

The Significance of a Large Residential District on the National Register of Historic Places

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Most people recognize the intrinsic value of a well-preserved historic neighborhood. When you ask anyone to draw a picture of a house, they typically draw a one and a half story, gable-end house that could have been built anytime from 1850 to 1899. The sketched house will often have divided light windows, a front door right off the sidewalk, and maybe even a front porch, depending on the artist's skills.

The houses sketched are those much like the early examples of houses in the North Slope Historic District. These houses are remnants of days when a street car shuttled people to work downtown, when moms greeted children with a fresh plate of homemade cookies, days when kids walked to school. These houses are sentimental reminders for everything many of us dream of having.

Equally important, the sketch does not include a large attached garage you walk around to get to a front door. The sketch is not a typical modern, suburban house popping up infilling more established neighborhoods or replacing formerly undeveloped stands of woods.

It's hard to put a pin dollar amount on this atmosphere. A study conducted in Alabama and released in July 2002 attempted to place a dollar amount on historic resources. The study titled "Property Value Appreciation for Historic Districts in Alabama" explored six similar studies previously conducted in other states peppered across the south and east coast. The study also considered the property values in seven historic districts throughout Alabama. All of the registered historic districts studied had a required design review process, similar to Tacoma's review for locally registered properties and districts. The Garden District in Montgomery, Alabama consists of approximately 750 structures built between 1850 and 1930 and found that

historic properties appreciated 34% more than comparable non-registered properties in the community.



The higher appreciation of property values in historic districts is likely due to our efforts to surround ourselves with tangible reminders of our past combined with the dedication of district residents to retain the historic integrity of their district. Our old houses afford many of us the opportunity to sit on our front porches and call out to

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neighbors that are out for an evening walk or chat with kids on their way to a friend's house. Dedication for retaining historic integrity of our neighborhoods includes careful consideration for the upkeep and modernization of the historic home.

In Tacoma, the historic districts afford a level of protection for those who have the right intentions but may lack the experience necessary to do the job properly. Design review, required for any changes that will affect the exterior of the house, is one responsibility of locally registered historic homeowners in Tacoma. This ensures that the character of the neighborhood is retained for everyone to enjoy. For most people, properly maintaining these resources we have become caretakers of, is second nature. For some it is a task to be learned. For all, it is a task that must be done.

The Tacoma Historic Preservation Officer and the Tacoma Landmarks Preservation Commission are available to assist you with making sure that the work you do on your house retains the historic integrity. We can direct you to resources appropriate for restoration and rehabilitation and we can work with you on our Special Tax Valuation program.

As residents of the North Slope Historic District, you deserve recognition of your dedication to historic preservation. That recognition comes in the form of placement on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, the Washington Heritage Register and the National Register of Historic Places. You all deserve a pat on the back for your hard work and dedication to assure that future generations will have a beautiful neighborhood to remind them of eras gone by. Congratulations to all homeowners in the North Slope Historic District, you've done a fine job. Now keep up the good work!



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