

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Luepke Florist

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1300 Washington not for publication

city or town Vancouver vicinity

state Washington code WA county Clark code 011 zip code 98660

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria

___ A X B X C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

WASHINGTON SHPO
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store

COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Moderne

foundation: concrete
walls: concrete

roof: asphalt
other: _____

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Luepke Florist is an L-shaped Moderne building set at the northwest corner of the intersection of Washington and 13th streets in downtown Vancouver, Washington one block west of Main Street and a block south of the major east-west corridor (a couplet formed by W. 15th and Mill Plain Boulevard) connecting Interstate 5 to the Port of Vancouver. The 1.5 story concrete building designed by Donald Stewart was built in two separate stages, with the original portion, at the corner of 13th and Washington, completed in 1937, and the addition to the west completed c. 1945. A 1959 remodel marked the 50th anniversary of the business. The horizontality, smooth wall surfaces, flat roof, curving lines, and round window make the building typically Moderne, a style seen in Washington state from the mid-1930s to early 1940s which derived from industrial design trends which were determinedly sleek and evoked motion. The level of integrity is high, and amount of alteration reflects the normal changes of a commercial building being updated over time to meet changing business needs. Commercial buildings of a variety of sizes provide an urban context, yet the building to the north (rear) of the building is a small Craftsman home which is now a beauty salon but recalls the earlier residential use of the area, and the buildings across Washington Street to the east are also former residences which are now in commercial use (the c. 1913 Foster Hidden House, and c. 1885 Lowell Hidden House, both on the National Register of Historic Places). Directly south of the building and occupying the entire block is St. James Cathedral (built 1885, and listed in the Washington Heritage Register) and Rectory. A c. 1970 brick office building is across the intersection to the southeast. A c. 1940 building is to the west on the same block.

Original Building

Exterior - The original portion measures approximately 54' east-west and 38' north-south and has the southwest corner sliced off to form a dramatic diagonal primary façade that is about 13' 9 " wide and has a large, central, metal-framed round plate glass window that is about 7' wide. Prominent rectangular metal signage stating the name of the business in neon rises above the parapet, which is outlined with a band of metal on the east and south facades. The word "FLOWERS" is outlined in neon letters on both sides of the central "LUEPKE" sign with distinctive rose accent.

The diagonal sign façade is flanked by recessed plate glass and aluminum swinging entry doors with transoms and side lights which date to the 1959 remodel, and large original plate glass display windows about 11' 8 " wide. All of the display windows were designed to provide equal quality viewing from both the interior and exterior. The large rectangular display windows, which are set flush with the wall plane, are topped by curvilinear marquees which were originally clad in dark metal with linear chrome accents and are now clad in corrugated metal. On the south elevation, a recessed 16-light steel sash window measuring approximately 4'6" x 5' 8" is located to the west of the large display window. The central four panes of the window open; the remainder are fixed. Further to the west is a wooden entry door set flush with the wall plane and accessed by one concrete step. The door is formed of diagonal boards and has a small diamond-shaped window set in the upper portion. Originally, there was a small marquee as above the display windows. Today, there is a small shed roof. Two lines of narrow wooden boards wrap around the original portion of the building above (like a belt course) and below (like a water table) the windows. Originally, these were chrome strips. Six semi-circular cut-outs in the concrete sidewalk at various symmetrical points around the exterior originally allowed for plantings have been filled in.

The north elevation has two large 12-light steel-sash windows which light the work room within. Four lights in each window open to the interior in hopper fashion; the remainder of the lights are fixed.

Interior – Approximately 2/3 of the open floor plan is occupied by a shop area to the east, while most of the west 1/3 is occupied by a work room which is largely open to the rest of the space. The southwest corner has a

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doorway to the c. 1945 addition, a small lavatory, and wooden stairs down to the basement and up to the half-story office. (The stairs and lavatory were in opposite positions prior to the 1959 remodel.)

The eastern shop area has its original concrete wall and floor (covered with vinyl during the 1959 remodel and later removed), and an acoustical tile ceiling dating to the 1959 remodel. (The original ceiling was a fiberboard product called Fir-tex, which was used extensively throughout the building). The north and east walls and a small portion of the cool room are now sheathed about 4/5 of the way from the floor up toward the ceiling with white subway tile and black grout laid in a diagonal pattern, and topped with a border of horizontal tiles. An original (currently non-functioning) radiator has been preserved in the northeast corner. The north wall was originally bare except for a large round mirror. During the 1959 remodel, the wall was covered with redwood panels and shelving which were recently removed. The large globular hanging light fixtures illuminating the southern portion of the room date from 1959. The silver metal flattened-disk lights in the north portion of the room are original to the building but were removed at an unknown date and kept on site. They were re-installed in 2015.

Low wooden display pieces topped with new black plastic laminate extend out into the sales space from each window. The one at the round window is curvilinear and, with two levels, appears like a rounded stage. The sides of the levels are sheathed with silver plastic laminate. Decorative wooden display shelves of varying sizes line the walls flanking the round window. The east window's display piece is original but the south one, which also has shelving, dates from the 1959 remodel, although there was a display surface and shelving there previously. A curvilinear movable counter designed by Stewart stands on the sales floor and has been re-surfaced with silver plastic laminate on the sides, and black plastic laminate on the top.

A large refrigerated curvilinear cool room/display case measuring approximately 12' 9" by 14' 8" is centrally located on the north wall and also serves as a divider between the sales space and work space. The double-plate insulating glass sheets are placed at slight angles to one another to form an overall curving display window. (This technique was repeated by Stewart on an exterior window in his 1941 Pepsi Cola Bottling Plant.) An original door on the east side near the north wall was removed at an unknown date. Sole access is now through a large metal door from the work room. The storage portion of the cool room has movable metal shelving on the north, east, south, and west walls. The roof-mounted refrigeration unit is toward the north side; lighting is via a centrally-located hanging utility fixture. The flower display area, which has a slatted wooden floor, is accessed through wooden doors inside which also provide a backdrop for the displays.

The Marmoleum-floored work room, which measures approximately 19' x 21', has concrete and plywood walls and is delineated from the sales floor by the refrigerated cool room on the east side, and shelving and a service counter on the south side. Measuring approximately 14' long x 2' wide, the rectangular counter finishes with a curve on the eastern end and is sheathed in the same silver laminate as the movable counter unit and round window floor display unit. (The original plans show the counter unit in two sections. It may not have been built that way as there is no current indication of an alteration.) Shelving, counters, a cabinet, and a non-original utility sink are located on the west wall. Pebble-finished plastic sheaths the wall near the sink. Three large central tables on wheels provide the primary work surfaces and are readily visible to customers. Steel sash windows on the north wall allow natural light to enter.

A small mezzanine office located up the wooden stairs has wallboard and wooden walls with built-in storage cabinets on the east wall and two sets of small, built-in, head-height flush wooden cabinets on the north wall. The floor is covered with linoleum, and the ceiling is covered with rectangular acoustic tiles and wood. Five small rectangular 3-light clerestory windows on each side of the slightly-elevated roofline light the space from above, and there is a small six-light casement window on the east side. The north side of the office has an opening through which one can observe the work room below. The existing sheets of the original blueprints do not indicate whether the office was built at the same time as the rest of the building, or was added later, as Stewart produced plans in July, 1942 to change the stairs to their current location and also included office window details. A bi-fold door on the west side provides access to the ½ story portion of the 1946 addition.

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A basement under the original portion has a concrete floor and walls, and a sheetrock ceiling. Currently used for storage, it has movable wooden shelving lining some walls and a small closet with a glass and wood door in the southwest corner.

1946 Addition

The rectangular concrete garden shop and warehouse addition to the west measures approximately 106' deep and 27' wide and contrasts somewhat with the original portion but flows from it and does not overwhelm it. The street-side shop area measures about 40' x 27' while the warehouse to the rear (north) measures about 66' x 27'. The original plans noted that the upstairs office and conservatory to the west were to be added later, but newspaper sources indicate that they were built concurrently. The conservatory was not in use for a number of years and has been removed.

The primary façade on West 13th has a grand 1½-story recessed entrance which projects slightly above the roof of the original building, to about the same height as the main neon signage at 13th and Washington on the original portion of the building. A central, recessed ground-level display bay window is surmounted by a block of nine structural-wire glass windows and flanked by wood and glass entry doors. All are surrounded by a squared projecting painted concrete arch with a rounded profile which is flanked by deep vertical display windows to the west and east. The windows and doors are surmounted by a decorative wooden band which has projecting rows of linear detailing over the east and west windows and incised rows over the doors and central bay window.

The west façade has a large 16'-wide overhead metal receiving door at the north end, and a row of three 9-light rectangular steel sash windows set high in the wall plane.

The north façade has a bank of four 6-light wire glass windows which light the upstairs half-story office.

Interior – The ground floor is divided into two main spaces – the shop area to the south, and a storage and receiving warehouse to the north which is set at a slightly lower grade. It is accessed from the exterior via the overhead door at the northwest corner and on the interior from the south end of the shop space by a ramp.

The first floor interior of the addition was used for sales and display, and is currently under construction. The original plans show a small fish pool, two central display counters, and two rear wrapping counters in this space but if they were built they were removed at unknown dates.

Correlating with the shop space below, the half-story office was recently used for storage and is now under construction. It has concrete walls; the south side is sheathed in a wall-board scored to look like vertical wood paneling. The floor is covered with linoleum. The ceiling is covered with rectangular acoustic tile that is the same in the upstairs office space in the original building. Light is provided by flush, round ceiling units, and boxed, rectangular fluorescent fixtures. A small, non-original office cubicle on the east side was removed in 2015.

The central windows on the south wall are flanked by two deep storage closets with wooden doors and built-in shelving.

Rear Service Wing

The concrete-walled and floored rectangular storage and receiving area located to the north of the gift shop space at a lower grade is accessed down a ramp has a wooden ceiling. A two-tub utility sink is located centrally on the west side. An overhead garage door provides access at the northwest corner. Three 9-light rectangular steel sash windows set high on the west wall provide light. A concrete block boiler room formerly centrally-located on the east wall was removed in 2015.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1937-1969

Significant Dates

1937, 1946

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Luepke, Rudolph A.

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Stewart, Donald J. (architect)

Cassady, William Donald (architect)

Johnson Construction Company (builder)

Collins, Larry O. (builder)

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)
(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Luepke Florist is historically significant for listing at the local level under Criteria B for its direct association with Rudolph "Rudy" Luepke, a prominent business and civic leader in the community of Vancouver, Washington. The florist shop is also significant under Criteria C as a property that embodies the distinctive characteristics of its type and period of construction. Additionally the building represents the work of locally-prominent architect Donald J. Stewart. The period of significance begins in 1937, the date of construction of the building, and ends in 1969, year Rudolph Luepke passed away.

The Early History of Floristry

Literary naturalist Loren Eiseley claimed in *The Immense Journey* that humans would not exist had not flowers evolved – the flowers which lead to, for example, fruit and seeds packed with enough nutrition to support human life and influence the beginning of agriculture. Certainly, the use of flowers for ornament of self and spaces, in funerary and other rituals, and for gift purposes dates back millennia and was worldwide in scope. From the celebratory wreaths and garlands favored by ancient Greeks and Romans, to Egyptians engaging in floral offerings to deities, flowers held meaning for cultures around the globe and influenced life and arts in innumerable ways. The famous Shanidar Cave Paleolithic burial with flowers in northeastern Iraq (Kurdistan), dates back possibly as much as 60,000 years, and is an example of even primitive humanoids likely engaging in floral ritual. Pollen analysis indicates that the body of a 40-year old Neanderthal man appears to have been entombed purposefully with a garland around his head, and with hollyhocks, ragworts, grape hyacinths, yarrow, and Barnaby's thistle next to and underneath his body – flowers typical of the area in June.

Certainly, cultivation of flowers has been a common practice for centuries around the world. The Dutch are given credit for the development of greenhouses in the 1600s. Although the term "florist" today refers to a person who arranges and sells flowers and ornamental plants professionally, the word had a more general meaning in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when it was also used to mean someone who appreciated flowers and engaged in skilled gardening. For example, artisan laborers residing and working in London's east end area known as Spitalfields were especially regarded for their botanical pursuits, whether in window boxes, indoor and outdoor pots, yards, and roof gardens, or on larger rented garden allotments. Growing of flowers for personal enjoyment, competitions, and for sale continued there into the 1840s when residential pressures overcame garden land.

Cut flower production began in the United States as early as the mid-1700s with the first American greenhouses. The first American florist, in the contemporary sense of the word, may have been a man whose name is not recorded but who lived in New York in the late 1700s and is known to have sold decorative cut flowers and containers, including a "large bunch of flowers for table" which might have been a commissioned arrangement. Certainly, Jacob Sperry, a Swiss immigrant who operated a garden and greenhouse in New York in the late 1700s, sold bouquets and decorative plants. The popularity of gardening and creating arrangements grew over time as both avocational enthusiasts and professionals engaged in horticultural pursuits on small and large scales.

The 1800s were a time of great growth in the commercial availability of flowers, and Queen Victoria's well-known fondness for them helped keep them popular. The increasing professionalization of the field in the United States resulted in the formation of the Society of American Florists in 1884, an outgrowth of the American Association of Nurserymen, Florists, and Seedsmen (AANFS). Although created to provide hail insurance for members, the organization evolved into providing educational opportunities and cooperative marketing for its members. The AANFS created telegraphic delivery in 1892, a practice which grew into today's Florist's Transworld Delivery (FTD).

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Luepke Family History

According to family and other records, the Luepkes came from a long line of family involved in the horticultural business. Rudolph's great-grandfather, Charles Leopold Luepke, worked in the florist trade in Germany. His grandfather Robert T. worked as a horticulturist at the Royal Palace Gardens in Potsdam. Robert was born in December c.1847 in Germany, and emigrated to America in 1882, leaving Hamburg on August 23 aboard the *Wieland*, traveling in the "Zwishchendeck", or steerage. Manifest not his ethnicity was listed as Prussian, and he was residence as Berlin, with an occupation as gardener. He arrived in New York City September 7, 1882. Records consulted did not indicate whether or not his wife (Rudy's grandmother) Minna/Mina Hermann Luepke, born November, 1857 in Saxonia, Germany, traveled with him. Rudolph's father Frank Robert, was born in Germany in 1876. Obituary records him as immigrating in 1880, but it is more likely that he immigrated in 1882 with his father. While research did not indicate specific reasons for the family's decision to emigrate to the United States, they were part of a large group of almost three million Germans who left their country during the appointment of Otto Von Bismarck as minister president from 1862-1890.

Robert and Minna Luepke fit the mold of many of the emigrants from Germany at that time – they were living in the northeast portion of the country, were from a family which made its living working for others at a wage with small prospect of saving enough to obtain land for themselves, were Catholic, and chose the United States as their destination. Horticultural knowledge from Europe was sought after in Victorian America, and the Luepkes may have been aware of this as they considered job possibilities abroad.

Reports indicate that Robert was in Houston, Texas by 1895, which is also true of Minna. (It is possible that he and/or they lived in Ohio and Pennsylvania for a time.) By 1896, he was already in operation as a florist, as the *Houston Daily Post* noted that he had over 2000 chrysanthemums in full bloom and ready for viewing. From 1897 on, he is listed in the city directory as a florist through at least 1920. Robert became a U.S. citizen in 1882, and Minna in 1887, although they do not appear in any federal census until 1900, by which time they were recorded as living in Houston and having a floral business there. Frank was not listed as living with them, although they had two boarders, one of whom was employed as a saleswoman in the business.

Family records show that Frank married Edla Mathilda Jacobson, who was born in Michigan in 1889 to parents who immigrated from Sweden. They met in Texarkana, Texas, where Frank was manager of the city park and greenhouses, and were married there in August 1906. Rudolph, "Rudy," was born in May, 1908.

The Luepkes Arrive in Vancouver

For reasons unknown, Frank moved the family to Vancouver in 1909 after first exploring Portland, Oregon. Family lore holds that Frank was intending to travel to Vancouver, British Columbia but took the Vancouver, Washington street car instead and liked what he saw. The community was in the midst of a population growth and the business prospects were good. He first sold flowers from a push cart in the downtown, and brought his family from Texas soon after his arrival. Frank acquired or built business premises fairly quickly at essentially the current location of the nominated structure. By 1910, the family was living at 209 W. 14th behind the shop and greenhouse at 206 W. 13th. Their daughter, Gertrude, was born in December of 1911. The earliest shop was a modest gable-front wood-framed building with a central front door framed by large windows. The wood-frame, gable-front greenhouse adjacent to the east had glass walls and roof set above low wooden walls of horizontal boards.

The area where the Luepke business was established was a mix of residential and commercial, although the enormous brick Roman Catholic cathedral across the street to the south was a major physical presence. The Luepkes built their shop and greenhouse – the latter about twice as big as the shop – on what had been a vacant lot to the west of a residence at the corner of Washington and 13th, and to the east of a carpentry and paint shop. Initially, they had one competitor, Eugene Zimmer, but he appears to have only been in operation since 1907, according to city directories. Zimmer and the Luepkes were soon joined by Abram Axtell in town, and also Fritz Braun and Mrs. D.L. Russell in Washougal. As the decade went on, the city directory began differentiating between florists and nurserymen and showed that the quantity of the latter were outstripping

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florists over time. In 1912, Axtell and Zimmer appeared to have left the floral business, but a new competitor, Andrew Hanson, had established a presence at F and 27th in what is now the Shumway neighborhood. Camas had gained a florist, Fred Palmer; Mrs. Russell continued in Washougal.

The Vancouver floral scene continued to grow into the late 1920s, by which time there were five florists in town, including J.E. Larson, which would remain in business into the 1990s. Some nursery operations were also close at hand to the downtown population center, such as Villa Nursery, at 10th and Washington, and the Clark County Nursery at 2301 Main, and presumably consumers bought plants from them, and perhaps cut flowers if not arrangements. Economic conditions, with plenty of jobs and burgeoning construction, seemed to warrant the growth. The Evergreen Highway (State Route 14) was built between 1921-1926. Shumway Junior High and the Evergreen Hotel opened in 1928, and Clark General Hospital at 33rd and Main in 1929 to serve a population which had grown to 19,000.

The Luepkes were operating a very successful business which had expanded by 1928 over much of the block. They had built several additional greenhouses, including one where the dwelling to the west formerly stood, added a boiler house for the greenhouses, and were cultivating extensive floral gardens. By this time, Rudy, then age 20, had joined the family business as a florist.

Frank passed away on September, 13, 1930, and was buried at Park Hill Cemetery. With his absence his wife Edla, and her children, Rudolph "Rudy" and Gertrude carried on the business. Edla passed away on September 11, 1936, at the young age of 48, but Rudy and Gertrude continued to operate the store jointly, with Gertrude also serving as a florist.

Rudolph A. Luepke (1908-1969)

Rudolph "Rudy", who started work in the business at a young age, grew up to be a man of many professional and civic activities. He participated in school athletics and as an adult played city league basketball as part of the Crimson Ramblers, and other teams, and was also on the softball team fielded by the Vancouver Gyro Club (a social and service organization). Professional volunteerism included service as director of region 11 (comprised of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and British Columbia) and district representative of the FTD Association, director of the Society of American Florists, and director of the U.S. Florist Information Council. He was also national president of FTD – the only Pacific Northwesterner to have served in that position by 1957. His work with these professional organizations included evaluation of potential members, public speaking, and convention planning. He was named to the Hall of Floral Fame in 1954 by Florist's Exchange and Horticultural Trade World. A founder of Royal Oaks Country Club, he was active in PTA and the Boy Scouts, held a lifetime membership in the Jaycees, of which he was a founding member, received the National Brotherhood Week award from the Knights of Pythias in 1954, was president of the Vancouver Chamber of Commerce, and was an active member of Kiwanis and the Elks. He also was a charter member of the Stockaders, an organization which advocated for the re-construction of Fort Vancouver and its continuing operations, and helped propagate seeds from Vancouver's landmark Old Apple Tree.

Rudy was presented with Vancouver's First Citizen Award in 1951, but his public contributions did not stop then. Political involvement included service as chair of the Regional Planning Commission and service on the Vancouver City Council beginning in 1958. He was elected by the council to two stints as mayor from 1962 to 1966 – the first mayor to serve two terms. Issues under consideration at the time of his service on the City Council and as mayor included the siting of Interstates 5 and 205. For the former, he favored a route ultimately not built that passed along the edge of the Columbia River north up to Woodland. His opinion for location of I-205 prevailed, however. The other proposed route would have cut through Vancouver's McLoughlin Heights neighborhood and connected in Oregon around Portland's NE 33rd Street.

At the time of his death in 1969, *The Columbian* newspaper eulogized him thusly: "Lost to the community in the death of Rudolph Luepke at 61 was one of its most tireless civic workers...Rudy wore an infectious smile easily throughout his life, and threw himself into whatever he was doing...Certainly, he left life better than he found it." His grave marker at St. James Acres states: "Mayor of Vancouver, Friend of All, Dedicated His Life to the

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Town He Loved.” He is memorialized by the city-owned Luepke Senior Center, a gathering place for senior citizens. Rudy married Louise Joan Zumsteg (1910-1990) on July 10, 1933. Louise was a Vancouver native who spent the majority of her life there, although she did work as a house mother at Oregon State University at one point. A Providence Academy graduate and former Miss Vancouver, she opened and operated a dance school for many years. She was also a member of Royal Oaks Country Club, and was an active member of St. Joseph Catholic Church and the Covington Club.

Gertrude Luepke married Tilden W. Randall (1912-1963) on May 15, 1934.

New Store Constructed

With business still growing under the leadership of the family, Luepke joined the Florist’s Telegraph Delivery (FTD – now Florist’s Transworld Delivery) network in the mid-1930s and advertised cut flowers, floral designs, and potted plants.

Tragedy struck the family business on July 2, 1937. A small fire destroyed flower stocks and the greenhouse building. It was thought to have been started by a prowler as the building had been illegally entered several times recently, and tax receipts rifled through. Though a relatively small amount of structural damage occurred, a decision was made quickly to construct a new building. Local architect Donald J. Stewart was hired and plans for a new building were done by the end of August. Bids for construction followed quickly the next month in local newspapers and the Johnson Construction Company was hired as general contractor. The worked feverishly for 3 months and a grand opening for the new building was held on December 4, 1937.

This type of speed was probably possible due to labor being readily available as few construction jobs were underway during the heart of the Great Depression, and many of them were very small. Building permits were being issued at a higher rate than in 1936 – but the overall total value was lower than the previous year. The local paper, the *Columbian*, contained far more notices of work on minor remodeling jobs, such as a roof replacement or a small addition, than construction of an entire building. Presumably, too, the Luepkes were trying to complete the building prior to winter weather and the holiday celebration season.

An existing dwelling was demolished to create space for the new store. Local businesses supplied the construction and most of the materials, as was the intent of the owners. Assisting the Johnson Construction Company was the Vancouver Sign Company, Olson Electric Service, Columbia Feed and Fuel Co. (cement, lath, plaster, and steel), Vancouver Sheet Metal Works, Paulsen Plumbing, Sparks Hardware (builders hardware), and R.J. Odne (painting and decorating). One Portland company, Baldwin Refrigeration, was probably selected over someone from Vancouver because the refrigerated storage unit was the largest in the region, and perhaps required installation expertise not available in Vancouver.

The business occupied the old shop during construction phase, but it was razed after the move to the new quarters to make way for a new, much larger greenhouse with 10,000 feet of glass. In contrast, the old greenhouse, which was retained, had only 400 square feet of glass. The *Columbian* hailed the new cast-concrete building as “one of the most modern of its type in the Pacific Northwest” and declared it “strikingly modern in its design and appointments.” Specifically noted were the unusual arrangement of the display windows and design which allowed for equal viewing from both interior and exterior, modern indirect lighting, the large, intricate neon sign, and the chrome-trimmed marquees.

It may seem surprising that such a relatively elaborate building was constructed in the 1930s. However, the floral business was less impacted by the Great Depression than most others. Many practitioners cut wages and prices to survive. Lower prices for flowers meant that they made a popular, relatively affordable gift, and sales typically increased as the decade continued. Lower labor costs overall meant that greenhouse construction was relatively inexpensive, and businesses could expand their output close to home. The Luepke store, with its curving Moderne lines, bold signage highlighting the owner’s name, sleek chrome trim, displays that curved out into the shop, glamorous refrigerated display, and modern lighting fixtures inside and for displays was on the cutting edge of 1930s floral shops. Given Rudy’s civic boosterism, it seems logical that the

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shop was also meant to inspire optimism among Vancouver residents and downtown businesses. With business still strong Rudy and Gertrude employed two other florists full-time, and also had at least one a part-time employee during the Depression years.

Architect and Architecture

Luepke has hired local architect Donald J. Stewart (1895-1996). A native of Spokane, Stewart became a registered architect in Washington State in 1931. He was formally educated at Washington State College (now university), and had served in the military as an engineer. His practical experience included working with various architects including Thompson & Churchill and Benjamin Wister Morris in New York City; A.E. Doyle in Portland; and John Graham in Seattle; as well as spent some time studying and traveling in Europe. When he began his architectural practice in 1931 in Vancouver, it was an uphill battle due to the Great Depression, but his took hold. Eventually he rose to become one of the city's most prolific and prominent architects, along side with Day W. Hilborn.

In just the same year of the Luepke commission, the prolific Stewart also designed the Sparks Motors Building at 6th and Broadway (also Moderne), prepared remodeling plans for Sparks Hardware at 607 Main, and the Elks Lodge, additions to the Vancouver Ice and Coal Company, a new commercial building near 14th and Main, and several residences. He also was elected chair of the Vancouver Planning Commission, and received an award for the design of a cold storage plant near Tillamook, Oregon.

Among Stewart's solo or joint efforts with other architects were school designs in Vancouver for Hudson's Bay and Vancouver high schools and Hough Elementary School, and Deer Hall, the Boy's Dormitory and Hunter Gymnasium at the Washington School for the Deaf. Works outside Vancouver include Camas High School, the Skamania County Courthouse in Stevenson, Washington, and Portland, Oregon's First Methodist Church and the Blue Cross Building. Stewart considered his most significant accomplishment, however, to be the design for Vancouver's First Presbyterian Church, dedicated in 1959, of which he was a parishioner.

Volunteer activities included service on the Vancouver and Clark County planning commissions, and as president and long-time member of the Fort Vancouver Historical Society. In the latter capacity, he was also a supporter of plans to reconstruct Fort Vancouver. Stewart's civic-mindedness was also evidenced by his and wife Elizabeth's donation of 12 acres of land to the city in 1974 for use as a park.

One of the most significant local examples of Streamlined Moderne, the Luepke shop and its distinctive rose-bedecked neon signage and prominent round window have become very recognizable and well-known to local residents; the window and sign are included in the Vancouver Tapestry, a large, significant local needlework art piece created to record area history. Other examples of Streamlined Moderne architecture in Vancouver include the 1941 Pepsi Cola Bottling Plant also designed by Stewart. There are several significant buildings of the general period, but these fall more clearly in the realm of the Art Deco style. Examples include Day Hilborn's Clark County Courthouse (1941) and Kiggins Theater complex (1936); and the Vancouver Telephone Exchange (1936) by the Seattle architectural firm of Albertson, Wilson, & Richardson.

Vancouver in the late 1930s and early 1940s

The floral shop was constructed during a time of preparation in Vancouver for a future then unknown but rapidly unfolding on a national and international scale. President Franklin Roosevelt had visited the city in September of 1937 while on a trip inspecting construction of the Columbia River dams which were helping bring the region out of the Depression and extend electric power to more remote areas. Their eventual power production would enable the building of major industries like Alcoa Aluminum in Vancouver which would play an important role in national defense during World War II. Other 1930s WPA projects of a local nature, such as significant improvements to the city water system and construction and extension of power transmission lines, would also stand the city in good stead after the United States entered the war as a combatant in December 1941, and Henry Kaiser swiftly brought defense shipbuilding to the city the following year, with its concomitant rapid and exponential population increase.

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First Remodel

Luepke's business continued to operate successfully through the war years, and easing of wartime materials restriction allowed for addition of a and gift shop west of the 1937 floral shop in 1946 (also designed by Stewart). This would have been one of the first post-war opportunities for expansion of a building in the city as building materials restrictions during the war would not have allowed for construction of an addition. The war boom in population meant that the town would remain significantly larger than before the conflict, and business prospects looked positive. Stewart's plans for the addition are dated October 8, 1945. Therefore, the owners moved into action to expand very quickly after the Japanese surrender in August, and formal signing of the document on board the *U.S.S. Missouri* on September 2. Luepke's addition was part of a larger post-war building expansion in Vancouver. In the first month after the end of the war, building permits totaled \$257,064, the majority of which -- \$132,000 -- was for non-residential new construction, and \$126,500 for alterations to commercial buildings.

Construction was not announced for the addition, designed to sell garden equipment and tools, seeds, and plants, and planned to cost between \$10,000 and \$12,000, until January of 1946. Low-bidding contractor Larry O. Collins began construction in February after removal of a greenhouse on the site. It is probable Luepke delayed construction so that it would be completed in time for the summer 1946 growing season. However, the winter of 1945-46 was unusually harsh, and that may have delayed the start, as well as could have personal or business economic considerations or competition for materials and labor at a time when the war was barely over. A national emphasis on providing housing for returning veterans placed a hold on many building projects. Architect Stewart also had a number of projects going at the same time. Still, the selling of gardening equipment and supplies seemed like a good investment at a time when home gardens were still being encouraged so that large-scale farming could be dedicated to export.

The 1949 Sanborn map shows the building as it currently is, but with only one greenhouse still remaining to the west, and the rest of the block built up commercially and residentially and no longer containing any floral gardens. The need for greenhouses and planting beds had been replaced by large greenhouses constructed on 80 acres of property near Dollar's Corner called Cedar Lawn Farms where the firm raised potted plants, bedding plants, and cut flowers to sell to their customers, and to other floral businesses. Cedar Lawn Farms was located about 12 miles from the shop. The three greenhouses at Cedar Lawns measured 150 x 30 feet each, and of an advanced modern design constructed without interior supports. The open space allowed room for a small tractor to enter and place plants and soil and remove them rather than those tasks being performed by hand with a wheelbarrow. The farm also had several simpler and smaller greenhouses, a pumphouse, a building housing a heating plant, potting room, flower refrigerator, office, and garage, and a residence for a superintendent. About four acres were dedicated to growing perennials, and about six to cut flowers. An artificial lake was constructed to produce water plants. In 1949, two of the large greenhouses and several of the smaller ones were completely dedicated to growing chrysanthemums. The business was also known for raising asters.

Second Remodel

To celebrate the 1959 50th anniversary of the business, Luepke's secured the services of local architect W. Donald Cassady to freshen up the appearance of the building within the bounds of the existing footprint. At that time the interior north wall of the floral shop was sheathed with paneling, and large, hanging globular light fixtures replaced the original flattened metal disk fixtures. The original exterior doors flanking the diagonal entry were replaced with aluminum and glass ones, which remain today. The paneling has since been removed; some of the globe lights remain.

The Floral Business in the Late 20th Century

The floral industry changed significantly in the late 20th century as cut flowers and potted plants became increasingly available and less expensive in supermarkets. Consumers became more likely to purchase them for themselves or as gifts along with their regular groceries at a lower price than was typical of florists. Improvements in packing, refrigeration, and transportation technology resulted in faster shipment from abroad

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of flowers which were of high quality and less expensive to purchase. Florist operations in general were challenged by these economic and technological pressures and many went out of business.

Luepke's Today

Rudy and Louise's three sons Bart, Nick, and Rudy did not elect to stay in the family business but Gertrude's daughter and son-in-law, Diane and Ronald Frichtl, purchased Rudy's portion of the business and became the third generation of the family to be involved. Gertrude (who had remarried in 1964 to Benjamin Gerstein) retired about 1974, and died in 1983. The Frichtls remained active in the business until about 2004, and then sold it to Maria and Alan Adler, who operated it until the end of 2014, when they sold business and building to current owner Bruno Amicci. Amicci did not originally intend to continue the floral business but soon decided to operate it as Luepke Flowers & Finds, with a gift shop added. At the present he is actively rehabilitating the building with plans to add a coffee bar, brew pub, and art space.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____
Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Or Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>45°37'52.17"N</u>	<u>122°40'22.78"W</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated area is located in Section 27 of Township 2N, Range 1E in Clark County, Washington.

It is legally described as Lot 8 & 9 of the Vancouver 1st Addition of Vancouver, Washington. It is otherwise known as Tax Parcel No. 47281000 & 51915000

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property encompasses the entire urban tax lot that is occupied by Luepke Florist.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Holly K. Chamberlain
organization _____ date 7/13/2015
street & number 2223 G St telephone 360-921-5992
city or town Vancouver state WA zip code 98663
e-mail mitchamb@pacifier.com

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)



Google Earth - Edit Placemark

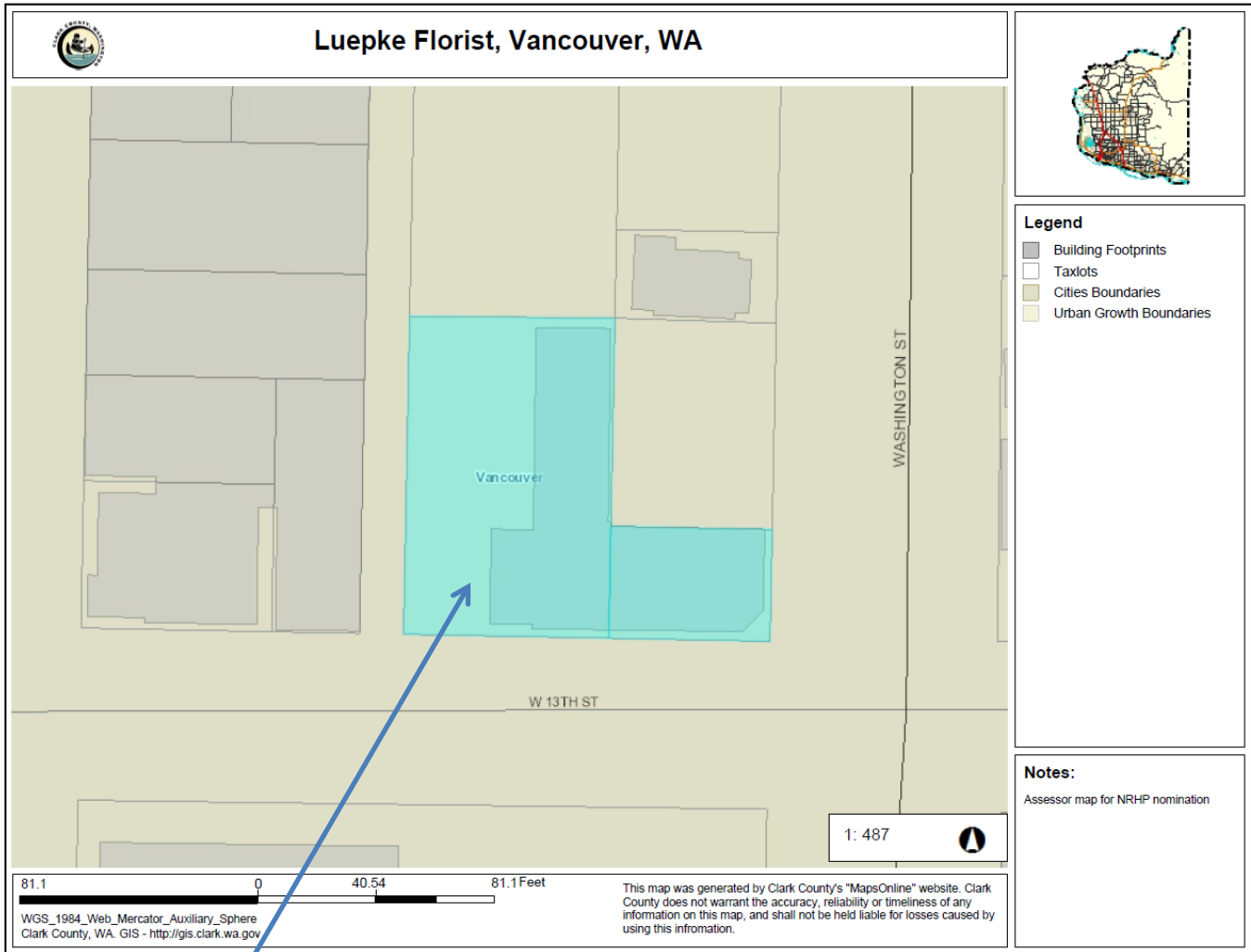
Name: 

Latitude:

Longitude:

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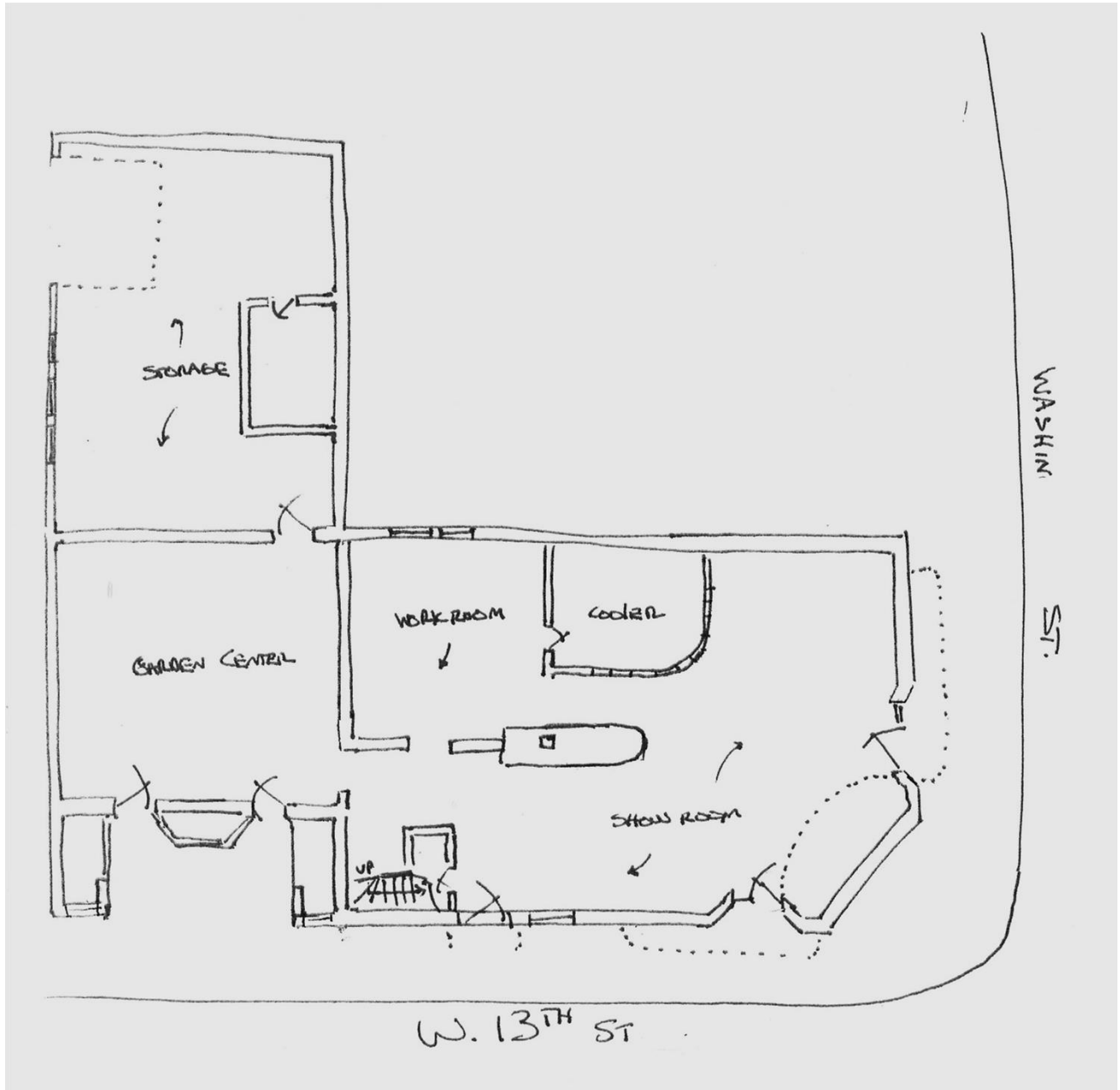
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Nomination Boundaries

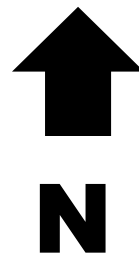
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Luepke Florist

Floor Plan – 1st floor
Not to scale



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Luepke Florist, first shop premises - date unknown
Image courtesy of Luepke Florist Collection



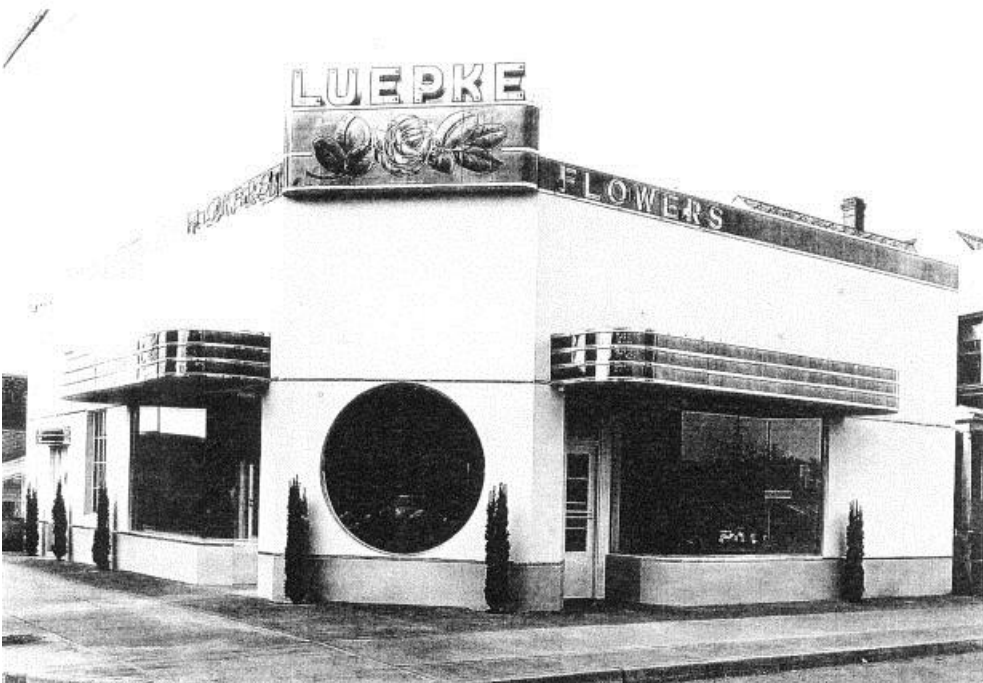
Luepke Florist, first shop premises - date unknown
Image courtesy of *The Columbian*

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Edla, Frank, and Rudy Luepke in greenhouse; 1909
Image courtesy of Luepke Florist Collection



South and east elevations of building as built, c. 1937
Image courtesy of Luepke Florist Collection

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Interior flower cooler, c. 1937, looking north
Image courtesy of Luepke Florist Collection



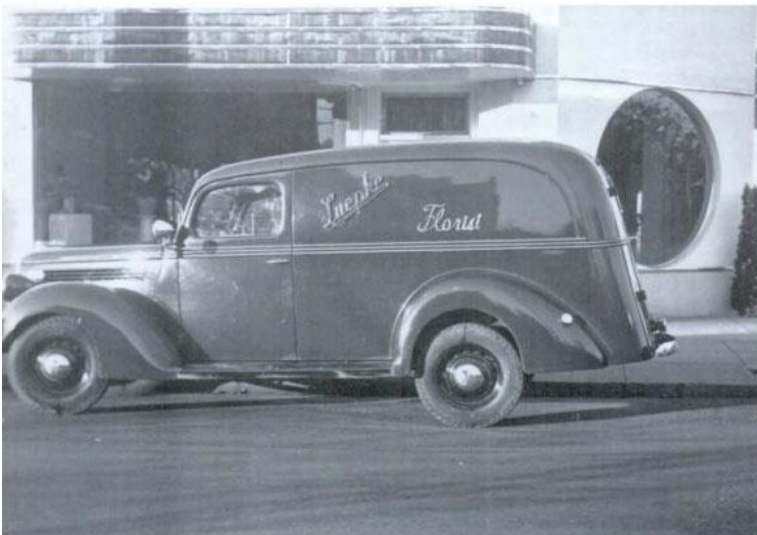
Interior Display Case, c. 1937, looking southeast
Image courtesy of Luepke Florist Collection

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Garden Shop addition, c. 1946, looking northeast
Image courtesy of Luepke Florist Collection



Luepke Florist Delivery Truck, c. 1940
Image courtesy of Legendary Locals of Vancouver

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Rudy Luepke in greenhouse, c. 1950
Image courtesy of Legendary Locals of Vancouver



Advertisement Luepke Florist
Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Directory -1948

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Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.



Name of Property: Luepke Florist
City or Vicinity: Vancouver
County: Clark State: Washington
Photographer: Holly Chamberlain
Date Photographed: 11 July 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: south and east (primary) elevations

Luepke Florist
Name of Property

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Name of Property: Luepke Florist
City or Vicinity: Vancouver
County: Clark State: Washington
Photographer: Holly Chamberlain
Date Photographed: 11 July 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: east elevation

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Name of Property: Luepke Florist
City or Vicinity: Vancouver
County: Clark State: Washington
Photographer: Holly Chamberlain
Date Photographed: 11 July 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: north elevation of original portion with mural under construction

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Luepke Florist
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Name of Property: Luepke Florist
City or Vicinity: Vancouver
County: Clark State: Washington
Photographer: Holly Chamberlain
Date Photographed: 11 July 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: east elevation of 1946 addition

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Name of Property: Luepke Florist
City or Vicinity: Vancouver
County: Clark State: Washington
Photographer: Holly Chamberlain
Date Photographed: 11 July 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: north and west elevations of 1946 addition

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Name of Property: Luepke Florist
City or Vicinity: Vancouver
County: Clark State: Washington
Photographer: Holly Chamberlain
Date Photographed: 11 July 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: south elevation

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Name of Property: Luepke Florist
City or Vicinity: Vancouver
County: Clark State: Washington
Photographer: Holly Chamberlain
Date Photographed: 11 July 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: detail of sign

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Name of Property: Luepke Florist

City or Vicinity: Vancouver

County: Clark

State: Washington

Photographer: Holly Chamberlain

Date Photographed: 11 July 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number: shop interior looking west toward sales counter and workroom

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Name of Property: Luepke Florist

City or Vicinity: Vancouver

County: Clark

State: Washington

Photographer: Holly Chamberlain

Date Photographed: 11 July 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number: shop interior looking northeast showing subway tile and lighting

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Name of Property: Luepke Florist
City or Vicinity: Vancouver
County: Clark State: Washington
Photographer: Holly Chamberlain
Date Photographed: 11 July 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: workroom interior looking northeast

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Name of Property: Luepke Florist
City or Vicinity: Vancouver
County: Clark State: Washington
Photographer: Holly Chamberlain
Date Photographed: 11 July 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: shop interior detail of refrigerated flower display unit

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Name of Property: Luepke Florist
City or Vicinity: Vancouver
County: Clark State: Washington
Photographer: Holly Chamberlain
Date Photographed: 11 July 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: interior detail of refrigerated flower display unit

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Name of Property: Luepke Florist
City or Vicinity: Vancouver
County: Clark State: Washington
Photographer: Holly Chamberlain
Date Photographed: 11 July 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: detail of sales counter with work room to left

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Name of Property: Luepke Florist
City or Vicinity: Vancouver
County: Clark State: Washington
Photographer: Holly Chamberlain
Date Photographed: 11 July 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: detail of original light fixtures

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Name of Property: Luepke Florist
City or Vicinity: Vancouver
County: Clark State: Washington
Photographer: Holly Chamberlain
Date Photographed: 11 July 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: detail of 1959 light fixtures

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Name of Property: Luepke Florist
City or Vicinity: Vancouver
County: Clark State: Washington
Photographer: Holly Chamberlain
Date Photographed: 11 July 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: interior of 1946 shop space under construction

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Name of Property: Luepke Florist
City or Vicinity: Vancouver
County: Clark State: Washington
Photographer: Holly Chamberlain
Date Photographed: 11 July 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: interior of 1946 warehouse space under reconstruction

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Name of Property: Luepke Florist
City or Vicinity: Vancouver
County: Clark State: Washington
Photographer: Holly Chamberlain
Date Photographed: 11 July 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: interior of mezzanine office space over original portion

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Name of Property: Luepke Florist
City or Vicinity: Vancouver
County: Clark State: Washington
Photographer: Holly Chamberlain
Date Photographed: 11 July 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: interior of upper floor office space in 1946 addition looking south

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Name of Property: Luepke Florist
City or Vicinity: Vancouver
County: Clark State: Washington
Photographer: Holly Chamberlain
Date Photographed: 11 July 2015
Description of Photograph(s) and number: interior of basement under original portion looking south

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Property Owner: (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Bruno Amicci
street & number 1300 SW Park Ave, Apt. 1201 telephone 503-810-9547
city or town Portland state OR zip code 97201

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.