



Trolley Times

North Slope Historic District Inc. November 2021
501(c)(3) Organization Volume 100

THE *TROLLEY'S* 100th ISSUE!

Julie Turner, Editor

Dear *Trolley Times* readers:

This November issue of the *Trolley Times* newsletter marks the 100th issue of our neighborhood newsletter. The newsletter began as a flyer to announce neighborhood meetings, and evolved into a 4-page newsletter filled mostly with updates on the enlarging of the historic district; the 8-page version came along about 2014.

In 1995, the City Council passed an ordinance that formed the first street of NSHD - North J St. This was the result of a majority of property owners agreeing to accept supervision from the Landmarks Commission for exterior *structural* changes to their homes. These neighbors also had a hand in creating the Design Guidelines that govern us, although most of the suggestions were turned down because the Historic District would be an architectural one - designed to save the original structures, not about paint colors or yard buildings. (The Design Guidelines can be read on NSHD's website: www.TacomaNorthSlope.org)

North Slope Historic District was formed in three sections as a city district, on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, and later in 2003, as a National Historic District. Since education is a key requirement to keeping our historic district - well, historic - The *Trolley Times* was created to help fill this gap.

Below is an article from the first *Trolley Times*, written in November, 1996

So, You Want to Live in Tacoma?

By Jean Kinney, November 1996

The first time we saw our Queen Anne Victorian house at 414 North J Street, it was love at first sight. The home had been beautifully restored in the eighties. Every decision in the restoration retained the original character of the house, yet enhanced its beauty.

Les and I had been looking at homes in North Tacoma for a year, toying with the idea of moving and living in an old house. We were amazed at the number of historic homes in Tacoma and at the reasonable real estate prices compared to Seattle

and the northern suburbs. We loved the feeling we had of stepping back in time every time we visited Tacoma.

The place seemed slower and the traffic was less congested. We loved Wright Park, the Conservatory, beautiful old homes with wide tree-lined streets, the waterfront, the public library and the proximity to the freeway.

We were told that our old house had been designed in 1890 by a foremost architect, August Darmer. The original plans were even on file at the U of W's Library.

continued on page 2

Continued from front page 1

Through the Tacoma Public Library, we found a list of everyone who ever resided at the house. (We are number 14). We've spoken to a former owner and they have told us many stories, including one about a ghost that haunted the house! We chatted with neighbors and talked to the Tacoma Police Department about the safety of the neighborhood. Everything reassured us that this was not only a beautiful street, but a safe place to live.

There was only one thing that gave us cause for hesitation — the reaction of other people.

"Tacoma??" said my hairdresser. "The reason that prices are cheaper there is because of the drive by shootings." "Tacoma? Why would anyone want to live in Tacoma?" was the standard reaction I got when I shared my dream of living in an old home. I felt like I was a one-person committee defending the honor of the city I had decided to make my home.

We had a full-price cash offer on our Mukilteo house... Everything was falling into place. We moved to Tacoma on August 21 and we want to thank all of the neighbors for welcoming us. We love it here in our beautiful old city, Tacoma.

Edited from the original article, *N. S. N. C.*, November, 1996
(*N. S. N. C.* earlier name of the *Trolley Times*)

EIGHTEEN WORDS

By Jay Turner

In the *Growth Management Planning* section of State's RCW 36.70A.020, you will find "Planning Goals". This section talks about Urban growth and Economic development, where it encourages more development. (Sometimes we get carried away with development!) There are about 75,000 words telling us about development, but hidden in this section are 18 very important words that talk about historic preservation. These words say:

Historic preservation. Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures, that have historical or archaeological significance.

In Olympia we have a Department of Archeological and Historic Preservation whose main function is to see that these needs are met. **No wonder historic preservation has such a hard time. In a document of 75,000 words, eighteen words is only 0.02 percent.**

The preservation of historic sites enables a city to reflect on the past while preparing for the future.

WHAT A TEAM!

Look for the Beauty Buddies on your block. You will see them in their bright yellow T-shirts tending to our traffic circles, picking up litter, or perhaps taking inventory of our precious old trees. Nearly thirty residents of our Historic District are organized to maintain and improve the beauty of our neighborhood. If you want to join our team, just call me or text me.

Tom Giske, Chair
NDHD Beautification Committee
425-301-5925



City Council Moving Toward Residential Changes

By Deborah Cade, Chair, North Slope Historic District, Inc.

The Planning Commission's "Home in Tacoma" program, which would eliminate single family zoning in Tacoma and allow building of up to four-story apartment buildings in many residential neighborhoods, is still before the City Council, and currently being reviewed by the Council's Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability (IPS) Committee.

The "Home in Tacoma" program can be read at: <https://www.cityoftacoma.org/cms/one.aspx?pagel=180033>.

The proposed comprehensive plan change would designate about half of the North Slope Historic District as "low-scale," allowing for single family, duplex, triplex, and town homes – all of which the NSHD already has. The other half – between the north side of North Sheridan and the south side of North L Street, and from the north side of North J Street to the north side of North I Street, would be designated as "mid-scale," which allows four-story apartment buildings.

The justification given is that North M and North I Streets are bus routes. NSHD is currently zoned "historic mixed residential – special review district" (HMR-SRD), which means that our current mix of single-family and multi-family housing is all permitted (and could be replaced if destroyed). New single family and duplexes are permitted, and new triplexes are permitted with a special review permit.

However, the **NSHD's historic district status provides protection from demolition of contributing structures**. But most neighborhoods throughout the city do not have this type of protection, and mid-scale zoned neighborhoods could see demolition of homes and smaller buildings to build larger multi-story buildings.

The Council will be voting this fall on changes to the city comprehensive plan to begin the implementation of this program. The necessary zoning changes would follow sometime next year.

*The City is pursuing these significant changes with very little notice to the residents of Tacoma, and with very little analysis of environmental impacts. The IPS Committee is likely to make changes to the Planning Commission proposal, so you can send comments to the City Council at **cityclerk@cityoftacoma.org** and to the Planning Commission at: **planning@cityoftacoma.org**.*

Some points to make in commenting can be found on this website: <http://www.dontseattlemytacoma.com/>.

This website is not associated with NSHD, but it includes a list of points that may be made in comments such as:

- (1) lack of notice to residents, with notice consisting only of a vague postcard that did not mention zoning changes;*
- 2) lack of environmental review, including impacts on infrastructure, storm water, open space;*
- (3) replacement of individually owned homes with more rental units, eliminating families' ability to build wealth through home ownership; and*
- (4) the program is being rushed through during a pandemic, when all city meetings are conducted online and there is no opportunity for in-person meetings or hearings.*

Please take some time to look at both the Home in Tacoma website, above, as well as the "Don't Seattle My Tacoma" website, and provide comments to the council and the Planning Commission.

Ask the North Slope House Doctor

From *Trolley Times*: Oct./Nov. 2008

Q: I'd like to repair - rather than replace - my wooden windows. Any ideas?

A: Excellent choice! Replacement windows are called that because you keep replacing them!

Restoring and maintaining your original wood windows makes sense in a number of ways. Contrary to what window manufacturers advertise, you lose relatively little energy through windows and tuning up your old sashes will stop most of that energy loss.



The density of the wood in your old windows can't be matched today, which means they are stronger and more rot-resistant. As well, it is generally less expensive to repair wood windows than to replace. Even windows that are quite deteriorated can be repaired with excellent results. It's also not environmentally responsible to replace old windows with new ones that will have to be junked and replaced every decade or two.

Finally, once original material is removed from a building, it's gone forever.

If you don't want to do the work yourself there are local firms that repair old wood windows. If you would rather do the work yourself there is an informative article in October, 2008 issue of *This Old House Magazine* that describes the process.

Also—get on the **internet** and search for: "repairing old windows" for a number of articles that show the process, step by step, with photos.

Lastly, don't forget **Tacoma Public Library**, where these two good books are examples of the help a do-it-yourself person can find:

"Working Windows -A Guide to the Repair and Restoration of Wood Windows," by Terry Meany, 1998

"Repairing Old and Historic Windows, A Manual for Architects and Homeowners," 1992

Do you have a question for the North Slope House Doctor? Send your comments or questions to news@tacomanorthslope.org

100 TROLLEY TIMES Read 'em all

Go to: TacomaNorthSlope.org
Then select: "History, Articles, & Photos"
Then select: Chapter 7, *The Trolley Times*

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Tacoma's Rationale for Preservation

By Julie Turner

We who live in NSHD, Tacoma's first neighborhood on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, owe the safety of our homes from demolition or inappropriate structural change to a part of the Tacoma Municipal Code numbered TMC 13.07. In this section governing how the City operates, are the reasons for preserving various areas and structures important in Tacoma's history, and how to do it.

The first section, .020, lays out the rationale for preservation of significant pieces of a City's past - why do it?

It's worth reading to see the words that make up the bedrock beneath our designation as an historic neighborhood.

TACOMA MUNICIPAL CODE

TMC 13.07.020 Landmarks and Historic Districts
— Declaration of purpose and declaration of policy.

The City finds that the protection, enhancement, perpetuation, and continued use of landmarks, districts, and elements of historic, cultural, architectural, archeological, engineering, or geographic significance located within the City are required in the interests of the prosperity, civic pride, ecological, and general welfare of its citizens. The City further finds that the economic, cultural, and aesthetic standing of the City cannot be maintained or enhanced by disregarding the heritage of the City or by allowing the destruction or defacement of historic and cultural assets.

The purpose of this chapter is to:

A. Preserve and protect historic resources, including both designated City landmarks and historic resources which are eligible for state, local, or national listing;

B. Establish and maintain an open and public process for the designation and maintenance of City landmarks and other historic resources which represent the history of architecture and culture of

the City and the nation, and to apply historic preservation standards and guidelines to individual projects fairly and equitably;

C. Promote economic development in the City through the adaptive reuse of historic buildings, structures, and districts;

D. Conserve and enhance the physical and natural beauty of Tacoma through the development of policies that protect historically compatible settings for such buildings, places, and districts;

E. Comply with the state Environmental Protection Act by preserving important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage; and

F. Integrate the historic preservation goals of the state Growth Management Act and the goals and objectives set forth in the City's Culture and History Element of its Comprehensive Plan.

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FROM THE ARCHIVES ...

Taken from the National Register of Historic Places

Home of Henry (Pete) F. and Maude K. Hunt, Principal, Stadium High School, assistant superintendent of the Board of Education (1920). Henry Hunt was born in Bloomingdale, Indiana in 1870. He attended Friends Bloomingdale Academy, Earlham College, and Indiana State University, the latter while he was teaching in country schools. He was the principal of an Indiana High School for a few years, then followed his parents to Tacoma in 1902.

When he arrived in Tacoma, there were no teaching or principal positions available, so Hunt drove a truck for the West Coast Grocery company. After eight months he obtained an 8th grade teaching position at the Central School. He went on to serve as Stadium High School's principal from 1912-1928 and then became assistant superintendent of Tacoma schools.



When he passed away in 1937, one obituary stated that he was a "philosopher" and "humorist" and "student," and "his was the rare ability to see two sides to every question." Finally, it states, "Simplicity, kindness, optimism, sterling honesty- these were the outstanding traits of character of this kindest, gentlest, most understanding of men."

Tuttle Bros., Architects. William Casey, Builder. W.M. Dawson, contractor. 1906

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LOOKING BACK 20 YEARS

Taken from the Trolley Times, Nov. 2001

Park Construction Set for October

Construction of the Tot-Lot Park on the vacant Tacoma Utilities property at North 8th and K St. will begin in late September, according to Curtis Hancock, of the Metro Parks District. Construction should take about 30 days and will include new landscaping, as well as play equipment for SMALL children.

The Steering Committee has decided on a name, North Slope Historic District Park. Tim McDonald, Valerie Sivinski's husband, will be designing the sign, which will include a dedication to Valerie. Details of an additional dedication plaque are currently in the works. A May 2002 date is being considered for the dedication ceremony.

Ms. Sivinski was the Tacoma Historic Preservation Officer who guided the North Slope residents in the writing of the ordinance and the formation of much of the Historic District. She was the inspiration for the district - the preservation of a historic neighborhood that contained a pattern of development from the 1880s to the 1940s.



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Lean, Clean and Green Landscaping, Part 1

By Geoff Corso

At 7:00am Tuesday, August 3rd, a neighbor walking her dog came across a grass fire at 702 North J St. With help from a neighbor, they stomped-out the fire. While the cause is unclear, the fire appears to have started near the sidewalk and moved toward the house.

A 2020 report titled "Home Structure Fires" by the National Fire Protection Association reports approximately **4% of house fires start outside the house** and an additional 3% start in the garage before burning the house. Tacoma Fire Prevention DFM Vernon Porter speculates that carelessly-discarded cigarette ash and/or an unfiltered cigarette butt may have started the grass fire and **advises irrigating mowed lawns during the summer.**

We increase the risk of a landscape fire when we neglect to remove dead plant material, including whole plants, branches and leaves.

City of Tacoma Code Compliance Supervisor Keith Williams advises residents to adhere to property maintenance codes including keeping yards free of litter and plant debris and mowing grass and weeds. He added that while the code requires property owners to limit the height of grass and weeds to 1 foot tall, he recommends **mowing them to 3-4 inches tall.**

The risk of a landscape fire increases when we allow a lawn to go dormant for the summer. The risk is further increased when we install plants that manufacture oils, resins, gums, waxes and/or terpenes, have shaggy, rough or peeling bark, and/or have dry, needle-like leaves. You can find a list of flammable plants that grow here on "the spruce" Web site at <https://www.thespruce.com/firescaping-the-most-flammable-plants-4107522>.

Part 2 coming in February newsletter



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