



Trolley Times

North Slope Historic District Inc. May 2019
501(c)(3) Organization Volume 90

Former Mayor Bill Baarsma Speaker at May 23rd Meeting

May is National Historic Preservation Month, and NSHD will celebrate it with a talk by former Mayor Bill Baarsma, who is currently the chair of Tacoma Historical Society. In addition, Mayor Baarsma is an expert in Tacoma history, so he has chosen to speak of Tacoma's mayors and their roles in city government over the years since the beginning of Tacoma.

Join us for a fun and informative hour, and think about the fact that you are living in an area that has been home to Tacoma's residents since the 1880s.

Questions? Call Judy Martin 253-307-7949

May 23, 6:30 for coffee time
Program starts at 7pm
Immanuel Presbyterian Church
Entrance on N 9th

Why The Tacoma Historic Register Is Good For Our Neighborhood

In a single word, PROTECTION.

PROTECTION: In order for an historic district to survive there must be safeguards in place to enable survival of the properties through limitations on demolition. There are 4 common reasons ordinance protection is necessary.

1. **Home Owners:** Without guidelines in place, home owners can, and do, make inappropriate changes to their properties. However, once home owners learn the value of historic preservation, they usually become the strongest allies of saving the historic architecture of the homes.
2. **Flippers or Remodelers:** Investment buyers in an historic neighborhood are often without knowledge of the District, and can and do make inappropriate changes. It takes home owners to keep an eye out and make sure all changes made follow NSHD's

guidelines, and, if not, that they are reported to the Historic Preservation Office promptly.

Phone: 253-591-5220 or 253-591-5254

3. **Demolition:** For properties to remain in an historic district, tear-downs must be almost eliminated. *If you don't tear something down, you can't build something non-historic or something out of place or scale.*
4. **The City itself.** Yes, city planning goals can be incompatible with preservation of historic neighborhoods. So residents must be alert to planned changes, and diligent in helping the Planning Dept. avoid changes that might damage preservation of historic architecture.

Protection, once earned, is not enough. Preserving historic places takes eternal vigilance by residents. NSHD's neighborhood group works to promote the values of preserving places of the past for the future. **Volunteer to help!**

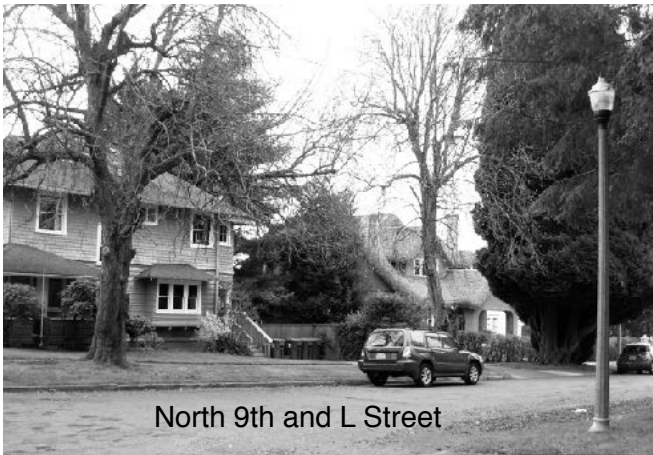
North Slope Historic District... Past and Future

“To live someplace . . . rather than no place”

Since May is National Historic Preservation Month, we thought it useful to share bits from a review of a book printed in the magazine of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Julie Turner, Editor

The book, *The Past and Future City*, was written by a former chair of the Trust, Stephanie Meeks, and reviewed by a number of publications.



North 9th and L Street

Actually, the title of her book, full of empirical data and research details, says a great deal: “*The Past and Future City: How Historic Preservation is Reviving America’s Communities.*” As Ms Meeks says, “historic preservation is the process of saving old places by restoring and using them, adapting them to modern living and the changes brought by need for affordable housing, sustainability and use of historic spaces.”

But, she asks, **why** are people moving back into our old city neighborhoods? To live near work? Reduce commuting? Find cheaper housing? Ms Meeks found what to many was a surprising answer: **when asked why they moved to the city, people often talk about the desire to live “somewhere distinctive, to be some place, rather than no place.”**

These urban landmark spaces are interesting places to live, where you can walk the tree-lined streets, pause to look at yards, or talk to neighbors who are sitting on their front porches. This historic streetscape aspect of the NSHD is one of its most distinguishing features, in addition to the wide variety of architecture in the homes themselves.

In fact, Stephanie Meeks also writes of the appeal of streets with limited traffic, with ground-level homes and businesses where a pedestrian can pause for a look or a chat, or to walk into a shop. Ms. Meeks suggests prioritizing “...pedestrian experience over vehicle traffic.” We need to encourage Tacoma to do this - preserve pedestrian spaces.

The change in today’s population movements make it doubly important to preserve the NSHD and to make sure that, as historic preservation evolves, the neighborhood retains the very essence that makes this a good place to live: a good place that can flex and change while still preserving the past places of one of Tacoma’s first streetcar suburbs.



North 9th and M Street

We in NSHD need to work together to better understand the past and its hints of how to manage the future of our homes effectively.

Ref. *The Past and Future City*, by Stephanie Meeks and Kevin C. Murphy, Island Press

OLD CARR HOUSE BECOMES HISTORY

Reprinted From the Archives of the *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, April 4, 1920

“Famous Landmark, Built 40 Years Ago, to Make Way for Modern Home”

“One of Tacoma’s oldest landmarks, the home of Job Carr on North Sheridan Ave between North 7th and 8th streets, is now passing. Work of tearing down the house, which has stood for more than 40 years, began last week and will make way for a modern residence to be built in the near future by Roland E. Borhek, Tacoma architect, who is the present owner of part of the old Job Carr tract. *(Editor: This was not Carr’s original log cabin built in Old Town when he first came to Tacoma, but was the house on his homestead property on the hill above Old Town.)*

Demolition of the house revealed the fact that many of the foundation timbers were only rough hewn. The Job Carr tract for years had unusual interest for residents of that section of the city, as the tract was not platted at the same time as adjoining property, so that the property lines ran at odd angles to the streets. Only recently has the tract been platted to conform with the layout of contingent district.

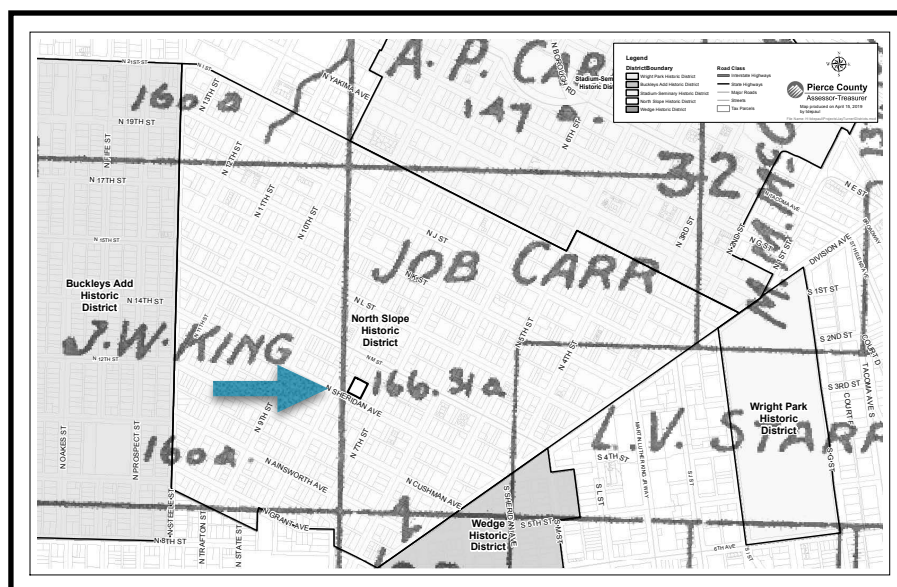
The [Carr] house [was] a two-story frame structure [see arrow on map], its blue-green color having nearly faded into the original weather-beaten board. It was surrounded by a large orchard of fine bearing trees. About 30 of

the trees still remain on the Borhek place and they will be retained as far as possible, says Mr. Borhek. The original abstract from the United States government to Job Carr, Tacoma’s first resident, and bears the signature of President U. S. Grant. The property commands on of the best views in the city.”



Borhek House Built 1920

In 1920 the new home of Roland and Marie Borhek was built at 715 North Sheridan on the site of land which first belonged to Job Carr. Borhek was an architect, originally from the East Coast. He opened his office in Tacoma in 1910, and designed many prominent Tacoma buildings. He was president of the Tacoma Architects Association for 10 years.



The Donation Land Claim Act of 1850 and the Homestead Act allowed settlers to stake claim to Western property. Single men were allowed 168 acres and, if married, another 168 acres.

Early surveying laid out a NS-EW grid, as was Job Carr’s claim. The arrow, on the map, points to the location of Job Carr’s house. Note the trapezoidal layout of the NSHD today, and all the Carr names on the map.

Map courtesy of Pierce Co. Assessor

e-Scooters: A New Transportation Option for the Neighborhood

By Alex Straub

You have undoubtedly seen the bright green scooters all over the North Slope, but have you taken one for a spin yet? I gave them a go, and I am a big fan. The e-Scooter allows me to quickly navigate the urban Tacoma landscape and get where I want to go without having to worry too much about traffic, parking, or slogging up our infamously steep hills. While I enjoy the excellent walkability of our neighborhood, I sometimes want to get to destinations faster than my feet will allow (at least, not without being too sweaty). These new e-Scooters seem to mostly fit that bill. However, like all new technology there is much to consider and, of course, there are pros and cons.

Easy Does It: Using an e-Scooter merely requires you to download an app on your cellphone, set up an account, and provide credit card information for ride payment—it took me less than 5 minutes to complete this process. After that, all you need to do is find a scooter (which the app will help with if none are visible at your location), scan the QR (bar) code located on the handlebars, and you are ready to ride. [\$1 to sign on and 15 cents a minute.]

However, before launching off to your destination, your e-Scooter app will warn you to “remember to obey traffic laws, to ride safely in the bike lane or street and to wear a helmet!” While this may seem reminiscent of a mother wanting her child to be safe, the warning seems more likely to be a corporation’s attempt to shield itself from legal liability, than any actual concern for a rider’s well-being.

Pros and Cons: While I am happy Tacoma has this transportation option available, it is also important that people operate these e-Scooters responsibly. Riders must take care to be respectful of those around them, including when parking an e-Scooter (please do not block driveways or other pathways, and be sure the

scooter is safely off the roadway). Of utmost importance: please, *ride safely and yield to pedestrians*. Unfortunately, riders and pedestrians have in some instances been injured or even killed in e-Scooter accidents. A Consumer Reports study has tallied over 1,500

e-Scooter- related accidents across the United States since 2017. Furthermore, the North Slope neighborhood presents its own challenges given the numerous cracks and craters on our old streets and sidewalks that sometimes make even walking challenging.

Looking Ahead: Fortunately, studies are underway to evaluate ways to make e-Scooters safer. Some of the proposed fixes include attaching helmets to scooters, sensors to prevent scooter-ing on sidewalks, and more dedicated bike/scooter lanes, according to a recent *Washington Post*

article. The City of Tacoma appears to be taking note and is evaluating the feasibility of these safety options, though it appears cost will be the major factor in any implementation. Ultimately, the presence of e-Scooters in our city will be dependent upon whether the benefits to the community outweigh dangers they may pose (just like cars and bicycles also present hazards but their benefits have proven invaluable). In the meantime, get out and enjoy the convenience and benefits of e-Scooter riding while being mindful, safe, and courteous to others around you.



Women In The NSHD Early Days

From the National Register Archives

Marjie Millar, 914 N M St. Marjie Millar won a Shirley Temple look-a-like contest in 1935, and



moved to Hollywood in 1950 to pursue modeling, radio, television, and movies. She changed the spelling of her last name From Miller to Millar.

Millar was the daughter of George W. and Eunice C. Miller and her childhood home, in the 1930s and 40s, was 914 N M St.

Lillian Bourland, 1020 N M St. Lillian Bourland, was a clerk in the U.S. attorney's office where she gained fame when, employed in the office of the U.S. attorney in 1933, she was approached by three men at her home who

proposed that she accept cash in return for "inside information on the activities of the prohibition department." When she refused, they threatened her life if she revealed anything about the conversation, so she promptly revealed the conversation! The men were apparently connected with "liquor law fugitive" Gus Anderson, who was then the focus of a prohibition department investigation.

Katherine Lockwood, 1012 N 9th St.

Katherine Lockwood Squire was an architect for the Tacoma Building Association. Squire was Washington's first female professional architect and



designed more than two dozen buildings in Tacoma. Of those homes, only two remain that are clearly identified with Squire: 1012 North Ninth Street in the North Slope Historic District and another at 1010 South Seventh.

Margaret Hall, 1224 N I St, was a wealthy widow living in her house on Harbor View Drive in Gig Harbor. Her house was considered that city's "largest and most pretentious dwelling." But Margaret Hall was convinced that her home could not be disposed of to good advantage

where it stood." She decided to move her house, by barge, from Gig Harbor to Tacoma to be near her daughter.





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DADU Code Passed City Council

On March 19th, the City Council voted to pass the new code for Attached and Detached Accessory Dwelling Units (DADU). This new code reinstates some design standards removed by the PC, and has three amendments that are good for all neighborhoods:

1. Limits size of a new DADU unit to 1000sf.
2. Requires an owner-occupant in one unit **if** it is used for nightly/weekly rental (AirBNB, etc).
3. Sets up a Review and Reporting requirement to examine and perhaps modify the code as time goes along.

There is **no requirement to provide off-street parking**, but there are incentives for providing it. And, **no one owner-occupant** required in either the house or DADU unit.

Our Council Member, Robert Thoms, worked hard to help with our concerns, and he comments: "It is my intent to review and report on what is happening with ADUs and DADUs through this reporting requirement that CM Hunter and I added."

Julie Turner, Editor



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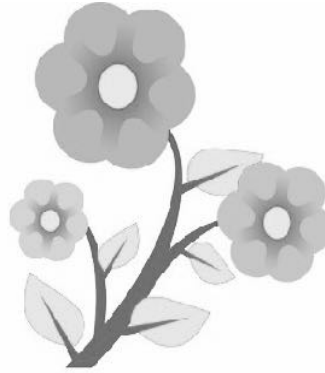
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Master Gardeners Can Answer Questions

By Angie Clark, Master Gardener

While we were blanketed in snow for a while in February, I was thinking about how lucky we are here to have gardens that always seem to 'spring back' fairly well after a "snowcapolis," unlike some other parts of the country. Some of our trees and shrubs may have suffered some damage, but for many, the old dead wood was cleared out and will provide better circulation and light for the plants around them. It's amazing to see that the bulbs, that were emerging after the very mild winter, have gone on to happily bloom.

We are also so lucky to have the **Washington State University Master Gardeners** so close by so we can ask them questions about what has happened to our gardens after the winter



storm. They are easily accessed via email at piercemg@wsu.edu. If you want to ask a question, click on the "Ask a Master Gardener" button. Please send digital pictures if possible. You may also telephone them at **253-798-7170**.

To visit the office at 3602 Pacific Avenue, 98418, go in from the So. D Street entrance.

The clinic hours are weekdays:
March-September M-F 9:00-3:00 , October through

Feb. 10:00-2:00. They also have tables at the various farmers markets in the area; the nearest one is the Proctor Farmers Market where Master Gardners are happy to answer your questions. Happy Gardening in 2019!

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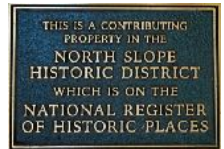
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If you would like a bronze plaque to mark your house as part of the NSHD National Register of Historic Places, the NSHD, Inc. Board has them for sale. Plaques are 5 x 7 and cost \$80 each.



To purchase, contact Karen May
253-779-0160, or klmay@wamail.net

"It has been said that, at its best, preservation engages the past in a conversation with the present over a mutual concern for the future."

— William Murtagh

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TROLLEY TIMES. The NSHD newsletter, published Feb., May, Aug., and Nov. Delivered to all single family homes in the NSHD. The current edition 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 you.

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