

## Model Steam Laundry Building—

244 West 300 North -- By Nelson Knight

This month's building reminds us of the mixed use nature of Capitol Hill's neighborhoods, especially on the blocks west of 200 West. This area was part of Salt Lake City's original Plat 'A', and consists of large ten-acre blocks separated by 132 foot wide streets. This neighborhood has always been an area of diverse uses, including houses, multi-family dwellings, commercial buildings, and small-and large scale industrial uses. In the 1870 and 1880s, early farms that characterized this neighborhood were subdivided and sold to developers. The proximity of the area to the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad line quickly attracted industrial uses, such as the Morrison-Merrill Lumber Company and Salt Lake Hardware buildings on 400 West, just north of North Temple.



Another company attracted to the area was the Model Steam Laundry Company. Originally located on Orpheum Avenue in downtown Salt Lake City, the Model Laundry moved its expanding business to a newly constructed building at 244 West 300 North. This architecturally modest, but sizable building boasts a strong architectural pedigree. Built in 1912 and expanded in 1915, the building was designed by Frederic Albert Hale, notable architect of such buildings as the Alta Club at 100 E. South Temple;

the Keith-Brown Mansion, at 529 E. South Temple; the David Keith Building at 242-256 S. Main Street (Home of Sam Weller's Bookstore) and at least one other laundry building, the American Linen Supply Company once located at 33 W. 600 South between Main and State Streets. The Contractors for the building were John and Henry Schraven, builders of the original Salt Lake City Library (which, until recently, housed the Hansen Planetarium), several public schools, and the W.P. Fuller Warehouse at 400 South and 400 West.

Hale and the Schravens' building was a two story brick structure, with decorative brick pilasters and cornices on the front. The open floor plan was lit by large windows on all sides of the building.. Historic photos show a tall water tower and an even taller stack at the back of the building.

According to Architectural Historian Korral Broschinsky's 2001 research concerning the history of the building, The Model Laundry's steam powered operation was divided into zones. Historic interior photographs show large washing machines and wringers on the main floor, with drying and pressing equipment on the second floor. A 1915 addition was constructed to provide, according to the 19C15 Polk city directory, "a special department for hotel and rooming house work, which cannot be excelled." The 1915 directory also noted that all washing was done in sterilized and triple filtered water. Manager of the laundry was Ernest J. Wignall, an Avenues resident who had worked in the laundry business for 57 years at the time of his death in 1964.

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Despite several decades of success, the Model Steam Laundry Company went out of business in the 1930s. The building sat vacant for a few years, until it was sold to the Salt Lake Knitting Works. The Knitting Works made several modifications to the building to accommodate knitting, sewing and finishing machines, and stockrooms. The Knitting Works specialized in ladies coats and suits, but produced other types of women's apparel that was sold at its store at 42 South Main Street.

The Knitting Works sold the property to Zions Securities Corporation in 1960. The buildings were used by the LDS Church as maintenance shops in the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1980s, Bud Bailey construction acquired the building and rehabilitated the structure for their offices. Several other businesses also used the building. The building currently houses Colvin Engineering and several smaller businesses.