

fınyada corgiöat





## FURUYA CORGIAT BUILDING

### “Best Adaptive Reuse Project” 2009 Historic Seattle

When photographer, Mallory MacDonaly asked if she could use the upper office window to capture an image of the Furuya Corgiat Building across the street, she was requited with, “You mean the Masin Building?” That is what the public has come to recognize the building as- the Masin Furniture store. But the building on the northeast corner of Second Avenue South and South Main Street in Pioneer Square reaches far further into the History of Seattle than the Masin family who owned from 1948 until early 2007. The building has marked the major transformations and happening of Seattle since the end of the 19th century.

The building was built as a two-story substation for the Snoqualmie Falls Power Company. The owner, Charles H. Baker soon decided the site was better suited for businesses other than the large power company and

converted the building. With Seattle booming in business, three floors were added to accommodate the growth.

But the economic growth in Seattle's first neighborhood was intricately connected with the population growth and large emigration movement. Originally known as the Baker Building, the site was home to another business from the start. A highly successful businessman, Masajiro Furuya had run his Japanese import/export business from the building. In 1907, two years after the addition, he opened the Japanese Commercial Bank. Eventually the Bank was moved to the 1st floor, where its vault doors still rest. As Japanese emigration in the neighborhood grew, so did his bank. Under a number of mergers the bank remained until 1931, seven years before Furuya's death.

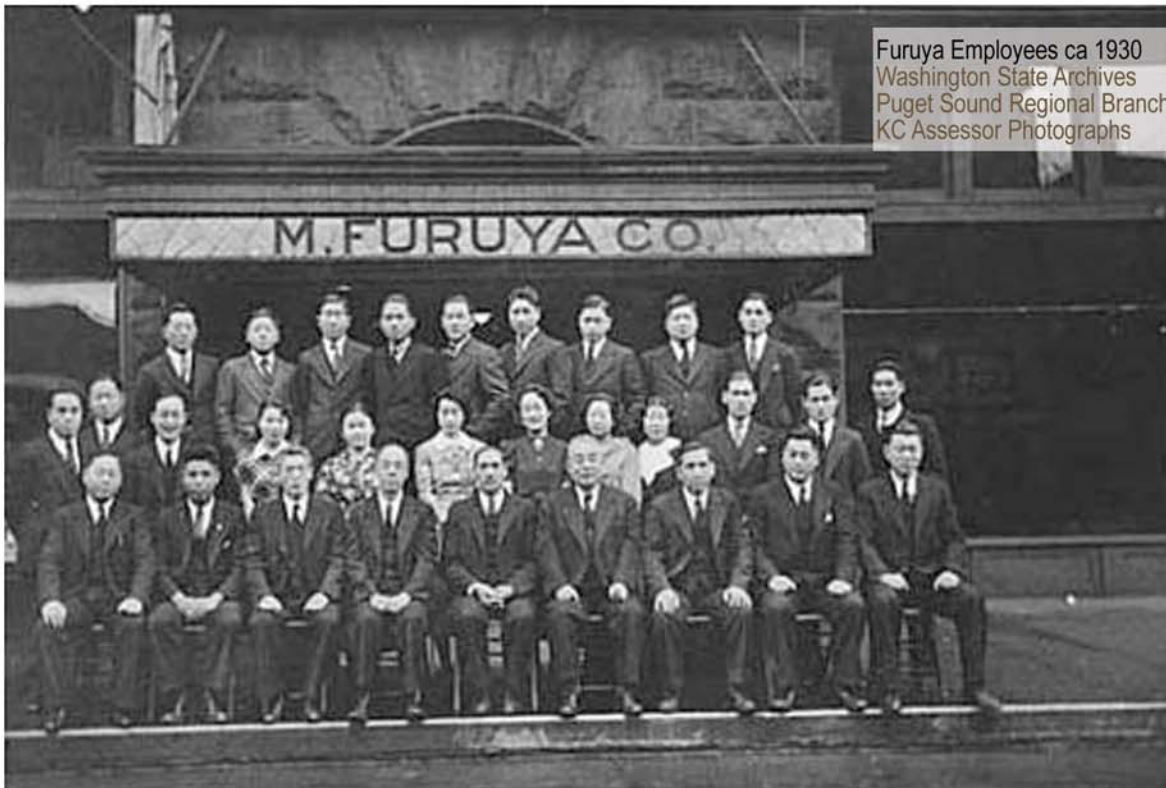
In April of 1949 an earthquake hit Seattle that changed the structural face of the city. Among the changes, the top two floors of the Furuya were removed. The building remained in this condition until 2007, when it was purchased from the Masin family by Rob Brewster. After restoring the Seattle historic Arctic Building, he set his mind to accomplish a similar feat in the Furuya.

He again teamed with local architect, Henry Weaver of Weaver Architects in order to reposition the building for modern use by restoring the building to its historic state. Two new floors, clad to match the historic condition ca. 1905 and approximately 10,000 square feet were constructed atop the Furuya Building. The façade was reconstructed from photos from the Washington State Archives, utilizing modern materials. The additional 2 stories clad in GFRC (Glassfiber Reinforced Concrete) from molds created by Architectural Reproductions from the original sandstone blocks on the remaining original stories. Designed from the photos, a new cornice of PGRG (Polymer-modified Glassfiber Reinforced Gypsum) mirrored the once sheet metal or caste stone cornice.

The Furuya was then joined to the neighboring Corgiat Building, the old Main Hotel. The two were combined as one building, sharing new circulation, mechanical and electrical systems including a new elevator. They received a full seismic retrofit and both structures were registered with the National Register of Historic Places. The upper floors now provide new offices while the ground and basement levels offer retail. Because of the care taken to maintain the historic qualities of the buildings, Brewster was able to receive full historic tax has been used as an alternate Green Building strategy and a champion of preserving the architectural history of Seattle.

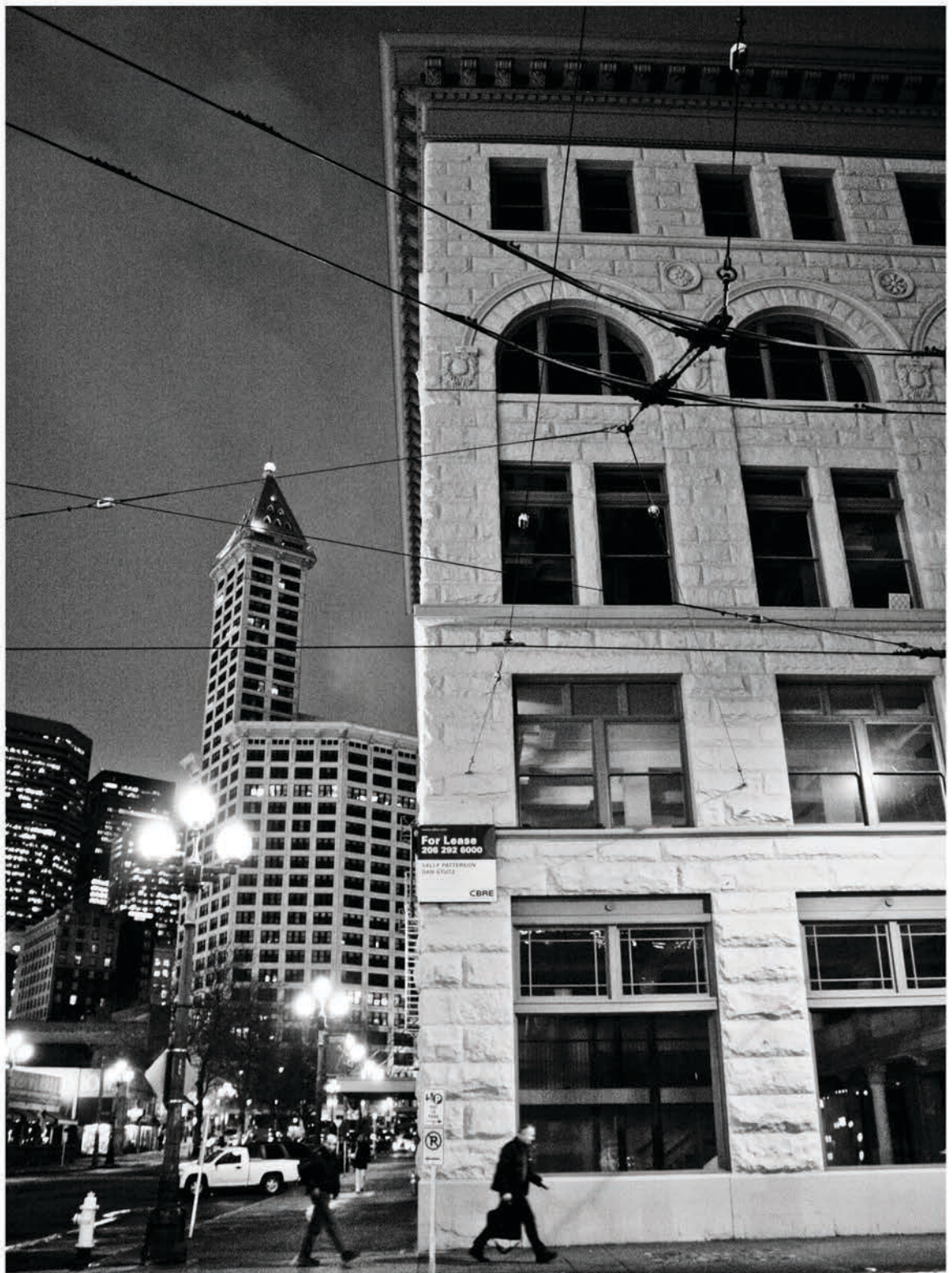
What now remains is a sort of living advocate for the history of Seattle. One day soon, the doors will again open on the building, ushering in visitors, tourists, and those who call Seattle their home. Their first look will be at the two vault doors, the detailed trim on the high ceilings, the beautiful staircase to the second floor: remnants of one of the Pacific Northwest's most prominent businessmen. According to the vision of the current owners, guests will follow the stairs down to the basement for a glass of wine or a craft cocktail where they will find the belly of historic Seattle, the towering brick walls of the Snoqualmie Falls Power Company's substation.

All the while, businessmen of today will sit at sun-soaked desks 4 floors above, carrying on history and commerce, and occasionally looking out their window at the Puget Sound.



Furuya Employees ca 1930  
Washington State Archives  
Puget Sound Regional Branch  
KC Assessor Photographs







Furuya Building  
Pioneer Square  
Seattle 1901  
UW Special Collections  
UW27025Z



Furuya & Corgiat Buildings  
Pioneer Square  
Seattle 1937  
Washington State Archives  
Puget Sound Regional Branch  
KC Assessor Photographs



Furuya & Corgiat Buildings  
Pioneer Square  
Seattle 1956  
Washington State Archives  
Puget Sound Regional Branch  
KC Assessor Photographs



Furuya & Corgiat Buildings  
Pioneer Square  
Seattle 2012  
Mallory MacDonald Photography  
[All photos not otherwise noted]





## Furuya Corgiat Rehabilitation Team

- Pacific Commercial Development, LLC
- Weaver Architects
- Chinn Construction
- Artifacts Consulting, Inc.
- BTL Engineering
- Bellevue Mechanical (Design/build)
- Pride Electric (Design/build)
- SJS Mechanical (Design/Build)
- Architectural Reproductions  
(cladding manufacturer)

