



CITY OF TACOMA

University of Washington

Architecture

ARCH 498G/598G: Special Projects

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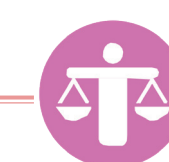
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WORKING TOWARDS EQUITY AND INCLUSION THROUGH HISTORIC DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT



Introduction

The City of Tacoma currently has 8 historic districts at the local, state, and national level, all concentrated in the city's north end and downtown. However, there are several other neighborhoods that retain a high degree of architectural and cultural integrity. Our two-quarter class gathered data on two of these neighborhoods, South Tacoma and McKinley

Hill, with the ultimate goal of creating National Register Historic District nominations. While these neighborhoods do not contain the high-style, large houses present in some other districts, they hold important historic and cultural value for Tacoma, as well as showcasing important examples of vernacular architecture.



Photo Credit: South End Cultural Resources Survey, 1977; Tacoma Public Library; Google Street View, August 2017
Carl Erickson House (built 1904), 5241 S. Birmingham Street, seen in 1977 and 2017. Much of the housing stock in the two districts remains functionally unaltered and faithful to original built appearance.

Methods & Approach

During winter quarter, we focused on identifying proposed historic district boundaries and developing neighborhood histories for the two areas. These neighborhood context statements emerged from a combination of fieldwork and historic research, which covered factors such as topography, key landmarks, major infrastructure development, and original neighborhood boundaries. At the end of the quarter, we briefed the Tacoma Landmarks Preservation Commission on these findings.

The second quarter has focused on refining district boundaries and inventorying individual properties, a step that is required for the formation of a National Historic District. In order to learn from the community about important historic assets and inform neighborhood groups of the historic district consideration, students participated in two walking tours and held a neighborhood workshop in each study area. Students also presented initial findings to neighborhood councils.

Initial Findings

Between the two neighborhoods, there are approximately 775 properties, and students have researched and documented each parcel's construction year, original owners and builders/architects, and cultural and physical descriptions of the properties.

McKinley Hill. In McKinley, 62% of properties appear to qualify as historically contributing, exceeding the 60% threshold required for designation of historic districts. The build dates peak between the 1890s and 1920s, in connection with development trends of the city at-large during the railroad-spurred economic boom. Though the ubiquitous Craftsman style is well-represented, a breadth of architectural styles and forms are found in both study areas.

South Tacoma. While McKinley is primarily a residential district, the South Tacoma study area encompasses industrial properties, a business strip, and some residential fabric. Structures in this district vary more

considerably in typology and integrity, but are tied to the neighborhood's origin as a Northern Pacific Railway company town.

Through the remainder of the quarter, we will continue to catalog and photograph properties and refine district boundaries to better illustrate each neighborhood's historic narrative.



Following narrated neighborhood tours, students met with neighborhood residents to gather community input and oral histories and inform the public about the project.