

The Port Townsend Historic Building Plaque Project

A project of the Port Townsend
Main Street Design Committee



Installation of The Rose Theatre Plaque

The Historic Building Plaque Project was funded in part by the City of Port Townsend Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC), and Participating Building Owners.

www.ptmainstreet.org



Port Townsend Timeline

- 1792 Captain George Vancouver sailed HMS Discovery into Port Townsend's harbor and christened the area Port Townshend
- 1851 Townsite founded
- 1854 Named Puget Sound Customs Division, leads to bustling seaport economy up to 1880s
- 1860 Port Townsend incorporated as a city
- 1872 Fire Department founded
- 1889 Ground-breaking for railroad line that ultimately failed
- 1902 Fort Worden established
- 1910 Population 3,300
- 1927 Crown-Zellerbach Paper Mill located here, county's largest private employer
- 1936 Rhododendron Festival founded
- 1950s Fort Worden and Fort Flagler military posts closed (now operate as Washington State Parks)
- 1976 Designated a National Landmark Historic District by The National Trust for Historic Preservation
Centrum Center for Arts & Education established at Fort Worden
- 2000 Won the Great American Main Street Award
- 2004 \$250,000 Restoration of Port Townsend's Fire Bell Tower coordinated by the Jefferson County Historical Society
City Council votes to approve funds to renovate City Hall, create Annex
- 2005 New Fire Station completed Uptown
- 2006 Designated a "Preserve America" Community
Renovation of City Hall completed
- 2007 Renovation of Jefferson County Courthouse Clocktower completed, a "Save America's Treasures" Project

Welcome to Port Townsend, Washington's Victorian Seaport and Arts Community (population 8,865). This walking tour describes some of Port Townsend's historic buildings which are part of the Main Street bronze plaque project in the downtown and Uptown historic districts. The Uptown Historic District is accessible via the stairs at Haller Fountain at the intersection of Washington and Taylor Streets.

Founded in 1851, Port Townsend is known for its remarkable collection of Victorian buildings, lively arts scene and scenic beauty. Port Townsend is a National Historic Landmark District recognized for its historic significance, one of only 2,500 such districts in the United States. A year-round calendar of events, independently-owned shops and inviting lodgings make Port Townsend a memorable destination. This guide was developed by the Port Townsend Main Street Program, a nonprofit organization committed to the preservation and economic vitality of the historic business districts, while maintaining our small town quality of life.

Thank you for visiting Port Townsend.

More information about Port Townsend is available at:
www.ptguide.com, www.enjoypt.com or www.ptmainstreet.org

Credits

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The bronze plaques were cast by The Port Townsend Foundry.

This is a project of the Port Townsend Main Street Design Committee:
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To visit an online version of this brochure, please visit www.ptmainstreet.org

Port Townsend Main Street Program
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The Mount Baker Block 1890

910-914 Water Street

Corner of Water and Taylor Streets

Owner Charles Eisenbeis, born in Prussia in 1832, arrived in Port Townsend in 1858. He died here in 1902. A man with multiple interests, he became the first Mayor of the town.

Eisenbeis decided to construct a four-story business block with eight stores on the ground level and sixty-nine offices above, complete with elevator, at a cost of \$80,000. Only the Kuhn Block was to cost more. The architects were Whiteway & Schroeder.

The imposing building was nearly complete when the town's economy began to collapse in the late 1880s. The much-heralded railroad line failed to come to town so Eisenbeis suspended interior work on the building. The top two floors were never more than framed.

There are multiple rooms underground which connect with three tunnels. One runs along the front of the building on Water Street and two more connect with the first and run across Water Street toward the harbor. There has been much speculation as to the use of these tunnels. The underground space has housed an antique mall and is now available for rent.

In the early 1970's, the building was purchased by local real estate developer Sam Kyle who is the present owner. In 1998, Mr. Kyle completed the renovation of the third floor. An elevator was installed and finally, the fourth floor was finished into Class A office space, wired for high tech. The Mount Baker Block is now home to artists, entrepreneurs, nonprofits and thriving retail shops.



Frank Ross Photo

McCurdy Building 1887

Historic Name: Catherine McCurdy Building
834-844 Water Street

Catherine McCurdy spent \$10,000 to build this building in 1887. It has a long history of stable tenants. The corner storefront housed a pharmacy for 94 years. A series of jewelers occupied a storefront for 88 years. Upper floors were operated as a hotel for 74 years, most recently under the name of The Delmonico Hotel. A saloon operated there for 91 years.

Restoration has been done in stages and began after Coila Sheard purchased the building in 1979.



Eisenbeis Building 1889-2007

Common Name: Olympic Hardware
1003-1009 Water Street

In 1873, the Charles Eisenbeis building was constructed as the city's first stone building— a one story 20x70 single story structure. Businesses included gents' clothes, dry goods, and groceries.

In 1889, two brick stories were added to the building. The architects were Schroeder & Whiteway. In 1903, it became the New Eisenbeis Hotel. Restaurants, saloons, theater and a "movie picture house" were located there throughout the years.

Olympic Hardware was established in 1916. In 1956, there was a major "facelift" to the building, taking down the old bay windows. In 1977, the Amels purchased the building and store. They operated it until 2003, when Albert Amel passed away. Present owners Ritch Sorgen and Marlies Egberding are now renovating the building to restore the bay windows and three storefronts. The upper floors have been converted into condominiums.



The Rose Theatre 1907

Historic Name: Haller Theater Building

235 Taylor Street

A theater called “The Haller Theater” was built on a lot owned by the Eisenbeis Estate Company in 1907. The next year, the Rose Theater moved to the site and The Haller disappeared. The theater was managed by a stream of different owners until 1959 when it closed and became a bakery, sporting goods store, a “bargain house” making keys, repairing shoes and selling sewing machines. Building owner Phillip Johnson and theatre owner Rocky Friedman rehabilitated The Rose to bring back much of its original atmosphere and reopened its doors in 1992.



C.C. Bartlett Building 1881

Historic Name: Bartlett’s Stone Building

829-831 Water Street

Owner Charles C. Bartlett, Architect/Engineer/Builder, constructed this two-story sandstone building in 1881 at a cost of \$50,000. Built in the Federal Style, it was the largest building in Port Townsend at the time it was constructed. By 1885, attorneys also had offices in the building. Later tenants included various dentists, Frank A. Bartlett with Gents Furnishings, a grocery store, bowling alley, clothing emporium, drug store, shoe store and drygoods store. In the 1980’s it was home to Jean’s House of Travel. In 1992, there was extensive



restoration to return the building to an appearance similar to the original. The second floor was configured as a maze of small apartments until the renovation. The upper windows are equipped with the original cast iron shutters on the inside. The second floor houses office space and Sirens Pub. The first floor has long-standing retail tenants including a gift shop and bookseller.

Miller & Burkett Building 1889

Common Name: Elks Building
237 Taylor Street

The Miller-Burkett Building, named for its builders, cost \$18,000 to construct. The architects were Whiteway and Schroeder. Over the years it was occupied by civic clubs, grocers, and drug stores. In 1902, a grocer paid \$20 a month for his lease. In 1905, Elks Lodge Number 317 purchased the building and began their long occupation of the site until 1993.

In 1993, residents Richard and Whitney Miller purchased the building from the Elks Lodge and with restaurateurs David Hero and Alison Hero Powers, they restored the old building to its original splendor. Tall windows were rediscovered in 1995 when the Silverwater Restaurant began to occupy the ground floor site.

The building has been retrofitted for earthquake mitigation.

A photo essay of the restoration is on view in the restaurant's entryway.



N.D. Hill Building 1889

635 Water Street

This three-story building on a prime corner location cost \$25,000 to construct and replaced an earlier pharmacy used by Hill since 1879. The architect was E.H. Fisher of Seattle.

In 1928 the Benson family purchased the building and renovated it to create the DeVillo Hotel. Rooms rented for 75 cents to \$1.25 a night. A tavern moved into the corner storefront the next year, and the space has been a tavern ever since, known for years as The It Tavern, The Town Tavern and now Water Street Brewing. Owners during the 1970's and 1980's invited residents to work for rent, manning the tavern or rehabbing the interiors, contributing to a rather wild and notorious reputation.

Both the Salal Cafe and the Silverwater Restaurant began in the back portion of this building. Like the Hastings Building, the N.D. Hill Building has a skylighted interior courtyard. Maintenance has been ongoing, keeping it in near original condition. The building is owned by Chris and Dawn Sudlow.



Historic Building Plaque

Port Townsend Main Street—7

The Terry Building 1890

923 Washington Street

In 1890, Fred Terry tore down the Philadelphia Saloon and built a new building in its place. It housed a print shop and served as a boarding house. A Chinese laundry operated out of the basement for years. In 1903, the first phone company in town, Sunset Telephone, moved in. It was followed by Citizens Electric, Pacific Telephone and Telegraph, and a tailor shop. It then stood vacant for many years, and was finally purchased in 1981 by The Johnson Family and restored. The basement has been occupied by a tavern/restaurant for almost 20 years. The street level is home to retail shops, and the upper floors are rented as office space. The building's recessed doorways are flanked by cast iron from Port Townsend Foundry which protect the wooden doors from the weather.



Siebenbaum Garage 1917

809 Washington Street

In 1917, this building was built for a partner of the Peninsula Motor Company, John Siebenbaum, as the first fireproof garage in town. It has always housed auto-related businesses. Since 1981, it has been home to Robin Bergstrom's



Antique and Classic Autos. It is a destination shop for antique car lovers. The building is owned by the Siebenbaum Estate Company.



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Port Townsend Main Street

The Fowler Building 1874

Common Name: The Leader Building
226 Adams Street

Captain Enoch S. Fowler, progressive Port Townsend businessman, built this building in 1874. It was the largest masonry structure in town, touted as a “commodious fireproof store.” Built of sandstone from Scow Bay, the facade was covered with cement, and subsequently stucco on two sides, to counteract erosion.

The level of the ground floor is lower than Adams Street because the street grade had not been established in this area of town in 1874. It was purchased by the county for \$4000 in 1880 for use as the county courthouse until the new courthouse opened in 1892. Sold to the Leader Publishing Company in 1916, the building is now the oldest standing two-story commercial

stone building in the state. The Leader remains the oldest continuously published newspaper in the state. The building is owned by Scott Wilson, Publisher.

The name and date plate, high on the front of the building, remains in its original condition.



The Bishop Block 1891

714 Washington Street

In 1891, The Bishop Block was just nearing completion at a cost of approximately \$15,000. The original owner was William Bishop Sr. The architect was Charles Packard.

It was three stories high to serve as an office building with a full basement and stores on the street level. The original street level occupants included insurance agents and attorneys. The insurance agent also had a large stock of carriages, buggies, and agricultural implements. Farm wagons were made to order and were said to be very reasonably priced.

During WWII, many young couples just starting out married life in the late 1940's and early 1950's made the apartment building their home. Furniture stores began occupying the storefront by 1971.

John Pickett purchased the building in 1980 and was operating the Bishop Victoria Guest Suites by 1982.

In 1995, Joe and Cindy Finnie purchased the building and renovated the Guest Suites with period furniture and fixtures. In 1999, The Bishop's Victorian Gardens were honored with a Washington State "Excellence in Design" award.



Good Templars Building 1870

280 Quincy Street

The International Order of Good Templars began construction in 1869. The upper floor was used for meetings and the first floor housed a playhouse used for lectures, plays and recitals. In 1888, a new owner fitted the building to accommodate sleeping rooms for male laborers. The Fraternal Order of Eagles bought the building in 1904, giving it a face lift in 1958. It was sold in 1995 to a local group who rehabilitated it, capturing much of its original charm. The building is home to the Jefferson Community School (which now owns the building) and has a mix of businesses on the main floor and lower levels.



Eisenbeis Stone Block 1884

Common Name: Earthenworks Building
702 Water Street

The cellar for this building was dug in 1882 but it wasn't finished until 1884. Built by Charles Eisenbeis, it was the first sandstone building in town, the stone floated in from Scow Bay. The first commercial business was Louis Wolff's Saloon. It subsequently housed The Milwaukee (bus) Depot and a laundry. By 1920, it was a second hand store; then saw life as a plumbing store for forty years, Puget Sound Power and Light, and finally in 1984 —Earthenworks Gallery. The building is owned by the gallery owners Don and Cynthia Hoskins.



Historic Building Plaque

Port Townsend Main Street—11

City Hall 1892

540 Water Street

Port Townsend's City Hall, designed by Batwell & Patrick, was completed in 1892, with an \$85,000 budget. Placed on the register of National Historic Landmarks in 1976, its council chambers had been used continuously over the life of the building. After 114 years of exposure to the maritime elements, a major restoration was needed to save the building.

In 2003, City Council approved plans to restore the building and construct an adjoining annex. The annex was designed with innovative bracing that provides seismic bracing for City Hall. The Jefferson County Historical Society, which has traditionally occupied a portion of the building, launched a successful capital campaign for the restoration of the original building. These funds, along with city, state & federal support, made the project a reality. The project was completed in 2006, and the building now reflects the grandeur of its Victorian past. Future long-term work includes plans for the reconstruction of the former third floor of City Hall which was removed in 1947 after storm damage.



Waterman & Katz Building 1885

701 Water Street

Built at a cost of \$20,000 in 1885, this three-story building was a very successful mercantile which catered to tourists. In 1888, it was the third largest store in the territory. It was owned by partners Sigmund Waterman and Israel and William Katz. Waterman died of rheumatism in 1888, and William Katz was killed in a boating accident that same year. Israel Katz ran the store for the next 25 years and became Mayor in 1915. He disappeared from his home under very mysterious circumstances in 1917. It is one of Port Townsend's unsolved mysteries.



In the early 1990s, Peter Newall purchased the abandoned building and renovated it for retail space and condominiums. Its renovation revitalized this end of Water Street. Look for the ghost murals on the side of the building.

Clapp Building Circa 1885

725 Water Street

The building was constructed, four bricks thick, for a cost of \$13,000. The soft brick is thought to have come from Hadlock, while the cast iron façade was applied on the brick face by Washington Iron Works in Seattle. It is said to have one of the finest cast iron facades in Puget Sound. Cyrus F. Clapp was the original owner.

It was a dry goods store, bank, saloon, and grocery. In 1934 it became a wrestling and boxing club. A few years later it was remodeled to include a dance floor and renamed Club DeLeo. A sign was later found in the building stating "Dancing on Mill Pay Days Only." In 1952, the building sold. Harry and Mary Johnson purchased it and began restoration of the building which had been 'modernized' over the years.

In 1968 Frank and Edna Smith purchased the building and continued renovating. The Smith family operated an art gallery there. The renovation of this key building started a wave of revitalization progress that continues to this day. The present owner is Ellen Poitevin, who has had her shop, April Fool & Penny Too, in the building since 1992.



The Hastings Building 1889

833-839 Water Street

Constructed by the Hastings Estate Company consisting of widow, Lucinda, and the children of Loren B. Hastings. Lucinda was first non-native woman to settle in Port Townsend. The architect was E. H. Fisher of Seattle.

An elaborate building with three stories and basement, it cost \$35,000-45,000 to build in 1889. It was said to be “the handsomest building in Port Townsend” with a thirty-eight foot inside courtyard reaching to the roof.

Over the years the building has housed a myriad of tenants. When the top floor business left during the depression, a “house of ill repute” was said to have moved in but was eventually closed down by the city. Periodic restoration in recent years has been mainly structural.

The Hastings Estate Company and Port Townsend descendants of the original family still maintain ownership of the building. The main level features retail space. The upper floors are not occupied at this time.



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Port Townsend Main Street

Sterming Block 1889

Common Name: The Belmont
921-925 Water Street

Architects: Whiteway and Schroeder. It was built at a cost of \$12,000 to house the popular Belmont Restaurant and Saloon owned by long-time saloon keeper George J. Sterming. Three years later Sterming died, but the saloon continued to operate until Prohibition. A real estate and insurance office, shoe store and a confectionery and tobacco shop were among a variety of tenants.

In 1979, the street level became the popular Lido Restaurant and six years later, the upstairs became an inn. In 1992, the restaurant was reestablished as The Belmont. The Belmont Restaurant is still operating in this historic building which bills itself as Port Townsend's only remaining 1880s waterfront restaurant and saloon.



James and Hastings Building 1889

NE Corner, Water and Tyler Streets

Port Townsend's first log cabin was built on this property in 1851. The two-room structure was built by early residents, Alfred A. Plummer and Charles Bachelder. A dry goods store replaced the cabin and was then replaced by the four-story James and Hastings Building in 1889. The owners were Francis W. James and Lucinda Hastings. Various first floor stores and upper floor offices and lodging spaces have occupied the building.

This decorative building is now home to retail shops, a restaurant, and the upper stories are residential. Major exterior restoration work has been done in recent years. The building is owned by the JSW Group.



U.S. Customs House 1878

Common Name:

Lighthouse Café

Historic Name: Eisenbeis

Wood Building

955 Water Street

By the last half of 1878 Charles Eisenbeis had completed the two-story wood structure. In December 1878, the U.S. Customs House was moved to this location. The upstairs portion of the building was being used as a boarding house.

In 1890, the Commercial Hotel replaced the U.S. Customs House and boarding house accommodations. The Axtell Saloon was operating on Water Street frontage as well. Later businesses included a tailor/tobacco shop, restaurant and a shoe/harness repair shop.

The Lighthouse Café has been operating at this location since 1968.

The building is owned by James and Karen Manier.



Captain Tibbals Building 1889

Common name: Palace Hotel

1004 Water Street

Built in 1889 at a cost of \$28,000 by Captain H. L. Tibbals, it housed a billiard parlor, three saloons, a theater, and furnished rooms for rent on the upper floors. From 1925 to 1933, the upper stories were known as The Palace Hotel. Operated as a brothel, its popular name was “The Palace of Sweets” and offered liquor and more during Prohibition. Following a raid by the sheriff in the mid-thirties, “the girls” left town and Marie, the Madam, was also told to leave.

Restoration began in 1976 and was completed in 1988, when the Palace Hotel opened once again. The rooms are named for the former “girls” and the building is currently owned by John Gair.



The Kuhn Building 1890

1024-1046 Water Street

“The biggest and best...more modern in its style than any yet in this city” boasted Joseph H. Kuhn, builder of this four-story hotel, begun in 1890. Built by Judge “Joe” Kuhn, early Port Townsend Mayor and entrepreneur. Sixteen years later, the top two floors still had not been finished and the building was sold. In 1927, a drive-in auto repair shop, Olympic Garage and Equipment Company, began occupying the first floor, and stayed for 19 years. A year later, another attempt at establishing a hotel failed. In 1946, the top two floors were removed.

A bowling alley was installed on the second floor during that time. In 1965, first floor became a dry goods store, which was to do business for 27 years. The Kuhn Building is currently home to a large restaurant, street level retail stores, an upstairs ballet school, business offices and gallery spaces. The building is owned by Beverly Malagon.



UPTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

Gallus Rutz Building 1889

1044 Lawrence Street

Built in 1889 at a cost of \$1,500, Dr. Gallus Rutz operated his pharmacy on the first floor and housed his family above. Rutz's son moved the pharmacy downtown in 1911, and the storefront remained empty until the Uptown Fountain and Grill opened in 1946. It then became a medical center in 1960. As of 1965, shops occupied both floors. In 1996, the Wild Coho Restaurant took over the first floor.

In 2006, owner Helen Gunn expanded the building to accommodate additional tenants.



UPTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

Dennis-Halteman Building 1891

1002-1020 Lawrence Street

Contrary to popular belief, the Dennis-Halteman Building was constructed in 1891. The building is referred to as 'Katzville', many mistaking a smaller, earlier building constructed by Waterman and Katz in 1871 for the current building. The architect was E.A. Batwell.

The building housed several storefronts; many of the early businesses were long term and became an important part of the uptown shopping district.

From 1891-1958, McLennan Brothers Dry Goods was in business here until they sold to their employee Sanford Lake in 1907. He operated under the name of Port Townsend Dry Goods until his retirement in 1956. Employee Russell Sheffer purchased the business and operated it in this location for another two years before moving it to the downtown district.

Some of the many other businesses in the building over the years included furnishings, hardware, bakeries, drug stores and beauty/barber shops. The building is owned by Tony Larson.



Historic Building Plaque

Port Townsend Main Street—19

Historic Building Plaque Locator Map

Uptown

P



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