



Trolley Times

North Slope Historic District Inc. May 2022
501(c)(3) Organization Volume 102

Celebrate National Historic Preservation Month

By Julie Turner, Editor

"The Congress finds and declares that:

- (a) the spirit and direction of the Nation are founded upon and reflected in its historic heritage;
- (b) the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people."

— Preamble to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

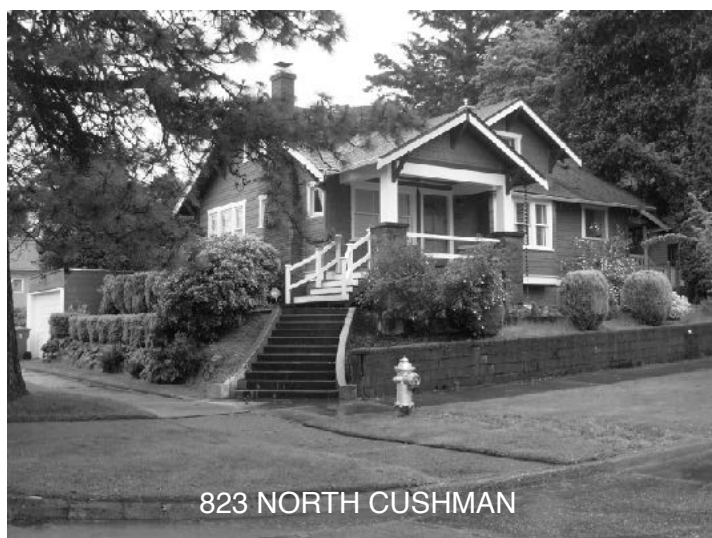
When I used to hear the words, "historic preservation," I used to think of big, old buildings built in the 1920s and 30s. But, that thought is just the beginning of what it means to *actually* engage in historic preservation; our neighborhood learned what it would mean to residents over a period of 5 or 6 years. It started in 1993. We are still learning how to do it.

North J Street neighbors were looking for a way to stop the demolition of old homes to build new places - not houses, but mostly fourplexes and more. So, at a National Night Out meeting in August, we decided the best idea was to investigate making an *historic street*.

There was no ordinance for a residential street, so it must be written, said the Historic Preservation Officer. *The ordinance would be based upon the standards for evaluating historic architecture that were part already of the National Register of Historic Places guidelines.*

So, the **architecture** of our historic homes would be protected. That was it - a simple architectural historic district. Nothing more - or less.

A majority of homeowners surveyed agreed that it was not too bad to repair the wooden windows and make new dormers compatible with the architecture, or make the new porch railing look



like it belonged to the house - these things were deemed a small price to pay for protection from demolition for our homes.

The two J St. organizers were amazed and delighted to find that other streets wanted to do this, too. So, North I, K, L and M were next, and the last section, Sheridan, Cushman Ainsworth and Grant streets was completed in 2000.

So, as you celebrate National Historic Preservation Month in May - take a walk along your street, and celebrate the oldness of your neighborhood homes, preserved by **resident-efforts** and now serving our modern families.

Historic Homes Come in all Sizes

By Elizabeth Anderson

Past Historic Preservation Officer, Tacoma WA

When considering the historic significance of any district, impressive size and elaborate styles do not particularly equal historic and important. The reverse is often true. In residential historic districts, smaller homes - cottages and bungalows built during the late 1800s and first half of the 20th Century - figure in the historic fabric of neighborhoods nationwide and especially in the North Slope Historic District. Concern for preservation of this walkable, welcoming neighborhood motivated residents to ask the City of Tacoma to add the North Slope neighborhood to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places more than 25 years ago.

To understand the historic qualities of the North Slope neighborhood, be sure to take note of homes of modest size and ornamentation, not just of the diverse, eclectic building styles and impressive large homes. Together, they represent the lives of the builders of this place, which continues to feel just right to many of us.

Small houses have deep personal historic qualities because of their residents who were part of the life of the city through good times and bad. Houses that remain tell of the times and styles in which they were built; looking a bit further can give insight to their early residents.

The North Slope was first developed as an alternative to what was then perceived as the wilder side of waterfront workers in the homes and saloons of Old Town. North Slope residents were people who participated in the commercial, domestic, and civic development of Tacoma while just going about their own daily lives.

The diversity of occupations among them is one reason the district is historically significant. The homes, the buildings themselves, represent this diversity with their varieties and mixtures of styles.

Most of the North Slope's smaller houses are Pacific Northwest versions of the vernacular residential styles popular in the United States prior to 1940. A vernacular mode or style results from a modest approach to design and construction specific to a region and period. The builders, who are seldom architects, rely on the use of local materials and construction techniques. Vernacular house types often carry out simplified elements of style.



1001 N 9th St., Hugh P. Swann Home, Built in 1925, Photo c. 1977

Craftsman Bungalow. Craftsman elements include eave brackets and window configuration. Windows appear original. Roof accented with triangular eyebrow windows. Porch roof distinguished by rafters with curved ends. Horizontal wood clapboard siding.



1515 N 9th St., Edger M. and Eva Phelps Home, 1925, Photo c.1998

Fred H. Madson, builder Residential Vernacular. Brick, with side-gabled roof and small gabled front porch extension supported on decorative brackets. The centered front door is flanked by wood panels and large picture windows.

Home of Edger Phelps, district freight agent for Canadian Pacific RR Co. & Duluth S. Shore & Atlantic RR

Continued on page 3

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In Tacoma's North Slope, vernacular residences will have general forms and details drawn from Craftsman, Queen Anne, or other varieties of American styles. In a compact version, Craftsman becomes a bungalow: often one-story, with a deep porch with roof supported by square columns, and visible roof brackets; built with wood, wood siding and stone. Queen Anne, popular in the late 1800s and into the very early 1900s, becomes more of a folk Victorian, with vertical lines, a steeply pitched roof, and a bit of ornamental woodwork. The American Colonial type maintains a symmetrical appearance, with a central front door and a small porch capped with a gable-end roof.

Using available materials, local carpenters and builders adapted and modified housing styles, generating a unique local flavor. Much of their work combines elements of more than one style —just for fun, or personal favorites, it seems. Their homes reflect the character of the owner: their tastes, their means, their origins, their aspirations, not only the tastes of the time when they were built.

The work of city and state historians, not only professionals, but dozens of volunteers, documented the built details and added early resident names and occupations to the addresses. Their effort established both local and national historic significance for the homes and district. They found unique buildings and people who were railroad employees, bookkeepers, grocers, newspaper workers, homemakers, lumbermen, automobile salespersons, carpenters, postal employees, florists, tailors, electricians, a watch-maker, widows, bank cashiers, teachers, machinists, and a baseball player. All of these people built and made their homes here on the quiet streets above Commencement Bay.

Let's appreciate and celebrate these smaller homes, the lives and times that created them - and our own time with them.

So how do you find out if the house that catches your interest had notable builders or residents? What are the stylistic elements? The North Slope Historic District website offers easily accessed descriptions developed for the National Register.

<http://tacomanorthslope.org/>

Further information on properties, including archival maps, newspaper articles, and city directories can be found using this guide, produced for the Northwest Room of the Tacoma Public Library. Or call Spencer Bowman, Librarian, at 253-280-2800.

<https://northwestroom.tacomalibrary.org/index.php/buildingsguide>



1106 N M ST



**924 N SHERIDAN
PHOTO C. 1977**



913 - 915 N AINSWORTH



1204 - 1206 N 9TH



1014 - 1016 N 12TH

NSHD Needs "Trolley Times" Sponsors

The NSHD's newsletter, *The Trolley Times*, is a quarterly publication, funded entirely by local businesses, but we are currently lacking one or two sponsors. In return for a year's sponsorship of \$240, the company may have space for a 1/4- page ad in each of our quarterly issues.

We need one more sponsor to fund the newsletter. It'd be nice to have two.

If you know of anyone who would like to sponsor the Trolley, please have them write or call: Judy Martin, 253- 307-7949 or email judithkmartin@outlook.com

Let's Pick Up Litter!

While walking in NSHD these days, one can find lots of litter in our gutters and parking strips so I've done a little picking up. I have been picking up litter on North J St. for about a week, and it is looking better. Of course, it takes constant work to keep it looking better!

Perhaps some of you can remember to bring a bag to put litter in as you walk along and help pick up, too.

NSHD, Inc.'s Beautification Committee has a group that picks up litter in our neighborhood. If you are interested in joining a group, call Tom Giske, NSHD, Inc. Board Chair of the Committee and ask him about this. The group meets monthly and has an agenda that includes litter-pickup. **Tom's phone number is: 425-301-592**

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Tacoma Zoning Project's Phase 2 Begins

"Home in Tacoma," the re-zoning project approved by City Council last December, begins Phase 2 of the effort to "to implement the new policies through changes to residential zoning and standards, along with actions to promote affordability and ensure that housing supports multiple community goals." To accomplish this will take effort and coordination.

Here are the steps envisioned by the Planning Department.

Taken from: <https://homeintacoma@cityoftacoma.org>

1. Zoning changes for Low-Scale and Mid-Scale residential designations
2. Strengthen design standards
3. Development of an anti-displacement strategy
4. Enhancement and expansion of regulatory and affordability tools
5. Actions to ensure that infrastructure and services are sufficient to support growth
6. Actions to address the potential demolition of older structures
7. Actions to create green, sustainable and climate-resilient housing
8. Actions to promote physical accessibility
9. Review of City permitting and processes
10. Education and technical support of public and developers

This is a large amount of work for planners to accomplish in the allotted year, as well as planned *outreach to the public*. The NSHD, Inc. Board will be keeping track of developments and report to you in the newsletter or via our MailChimp account. For more info, click on above website.

FROM THE ARCHIVES . . .

Edited from the National Register of Historic Places

The Craftsman/Arts and Craft-style house at 607 North Cushman was built in 1908, the home of William J. and Mary Love of Love Electric Company. The house was estimated to cost \$3,000. Love was the founder of the Love Electric Company, which sold electric supplies, mantles, grates, tiles.

William Love was perhaps best known for his collection of Indian artifacts, a hobby that he had pursued beginning as a small boy. His arrowhead collection numbered in the thousands, many of which were found along the Columbia river.

He was born in Byron, Illinois and came to Tacoma via California in 1888. Mary Adeline Love was born in Muscatine, Iowa, and came to Tacoma in 1890. During their marriage Mary and her husband had two sons and a daughter.

Tuttle & Woodroffe, Architects, E.C. Phonicie, Contractor.
1907



GRAY GABLES TOWNHOMES CELEBRATES 100TH ANNIVERSARY

by King Schoenfeld

Anchoring the southeastern tip of the North Slope Historic District, the Gray Gables townhouse complex is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. Located at the crest of the hill at 1617 Division Avenue, the Gray Gables was touted in 1922 as "California living" in newspaper coverage. Today it remains a vital community of twelve individual townhomes, where children play in its courtyard, retired seniors enjoy their tiny yards, and owners work in IT, theater, higher education and charity.

Real estate dealers Peterson, Riehl & Russell, working with contractor Albert Miller, estimated its cost as \$38,000 "in the heart of the best residence section of the city."

The Gray Gables' developers sold the new townhomes to W.U. Parks, manager of the Wisconsin-Illinois apartments for a reported \$48,000.

Newspaper headlines covering the sale called the complex a "Structure First of Kind to be Erected

Here" and "the first community dwelling to be started in Tacoma," one which "has met with success in California and throughout the East." An advertisement on April 9, 1922, announced "the initial showing of this most modern dwelling house," offering each of the 12 units for sale at an unnamed price.

Over the last century, Gray Gables, like the rest of the North Slope, has sported numerous paint colors and restorations, new fences and landscaping, and

hundreds of residents. Rightly dubbed "Tacoma's first community dwelling" by journalists and developers of the period, the Gray Gables continues to connect friends and neighbors to the vibrant neighborhoods of Hilltop and 6th Avenue.



GRAY GABLES UNDER CONSTRUCTION C. 1922

The Gray Gables was the brainchild of Frank and Helma Alexander. Frank was a carpenter at Carsten's Packing Company. They hired A.D. Gendron as architect. Newspapers described the planned venture as "neither apartment house nor a flat, but... "12 separate and distinct residences, all under the same roof...a "U" shaped structure surrounding a central courtyard." The structure would have cement basements, fireplaces, built in kitchen cabinets, and individual heat and electric wiring. These last features were unique to the complex, according to the press release, unlike apartments with a "central heating plant supplying the entire building."



GRAY GABLES, 100 YEARS LATER C. 2022

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TacomaNorthSlope.org the NSHD web page

TROLLEY TIMES. The NSHD newsletter, published Feb., May, Aug., and Nov.

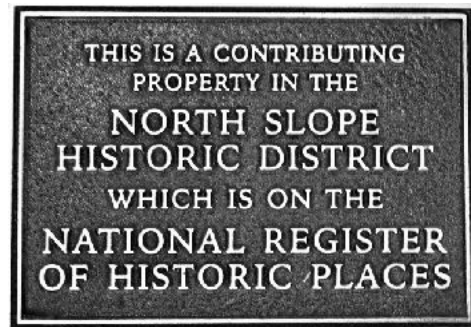
The current edition can always be found at:

[http://tacomanorthslope.org/
current_trolley_times/TT.pdf](http://tacomanorthslope.org/current_trolley_times/TT.pdf)

North Slope NEWS. Sign up on NSHD web page, and have items of general NSHD news, events, and the online *Trolley Times* sent to you.

Send your questions, comments and remarks to news@TacomaNorthSlope.org

FOR SALE - NSHD BRONZE PLAQUE



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. To order your plaque, call Judith Martin at 253-307-7949 or by email at judithkmartin@outlook.com

Plaques are 5 x 7 and cost \$100.00 each.

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NSHD Garage Sale Is Back!

The annual Garage Sale is back on for July 9th! It had to be canceled for a year or two, due to the pandemic. So, dig out all that stuff that's been gathering dust and sign up to participate in the garage sale. Just remember to do it by July 6th.

The way it works - in case you've forgotten - is this way:

1. You sign up by filling out the form below, take it to Judy Martin's house along with \$10 cash and the form filled out, no later than July 6th.
2. Judy puts an ad in different spots and people who want to attend a garage sale come by her house after 9am on July 9th and get a map of places in NSHD that have a garage sale on July 9th. And, we're off to a garage sale!

NSHD GARAGE SALE ON JULY 9TH

It's time to clean out your closets and attic in anticipation of the annual NSHD Garage Sale:

Saturday July 9th, from 9am to 4pm

Here's how it works: Maps listing participating homes are handed out the day of the sale at 515 North M St. Shoppers won't receive the maps until 9am so you won't have early birds.

Fill out the form below and attach \$10 cash or check made payable to NSHD. Mail or deliver to:

Judy Martin, 515 N.M St.

Contact Judy Martin with questions 253-307-7949

Name _____

Address _____

Where is the sale? Circle one: Parkway or Alley

One item you like to feature in the map and advertising. (example: baby clothing, plants) _____

Mail or drop off by 7/6/2022 (with \$10) to

Judy Martin 515 N.M St.

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