## Staff Report

### Wedge Historic Special Review District (Proposed)

#### District Regulations and Design Guidelines

The following is the proposed structure and generalized content for the formation of the Wedge Neighborhood Historic District.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Explanation/Recommended Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Statement of Purpose, to include: | Provides the basis for the formation of the district and sets the goals and purpose for the district regulations. These include:  
  a. Statement of public benefit  
  b. Statement of intent  
  c. Statement of general regulations  
  - Reasons for preserving the neighborhood  
  - What is gained by the preservation of the neighborhood  
  - The overarching requirement for design review within the district |
| 2. Statement(s) of significance under relevant designation criteria in TMC 13.07. | These are the findings that are made by the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the historic significance and importance of the neighborhood. |
| 3. Boundary Description | The legal description and map of the district as recommended by the Commission and approved by City Council and the Planning Commission. |
| 4. Guidelines for building design and streetscape improvement review | The basic guidelines for property owners and the Commission to review and approve applications for certificates of approval. These may include:  
  - Purpose and use of the guidelines  
  - Enabling language for use of standards and administrative guidelines  
  - Overview of architectural styles in the district  
  - General Principles for the Guidelines  
  - Guidelines for Remodeling and Rehabilitation  
  - Guidelines for New Construction |
| 5. District Exemptions | Such as:  
  - Administrative review for exterior nonvisible changes  
  - Interior  
  - Basic maintenance  
  - Installation and repair of public or private water and sewer systems  
  - Landscaping  
  - Maintenance and repair of existing parking areas  
  - ADA accessibility installations, traffic signaling equipment, wayfinding or directional signs legally installed by the City of Tacoma  
  - Historically nonresidential-use buildings (i.e. commercial, industrial, religious, educational)  
  - Noncontributing buildings |
Areas of Consideration for the Commission

1. Statement of Significance

The Statement of Significance is the overarching statement for designation of the historic district and is stated in the form of findings from the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

At its meeting of November 12, 2008, the Commission reviewed the preliminary language submitted with the nomination. Staff made the following recommendations to the Commission:

- While the district appears to represent some of the broad patterns of Tacoma's history, it is not known to what degree or how significant this association is. Additional work to develop a historical context, including historical themes related to the history of the Wedge Neighborhood, should be undertaken to determine whether Criterion A applies.

- There is evidence that there were historically significant persons living in the district, including Silas Nelsen, Aaron Titlow, and Frank and Ethel Mars, potentially meeting Criterion B. More work should be done to substantiate and document the degree of association.

- The district appears to be an intact middle class residential district from early in Tacoma's developmental history until after WWI, potentially meeting Criterion C. Although there are a number of notable homes within the district, most appear to be modest builder interpretations of established architectural styles and forms. Several of these may be good examples of typical residential architects. More work needs to be done to analyze the architecturally character defining features and influences within the district, including information on builders and architects, development history, and architectural type and style through the years.

- The Wedge Neighborhood is adjacent to a component of the North Slope Historic District, and is part of a larger section of the city where historic development patterns prevail (including Wright Park, S J Street Historic District). Therefore, it appears that Criterion E may be met.

- Additional development of the historic context discussion and overall development history would benefit the significance statement.

Recommendation

Staff will continue to develop this statement for presentation to the Commission on February 11, 2009.
2. District Boundaries

Background

At its meeting of December 10, 2008, the Commission reviewed the staff analysis for the boundaries of the historic district. Staff made the following observations and recommendations:

A. The formation of the historic district boundaries should consider the following factors:

1. Historic character and age:
   a. The district nomination request stipulates that historically residential buildings are to be the focus of the historic district, and that commercial properties, religious properties and other nonresidential buildings should be excluded.
   b. The prevailing architectural characteristics of areas that are included in the district should be within the period of significance for the district. An analysis of buildings that are 50+ years of age within the district shows that the oldest known build date is 1889 and the most recent is 1931.
   c. Staff has completed a preliminary analysis for the buildings inventory, excluding modern construction (less than 50 years of age, nonresidential, vacant properties) (Figure 2).

2. Underlying zoning and land use development regulations
   a. The core of the area is zoned R2-SRD, which is bordered by HM (Hospital-Medical) to the east at M Street, and C2 (Commercial) along 6th Avenue.
   b. Portions of the district are zoned consistently, in terms of density, with low density detached dwellings, the historically predominant use of the area.
   c. There are portions of the district, including Sixth Avenue to the south, and the Hospital-Medical zone to the east, are not consistent with the aims of the district. In some cases, this zoning has resulted in development that has removed the historic character of the area, and should be excluded from the district.

B. The following issues need to be resolved by the Commission as it considers boundaries:

1. Creso Court at 1521 Sixth Avenue is a relatively intact 1927 Bungalow Court apartment structure. It is within the C2 zoning designation, but is also within the development period of the district and represents a form that was very common prior to WWII.
2. The Berg Apartments, built in 1916 at 1304 Division Avenue, are within the Hospital Medical zone, but are architecturally intact. The Berg, along with the apartments at the 1300 block of Sixth, represent historic multifamily housing along the arterials at the periphery of the district.
3. The homes along the 500 block of South L Street are some of the earliest homes in the district. However, they are somewhat isolated from the remainder of the district.
4. The vacant parcels in the 500 block of South M Street create a substantial nonhistoric area within the district, especially on the eastern side of the street, where the nonhistoric development extends to Sixth Avenue.

5. The 1300 block of Sixth Avenue is zoned C2 Commercial, although the buildings on this block are excellent examples of early historic apartments.

During discussion, members of the Landmarks Preservation Commission requested additional consideration of the boundaries, and directed Staff to review the following:

1. Provide a list of buildings that were included in the “Areas to be Removed” map of the 12/10/08 Staff recommendation for boundaries.
2. Potential district boundaries using “conservation district” or conservation areas to buffer the core residential district from potential adverse impacts due to construction activities on the edges; and

In response to the first item staff provides the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Build Date</th>
<th>Historic or Current Use</th>
<th>Included in Staff Recommended District?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1304 Division.</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Apartments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1220 Division</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Medical offices</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121 S 4th Street</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>311 S L Street</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1207 S 5th Street</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Medical Offices</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>421 S M Street</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Apartments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1301 S 5th Street</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Apartments</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>502 S M Street</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>502-4 S L Street</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>506 S L Street</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>508 S L Street</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>510 S L Street</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>512 S L Street</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>514 S L Street</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional buildings not within the Staff Recommended District Boundaries, but within Study Area.

1615 Sixth Ave  United Presbyterian Church parsonage 1902
1619 Sixth Ave  First United Presbyterian Church 1922
1703 Sixth Ave  It’s Greek To Me (restaurant) 1986
1601 Sixth Avenue Warehouse 1929
1501 Sixth Avenue Warehouse 1946

The following maps are provided in response to the question regarding buffers and conservation district areas (see following pages).
Alternative A: Staff Recommended Boundaries from 12/10/08 LPC meeting

Boundaries are based on the following:

1. Areas of predominantly modern construction are removed from the district. These include areas primarily on the hospital campus at the NE corner of the study area. These do not include all of the areas that are zoned HM or C2, however, where there are a concentration of period contributing buildings, or potential infill sites at the center of the proposed district.

2. Areas of historic but nonresidential are also excluded due to their status as noncontributing to the district. These include the First United Presbyterian Church and parsonage on Sixth Avenue, as well as historic warehouses on Sixth Avenue.

Advantages of this approach:

1. Simplest to understand and implement.
2. Reflects the current extent of detached residential housing.
3. Areas that are clearly not historic in nature are excluded.
4. Follows the development/plat pattern closely.

Disadvantages of this approach:

1. Does not address historically significant nonresidential properties in the district.
2. Does not address potential need for a buffer in the district between modern development and existing historic properties.
Alternative B: Alternative A with Conservation Infill Areas

Boundaries are based on the following:

1. Areas of predominantly modern construction are removed from the district. These include areas primarily on the hospital campus at the NE corner of the study area. These do not include all of the areas that are zoned HM or C2, however, where there are a concentration of period contributing buildings, or potential infill sites at the center of the proposed district.

2. Areas within the core proposed district that are vacant, or historic nonresidential, are included in “conservation areas” which may have specific design guidelines or reduced design review requirements. These include the First United Presbyterian Church and parsonage on Sixth Avenue, as well as historic warehouses on Sixth Avenue.

Advantages of this approach:

1. Protects core historic residential areas.
2. Excludes nonhistoric areas.
3. Addresses impacts from infill and creates some buffering.

Disadvantages of this approach:

1. Boundaries are more complex.
2. Requires additional policy language development relating to conservation districts.
3. Excludes vacant lots between 4th and 5th Streets on L.
Alternative C: Alternative B, with 400 Block of S L Street included in conservation area

Boundaries are based on the following:

1. Areas of predominantly modern construction are removed from the district. These include areas primarily on the hospital campus at the NE corner of the study area. These do not include all of the areas that are zoned HM or C2, however, where there are a concentration of period contributing buildings, or potential infill sites at the center of the proposed district.

2. Areas within the core and adjacent to the proposed district that are vacant, or historic nonresidential, are included in “conservation areas” which may have specific design guidelines or reduced design review requirements. These include the First United Presbyterian Church and parsonage on Sixth Avenue, as well as historic warehouses on Sixth Avenue.

Advantages of this approach:

1. Protects core historic residential areas.
2. Excludes nonhistoric areas.
3. Addresses impacts from infill and creates strong buffers.

Disadvantages of this approach:

1. Boundaries are more complex.
2. Requires additional policy language development relating to conservation districts.
3. Includes a significant portion of the HM zone.
Alternative D: Includes all areas within the study area either within a conservation zone or historic overlay.

Boundaries are based on the following:

1. Outer boundaries are based on the study area as proposed by the neighborhood, and are taken from the grid pattern, terminating at arterials to the North and South of the neighborhood. The eastern boundary is determined by the L Street right of way, which includes both historic properties and modern hospital development.

2. Areas of predominantly modern construction are removed from the core proposed district but included in conservation districts. These include areas primarily on the hospital campus at the NE corner of the study area.

Advantages of this approach:

1. Boundaries are simple and easy to understand.
2. Protects core historic residential areas.
3. Excludes nonhistoric areas.
4. Addresses impacts from infill and provides strong buffers.

Disadvantages of this approach:

1. Relationship between historic significance and boundaries less strong.
2. Requires additional policy language development relating to conservation districts.
3. Includes a significant portion of the HM zone, including major modern hospital facilities.
Alternative D: Simplified Boundaries with No Conservation Buffers

Boundaries are based on the following:

1. Strict review of contributing, residential buildings
2. Contiguous historic areas; "gaps" are avoided
3. Simplified boundaries, avoiding many “cutouts” in the district boundaries, for clarity and ease of use

Advantages of this approach:

1. Simple, easy to understand boundaries
2. Strong relationship between existing historic character and proposed boundaries
3. Omits areas of predominantly modern construction, including much of the HM zoning.

Disadvantages of this approach:

1. Does not address edge issues
2. Does not address historically significant nonresidential buildings.
3. Omits the 500 block of S L Street, which includes several historically significant homes.

Recommendation

The Landmarks Preservation Commission should schedule a district tour with the nominators of the district. This tour may be open to the public.
3. **District Design Guidelines**

**Background**

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is required to adopt design guidelines for the district once it is adopted. The most comparable example of district guidelines are the North Slope Historic District guidelines established in 1994.

**Areas for the Commission to Consider**

a. **Approach.**

i. **Design Approach.** The North Slope Historic District Guidelines are divided into areas of design considerations, such as Scale, Height, Massing, and so forth.

   The benefit of this approach is that it is generalized and captures the broadest possibilities.

   The negative of this approach is the difficulty in interpreting these guidelines successfully for homeowners and laypeople, as well as a certain amount of vagueness. In addition, conflicts of interpretation between the SOI standards and design guidelines, as well as a lack of distinction between guidelines for new construction versus rehabilitation creates some confusion.

ii. **Project-type approach.** This is a common approach for residential district guidelines in which common projects and architectural elements are discussed specifically, such as garages, porches, windows, siding, and so on. In general, the higher design concepts are included as policy statements, and are used to derive the guidelines along with the relevant Secretary of the Interior’s Standards.

   The benefit of this approach is that it provides clear guidance to property owners and building professionals, offers opportunities to integrate the guidelines with the SOI Standards, and defines a vision. In addition, clarity of standards assists the Commission in making consistent decisions that are less likely to be appealed.

   Drawbacks to this approach include the complexity in drafting the guidelines, the potential for confusion for projects that are outside of the usual types, and the difficulty in arriving at consensus for preferred approach.

   Staff recommends the Project-Type approach.

b. **Content**

Below is a table outlining the recommended content for the design guidelines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Overview</th>
<th>Sub-sections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architectural Styles</td>
<td>This would provide a reference to the user for common relevant residential typologies and their</td>
<td>Suggested styles include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Gable-Front Folk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Queen Anne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Principles</td>
<td>Architectural Elements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic principles that provide overarching philosophical guidance for using the guidelines, similar to but simpler than the SOI Standards.</td>
<td>This is the section that would provide an overview of common project types and architectural elements that are significant to the district, and provide guidelines for historical compatibility.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of potential principles include:

- Original building materials should be maintained and preserved in place, where possible.
- Deteriorated building materials should be repaired rather than replaced, whenever possible.
- Original building materials that have deteriorated beyond repair should be replaced in kind.
- The covering of original building materials and architectural elements is inappropriate. Each principal would have, as appropriate, specific statements about certain applications of the principle.

Staff has generated the following list of subsections (each of which has several guidelines and elements):

**Roofs**
- Materials
- Roof form/shape
- Ridge Height
- Dormers
- Chimneys and vents
- Ornamentation (finials, roof cresting)
- Roof installations

**Cladding**
- Configuration and type
- Repair before replace
- Trim and detailing
- Material

**Windows**
- Type and Configuration
- Scale
- Repair before replace
- Material
- Pattern and location
- Profile and dimensions
- Casing and ornamentation

**Doors**
- Locations and patterning
- Design and style
- Materials
- Hardware
- Ornamentation and casing

**Porches**
- Shingle
- Pyramidal Folk (Workingman’s Box)
- American Foursquare Type
- Colonial Revival
- Craftsman
- Chalet
- Tudor/English Cottage
### Guidelines for New Construction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balustrades and railings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columns and piers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ornamentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decking and stairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skirting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garages and Parking</td>
<td>Location, Massing, Form, Scale, Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decks</td>
<td>Location, Materials, Design and ornamentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street trees</td>
<td>New trees, Existing trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADA Accessibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solar Panels and Satellite Dishes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy and Thermal Retrofitting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architectural Detailing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additions on Historic Buildings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>Style, Material, Configuration, Pattern and scale, Ornamentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cladding</td>
<td>Material, Patterning, Ornamentation and embellishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Design</td>
<td>Roof Height, Roof form and shape, Building form and scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry</td>
<td>Location, Porch Design and Style</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Recommendation

1. Staff recommends the Commission accept the proposed structure and general content of the above guidelines and provide direction to staff for further development of these guidelines.

2. Staff recommends designation of a special design guidelines committee to review the draft language and recommendations, and advise the Commission.