Hotel Madison, December 1981

Sev Coursen had an art studio on the fifth floor of the Lockhart Building at the corner of Staniford and Causeway Streets from 1981-83. Fascinated by the history of the West End, and aware of the plans for further redevelopment, he began shooting film footage of the rapidly changing neighborhood. Of particular interest was the Madison Hotel.

“I was fascinated by the beautiful old empty hotel, which reminded me of a faded, dry-docked ocean liner many decades past its opulent glory days. The neighborhood around North Station contained some of the last remnants of the old West End, which was continuing to rapidly disappear.”

The residential buildings in the foreground were demolished in the winter of 1982 and spring of 1983; shortly thereafter the Madison was imploded on May 15, 1983.

Coursen is a multi-media artist who works in sculpture, photography, film, video, interactive media and alto sax. His work has been shown in exhibitions and screenings throughout the US and Europe.

(Composite image created by combining multiple 8mm film frames of a sequence shot from the roof of the Lockhart Building)