

## **SIX NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICTS IN A ROW!**

The Wedge Historic District, Buckley's Addition Historic District and College Park Historic District add significant historic resources to Tacoma by being on the National Register of Historic Places.

These three districts join the Stadium-Seminary National Historic District (1977), the North Slope Historic District, (2003) and Wright Park and Seymour Conservatory (1976) that are on the National Register. Wright Park and Seymour Conservatory, while not a residential district, is on the National Register of Historic Places too, and the first one of this group to gain that honor.

### **ALL SIX ARE CONNECTED IN ONE LARGE IMPRESSIVE GROUP!**



Tacoma City 1893 portion of map publish by J. R. McIntyre Tacoma,

Looking west with part of the Wedge Historic District on the bottom left corner. The North Slope Historic District is the triangular piece across the middle and left. Buckley's Addition Historic District is the rectangular piece west of the North Slope. College Park Historic is in the upper middle The top of the image is west of Alder St.

The table lists the area of the districts, in acres.

- Wright Park & Seymour Conservatory 27
- Wedge 34
- Buckley's Addition 118
- College Park 125
- Stadium Seminary 200
- North Slope 228

***ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CONSIST OF DIRECT QUOTES FROM THEIR RESPECTIVE NATIONAL NOMINATION FORMS.***

## **Wright Park and Seymour Conservatory**

On May 29, 1886 the Tacoma Land Company deeded approximately 27 acres of land to the City of Tacoma exclusively for park purposes. This had followed other gifts to the city, under the auspices of Charles B. Wright, then President of the Company, which were designed to transform the railroad terminus from a village into a bustling, respectable community, and to enhance the land investments of the Northern Pacific Railroad through an anticipated influx of population.

Following the philosophy of Frederick Law Olmstead, who had designed an unused plan for the city in 1873, Tacoma's residential areas were to be encased in a park-like atmosphere, and this deeded property was to become the focal point - The Park – for the residential properties which, with time, would encircle it. And it was befitting to memorialize the generosity of Charles B. Wright by naming the park in his honor. Wright never lived in Tacoma, but in Pennsylvania; nevertheless, it was he who was instrumental in choosing Tacoma as the terminus. It was he who, throughout his later life, encouraged investment in the potential future of the Pacific Northwest.

When the land for the Park was acquired, it was covered by fallen trees, stumps, and underbrush. That portion in the vicinity of the duck pond was a gulch which required thousands of yards of dirt to fill. The early work on the park must have been shaky, for at one point, when the city was in danger of losing Wright Park for failure to comply with the conditions of the deed, Nelson Bennett, architect of the famous Stampede Tunnel through the Cascades, advanced his personal funds for improvement work in the park.

Seymour Conservatory Facing "G" Street on the east side of the Park is the Seymour Conservatory. W.W.Seymour donated funds for its construction in 1907. The structure is of modest proportions, and its asymmetrical floor plan and unusual massing contribute to its picturesque quality. The conservatory consists of a central twelve-sided rotunda. The steel-

ribbed, glazed, wall structure rises to meet a twelve-sided domical vault off a ceted copper. The drum upon which the copper vault rests is comprised of a continuous series of hinged, three-light wooden sash. Two major wings, each 20 feet by 48 feet, and a central entry wing, 20 feet by 22 feet, have gabled roof surfaces which meet the vertical walks in a slight curve, thus giving the appearance of a Tudor arch configuration. The major side wings extend from the rotunda at an angle approximately 60 from the center axis of the entry wing.

The structure rests on a poured concrete foundation which rises three feet above grade. Framing consists of four-inch steel webs, between which narrow steel mullions anchor the panes themselves vertically, at twelve-inch intervals. The panes vary from 12 inches by 12 inches to 12 inches by 18 inches, and are horizontally overlapped and sealed to one another. Portions of the structure, notably the base of the rotunda to the rear, and the hinged vents at the ridge of each wing, are formed of glazed wooden sash.

## **The Wedge Historic District**

The Wedge traces its development to some of the earliest settlement in Tacoma. Although there had been native people in the region for thousands of years, European exploration in 1792 under the command of British Captain George Vancouver gave Puget Sound area names, many in honor of his crew members. The British later founded Hudson's Bay post at the mouth of the Nisqually River in 1833. The Lewis and Clark Expedition first brought the Americans along the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean in 1805 and American explorers arrived in 1841 to chart the northern Puget Sound. In 1843 the 2,000 mile three-decade "Great Migration" began from Independence, Missouri along the Oregon Trail bringing settlers and their families, although it was not until 1846 that the United States/Canada border was officially established. As land became scarce around the Columbia River, these settlers moved outward. Eventually, Washington Territory separated from the Oregon Territory in 1853 with a population of 3,985.

## **Buckley's Addition National Historic District**

The Buckley's Addition Historic District is a rectangular-shaped residential district located in Tacoma, Washington, on a portion of land above the south shore of Commencement Bay. The area is known to most of us for its historic homes and tree-lined streets. The streets are laid out in the North-South, East-West orientation like most of Tacoma. Buckley's Addition to Tacoma, which defines the parcel layout, was filed for record on June 12, 1883. Buckley's Addition was named for the Buckley's Addition that runs through the northern part of the district. The District encompasses 118 acres.

While all of this was occurring, the Buckley's Addition Historic District maintained a clear physical proximity to the business and commercial core of Tacoma, accessible via the streetcar lines on North I St. and on North K St. The K St. Line ran along North K St. and North 11th and then crossed North Steele into Buckley's Addition at North 12th St. The neighborhood was accessible and attractive to both middle and upper class citizens. The people who built Tacoma lived here because of the easy access to motor transportation to downtown jobs.

A century ago Tacoma, like many American cities, had an extensive streetcar system. The first two lines in Tacoma were constructed in 1888 along the lengths of Pacific Avenue and Tacoma Avenue. A pair of horses pulled each of the yellow streetcars. The lines were a success from the start, carrying many passengers, and were very soon thereafter extended. From these few lines others sprang up, each emanating from Downtown Tacoma into the surrounding areas, allowing for houses and business areas to develop.

Buckley's Addition Historic District was a "streetcar suburb" of Tacoma and popular with residents, as they could easily get from home to jobs downtown, or the factories on the Tide Flats. There were three streetcar lines serving the district, one on 6th Ave a few blocks south of the District; a second streetcar line served the people to the north as it ran along North I St./ North 21st.

The third streetcar line, the K Street Line, ran through the North Slope Historic District on N K St, turned to the South on N 11th and on to the 5-way corner where N Steele, N Cushman, N 11th and N 12th all come together. From there the streetcar went west on N 12th through the middle of the Buckley's Addition to N Pine St. There is visual evidence remaining today of the K Street streetcar line.

## **College Park Historic District**

The College Park neighborhood of Tacoma is a cohesive walkable single family residential area of one to two story tall homes built primarily before Second World War, with an average construction date of 1924. Developed during the a peak in home construction and growth in Tacoma, the period between 1910 and the mid- 1930's. The area was developed and shaped by two main street car line and was at the end of the a third. It represents a typical early streetcar neighborhood of the period that grew out into the undeveloped land west of downtown Tacoma.

During the mid to late 1920's and 1930's it was also influenced by its proximity to the new site of College of Puget Sound campus, the present University of Puget Sound. During this period, the then college moved from its previous site at Sixth Avenue and Division Streets, the current site of Jason Lee Middle School (1924) to the site of pre-world war one residential development known as Rose Park (13th and Lawrence) and the Tacoma athletic fields and track used by the local YMCA.

The College Park neighborhood exhibits the full range of residential architectural styles prevalent during of pre-war and post-world war two in Tacoma. These styles are also documented in pattern books and kit home catalog of the time, but with a primary influence of Craftsman, Tudor Revival and Colonial Revival houses. Most of its residences are relatively modest structures, built for young professionals and the working class, but with a few good examples of high-style architect-designed homes and buildings.

## The Stadium-Seminary Historic District

The Stadium-Seminary Historic District in the City of Tacoma is a residential neighborhood of substantial two and three-story homes developed between 1888 and 1930. It is located northwest of the central business district on a high sloping site along a bluff overlooking Commencement Bay.

With in the district there are an early 400 buildings in an area encompassing the equivalent of 50 blocks. This neighborhood is distinguished by its exceptional quality and variety of architecture and its unusual continuity of period that is only rarely interrupted by more modern structures. It is an odd shaped district that is roughly from N 2nd to N 10th and from N 21st to the bluff overlooking Commencement Bay.

## The North Slope Historic District

The North Slope Historic District is a trapezoidal-shaped residential district located in Tacoma, Washington. The district is located on the upper portion of an area above the south shore of Commencement Bay, known to most for its historic homes and tree-lined streets. The streets are laid out parallel to the Commencement Bay water line, while the rest of Tacoma is in a North-South, East-West orientation. The District encompasses 228 acres.

The entire North Slope Historic District was settled primarily as a residential neighborhood, the same use the area has today. It contains a wide variety of architecture, from the humble bungalow, to the elegant Queen Anne mansion. The neighborhood has, for the most part, retained its street trees (mainly horse chestnut and maple), which contribute significantly to the area's historic character.

The district developed over time and it is common to find structures built as early as 1900 standing beside structures built 20, 30 and 50 years later. According to various Tacoma street maps, structures were built "sporadically throughout the area rather than showing a concentration of building in one area at anyone stage of growth. Seventy-eight percent of the homes were built prior to 1930. It took an additional 25 years for another 12 percent of the homes to be added. Such a development pattern has resulted in the varied architectural style and types found on any block, which is readily apparent to the casual observer.