

WALLINGFORD-MERIDIAN STREETCAR HISTORIC DISTRICT

KING CO., WA

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property 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 lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1901-1941

Significant Dates

1901/1937 - Green Lake Streetcar, start/end of service

1907/1940 - Wallingford Streetcar, start/end of service

1908/1941 - Meridian Streetcar, start/end of service

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Breitung & Buchinger (Architect)

Durham, Anderson & Freed (Architect)

Merritt, Edward L. (Architect)

Perkins, Frank H. (Architect)

McKnight, Harry B. (Architect)

Bittman, Henry (Architect)

Creutzer, John A. (Architect)

Yoho, Jud (Architect)

Casey, Lowell V. (Architect)

Gwinn, Wells (Architect)

Jones, William J. (Architect)

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Narrative Statement of Significance

(Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Wallingford-Meridian Streetcar Historic District in Seattle, Washington is historically significant under Criteria A as an intact “Streetcar Suburb” that represents the broad patterns of residential development and growth in Seattle during the early part of the 20th century. The development was spurred by a population boom in the city and largely developed within a short 20-year time span. This formed an interrelated cohesive design. When initially developed, the neighborhood was located on affordable land outside the city center and could be accessed through use of streetcar lines. The clustering of apartment buildings on blocks closest to transit lines and the neighborhood business district reflect this subtype of suburb. Such conditions created a middle-class neighborhood of blue-collar workers who supported a variety of business ventures across the city.

The historic district also is significant under Criterion C as a collection of properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of their type and period of construction. The nominated area contains a concentration of architectural styles popular in the Pacific Northwest during the first decades of the twentieth century. Notable is the wide range of interpretations of the Craftsman style, constructed by multiple builders. The simplicity and artistry of these buildings harmonized into an affordable house design providing style, convenience, and simplicity which was within the reach of many middle-income families. While only 13 buildings are documented as architect designed within the period of significance, 84 builders have been identified indicating the use of mass-produced plans, such as Jud Yoho’s *Craftsman Bungalows*. In fact, Yoho himself was a resident of Wallingford, and his own home (4718 2nd Ave) is located within the boundaries of the district. Several other architects also resided in the neighborhood.

The period begins in 1901, the construction date of the oldest extant property in its original location within the district (1603 N 48th Street, built ca. 1901) as well as the inauguration of streetcar service in the area, and ends in 1941, the last year streetcars were in operation within the district. Streetcar lines accessing the district began switching to motorized buses and trackless trolleys beginning in 1937. The transition was completed in Wallingford in 1941 and throughout the rest of city by 1944. The district meets the registration requirements as set forth in the Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States, 1830-1960 MPD.

Historical Background

The nominated historic district is a sub-area located within Seattle’s Wallingford neighborhood. The larger neighborhood is located on a hill overlooking the north shores of Lake Union and is roughly bounded by Interstate 5 to east, Lake Union to the south, Stone Way N and Aurora Avenue N to the west, and N and NE 55th and 56th streets to the north. Wallingford was largely shaped by transportation connections due in part to its location between key early communities on the north side of Seattle—Ballard to the west and the University of Washington to the east—as well as its close proximity to north-south routes connecting downtown Seattle with cities, and later its other suburbs to the north.

The area that would become Wallingford was largely wooded until the late nineteenth century, when initial development began primarily along the northern shores of Lake Union. The lake’s waterfront was cleared of timber by 1887, with many of the hills further north were cleared by 1890.¹ Non-industrial development (i.e., residences and commercial buildings) extended north from the lake, but still within close proximity to the shoreline. Soon several small communities, such as Edgewater and Latona, emerged near the northern shores of the lake, particularly after the Seattle, Lake Shore & Eastern Railroad connected the lake to communities to

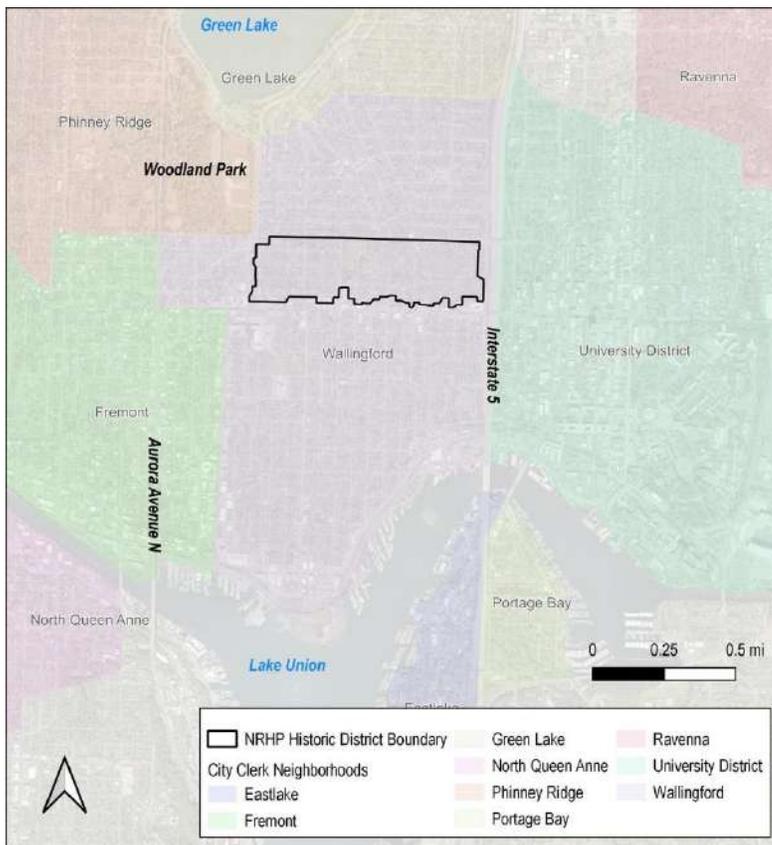
¹ Thomas Veith, “A Preliminary Sketch of Wallingford’s History: 1855-1985” (2005), <https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/HistoricPreservation/HistoricResourcesSurvey/context-wallingford.pdf>, 10.

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Map showing the historic district relative to surrounding neighborhoods.

the west and downtown via a trestle bridge in 1887. A large area north of the city, including what would become Wallingford, was incorporated within the City of Seattle in 1891. This annexation initiated a significant amount of platting activity between Lake Union and Green Lake although development did not immediately follow. By 1890 the area that would become Wallingford was considered affordable in comparison to prices in the Queen Anne and Capitol Hill neighborhoods. A 1900 advertisement of real estate for sale indicated an entire block of 20 lots in the historic district's Lake Union 2nd Addition were priced at \$1,200 while just two lots in Queen Anne were listed for \$1,100. Three lots near 20th Avenue and E Madison Street on Capitol Hill were listed as "cheap" for \$750.² Developers jumped at the low prices and blocks quickly sold for their future investment potential.

Streetcar line development in and through the area, following early plats, stimulated additional platting and the actual residential and commercial development within the plats. Real

estate prices also increased with streetcar access. Development in the early 1900s only increased as the University of Washington campus to the east of Wallingford was selected

as the location for a world's fair in 1909, the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition. The streetcar line that ran along NE 40th Street, south of the district, provided direct access to the fair and increased the number of residents and visitors passing through Wallingford on their way to the fair. Industrial development along the northern shores of Lake Union also pushed residential development further north as the Seattle Gas Light Company established its Lake Union facility in 1906 and a canal was dredged connecting Lake Washington, Lake Union, and Puget Sound beginning in 1911. During the 1910s, as the full channel was opened for ship traffic in 1917 reshaping development along the neighborhood's south edge, residential development in the historic district reached peak levels. The opening of the canal transformed Lake Union into a boatbuilding and marine industry center. Some of those who lived in Wallingford and the historic district worked in these lake-based industries, according to the census data.

The name "Wallingford Hill" for the area begin to appear in real estate advertisements in *The Seattle Times* and *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* by 1908 as the Wallingford Avenue streetcar line was complete.³ By 1912, the Wallingford name for the neighborhood gained traction as it was used to brand two area churches: Wallingford Church (1414 N 42nd Street)

WALLINGFORD HILL.
\$1,200—Fine level lot, commanding a beautiful view, convenient to University and High School, priced at this very low figure for quick sale. Call 3030 Densmore Avenue, or Phone North 556.

Typical advertisement for Wallingford lot. Seattle Times – May 15, 1908

² "Something Attractive," *The Seattle Daily Times*, February 24, 1900: 3.

³ "Wallingford Hill," *The Seattle Daily Times*, May 15, 1908: 20; "Wallingford Hill," *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, October 14, 1908: 15; "Wallingford Hill," *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, February 23, 1909: 15.

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and Wallingford Hill Baptist Mission (1929 N 45th Street). Prior to this point, "Wallingford" only appeared in city directories as a surname or a street address. In 1913, a newly constructed joint fire and police station at the southwest corner of N 45th Street and Densmore Avenue N, was named Wallingford Fire and Police Station (NRHP listed in 1983). The Wallingford name most likely came from John Wallingford, Jr., who was among the early developers that purchased one of the large tract of land north of Lake Union in 1888.⁴

By the end of 1909 the Seattle Times reported that nearly 300 homes had been erected in Wallingford Hill district and by 1925 it was estimated that more the 50,000 people lived in the district. Seattle's population had boomed in the 1920s and residential construction responded with the volume of construction. During that time Wallingford experienced a significant effort to infill its plats. Initially there were no apartment zones in the district and it remained single-family for the most part. Apartment construction was eventually allowed in the late 1920s, which provided greater density to the growing neighborhood. Many three- to four-story apartment blocks were constructed near streetcar lines. Commercial construction also fleshed out key commercial corridors in the neighborhood, including N and NE 45th Street, Stone Way N, and the corner of N 40th Street and Wallingford Avenue N, a key transfer point, just south of the historic district, between the Wallingford and Meridian streetcar lines.⁵

Wallingford-Meridian Streetcar Neighborhood

Within the larger Wallingford neighborhood, the Wallingford-Meridian Streetcar neighborhood (aka Wallingford Historic District – North) is a residential area located immediately north of Wallingford's primary commercial corridor, N and NE 45th Street. The oldest property in the district was constructed in 1901 and most of the buildings in the proposed district were constructed prior to 1923, when Seattle adopted a new and sweeping zoning ordinance codifying use rather than construction quality. Several architects, builders, and real estate developers not only developed property in the district but also lived in the greater Wallingford neighborhood, including Henry Bittman, W.J. Landon, Harry B. McKnight, Henry Nelson, P.E. Wentworth, and Jud Yoho.

Development in the district can largely be divided into four periods: 1901-1941, 1942-1956, 1957- 1985, and 1986-present. The period between 1900 and 1941 is the district's period of significance and represents the district's initial construction and establishment as a streetcar suburb in Seattle. The 1942-1956 period had limited development, but reflects key transportation changes affecting the neighborhood and the impacts of the automobile. Between 1957 and 1985, the Wallingford neighborhood's population decreased—due to smaller family sizes, migration of young families to Seattle exurbs,⁶ the Boeing Bust which impacted the economy of the entire region, and the closure of the Lake Union gas plant in 1956, which resulted in the shuttering and/or reorganization of neighborhood schools.

After significant rehabilitation efforts to key institutions in the neighborhood and changing attitudes toward urban living, the population decline was reversed, and today Wallingford continued as a thriving residential area in Seattle.

Streetcar and Suburban Development, 1901-1941

The time between 1901-1941 reflects the first intensive wave of development in the district, which built off the extensive platting that occurred in the Wallingford neighborhood prior to the turn -of-the-century. Key contributors to the growth of the district included the establishment and construction of neighborhood schools

⁴ Paul Dorpat, "Wallingford, John Jr. (1833-1913)," *Historylink.org the Free Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (June 4, 2001), <https://www.historylink.org/File/3463> (accessed December 17, 2021).

⁵ Veith, "A Preliminary Sketch of Wallingford's History: 1855-1985," 60-68.

⁶ An "exurb" is a small, typically prosperous, community located beyond the suburbs of a city.

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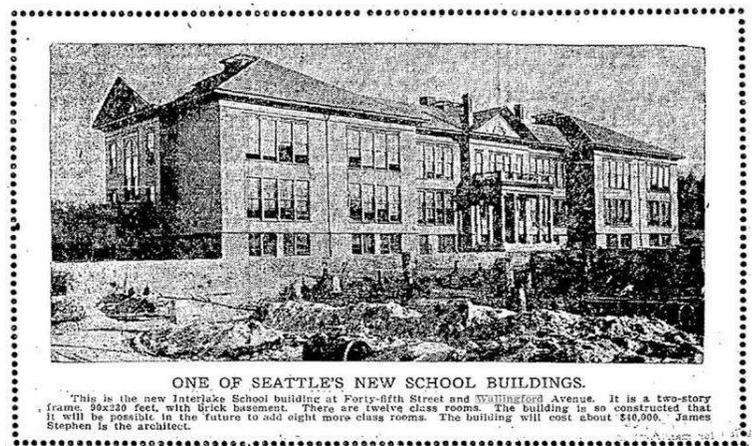
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and transportation routes, as well as the 1909 world's fair hosted at the University of Washington campus to the east—the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition (AYPE). The historic district also reflects a later wave of streetcar suburban development in Seattle, aligning with the consolidation of many streetcar lines under the Seattle Electric Company and the expansion of municipal utilities.⁷

Although much of the Wallingford neighborhood was platted between the 1880s and 1890s, the area initially remained sparsely developed the further north from the shores of Lake Union one traveled. Porterfield's Addition (1888), Lake Union 2nd Addition (1889), and the Baltimore Addition (1891) were the plats located within the district by 1900. By 1901 the Green Lake streetcar line extended north from downtown and Lake Union and looped around Green Lake. This line jogged to the east along N 45th Street to run north along Interlake Avenue N, the historic district's west edge.⁸ Real estate classifieds in *The Seattle Daily Times* advertised lots in the Lake Union 2nd Addition for their proximity to the new Green Lake streetcar line.⁹ According to a 1905 Baist's Real Estate atlas of the area, there were approximately 72 buildings existing in the area bounded by N and NE 45th Street to the south, Interlake Avenue N to the west, N and NE 50th Street to the north, and 5th Avenue N to the east.¹⁰ Development at the turn of the century was still predominately located along the northern shores of Lake Union and close to the University of Washington campus to the east. Although portions of the area were platted in the 1880s and 1890s, larger, undivided acreages still remained. Mr. E. Brown retained 13 acres; E. L. Nichol, 5 acres; the W. P. Boyd Estate retained adjoining 10 acre and 20 acre parcels; and A. Schmidt, 10 acres.

However, development was anticipated, and the school district purchased several larger parcels for the construction of schools. Among them was a new primary school, Interlake School, constructed in 1904 at the southeast corner of 45th and Wallingford, just a half block from the district's southern boundary. An additional school, Latona School (1906), provided educational options further south at 5th Avenue N and N 42nd Street. Residential construction followed, and like the schools with many of the early homes predominately reflecting Classical Revival architecture.¹⁰

Between 1905 and 1910, the number of buildings within the district more than doubled. Four plats were filed in the district in the course of four years on the eastern half of the district: University Hill Tracts (1905), University Hill Tracts 2nd Division (1906), Daniels' University Grove (1907), and Smiths University Addition (1908). The University Hill Tracts and University Hill Tracts 2nd Division—which encompassed the former W. P. Boyd Estate—were sold by Norman Bruen and Charles Best of the University Investment Company, who advertised the lots for their low price, views towards Lake Union and the University of Washington, and proximity to the university campus. Daniels' University Grove, sold by Leonard Daniels, advertised its lots as fronting the newly completed N and NE 45th Street streetcar line, within walking distance of the university, and within close proximity to multiple schools. Smith's University Addition encompassed the 5



The New Interlake School
Seattle Times – December 24, 1904

⁷ Veith, "A Preliminary Sketch of Wallingford's History: 1855-1985," 14-16.

⁸ Ellis Morrison and A. Robinson, "Morrison and Robinson's City of Seattle Vicinity," (1901), National Association for Olmsted Parks, map reference no. 02690-06_1901.

⁹ "Something Attractive," *The Seattle Daily Times*, February 24, 1900: 3; "Room Rental Agency," classified, *The Seattle Daily Times*, February 3, 1900: 20.

¹⁰ G. Wm. Baist, *Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Surveys of Seattle, Wash.* (Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Baist, 1905), plates 16-17. Available via Seattle Public Library's "Seattle Maps and Atlases" digital collection.

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acres previously owned by E. L. Nichol. These new plats, plus the establishment of neighborhood amenities and improvements such as the arrival of the streetcar lines, spurred on residential construction in the neighborhood.¹¹ Houses constructed between 1905 and 1910 continued to be predominately 1 and 1.5 stories in height, but new architectural trends began to appear. The Craftsman style arrived in the district by 1906 on a few houses, but these houses were still quite modest expressions of the new style.

UNIVERSITY HILL TRACTS

First choice today on only close-in view acreage on the market.
Large tracts; fine soil; excellent views of Lakes Union and Washington.
Borders graded streets; board walks to it; short distance to state university.

75x204, 110x112, 84x168 feet.
Prices \$550 to \$750; terms very easy.
We are bounded by Latona on the south, Green Lake on the North, Fremont on the west, University on the east.

Take University car; get off at Latona; go north on Latona Avenue.
Salesman on the ground today.
BRUEN & BEST, Marion Block.
Phones: Red 1311; LI337.

*Advertisement for
University Hill Tracts
Seattle Times –
August 20, 1905*

In addition to the residences constructed numerous social and religious institutional arrived in the neighborhood. These included the Home of the Good Shepherd who in 1907 was established a large 6-block campus between Meridian Avenue N and Sunnyside Avenue N and N 47th Street and N 50th Street—on acreage formerly owned by E. Brown.¹² The Home of the Good Shepherd was operated by sisters of the Good Shepherd Order and provided shelter, education, and guidance to young girls.¹³ They also operated a commercial laundry to generate revenue. St. Benedict Roman Catholic Parish was founded in the area in 1906 and began meeting in the district in 1907 in a basement until their building at the northwest corner of N 49th Street and Wallingford Avenue was completed.¹⁴ Later they developed a school. Lincoln High School was also a boon to the neighborhood when it opened in 1907, located at N 44th Street and Interlake Avenue N. The Elim Swedish Baptist Church was established in the area in 1903 and they constructed a new church building in the nominated area dedicated in 1913 at 2410 N 46th Street. Like many other congregations in Wallingford, this congregation was established by a group of immigrants, in this case Swedish immigrants.

The selection of Seattle for the 1909 World's Fair set in motion citywide improvements in preparation. Wallingford received many of these improvements, including grading, curbing, and sidewalks for Bagley, Corliss, Sunnyside, Eastern, and Meridian avenues between 1907 and 1909. The completion of streetcar lines connecting the district with other neighborhoods also spurred development in order to supplement the existing Green Lake Line along Interlake Avenue N. Additional streetcar line tracks were laid east along N and NE 45th Street from Meridian Avenue N to the University District in 1907 and by 1908 connected with the Wallingford Avenue Line along Wallingford Avenue N. The Wallingford Avenue Line of the Seattle Electric Company also began service in January 1907. The Wallingford Avenue line ran south through the neighborhood and then west along the north edge of Lake Union to connect with neighborhoods to the west and downtown Seattle with the loop from the depot going to Pike, then Westlake, Fremont, Ewing Street, Wallingford Avenue, then to North 45th Street and Latona Avenue.¹⁵ The Wallingford line was extended in 1909 to the AYPE grounds, but was cut back to NE 14th Avenue after the fair. NE 14th Avenue remained its northern terminus until May 16, 1928, when the new University loop between 43rd and 45th streets opened. By 1911 an extension of the line ran east from Wallingford Avenue N along N and NE 40th Street towards the University District.¹⁶ The Meridian Line with service through Wallingford began in July 1908 and was extended in 1909 to run north along Meridian Avenue

¹¹ McClelland, Ames, and Pope, "Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States, 1830-1960," Section E, Page 5.

¹² The Home of Good Shepherd, now the Good Shepherd Center, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

¹³ Toby Harris, "Home of the Good Shepherd," *HistoryLink.org the Free Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (May 29, 2002), <https://www.historylink.org/file/3837> (accessed November 5, 2021).

¹⁴ St. Benedict Catholic Church, "Mission & History," *St. Benedict Catholic Church*, <https://parish.stbens.net/missionandhistory> (accessed November 18, 2021).

¹⁵ Leslie Blanchard, *The Street Railway Era in Seattle: A Chronicle of Six Decades* (Forty Fort, PA: Harold E. Cox, 1968), 116.

¹⁶ Charles D. Raymer & Co., *Raymer's Dictionary of Greater Seattle* (Seattle, WA: Chas. D. Raymer & Co., 1908).

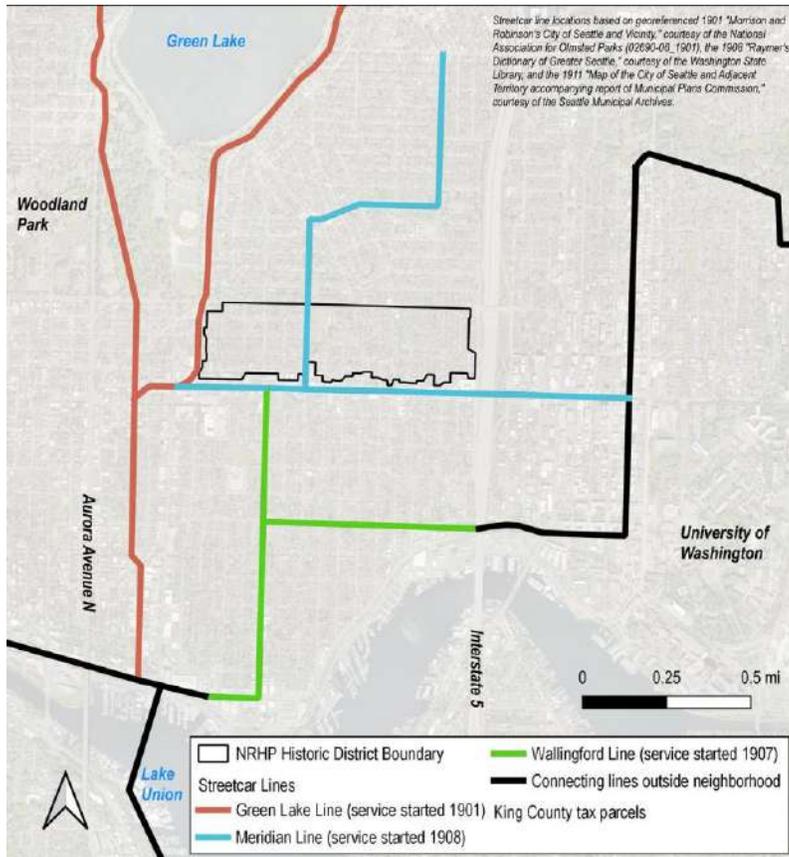
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N to N 56th Street and then north along Latona Avenue Ne to NE 65th Street.¹⁷ The Meridian Line was originally called Wallingford & 65th but changed to Meridian in the same year it opened.¹⁸



Map showing the development of streetcar lines relative to the historic district.

In 1910, when the U.S. Federal Census was taken, there were just over 200 residences within the district. Of these 203 residences, 23-percent were rentals while 72-percent were owner-occupied (5-percent did not have information).¹⁹ In the same year, the Wallingford Commercial Club was founded to promote Wallingford businesses, particularly along its emerging commercial corridor on N and NE 45th Street.²⁰ The district's residents were largely white and U.S. or European-born. The 1910 census lists the broad range of occupations held by residents within the district. Commerce was the main area of employment and included office workers, salespeople, professionals (accountants, architects, engineers), and specialty business employees (auto garages, bakers, tailors, and butchers). Industry in 1910 consisted mostly of trades people (painters, carpenters, brick layers) as well as people working in extraction (logging or mining), maritime-related jobs, and manufacturing. Other occupational fields were represented within the district, including government (fire/postal/police workers), education (teachers), religious, funerary, defense, healthcare, recreation and culture, and subsistence workers.

By 1910, the Craftsman style was firmly established as the dominant architectural style for the rapidly growing neighborhood. Earlier Craftsman houses often just had craftsman details, like brackets in the gable ends, applied to simple forms. But the publication of many plan books—including architect V. W. Voorhees' *Western Home Builder* (1907) and Jud Yoho's *Bungalow Magazine* (1912-1916) and *Craftsman Bungalow* (1916)—boosted the construction of more highly decorative and larger Craftsman style houses. A mixture of materials (wood, stone, brick), decorative bargeboards, massive brackets and knee bracing, porches with battered piers, began to appear on more and more new construction houses within the district. Two known Jud Yoho designs include 4759 2nd Avenue NE (ca. 1912) and 4748 4th Avenue NE (1910).

¹⁷ Virgil Bogue, engineer, "Map of the City of Seattle and Adjacent Territory, Map No. 1" (1911), prepared for the Municipal Plans Commission, City of Seattle Municipal Archives.

¹⁸ Blanchard, *The Street Railway Era in Seattle*, 116.

¹⁹ 1910 U.S. Census.

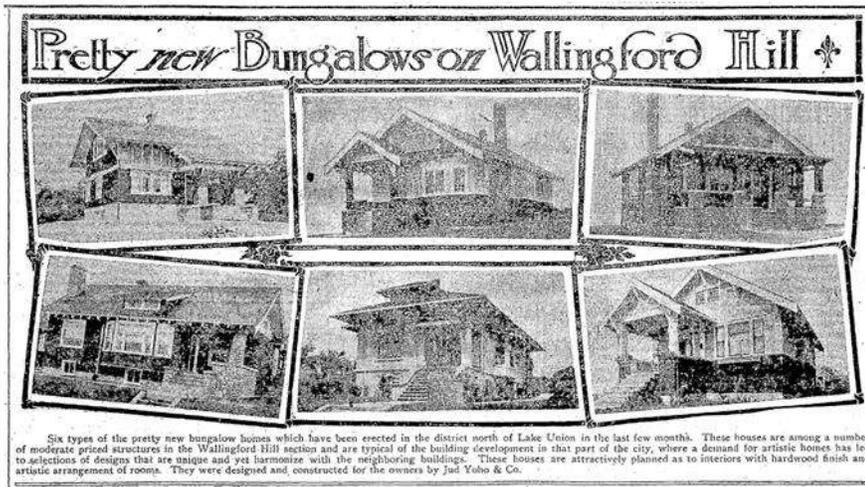
²⁰ Folke Nyberg and Victor Steinbrueck, "Wallingford: An Inventory of Buildings and urban Design Resources" (2005), prepared for Historic Seattle Preservation and Development Authority.

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*Six types of Bungalow on Wallingford Hill by Jud Yoho & Co.
Seattle Times – November 7, 1909*

472 residences, 22-percent were rentals and 77.5-percent were owner-occupied (roughly .5-percent did not have information). The same range of occupations was represented within the district in 1920 and the neighborhood remained largely white and of Euro- American descent. Architect-designed residences during this period include 4625 Eastern Avenue N (ca. 1916, Henry Bittman), and 4554 Latona Avenue NE (ca. 1917, William J. Jones).

In the midst of the historic district's growth, the City of Seattle established the Seattle Zoning Commission, via Ordinance 40407 in 1920. The commission began surveying the city to report to City Council on a recommended zoning or districting ordinance. Prior to this survey, there were a series of building ordinances that predominately focused on fire prevention and established "classes" of buildings, based on construction materials and techniques. After the Zoning Commission completed their survey, the City Council adopted Ordinance 45382 (i.e., the zoning ordinance) in 1923, which divided the city into districts and rather than just focusing on building materials, and also began also regulating the use, heights, and size of buildings, and restricting the location of trades and industries.²¹ The 1923 zoning ordinance largely documented existing uses. Over 75-percent of the historic district was constructed in or prior to 1923 when Ordinance 45382 was adopted to regulate, restrict, and limit building uses, sizes, and locations. The land within the historic district was classified as within a First Residence zone with the exception of the Home of the Good Shepherd, which was classified as a Second Residence zone. First Residence districts allowed the following uses:

- Single family dwellings
- Public schools
- Private schools – i.e., schools with prescribed courses of study given and graded in a manner similar to public schools or are of a higher degree
- Churches
- Parks and playgrounds (including park buildings)
- Art gallery or library building
- Private conservatories for plants or flowers
- Railroad and shelter stations

²¹ Seattle Municipal Archives, "Research Historic Land Use and Zoning," *Seattle Municipal Archives*, <https://www.seattle.gov/cityarchives/search-collections/research-tips-and-tools/researching-land-use-and-zoning> (accessed November 5, 2021).

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The significant buildout of the Wallingford neighborhood by the mid-1920s was noted in *The Seattle Daily Times* on October 25, 1925. Property values skyrocketed in 1925, with business property along N and NE 45th Street, at the south edge of the historic district, valued at roughly \$50 a front foot in early 1925, increasing by five-fold to \$250 a front foot by the end of October 1925.²² The historic district's location within Wallingford on the main east-west thoroughfare between Ballard and Fremont to the west and the University District to the east as well as adjoining the North Trunk Highway (now Aurora Avenue and Highway 99) to the west made it and the larger Wallingford neighborhood an ideal location for new construction in the quickly growing city. The *Times* article further states that the neighborhood, including the historic district, was "rapidly reaching the point of saturation—that is virtually every available building lot is occupied by a home. It is the home center of the metropolis."²³



Map showing the 1923 zoning relative to the historic district.

News coverage also highlighted the recent zoning ordinance, stating that no hotels or apartment houses existed in the neighborhood outside of the one-half block commercial zones along Wallingford Avenue N between N 34th and N 45th streets and along N 45th Street between Stone Way N and 1st Avenue NE. Despite this advertising, apartment houses and hotels did exist within the neighborhood as many pre-dated the 1923 Zoning Ordinance. But the Wallingford Commercial Club began to petition the Zoning Commission to rezone part of the neighborhood to allow for additional apartment home construction in blocks adjacent to N and NE 45th Street to continue to grow the community.

Several apartment buildings within the historic

district adjacent N 45th Street, as well as the courtyard apartments along N 48th Street were built between 1925 and 1929 and contributed to this effort to support increased density adjacent the commercial core. The rise of the automobile was evident in the garages constructed at both single- and multi-family residences. The community also petitioned for additional access to downtown, seeking construction of a high bridge, rather than another draw bridge, over the ship canal.

By 1930, most of the available lots in the historic district had been built out. Streetlights lit portions of the neighborhood and it was a thriving residential area in the city. The greater Wallingford neighborhood, inclusive the historic district, had a population of over 50,000. The efforts of the Commercial Club (and other neighborhoods, politicians, and business owners) for a high bridge connection with downtown came to fruition in the 1930s. Work began on the Aurora Avenue Bridge (officially named the George Washington Memorial Bridge) in 1929 after a route over the ship canal was selected.

²² "Wallingford Grows Rapidly: Population Exceeds 50,000," *The Seattle Daily Times*, October 25, 1925: 7.

²³ *Ibid.*

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In the midst of bridge construction, Seattle City Council adopted an ordinance in June 1930 approving an extension of the Aurora Avenue speedway/highway through Woodland Park. The Aurora Bridge opened to auto traffic in February 1932 and the highway in 1933.²⁴ The completion of the speedway along the west edge of Wallingford made the neighborhood more physically accessible. However, it spurred a shift in transportation away from the streetcars that had shaped the early development of both Wallingford and the historic district. Highway access to the neighborhood, along with the steady increase in personal automobile ownership and use, altered the landscape of the neighborhood and led to the decline and, ultimately, cessation of streetcar traffic to and through the district and neighborhood.

In the midst of these transportation changes and the nationwide Great Depression, the historic district had an over 10-percent increase in the number of rental households, from 22% of houses in the district occupied by renters in 1920, to 33% in 1930. This contrasts with the city-wide rental rate of just under 50% of dwelling units occupied by renters.²⁵ The U.S. Government had been encouraging home ownership to middle class families for years, but it still remained out of financial reach for most urban and working-class families and individuals as banks often required a 50-percent down payment, interest only payments, and repayment in full after 5-7 years.²⁶ Under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) was established in 1933, which purchased mortgages on the brink of foreclosure and issued new mortgages with longer repayment schedules that were also amortized (i.e., payments included both principal and interest). The HOLC had lower interest rates and required borrowers to maintain regular payment schedules, so the HOLC was naturally concerned about the risk of borrowers defaulting on their loans. The HOLC incorporated an appraisal process in its lending practices, requiring an assessment of the houses, condition of the surrounding neighborhood, and neighborhood demographics, including race. They created color-coded maps, or residential security maps, to demonstrate the "risk" associated with loans in particular neighborhoods. Higher risk levels corresponded with areas near noxious industrial operations or having greater numbers of people of color and lower incomes. An area of southern Wallingford near the gas plant located on the shore of Lake Union was shaded red (redlined) on the maps. This area is not within and is some distance away from the historic district.

Congress then passed the National Housing Act of 1934, establishing the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) which insured bank mortgages. The FHA continued the exclusionary practices of the HOLC in its appraisal process. According to Richard Rothstein in his book *The Color of Law*, "The FHA judged that properties would probably be too risky for insurance if they were in racially mixed neighborhoods or even in white neighborhoods near black ones that might possibly integrate in the future."²⁷ These practices encouraged real estate agents, developers, and residents to write racially restrictive covenants to prevent their neighborhoods from being "redlined."²⁸ Although there is no evidence that there were any formal restrictive covenants in the historic district, it is clear that de facto segregation was at play in Seattle and Wallingford. Few individuals of color resided within the boundaries of the district and much of the Wallingford area received a "B" or "still desirable" ranking on the 1936 residential security map and was described as follows:

The residents are practically 100% American of moderate means, with annual incomes of \$1500 to \$3000. The homes are both modern and seem-modern in type, with a sprinkling of old-style residents.

²⁴ Kit Oldham, "Seattle City Council Votes to Build Aurora Avenue Through Woodland Park on June 30, 1930," *The Free Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (February 17, 2007), <https://www.historylink.org/File/8093> (accessed November 15, 2021).

²⁵ U.S. Department of Commerce, "Washington," in *Housing: General Characteristics, Part 1: United States Summary*, Volume II (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1943). Statistics were found in "Table 1—Occupied Dwelling Units" on page 731. Content available at <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1940/housing-volume-2/housing-v2p5-ch10.pdf>.

²⁶ Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2018), 63.

²⁷ Rothstein, *The Color of Law*, 65.

²⁸ Catherine Silva, "Racial Restrictive Covenants: Enforcing Neighborhood Segregation in Seattle," *The Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project* (2009), https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/covenants_report.htm (accessed November 15, 2021).

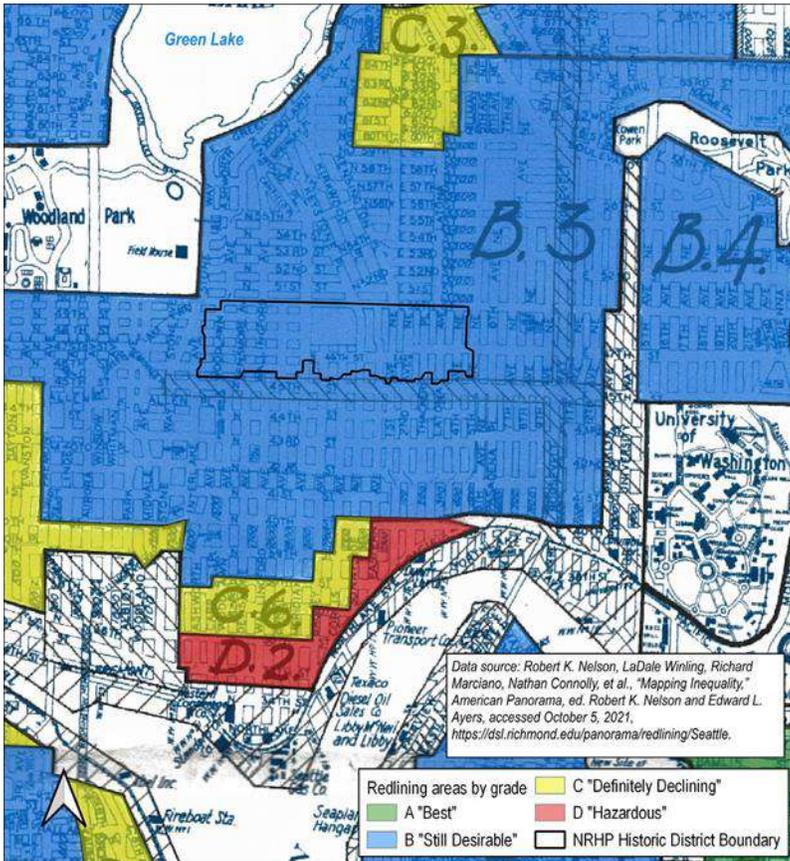
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The district is predominately residential in character and densely settled. It is a very popular district to desirable tenants and the permanent type of home owners. The residences are being maintained in from fair to good conditions.²⁹



Map showing the redlining areas by grade relative to the historic district.

In comparison to other areas of Seattle, Wallingford was not unique in its lack of racial diversity. The Phinney Ridge and Green Lake area, north of the historic district, was also ranked as “B” and was also noted for its white residents. Ballard, also ranked “B,” was noted as the “Scandinavian” section of Seattle. Three “B” ranked neighborhoods east of the University District—Windermere, Laurelhurst, and Hawthorne Hills—were noted for their racial restrictions. And the North Broadway and Capitol Hill area, with the exception of the western hillside, were also noted for not having racial problems or lower-income residents.³⁰

Discussion around “trackless trolley” (i.e., trolleys or buses propelled by an electric current in a wire run above the street) or motorized bus systems in Seattle began in earnest in the 1920s, particularly as the city’s municipal railway system had substantial debt.³¹ The primary consideration by the city was the reduced cost of construction of the trackless trolley versus laying streetcar tracks.³² Conversations about transforming public transportation gained traction in the 1930s and trackless trolley and bus routes began to supplant the older street car lines. The Green Lake Line was replaced by buses

in 1937, followed by the Wallingford Line in 1940, and the Meridian Line in 1941. The transition to electric or motorized buses was completed in 1941 when the last streetcar ran in the city.³³ The city was able to apply to the federal government for financial assistance, via a \$10 million loan from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, to implement their revised transportation program. The city removed streetcar tracks throughout the city and repaved streets between 1943 and 1944. The dominance of the automobile was reflected in particular in new commercial construction, with an emphasis on parking lots. A Safeway Store was constructed at 2205 N 45th Street in 1941 (demolished in 2005), adjacent the historic district, with an associated parking lot, reflecting the desire of customers to drive to the store.

²⁹ Robert K. Nelson, LaDale Winling, Richard Marciano, Nathan Connolly, et al., “Mapping Inequality,” *American Panorama*, ed. Robert K. Nelson and Edward L. Ayers, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=14/47.656/-122.35&city=seattle-wa>

³⁰ Nelson, Winling, Marciano, Connolly, et al., “Mapping Inequality.”

³¹ Walt Crowley, “Street Railways in Seattle,” *The Free Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (October 2, 2020), <https://www.historylink.org/File/2707> (accessed November 15, 2021).

³² “Urges Trackless Trolley for City,” *The Seattle Daily Times*, August 18, 1921: 1.

³³ Crowley, “Street Railways in Seattle,”

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From Streetcar to Automobile Suburb, 1942-1955

Development around and within the historic district in the mid-1930s reflect the replacement of the once ubiquitous streetcar lines with bus lines and the predominance of the car with commercial development along N and NE 45th Street emphasizing parking lots. Residences featured street-facing garages (rather than garages set towards the back of the lots).

In the midst of these transportation efforts, World War II raged abroad with a number of implications on the home front, including a housing shortage as the city's population surged to support the local defense industry. Between 1940 and 1950, Seattle's population increased 27-percent, from approximately 368,000 to over 467,500.³⁴ As a result the number of renters in the historic district continued to increase during the depression years according to census records. By 1940, 40-percent of the houses within the district were renter-occupied, up 7% from 1930. This increase aligns with the city-wide increases in renter tenancy. By 1940, over 55% of the city's housing units were renter-occupied.³⁵

The automobile increasingly shaped the physical character of the commercial core along the south edge of the historic district and the surrounding Wallingford neighborhood in the post-WWII era. Businesses began to increasingly cater to auto-oriented rather than pedestrian-oriented shopping and traffic. Examples include Wald's Foodland which opened at Wallingford Avenue N and N 45th Street in 1950 (renamed Food Giant in 1953) adjacent the historic district. The store's main elevation was not only setback from the street further than adjacent commercial buildings to accommodate a parking lot but also a large rooftop sign to easily advertise to cars passing by. The status of N and NE 45th Street as an auto thoroughfare was cemented with the construction of the fast food hamburger stand Dick's Drive-in—the first stand in an expanding local chain of restaurants—in 1954.

Wallingford at the Turning Point, 1956-1985

Land use, transportation, and population changes in the surrounding Wallingford and Seattle neighborhoods impacted the historic district in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. Furthermore, the financial losses of Boeing, a prime industry in Seattle, in 1971 sent a ripple effect of population and income decline through the city, neighborhood and historic district. Land use changes include City Council's adoption of a new city land use ordinance (Ordinance 86300) in 1957, repealing the 1923 ordinance. Key elements of this new ordinance—later codified under Title 26, Zoning Code, in the Seattle Municipal Code, established requirements for off-street parking and reclassified zones. The First and Second districts of the 1923 Zoning Ordinance were now "low density residential area" and "high density residential area." Within those zoning categories, properties within the historic district was rezoned primarily RS 5000 (single family residence high density zone) with portions along Meridian Avenue and the south side of N 46th Street backing up to the business district zoned RD 5000 (duplex residence high density zone). Within the historic district, the northeast corner of Meridian Avenue N and N 46th Street, the north side of N 46th Street between Interlake Avenue N and Meridian Avenue N, the south side of N 46th Street between Interlake and Densmore Avenues N, were rezoned RM (multiple residence low density zone). Multi-family infill construction within the historic district occurred largely within the RM zoned areas. In addition to regulating use, height, size, location, and parking for buildings and structures, the new zoning ordinance also emphasized the importance of stable property values, stating, "The economic stability of land use areas and conservation of building values are promoted and protected thereby."³⁶ This reinforced the effects of ongoing exclusionary lending practices, and put into policy the exclusionary priority given to single

³⁴ U.S. Department of Commerce, "1950 Census of Population: Number of Inhabitants: Washington," Volume 1, 47-8, <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1950/population-volume-1/vol-01-50.pdf> Statistics found in "Table 4 – Population of Urban Places of 10,000 or more from the Earliest Census to 1950."

³⁵ U.S. Department of Commerce, "Washington," in *Housing: General Characteristics, Part 1: United States Summary*.

³⁶ City of Seattle, "Ordinance No. 86300," Section 2.1, page 2, http://clerk.seattle.gov/~archives/Ordinances/Ord_86300.pdf

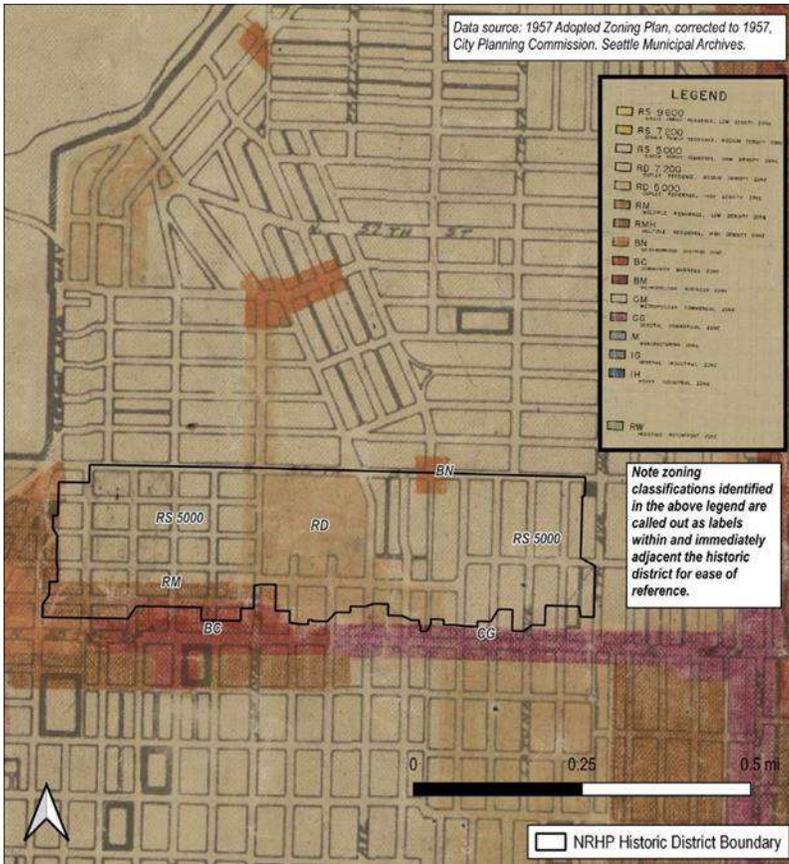
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family housing. Greater flexibility in property use was allowed for within the 1923 Zoning Ordinance, but severely limited with the 1957 Zoning Ordinance and associated Comprehensive Plan.



Map showing the 1957 zoning relative to the historic district.

Continued transportation improvements affected the historic district and surrounding development. Plans for a Seattle Freeway (Interstate 5) began in 1951, with federal approval and funding occurring in October 1957. The right-of-way for the new freeway required the Washington State Highway Department to acquire a two-block swath of properties between 5th Avenue N and 7th Avenue N, abutting the eastern boundary of the historic district. All the properties in these two blocks were demolished or sold at auction; the sold properties were either salvaged or moved to new sites.³⁷ All properties in the path of the freeway were deemed nuisances, regardless of condition.³⁸

The entire length of Interstate 5 through Seattle opened in 1965. Although this path abuts rather than bisects the district, the concrete highway restricted Wallingford's access to the University District, which had originally been a selling feature in the neighborhood's infancy. The ease of access to freeways, with Aurora Avenue/Highway 99 to the west and Interstate 5 to the east, made shopping farther outside of the neighborhood easier for residents.

Residential construction remained minimal in the historic district during the post-war years with a handful of apartment buildings constructed. One such apartment building was the Mari Don at 1621 N 47th Street (1966), designed by Lowell V. Casey. As the population declined in the area, the value of Wallingford's proximity to the University of Washington reemerged. As enrollment boomed at the university, first with veterans utilizing the benefits from the G.I. Bill and then their children, the campus faced a severe housing shortage. Developers and property managers looked to surrounding neighborhoods to house students. Many single-family houses in Wallingford's neighborhood were converted to duplexes.³⁹ However, property owners within the neighborhood pushed back against this effort, seeking to retain the single-family land use and complained to the City. Their efforts resulted in a prohibition on new duplexes in much of the neighborhood.⁴⁰

³⁷ Veith, "A Preliminary Sketch of Wallingford's History: 1855-1985;" Paula Becker, "Washington establishes an office for clearing the route of the Seattle Freeway (Interstate 5) on April 1, 1957," *Historylink.org the Free Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (December 1, 2002), <https://www.historylink.org/File/4168> (accessed December 20, 2021).

³⁸ Becker, "Washington establishes an office..."

³⁹ Joshua McNichols, "Wallingford Fought Developers Decades Before it Was Hip," *KUOW* (September 9, 2017), <https://kuow.org/stories/wallingford-fought-developers-decades-it-was-hip/> (accessed November 16, 2021).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

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Several other factors changed the character and threatened to destabilize the neighborhood in the 1970s. Among them was the closure of the Seattle Gas & Electric Light Company plant on the northern shores of Lake Union—a key industry south of the district—closed in 1956. Although the closure of the plant eliminated the air pollution that had plagued the neighborhood south of N 40th St, the contaminated site faced an uphill battle to redevelopment and it served as a parking lot for years. Other closures in the district and the surrounding neighborhood included Interlake School as an elementary school in 1972, Home of the Good Shepherd in 1973, and Lincoln High School in 1981. Interlake School was declared surplus in 1981 when Lincoln High School closed. Proposals to turn the Home of the Good Shepherd (NRHP listed in 1978) site into a shopping center were defeated when neighborhood activism forced the City of Seattle to purchase the Home of the Good Shepherd property in 1976.

Eventually preservation and revitalization efforts turned many of these potential losses into gains for the neighborhood. At the home of the Good Shepherd the site west of the building was converted to a public park and playground, named Meridian Playground. The building was converted into a multi-purpose community center, housing non-profit organizations, schools, small businesses, and a senior center.

The former gas plant on Lake Union from the gas company was converted into a public park in 1975 after a long remediation process. Today Gas Works Park (NRHP listed in 2013) remains a draw to the greater Wallingford neighborhood. The Interlake School (NRHP listed in 1983) was leased to a developer in 1982 who rehabilitated it and converted it to a mixed-use building with retail, restaurant, and residential spaces. The Interlake School is now known as Wallingford Center.

In the 1990s, city planning introduced the urban village concept and over 25 blocks of the nominated historic district were designated as a Residential Urban Village (west of Sunnyside Avenue N, excluding the Good Shepherd Center, Meridian Playground and the lots east of it). This designation identified this area of Wallingford as able to accommodate additional growth with increased density. The urban village strategy intended to accommodate increases in population by concentrating density in various identified neighborhoods throughout the city. With this, the residential trends are beginning to slowly be reversed. High density residential construction has increased within the last two decades along the south and west edges of the historic district, aligning with the urban village designation and the increased density pressure near the district's commercial corridors.

The Wallingford-Meridian Streetcar Historic District and the “Historic Residential Suburbs” MPD

The Wallingford-Meridian Streetcar Historic District is being nominated under the “Historic Residential Suburbs” Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) form and meets the guidelines for evaluation and registration specified in the document. The MPD defines a historic residential suburb as,

A geographic area, usually located outside the central city, that was historically connected to the city by one or more modes of transportation; subdivided and developed primarily for residential use according to a plan; and possessing a significant concentration, linkage, and continuity of dwellings on small parcels of land, roads and streets, utilities, and community facilities.⁴¹

The Wallingford-Meridian Streetcar Historic District meets this definition as it applies to “a grouping of contiguous subdivisions that during the historic period collectively assumed a cohesive identity as a historic neighborhood or suburb.”⁴² The district is a residential neighborhood that through historic events and

⁴¹ McClelland, Ames, and Pope, “Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States, 1830-1960,” Section F, 44.

⁴² Ibid.

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associations has achieved a cohesive identity, is located along streetcar lines, and is a group of contiguous residential subdivision that are historically interrelated by design, planning, and historic association.

The Wallingford-Meridian Streetcar Historic District developed in the midst of a population and construction boom in Seattle and the establishment of streetcar lines into the area provided reasonably priced housing with easy access to downtown and the university district. The proposed district features a significant concentration of Craftsman bungalows, creating a cohesive visual identity within the neighborhood and reflecting the intense development that occurred in just a few decades.

Application of the “Historic Residential Suburbs” MPD’s Registration Requirements

As noted in the “Statement of Historical Significance,” the Wallingford-Meridian Streetcar Historic District is being nominated under National Register Criteria A and C.⁴³

The district’s significance under Criterion A, Community Planning and Development, under the MPD is justified because the Wallingford-Meridian Streetcar Historic District it reflects the rapid growth of Seattle at the beginning of the 20th century, necessitating increased housing stock further away but still connected to the downtown core.

The district’s significance under Criterion C, Architecture, under the MPD, is justified because the Wallingford-Meridian Streetcar Historic District—with its numerous Craftsman and Colonial Revival bungalows and foursquares as well as later more elaborate bungalows and period Revival homes—reflects the concentrations of suburban houses that were developed along streetcar lines for working-class and middle-income home buyers at the turn of the 20th century. The Wallingford-Meridian Historic District is an important collection of early 20th century housing in Seattle.

The district retains its historic integrity achieved during the period of significance (1901-1941); alterations to the neighborhood since the period of significance have not substantially diminished the district’s ability to convey its significance. Its integrity is conveyed through the district’s location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The district’s **location** remains intact, with the size, shape, and orientation of blocks and lots consistent since the period of significance. Although transportation to the district has changed—with the removal of the streetcar car lines and an increased orientation towards the automobile—these alterations have not diminished the integrity of the district.

The **design** of the district remains largely intact with the arrangement and hierarchy of streets and blocks as well the collection of residences exhibiting a mix of popular architectural styles, mainly the Craftsman style, during the period of significance. The district’s pattern of single and multiple family, as well as religious facility, development remains evident. While common alterations throughout the district include window and porch changes, small additions, and some demolitions, they do not detract from the overall design character and quality of the district.

The **setting** within the district remains largely intact, which is residential in character with a few institutional buildings (e.g., churches). The residential properties are primarily single-family in form, but there are several multiple family residences within the district, primarily sited within close proximity to the former streetcar lines along N and NE 45th Street, Meridian Avenue N, and Interlake Avenue N. The setting around the district has

⁴³ Ibid., Section 6, 58-60.

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changed with the growth of the neighborhood's commercial corridor along N and NE 45th Streets transitioning single family buildings to commercial use and replacing them with low-rise commercial buildings. Commercial development along Stone Way N has also replaced single family dwellings along the street.

The district retains many of its original **materials**, from buildings to the roadway, sidewalks, street trees, and curbing. Most contributing resources retain key exterior cladding and window materials related to their original construction, which are primarily wood (horizontal siding and shingles), brick, and stucco. Resources that do not retain original materials typically have modern materials, including vinyl siding and windows or cement fiber board siding.

The original **workmanship** within the historic district remains largely intact and is evident in the design and quality of the buildings, conveying the skills of the architects and builders who design and built them.

The historic district retains a remarkable historic **feeling**. When walking or driving through the district, the arrangement of streets, lot sizes, variety and quality of architecture, and proximity to commercial corridors (and former streetcar lines) convey patterns of suburban life in the early twentieth century.

The district retains integrity of **association** as the plats remain in continued majority residential use and continue to anchor the core development area associated with the growth of Wallingford. The organizational framework established by the plats and the buildings convey the period when they achieved importance and continue to reflect design principles.

Conclusion

The Wallingford-Meridian Streetcar Historic District provides an excellent example of a streetcar suburb in the city of Seattle, representing community planning and residential development in response to streetcar construction as the city's population and physical footprint expanded. The district also continues to reflect a wide variety of architectural styles, but the Craftsman style in particular, popular in the Pacific Northwest during the first decades of the twentieth century.

Due to these associations, and the district's ability to convey them, the Wallingford-Meridian Streetcar Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Architecture under the Multiple Property Documentation "Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States, 1830-1960."

Today Wallingford has weathered numerous changes over the last century. These include the removal of the streetcar lines in favor of motorized bus routes, industrial changes and remediation along Lake Union, and the effects of post-war suburbanization. The neighborhood has rebounded through revitalization and significant investment in the last 50 years.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____