

The Buildings of Longview

The First Building *Hotel Monticello*

The first permanent building to be erected in Longview was the Hotel Monticello in the Georgian-Revival Style on the west side of the Civic Center.

“The Hotel”, as it is locally known, opened for business on July 23, 1923, as the centerpiece around which Longview was to grow and the gathering place for important events. The 200-room hotel provided lodging for prospective residents and business people looking to locate in the area.

As intended, the Hotel Monticello remains a focal point of community and social activities with its ballroom, lounge and restaurant.

All photos courtesy of the Cowlitz County Historical Museum and the Longview Public Library's Longview Room.

Longview is a planned city that was conceptualized between 1919–1922 when the Long-Bell Lumber Company purchased 14,000 acres of the Columbia River Valley bottom to build a mill site and accompanying town. Seventy thousand acres of timber were purchased from the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company in Lewis and Cowlitz Counties and Longview was born. Longview was the only planned city of its magnitude to have ever been conceived of and built entirely with private funds. Longview was completely planned down to the last sidewalk and the last street name before construction ever began.



R.A. Long H.S., est. 1927

Designed by William B. Ittner, this Georgian Revival-styled school (*left*) was gifted to the community by the City's founder, Robert A. Long. The school's mascot is the Lumberjack, homage to Long's timber interests and the area's economic reliance on the timber industry.

Community Church, est. 1923

Recognizing the spiritual needs of the City, R.A. Long contributed the land on the corner of Washington Way and Kessler Boulevard along with \$25,000 toward construction of the Community Church (*right*). He also donated a set of chimes for the towers. There were 22 bells in all, with the largest weighing 2,000 pounds and the smallest weighing 475 pounds.



General Hospital, est. 1932

Shortly after its founding, the hospital (*left*) moved into the old train depot in 1935 and was renamed Cowlitz General Hospital. After the new hospital opened in 1968, it was renamed Monticello Medical Center and in 1987 became a campus for St. John Medical Center.



U.S. Post Office, est. 1933

The United States Post Office (*right*) was constructed in part to aid the local economy during the Great Depression. Built to similar scale as that of other buildings around the Civic Center, this building combines the classic style with Art Deco accents. Inside you will find colored inlaid flooring, aluminum accents and gold leaf patterns in the walnut walls.



Jefferson Square, est. 1923

The focal point of the Planned City, Jefferson Square (*below*) was designed by the Kansas City-based planning & landscape architecture firm that designed Longview, Hare & Hare, with input from J.C. Nichols and George Kessler. From the Park, Longview's founders could look across the Planned City to some of the most key, now-historic areas of town. The Park was renamed R.A. Long Park in 1928 after the City's founder.



Longview Public Library, est. 1926

As a personal gift from Robert A. Long, the local public library (*above*) represents the value the City's founder placed on the community's cultural and intellectual growth.

Its graceful Georgian Revival-style includes one of the few rooftop cupolas in the region. This unique style was maintained when voters approved major expansion projects, first in 1953 and again in 1967. When the remodeling was complete, the Library had triple the floor space of the original building.



Columbia River Mercantile Building, est. 1923

Completed in 1923, "The Merk" (*below*) was the first commercial structure to be built in downtown Longview. It served as the "company store" and headquarters for the Long-Bell Lumber Company. The Merk was sold in 1950 by Long-Bell and acquired by Allied Stores, Inc., who turned it into a department store. Years later it was sold again to local businessman John Chilson who restored it to its former glory.



YMCA, est. 1924

The only early Tudor-styled YMCA (*above*) anywhere in the world, even in England where the organization began. The building is impressive, yet friendly and welcoming with its French doors and windows, peaked log trim and sloping gabled roof with wrought iron balconies. Mr. Long's YMCA dream and gift to the community had cost over double his original estimated figure of \$75,000, with a finished price tag of \$166,000.00! The YMCA is still enjoyed today by families all over the area.



Columbia Theatre, est. 1925

On April 4, 1925, the Columbia Theatre (*above*) opened to the public, which could seat roughly one fourth of the population at the time (1,000 patrons). The Theatre was originally outfitted with a 9-rank Kimball organ to accompany silent film screenings.

In its early days, the theater hosted touring shows, including dates featuring an unknown Portland-based actor at the time, Clark Gable.



Tennant Mansion, est. 1927

Built on a 50-acre site, this three-story, 13,000 sq. ft. English colonial mansion (*left*) was originally home to John D. Tennant, the Vice President of the Long-Bell Lumber Company. It was crafted almost entirely from Longview-sourced Douglas Fir with stone quarried from Mt. Solo. The Rutherglen Mansion, as it is known now, is currently listed on the national historic registry.