



Trolley Times

North Slope Historic District Inc. Feb. 2018
501(c)(3) Organization Volume 85

FEB. 22 PROGRAM FEATURES FIXING, SELLING YOUR HOUSE

Time to think about spring projects around the house, whether you're looking to make your home ready to sell or more convenient for you. We have two Trolley sponsors who will share with you their ideas and expertise in projects around the house.

Turn Key Realty's Craig Tuttle, along with Steven Rork from R-4 Construction, will discuss what changes enhance sale of a house, and how to get these changes done as economically as possible.

They will be joined by Lauren Hoogkamer, the City's Historic Preservation Coordinator, to answer Landmarks/guidelines-related questions that can apply to many projects.

**Feb. 22, 6:30 for Coffee Time
Program Starts at 7 pm
Immanuel Presbyterian Church
Entrance on N. 9th**

MANY INDIVIDUAL HOMES ON TACOMA HISTORIC REGISTER

Taken from City's Website, "Tacoma Culture"

The City of Tacoma maintains the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, which includes *individually* registered City Landmarks in addition to Historic Districts and Conservation Districts. Nominations of properties to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places may be made by citizens or property owners, which are then reviewed by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. If found to meet the criteria, the Commission makes recommendations for designation to City Council. Changes to the exteriors of all City Landmark properties must be approved by the Landmarks Commission.

There are over 160 properties *individually* listed on Tacoma's Register of Historic Places, ranging in age from the 1870s through 1940. Landmark buildings and properties are scattered throughout the city, and represent a wide variety of perspectives, architectural design, and local history.

In 1995, the North Slope Historic District was the first residential historic district to be placed on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places.

NSHD properties individually listed on the Tacoma Register:

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------|
| 1201 Division | Frisko Freeze |
| 912 N I St. | Geiger House |
| 206 N J St | Park Universal Church |
| 701 N J St | Henry Rhodes House |
| 1001 N I St | William R. Rust House |
| 211 N J St | John Shackelford House |

For a full list see: <https://goo.gl/YffSEz>

The NSHD, as a District, is on the Tacoma Register, but the individual houses in the District are not on the Tacoma Register.

Properties can be placed on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places individually through a nomination process. You can view that process by visiting this website: <https://goo.gl/VGS6b1>

STREETLIGHTS CHANGING TO LED TECHNOLOGY

By Leigh Starr, PE, PMP,
Signal and Streetlight Operations, City of Tacoma

The City's Public Works Department and Tacoma Public Utilities are working to replace most of Tacoma's aging streetlights with new, energy-efficient LED fixtures by the end of 2018. The City has hired a contractor to replace overhead fixtures with new LED ones, and City crews are replacing fixtures in response to streetlight outages. Also, LED technology has improved so much, City crews can now convert ornamental fixtures using LED lamps.

The LED industry has been changing very rapidly, and the City has done extensive research on LED design and on the effects of LED color temperatures. There have also been numerous reports done on the effects of LED lighting and there is quite a bit of controversy on the subject.



Early thinking was that the whiter the better, and the City installed a few 5000K lamps, but some find the whiter light to be too harsh, and can cause glare issues. On the other end of the spectrum (literally), there are recommendations to limit the color temperature to a maximum of 3000K.

After much research, the City found that the optimum color temperature for night time lighting is 4000K, which is about the same color as moonlight. Studies have clearly shown that drivers can see up to 200% further than current lighting allows, and the actual color is not distorted by the light.

And so, on nearly all arterial streets, 4000K fixtures will be installed; on residential streets, 3000K fixtures will be used, since the speeds are much lower, and sight distance is not as critical to safety. To help citizens understand what their street may look like, the City has proactively installed LED lamps and fixtures along a few streets in the North End of Tacoma:

1. N. Anderson: N. 12th to N. 17th Street - 3000K ornamental
2. N. Union: N. 22nd to N. 26th Street - 3000K overhead and ornamental.
3. N. Union: N. 13th to N. 18th Street - Mix of 3000K and 4000K.
4. N. 26th Street: N. Adams to N. Warner Streets - 4000K fixtures.

There are so many advantages to LED lights, but one of the biggest is energy reduction. With the resulting savings from the conversion, the City will be able spend more of its resources fixing some of the damaged and outdated remaining streetlight infrastructure, as well as move some of its resources over to improving our very outdated traffic-signal system.

To find out more and to view an interactive map please visit the project website:

www.cityoftacoma.org/LEDStreetlights



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From the Past of the NSHD

Adapted from Trolley Times, Jan. 2001

Who Was Valerie Sivinski?

Valerie Sivinski was a leading preservationist in Tacoma, both as the former City Historic Preservation Officer and as an architect in private practice. Her projects included many downtown buildings, and the formation of the North Slope Historic District.

In the early 1990's, a group of North J St. residents were referred to Sivinski's office for help in forming an historic district to discourage the tearing down of historic houses to build apartments. Sivinski advised the group to survey North J Street owners for interest in forming an historic district, while her office determined if a district was justified.

What emerged was an historic district with simple architectural guidelines for any structural changes made to the exterior of the contributing buildings. Structures too modern or in drastically marred condition were called non-contributing and were not subject to the ordinance. This excluded all the modern apartment buildings of the 1960's, 70's and 80's, and included all sizes and shapes of houses and older apartments from the 1880's to 1953.

So, residents went to work, going door-to-door to sell the idea of an historic district. North J. St. came first, and then all the letter-and-named-streets south to Jason Lee School. By 2000, the District was complete. During this time, a solid group of residents interested in an historic neighborhood developed.

And, somewhere along the line, in the years from 1993-2000, the residents of the North Slope absorbed Valerie's point of view of the value of our neighborhood as a *chronicle* of the lives of real people in Tacoma from the 1880s to the 1950s. Her view was that the variety and breadth of housing types and sizes as the North Slope developed in fits and starts over the years was as important as the historic value of the individual buildings.

Julie Turner, one of the residents who worked with Valerie on the original N. J Street ordinance and the subsequent extensions, feels that Valerie's guidance and professional advice were

key elements in the successful formation of the Historic District.

"Val taught us," says Turner, "to think of more than just 'no more apartments;' she taught us our place in Tacoma's history."

Val was fond of saying a person could stroll the streets of the North Slope and see what was built, and how people lived over a 50-year span. So, think of Valerie as you walk along our streets, and appreciate what she saw in all the old houses we are fortunate to call home.

If you would like to read more about how the NSHD started and was formed, and the reasons for it, go to the NSHD website, tacomanorthslope.org and click on "History, Articles, and Stories" and click on Chapter 1.



Tidbits from the Website

TacomaNorthSlope.org

Library Items Available for Home Research

New article (4/2017) from the Main Library's NorthWest Room on how to research the history of your home. Read this article here: <http://tacomanorthslope.org/library/NSHDarticles/researchyourhome.pdf>

Eighteen Words

Hidden in a section of the State's Growth Management Planning, in the State's "Planning Goals," are 18 very important words that talk about historic preservation in Washington State. Read this article here: <http://tacomanorthslope.org/library/NSHDarticles/18words1.pdf>

A Homeowner's Report on Working with Landmarks Commission

Marcie's report on building her deck using help from Tacoma's Historic Preservation Office and Landmarks Commission. Read this article here: <http://tacomanorthslope.org/library/NSHDarticles/Marcie-changes%20to%20house.pdf>

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TacomaNorthSlope.org NSHD web page

TROLLEY TIMES. The NSHD newsletter, published Feb., May, Aug., and Nov. Delivered to all single family homes in the NSHD. The current addition can always be found at: <https://goo.gl/5sdbHq>

North Slope NEWS. Sign up on NSHD web page, and have items of general NSHD news, events, and the on-line *Trolley Times* sent to your email. Send your questions, comments and remarks to news@TacomaNorthSlope.org

FROM THE EDITOR

The purpose of the *Trolley Times* is to inform North Slope Historic District residents about coming events, and provide articles of helpful information and ideas about living in an historic home in an historic neighborhood. The *Trolley Times* is published 4 times per year.

We would like to hear from you about your views of the *Trolley Times*. Is it meeting the stated objectives? What would you like to see in future editions?

Would you like to help on the Communications Committee charged with putting out the newsletter? If so, let's talk!

And, of course, the NSHD Board of Directors is looking for volunteers for its many activities it has going on in your neighborhood. Please send your information and thoughts, ideas and requests to the Editor:

juliejayturner@gmail.com. We will respond to your email with appropriate information.

GOOD THINGS NOT SAID IN THE DESIGN GUIDELINES

In the Nov. 2017 “Trolley” our Landmarks Commission Ex Officio member, Marshall McClintock, wrote about how the Design Guidelines for NSHD and the Wedge promote architectural integrity to enhance our neighborhood. *For a review: Design Guidelines: <https://goo.gl/BdNkf1>*

Now, some things **not said** in the Design Guidelines help our neighborhood, too. What not said is that additional protection accrues to NSHD homeowners, over time. The following reasons, implied but not spelled out in the Design Guidelines, are very evident to those living in the NSHD and Wedge Historic Districts for any length of time.

1. By keeping historic homes’ architecture true to the original design, a certain “pride of ownership” takes place; homeowners not only like the house they live in, they love their historic neighborhood. They realize that to have

an historic district endure, owners must help by willingly following the “*Design Guidelines.*” thus creating protection via owner diligence.

2. The integrity of the historic district is kept true, maybe even be improved, as historic homes are fixed up and maintained as close as possible to their original architecture. Outsiders who come into the neighborhood to do work find out that they, too, must follow the guidelines.

3. In short, if you can’t tear it down, you can’t build a non-historic house! Nothing of non-historic character can be built by tearing down a contributing structure, because demolition is not permitted, except by Landmarks, per the NSHD Design Guidelines. This preserves all the historic properties, along with the historic neighborhood.

(New homes are permitted on a few remaining 25-foot lots that date from the original 1800’s platting.)

Market Value Versus Assessed Value?

What would your home sell for in this current real estate boom?



With the new year comes your new assessed value; which besides raising your property taxes, has little affect on you, and your homes MARKET value. North Slope Historic District assessed values are consistently 20%-35% below true market value!

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FROM THE ARCHIVES ...

Taken from the National Register Nomination for NSHD

The single-family home at 912 North L St, was built in the Craftsman Style in 1909. The cost was \$3200; it was designed with six rooms and a bath. In addition, it featured a **Dutch kitchen**, and an upstairs balcony off the front bedroom.

It was the home of Leonard J. Brown, President and Manager, Tacoma Engraving Co., and his wife, Myrtle Soule, and their son and daughter.

Brown was a native of Washington Territory, having been born on a farm south of Olympia in 1873. His father taught in the first school in Olympia. When he was not teaching, the elder Brown worked as an explorer for the government, and as such became one of the first white men to go into the Lake Chelan District.

Leonard attended the first Olympia School, and then studied at the Olympia Collegiate Institute.

As a boy growing up in Olympia, Leonard had the distinction of serving as an office aide to the first governor of Washington State, Elisha P. Ferry. Ferry used to have Leonard sit down and listen while he practiced his speeches.



912 N L St.

Leonard came to Tacoma in the early 1890's to attend Puget Sound College. He managed to work his way through school by selling illustrations he drew in a studio he had created in his dorm room. For 18 years he made his living illustrating, then bought an interest in the Tacoma Engraving Company.

What is a "Dutch kitchen?"

Marshall McClintock explains - -

The first thing to understand is that "Dutch kitchen," as used above, is realtor-hype. It was as truthful in 1909 as it is today. So, what we're really talking about here is a 1909 kitchen ... period.

But here's what I'd guess they were trying to call out by using that term. It probably had built-in cabinets like we have today in kitchens. In 1909 that would have been a new thing. Most kitchens had furniture pieces that provided storage, and built-in cabinetry was typically found only in the 'butler's pantry.' Efficient use of space was something meant by "Dutch" even today. Going with that same idea, I'm guessing that this "Dutch kitchen" was probably designed more for use by the owner family, as opposed to paid help. There might even have been a built-in breakfast nook, suggesting you might actually eat in the kitchen, and not the dining room!

By 1909 there was a 'servant crisis', meaning there were fewer and fewer people willing to enter 'service' due to better paying jobs elsewhere.

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 6

Better-off folks, except the more wealthy, were switching to maids and cooks who came to the house on a daily schedule, and lived elsewhere.

So, how do you turn this trend in kitchens into a selling point? Why, this fine new house provides a "Dutch kitchen" that is pleasantly but efficiently designed with copious storage right at hand, to give a time-saving but pleasant place to "spend time" - never 'work', of course. . .

I seriously doubt there was anything specifically "Dutch" about this kitchen. It was just a way to call out positively the changes that were generally taking place in home-building.



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Continued from page 6

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HISTORIC YEAR FOR THE HISTORIC DISTRICT!

by Isaac Schaefer, Licensed Real Estate Broker

We all witnessed the countless "For Sale" signs that went up throughout Tacoma, specifically in the North End, this past year. More important were the "Sale Pending" and "SOLD" signs that followed. Observing this throughout the year, it should come as no surprise that in the North Slope Historic District alone, there were a total of 67 properties sold in 2017.

While this number is indeed staggering, upon reviewing this historic year (in regards to local real estate sales) there is one statistic that catches my eye more than any other:

- At the beginning of 2013, the average sold price for homes in the North Slope Historic District was \$277,872. By the end of 2016 the average had increased to \$330,415; that is a \$52,543 or **19% increase over four years.**
- Fast forward to January 2017; the average sale price was \$341,735, and by the end of the year it had increased to \$385,414. That is a \$43,679 or **13% increase in just one year!**



I had the opportunity to witness and participate in this historic year, since I both live and work in the North Slope Historic District. If you are interested in more statistics, give me a call at 253-756-7200 or email me at isaac@tkrei.com.

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CARMEN

Why Replacing Wood Windows is a Costly Mistake

by Jeff Williams

[The following article has been edited to fit the Trolley by permission of the author. Mr. Williams, a member of Tacoma's Landmarks Preservation Commission, is a long-time restorer of historic homes. We thank him for allowing us to publish his article on the value of saving wood windows.]

In Tacoma, and across the country, many home owners believe vinyl windows are an inexpensive solution to replacing deteriorating, wood windows. But, we now have evidence that the replacement of wood windows is a costly mistake.

I think most will agree that original wood windows are important architectural features in any historic structure. They are the "eyes" of the building. They convey a sense of craftsmanship and detail that cannot be achieved with substitute materials. In my experience with renovating and selling historic homes, I find that buyers are willing to pay a premium for an older home with well-maintained, operational original wood windows over those with vinyl replacement windows. I cite the fact that the majority of my restoration projects involve removing vinyl siding and inappropriately-sized vinyl replacement windows.

I believe that windows are replaced by homeowners if they begin having **operational problems**: they stick or rattle, latches break, glass is broken, sash cords break and the windows have to be held open with a stick, let in outside air, or need to be painted. However, these problems are the simplest, most cost-effective to fix. More often than not, wood windows can be easily repaired to operate correctly and last another hundred years.

Here are just a few of the problems associated with **vinyl windows**:

1. While it's true that they don't require painting, they are not a rigid material like wood, thus they shrink in cold weather, and expand in hot weather. Vinyl begins to soften and distort at 165 degrees Fahrenheit (a temperature that's easily reached in the space between a window and drapes on a sunny day). And though all windows expand and contract with temperature changes, vinyl expands more than twice that of wood. It expands seven times farther than glass with each degree of temperature. This causes the seal between the vinyl framework and the glass to fail. The problem increases with the size of the window; the bigger the sash, the sooner it fails.

2. Vinyl windows have only been around about 20 years. Will they survive for a hundred? No one knows, but stud-

ies prove that many of the windows installed since the early 1980s are failing at an alarming rate.

According to the International Association of home inspectors, vinyl windows are expected to last between 15 and 20 years. To make matters worse, vinyl windows can't be repaired.

3. A big selling point of vinyl windows is double or triple glazed (insulating) sash (two or three panes of glass). These units are manufactured with desiccant-filled spacers between the glass panes and sealed on the outside with butyl rubber or silicone. All insulated glass units eventually fail because no sealant stops all moisture penetration. Eventually the desiccant absorbs all it can, and the window becomes cloudy, forever.

Conventional wisdom indicates that only marginal heat loss is recovered using insulated glass. As much as 85% of air infiltration (or heat loss) is around the edges of the sash, not through the glass. Energy savings realized by replacing single-glazed windows with insulated ones seldom justifies the replacement cost. Another study indicates it would take more than 50 years to recover the expense; and with an average expected life of 25 years or less, insulated glass units hardly make economic sense.

4. Consider the overall energy efficiency. According to a study by Preservation Green Lab issued in October 2012, **a single glazed wood window with a fitted storm window reaches 92% of the efficiency of a vinyl window**. Plus wood lasts 6-8 times longer than vinyl, so the small gain in energy efficiency is lost in replacement cost.

According to Mark Huppert, technical director of the Preservation Green Lab, "a number of existing window retrofit strategies come very close to delivering the energy benefits of high-performance replacement windows – at a fraction of the cost. From weather stripping and sealing, to installing exterior storm windows or interior cellular shades, almost every retrofit option offers a better return on investment than outright replacement.

My rule of thumb is the 50% rule. If a window sash is less than 50% deteriorated, it probably is cost effective to repair. If more than 50% deteriorated, replace it with a new wood sash window that matches the existing window.

You may contact Jeff at: 253-303-1135