

McKinley Hill Mixed-use Center Inventory Report

prepared for

City of Tacoma

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Executive Summary

On behalf of the City of Tacoma (City), Historic Tacoma conducted a survey and inventory of the McKinley Hill Mixed-Use Center (MUC) in Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington. The survey was prepared to identify potential historic resources located within the McKinley Hill MUC, an area identified by the City to focus future increased density. The McKinley Hill MUC contains a collection of commercial, institutional, and residential properties constructed between approximately 1888 and 2020.

The present inventory was prepared in accordance with the guidelines of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. It included a field survey, property-specific background research, and recommendations on federal and local eligibility. It was funded in part by the City and completed through the volunteer efforts of Historic Tacoma. Work efforts included archival research, literature review, and inventory. This report was prepared to present the results.

A total of 169 properties were inventoried. Two of these buildings were already individually listed. Another 22 were built after 1970 (less than 50 years old at the time of the survey) and hence excluded. A total of 145 HPI forms were entered in WISSARD.

The survey results were typical of an early 20th Century neighborhood. Of the inventoried buildings 7% were built from 1880 and 1899, 39% from 1900-1919, 23% from 1920 to 1939, 14% from 1940 to 1969 and 13% after 1970, i.e. less than 50 years old. The inventoried properties range from modest one-story homes to one and two story commercial buildings. The commercial district was never planned but simply emerged over time along the McKinley Avenue streetcar line. However, very little commercial development has spread beyond McKinley Avenue in the 118 years since the streetcar line opened. The McKinley Hill MUC combines a large contiguous commercial district along McKinley Avenue from East 34th to East Division Lane. Three small “corner” or “streetcar stop” commercial areas located at East 36th, East 37th, and East 38th Streets. Consequently, the McKinley Hill MUC contains a larger number of houses than might be expected. Most of the buildings are either wood-frame or masonry structures with the commercial buildings tending toward the latter.

By far the largest architectural style represented among the inventoried buildings was the Craftsman style with 44 representatives or 42%, followed by Gable Frontier/Homestead style with 18 or 17% and Commercial style with 9 or 8.5%. Other styles represented were Minimal Traditional, Prairie, Tudor Revival, Classical Revival, Queen Anne, French Eclectic and others.

Nearly all of the surveyed properties have incurred visible alterations. The most common alternation involved windows. A common change was replacing original sashes with vinyl sashes. In many cases both sashes and surrounds were replaced. Another common change was modern siding. As expected, the storefronts of the commercial buildings have also seen considerable change as, for example, they change from one store to two stores and back to one or change use.

The survey confirmed two properties are currently listed in the Tacoma Register of Historic Places (TRHP): the 1908 McKinley Elementary School (3720 McKinley Ave.) and the 1909 Engine House #11 (3802 McKinley Ave.). An additional 10 buildings were also identified in the 1977 Tacoma Cultural Inventory.

As a result of the current effort, 20 buildings, mostly houses, were found to likely meet the criteria for inclusion in the TRHP and perhaps the NRHP. Of the remaining buildings within the survey area, most have been altered somewhat, usually with replacement window sashes and surrounds and replacement cladding, but still retain much of their historic integrity and would be considered contributing to a potential historic district.

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This program received Federal funds from the National Park Service. Regulations of the U.S. Department of Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental Federally Assisted Programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or handicap. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of Federal assistance should write to: Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.

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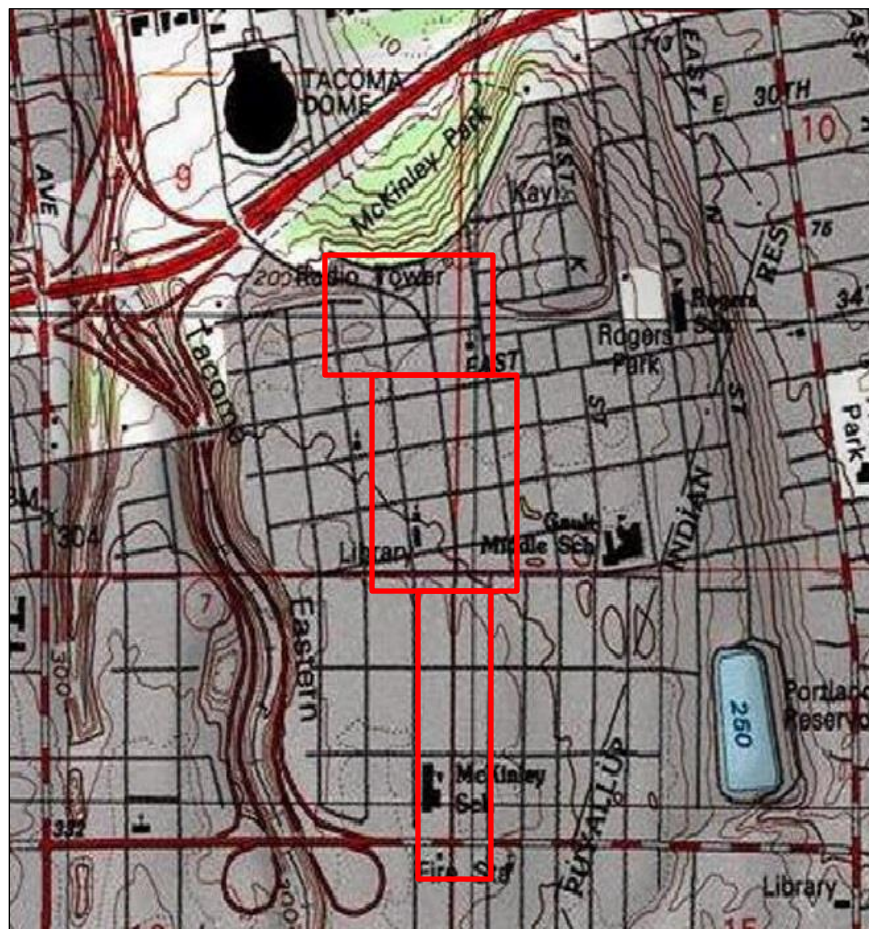
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1 Project Background

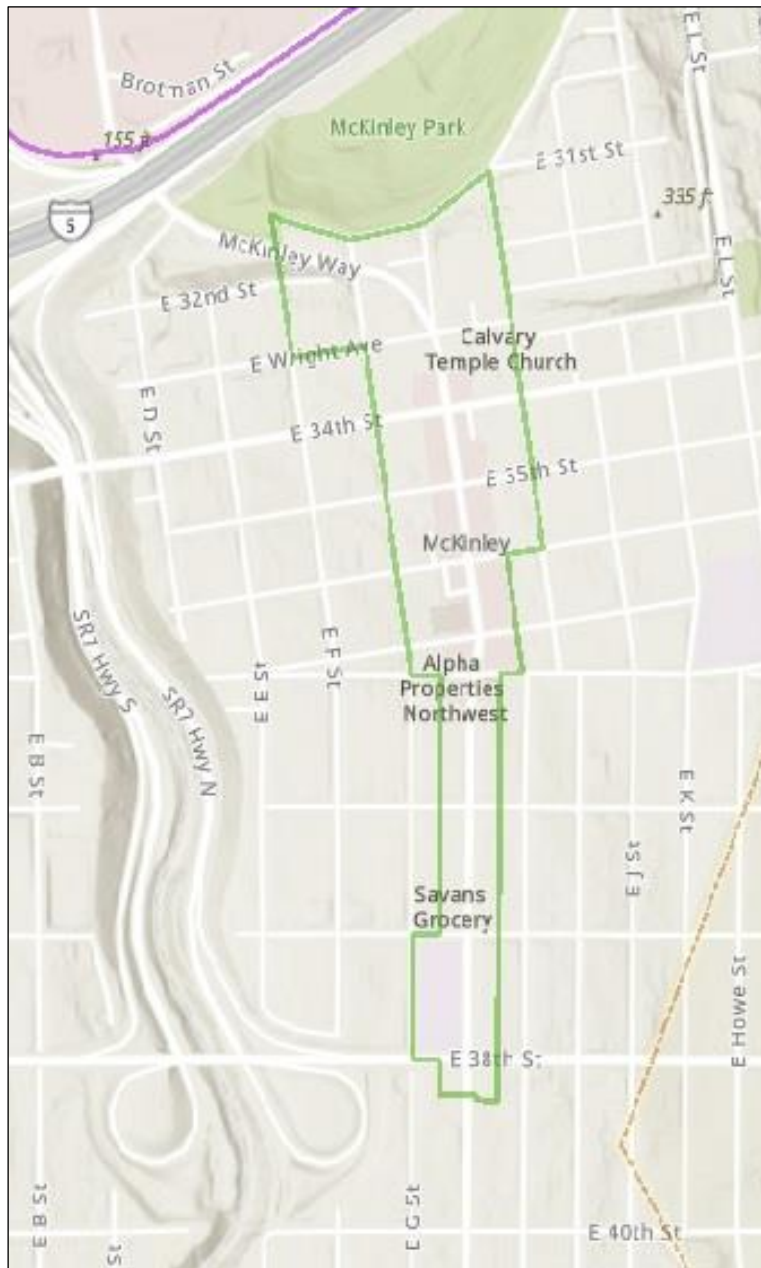
On behalf of the City of Tacoma (City), Historic Tacoma conducted a survey and inventory of the McKinley Hill Mixed-Use Center (MUC) in Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington (Figure 1 and Figure 2). In 2009, Tacoma City Council created six “neighborhood mixed-use centers,” including one that included the old McKinley commercial district and residential areas. This new zoning allowed increased development with greater density and building heights, constituting a threat to the remaining historic buildings and the historic fabric of the district. This inventory was undertaken by the city’s Historic Preservation Office and Historic Tacoma to identify historic and cultural resources still remaining in the McKinley Hill MUC, which contains a collection of commercial, institutional, and residential properties largely constructed between 1888 and 1949. It includes a field survey, property-specific background research, and recommendations on National Register and local eligibility. All work efforts were completed by Historic Tacoma Board Members Marshall McClintock, Kathleen Brooker, and Steven Treffers, who meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards for History and/or Architectural History. Copies of this report and inventory forms will be on file with the City, Historic Tacoma, and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation’s (DAHP) WISAARD database.

Figure 1 Study Area Vicinity¹



¹ USGS, Tacoma South, WA Quadrangle, 1997, 7.5 min. series.

Figure 2 Study Area Location²



² DART map, City of Tacoma, Planning & Developmental Services, accessed July, 2021.

2 Research Design

A. Objectives

The current survey was completed to identify and compile information about historic resources located in the McKinley Hill MUC. This information expands on previous survey and inventory efforts completed by the City and serves to fulfill the goals and objectives of the City's historic preservation ordinance and Comprehensive Plan. The surveyed area was focused on the McKinley Hill MUC, an area which has been identified by the City for future intense growth. The historical overview presented herein provides the basis for future planning projects and the background necessary for identifying historic resources as well as nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places (TRHP), individually or as districts.

The objectives of the survey support the adopted goals of the City and Washington State. At the local level, this survey is consistent with the regulations which govern historic preservation activities in Tacoma. These are outlined in the Municipal Code under Title 1 (Administration; activities relating to the Landmarks Preservation Commission), Title 8 (Public Safety; historic property maintenance code), and Title 13 (Land Use; activities relating to designations to the register, design review and permitting and demolition review).

At the state level, this survey also aims at supporting the goals outlined in the 2014-2019 State Historic Preservation Plan. These are:

- Goal 1.** Enhance communities by actively engaging historic preservation with other forces shaping our environment.
 - A. Create new and enhance existing incentives for historic preservation.
 - B. Increase awareness of the community and economic benefits of preservation.
 - C. Promote cultural and heritage tourism.
 - D. Increase the connection between historic preservation and sustainability/environmental initiatives.
 - E. Enhance local program support.
- Goal 2.** Engage a broad spectrum of the public in preservation; Improve access to information.
 - A. Improve and expand information about preservation.
 - B. Increase outreach to, and education for, state and local government staff and officials.
 - C. Provide preservation education and hands-on training, inclusive of Tribal cultural resources.
 - D. Build awareness, enthusiasm, and support for historic preservation.
- Goal 3.** Strengthen policies and planning processes to enhance informed and cross-disciplinary decision-making for managing cultural and historic resources.
 - A. Position historic preservation to be more fully integrated into land use decision-making processes.
 - B. Establish policies and provide tools to improve protection of cultural and historic resources.
 - C. Improve planning, management and funding of historic and cultural resources on state-owned and managed lands.

B. Survey Methodology

The present survey and inventory was prepared in accordance with the guidelines of the DAHP. It included a survey and inventory of 169 properties. Properties were inspected visually in order to identify architectural styles and character-defining features and to assess physical condition and historical integrity. Observations were recorded in detailed field notes. Buildings earlier than 1970 were photographed from the public-right-of-way and

Archival research consisted of a review of a variety of primary and secondary source materials relating to the history and development of the study area. Property-specific research was also conducted to identify the architects, builders, occupants, and construction histories of each of the individual buildings inventoried. Sources included, but were not limited to, original historical maps and photographs, contemporary newspaper articles, and written histories of the area. The following is a list of sources consulted:

- *Kaleidoscope: a history of McKinley Hill as told by "Old Timers" for the August 4, 1988 McKinley Hill Festival*, Tacoma, Wash.: s.n., 1989
- Hunt, Herbert. *Tacoma: Its History and its Builders*, Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1916
- *Image Archives*, Northwest Room Tacoma Public Library
- *Local History & Biography Index*, Northwest Room Tacoma Public Library
- Metsker, Thomas Charles, *Metsker's Atlas of Tacoma*, Tacoma, WA: Metsker Maps, 1926 – 1930
- Petersen, Anna, *Early Main Street*, Tacoma, Wash.: A. Peterson, 1987
- *Polk City Directory: Tacoma, Washington*, Livonia, MI: R. L. Polk Co., 1910 cont.
- Sanborn Map Company, *Sanborn fire insurance maps: Washington* (microfilm), Teaneck, N.J.: Chadwyck-Healey, 1983
- *Tacoma City Directory*, Tacoma, WA: Frank W. Spear, 1888 – 1909
- *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, Tacoma, WA: Daily Ledger, 1883 -1937
- *Tacoma-Pierce County Building Index*, Northwest Room Tacoma Public Library
- *The Tacoma News Tribune*, Tacoma, WA: Tribune Publishing Co., 1922 – 2019
- United States, Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census*. Records accessed via HeritageQuest.com
- Additional resources in the Northwest Room of the Tacoma Public Library

Following the field survey and archival research, Historic Tacoma completed individual property forms for each property in WISAARD, Washington's digital repository for architectural and archaeological resources and reports, in accordance with DAHP standards. The forms included a Physical Description and Statement of Significance, Recommendations were also made on the NRHP and TRHP eligibility of properties, both as individual resources and as contributors to a potential historic district. The designation criteria for both registers is presented below.

National Register of Historic Places

The NRHP was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as “an authoritative guide to be used by federal, state, and local governments, private groups and citizens to identify the Nation’s cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment” (CFR 36 CFR 60.2). The NRHP recognizes properties significant at the national, state, and local levels. To be eligible for listing in the NRHP, a resource must be significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. Districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of potential significance must also possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. A property is eligible for the NRHP if it is significant under one or more of the following criteria:

- **Criterion A.** It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- **Criterion B.** It is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in our past.
- **Criterion C.** It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- **Criterion D.** It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

In addition to meeting these criteria, a property must retain historic integrity, defined in National Register Bulletin 15 as the “ability of a property to convey its significance” (National Park Service 1990). To assess integrity, the National Park Service recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, considered together, define historic integrity. To retain integrity, a property must possess several, if not all, of these seven qualities, defined in the following manner in National Register Bulletin 15:

- **Location.** The place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred
- **Design.** The combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property
- **Setting.** The physical environment of a historic property
- **Materials.** The physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property
- **Workmanship.** The physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory
- **Feeling.** A property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time
- **Association.** The direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property

Tacoma Register of Historic Places.

The TRHP was established to meet the purposes of Chapter 13.07 and Chapter 1.42 of the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC). Historic resources and districts designated to the TRHP pursuant to the procedures and criteria listed in Chapter 13.07 are subject to the controls and protections of the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) established by TMC 1.42 and pursuant to the design review provisions of Chapter 13.07. B. Per 13.07.040, the LPC may determine a property is eligible for consideration for listing on the TRHP if: a. Is at least 50 years old at the time of nomination; and b. Retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association such that it is able to convey its historical, cultural, or architectural significance In addition to the above, a property may be designated to the TRHP if it:

- a. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- b. Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- c. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- d. Has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history; or
- e. Abuts a property that is already listed on the TRHP and was constructed within the period of significance of the adjacent structure; or
- f. Is already individually listed on the NRHP; or

- g. Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood or City.

In addition to individual landmarks, the City may designate Historic Special Review Districts and Conservation Districts under Chapter 13.07.040. Per this chapter:

The City Council may find it appropriate to create Historic Special Review or Conservation Districts for the purposes of encouraging the preservation of character within established neighborhoods and districts, protecting such areas from adverse effects to their cultural and historic assets resulting from unsympathetic development activities, and for the purpose of promoting economic development and neighborhood identity.

Historic Special Review Districts are areas that possess a high level of historic integrity in existing architecture, development patterns and setting, in which these characteristics should be preserved. In addition to the threshold criteria listed in Section 13.07.040.B.1, a proposed Historic Special Review District should meet the following specific criteria:

- a. It is associated with events or trends that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; and
- b. It is an area that represents a significant and distinguishable entity but some of whose individual components may lack distinction;
- c. It possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.

Conservation Districts are established in areas in which there is a clearly established existing character related to historical development patterns and/or the overall appearance of building types that were constructed in a defined period of time, generally prior to 50 years before the present. In conjunction with or independent of the establishment of a historic district it may be warranted to consider the establishment of a Conservation District. A proposed Conservation District should meet one of the following specific criteria:

- a. The area is part of, adjacent to, or related to an existing or proposed historic district or other distinctive area which should be redeveloped or preserved according to a plan based on a historic, cultural, or architectural motif; or
- b. It possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.
- c. Although it shall possess historic character based upon an intact development pattern and a prevailing historic architectural character expressed through its assemblage of buildings, a Conservation District is not required to meet the criteria for landmark designation as outlined above.

The boundaries of Historic Special Review Districts and Conservation Districts should be based upon a definable geographic area that can be distinguished from surrounding properties by changes such as density, scale, type, age, style of sites, buildings, structures, and objects or by documented differences in patterns of historic development or associations. Although recommended boundaries may be affected by other concerns, including underlying zoning, political or jurisdictional boundaries and property owner sentiment, to the extent feasible, the boundaries should be based upon a shared historical or architectural relationship among the properties constituting the district.

Properties Excluded from Inventory

Two properties within the McKinley Hill MUC are already listed on the TRHP. They are listed in the table below.

Table 1 Listed Properties

Number	Street	Name	Built	Listed	Register
3720	McKinley Ave.	McKinley Elementary School	1908	1986	Tacoma Landmark Register
3802	McKinley Ave.	Engine House #11	1909	2014	National Register, Washington Heritage Register and Tacoma Landmark Register

Additionally, 22 properties were constructed after 1970 and hence less than 50 years old at the time of the survey. A table listing these properties are presented In Appendix A.

Based on an initial reconnaissance and research, the study area was anticipated to possess an intact grouping of properties, primarily residential, dating from the late 1880s through the 1960s. It was expected these building would have various degrees of alterations due to continued use.

C. Delineate Area Surveyed

The survey area boundary is directly tied to the McKinley Hill MUC (See Figures 1 and 2). The irregular boundary is generally bound by Upper Park Street to the north and East 38th Street to the south. E. G Street to the east and East I Street to west to East Division Lane. After East Division Lane, the boundary narrows to either side of McKinley Avenue to East 38th Street. (See Figure 2). The survey area’s principal historical theme is commercial, residential, and institutional development spanning from the 1880s through the 1960s. Two properties in the survey area that are already listed in the NRHP. An additional 10 buildings were identified in the 1977 Tacoma Cultural Resources Survey.

D. Community Outreach

Community outreach for the McKinley Hill Inventory included a variety of digital efforts and one postcard mailing to all property owners within the mixed use center with information and links, including a QR code. The digital efforts included a landing page for the project on Historic Tacoma’s website which contained information about the inventory, links to public workshops, and a survey soliciting public input on the history of the neighborhood. Historic Tacoma also produced digital "McKinley Bingo" card containing architectural features to prompt on-the-ground exploration of the neighborhood in lieu of in-person events due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Workshops were held virtually in partnership with the City of Tacoma. They were advertised through Historic Tacoma and City of Tacoma social media accounts and specifically posted to Facebook groups and business pages based in the McKinley Hill area. Workshops presented included a "Virtual Tour of McKinley" in partnership with Pretty Gritty Tours, "How to Do Historical Research in Tacoma" in partnership with Katie Pratt of Northwest Vernacular, a "Historic Register Workshop" presented by Historic Tacoma, and the "McKinley History Reveal" presented by Historic Tacoma as the project wrap-up and overview.

E. Integration with the Planning Process

This survey supports local comprehensive planning and the purpose of the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance as outlined in Titles 1, 8, and 13 of the Tacoma Municipal Code. The findings of this survey and inventory will aid in the identification of historic resources within the McKinley Hill Mixed-Use Center and support the designation of properties to the NRHP and TRHP.

3 Historical Overview

A. Historical Development

Neighborhood Context – McKinley Hill

McKinley Hill is the highest point in the City of Tacoma and takes its name from McKinley Park that was donated to the city by the Northern Pacific Railroad and named in 1901 following President William McKinley's assassination that year.³ Not actually a hill, it is the steep end of a ridge that fronts to Commencement Bay and the Puyallup River delta or Tideflats. To the east, it slopes down steeply to the broad Puyallup River floodplain with the general boundary of Portland Avenue. The northeast corner of the hill (near East 29th and East L Streets) is known locally as "Strawberry Hill." To the west, it is bounded by the wide, seven-mile long Tacoma Eastern Gulch. To the south, the ridge merges with the upland plain just in front the Cascade Range foothills. Although no definitive geological feature marks the McKinley Hill neighborhood's southern boundary, it is commonly taken to end at about East 43th Street where the last bridge crosses the Tacoma Eastern Gulch. This report, however, focuses only on the McKinley Mixed-Use Center (MUC) zone, which runs roughly along McKinley Avenue from McKinley Park to East 38th Street.

Contact and early settlement (1852 to 1883)

The area where Tacoma is located was inhabited for thousands of years by Native Americans, primarily the Puyallup people, a federally recognized tribe within the Coast Salish group of indigenous peoples living along the Pacific Northwest Coast. In 1854, the Treaty of Medicine Creek was negotiated between the United States and nine tribes and bands of Native Americans of the area, including the Puyallup tribe. It granted the United States 2.24 million acres of land in exchange for three reservations, cash payments and recognition of traditional native fishing and hunting rights.

Around this same time, small, usually temporary, lumber operations were set up around Puget Sound, some of which became permanent. In 1852, Nicolas Delin built a saw mill and small community at the headwaters of the Thea Foss Waterway. It was abandoned in 1855 due to conflict with Native Americans. The nearby lumber community of Steilacoom, however, was incorporated in 1854, becoming Washington state's oldest incorporated town.⁴

In 1864, Job Carr arrived at Commencement Bay, hoping to profit from the planned arrival of the northern tier transcontinental railroad to be built by the Northern Pacific Railroad (NPRR). He and others developed a small town at what is now called Old Town in Tacoma.⁵ In 1873, the NPRR did select the area as its western terminus but laid out its own town about one mile east of Carr's earlier settlement. The city of New Tacoma was incorporated in 1875. During this period, timber operations and sawmills operated across the area, and the city flourished with the completion of the first transcontinental railroad link in 1883. Residential and commercial development spread out from the two initial communities, which merged in 1884.

Early Development (1884 to 1899)

Commercial development in early New Tacoma was focused along the eastern end of what is today called the Thea Foss Waterway.⁶ Demand quickly increased for more industrial and commercial land beyond the south end of the waterway. In 1884 the NPRR's Tacoma Land Company made their "First Addition" to the city of New Tacoma, which included a new industrial and business area along what is

³ "New park given to the people," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, April 12, 1901, pg. 5

⁴ Hunt, Herbert. *Tacoma: Its History and its Builders*, Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1916, pg. 9-15

⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 98ff.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 184ff.

today Puyallup Avenue. The First Addition ran from the Thea Foss to East Division Lane between Pacific Avenue to west and the Puyallup Reservation to the east.

In 1886, John F. and George E. Hart, who operated several businesses around Puget Sound, built a large sawmill and other operations at about where East 64th Street and McKinley Avenue are located today. The community around the sawmill became known as Bismarck (now Hillsdale and Stewart Heights). It was linked to the Hart's wharf in Tacoma by a narrow-gauge railroad running through the Tacoma Eastern Gulch. By 1890, the railroad was changed to standard gauge and became the Eastern Tacoma Railroad, eventually being extended to the foothills of Mt. Rainier. After Mount Rainier National Park was established in 1899, the railroad was extended to Ashford, the western gateway to the park, in 1904. The passenger train would serve as the main tourist park access until the automobile overtook it in the 1930s.⁷

By 1888, the NPRR completed its direct link through the Cascades to Tacoma, greatly increasing the flow of people and goods.⁸ By 1890 the new industrial area around the Thea Foss waterway boasted saw mills, flour mills, grain warehouses, shingle mills, woodworking plants, foundries, breweries and other industries, especially the Northern Pacific shops and roundhouse. The workers for these new industries and their families were eager for nearby housing, which quickly spread up the steep slope of McKinley Hill, making it among Tacoma's oldest neighborhoods. Prior to the construction of I-5 in the 1960s, it was largely contiguous with the lower Hawthorne neighborhood (now the Dome district), named after the 1886 elementary school (first called East School) located at 414 East 31st Street.⁹ In 1913 a larger Hawthorne school built at 519 East 28th street, just below McKinley Park.¹⁰ It was demolished in 1981 for the Tacoma Dome.

Due to the steep slope, access to the hilltop was difficult. By 1894, trestle bridges had been built across the Tacoma Eastern Gulch and the smaller one to the west, allowing access via East 34th Street and the less steep Pacific Avenue.¹¹ Also, the stream in the Tacoma Eastern Gulch was dammed at about East 32nd Street, creating a 500,000 gallon reservoir.

McKinley Avenue, originally East H Street, took its name from the park about 1910. Three other McKinley Hill streets have names other than numbers or letters, though when they were named is not known. Wright Avenue appears on the 1896 Tacoma Sanborn Map and refers to NPRR president and Tacoma benefactor, Charles B. Wright. Harrison and Morton Streets are named after President Benjamin Harrison and Vice-President Levi P. Morton, who were in office when Washington became a state. Harrison visited Tacoma in 1891 on a tour of the west.

In 1899, the state designated a large area south of East Division Lane as the First School Addition to be sold to benefit public education.¹² Except for the more distant Bismarck community, however, development was sparse on the hilltop itself until the streetcar line was built. The neighborhood remains one of the least densely populated areas of the city.

Rapid Expansion (1900 to 1919)

In 1901, the NPRR's Tacoma Land Company donated 26.7 acres of the north slope of its First Addition to the city for a park. Initially called "East Park", work quickly began on footpaths and bridle trails throughout the park on the steep terrain. When President McKinley was assassinated later that same year, the new park was quickly named after the fallen president. The park would eventually feature a large lily pond and a children's swimming pool. McKinley Park would become the defining

⁷ "Tacoma Eastern Railroad." Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 05/23/2020, [//en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tacoma_Eastern_Railroad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tacoma_Eastern_Railroad)

⁸ Hunt, pg. 439ff

⁹ Ibid., pg. 393

¹⁰ *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 09/14/1913, pg. 21

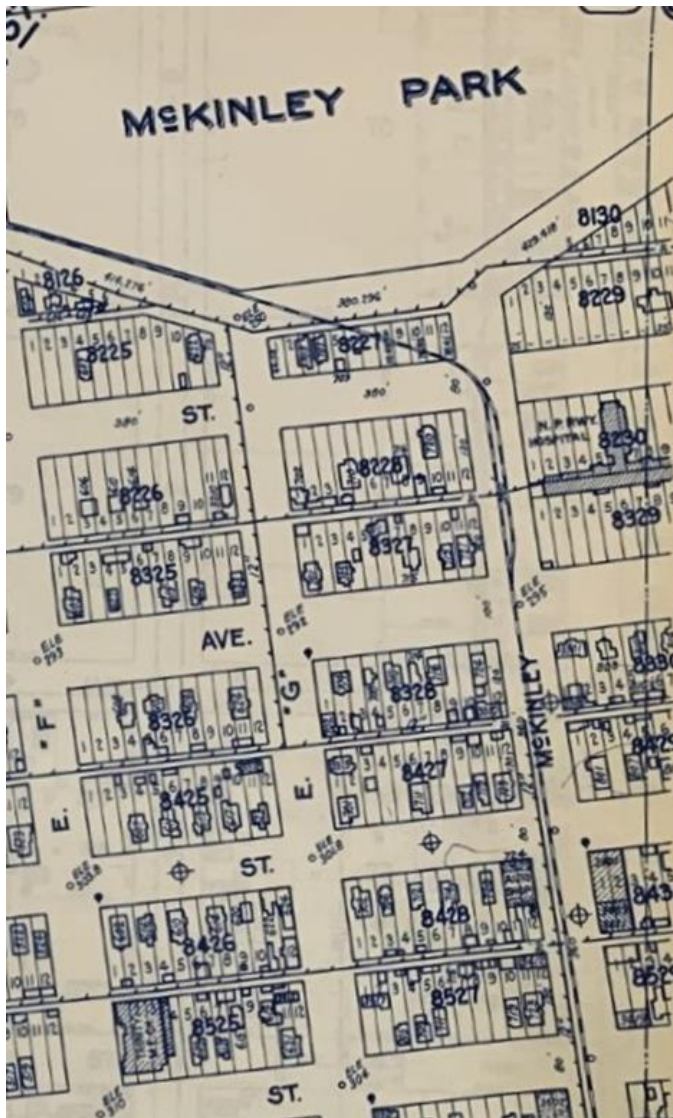
¹¹ *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 10/24/1893, pg. 5

¹² *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 10/15/1899, pg. 5

amenity of the neighborhood, quickly lending its name to McKinley Hill and changing East H Street to McKinley Avenue.¹³

In 1903 the Tacoma Railway and Power Company extended a streetcar line up McKinley Hill and along McKinley Avenue to East 30th Street. It was later extended to East 36th Street and eventually terminated at East 64th Street at Bismarck. Rapid development followed the streetcar line as the neighborhood's easy access attracted workers from the industries clustered around the Thea Foss Waterway.

Figure 3. 1926 Metsker map of streetcar line to McKinley Ave.¹⁴



In 1904, the Northern Pacific Railway constructed the Northern Pacific Beneficial Association Hospital for its employees at 801 East Wright Street just above McKinley Park.¹⁵ Doctors and nurses

¹³ "McKinley Park History", Metro Parks, Tacoma, 2020, www.metroparkstacoma.org/place/mckinley-park/

¹⁴ *Metsker's Atlas of Tacoma*, 1926

¹⁵ *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 06/19/1904, pg. 4

employed at the hospital also moved into the area. The hospital operated until 1968, and the building demolished in 1973 to make way for senior housing.

Figure 4. Northern Pacific Beneficial Association Hospital, ca. 1909¹⁶



In 1904 the McKinley Hill Addition was added to the city, adding a large number of parcels for sale beyond East Division Lane.¹⁷ This addition along with the earlier First School Addition were laid out on a true north-south grid, which accounts the jog in McKinley Avenue at East Division Lane. This was a largely working class neighborhood, where many bought a parcel and built their own house themselves.¹⁸

The hilltop's rapid residential development is reflected in the public schools built. The 1886 Hawthorne Elementary School, enlarged in 1913, has already been mentioned. The 1889 Bismarck Elementary School was enlarged in 1908 with the building of Sheridan Elementary (5317 McKinley).¹⁹ In 1907 Rogers Elementary (1301 East 34th) was opened.²⁰ In 1910, McKinley Elementary (3702 McKinley) opened.²¹ In 1913, Lincoln High School (701 South 37th) opened.²² Gault Middle School (1115 E. Division Ln) would be added in 1926.²³

Churches also appeared, often initially as missions associated with more established churches in the city center. Probably the first was Wright Avenue Baptist Church (324 E. Wright, demolished) in 1890.²⁴ Others came after the streetcar, such as the First Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church (702 East Harrison, now Iglesia La Roca) built in 1906 by members of congregation, which included

¹⁶ Washington State History Society, N.P.B.A. Hospital (Tacoma), 1981.94.454

¹⁷ *Tacoma Daily News*, 10/29/1904, pg. 3

¹⁸ "Wonderful growth of new addition", *Tacoma Daily News*, 07/07/1907, pg. 17

¹⁹ *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 06/07/1908, pg. 22

²⁰ *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 12/15/1907, pg. 31

²¹ *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 6/7/1908, pg. 22

²² *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 08/31/1913, pg. 4

²³ *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 03/07/1926, pg. A!

²⁴ *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 06/02/1890, pg. 5

many carpenters and other skilled craftsmen.²⁵ It would later become Bethlehem Lutheran, now located at 101 East 38th Street.²⁶ In 1908 Our Saviors Norwegian Lutheran Chapel was built at 3308 East I Street, which in 1922 became the site for Third Church of Christ, Scientist (now 824 Wright and site of Iglesia De Dios).²⁷ The Lutheran chapel was moved to 1024 East 34th, becoming Our Redeemer English Lutheran Church in 1927.²⁸ Also in 1908, McKinley Park Methodist Church (now Tacoma Indian Baptist Church) was built at 3526 East G Street.²⁹ In 1913, that congregation would merge with the 1889 Fowler Methodist (201 East 30th) in the Hawthorne neighborhood to form Trinity Methodist Church and enlist noted Tacoma architects Heath and Gove to build a church at 601 East 35th Street.³⁰ The congregation remained in the building until 2007. In 2008, it became Kalevaria United Methodist Church, largely serving Tacoma's Samoan community.

The Methodists continued to own the building at 3526 East G Street, which they rented to various congregations and as a general hall, known as "Liberty Hall," from 1933 to 1945.³¹ In 1943 the McKinley chapter of the Royal Neighbors fraternal organization began using it and then purchased it in 1945, using it until 1988.³²

In 1913, Sacred Heart Catholic parish was established with a church at 4540 East McKinley, the building now used as a parish house. A new sanctuary was built in 1954. The church also operated a school from 1924 until 1980, operated by the Sisters of Providence.³³ Also in 1913, McKinley Park Christian Church was established at 860 East 38th. The McKinley Park Free Methodists established a church in 1913 at 1112 East 36th, which later moved to 814 East 36th (now Harrison Park Baptist, 3602 Spokane). In 1917, a congregation of western Quakers built Friends East Side Church at 4902 McKinley (now Maranatha Church of God).³⁴

Further Development (1920 to 1942)

McKinley Avenue emerged as a neighborhood commercial corridor between E. 34th Street and E. Division Lane with many grocery, bakery, and butcher shops, variety stores, and drug stores as well as restaurants and bars. Apartment buildings appeared along McKinley Avenue with the Post Apartments (now McKinley Apts., 802 East 34th Street) and McKinley Hall (3407 McKinley) in 1921 and Porter Apartments (3502 McKinley) in 1928. A popular destination was The Park Theatre (3510, then 3506, later 3508 McKinley), a vaudeville and movie theater that opened in 1910 and operated until 1961.³⁵

In 1915, the McKinley Hill Branch Library opened in a storefront at 3510 McKinley). In 1930, pioneer Tacoma businessman Frederick Mottet of Hunt & Mottet Company (1887 - 2012) donated the land, building and furnishings for a branch library (3523 East G St.) to the neighborhood in memory of his wife Charlotte and the many hours they spent horseback riding earlier in the area. Tacoma architect Silas Nelson (1894 - 1987) designed the French Eclectic style building to reflect Mottet's French Huguenot heritage.³⁶

²⁵ *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 04/01/1906, pg. 17

²⁶ *Tacoma News Tribune*, 12/11/1948 pg. 7

²⁷ *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 05/03/1908, pg. 22

²⁸ City Building Permits, Tacoma

²⁹ *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 06/14/1908, pg. 34

³⁰ *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 05/25/1913, pg. 11

³¹ *Tacoma City Directory*

³² *Kaleidoscope: A History of McKinley Hill*, 1988, pg. 21-24

³³ *Ibid.*, pg. 18-19

³⁴ *Tacoma News Ledger*, 09/09/1917, pg. 21

³⁵ *Tacoma City Directory*

³⁶ *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 11/26/1930, pg. 1

The streetcars remained the dominant mode of transportation, but responding to the increasing use of automobiles, the city paved McKinley Avenue in the early 1920s. However, other streets went unpaved. Garages and gas stations appeared, such as Saugen Garage (now Kent Collision, 3402 McKinley) in 1921 and Hess Auto Repair (now Ricks Diagnostic & Repair Service, 3526 McKinley) in 1929. Tacoma removed its fleet of streetcars in 1937.

A Depression era project of the Works Progress Administration was to replace the wooden trestle bridges of East 34th Street. In 1937 the concrete bridge was completed across the Pacific Avenue gulch.³⁷ However, construction of the second span across the Tacoma Eastern Gulch was delayed by WWII. It was completed in 1948 after the wooden trestle bridge was condemned in 1943.³⁸ Both bridges are now individually listed on the TRHP.

WWII and Post-War Boom (1943 to 1969)

World War II would bring a new population influx to Tacoma. War-time industries and nearby military bases brought huge numbers of workers and military personnel. In 1943, for example, the federal government opened the 2000 unit, racially integrated Salishan housing development to the southeast of McKinley Hill to house workers. It was transferred to Tacoma's Housing Authority, which eventually converted it to low income housing, where more recently it would serve families immigrating to America. In 2002 the old Salishan began to be redeveloped, which was completed in 2015. Today it is a mixed-income neighborhood of 1,400 housing units, single-family and rentals.³⁹

In 1943 the 43rd and McKinley Playfield Association was founded to improve the playground (now Verlow Playfield), building a clubhouse and pool by 1946. This would become the East Side Boys Club, eventually becoming East Boys & Girls Club, which continues today at the Eastside Community Center (1721 East 56th).⁴⁰

Many of the new residents stayed on following the war, and residential and commercial development extended further south of McKinley Hill eventually to Parkland. Timber and wood products industries flourished, and Boeing expanded rapidly with facilities nearby. The post war boom expanded into surrounding unincorporated areas like University Place and Edgewood and outlying towns like Puyallup, Lakewood and Gig Harbor.

Starting in 1956, Interstate 5 construction would cut through Tacoma. The Tacoma section was opened in 1962, but subsequent construction would continue for the rest of the decade. It would cut off McKinley Hill from the easy access it had to downtown and the Tideflats with its many industries.

In 1961 Safeway left its small 1941 grocery at 3524 McKinley for a large supermarket and shopping complex at 3507 McKinley, taking an entire block of the commercial district.⁴¹ In 1965, McKinley Hill got its first bank when National Bank of Washington (3514 McKinley) opened a branch.⁴² The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Post 969, took over 3510-12 McKinley in 1958 and by 1967 would convert the old Park Theater into an auditorium.

Decline and Revival (1970 to 2000)

Through the 1970s and 1980s, McKinley Hill, along with the city generally, experienced urban decline. The railroad hospital closed its doors in 1968, replaced eventually by a senior housing project. By the mid-1970s, the devastating impact of the Tacoma Mall (built in 1965) on the downtown

³⁷ *Tacoma Times*, 10/20/1936, pg. 1

³⁸ *Tacoma News Tribune*, 01/08/1948, pg. 1-

³⁹ "Salishan, Tacoma, Washington." Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 05/23/2020, [//en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salishan,_Tacoma,_Washington](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salishan,_Tacoma,_Washington)

⁴⁰ *Kaleidoscope: A History of McKinley Hill*, 1988, pg. 5-6

⁴¹ *Tacoma News Tribune*, 06/18/1961, pg. B2

⁴² *Tacoma News Tribune*, 02/26/1965, pg.10, 11

commercial core and neighborhood business districts like McKinley Hill was apparent. Neighborhood shops struggled to compete with national chain stores. The National Bank of Washington branch that opened in 1965 was closed by 1982. The Safeway supermarket closed its doors in the mid-1990s. During the 1980s Tacoma was caught up in a wave of gang crime and violence, much of it centered in nearby Salishan and spilling across East Tacoma. This fueled more flight from the area and a decline in property values and investment. By the mid-1990s social and educational interventions had greatly reduced crime.

More recently, the neighborhood has experienced a revival with an influx of new residents. The McKinley Boosters, organized in 1973, to carry out neighborhood improvement and historic preservation projects. In 1982, they staged the, "McKinley Hill Recognition Festival."⁴³ The idea caught on and the first McKinley Hill Street Fair and Street Dance was staged in 1988 and has occurred every year since. Currently, the grassroots group, Dometop Neighborhood Alliance, meets monthly; they organize community members to create a safer, cleaner neighborhood environment. In 2010, McKinley Hill was featured on the PBS show "This Old House" as one of the country's best places to buy an old house.

Additionally, changes in immigration patterns and ethnic demographics are reflected in changing religious congregations. Immigrant Norwegians predominated on McKinley Hill at the turn of the 20th Century with Norwegian-language Lutheran churches at 702 E. G St. and 899 E. Wright. Today a largely Hispanic congregations meet at Iglesia La Roca (702 E. G St.) and Iglesia De Dios Palabra De Vida (899 E. Wright). Trinity Methodist (601 E. 35th St.) is now Kalavaria Methodist with a largely Pacific Islander congregation. Kingdom Vision Alofa Tunoa Pentecostal Church (3608 McKinley) serves a largely Samoan congregation

Historical Neighborhood Leaders

William R. Giblett (1861 – 1920) was a Tacoma and McKinley Hill pioneer and served on Tacoma City Council representing Ward 4 from 1901 to 1909. Born in England, William immigrated in 1879 to America at the age of 18 with his parents, Richard and Elizabeth Giblett. By 1890, the family is in Tacoma living at 3503 E. G St. (demolished), one of the first houses on McKinley Hill. The family operated a feed & seed business and were also building contractors, Giblett & Son, building many houses on McKinley Hill. From 1895 to 1907 William and wife Anna lived at 723 E. 35th St. (719 from 1895-05, now demo.) and from 1908 – 1918, they lived in a new house at 3412 McKinley (same parcel as 723, demo.). From 1890 until 1900, William worked with his father. From 1901 to 1914 he was a steam fitter and later salesman, and served as state grain inspector from 1915 to 1918.

John H. Ryan (1865 – 1943) John and Ella Ryan came to Tacoma in 1900 from Spokane where he was a successful solicitor and businessman and she operated a successful beauty salon. In 1903 the Ryans began publishing *The Weekly* followed quickly by *The Forum* newspaper, the city's first Black-owned newspaper that would run until 1918. Henry also published *Ryan's Weekly*, a political journal that would last for 30 years. Henry was first elected to the State Legislature for the 28th District in 1920 as the Farm Labor candidate. Over the next 20 years he would serve in the upper and lower houses of the legislature from 1920 to 1940. He was the first Black elected to the state Senate. John and Jeanne lived at 4820 South D Street from 1933 to 1940.

Thorwald (Thor) Carl Tollefson (1901 – 1982) was an attorney and politician who served as a U.S. Representative for Washington's 6th congressional district from 1947 to 1965. Born in Minnesota, his family moved to Tacoma in 1911 and resided for many years at 3839 E. G Street. He attended public schools, graduating from Lincoln High School in 1924 and the University of Washington's School of Law in 1930. He served as the Prosecutor of Pierce County from 1938 – 1946. After Congress, Tollefson was later appointed Director of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. His brothers Harold and Erling were also in city government and law.

Harold M. Tollefson, (1908 – 1985) was an attorney and twice Mayor of Tacoma from 1953-58 and again from 1961-67. Tollefson live at has family home at 3839 E. G St. until 1941. Tollefson was elected as the President of the National League of Cities in 1966. He was a confidant of Vice

⁴³ *Kaleidoscope: A History of McKinley Hill*, 1988, pg. 1-4

President Humphrey and friend of President Johnson. Tollefson Square is named after him. Brother to Thorwald and Erling (1913 – 1986), who served as a Municipal Court judge for 26 years.

Albert L. “Slim” Rasmussen, (1909 – 1993) grew up in the South End. He dropped out of Lincoln High and became a machinist with a Northern Pacific Railroad from 1929 to at least 1960. He was elected to the Pierce County Council. He then served in the Washington House for the 28th District from 1949 to 1961 and in the Senate from 1961 to 1967. He also served two terms as Tacoma mayor from 1967 to 1969, and then again in the Senate from 1971 until his death in 1993. His family home was in the South Rasmussen and his wife Eleanor lived for many years in the Lincoln District at 4031 Pacific Ave.

Ruth L. McElliott (1915 – 2004), Ruth Leona Chester was born in Montana, but her family moved to Tacoma about 1919. She married Cletus T. McElliott, an electrician, in 1936. From about 1945, they lived at 906 East 34th Street. She worked in Tacoma’s Tax and License Department from 1955 and later in the Street Maintenance Division until 1975. She wrote the newsletter for the McKinley Hill Boosters and was president for six years from 1976. She was pivotal in starting the McKinley Hill Festival. From 1986 at the age of 72 until 1993, she served two terms on Tacoma City Council. Ruth McElliott Clinic, which was named after her, opened in 1998 at 3418 McKinley Avenue (now Share & Care House). She also published *Early Main Street* (written by Ann Peterson) *Kaleidoscope* and *All My Some Days* (written by Josie Walter and Brian Tollefson) about historic McKinley Hill.

Lorraine Wojahn (1920 – 2012) was born in Tacoma, but grew up mostly in Seattle where he graduated from the University of Washington. She and her husband lived for many years at 3592 East K Street. She got involved in politics as a field agent for the Washington State Labor Council. Wojahn was a powerful Washington state legislator for 32 years, serving in the House for four terms, from 1969 to 1976, and in the Senate for six terms, from 1977 through 2000, including three stints as Senate president pro tem. Her key accomplishments included passage of the state's Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), creation of the Department of Health, various consumer protection bills, and workers' rights legislation. Wojahn helped create the Washington State History Museum in Tacoma.

Joel E. Odegard (1923 – 1976) was a fire captain and served 28 years with the Tacoma Fire Department. He was an active member of the McKinley Hill Boosters and Sons of Norway. His parents emigrated from Norway in 1904. He and his wife Genevieve lived at 3853 East G Street from 1940 to 1976. A memorial to him stands at the northwest corner of the intersection of East Wright St. and McKinley Ave. It was erected in 1982 by McKinley Hill citizens, Sons of Norway and his fellow firemen. Today it is maintained by the Boosters and lists the names of other neighborhood leaders.

John E. O’Leary (1926 – 1984) was a tug boat captain and served one year of one term on Tacoma City Council (1969-70). He was one of five council members recalled in 1970 by Tacoma citizens for agreeing among themselves to hire a City Manager who they knew to be unqualified. This part of an attempt to end the Council-Manager form of city government that had been in place since 1953. In 1976, he was appointed to one term on Park Board. O’Leary had a varied career from tug boat operator to real estate. He and his wife Margot lived for many years at 3584 South G Street in the Lincoln District.

David G. De Forest (1944 – 2001), De Forest served two terms on Tacoma City Council starting in 1993. He died in office in 2001. He had served as president of the Greater McKinley Hill Booster Assoc. that he helped found in 1980. He also as president of the Eastside Improvement organization.

Douglas A. Delin (1944 – 2005) A former cook in the U.S. Navy, Delin operated a pizza parlor on McKinley Hill for many years. Although an unsuccessful candidate for city council, he was a tireless advocate for the McKinley neighborhood. He was president of Tacoma Eastside Action Membership (TEAM) as well as McKinley Hill Boosters and oversaw their merger. He pushed to keep the Portland Avenue Community Center open, create the Eastside Pool at Gault School, and bring programs to serve Eastside youth. He was a founder of Roosevelt Heights Church of God in Christ. He lived for many years at 3565 East T Street and later at 3526 E. Roosevelt Ave.

Architectural Styles

The McKinley business district grew up organically along the streetcar route and expanded little beyond it. Sadly, incursions over time have led to the loss of much of its original commercial texture. Beyond McKinley Avenue itself houses predominate. From East Division Lane to East 38th, houses still predominate with corner commercial buildings at the old streetcar stops. Most of the historic buildings were constructed between 1900 and 1919 (67 or 47%). A second small boom occurred from 1920 to 1929 (33 or 23%) and hence represent architectural styles that were nationally popular at that time. The McKinley Hill neighborhood was rather modest with mostly working and lower middle class residents, and it was noted that many families built their houses themselves.

Craftsman (1905 – 1930)

Given that the McKinley Hill saw its largest building boom from 1900 to 1929, it is not surprising that the popular Craftsman residential style is the most common found in the inventory (44 examples or 42%). The Craftsman style is characterized by generally one to one-and-a-half stories with a low-pitched, gabled roof with a wide, unenclosed eave overhang. Roof rafters are often exposed with decorative beams or braces added under gables. Porches often feature pyramidal columns set on masonry piers. While commercial versions of this style were also common, none are found in the inventory area.

Handsome examples of the residential Craftsman style are the Reilly house (1908) at 3301 McKinley Ave., the Cavanaugh house (1910) at 3594 McKinley Ave., and the Halsvik house (1924) at 701 East 34th St..

Gable Frontier/Homestead (~1850 - ~1930) & Folk Victorian (~1870 – 1910)

The Gable Frontier/Homestead is a vernacular form to which could be added Italianate or Craftsman detailing. These houses are simple, usually one room wide, constructed with light balloon or braced framing, and covered by wood cladding and a simple gable roof. It was an inexpensive and easily constructed house that followed the railroads across the country making milled lumber available,. In Tacoma National Folk houses are often the earliest houses, and that is true in the McKinley Hill area. Highly decorated examples are characterized separately as Folk Victorian.

This is the second most common residence in the McKinley Hill MUC with 19 examples or 18%. An outstanding example of the Folk Victorian is the Edward Young house (1894) at 623 East Wright Ave. Other examples include the Arthur Lister house (1888) and the R. F. Roberts Grocery (1889) at 607 and 702 East Wright respectively.

Commercial (1900 – 1930)

Nine or 8.5 % of the McKinley Hill MUC buildings are examples of early 20th Century Commercial style. This style is characterized generally has flat-roofed, masonry buildings with a modestly decorative parapet. The front façade may feature decorative string courses but primarily consists of large display windows set on bulkheads with a usually centered and recessed doorway. In the McKinley Hill MUC, most examples of this style are the one-part block type with three bays and only a few of the two-part block type.

The Top of Tacoma Bar at 3527 McKinley Avenue is a good example of the one-part block type of this style as is its neighbor, the 1925 Clips at 3535 – 39 McKinley Avenue. The 1920 McKinley Apartments at 3405 McKinley and the 1928 Porter Apartments at 3502 – 04 McKinley Avenue are good examples of the two-part block type of this style.

Minimal Traditional (~1930 – 1950)

This style is characterized by a small house, usually one-story, with a low or intermediate-pitched, gabled roof. Roof eaves usually have little or no overhang, porches are minimal or non-existent, and architectural detail is minimal. It was a simple, inexpensive house found in early sub-divisions,

especially during and immediately after WWII. Side-gabled versions are commonly called “Cape Cod.”

This style has nine examples (8.5%) in the inventory. A 1937, rare hipped-roof variant with modernist corner windows is located at 701 East 35th St. while two brick examples from the 1940s are found at 3575 and 3589 McKinley Ave.

Prairie (1900 – 1920)

The Prairie style is characterized by a low-pitched roof, usually hipped, with wide overhanging eaves, two stories with porches, often full width with large square supports and a symmetrical façade.

This style has seven examples (7%) in the inventory. A fine example is the John R. Binnings house (1905) at 710 McKinley Way but is largely hidden behind a privacy fence. Another good example is the Rev. E. B. Sletterdahl house (1908), which is a close match for the Sears & Roebuck “Modern House No. 11” pattern, located at 712 East 34th St.

Other building styles that have only one or two representatives include Tudor Revival, Classical Revival, Queen Anne, French Eclectic, Ecclesiastical Gothic, Contemporary, and American Renaissance and are not elaborated here.

Architects

E. Taylor Gardner. Little is known about E. (Edward?) Taylor Gardner except that he was listed as the architect and contractor for the 1920 Porter Apartments (3502 – 04 McKinley Ave.). Beyond that he is known for a 1925 proposal (Tacoma News Tribune, 12/17/1925, Pg. 1, Tacoma Daily Ledger, 12/20/1925, pg. E8) for a dome to enclose the Tacoma Stadium. He is said to have worked on the team designing Madison Square Garden, but whether the 1879, the 1890, or 1925 building is unknown. He is listed as a contractor in the City Directory from 1926 - 1927 with wife Rachel E. Gardner. Then oddly he appears to change his name to Charles E. Gardner from 1928 to 1929 after which he seems to disappear. No census records have been located for him. No other buildings in Tacoma are known to be associated with him.

Heath, Frederick (1861-1953). Frederick Heath served as the official school architect for Tacoma from 1902 through 1920. Heath formed a number of partnerships: Spaulding, Russell & Heath, Russell & Heath, Heath & Twitchell, Heath & Gove, Heath, Gove & Bell. Through these various firms, Heath was responsible for a number of significant buildings in Tacoma and, completed more than 600 projects. Design work was far reaching and varied from private residences, commercial buildings, and fraternal lodges, to churches, hospitals and school buildings. In the McKinley Hill MUC, Heath’s firm is responsible for four buildings. The earliest, largest and most significant is the 1908 McKinley Elementary School (3702 McKinley Ave.). Additionally, Heath, Gove & Bell designed the Haus house (1912) at 814 East Wright Ave. and the Butzberger house (1920) at 723 East 34th St., now Dusty’s Hideaway. For more information see the Architect Biographies at the Dept. of Archaeology & Historic Preservation website: [//dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/research-and-technical-preservation-guidance/architect-biographies/bio-for-frederick-h-heath](https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/research-and-technical-preservation-guidance/architect-biographies/bio-for-frederick-h-heath)

Lea, Pearson, and Richards. Charles W. Lea, Charles T. Pearson, and John G. Richards formed a partnership in 1937 and quickly became Tacoma’s largest architectural firm, a position they would retain through the middle decades of the 20th Century. The National Bank of Washington used the firm to design its branches, such as in Chehalis (1949), Parkland (1950) and at 3512 McKinley Ave. (1964).

Charles W. Lea, Jr. (1903 – 1990) was born in Tacoma and received his education at the University of Washington, University of Pennsylvania, and New York University. He worked as a draftsman in various architecture firms in Pennsylvania and New York before moving back to Tacoma in the 1930s.

Charles T. Pearson (1905 – 1994) was born in Chicago and earned a degree in architecture from the University of Washington in 1931. He worked as a draftsman with two prominent Tacoma firms: Heath, Gove & Bell and John Maloney.

John G. Richards (1908 – 1985) was born in Waltham, Massachusetts and received his education at the University of Washington. For seven years (1930 – 1937), he worked at the firm of Heath, Gove & Bell, first as a draftsman and later as a designer.

Other principal works include their buildings at Pacific Lutheran University (1947-1955), Whitman Elementary School (1952), Tacoma Savings and Loan (1958), Franklin Pierce High School in Parkland (1953), and Lakewood Center in Tacoma (1951).

Nelson, Silas E. (1894-1987). Silas E. Nelsen started his career as a naval architect but eventually moved into residential and civic architecture. He moved to the Puget Sound area as an adult and worked with the architectural firm Heath, Gove, and Bell for four years. He then started his own practice and designed more than 150 homes, 15 churches, numerous buildings at the University of Puget Sound, and the Tacoma main library addition. He designed Charlotte White Mottet Branch Library (1930) at 3523 East G Street. For more information see the Architect Biographies at the Dept. of Archaeology & Historic Preservation website: [//dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/research-and-technical-preservation-guidance/architect-biographies/bio-for-silas-e-nelsen](http://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/research-and-technical-preservation-guidance/architect-biographies/bio-for-silas-e-nelsen)

Contractors and Builders

Benjamin D. Archer (1868 - 1953). Born in England, Archer emigrated to the U.S. in 1873 and was in Tacoma by 1917. He started a contracting business and built a number of houses mostly in the 1920s in south and east Tacoma. Tacoma-Pierce County Buildings Index lists 10 buildings by him.

William Chelse Boynton (1899 – 1977). W. C. Boynton constructed mostly homes in the mid-20th Century. He is sometimes listed as “architect”. Tacoma-Pierce County Buildings Index lists 25 buildings by him.

Cornell Brothers. Ernest (1865 – 1936) and Daniel (1861 – 1940) Cornell were in Tacoma by 1889 and began building one of Tacoma’s largest construction firms, Cornell Brothers. They built numerous houses like 706 E. 34th St.) as well as major buildings such as First Presbyterian Church, Tacoma grain elevators, the Elks Building, the Weyerhaeuser’s Haddaway Hall, and much of WWI Fort Lewis. Many of their buildings are registered landmarks. They are buried in the Tacoma Mausoleum, which they also built.

Hagar Brothers. Martin A. (1859 – 1922) and Alfred A. (1878 – 1954) The Hagar (Hager) brothers emigrated from Norway in 1886. As skilled carpenters they formed a construction company, Hagar Brothers and specialized in houses, of which 24 are listed in Tacoma-Pierce County Buildings Index. They eventually lived at 308 E. 34th St.

Christian M. Halsvik (~1875 – 1969). Christian (Chris) M. Halsvik arrived in Tacoma from Norway in 1902, and his wife Hilda in 1903. Halsvik was a skilled carpenter and contractor, who built his house at 701 East 34th St. where he lived until his death. In 1905, John M. Halsvik (1883 – 1958), likely a brother, joined Christian. Together they built many homes in east and south Tacoma, of which 42 are in the Tacoma-Pierce County Buildings Index.

Richard Giblett (~1834 – 1902). *Richard Giblett and his family emigrated from England in 1879 and were in Tacoma by 1889. The family were important early settlers on McKinley Hill. His house at (3501 E. G St. demolished) was said to be the third oldest on the hill. He and his sons worked as building contractors as well as operating a hay and feed business. Their contracting business,*

Richard Giblett & Sons, built many of the early houses on McKinley Hill. His son William served on Tacoma City Council from 1901 to 1909.

Gerhard Kirkebo,(1890 – 1967). Gerhard Kirkebo was born in Norway in 1890 and immigrated with his parents and brother in 1909 to Tacoma. Kirkebo & Sons was a well-established contracting firm in Tacoma in the mid-20th Century. His work included banks, public schools, supermarkets, fire stations, and churches, including in 1948 the Star-Lite Park-In Theater on South Tacoma Way. It is likely Kirkebo knew fellow contractor Edward Young, in whose house (623 Wright Ave.) he lived.

W. H. Lebo and Son. William H. Lebo (1869 – 1916) and his son Willis R. Lebo (1890 – 1978) provided building construction and architectural services primarily for residences. Willis provided the architectural services, but it's unknown what his training was. The Tacoma-Pierce County Buildings Index lists 22 buildings by them, most in east and south Tacoma.

Peter (Peder) Olson (1847 – 1926). Peter Olson and his wife Gertrude emigrated from Norway in 1881. A carpenter by trade, Peter became an early contractor on McKinley Hill. He built Our Savior's Norwegian Lutheran Church (824 Wright Ave.) and likely helped build Bethlehem Lutheran (3521 E. G St.).

Edward Young (1869 – 1951). Edward Young emigrated from Sweden in 1885 and developed a major construction business in Tacoma, primarily in the years 1905 to 1935. Several of his buildings are Tacoma landmarks, such as the Lynn Funeral Home (717 Tacoma Ave. S.) and First Lutheran Church (524 S I). He worked with many of the city's leading architects. The Tacoma-Pierce County Buildings Index lists some 27 buildings across Tacoma by him.

B. Survey Results

Overview

In 2009, Tacoma's city council created six "neighborhood mixed-use centers," including one that encompassed the McKinley commercial district. This new zoning allowed increased density and building heights. This increased level of development constitutes a substantial threat to the remaining historic buildings and the historic fabric of the district. This inventory was undertaken by the city's Historic Preservation Office and Historic Tacoma to identify historic and cultural resources still remaining in the McKinley Hill Mixed-Use Center.

A total of 169 properties were inventoried. Two of these buildings were already individually listed. Another 22 were built after 1970 (less than 50 years old at the time of the survey) and hence excluded. A total of 145 HPI forms were entered in WISSARD.

The survey results were typical of an early 20th Century neighborhood commercial district. Of the inventoried buildings, 69% were built between 1888 and 1939: 7% from 1888 – 1889, 36% from 1900 – 1909, 10% from 1910 – 1919, 23% from 1920 – 1929, and 6% from 1930 – 1939. The inventoried properties built before 1970 range from modest one-story homes to one and two story commercial buildings. The commercial district was never planned and simply emerged over time almost exclusively directly along McKinley Avenue from East 34th St. to East Division Lane. Beyond that point are corner commercial areas at what were streetcar stops along McKinley Ave. at East 36th, East 37th, and East 38th streets. Most buildings are either wood-frame or masonry structures with the commercial buildings tending toward the latter.

By the far the largest architectural style represented among the inventoried buildings was the Craftsman style with 44 representatives or 42%, followed by Gable Front/Homestead style with 18 or 17% and Commercial style with 9 or 8.5%. Other styles represented were Prairie, Tudor Revival, Classic Revival, Queen Anne, Minimal Traditional and others.

The large percentage of residential styles indicates the large number of houses in the inventory area. Of some surprise were the 12 houses that date from 1888 to 1899. These represent a remnant of the earliest development of McKinley Hill, which has largely disappeared. Some like the Lister house

(607 E. Wright) and the White Shield Society house (812 E. 34th) have important historical connections to Tacoma and the state.

Nearly all of the surveyed properties have incurred visible alterations. The most common alternation was windows with original windows replaced with vinyl sashes and often new surrounds followed closely by modern siding. As expected, the storefronts of the commercial buildings have also seen considerable change as, for example, they change from one store to two stores and back to one or change use.

The inventory area exhibits a similar range of construction dates, land uses and architectural styles. Historically the buildings represent the late 1880s and early 20th Century growth of Tacoma and the establishment of its early streetcar suburbs. The buildings surveyed here are those that give the McKinley Hill MUC its current character.

Eligibility Recommendations

The current survey was conducted at the intensive level with property-specific evaluations were completed. General recommendations on potential NRHP and TRHP eligibility are based on historic research and visual observation of their architectural and historic integrity.

The McKinley Hill MUC already contains two buildings listed on the TRHP: the 1908 McKinley Elementary School (3702 McKinley Avenue.) and the 1909 Engine House #11 (3802 McKinley Ave.). Although just outside the MUC, the Folk Victorian house at 618 East 35th Street is also listed on the TRHP. The 1977 Tacoma Cultural Inventory included 10 more additional buildings as significant:

- 3521 E. G St. (702 Harrison), Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1906
- 3523 E. G St., Charlotte White Mottet Branch Library, 1930
- 3526 E. G St., McKinley Park Methodist Church, 1908 (just outside MUC boundary)
- 710 McKinley Way, the Binnings house, 1905
- 3401 – 07 McKinley Ave. (802 E. 34th), Post Apts., 1920
- 3402 McKinley Ave., Saugen garage, 1921
- 3407 – 11 McKinley Ave., Elred Hardware, 1921
- 3502 – 05 McKinley Ave., Porter Apts., 1928
- 3535 – 39 McKinley Ave., Hope Shoppe Art Supplies, 1925
- 3602 – 06 McKinley Ave., Fields Grocery, ~1906

Of these the Fields Grocery (3402 McKinley Ave.) has lost most of its integrity. The Saugen garage (3402 McKinley), The Post Apts. (3401-07 McKinley) and the Porter Apts. (3502-05 McKinley) have been compromised and are only contributing structures. The rest of these buildings from the 1977 inventory are potentially individually eligible to the TRHP or perhaps the NRHP. These buildings still retain significant integrity, are associated with the broad patterns of Tacoma's history, are associated with significant figures, or reflect distinctive architectural characteristics).

An additional 13 buildings not on the 1977 inventory are identified as potential candidates for inclusion on the TRHP and perhaps the NRHP. Some of these have seen substantial alteration, but they have substantial historical significance, such as the Lister house (607 E. Wright) and Giblett hosue (3503 E. G)

Table 2 Potential Individually Eligible Properties

Address	Street Name	Name	Built	Style
701	E 34th St	C. M. Halsvik house	1924	Craftsman
706	E 34th St	Stephen Meyers house	1903	Gabel Front
712	E 34 th St.	Rev. Slettedahl house	1909	Prairie
3216	E G St	Gerhard J. Kirkebo house	1926	Craftsman
3503	E G St	Giblett house	1890	Gable Front
3521	E G St	Bethlehem Lutheran Church	1906	Late Gothic Rev.
3523	E G St	Mottet Branch Library	1930	French Eclectic
3526	E G St	McKinley Park Methodist Ch.	1908	Craftsman
607	E Wright Ave	Arthur Lister house	1888	Gable Front
623	E Wright Ave	Edward Young house	1895	Folk Victorian
702	E Wright Ave	R. F. Roberts grocery/house	1889	Gable Front
716	E Wright Ave	Robert Gregg house	1904	Queen Anne
3202	McKinley Ave	John G. Anderson house	1941	Min. Trad.
3301	McKinley Ave	Anna J. Reilly house	1908	Craftsman
3407	McKinley Ave	Elred Hardware Store	1921	Commercial
3527	McKinley Ave	Neff Grocery & Meats	1937	Commercial
3535	McKinley Ave	McKinley Clips/Lux Coffe	1925	Commercial
3592	McKinley Ave	John C. Cavanaugh house	1906	Classic Revival
3594	McKinley Ave	John C. Cavanaugh house	1909	Craftsman
710	McKinley Way	John C. Binnings house	1905	Prairie

The Arthur Lister house (607 E. Wright) represents a special case. The Lister house is a modest example of the Gable Front form and has some significant integrity issues. Built in 1888, it is one of earliest buildings remaining on McKinley Hill and is associated with the Listers, a noted Tacoma family especially tied to McKinley Hill. Ernest Lister, future governor, briefly lived here as did his (and Arthur's) father, Jeremiah Lister, who operated a foundry in the Dome district. The Listers helped develop McKinley Hill, Trinity Methodist (601 E. 35th) was the family church, and Lister Elementary is named for Ernest and Alfred Lister. The Arthur Lister house is last of the Lister houses or buildings remaining, hence its historic significance.

Contributing Buildings and Conservation and Historic District Possibilities

Of the remaining buildings, mostly houses, some 82 were identified as possible contributing resources in a TRHP or NRHP historic district or a TRHP conservation district. The majority of these have been altered somewhat, usually with significant additions or alterations (replaced window sashes) to the primary facades, but still retain substantial historical integrity. Both of these areas could easily be part of a broader district beyond the McKinley MUC that was this inventory's focus.

Two areas were identified as possible conservation or historic districts. The 600 to 800 blocks of E. Wright Ave. and 700 to 800 blocks E. 34th St. (including 704 and 710 McKinley Way and 3301, 3402, 3405 and 3407 McKinley Ave.) represent a contiguous area with a significant degree of integrity, some of the earliest buildings on McKinley Hill and several that are potentially individually eligible. Forming a historic or conservation district here should be given priority, and could likely include a larger area beyond the boundaries of the McKinley MUC covered by this inventory.

Figure 5. Potential North End Historic District



The block of McKinley Ave. from East Division Lane and E. 36th Street (3562 to 3589 McKinley), especially the east side of that block, also exhibits a significant degree of integrity and represents the later expansion of the neighborhood. It is still entirely houses and contains a mix of Craftsman houses, bungalows and cottages as well as later Minimal Traditional infill. A district would likely extend beyond the limited area of this McKinley MUC inventory.

Figure 6. Potential Mid-McKinley Ave. Historic District



Although the neither area may possess buildings of sufficient architectural merit under TRHP Criterion C, designation under Criterion A for historical significance is more likely. Given that new development within the MUC is beginning, working with the Planning Dept. and home owners about a conservation or historic overlay in these areas is time critical.

C. Development Trends

There are development trends which may affect historic resources within the survey area. These include:

- Increased growth and redevelopment – The goal of the City’s Mixed-Use Centers is to accommodate Tacoma’s future population through the encouragement of larger and taller residential buildings in these areas. The McKinley Hill MUC has already seen two large apartment buildings constructed and has seen single-family houses demolished for multi-family buildings. Land values have increased considerably.
- Changing business climate – Increased land values and consequent property taxes have led to more costly leases, which are increasingly difficult for local retailers to meet.
- Ongoing alteration of buildings – As retail businesses turnover and new tenants arrive, buildings may be altered to meet the needs and specifications of new uses. The exterior alteration of buildings may result including the removal or replacement of original windows, entrances, and other original features. These developments have the potential to negatively affect the historic integrity of eligible/listed properties.

D. Report Recommendations

The current survey and inventory was completed to inform future planning efforts in the McKinley Hill MUC and to support the historic preservation goals of the City of Tacoma. The McKinley Hill neighborhood contains a number of properties which are both individually and collectively significant both for their architectural merit as well as their embodiment of the commercial, institutional, and residential development of one of Tacoma’s unique neighborhoods. The following recommendations are presented to support the historic preservation goals of the City and of Washington State:

- Support the designation of individual properties in the NRHP and/or TRHP. The City and the Landmarks Preservation Commission should reach out with mailers and meeting to the property owners of buildings identified in this study to encourage the recognition and protection of properties which are historically and/or architecturally significant, as well as financial incentives such as the Special Tax Valuation (TRHP), which may be available to formally designated properties.
- Consider the designation of some areas of the McKinley Hill MUC as a as a conservation or local historic district. The 600 – 800 blocks of E. Wright Ave. and the 700 – 800 blocks of East 34th Streets retain some of the earliest and individually eligible houses. Similarly, the east side of McKinley Avenue from 3562 to 3598 retains cohesive collection of early houses that retain significant integrity as largely contributing buildings. Outreach should be conducted with property owners to see if such a designation would be supported. If a historic district is determined infeasible for any reason, a conservation district should be explored as a means of retaining and managing the unique character the McKinley Hill area possesses.
- Continue inventory on McKinley Hill beyond the MUC zone. Priority should be given to the areas adjacent to the potential conservation or local historic districts mentioned above as well as the Strawberry Hill area.
- Integrate survey findings into the planning process as future development projects are proposed in the McKinley Hill MUC. This study identified a range of properties which can be considered historic resources and will potentially be negatively affected through redevelopment. The use of the survey findings will assist in the early identification of potential impacts and the development of strategies to avoid or minimize these impacts to the greatest extent feasible.

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5 Appendix A: Properties Excluded from Review

Table 3 Properties Excluded Due to Construction Date after 1970

Address	Street	Current Name	Built
624	E 32nd St	Overlook Place Apts	2017
717	E 34th St		1980
818	E 34th St		1984
705	E 35th St		1998
823	E 35th St		1998
3501	E G St		2005
3505	E G St		2008
802	E. Division In.	R. C Roberts Mem. Park	1973
706	E Harrison St		1985
810	E Harrison St	Winners Gym (Tcc)	2008
807	E Wright Ave	Mckinley Terrace Apts	1980
3302	McKinley Ave		1976
3418	McKinley Ave	Share & Care House	1998
3419	McKinley Ave	J's Deli & Grocery	1987
3555	McKinley Ave		1980
3618	McKinley Ave		2021
3715	McKinley Ave		2020
3801	McKinley Ave	McKinley Market Place	2004
3811	McKinley Ave	McKinley Market Place	2008
621	McKinley Way		1979
614	Upper Park St		1979
620	Upper Park St		1979