

In 1873, the Northern Pacific Railroad selected a site along the shore of Commencement Bay. They purchased two miles of waterfront and 2700 acres of property south of the existing settlement of Tacoma [Old Town] and began New Tacoma.

With the promise of "The Great Metropolis", development surged forward, absorbing Old Tacoma in 1884. Tacoma became a center for the processing and shipping of the region's vast, natural resources. Sawmills and flour mills lined Commencement Bay, along with warehouses, coal bunkers, shipyards, canneries and wharves. Merchant offices and commercial establishments sprang up along Pacific Avenue. Residential districts expanded north, south and west, further up the bluff. Long periods of expansion were punctuated by periods of severe national economic downturns such as The Collapse of 1873, The Panic of 1891 and the Great Depression of 1929. The stiffest blow, however, came in 1893 when the Great Northern Railroad's transcontinental line pulled into Seattle, ending Tacoma's regional dominance. Tacoma continued to be molded and shaped by its rich ethnic heritage and resilient pioneer spirit. Both remain the persistent strengths of this City of Destiny.

Tacoma's unique history is revealed through an amazing legacy of structures: buildings, bridges and parks. This rich architectural fabric awaits those willing to look and listen to the story of Tacoma's people and places.



Self-Guided Walking Tour

Historic Hilltop First Neighborhood

The Hilltop neighborhood developed quickly due to its proximity to the expanding downtown, waterfront mills and warehouses. Waves of ethnically diverse peoples from around the globe and throughout the Eastern States moved in and established it as a predominantly working class community. Its development paralleled that of the city and of the nation as a whole. An extensive inventory of historic houses, apartments, churches, clubs, parks, and stores narrate the story of this neighborhood's evolution.

Development exploded over the eastern bluff in 1891 with the llth to 13th Street cable car. A network of subsequent trolley lines led new waves of growth into the 20th Century. This district was originally developed with one and twostory single-family homes, with occasional double houses. They were tightly packed on the standard 25 foot wide lot. Encircled by busy arterials and close to municipal and commercial centers, this quadrant of the Hilltop was molded by economic pressures and the changing needs of the community.

A vibrant apartment district transformed much of the original neighborhood. Many of the smaller wooden buildings were demolished for these three to four story brick structures that typically stretch the depth of corner lots. Nearer to the historical commercial core at So. Ilth Street and MLKing Way, business pressures continuously

Across the Hilltop, land was cleared, additions were platted, and roads and services were laid down. Popular architectural styles of the day, American Foursquares of the 1900s, Craftsmans of the 1910's, and Bungalows of the 1920's, record the irregular pattern of residential infill. They were interwoven with essential services establishing a strong and cohesive community.

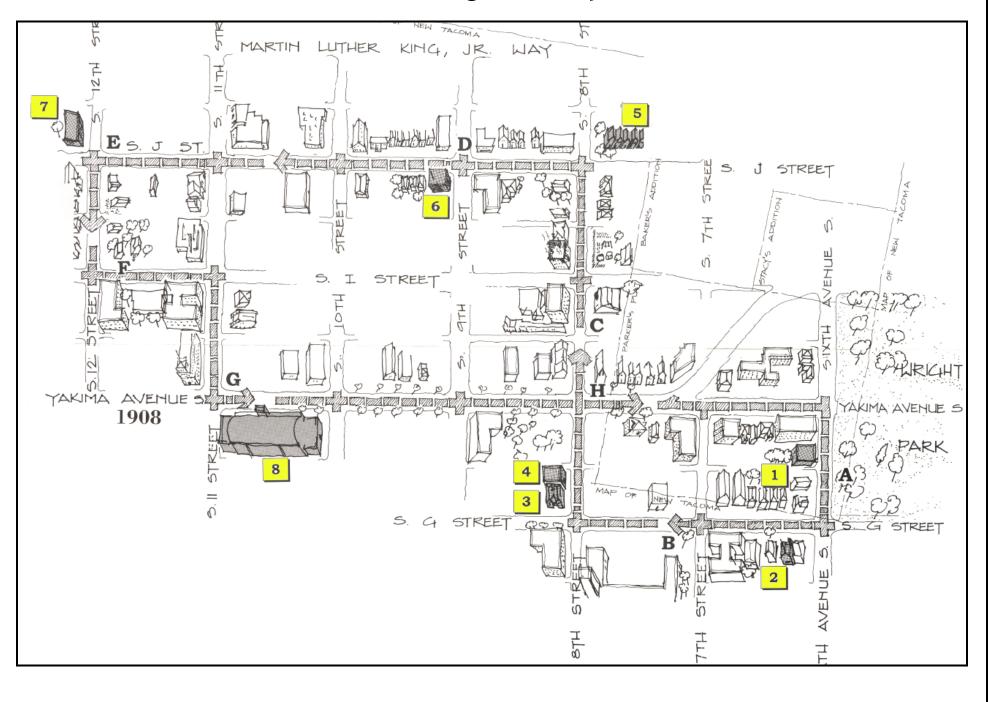


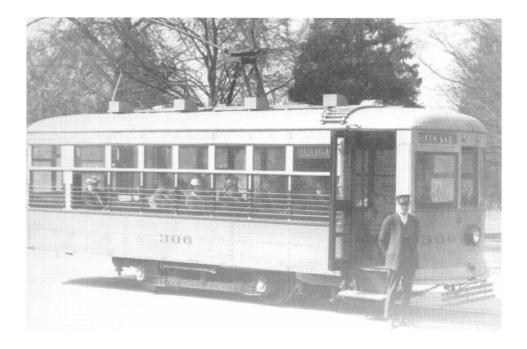
transformed existing structures into newer, larger commercial buildings-or with the sad contemporary promises of urban renewal - vacant lots.Many older historic homes remain scattered throughout; standing defiantly against the push of history while adjusting to its inevitable momentum. The result is the Hilltop's most diverse quilt of architectural periods, styles and building types. It has the greatest concentration of properties on

Surges of growth continued until the Great Depression of 1929, after which scattered infill and modernizations reflect the changing needs of this community's residential population. the National and Tacoma Registers of Historic Places in the Hilltop. It includes single family homes, double homes, apartments and neighborhood commercial.

The walk is a figure 8 loop of approximately 1.4 miles and will take 1-1/4 to 1-3/4 hours. Stops for breakfast, lunch, coffee or chocolates will quickly lengthen your time and enjoyment.

Walking Tour Map





A

Solution Notice the reorientation of buildings to provide views of Wright Park and 6th Avenue, where the trolley once ran.

720 Sixth Avenue (1925) Wm. Virges, builder

702, 704, 706, 708 Sixth Avenue (1904)

I. Jay Knapp, arch., H.A.Ferguson, builder, Cornell Bros., contr. Block of 4 residences from two similar plans.



720 Sixth Avenue 1925

1

Hob Nob Restaurant

1925

712, 714, 716 Sixth Avenue

Wm. Virges, builder/developer

This single story commercial property was developed with the larger apartment building to the north as an investment property. Notice the many related building materials, especially the pressed metal cornice. Each building has a full floor that opens directly onto a large shared yard at the rear, providing considerable light, ventilation and pleasant views. This also helped reduce the overall impact of the two buildings.

The shops face the bucolic Wright Park and the busy cross street, Sixth Avenue, where a trolley once ascended the hill. Originally there were three independent shops, each with its own storefront entrance. Over the years, a variety of different tenants have called this building home. In 1928, it held the Wright Park Cleaners and Dryers and the H.P. Kemp Confectionery. The cleaners were gone by 1935 and the confectionery converted to a grocery. The Hob Nob Food Shop, as it was called, expanded soon after W.W.11 to include a restaurant. Soon afterwards, Louis Fruchter opened a furrier and the Heatherland Dance Studio moved into the center shop which had long been vacant. Eventually the Hob Nob expanded, filling the entire building with home cooked meals and family charm.

James Agnew, builder

James Agnew was a carpenter, and along with his wife Amanda, owned property in various parts of the city. By 1891 they had moved into this building suggesting the construction date of 1890. Shortly after its construction, however, they relocated to the newly developing southern part of Tacoma. The building then became home to a number of families, eventually being divided into two units.

James Agnew Residence 605 South G Street

Carpenter Agnew probably consulted one of the many pattern books available to develop the design of this building. These books provided numerous different plans of the most popular styles of the day. In the 1890's they would have included the many variants of ornate Victorian design, of which 605 is a wonderful example of the Stick Style. It clearly exploits the availability of milled lumber, an essential commodity of Tacoma. The mass of the building is dissolved and the various components, or "sticks" of its construction are expressed on the surface. The many fields of the exterior surface are filled with decorative shingles and various patterns of horizontal and vertical board siding.

B

So Notice how the buildings on the west side of the street step back approaching So 7th Street. They were constructed completely within Parker's Plat which is angled, as were most plats, relative to the street grid.

724 So G Street, First Methodist Episcopal Church (1892, DEMOLISHED 1918) Bullard & Haywood, arch. McKenzie & Edwards, contr.

800 Tacoma Avenue South, Central School (1912)

Frederick Heath, arch. F.H. Goss, contr.

"...designed to accommodate 1,000 students...The tower housed the school district's administrative offices...The school featured not only classrooms, but recreation rooms and a hospital, as well as a complete garage and a caretaker's quarters...shop facilities for boys, as well as extensive 'domestic science' classrooms for the girls...on the fourth floor...the school doctor and dentist...special section, on the south side of the building, for tubercular students..."

801 South G Street, Charlesbee Apartments (1928)

Silas E. Nelsen, arch. C.F. Davidson & Co., builder & contr. "First apartment in the city to be equipped with radio service"

803 South G Street, Thomas Carroll Residence (1888, DEMOLISHED)

Farrell & Darmer, arch. Geo. H. Pew, contr. Notice the extent of demolition in this area. There was a campaign in the 1950's to "eliminate dilapidated" buildings. They remain abandoned sites or municipal parking; a sad memorial to urban renewal.



1890

Charlesbee Apartments 1928 801 So. G Street



3

Thomas Carroll Double House 802-804 South G Street

1890

Farrell & Darmer, arch.

Many of the rental properties in the Hilltop were constructed as investment properties by a local businessmen and residents. Like many early Tacomans, Thomas Carroll participated actively in the local real estate market. He developed the Carroll and Hannah addition, at the southern edge of the Hilltop, and purchased a number of other small Hilltop parcels.

In 1884 Carroll purchased four adjacent lots, two of which support this house and he held them as an investment. In 1888 he purchased additional lots across the street (where the Charlesbee Apartments now stand) and built a large two story home. Two years later he developed this double house. Designed to resemble a large single family home it is a duplex with matching halves. It reveals a high level of detailing not typically found in more modest Hilltop homes of its generation. Notice the fan-shaped trim in the gables, the decorative chimney brick (recently restored), and the center attic gable. Interior woodwork also shows an attention for details, especially the first floor fireplace surrounds. Carroll's substantial investment in this as a rental property likely reflected his interests as a neighbor and a landlord.

Buren/Holden Apartments

708-10 South 8th Street

Heath & Twichell, arch., Michael Buren, builder, E. Youngberg, contr.

Michael Buren, proprietor of the Olympic Steam Laundry, purchased Thomas Carroll's Double House [802-4 So. G St.] in 1908. The back yard area had remained open, and Buren decided to develop a small apartment building.

He likely turned to Heath as architect because Heath and Gove had designed the Buren brother's laundry in 1903.

This building illustrates the impact of the increasing population to this area; looking for new designs to achieve greater density. Still relatively spacious, each unit had four full rooms, a bath and a long hallway running front to back. Still a wood framed building, the design incorporates some commercial elements to resolve the new multi-unit building type. Notice the simple boxy mass with a strong horizontal cornice and parapeted facades to the street and alley. These details become more typical in later brick apartment buildings.

1908

Buren/Holden Apartments 1908 708-10 So. 8th Street

Each unit still has its own separate entrance, albeit from a shared porch. Light and air wells cut through the center solving one problem of this transitional building type; its long interior units. A unique example, this building represents a transitional apartment structure in an area of the Hilltop changing rapidly with the new century.

C

816 South 8th Street, Malone Apartments (1908)

Drack & Bergfield, arch., Jos. Malone, builder, B.B. Teeor, contr. A stroll down the 800 biock alley shows the variety of back lot buildings. Notice especially the lettering on the storefront mid-block to the west.

902 South 8th Street, Mottau Apartments (1913)

Darmer & Cutting, arch., Robert Mottau, builder, John Wallin, contr. "1930 – J.W. Seldon purchases building," "1935 ... Tacoma buildings sold" "1941 ... il. of garden of E.M. Harbor"

806-08 South I Street, Baren Apartments (1909)

L J. Baren, builder Notice the neighborhood community park and pea-patch.

809 South I Street, Dedenback Apartments (1925)

McDonald & Michel, arch. & contr., LJ. Dedenback, builder "1938 ... Harvard Apts recent sales"

910 South 8th Street, Robert Mottau Residence (1908)

Proctor & Farrell, arch. Note the beautiful balustrade within and leaded windows. Notice all the American Foursquare building types in this area of 1908-10 vintage residences as opposed to the number of late Victorian types on the 600-700 block of So G Street.

923 South 8th Street (1902)

Proctor & Farrell, arch., Cornell Bros., contr. A transition between the Victorian and American Foursquare/Italianate Styles.

South J Street – Victorian Row c. 1889

702-22 South J Street

Washington Builders' Association

This continuous row of residences is an outstanding example of the Queen Anne style. It is a rare example of a continuous grouping of seven homes by a single builder, in this case the Washington Builder's Association. Each building is tucked onto a single 25 foot lot. They begin to resemble rowhouses, common in East Coast cities but almost non-existent in Tacoma. The tall slender design of these homes afforded considerable interior space; two full stories and rooms tucked into attics opened up with dormers.

Notice the steep steps from the street. Traditional pattern book house plans were developed for flat sites. Builders were therefore forced to locate the main floor level at either the street or alley. Along the west, the houses are raised above the street; along the east they sit well below it. The more elevated siting provides a grander presence along the street and enhanced views out to Commencement Bay and beyond.

Observe the splendid wood detailing, visible in all the buildings along this row. There are subtle differences in massing, wood trim and shingles that help to differentiate the buildings and at the same time unite them. They are magnificent examples of the Queen Anne style and together help present a wider view of the urban fabric of their time.

D

802 South J Street, Hart-Magann Tabernacle (1907, DEMOLISHED)

S.L. Blair, contr.

"-temporary bldg. built for religious revival," "4/21/1907 ... Volunteers hustle to build a big church ..."

802-6 South J Street, Apartments (1907)

Durfey Investment Co., builder, Cornell Bros., contr. "12/1/1907 ... Brick apartments are being erected"

805 South J Street (1888)

809 South J Street (1888) Philip Savory, owner & contr. (5/20/1888 & 1/1/1889: permits)

818 South J Street, 'Jumbo' Cantwell & Mrs. Harry Morgan Residence (c.1890) "1893.. In wedded bliss"?

820 South J Street (1888, DEMOLISHED) M.G. Denton, builder, Pepper & Fogg, contr.

820 South J Street, Apartments/flats (1908)

Bullard & Hill, arch., G.L. Freer, contr., Corrine Nolan, builder "Mrs. Helen J. Hilburn ... 5/4/1932 ... Two dead in triangle tragedy" "12/19/1937 ... Calabres purchases bldg." A wonderful example of the well balanced hodgepodge of styles common in the Hilltop; here with an American Foursquare/ Italianate mass, a craftsman influenced entry and some Queen Anne bays on the north side.

902 South J Street, Schafer Apartments

Notice along the east side of the street how the houses are set down low as the bluff starts its rapid drop to the bay. On the other side of the street notice how close the houses sit to each other, each on a narrow 25' wide lot.

McIlvaine Apartments

920 South 9th Street

John P. Larkins, arch., J.D. Bonnell Company, contr.

The McIlvaine Apartments are another investment property of a local businessman from the community, Alvin C. McIlvaine. He arrived in Tacoma from Pennsylvania in about 1893 and succeeded as a brick and plastering



McIlvaine Apartments 1909 920 So. 9th Street

contractor. He acquired a few small pieces of property at various locations throughout Tacoma after 1898 including this one, purchased in 1906. It was a valuable parcel, located two blocks north of the cable line and two blocks east of the burgeoning "K Street" Business District.

The architect found that the opportunity to work on a more substantial project thrilled and challenged him; having typically worked on speculative single family homes. His original plans were for a three story building with three wings separated by light courts. McIlvaine, however, opted for a considerably more modest solution resulting in the single square plan we now see.

The mass of the building is well proportioned, broken up with a concrete base, two brick stories, and topped by a field of stucco with a bold metal cornice. The corners are articulated by concrete brick quoining while the sides have three story stamped metal bays that contain generous interior window seats. Built by J.D. Bonnell, details and materials of the exterior highlight the trades of its developer

Ε

1007 South 11th Street, Tally Ho Tavern (1926) Silas & Nelson, arch., Jackson & Son, contr

1101 South J Street, Swedish Methodist Episcopal Church (1904) (New Jerusalem Church of God in Christ) See the Tacoma Daily Ledger, 24 January 1904, for a shocking photo of the original structure; pre-fire and pre-remodel.

1201 South J Street, Swedish Baptist Church (1910) (Truth Temple/Partially Abandoned)



Schuliz Apartments 1911 1002 So. 12th Street

7

Schultz Apartments

1911

1002 South 12th Street

Darmer & Cutting, arch., George Frier, contr.

The Schultz Apartments might almost be called a double apartment building. Its design seemingly joins a pair of matched apartment buildings. The large multiroom apartments, still common in the 1910's, presented a design challenge to adequately light and ventilate all the rooms.

Each half of this building has a shared entry, a central hallway and a stairwell with porches at upper landings. The individual units extend the entire depth of the building with three full rooms, a pantry and a bath each off a long hallway. Rear exits collect on a series of shared balconies running the length of the building. Common light wells became a necessity in this emerging building type, bringing additional light and ventilation to the deep interiors.

The mass and size the Schultz Apartments equaled larger masonry structures downtown and those appearing nearby in the Historic "K Street" commercial district. A simple box on a raised basement, the main body, upper floor, and continuous cornice are however completely clad in wood. Fields of horizontal siding and wood moldings break it up. Windows are limited to two basic styles and follow a strict vertical alignment. The building is another transitional design looking for an appropriate vocabulary to an evolving building type.

For Darmer, it reveals strong links to other apartment buildings he designed and reveals the struggle to resolve the conflicting interests of changing lifestyles, building technologies, and commercial interests.

F

1118 South I Street, J.W. Cutting Residence (1887)

"1913 ... Nursery tots in bright home"..." Alva Tucker residence ... 1926 ... She's the happiest mother in Tacoma"... Notice how the "flat" floor plan of a "standard" house plan must be "jacked-up" to accommodate the Hilltop's steep eastern slope.

1121 South I Street, Bollvar Apartments (c.1930)

1113 South I Street, Tacoma Day Nursery (1918, DEMOLISHED)

"1914 ... Option taken on favorable site" ... "1918 ... Junior Day Nursery to open pretty new building"

1113 South I Street, Tacoma Day Nursery (1963)

Lea, Pearson & Richards, arch., John Lade, contr. "1963 ... Tacoma Day Nursery presents new building to Tacomans"

G

818 South 11th Street, Landmark Court Apartments (c.1920) Notice the cut brick "LAUAN" set in the steps. The courtyard has a beautiful, elaborately detailed entry vestibule.

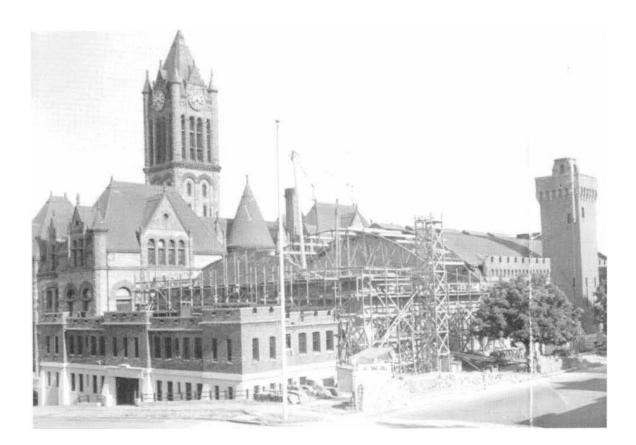
811 South 11th Street, S.S. King and McCollough Double House (1889)

F.A. Sexton, arch., J. Mackin, contr. Excellent example of the Queen Anne style. The basement garages are a more recent alteration made possible by the steep eastern slope.

1102 *Yakima Avenue South, Roosevelt Apartments* (1929) Lundberg & Ekvall, arch.

1101 Yakima Avenue South, L.H. Bates Vocational-Technical School (c.1945) (*Tacoma Vocational School*) Ernest L. Mock, arch.

1002 Yakima Avenue South, Gaffery Mortuary (1932)



8

State Armory National Guard Armory

715 South 11th Street

1908

Russell & Babcock, arch., Joseph Well, contr.

major remodel doubled area of the armory Heath & Grove, arch. (1938) major remodel doubled area of the armory Heath & Grove, arch. (1938)

Se remodeled into jail, Walt Gressinger, arch. (1982)

The Tacoma Armory/State Armory/National Guard Armory was built adjacent to the Pierce County Court House (demolished; site of the current temporary jail) in what remains of an important governmental and institutional district of the Hilltop. The Armory was modeled on eleventh-century English fortifications and was designed to symbolize its military function and bestow a civic stature to the community. See the watch towers and battlements with their crenellations and arrow slits. Notice the building's name above the entry in an elaborate raised Gothic script.

The main body of the structure incorporates a vast covered hall designed for public gatherings as well as military assemblies. Massive heavy-timber trusses with a sweeping curved top chord span this space. Their form is clearly visible on the exterior. Along with a contingent of troops, the building originally housed stables for the horses used to pull artillery. In the basement there was a rifle range, later converted to a parking garage. More recent, and less impressive, the entire building had been modified into a temporary jail. Its large interior space was filled with small cells. They jail was relocated in late 1996 leaving the Armory's future as a public space and monument uncertain.

821 Yakima Avenue South, St. James Apts.(1929) H.J. Schneider, builder, 53 units

806-8 Yakima Avenue South, Thompson Apts. (1906) Proctor & Farrell, arch., E.E. Bryant, contr.

805 Yakima Avenue South (1889)

802 Yakima Avenue South, I.H. Durboraw Building (1891) Brick construction.

Notice the view up angled street (post-1926) to the steeple of the First Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1926.

713 *Yakima Avenue South* (1906) E. Youngberg, contr.

621 Yakima Avenue South, McDonnell Apartments (1909) J.D. McCabe, contr. "Apartment house will cost \$8,000."

615 Yakima Avenue Sout, M.G. Storaasli Residence (1889) Alex Wallace, contr.



713 Yakima Avenue So. 1906

Growth of the Hilltop

The formation of the Hilltop can be divided into three broad chronological periods. They address events and trends which influenced the formation of this neighborhood.

The initial period, First Expansion: 1875-1900, covers the early settlement in the Hilltop as development spread up the hill from the waterfront following the Northern Pacific Railroad's decision to locate its terminus on Commencement Bay. As the forest gave way to residences, real estate developers played a key role in platting land and marketing property on the Hilltop. The Hilltop's homes were soon joined by community institutions such as schools, social clubs, and churches. Residents depended on their feet for transportation, so stores and social activities were typically located within easy walking distance from homes. The construction of a cable car line up the slope in 1891 hastened the pace of the Hilltop's development. Growth in the the Hilltop followed the boom and bust cycle of Tacoma's economy. which was itself affected by regional and national trends. This initial expansion concluded when growth stopped following the national financial panic of the early 1890s.

The second period, **Branching Out: 1900-1930**, establishes an era of tremendous population growth in Tacoma. The city's resource and transportation based industries recovered from the economic troubles of the 1890s and new employment opportunities in the region attracted immigrants. The Hilltop absorbed a large share of working class immigrants arriving in Tacoma from throughout the United States and the world — hoping to benefit from the city's wellpublicized economic opportunities. The extension of citywide trolley lines throughout the Hilltop spurred the construction of homes farther from the commercial and industrial center of Tacoma. Trolleys also contributed to the development of defined commercial districts throughout the community. Numerous apartments f appeared, responding to the demand for housing generated by the expanding population. Churches, schools, and civic clubs representing the diverse populations of the Hilltop flourished.

The third period, **Filling In: 1930-1950**, involves the continued development of the neighborhood leading up to and through World War II and the immediate post-war years. After start of World War II, expansion of war-related industries such as ship building carried Tacoma out of the depression. Following World War II, many who had moved into Tacoma to support the war effort decided to stay permanently. Developers added new homes and apartment buildings on vacant parcels or replaced older homes with new buildings.

Today the Hilltop is again in flux; responding to the continuing needs of its existing population while opening its doors to new immigrant populations. As in days of old, these new residents come from around the world, the country and the region.

Homes in the Hilltop

Residential properties in the Hilltop include two basic types: single family, and multifamily dwellings, which can be subdivided into semi-attached houses and apartment buildings.

A wide variety of single-family houses were built in the Hilltop from the standard 25' wide x 130' deep lots. Individual homeowners and small scale builders produced a tremendous diversity in the sizes and styles. Even on the same block, houses might range from tiny workman's cottages to much larger homes when two or more lots were combined. Early houses were tightly packed, building close to lot lines - and consequently to neighboring homes. Occasionally they were spaced with gardens and orchards on adjoining lots.

Houses ranged from the common vernacular structures and popular "pattern book" designs to the larger architectdesigned homes. Popular Hilltop styles included 1880's Stick Style, 1890's Queen Anne and late-Victorian, 1900's American Foursquare, 1910's Craftsman, and 1920's Bungalow. Often motifs from numerous popular architectural styles were incorporated in the same buildings. Because development on the Hilltop tended to leapfrog rather than progress uniformly, one often finds homes from different periods sharing the same block. Homes were typically wood-frame construction with wood siding, shingles, and mass-produced wood ornament. Original stone foundations remain on some of the earlier homes; while cast stone, concrete or concrete block have replaced most early a timber foundations. Brick construction was rarely used in residential construction before the 1950s and is therefore an easy way to date a structure.

The majority of single-family homes consisted of individual houses and not large scale tracts as were common in Eastern cities. A few groupings of similar houses built concurrently by he same developer can be seen, but they are the exception in the Hilltop.

Double (semi-attached) houses and larger multi-unit, wood- frame apartments were typically built only in the first phase of the Hilltop's development. After the turn of the century, apartment living became a more widely accepted form of housing, as proximity to commercial interests and the costs of construction escalated. Apartments replaced older single family housing to the greatest extent in the northeastern part of the Hilltop, close to downtown Tacoma, and along the Sixth Avenue street car route. These buildings created a transition between the urban hubbub and quieter single family residential districts. The architecture of this walk provides a wonderful opportunity to study the evolution of a building type. Over many years the design of the wood frame, single-family residences were transformed by a repeated doubling the floor plan and a gradual reduction of the size of each unit until being resolved in three to four story brick apartment buildings now common throughout this quadrant of the Hilltop. The **Thomas Carroll Double** House is an example of the first doubling: the scale, details and building materials still mimic the single family residence. When this was doubled the size of the new structure demanded a new vocabulary. The details and massing of larger commercial structures began to be incorporated. The Buren/Holden Apartments is an early example maintaining four individual entries. The next version doubled vertically with 8 units as in the McIlvane **Apartments**. There is now a shared entry and the building fully embraces a new apartment building design aesthetic. The construction materials shifted from small scale wood details to a commercial scale (and more fire resistant) brick with stucco. In buildings with two units per floor there was still light and ventilation all along one side. The Schultz Apartments doubled literally doubled this design adjoining pair. Light and ventilation were now only available at the ends for half the units or through deep shared light wells. Of note also is the all wood construction of this large structure.

Gradually, a commercial brick vocabulary dominated with rather simple architectural ornament concentrated at single entrances. They were typically four story walk-up blocks with little or no street setback. The size of apartments was also reduced to one bedroom and studio plans reducing the need for windows on multiple sides. The family structure was changing and the buildings responded. Apartments of this type include the <u>Charlesbee Apartments</u> [1928] at 801 S. G Street, the <u>Bolivar Apartments</u> [c.1930] at 821 S. Yakima Avenue and the <u>Granada Apartments</u> [I9261 at 1224 S. Yakima Avenue.

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