

Walruses in Hog Heaven After Restoration

by Ginny Smith

What could the restoration of a landmark building in Seattle possibly mean to a 66-year-old walrus?

Plenty, if you're one of the 27 walruses that grace the 10-story Arctic Building at Third Avenue and Cherry Street. They've been tusklessly gumming the breeze for some 33 years. But their tusks are now back, thanks to **Carma Developers'** restoration work on the building.

When the Arctic Building was constructed back in 1916, the walrus heads were intended to apprise passersby of the building's noble native inspiration. Each one sported a pair of terracotta tusks.

Everything was fine until the earthquake of 1949. No, the tusks didn't fall off during the quake, but our city fathers were afraid they might, if another quake struck. So the walruses were rendered toothless, and the tusks vanished forever.

End of story? Not quite. Carma Developers purchased the Arctic Building in 1980 and won the nation's first conservation easement to restore the property to its former grandeur.

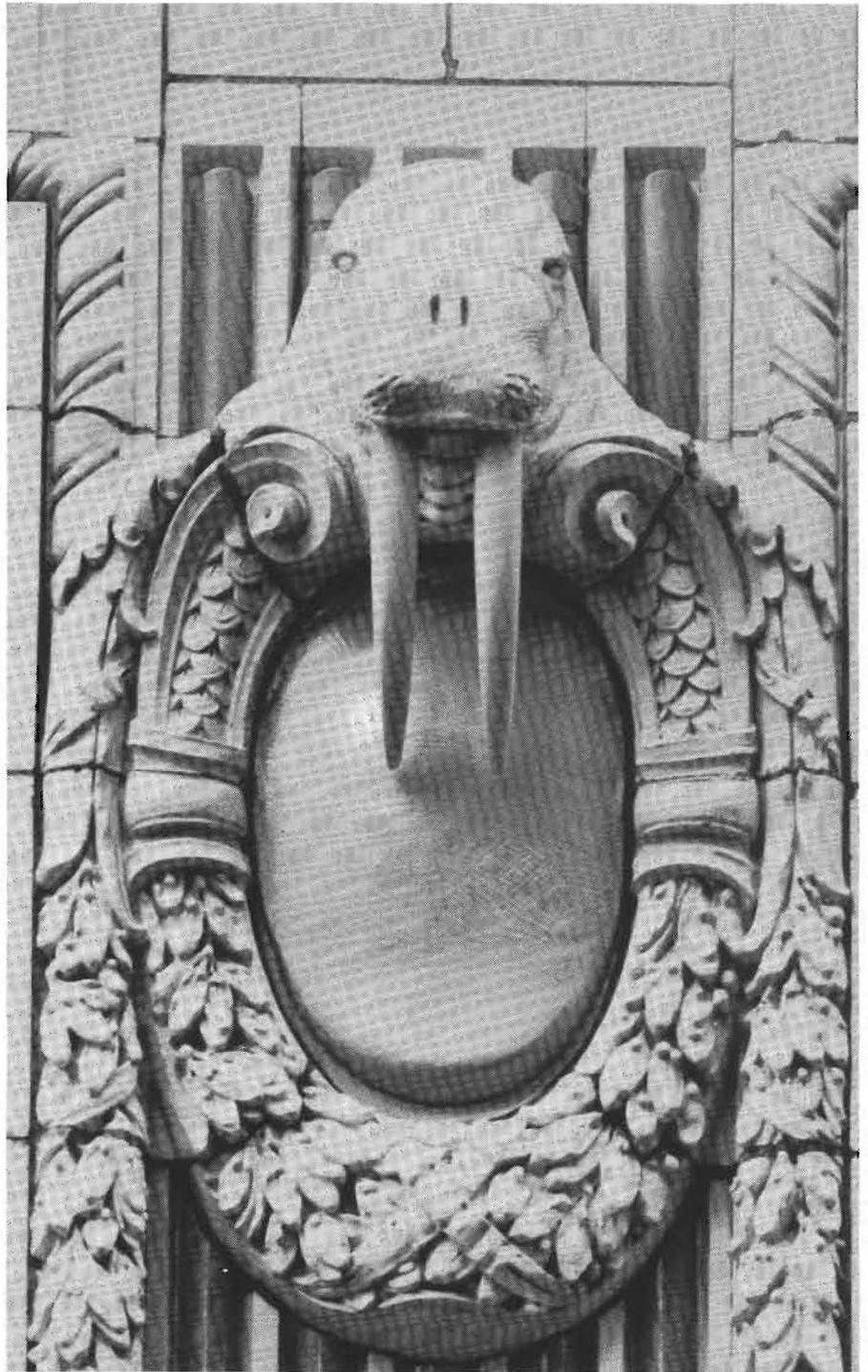
Naturally, part of that restoration project just *had* to be new tusks for the walruses. But how do you replace 54 walrus tusks when the originals can't be found?

No problem, said Carma. They unearthed a photograph of the walrus heads, snapped before the 1949 earthquake, and took it to **Architectural Reproductions, Inc.** in Portland.

There, a wooden model, and then a two-piece plastic mold, were produced and the end result — a set of test tusks 15 inches long and two and one-half inches in diameter, each tusk weighing one and a half pounds — were brought to Seattle in mid-March for a trial fitting. Made of cast epoxy, a material guaranteed to withstand Seattle's onslaught of soggy weather, the tusks were deemed a success.

Taking the fears of our city fathers to heart, the developers took all kinds of precautions to make sure these tusks remain attached to the walruses.

Pioneer Masonry Restoration Co. handled the installations, which involved screwing each tusk into an existing socket beneath the walrus's whiskers and then gluing the tusk in place with nonshrink grout.



Walruses on the Arctic Building have been gumming the breeze for 33 years. Now, thanks to Carma Developers, they've got their tusks back.

The walrus heads were also fitted with glass-reinforced polyester masks that are $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick. The purpose of the masks is to cover unsightly holes in the walruses' chins as well as some surface damage. (One head, for example, is missing its cheeks.) □