacoma’s central business district in the early 20th century. It also showcases the work of locally significant architects Heath & Twitchell and structural engineers Heady & Peterson. Built in 1912, the Annex (1117 Pacific) is historically connected to the National Realty Building but has been altered over time, including the 1964 front facade remodel and 2001 facade and interior alterations. The nomination, prepared by NW Vernacular for the owner, includes the principal structure and the Annex; the connected buildings together occupy the same tax parcel.

The nomination was submitted by the owner and was received by the Historic Preservation Office in November 2022. On December 14, 2022, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) scheduled the nomination for a public hearing on January 25, 2023. Following the hearing, the LPC voted unanimously to recommend designation of the National Realty Building to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places for meeting Criteria A, B, and C under Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) 13.07.040.

The nomination and designation process of properties to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places is described in TMC 13.07. Properties placed on the historic register are subject to design review for future alterations, thus protecting the historic character of the city. In addition, historic tax incentives will be available for historically appropriate renovations. This property is planned to be converted to a mixed-use urban housing and eating development with 63 new housing units.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:**

This item was reviewed in two separate public meetings, including a public hearing to gather community input. The property owner’s ability to alter the property will be affected.



**2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

**Equity and Accessibility:**

This legislation is not anticipated to have a direct effect on equity or accessibility, either positive or negative. However, historic designation of historically significant multifamily buildings will help to preserve higher density historic structures while providing tools and incentives for upkeep and continued investment.

**Economy/Workforce:** *Equity Index Score:* Moderate Opportunity  
Increase positive public perception related to the Tacoma economy.

**Livability:** *Equity Index Score:* Very Low Opportunity  
Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.

**Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s).**

Designation and protection of historic buildings within the city ensures these buildings remain for future generations to experience. In addition, such properties contribute to a sense of unique place and encourage investment into the neighborhood. There are numerous examples of historic renovations that have contributed positively to quality of life and urban vibrancy in downtown Tacoma. Nominations also come from the public. Land use is not governed by historic designations.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

| Alternative(s)  | Positive Impact(s)                                       | Negative Impact(s)  |
|---|--|---|
| Not adding the building to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places | No additional restrictions to development or maintenance | Future changes to the structure that negatively alter architectural character, including demolition, could take place without the review of the LPC. The property would not be eligible for financial and development incentives that encourage adaptive reuse. |

**EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:**

Additions to the historic register encourage financial investment in listed properties. These investment numbers are reported annually to the state and City Council.

**STAFF/SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff concurs with the recommendation of the LPC to designate the above property as a City Landmark, which will help to preserve this important structure for future generations.



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Map of Property Location
- Current photograph