

Brewery Blocks Place Naming Request

Description

Horizon Partners Northwest and the neighborhood proponents of the Brewery Blocks historic sub-area request the Tacoma City Council recognize the area with a place naming action as described in Resolution 40408 (adopted by Tacoma City Council August 20, 2019). The proposed Brewery Blocks boundary is described as being bounded between South 21st and South 23rd Streets, and between Pacific Avenue to the east and the yet-to-be-developed public thoroughfare known as the Prairie Line Trail to the west. There are approximately seventeen properties affected by this name change request. The area has been the center of the Tacoma Brewing industry for at least 110 years. These blocks have been the historic home of Carling Brewing, Columbia Brewing, and Pacific Brewing Companies. The purpose of this request is to formally identify and recognize this portion of Tacoma as the Brewery Blocks. The Brewery Blocks area is partially within the Union Depot/Warehouse Historic Special Review District and the Union Station Warehouse Conservation District.

Location map



Statement in Support of Naming Criteria

The Brewery Blocks are centered in one of the most dynamically changing commercial districts in Tacoma. The approximately nine block area is distinguished from the University of Washington Tacoma campus and the surrounding historic district and Brewery District subarea by the connection with the once massive Columbia Brewing Company and the streetscape patterns it has left behind. Today the adaptive reuse of the warehouses and commercial brick structures that once accompanied the brewery operation define a growing neighborhood. Cooperative ownerships and development plans are working with design review mechanisms and innovative building technologies to create a mixed-use neighborhood that has its own distinct character and identity. Different from master planned new construction districts like Point Ruston and Town Center, the Brewery Blocks impart a sense of place drawn from an authentic past with architecture and streetscapes blending existing historic character with new building design and construction technology.

As residents, members of the university community and visitors transit the streets, sidewalks and future pathways along the Prairie Line, Commerce and Pacific Avenue they will benefit from more specific and meaningful placemaking and wayfinding. The Brewery Blocks are quickly becoming dense and diverse in resident population and complex in uses, commercial services as attractions. The place is there. A clear recognition of name and marking is not.

The Brewery Blocks have been a distinct part of the larger Tacoma Brewery District since the days when local and regionally marketed draughts were concocted there by generations of skilled brewery workers. This request seeks formal name recognition for an area well established for its history with beer making and its architectural presence along Pacific Avenue south of the busy corner at 21st Street. The proposed nine block neighborhood does not currently have a recognized place name, and the proponents are not seeking to change a more commonly or historically used name or map feature at this location.

The proponents of the Brewery Blocks name designation look to Tacoma's brewing history and the reuse of landmark buildings to help distinguish a sense of place today and into the future. At the time of its closure, the Columbia Brewery was one of the largest and longest running facilities of its type west of Milwaukee and north of San Francisco. It was one of a handful of brewhouses on the west coast that survived the Prohibition era and it left a discernible imprint on this part of the city. As the area undergoes dramatic growth and reshaping in the present and future we think it is appropriate to invoke that colorful past and mark it with an appropriate place name-The Brewery Blocks.

Support and Outreach

The proponents of the Brewery Blocks name designation have discussed the proposed name change with neighboring property owners, retailers and residents within the district as well as neighbors and institutions in the surrounding district. The response to the proposed name change has been overwhelmingly positive and, in many conversations, it is clear that the Brewery Blocks place name is already in common usage. This recent press release from the University of Washington Tacoma is an example.

“Milgard Hall both responds to the need for STEM programming in the South Sound while its mass timber construction also addresses ambitious sustainability goals,” the architecture firm says on its website. STEM refers to science, technology, engineering and math disciplines.

The 1-acre site, at 1950 C St., previously served as a parking lot and has an assessed tax value of \$4.2 million. It is directly across 21st Street from Brewery Blocks.

Interpretive Measures

Pedestrian gateway signage has been designed and located specifically to help the public better understand the geographical limits of the Brewery Blocks area. Historical research has been conducted to help developers and property owners better understand the significance of the properties they hold. This research will help city planners, the Historic Preservation Commission, residents, visitors and retailers within the Brewery Blocks to better understand and embrace the role history has played in the appearance and backstory of the area. Interpretative displays and web based storytelling can help bring the message to the public regarding how the district developed; who was responsible for its growth; and more complete understanding of why the district is comprised of so many masonry-built warehouses in this portion of Tacoma. The Brewery Blocks place name can also help with the clarity of wayfinding tools, urban design inspirations, architectural guidelines and public art installations and programs.

Properties within Brewery Blocks

Pacific Avenue

2102-2106

Horizon Pacific Partners /Morris Miller Building



The Morris Miller/Horizon Partners building was first occupied in 1906 by the Morris Miller Company, a dry goods wholesaler. The structure underwent several changes of ownership but was an important center for wholesale distribution of commodities for local retail outlets and drug stores for the first three decades of its existence. This

six-story building is 140' long and 120' deep. It is constructed of brick and retains its heavy timber framing necessary for short- and long-term storage. The building was largely underutilized from 1935 until Horizon Partners rehabilitated the structure. It is now an important commercial space located at the corner of a vital intersection of downtown Tacoma. The building is a contributing structure in the Union Depot Warehouse Historic District listed on both the National and Tacoma Register of Historic Places.



2108-2112 Pacific Avenue

Tacoma Grocery



Built concurrently with the Morris Miller Building, the Tacoma Grocery has been inexplicably altered. The alterations were necessary after an unfortunate incident with a failed fire suppression system caused the six-story façade of the structure to collapse in the 1940s. The historic brick façade was replaced with concrete in an

Art Deco style. The six-story building remained in the ownership of Tacoma Grocery until 1955 when the neighboring Hunt Mottet company purchased it to expand their growing operations. The building is a contributing structure in the Union Depot Warehouse Historic District listed on both the National and Tacoma Register of Historic Places.



2114 Pacific Avenue

Hunt Mottet and Hunt Mottet Annex



The Hunt Mottet building is a wholesale warehouse constructed in 1907. Hunt Mottet was a hardware wholesaler. The eight-story building housed its headquarters. The loading dock on Commerce Street allowed for the distribution of wholesale goods from vendors and bulk shipments to retail outlets. Like its two neighboring buildings, the Tacoma Grocery, and Morris Miller, the Hunt Mottet building is framed in heavy timber clad in brick. The building was designed to bear three additional floors if expansion plans were warranted.

The Hunt Mottet Annex is a smallish four-story commercial block located adjacent to the larger eight-story structure. The Annex was designed in 1906, but construction of the structure was deferred until the 1950s. The top floor of the Annex has been converted into a condominium with rooftop deck and green space.



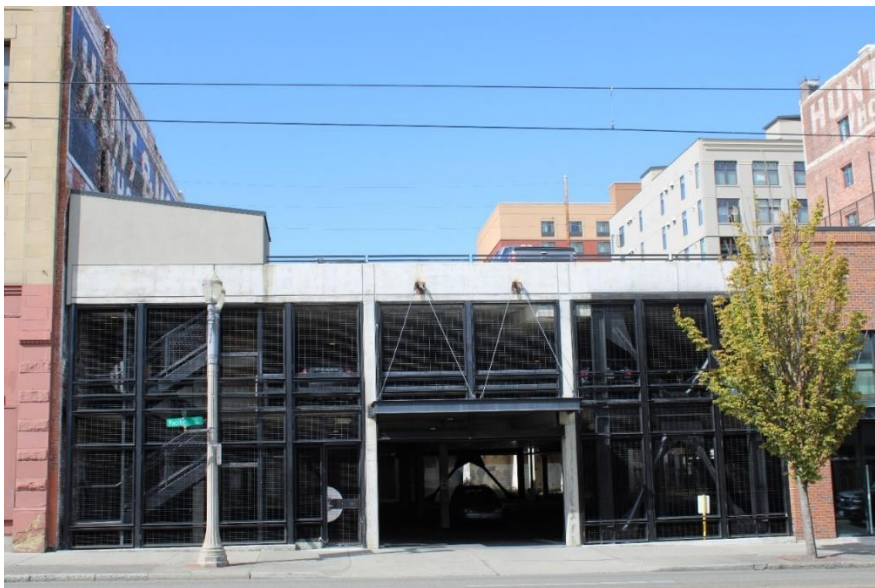
2118 Pacific Avenue



This single-story commercial façade accompanies vehicle and pedestrian access to three levels of parking and open space from Commerce. Built recently within the historic district, this structure was built in consultation with the Tacoma Landmarks Preservation Commission and complies with the historic design review guidelines.

2130 Pacific Avenue

Parking Garage



2134 Pacific Avenue

G. Cinelli Building (former J. B. Stevens Building)



This three-story grain warehouse was erected in 1904. It is a heavy timber frame warehouse clad in brick. Like many of the other buildings in the district, the interiors were left in an unfinished condition. The Stevens Company warehoused sacked grains at this location until 1915 when it was sold to G. Cinelli. Until the Great Depression, both a retail and wholesale grocer operated in this building. After 1958, the building housed a tire shop and a fireplace and stove retailer. Beginning in the 1990's the building served as headquarters for glass artist Dale Chihuly's Tacoma operations until his growing enterprises moved recently to the port area.



The Robinsons operated a flour, grain, and feed supply outlet at this location from 1895 to 1904. The heavy timber frame structure is clad in brick. The 70 by 120 building was designed for warehouse and wholesale businesses. The Rogers Company took over in 1907. Rogers was a food processor that branded coffees, teas, and spices. This building became the home of Hills Brothers Coffee Inc in 1935. Tacoma Moving and Storage occupied the building into the 1980s. A ghost image of the Roger's sign can still be seen on the southern façade.

2140 Pacific Avenue

Vacant lot (Former Bertelson Building)



The Bertelson Building had been erected in 1892 and was a meat packing plant. It became a rather notorious tavern during the mid-1970s. The signage remained until the building was torn down. The site is surface parking but is slated for future development.

2156 Pacific Avenue

The Sussman Building



Constructed in 1930 for the Frank Sussman Steel Supply firm, the Sussman block is 120 x 65 and is made from poured in place concrete protecting a steel frame. The building is three stories tall. Sussman was a dealer in government surplus items. After World War Two, the building was the location of several moving and storage companies. The building currently houses a social services provider.

Commerce Street

2108-2120 Commerce Street/ Hunt Mottet Warehouse



This newly completed Hunt Mottet warehouse was constructed in 1906 with three stories and plans for additional floors above. In 2020, more than a century later, the upper four floors were completed using Cross Laminated Timber (CLT)

building technology. With commercial space and access to both floors from Commerce and on “C” Streets respectively the building provides residential housing for the growing UWT community. Design elements from the historic structure including heavy timber interior structure and exterior cladding and fenestration were incorporated in consultation with the Tacoma Landmarks Preservation Commission and historic design review guidelines.



2130 Commerce Street

Vacant (Former Tacoma Steel Supply)



Is a surface parking lot approximately 100 x 80' in size. The site was the former home of Tacoma Steel Supply. Only the shed adjacent to the parking lot still stands.



2234 Commerce Street

Tacoma Steel Supply Shed



The western side of Commerce Street is dominated by the large low-slung Tacoma Steel and Equipment Company. The company takes in several historic-era structures. Tacoma Steel was built out in phases between 1930 and 1979. The buildings were tall single-story structures. Many of their structures, like this one, had gantry crane ways mounted to the ceiling to accommodate the loading and unloading of railcars and semi-trucks. All the structures on this block were constructed specifically for the storage and distribution of steel.

"C" Street

2101 Former C Street Café



This reconstructed brick building was designed to recall the scale, form and hollow clay tile masonry building which filled the corner site and dated from the 1930's. The existing building is a two story, brick-clad structure with

porch and balcony opening onto a small courtyard infilling a previous loading dock and parking lot. The building has a low, slightly crenelated, parapet which is an homage to the Art Deco styled diner which was prominent on the corner of 21st and C Streets for eighty years. B.Well Fitness Studio was the last known occupant of the historic structure prior to its demolition. Although the new building is not historic, it was designed intentionally to be compatible with the surrounding structures within the Brewery Blocks District. The lot contains roughly 1000 square feet of open bistro pedestrian friendly accommodations accessible via Commerce.



2102 C Street

Holiday Inn Express and Suites



The Holiday Inn Express and Suites was constructed in 2012 to take advantage of Tacoma guests and tourists who come to visit the University of Washington-Tacoma, or to take in events at the Tacoma Dome, and come here to enjoy the world class museums located nearby. The structure is poured in place concrete of eight floors, clad in brick. Above the lobby floor are two floors of parking and five floors express rooms and suites. This non-historic building is compatible with the historic structures located within the Brewery Blocks District. It sits on the location of the former massive copper brewing tanks operation for Columbia and was designed in consultation and compliance with the Tacoma Landmarks Preservation Commission design review process.



ca. 1940

2105-2107 C Street

Aubry Brothers



This 50 x 100' building located at 2105 C Street dates from 1892 and was the headquarters for Aubry Brothers, carriage makers. In 1919, the success of the Model-T led the firm to switch directions, becoming an auto shop known as Aubry and Sons. In 1938, the Aubry's sold the structure to a biscuit company which manufactured *Takhoma* brand crackers. Later, the company became more commonly known as the Sunshine Biscuit Company. Sunshine moved production in 1954. The site remained mostly vacant until 1969 when it became the Farvor Sign Company. It continued as Farvor Sign company into the 1980s. The building is three stories with the basement level accessible via Commerce.



2120 C Street

Vacant Lot (former Columbia Brewing site)

Columbia Brewing, bottlers of Heidelberg Beer, occupied the west side of C Street from the corner of 21st down to 23rd. Although idle for its last three decades, a brewery sat

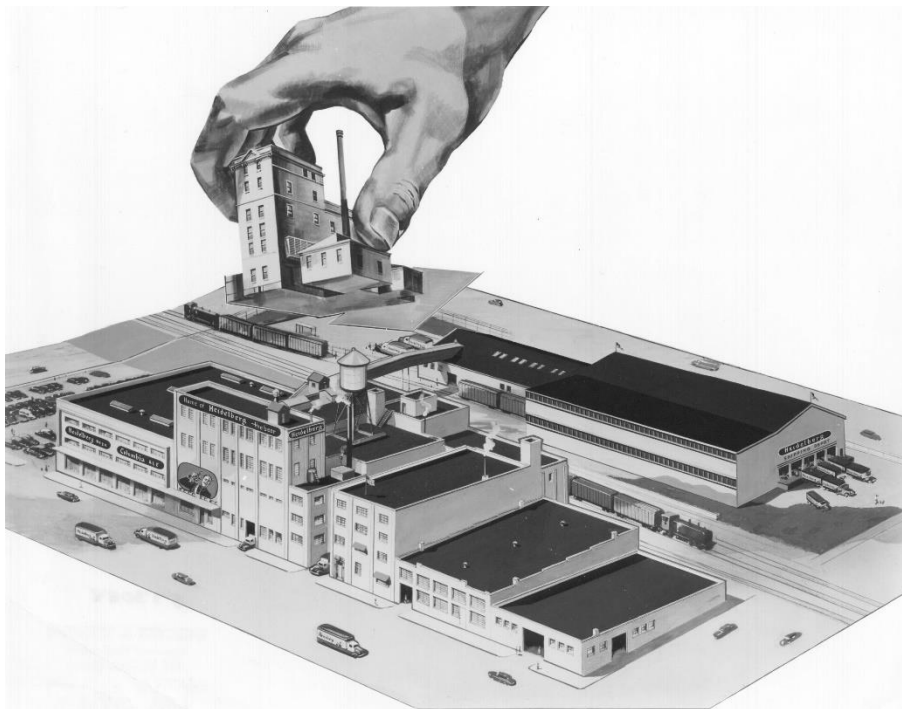


on this site for 111-years. The original brewery, constructed in 1900 was known alternately as Columbia Brewing, Carling Brewing, and the name reverted back to Columbia before being forced to shut down. The Heidelberg brand of beer was established in Tacoma in 1912 and its products were distributed widely up and down the west coast.

During the Prohibition Era, the role of the organization was changed from brewer to bottler. With this came a subsequent name change from Columbia Brewing to Columbia Bottling. With the end of Prohibition in 1933, the company dropped its lines of soda which included the rather popular beer substitute known as Green River. While waiting for Congress to repeal Prohibition, Columbia Brewing dismantled the 1900-built brewhouse and replaced it with one built of concrete and brick. The new plant was completed just in time to slake thirsty customers legally. Beer sales skyrocketed compelling Columbia Brewing to construct a cold storage warehouse (known as the Cellar) adjacent to its brewhouse. Within five years of the repeal of Prohibition, a canning and bottling plant was erected. Heidelberg was one of the first beers distributed in cans. A major renovation was begun in 1954. Once completed, Columbia Brewing was the largest brewer north of San Francisco and west of Milwaukee. This expansion attracted the attention of the Carling Company of Canada which purchased the Tacoma plant in 1958. Carling maintained a positive presence in the community of Tacoma, upgrading the physical plant, and actively participating in regional events. However, that all changed in 1976 when Carling was caught up in a merger. The plant was eventually sold to Heileman Brewing. A federal antitrust suit brought against Heileman Brewing caused the company to shut the Tacoma plant down in 1979.

The Columbia Building Complex had been compromised by multiple additions over its 100-year life. After several arson attempts, it was finally razed in 2011.

Portions of the vacant land have been cleaved off for development, the surface parking adjacent to the Holiday Inn Express will eventually be developed to take advantage of growing mixed use commercial and residential needs as Tacoma continues to expand.



ca.1952

2210 C Street

Brewery Bottling Line Building/Sam's Tire

The former Sam's Tire location was constructed in 1961 for the Carling Company as part of the historic brewery. It is a Mid-century three story poured in place concrete



structure designed as the bottling plant and retail loading facility. Although the building has lost its context with the sprawling Columbia complex it remains as a vestige of the beermaking operation which backed onto the Prairie Line railroad sidings. The building is roughly 200 feet long and 200 feet wide. The structure has second

floor truck loading access from Hood Street behind the structure. It last served as a commercial and fleet vehicle tire maintenance and storage facility.



Area Map

