

# HISTORIC ALPHABET DISTRICT: COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDELINES ADDENDUM

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City of Portland

Bureau of Planning  
Portland, Oregon

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For a copy of the ***Community Design Guidelines*** or the ***Historic Alphabet District National Register Nomination*** contact the Bureau of Planning at 823-7700

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# **INTRODUCTION**





## A. About This Document

This document contains the Historic Alphabet District's boundary map, historic context statement, and adopted interim design guidelines. The applicability chart for design review and the adopting ordinance are also included in this document. Together these parts make up the Historic Alphabet District Addendum to the *Community Design Guidelines (CDG)*. The addendum is presented in a similar format as the *Community Design Guidelines* (adopted in January 1998)

## B. What This Is

On March 13, 2000, the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission (PHLC) approved the use of the *Community Design Guidelines* and the newly developed interim design guidelines as the design review criteria for projects located within the Historic Alphabet District. The PHLC concluded that the *Community Design Guidelines* and interim design guidelines addressed the concerns expressed in the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Design Review and recommended their adoption to City Council.

On April 6, 2000, the Portland City Council adopted the *Community Design Guidelines* and the newly developed interim design guidelines as the design review criteria for projects located within the Historic Alphabet District. The *Community Design Guidelines* and the three Historic Alphabet District design guidelines will function as the mandatory approval criteria for the Historic Alphabet District on an interim basis. These criteria will be applicable during the period between the listing of the Historic Alphabet District on the National Register of Historic Places and the adoption of a special district design guidelines document.



Looking westerly at 137 NW 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue, no longer extant

Map 1: Historic Alphabet District



The Historic Alphabet District is located in Northwest Portland. Its boundary is irregular following the temporal concentrations of contributing properties. Generally, the district's boundaries are: West Burnside on the south, NW 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the east, NW Lovejoy Street on the north and NW 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the west.

## Background

### A. Why This Addendum Exists

The community driven process began at the end of the 1980s when residents of Northwest Portland became concerned about the demolition of historically significant buildings to make way for development. In the early 1990s the Northwest District Association received two grants from the State Historic Preservation Office to document the neighborhood's significant historic buildings and prepare a historic district proposal. Scores of volunteers contributed hundreds of hours to this project. Much of the required inventory work was completed and a rich legacy of information was created.

In October 1997, the City of Portland received a grant from the State Historic Preservation Office to enhance the City's historic preservation efforts. The grant allowed completion of the historic district project, initiated by Northwest's citizen, to become a City priority. This project ensured that the efforts of citizen volunteers to create a historic district would receive official consideration.



Looking east on NW Glisan Street, between NW 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Avenues

On March 8, 1999, the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission (PHLC) accepted the Bureau of Planning recommendation to forward the nomination of the Historic Alphabet District to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). This recommendation was based on the National Register Criteria for evaluation. The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission forwarded the Historic Alphabet District nomination to the SHPO based on its meeting the following criteria:

**Criterion A:** Birthplace of important local institutions

**Criterion B:** Residential district once home to key figures in Portland's history

**Criterion C:** Representative of the early architectural development of Portland, with a concentration of diverse multi-family structures and significant works of prominent architects

On October 28, 1999, the State's review board, the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation, held the first of two hearings on the merits of the nomination as required by Oregon Administrative Rule 736-050-260 (8). A second hearing, planned for February 2000, was postponed to allow an opportunity for consideration and approval of interim design guidelines. The second hearing, held on May 12, 2000, resulted in the SHPO's acceptance of the Historic Alphabet District nomination. The SHPO Advisory Committee Review Board decided that the nomination met the National Register criteria for listing and forwarded their recommendation to the U.S. Secretary of Interior in Washington, D.C. The Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places will decide to accept or decline the nomination based on the criteria for listing by Fall of 2000. The majority of National Register nominations submitted through the Oregon SHPO Advisory Committee are accepted for listing.

During this process some property owners within the Historic Alphabet District opposed the nomination because of the uncertainty created by the design review process. Proponents from the neighborhood worked with opponents of the Historic Alphabet District to develop an approach to design review that reduced or eliminated the basis for opposition to the district's creation. The Bureau of Planning became involved in October 1999, in response to these discussions.

A key point of the opponent's concern to the district's listing in the National Register was the vague language of the amended version of the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Design Review, as stated in Section 33.846.140 (C) of Portland's zoning code (*Appendix B*). Difficulty with the interpretation and application of the guideline language was a major point of apprehension. The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission also expressed concern with the vague nature of the language in the amended version of the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Design Review. Property owners were thus concerned that new construction and exterior alterations of existing buildings would become more contentious and uncertain under the existing standards.

Their concerns were supported by a recent Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) ruling (LUBA No.99-105) regarding the applicability of Section 33.846.140 (C) to a project located in the King's Hill National Historic District. LUBA was concerned that the approval criteria of Section 33.846.140 (C) appeared to have no applicability to new construction. LUBA's decision provided further impetus for the City to clarify the design standards language for National Historic Districts without a special design guidelines document. A clarified set of guidelines is intended to provide greater assurance to developers as well as interested residents.

Both opponents and proponents identified the development of design guidelines for the Historic Alphabet District as a desired outcome. Consensus was developed on the use of the City's adopted *Community Design Guidelines* as the first step in this process. The *Community Design Guidelines* are more specific, use many visual examples, and provide greater clarity than the more general design standards of Section 33.846.140 (C). The adoption of the *Community Design Guidelines* and the development of interim design guidelines constituted the first step in the amelioration of opposition to the listing of the Historic Alphabet District onto the National Register of Historic Places.

The use of the *Community Design Guidelines* and interim design guidelines is intended to provide assurance to property owners, the Landmarks Commission, and other interested parties that properties in the Historic Alphabet District will have workable design review criteria. The second step in this process is also dependent upon the listing of the Historic Alphabet District in the National Register of Historic Places and will require the development of a special district design guidelines document.

## **B. Who Will Be Using It**

Design guidelines are mandatory approval criteria that must be met as part of design review and historic design review. The *Community Design Guidelines* and the three Historic Alphabet District design guidelines function as the mandatory approval criteria for projects located within the Historic Alphabet District. These documents will be used on an interim basis during the period between the listing of the Historic Alphabet District on the National Register of Historic Places and the adoption of a special district design guidelines document. Developers of projects located within the boundaries of the Historic Alphabet District (see Map 1, p.4) are required to explain, in their application, how their design meets each applicable guideline (see Applicability Chart, p 41).

Design review provides an opportunity for public evaluation of new construction and exterior changes to buildings and sites. The design review process is used to evaluate architectural composition, compatibility, and quality applied to new construction and exterior changes to existing buildings. Building materials, landscaping, and the location of parking are also elements considered during design review. The interior remodeling of a landmark's significant interior rooms may also be subject to historic design review.

### C. How It Is Intended To Be Used

The use of the *Community Design Guidelines* and the Historic Alphabet District design guidelines is intended to create a consistent and dependable design review process for projects located in the Historic Alphabet District. The guidelines state broader concepts in order to provide flexibility to designers, yet they are requirements. Each project proposal will be evaluated against the applicable design guidelines. **The applicability chart on page 41** identifies the applicable design guidelines for projects located within the Historic Alphabet District. During the design review process, the review body must find that the proposal meets each of the applicable design guidelines. Proposals that meet all applicable design guidelines will be approved; proposals that do not meet all the applicable design guidelines will not be approved. If the review body approves the proposed design, they may add conditions to their approval if necessary to ensure the proposal's compliance with the guidelines.

The planners within the Office of Planning & Development Review and the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission conduct historic design review. The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission is a volunteer board and includes members with expertise in design, development and historic preservation. The members of the commission are nominated by Portland's Mayor and confirmed by the City Council.



Looking southwest at NW 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue from NW Johnson Street



Looking southeast at 622 NW 23rd Avenue



# **HISTORIC ALPHABET DISTRICT CONTEXT STATEMENT**





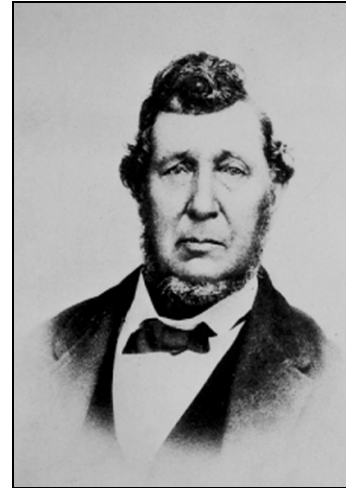
## A. Statement of Significance

The Historic Alphabet District, located in the northwest area of Portland, Oregon, is locally significant under Criterion A as the birthplace of important local institutions. It is additionally significant under Criterion A as the secondary center of Portland's Jewish and Scandinavian population in the early twentieth century. It also satisfies Criterion B as a residential district in which a large number of locally prominent merchants, professionals, civic leaders, and politicians lived.<sup>1</sup> The Historic Alphabet District is further eligible under Criterion C for its expression of early residential architecture in the city of Portland, characterized by buildings of various types, styles, and eras. Indeed, the Historic Alphabet District is unique in Portland for its concentration of early twentieth century multi-family structures—many of which were designed and constructed by the city's premier architects and developers. The district's multi-family dwellings are noteworthy for their appearance in an area that retains buildings from its early development period. Grand single-family homes sit next to first-class apartment buildings in a physical representation of the sociocultural transition experienced by one of Portland's oldest neighborhoods.

The irregularly shaped district is roughly bounded by NW Lovejoy Street to the north, with a northern extension to NW Marshall Street; by NW 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the east; by W. Burnside Street to the south; and by NW 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the west. The period of significance begins in 1880, the earliest date of construction for the oldest remaining resources in the district. It ends in 1940 with the beginning of World War II. The war induced a national mobilization effort that included Portland. As a leader in the shipbuilding industry, Portland became a war production center, an identity that significantly affected the city's growth. Consequently, 1940 marks a turning point in the city's and, by extension, the district's history.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix D for a short biography of significant persons and a list of associated properties.

## B. Settlement: 1845 – 1869



Capt. John H. Couch

The Historic Alphabet District contains a total of six originally platted additions to the city of Portland. The lion's share of the district (about 50%) is located in Couch's addition to the city of Portland, recorded in 1865. As such, the district's development is rightfully attributed to Captain John Heard Couch.

Couch was a successful mariner from Newburyport, Massachusetts. He began his naval career at the tender age of fifteen on a voyage to the West Indies upon the brig *Mars*. By the age of twenty-eight, Couch was commanding the brig *Maryland*, which he safely navigated to the mouth of the Columbia River in June 1840. It was the first vessel to enter the Willamette River.<sup>2</sup> Couch returned to the Oregon Territory three more times before finally settling in Oregon City in 1844. There, he began a promising career as a landsman and became director of the publishing company that organized the *Spectator*, Oregon's first newspaper. Couch was also Oregon's Treasurer under the Provisional Government. He quickly became a popular and respected citizen. It was observed of Couch: "His gentlemanly deportment has won him a host of friends, who esteem him for his high moral worth."<sup>3</sup> A prosperous career in Oregon City seemed certain for Couch, but he had other plans.

In 1847, Couch traveled back to New England. One year later, he set sail from New York as captain of the brig *Madonna*. He traveled with George F. Flanders, his brother-in-law, as chief mate. They were journeying to San Francisco and Oregon with a

<sup>2</sup> Eugene E. Snyder, *We Claimed This Land: Portland's Pioneer Settlers* (Portland, OR: Binford & Mort, 1989) 39.

<sup>3</sup> Eugene E. Snyder, *Portland Names and Neighborhoods: Their Historic Origins* (Portland, OR: Binford & Mort, 1979) 23.

cargo of goods they hoped to sell. Both arrived in San Francisco not a moment too soon. It was July 1849, and the gold rush fever was at its peak. Couch and Flanders were able to sell their goods at a tremendous profit. They continued traveling and reached Oregon in early August.

Once there, Couch decided to relocate to Portland instead of returning to Oregon City. Couch's naval background had convinced him that the area's commercial future would be found at a site north of Oregon City, closer to the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers. In August 1845, four years earlier, Couch speculated on this premonition by filing a land claim one square mile to the north of the Lovejoy-Pettygrove townsite on the west bank of the Willamette River.

Couch's business acumen proved sound. The Lovejoy-Pettygrove townsite eventually became the city of Portland, which soon surpassed Oregon City in prominence. Couch bragged to many of his seafaring friends that Portland was the "head of navigation."<sup>4</sup> Couch's influential decision has since been confirmed by historians: "Captain Couch's vote of confidence in selecting that claim was one of the most important events—some would call it decisive—in the early history of Portland."<sup>5</sup>

In Portland, Couch began a business partnership with Benjamin Stark, part owner of the Portland townsite. With Stark based in San Francisco as a merchant banker, he and Couch established a retail shipping business between their respective cities. Couch and Company Bankers were soon conducting profitable trips between Portland and San Francisco—they were even able to send one brig from Portland to Canton, China.

By 1852, Couch had carved a comfortable financial niche and sent for his wife and three daughters who were still living on the East Coast. Upon their arrival in Portland, they were led to a picturesque cabin in the woods, situated where Union Railroad Station is today. The Couch family eventually lived in much

grander residences that would grace the landscape of the future Historic Alphabet District. Before that occurred, though, Couch had to map the lots, blocks, and streets that would form the blueprint for one of Portland's most elite neighborhoods.

In 1865, Couch platted his first subdivision. It included the area between what are now Ankeny and Kearney Streets. On the plat Couch filed, the streets were unnamed and delineated only by the letters of the alphabet. In June 1866, a city ordinance was approved to name "A" as "A Street," to be followed by "B Street," "C Street," and so forth to the north as they had been laid out by Couch. This first plat was extended to L, M, N, and O Streets in 1869. The area came to be known as the "Alphabet District" for its unusual street naming system and remained so from 1865 to 1891 until the streets were assigned their present names.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*

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<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, 29.

## C. Railroad Era: 1870 – 1905

### 1. Institutional Development

Captain John Heard Couch, patriarchal founder of the Historic Alphabet District, died just before his 59<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was diagnosed with “typhoid pneumonia” and passed away on January 19, 1870. His death was mourned citywide: “The funeral cortege was never excelled in Portland...The banks closed, all business was stopped, labor suspended, and all combined to pay respect and honor.”<sup>7</sup>

The family lineage did not end with Couch’s passing. He lived to see three of his daughters married and was survived at his death by not only a wife and four daughters but also 15 grandchildren. In 1854, Caroline Couch, his oldest daughter, married Dr. Robert Bruce Wilson from Virginia. In 1857, Clementine Couch wed Cicero Hunt Lewis, a prominent and wealthy merchant from New Jersey. In 1863, Elizabeth Couch married Dr. Rodney Glisan from Maryland. Most members of this extensive clan later settled the land originally claimed by Captain Couch, helping to establish a neighborhood for the elite of Portland’s pioneers.

While 1870 was significant for Couch’s passing, it also heralded the introduction of important local institutions. Bishop Scott Grammar and Divinity School was one such institution. It was constructed to replace the Trinity Boys School that had operated in the neighboring town of Oswego from 1856 to 1866. The Trinity Boys School had led a precarious existence, with numerous closures during its history. With the arrival of Bishop E. Wistar Morris, a new location was sought for the private school. He decided upon the city of Portland, where the Portland Episcopal Church and its congregation could help raise funding. The Couch and Flanders families promptly donated a two-block site west of the intersection of 19<sup>th</sup> and E Streets.

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, 29.

Bishop Morris continued to spearhead the founding of the new school, which he renamed in honor of Bishop Thomas Fielding Scott. Scott had been the director of the original Trinity Boys School. His namesake was established to train young men for the ministry and good citizenship. The Bishop Scott Grammar and Divinity School was described as being “away out in the woods in the western part of the city.”<sup>8</sup> Apparently, its siting caused some concern, as “it required great faith in the development of the country and the town to establish a school at that time and place.”<sup>9</sup>

To ensure future development, the Couch family continued to plat their Donation Land Claim (DLC).<sup>10</sup> In 1872, Caroline Couch, the family matriarch, extended the platted area to P, Q, and R Streets. Subsequent plats continued the alphabet to W Street.<sup>11</sup> These later plats, concentrated at the western end of the Couch DLC, differed distinctly from the earlier plats. The earlier plats had been subdivided into the standard 200 x 200-foot blocks that characterized downtown Portland, while the later plats were subdivided into 200 (north-south) x 480 (east-west) foot blocks. This larger gridding system established the standard for the future subdivisions of the King and Balch DLCs that bordered the Couch DLC to the north and west.<sup>12</sup> More importantly, these land divisions and plats provided additional incentives for the siting of public institutions that required relatively large tracts of land in a pleasant environment.

In 1874, Bishop Morris again coordinated the siting of another important public institution in northwest Portland. He organized a board of leading citizens to determine the location of a public hospital. The hospital purchased land at 21<sup>st</sup> and L Streets from

<sup>8</sup> H. W. Scott, ed., *History of Portland, Oregon* (Syracuse, NY: D. Mason & Co., 1890) 396.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> The Donation Land Act of 1850 granted free land to qualifying early settlers of the Oregon Territory, with the agreement that they live on and cultivate the land for four consecutive years. City of Portland Bureau of Planning, Eliot Multiple Property Submission, 1997, Sec. E, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> Northwest District Association (NWDA), *Northwest Portland Historic Inventory: Historic Context Statement* (Portland, OR: Northwest District Association, 1991) 11.

one of its board members, Rodney Glisan. The hospital grounds were extended to 23<sup>rd</sup> Street with an additional purchase from George Flanders.

Good Samaritan Hospital opened in October 1875, with the location described as a “high and healthful situation.”<sup>13</sup> It complemented St. Vincent’s Hospital, which had opened a few months earlier in July. St. Vincent’s was located closer to town on 12<sup>th</sup> between M and N Streets but was still considered to be in the continuous “North Portland” district that stretched as far west as Good Samaritan.<sup>14</sup> Both hospitals were among the first institutions to locate away from the core area of town.<sup>15</sup>

The hospital’s original staff listed Curtis C. Strong, Rodney Glisan, and Robert Wilson. Glisan and Wilson were both sons-in-law of Captain Couch, while Flanders was his brother-in-law. It should be noted that the hospital was located on land bought from both Glisan and Flanders. It was evident even at that early date that the Couch clan would be instrumental in shaping the future of northwest Portland.

## **2. Residential Development**

The residential development of northwest Portland began to take form as the city’s economy gathered steam in the late 1870s and early 1880s in anticipation of the burgeoning railroad industry. Demand for lumber and fuel cleared the old- growth forest in the western reaches of the Alphabet District, which, in turn, encouraged the establishment of businesses such as breweries and dairies in that area. Meanwhile, large houses with spacious grounds were constructed on the large 200 x 480-foot blocks that Caroline Couch and George Flanders had platted west of 19<sup>th</sup> Street. These homes clustered between 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Streets from B Street north to L—basically, the district defined by the two Episcopalian institutions of Bishop Scott School and Good

Samaritan Hospital. A residential enclave was also developing east of 16<sup>th</sup> Street. However, this residential district was markedly different from that west of 19<sup>th</sup> Street in that it catered to middle-class and working-class families. These homes consisted of modest vernacular “cottages” located on small to midsize lots.

The character of northwest Portland was clearly heterogeneous during this time. On the west, it was characterized by an industrial suburb, while a middle class neighborhood developed to the east. Growth of either neighborhood threatened to overwhelm the elite community located in between. That threat was answered in 1881.

In 1881, George W. Weidler, owner of Portland’s largest and most profitable steam sawmill, built a home at 19<sup>th</sup> and L Streets. Weidler’s home overlooked his mill and was constructed at the tune of \$16,000—no mean sum at the time. That same year, J. C. Carson built an Italianate style home at 20<sup>th</sup> and J Streets for \$10,000. Carson managed a sash and door business in association with Weidler’s mill. Not to be outdone, C. P. Bacon, Weidler’s father-in-law, also built an Italianate residence located between 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, J, and I Streets. Evidently, business owners with interests along the northwest waterfront had decided that the large blocks and fresh air should belong to them rather than to the workers whose homes had begun to creep uphill from the riverfront industrial district.

Members of the Couch clan also began developing the series of blocks between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets that they had inherited from John H. Couch. The first of the fold to return were Clementine and Cicero H. Lewis, Couch’s daughter and son-in-law. Lewis was one of the richest men in Portland. He invested \$35,000 in a Stick style mansion between G and H Streets. His relative, George Flanders, followed suit in 1883 and spent \$40,000 on a home between F and G Streets. By 1885, two of Couch’s daughters and their families had similarly relocated. Caroline and Robert Wilson resided between H and I Streets, while Elizabeth and Rodney Glisan occupied a home at I and J Streets. Those

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<sup>13</sup> Scott, 377.

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.*, 12.

<sup>15</sup> Patty Mantia, “A neighborhood of porch sitters: residents of Victorian homes face contemporary problems with energy and good will,” *Willamette Week* 6 July 1976: 13.

wishing to claim a certain social standing soon coveted an address in the vicinity of 19th Street.

While residents of the Alphabet District sought to maintain its exclusive reputation, they were also interested in sustaining the middle-class neighborhood east of 17<sup>th</sup> Street for land speculation. In 1884, the Couch family developed rowhouses on the block between I, J, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> Streets. These narrow frame houses [extant] built in the Queen Anne style were near enough to allow the Couchs' to keep a close eye on their investments.

The Couch family followed a precedent established by George H. Williams the year before. In 1883, Williams, a former senator and U.S. Attorney General, built his home on the block between 19<sup>th</sup> and D Streets. He simultaneously constructed a three-unit townhouse [extant] on the same block. Williams intended to maintain this townhouse as income property.<sup>16</sup>

The Couch and Williams' townhouses were well received by the housing market. They gave confidence to other investors interested in similar business ventures. In 1890, Herman Trenkmann, a contractor, constructed eight identical frame houses [extant] in the Queen Anne / Eastlake style at NW 17<sup>th</sup> and Hoyt Streets. He intended them for middle-class housing.<sup>17</sup> That same year, Williams converted his townhouse into a first-class boarding house. In 1893, David Campbell built six brick rowhouses [extant] on the same block as the Couch family investment properties.<sup>18</sup> The success of the Couch, Williams, Trenkmann, and Campbell properties later encouraged similar development in the northwest area.

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<sup>16</sup> *Op. cit.*, 16-17.

<sup>17</sup> William R. Jamison and Charles M. Spence, *Trenkmann Houses National Register Nomination, 1977*, Sec. 8, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Op. cit.*, 17.

### **3. Streetcar Development**

Residential development in the northwest area was further spurred by the introduction of new streetcar lines in the early 1880s. In 1882, the Transcontinental Street Railway Company started a line that ran tracks on G Street to 22<sup>nd</sup>, on 14<sup>th</sup>, and on S Street to 26<sup>th</sup>. The company also built car barns on S Street at 24<sup>th</sup> Street.

A second streetcar system was introduced the following year. In June 1882, E. A. Jeffrey was awarded a franchise for the Multnomah Street Railway Company. With financial backing from George Weidler and W. A. Scoggin, the Multnomah Street Railway Company began streetcar service in 1883. Horse-drawn streetcars began service on Washington and B Streets, and by December of that year, had reached 23<sup>rd</sup> and B streets. Another line opened earlier in July. That line traveled north from B Street along 16<sup>th</sup> Street. The competing Transcontinental Street Railway Company established east-west service on G Street at the same time. By 1891, when the Multnomah Street Railway Company completed a line on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, a network of streetcars served the subdivisions located on either side of Burnside. As a result, the northwest area's appeal as a residential district was further elevated. The area was not only a stone's throw from the central business district; it also offered a transit option besides walking. In those days, streetcars helped commuters avoid the long, muddy walk to and from work that was unavoidable if one did not own a horse.<sup>19</sup>

The streetcar lines must have been particularly appealing to medical professionals who were beginning to populate northwest Portland in the late 1870s and 1880s. In 1885, the Medical College of Willamette University, which had relocated to Portland in 1878, constructed a new building at 15<sup>th</sup> and C Streets. Located midway between two major hospitals, the Medical College building invited the establishment of various medical

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<sup>19</sup> City of Portland Bureau of Planning, *Alberta Substation National Register Nomination, 1997*, Sec. 8, p. 4.

agencies. Medical offices and convalescent centers began to proliferate in northwest Portland, as did physicians' homes.<sup>20</sup>

Doctors were not the only residents of the Alphabet District. "Merchant princes" and nonmedical professionals also made their homes there, tending to congregate along the strip of 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue.<sup>21</sup> That particular corridor came to be known as "Nob Hill," a likely imitation of San Francisco's Nabob or Nob Hill, itself derived from the Nabobs of the Mogul rule in India.<sup>22</sup> It would seem the case; one grocer claimed to have named the avenue for its similarity to the Nob Hill area of his native San Francisco.<sup>23</sup>

Though western in name, the Nob Hill area was eastern in character. Many of its residents hailed from New England. As such, the neighborhood strove to create an aura of New England culture and level of sophistication. It was, at times, referred to as "the Boston of the west."<sup>24</sup> In any case, the neighborhood's character was distinctly defined. The Great Renaming of 1891 bore that out.

#### **4. Consolidation and the West End**

In 1891, the three separate cities of Portland, Albina, and East Portland were consolidated to form the Portland we know today. Consolidation produced a single city with duplicate street names that failed to replicate each other in location. For example, there may have been ten "A Streets," each of which were located in three different sections of the city. Mayor W. S. Mason appointed a "Streets Committee" to study the dilemma. The "Streets Committee" produced a list of citizens they believed were worthy of commemoration.<sup>25</sup> Nearly one-third of the Alphabet District was

named for citizens who either lived in the area or who owned businesses there.<sup>26</sup> Clearly, the Alphabet District housed important local businessmen and pioneers whose contributions would be recognized in posterity. On January 12, 1892, the city of Portland passed an ordinance that replaced the letters with corresponding names of pioneers and deserving citizens.<sup>27</sup>

With the renaming, the Alphabet District was no more. Instead, the area was newly christened the "West End," with Nob Hill retaining its sobriquet. Fortunately, the district lost none of its appeal during the transition. One observer wrote:

"Among those of the spacious and magnificent West End are houses costing about \$20,000 to \$50,000—some of them \$90,000 each—of three and four stories, and mainly in the Queen Anne style. It is upon the swell of the plateau that these fine houses begin to appear, and the views from their upper windows and turrets are extensive. For ten blocks back—16<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> streets—or even further, and from about N street southward to Jefferson, or some twenty streets, the region is, by popular consent—and still more by prevailing prices—forever dedicated to dwellings of wealth and beauty...for substantial comfort and tasteful display the west end of Portland has few rivals."<sup>28</sup>

As the 1890s progressed, the West End kept its status as "one of the best places for the 'best' Portlanders."<sup>29</sup> After all, the right address said as much about one's social ranking as did membership in the proper club. An address in the West End certainly spoke volumes. People such as J. K. Gill, W. Harrison Corbett, and Mrs. Edward Failing were all potential neighbors. They were, of course, included in the social register of the day.

In time, the West End encompassed as many as 60 mansions, a number of which occupied full city blocks.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps the most impressive of the lot was a huge house constructed by Richard B.

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<sup>20</sup> *Op. cit.*, 13, 18.

<sup>21</sup> Mantia, 16.

<sup>22</sup> Rod Paulson, "Northwest Portland – From Nob Hill to Willamette Heights," ch. in *Neighborhood Histories* (Portland, OR: The Community Press, 1974-30).

<sup>23</sup> *Portland's Colorful Nob Hill*, Nob Hill Business Association, pamphlet, OHS Vertical Files.

<sup>24</sup> Denise Meyer, *A Brief History of Nob Hill – Its Early Days*, 27 May 1977, OHS Vertical Files.

<sup>25</sup> Snyder, "Names Changed, Lost, and Missing," ch. in *Portland Names*, 53-59.

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<sup>26</sup> Snyder, "The Street Names, A to Z," ch. in *Portland Names*, 72-234.

<sup>27</sup> Paulson, 4.

<sup>28</sup> Scott, 430-431.

<sup>29</sup> NWDA, 15.

<sup>30</sup> John Terry, "Take a walking tour through city's early social register," *Oregonian* 5 Oct. 1996: D02.

Knapp, a partner in an implement and machinery company. Knapp invested \$80,000 in his residence, though some rumors placed the figure closer to \$100,000.<sup>31</sup> The cost alone placed the home in a singular category. The Knapp residence was, unsurprisingly, also noteworthy for its ostentatious architecture. It sported exotic woods, rare stained glass, and hand-wrought hardware. Knapp's house dominated the block between 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, Davis, and Everett Streets; but despite the attention it commanded, it should be remembered that the Knapp residence kept company with similar homes.<sup>32</sup> The architectural reign of the single-family residence was definitely at its zenith, but the prelude to its denouement could be heard *pianissimo*.

### **5. The Lewis and Clark Centennial and American Pacific Exposition and Oriental Fair<sup>33</sup>**

The monied residents of the West End district had contributed to Portland's rise as the metropolis of the Pacific Northwest, but the bank panic of 1893 felled many of the city's captains of industry. As Portland's businesses struggled to get back on their feet, the economy and population of upstart Seattle surged ahead. Portland's business community responded by devoting itself to boosterism. The city's commercial advantages and future growth were hawked to every available audience. The Lewis and Clark Centennial and American Pacific Exposition and Oriental Fair was simply the most glamorous and successful result of Portland's boosterism efforts.

The idea for a fair was bandied about as early as 1895 but met with a lukewarm reception at the time. It had its first solid supporter in J. M. Long of the Portland Board of Trade. In 1900, he organized a provisional committee to consider the possibility of a Northwest Industrial Exposition. Harvey W. Scott, member of the Oregon Historical Society (OHS) and *Oregonian* editor,

proposed an alternate theme: a commercial fair to commemorate the centennial of Lewis and Clark's exploration of the Oregon country. In February 1901, the state legislature endorsed OHS' suggestion and pledged state aid for the project. Henry W. Corbett, Portland's premier capitalist, was chosen to lead the Exposition Association that would organize the fair.

One of the first issues to resolve in planning the fair was its location. Upon the recommendation of Colonel Henry E. Dosch, esteemed Portland businessman, the Guild's Lake site in northwest Portland was chosen. The decision was rendered in July 1902 but not without controversy. Coincidentally, many members of the Exposition Association or their affiliates leased land in the Guild's Lake area. They would receive property tax exemptions during the period of their lease. Other advocates of the Guild's Lake siting included Abbott Mills, Portland banker. Mills was a close confidante of Robert Livingstone whose company owned prime residential property on lower Willamette Heights, adjacent to the proposed fairgrounds.<sup>34</sup> Dosch himself stood to gain from the siting. Circa 1898-99, he had constructed the Elliston Apartments, located at 425 NW 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue [extant].<sup>35</sup> With numerous fairgoers expected to attend, surely some would appreciate temporary accommodations located near their destination.

Dosch's Elliston Apartments were an early indicator of the changes that would transform the West End. As a gateway area to the fair, the district functioned as the exposition's "host." Beginning in 1903, new housing types were introduced to the city's landscape.<sup>36</sup> Hotels, apartments, boarding houses, and multi-family dwellings such as duplexes and fourplexes slowly appeared in Portland but were mostly concentrated in the West

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<sup>31</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>32</sup> Richard Marlitt, *Nineteenth Street* (Portland, OR: OHS, 1978) 15.

<sup>33</sup> Carl Abbott, "Portland Boosters and the Great Exposition," ch. in *Portland: Planning, Politics, and Growth in a Twentieth-Century City* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983) 33-48.

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<sup>34</sup> E. Kimbark MacColl, *The Shaping of a City: Business and Politics in Portland, Oregon 1885 to 1915* (Portland, OR: Georgian Press, 1976) 266.

<sup>35</sup> Heritage Investment Corporation, Elliston Apartments National Register Nomination, 1986, Sec. 8, p.1.

<sup>36</sup> Lynda Sekora, Lauer Apartment Building National Register Nomination, 1992, Sec. 8, p. 2.

End, particularly near the Exposition.<sup>37</sup> The demonstrated success of earlier rental houses had illustrated that there was a market for smaller but socially acceptable housing in the area.<sup>38</sup> On the assumption that at least three-fifths of local visitors to the fair were from nearby Roseberg and Everett, approximately 800,000 tourists eventually occupied Portland's new hotels.<sup>39</sup>

Despite potential changes to their physical, social, and cultural landscape looming ahead, West End society remained intact. In 1905, the same year the fair opened, Trinity Episcopal Church was established at NW 18<sup>th</sup> and Everett Streets. Designed by David Lewis, grandson of John H. Couch, the church moved from its original location downtown on SW Oak Street. The relocation was a firm avowal of the West End's standing, since the Trinity Episcopal Church listed the most socially "proper" congregation in the city.<sup>40</sup> In fact, young men seeking fortune and success were often advised to "join Trinity Episcopal Church and marry a Couch" to fulfill their wishes.<sup>41</sup> Enough young men must have heeded those words because, by the turn of the century, almost every socially prominent family was related to one another. The West End cliques were not only socially and economically exclusive; their intermarrying practices genetically isolated them from the rest of the city.<sup>42</sup> So while there were signs of change in the neighborhood, West End residents managed to cleave to an exclusive identity.

The Lewis and Clark Centennial and American Pacific Exposition and Oriental Fair was a mammoth success. From its opening on June 1 through its official closing on October 15, 1905, there were 1,588,000 paid admissions, for a daily average of 11,600 visitors. An additional 966,000 visitors can be added to that total to represent the number of free passes given to reporters, workmen,

officials, and the like.<sup>43</sup> Many of these visitors were transported to the fair by streetcar service. During the fair's peak months of July and August, more than 125 cars were assigned to handle a million passengers a week.<sup>44</sup> Two well-traveled routes were along NW 23<sup>rd</sup> and NW 16<sup>th</sup> streets through the heart of the West End district.

Portland's greatest civic undertaking succeeded in jumpstarting the city's previously sagging economy. Between 1903 and 1912, the city enjoyed over \$64 million in new housing and neighborhood development.<sup>45</sup> Portland's business leaders credited the fair with the city's success and pinpointed the summer of 1905 as the beginning of a sustained real estate boom.<sup>46</sup> The booming economy was naturally accompanied by a tremendous population explosion. Between 1900 and 1910 the city's population more than doubled. Portland went from a town of 90,000 to a metropolis of 212,000.<sup>47</sup> As *Harper's Weekly* noted, the Exposition "marked the close of an old epoch and the beginning of a new one for Portland."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> City of Portland, "Portland Historical Context Statement (Draft)" (Portland, OR: Bureau of Planning, Oct. 1993) 44.

<sup>38</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>39</sup> Abbott, 45.

<sup>40</sup> NWDA, 20.

<sup>41</sup> City of Portland, "Nob Hill," ch. in *Potential Historic Conservation Districts* (Portland, OR: Bureau of Planning, Oct. 1978) 130.

<sup>42</sup> Meyer, 14.

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<sup>43</sup> Abbott, 44.

<sup>44</sup> John T. Labbe, *Fares, Please! Those Portland Trolley Years* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1980) 120.

<sup>45</sup> Scot W. McLean and Elizabeth S. Atly, Weist Apartments National Register Nomination, 1989, Sec. 7, p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> NWDA, 19.

<sup>47</sup> City of Portland, "Nob Hill," 131-2.

<sup>48</sup> Carl Abbott, *Portland: Gateway to the Northwest* (Northridge: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1985) 78.



## 6. The Introduction of New Housing Types

This new era was particularly noticeable for the physical changes it wrought upon the city's built environment. Following the fair, increasing real estate values proximate to downtown, coupled with good streetcar service, led to a transformation of Portland's close-in residential neighborhoods. In the West End, the convenient and efficient streetcars that had carried fairgoers through the neighborhood facilitated post-fair development. As a consequence of increasing property values, many of the large single-family residences that dominated the district's architectural landscape were demolished and succeeded by a broader spectrum of building types, including multi-family buildings. Developers were quick to take advantage of the area's proximity to downtown and network of streetcar lines. Beginning in the early 1900s, entire blocks were razed to make way for new projects to accommodate the growing neighborhood. The Henry Hewitt and Levi White homes on 20<sup>th</sup> Street were razed for Couch Elementary School. The Cicero Hunt Lewis home, located between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> avenues and Glisan and Hoyt streets, was demolished for the Couch School playground.

As previously mentioned, the success of the earlier rental townhouses intimated a market for smaller but socially acceptable housing citywide. In the West End, one of the earliest extant examples of the new housing available to Portlanders is the Weist Apartments at 209 NW 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Built in 1904, it was specifically designed for wealthy fairgoers. The construction of the Weist Apartments followed a nationwide trend of creating building types for the higher rather than the lower end of the market.<sup>49</sup>

After the fair, luxury apartment dwellings and residential hotels multiplied in the West End. They continued the pattern of building for "respectable people," a euphemism for the wealthy and upper middle class. Some of these multi-family dwellings—duplexes and fourplexes in particular—were designed to look like single-family homes. Such design was meant to appeal to families

<sup>49</sup> City of Portland, "Portland Historical Context Statement (Draft)," 42.

accustomed to living in single-family residences. It was also an attempt to avoid any association with the similar but socially unacceptable building type, the tenement.<sup>50</sup>



Campbell Hotel

Luxury apartments attracted a wider-than-intended audience, though. Instead of families, typical residents included single men, couples with no children, and single women. The latter contingent was assumed to be

mistresses of wealthy businessmen able to afford the upkeep of a second "residence." However, all three groups were suspect because of their marital status and/or lack of children. Builders and developers were aware of the moral stigma attached to apartment living and assuaged such fears by siting apartment buildings in fashionable districts. There, residents were assured physical and social distance from the dreaded tenements and their occupants.<sup>51</sup> An occupant of a residential hotel such as the Campbell Hotel at NW 23<sup>rd</sup> and Hoyt [extant] could flaunt the advantages of a northwest Portland address and still mask an inability to purchase a single-family home.<sup>52</sup>

Indeed, the West End and its encapsulation of Nob Hill provided Portland developers and homebuilders the fashionable district they needed for their luxury apartments and other such building types. For example, William L. Morgan, the city's "apartment king," built a number of luxury apartments in northwest Portland between 1905 and 1912. Extant examples include the previously mentioned Weist Apartments, the Day Building (2068 NW Flanders Street), the Dayton Apartments (2056 – 2058 NW

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, 44.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, 45.

<sup>52</sup> NWDA, 19.

Flanders Street), and the Ormonde Apartment Building (2046 – 2048 NW Flanders Street). All have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places and are additionally located in the Historic Alphabet District.

Notably, all four buildings were sited either within a few blocks of a streetcar line or on a line itself. Such was the case for many multi-family dwellings in the Historic Alphabet District. In 1890, the two streetcar systems that had served northwest Portland were electrified. In 1906, they merged to form the Portland Railway Light and Power Company. The unified company eliminated redundant lines and, more importantly, provided for transit-supportive densities.<sup>53</sup>

Increasing densities coupled with a changing physical landscape were not the only transformations occurring in northwest Portland. The changing land uses east of NW 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue were also critical to the development of the West End district. In 1906, the Spokane, Portland, and Seattle Railroad Company purchased most of the land north of NW Hoyt from 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue west to 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Railroad spur lines were also extended south on NW 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Burnside and on NW 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Johnson. The expanded industrial uses triggered a massive rebuilding. The working-class residences, hotels, lodging houses, and shops that formerly characterized the area were replaced by large, multi-story warehouses and railroad lines. This wholesale clearance raised land values for the remaining residences in the surrounding area. In 1909, the Northern Pacific Terminal Company purchased more land in the area before land values could increase further.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, 16.

<sup>54</sup> City of Portland, “Portland Historical Context Statement (Draft),” 40.

#### **D. The Motor Age: 1910 – 1940**

Institutional and cultural changes occurred in tandem with the physical changes of the West End in the early twentieth century. For example, the Bishop Scott School closed in 1904, but educational services for the area remained intact. There was the Portland Riding Academy to fall back on. Established in 1896, the Portland Riding Academy operated as an adjunct of the Portland Academy. Its parent organization was based in southwest Portland, while the Portland Riding Academy was located on Johnson between 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenues.

A second school opened in the West End in 1912. The Miss Catlin School at 23<sup>rd</sup> and Irving Streets functioned as a school for girls. Its tenure in the neighborhood was short-lived, though. Four years after its founding in the West End, the Miss Catlin School relocated to the Westover neighborhood. Perhaps as a replacement, a third school was moved to the heart of the district at 20<sup>th</sup> between Glisan and Hoyt in 1916. Formerly located on 17<sup>th</sup> between Kearney and Lovejoy, the Couch Schoolhouse was moved to the site of the old Gertrude and Isaac White residence. Isaac White was a locally prominent businessman. Originally built by the Couch family as a schoolhouse for their grandchildren and other children in the neighborhood, it became a residence upon its relocation. A new school designed by F. A. Naramore took its place. The Couch School is still in use today, though it is now known as the Metropolitan Learning Center. The schools served the growing population of the West End while adding to the district’s fashionable reputation.<sup>55</sup> They all operated as private schools.<sup>56</sup>

Another institution, the First Church of Christ, Scientist [extant], was established during the same time period. Built in 1911, the church was sited on Everett between 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Avenues. It

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<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, 45-6.

<sup>56</sup> NWDA, 19-20.

was the first facility constructed for the Christian Science religion, west of the Mississippi River.<sup>57</sup>

Besides new organizations and institutions, northwest Portland attracted an immigrant population. A Jewish contingent began migrating to the West End in the 1910s. The business successes of older immigrants allowed them to leave the established Jewish neighborhood of South Portland.<sup>58</sup>

The city's Scandinavian community also began adding to the established Anglo makeup of the West End. Like the Jewish community, the heart of the Scandinavian community lay elsewhere. For the Scandinavians, the city's northeast quadrant functioned as their primary community base, with the area east of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue as a secondary center. The railroad expansion of 1906 and a growing Scandinavian population forced a number of Scandinavian institutions to locate west of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Many of the structures that housed these organizations still exist today.<sup>59</sup>

One of the first Scandinavian institutions to relocate was the Immanuel Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church. In 1906, it moved from its former site along Burnside Street to its present-day location at the corner of 19<sup>th</sup> and Irving Streets. The First Norwegian-Danish Methodist Episcopal Church followed four years later. In 1910, it moved to its current site at 607-611 NW 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In 1912, a third religious facility opened for the West End's Scandinavian community. The Swedish Mission Covenant Tabernacle was built at 1624 NW Glisan Street [extant]. It relocated from its original site at 14<sup>th</sup> and Flanders. The new Tabernacle was meant to accommodate a growing congregation, but it also served the needs of the many single women who attended the church. Many of these women worked as maids and governesses in the West End neighborhood, so the Tabernacle's

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<sup>57</sup> Richard Michaelson, First Church of Christ, Scientist National Register Nomination, 1980, Sec. 8, p. 1.

<sup>58</sup> City of Portland, "Portland Historical Context Statement (Draft)," 65.

<sup>59</sup> NWDA, 21.

new location allowed them to walk or take public transit to worship.<sup>60</sup>

Religious organizations were not the only Scandinavian institutions represented in the West End. There was also one fraternal organization. In 1910, the Swedish Society Linnea erected a hall at 2066 NW Irving Street [extant]. The Society was the oldest Swedish organization in the region, and Linnea Hall functioned as the only independent Swedish lodge in the city.<sup>61</sup>

The relocation and construction of these institutions, educational and religious alike, as well as the construction of new housing types were part and parcel of the growing pains experienced by the northwest neighborhood. Not everyone suffered the pains gladly, though. Prescient residents of the West End understood the densification of their neighborhood was only the beginning of what would become a continued trend. They began a slow exodus to up-and-coming neighborhoods such as Dunthorpe to distance themselves from the threatening crowds.<sup>62</sup>

As the West End's aging Protestant elite moved away in the late 'teens and early 1920s, a number of successful Jewish businesses and professional families took their place. What had begun as a steady expansion by the Jewish population became a recognizable colonization of the West End neighborhood. The migration can be traced to the area's popularity with the upper-middle class and upper class Jewish population.<sup>63</sup> A sizeable portion of the members of important Jewish organizations such as the Council of Jewish Women and the B'nai B'rith resided in the West End. Many of the new apartments and converted single-family residences were owned or occupied by Jewish professionals.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Michael F. Crowe, "Turning White Elephants Into White Knights," *CRM* 6 (1997) 21.

<sup>61</sup> Richard Michaelson, Linnea Hall National Register Nomination, 1980, Sec. 8, p. 1.

<sup>62</sup> Meyer, 20.

<sup>63</sup> Sally Ashley, Joseph Goodman House National Register Nomination, 1993, Sec. 8, p.

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<sup>64</sup> NWDA, 21.

Nothing symbolized the West End's popularity with the Jewish population more than the construction of the new Temple Beth Israel Synagogue. The previous synagogue had been located at SW 12<sup>th</sup> and Main but was destroyed by arson in 1923. Its destruction prompted a debate among the congregation: should a new synagogue be built upon the old site, or should a new site be found? The decision to relocate to northwest Portland represented a triumph for younger members of the congregation such as Julius Meier. Members of the "old guard," such as Ben Selling and Joseph Simon, had been forced to concede to the relocation.

Fittingly, the site chosen was the old George Flanders estate. Two of his daughters—who were still living on the property at the time—sold it to the congregation. Construction for the synagogue began in 1924. It was completed three years later. As Portland's most "modern" congregation, Temple Beth Synagogue flourished in its new location and survived the financial crisis of the Depression.<sup>65</sup>

Another congregation joined Temple Beth in its relocation to northwest Portland. The Roman Catholic diocese built the Cathedral of Immaculate Conception at 18<sup>th</sup> and Couch Streets in 1925. Like Temple Beth, the Cathedral was sited on land owned by a pioneer of the area. Dr. Henry Jones, a founder of St. Vincent's Hospital, had previously occupied the land.<sup>66</sup>

The congregation of St. Mark's Episcopal Church constructed a new church around the same time. The Parish of St. Mark the Evangelist (Anglican) had been originally established as a mission of Trinity Church in 1874. Trinity Church was, at the time, still located in downtown Portland. In 1890, St. Mark's was constructed to serve residents of the Alphabet District. It was the first church in the region to use the Anglo-Catholic practice in the Episcopal Church. The original building for St. Mark's was located at 18<sup>th</sup> and Q Streets. It was moved in 1909 to its present site at

21<sup>st</sup> and Marshall Streets to avoid the expanding industrial district to the north and east.

The main body of the original building was razed in 1925. Miss Catherine H. Percival donated \$50,000 for the church's reconstruction. The main portion of the present building is a result of that reconstruction. As per Miss Percival's request, it is an exact replica of the Church of the Evangelists in Philadelphia. Her brother, Dr. Henry R. Percival, was an Anglican priest and writer there. The Church of the Evangelists was, in turn, a replica of the Cathedral at Orvieto, St. Mark's in Venice, and the Cathedral at Pisa—all of which were based on the 10<sup>th</sup> century Basilica of San Zeno in Verona, Italy.

The many new institutions that were introduced to the West End neighborhood during the 'teens and twenties were not all nonprofit organizations. Neighborhood "institutions" such as the Nob Hill pharmacy on NW 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue [extant] were also staking their claims to the area. The same streetcar system that provided incentive for apartment living in northwest Portland also attracted retail and service businesses to the area.<sup>67</sup> As density intensified in the West End, 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenues became increasingly commercial. These commercial corridors provided needed goods and services for the neighborhood.<sup>68</sup> By 1926, Burnside Street, 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue from Burnside to Thurman, and 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue from Burnside to Kearney were solidly lined with businesses such as restaurants, drug stores, laundries, bakeries, and auto service stations. Commercial uses were also evident on Everett, Flanders, Glisan, and 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue from Kearney to Thurman but to a lesser degree. Overall, block frontage devoted to retail and service businesses had increased threefold in the area since 1908.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> City of Portland, "Portland Historical Context Statement (Draft)," 65.

<sup>66</sup> *Op. cit.*, 25.

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<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, 23.

<sup>68</sup> John M. Tess and Robert Mawson, Rose City Electric Garage National Register Nomination, 1995, Sec. 8, p. 4.

<sup>69</sup> *Op. cit.*

## 1. *Apartment Buildings Multiply*

The 1920s also saw a renewed interest in apartment construction for the West End district and, more specifically, the Nob Hill area. After the boom years of 1905 to 1912, the combined value of residential and commercial permits in the city reached another crescendo during the 1920s. Where the first boom introduced a variety of housing types from duplexes to high-rent elevator apartments, the second boom focused on apartment construction to both meet housing demand and obtain speculative profits with easily borrowed capital. It was, after all, the Roaring Twenties, and financiers were enjoying a bull market. The West End district became the site for the speculative construction of multi-family dwellings by developers such as J. C. Meyers, S. E. Henderson, and Harry Mittleman. Developers and homebuilders financed the construction of one-story, California-style garden court apartments; mid-sized and mid-priced apartment buildings; luxury apartment buildings; and new single-family houses for prestigious clients. Like the grand mansions before them, the luxury apartments of the city's first housing boom made room in the architectural landscape for more modest residences. The concentration of apartments along Everett, Flanders, Glisan, and adjacent streets made the West End one of two areas in the city with particularly high population densities. After a time, population densities passed 100 persons per acre in the heart of the new apartment area.<sup>70</sup> The area's high density and nearby mix of commercial uses produced a neighborhood unlike any other in the city.

The combination of changes in land use intensity, housing types, and ethnic population in the West End during the 1920s altered the character of the neighborhood severely. In 1914, it had been a solid residential district.<sup>71</sup> Exactly a decade later in 1924, the city adopted a zoning ordinance that gave legal footing to those changes. The zoning ordinance created four zones: (1) single-family, (2) single- and multi-family, (3) business-manufacturing, and (4) unrestricted. Building height, yard dimensions, and

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<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, p. 22.

building density were not regulated by the ordinance. Multi-family dwellings and commercial and industrial uses increased in the area while single-family housing declined. Formerly homogenous zones such as the West End district became vulnerable to small-scale speculation and piecemeal growth. The West End became known as a “zone in transition” or “breakup zone” of mixed uses.<sup>72</sup>

Changes in transportation technologies contributed to the West End's growing heterogeneity. The convenience of the exceedingly popular automobile allowed homeowners to locate further from Portland's center.<sup>73</sup> Longtime residents of the West End continued to migrate to new neighborhoods such as King's Heights along with other affluent Portlanders. In some cases, established Nob Hill residents opted to remain in the neighborhood by moving to one of the many luxury apartments nearby. The upkeep for those glorious mansions had simply proven too much. The elephantine homes continued to be razed to make way for more apartments.

By the mid-1930s, the shine of an address in northwest Portland had substantially dulled. By 1936, the number of families with a northwest address listed in the *Portland Blue Book-Social Register* was only a fraction of what it had been in the past. By the end of the decade, northwest Portland was still an acceptable neighborhood, but it no longer ranked as high as it once did.<sup>74</sup> Its slippage in the ranks was nowhere more reflected than in the loss of its tony name. Instead of the “West End,” the district came to be known by the less distinctive “Northwest neighborhood.”

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<sup>72</sup> City of Portland, “Portland Historical Context Statement (Draft),” 60.

<sup>73</sup> Tess, 4.

<sup>74</sup> NWDA, 24-5.

## E. World War II and the Postwar Era: 1941 – 1998<sup>75</sup>

While faring better than other cities during the Depression, development in Portland was still slow by the end of the 1930s. World War II acted as a wake-up call for the dozing city of Portland. In 1941, military production in the city increased. By 1942, it was fully mobilized. The federal government was soon referring to the transformed city as a “congested war production area.” The “congestion” was primarily attributable to Henry Kaiser, who established a shipbuilding empire during the war.

Kaiser’s empire called for laborers and plenty of them. By 1943, approximately 120,000 people worked in the shipbuilding industry. Local residents worked alongside a growing number of non-native recruits who had traveled from all over the country, enticed by the promise of steady work at the Kaiser shipyards. These migrants caused Portland’s population to jump from 500,000 to 660,000 in the space of only two years.

The influx of people caused a citywide housing shortage. To alleviate demand, the federal government took it upon itself to create emergency war housing. Northwest Portland was marginally affected insofar as one of the federal projects was located in the Guild’s Lake industrial area, former site of the Lewis and Clark Fair. An increase in the conversion of single-family homes to multi-family dwellings impacted the neighborhood more directly. Private owners let out rooms in their homes and subdivided large old houses into small apartments. The rooms and apartments rented rather quickly because of their convenient proximity to the riverfront and the Guild’s Lake area.

The conversions accelerated a neighborhood trend begun during the 1930s. They also alienated longtime residents who had settled in the neighborhood when it was still the “West End” and a solid, single-family residential area. However, as one old-timer recalled, “No one could really complain with a war on.”<sup>76</sup> They just

left quietly; leaving the neighborhood to shipyard workers who rented rooms in the beautiful, old mansions.

During the late 1940s and 1950s, population in the Northwest neighborhood declined steadily. The wartime crowding was limited to just that—wartime. The war’s end brought about a return to normalcy that revived America’s love affair with the automobile and with it, suburbanization. The middle and upper class and families with children left the tired housing stock of the Northwest neighborhood for new, modern suburban housing. As it had promised in the 1920s, the automobile erased any need to settle near the central city.

The departure of many of its longtime residents further eroded the character of the Northwest neighborhood. The district’s age profile became bimodal, with many young adults and senior citizens but few children and few adults between 30 and 60. Average household size dropped below two persons.

The neighborhood’s decline continued into the 1960s. After analyzing housing age, housing condition, and income, the City of Portland’s *Community Renewal Study* classified the Northwest neighborhood as a depressed area in 1967. That classification still applied five years later. In 1972, the Columbia Region Association of Governments (CRAG) examined rent levels, income, crowding, lack of plumbing, numbers of persons living without another family member, and home ownership rates and categorized the Northwest neighborhood as blighted.

Despite the City of Portland’s study and CRAG’s later analysis, the Northwest neighborhood was already experiencing the first stirrings of community revitalization. In 1969, Good Samaritan Hospital and Consolidated Freightways, aided by the Portland Development Commission (PDC), began to plan a multi-block land acquisition and clearance. Federal guidelines required the project to elicit citizen participation. When local activists failed to organize a neighborhood group, PDC gave a helping hand and created the Northwest District Association (NWDA). Well meaning in their intent, PDC and its clients did not receive the results they had

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<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, 26-31.

<sup>76</sup> Mayer, 20.

expected. On May 20, 1969, at a meeting to discuss the proposed project, the hospital and PDC were vilified by 450 angry residents of the Northwest neighborhood. Months later, NWDA separated from PDC. In November and December, NWDA went before the Portland City Council to argue against the city's proposed application for an urban renewal planning grant without a comprehensive plan for the district. Supported by Commissioner Lloyd Anderson, City Council budgeted \$75,000 for a neighborhood plan for the Northwest. The NWDA and its objectives gained credibility through the dedication of staff time and finances to achieve a planning partnership. In the five years that followed their founding, the NWDA produced a formidable resume:

#### 1971

- Created partnership with the Willamette Heights Neighborhood Association to file a suit against the I-505 environmental impact study. Suit blocks construction of a planned I-505 connector that would have divided the neighborhood along Savier Street.

#### 1972

- Completed a preliminary NWDA Comprehensive Policies Plan.

#### 1974

- Approval of the I-505 connector rescinded by the City Council.
- Goals for the neighborhood adopted by the Planning Commission.
- The Office of Neighborhood Associations (ONA) formed by the City of Portland. The City cites its experience with the NWDA as a positive influence on ONA's founding.

#### 1975

- The *Northwest District Policy Plan* approved by City Council. In the beginning, the NWDA's goals were modest—to reserve the blocks west of 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue for housing and to influence the route and design of the I-505 connector. Tighter zoning restrictions allowed them to achieve their first goal,<sup>77</sup> while partnership with another neighborhood association permitted the success of the second.

The NWDA's deft ability to deal with City Hall energized the neighborhood. In the late 1970s, the neighborhood founded locally based community institutions. In 1978, the NWDA listed the First Church of Christ, Scientist in the National Register and renamed it the Northwest Service Center.<sup>78</sup> It was dedicated to a variety of neighborhood and civic groups. A credit union for the neighborhood was also established. The Northwest Neighborhood Credit Union retained residents' savings and made them available for local loans. Neighborhood newspapers were also established. *The Neighbor*, the *Community Press*, and the *Northwest Examiner* all found an eager audience.

Many of the city's political leaders of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s were involved in the formation and activities of the NWDA. Past members have included George Sheldon, NWDA president who presided over a number of city commissions; William Scott, an assistant to Mayor Neil Goldschmidt, school board member, and community leader; J. E. "Bud" Clark, former Portland Mayor; Margaret Strachan, former City Council member; and Vera Katz, present Mayor of the City of Portland.

The social vivification of the 1970s gave way to economic change in the 1980s. Property owners in the Northwest neighborhood had begun the conversion of a number of apartment buildings to condominiums in the late 1970s due to a rising real estate market

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<sup>77</sup> E. Kimbark MacColl, *The Growth of a City: Power and Politics in Portland, Oregon 1915 to 1950* (Portland, OR: Georgian Press, 1979) 78-9.

<sup>78</sup> The building has since been renamed. It is now known as the Northwest Cultural Center.

that threatened the availability of lower rent housing. Two factors in the early 1980s halted that trend: a severe depression statewide and a national wariness towards condominium ownership. The problem renewed itself in the mid- to late 1980s because of a rapidly inflating housing market citywide. The neighborhood continued to lose housing units between 1980 and 1986.

One of the more riotous examples involved the demolition of historic properties on NW Overton and Pettygrove Streets between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Avenues in 1989. Developer Philip J. Morford planned to replace the Victorian homes with upscale rowhouses.<sup>79</sup> Neighborhood residents rallied to save the structures, beginning a “Save the Good Old Houses” campaign.<sup>80</sup> Protesters were unable to stop the demolition of most of the homes, but their efforts did raise awareness of historic preservation issues in the neighborhood. In the early 1990s, the NWDA received grants to update the inventory of historic resources in Northwest Portland, providing foundation for a future project to create a historic district in the neighborhood.

The neighborhood's commercial corridors fared much better than their residential counterparts during the late 1980s. Carefully phased reinvestment revitalized the older streetcar commercial strip of 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Previously a retail district for the Northwest neighborhood, 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue now attracts recreational shoppers from the entire metropolitan area. Its local moniker—“Northwest Trendy-third Avenue”—expresses its success as an avenue of upscale boutiques. Recent development indicates the same “trendiness” also infecting 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue.

The residential sectors of the Northwest neighborhood have benefited from the continued success of commercial businesses in the area. The area's renewed fashionability has facilitated the preservation of older housing stock that has managed to retain its

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<sup>79</sup> Diane Dulken, “NW Portland row house plan draws heavy fire,” *Oregonian* 15 Jan. 1989: C7.

<sup>80</sup> Diane Dulken, “Old Houses tremble despite display of signs,” *Oregonian* 15 May 1989:

single-family status, particularly housing west of 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. However, the same market factors affect the affordability of rental housing in structures built for multi-family occupancy or conversion to multi-family. For example, as the 1990s draw to a close, developers continue to build townhouse units for the upper-middle class market. In some controversial cases, the new construction removed lower cost units in old apartments or subdivided turn-of-the-century houses.

The housing market both mirrors and influences the demographic makeup of the Northwest neighborhood. For instance, between 1980 and 1990, the Northwest neighborhood lost families but gained in population. It has become home to a larger proportion of single, unrelated individuals.<sup>81</sup> That ratio speaks to the bimodal character of the district, with much of the area's population between the ages of 20 and 54.<sup>82</sup>

Other demographic statistics show most housing units in the neighborhood to be renter-occupied.<sup>83</sup> The Northwest neighborhood has less than 15% owner-occupied housing.<sup>84</sup> Incomes tend to be lower than the city as a whole, while educational levels tend to be higher.<sup>85</sup> In 1990, 22% of the neighborhood's residents lived in poverty.<sup>86</sup> Finally, the Northwest neighborhood shows a marked difference from the rest of the city in the transportation choices made by its residents.<sup>87</sup> In 1990, almost 50% of housing units in the Northwest neighborhood did not have vehicles available to its residents. This statistic can be traced to the neighborhood's proximity to downtown Portland and its density, which supports frequent transit service.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> City of Portland, *Demographic Trends of Northwest Portland, 1940-1990: Evidence from U.S. Census Data* (Portland, OR: Bureau of Planning, Aug. 1995) 14.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, 1.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, 24.

<sup>85</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, 26.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, 1.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, 33-4.



## F. Architecture and Development

The architectural significance of the Historic Alphabet District lies primarily in its concentration of multi-family dwellings, many of which were designed by prominent architects in the period between 1903 and 1940. Before 1904, multi-family dwellings such as duplexes, fourplexes, and apartment buildings were virtually nonexistent in Portland. However, the anticipated success of the Lewis and Clark Centennial and American Pacific Exposition and Oriental Fair of 1905 had developers busily preparing for an unprecedented number of visitors to their city. These visitors would need temporary accommodations, so a number of luxury hotels and apartment buildings were built. Many of them were concentrated in northwest Portland because of the area's proximity to the Fair.

The Lewis and Clark Exposition succeeded beyond all expectations. Business leaders described the Fair as a catalyst for Portland's economic boom that began in 1905 and lasted until 1913. In the first decade of the twentieth century, Portland's population more than doubled. This influx of people caused over \$64 million in new housing and neighborhood development to be spent.

Demand was highest for close-in residential housing. This demand could not be satisfied by the conventional, owner-occupied home or the transient, non-family orientation of rooming or boarding houses. The single-family homes that ruled the architectural landscape of the fashionable West End district became neighbors to an increasing number of multi-family dwellings. The West End's location close to the Fair had proven adequate argument for the early siting of apartments and hotels. After the Fair, its proximity to the central business district and transit-supportive environment provided ready justification for the later siting of multi-family residences in the area.

### 1. Form and Style in Multi-family Housing

The Historic Alphabet District today harbors a concentration of various types of multi-family housing. One-story, California-style garden court apartments were sited next to mid-sized, mid-priced apartment buildings such as the Tudor Arms apartments [extant]. Luxury apartment buildings such as the Trinity Place Apartments [extant] were also well represented.<sup>89</sup> The West End came to be known as an area where “the building is most marked” and which was “built up with fine apartment structures.”<sup>90</sup> That description still holds true today, with 333 of the resources in the district constituting 41% of multi-family dwellings.

As noted, most multi-family buildings constructed during the first two decades of the 1900s were of consistently high quality. Ranging in height between one and five stories, the typical building has a conventional U-shaped or H-shaped plan. The wood frame structure is supported by a concrete foundation and has a basement, a rusticated concrete base, and walls faced with brick. Terra cotta, brick, cast stone, and/or cast iron elements were often added to accent the building. Interior features typically include embellishments such as mosaic tile in the vestibule and fine built-in cabinetry in each unit. The American Apartment Building (2093 NW Johnson Street), constructed by the American Realty Company in 1911, provides a good example of a quality multi-family building constructed by a developer. The American Apartment Building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is located in the Historic Alphabet District.

The Tudor Arms (1811 NW Couch Street), constructed in 1915, shares many of the above-mentioned characteristics. Additionally, it is one of a series of stylistically related apartment house projects for the developer Royal Arms Associates. Conventional in plan, it draws its effect from the high contrast between surface materials,

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<sup>89</sup> During the second building boom, more modest residences—typified by the apartment building—varied thematically from their precedents of the first building boom. Instead of expressing an architectural style throughout their building form, these apartment buildings were limited to stylistic facades applied to a basic form.

<sup>90</sup> John M. Tess and Richard E. Ritz, Regent Apartments National Register Nomination, 1990, Sec. 8, p. 3.

with dark red, textured brick accentuating glazed white terra cotta trim elements. At the time the Tudor Arms was constructed the surrounding neighborhood was still an elegant area, with many full-block and double-block sites occupied by single-family houses. The Tudor Arms, with its bold Jacobethan style, was one of many buildings that signified the new era in West End multiple family housing. It is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is located in the Historic Alphabet District.

Apartment building construction accelerated in the next decade. The 1920s construction boom was touted in the 1924 *Portland City Directory*: “The past few years have been busy ones in building new structures in Portland, and the advance in apartment houses and hotels has been especially marked.”<sup>91</sup> In that year, the Commodore Investment Company constructed the Biltmore Apartments (2014 NW Glisan Street). Typical of apartment buildings of the time, the Biltmore is a U-shaped building constructed with concrete exterior walls, which are stuccoed and painted. It is a five-story building, large for its time, with a double-loaded central corridor perpendicular to the street. Designed in the popular Mission style, the Biltmore is distinguished by a Spanish tile cornice, round-arch openings, cast stone and wrought-iron trim, and plaster finishing on the exterior. The building was conveniently located adjacent to the Willamette Heights streetcar line on NW Glisan Street. Also adjacent were the full-block Couch family mansions. In spite of new development, the area retained a quiet and residential character, with many deliveries still made by horse-drawn vehicles.

As the building boom progressed in the 1920s, several architects made their mark in the Historic Alphabet District. Architect Elmer Feig was one of the more prolific apartment house designers of that time. His work provides noteworthy examples of apartment house form and style in that period. Feig explored the apartment design concepts of his time, including use of the front courtyard, garden style, bungalow court, and U-shaped and L-shaped forms. Although his buildings were typical commercial apartments, they were distinguished with exotic appliques and motifs. An example

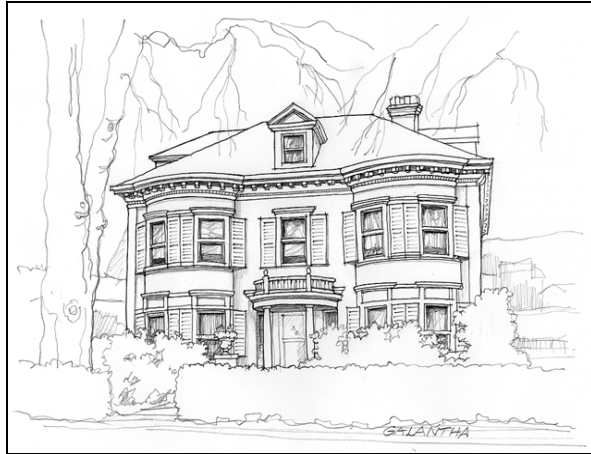
is the Olympic Apartment Building (707 NW 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue), constructed in 1928. The Olympic is a three-story, U-shaped block of flats in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The walls are stucco-clad concrete, embellished with decorative elements evoking the period style. Like many of its contemporaries, the Olympic is finished with materials and fixtures of quality. Slightly later, Feig developed apartment building designs of a larger size. They were typically L-shaped and rose four to six stories. He also experimented with small apartments squeezed onto 50 x 100 parcels, in response to the diminishing availability of building lots.

Following the Depression, developers such as Harry Mittleman expressed renewed confidence in the economy and constructed multiple housing structures such as the Regent Apartments (1975 NW Everett Street). The Regent, completed in 1937, was designed to be the best in town, up-to-date in style and function. It is a five-story masonry building in the Art Deco-inspired Zig Zag Moderne style. Constructed of reinforced concrete and U-shaped, it exhibits a modern emphasis on form. The Regent is set back from the street on a large site and presents a solid façade to the streetscape. Lighting and ventilation are provided to large interior units from a landscaped interior courtyard. Distinguishing characteristics include a multi-colored and textured brick façade, steel sash windows, and chevron-patterned panels at the parapet. The Regent is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is located in the Historic Alphabet District.

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<sup>91</sup> *Polk's Portland City Directory*, (Portland, OR: R. L. Polk & Co., 1924) 10.

## G. The Historic Alphabet District's Architectural Legacy



Ayer-Shea House, Whidden & Lewis design

The Historic Alphabet District is secondarily significant for its collection of resources that represent the work of masters in the field of architecture.<sup>92</sup> The firm of Whidden and Lewis is particularly represented in the district. As

discussed in the National Register nomination for the Isam White residence, Whidden and Lewis' residential work was heavily weighted towards the Colonial Revival style. In fact, the firm's output in the Colonial vein outstripped all the other house styles put together. The firm has been attributed with as many as 31 Colonial Revival designs carried out between 1889 and 1912. Of that number, only 20 to 21 homes remain, with 11 built in 1900 or later.<sup>93</sup> Of the dozen Whidden and Lewis properties found in the Historic Alphabet District, seven were designed in the Colonial Revival style. Three of those seven were constructed before 1900.

Eminent architects designed other single-family homes in the neighborhood. For example, Albert E. Doyle designed the Bingham House, while the esteemed firm of Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge designed the Abbott Mills House, a Portland Historic Landmark.

Unsurprisingly, distinguished architects also designed a great number of the noteworthy apartment buildings that compose the Historic Alphabet District. The most prolific of all was Elmer E. Feig, discussed previously, who designed 21 apartment buildings in the district. A number of better-known architects achieved more modest design figures. For instance, Alexander Charles Ewart designed four apartment buildings in the district, while Carl L. Linde, Ellis Fuller Lawrence, and Harry A. Herzog designed one apartment building each.

Besides residential work, other significant architects engaged in the design of public and social buildings. Temple Beth Israel commissioned Herman Brookman, Morris H. Whitehouse, John V. Bennes, and Harry A. Herzog, while the Cathedral of Immaculate Conception Church employed the firm of Jacobberger and Smith. F. A. Naramore designed the Couch School, while Jamieson Parker supervised the reconstruction of St. Mark's Episcopal Church and Parish. There was clearly an abundance of talented architects able to showcase their work in the prominent Alphabet District.

<sup>92</sup> See Appendix E for a short biography of each architect and a list of their works.

<sup>93</sup> Jinx Faulkner and Lynda Sekora, Isam White National Register Nomination, 1991, Sec. 8, p. 1A.

## H. Summary

The Historic Alphabet District deserves official recognition as a significant area that greatly contributed to Portland's historical and architectural development. Including much of Captain John Heard Couch's additions to the city of Portland, the Historic Alphabet District represents the earliest concentration of executive housing in the city. Many of Portland's captains of industry chose to live in what became the exclusive West End and Nob Hill neighborhood. As such, members of the Couch and Flanders clan as well as other influential Portland families sought to maintain the area as an elite microcosm of the city's sociocultural infrastructure. A number of important local institutions were established in the privileged Alphabet District to provide for the betterment of the health, mind, and spirit of its upper-class citizens. Early institutions like the private Bishop Scott Grammar and Divinity School were replaced by equally exclusive institutions such as the private Couch Schoolhouse and the Trinity Episcopal Church.

The Alphabet District's appeal extended to enfranchised immigrants who had gained sufficient success in the early decades of the twentieth century. Portland's Jewish population, concentrated in the South Portland neighborhood, relocated Temple Beth Israel to the West End district when the original building was destroyed by arson. The relocation signified a triumph for up-and-coming members of the congregation who may have viewed the move as a symbol of their success and belonging in America.

Scandinavian immigrants also relocated many of their community institutions to the West End district during the 'teens. Forced by redevelopment east of 16<sup>th</sup> Street, congregations of the Immanuel Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Swedish Mission Covenant Tabernacle moved or constructed buildings in their adopted neighborhood. However, unlike their Jewish counterparts, these Scandinavian immigrants had not yet reached the same level of social and financial success in their new country. For example, many single women who attended the Tabernacle labored as maids and governesses for their West End employers.

Located a few blocks east of the aristocratic Trinity Episcopal Church, the Tabernacle survives as a physical record of racial and class dynamics in the West End district.

In addition to its sociocultural significance in Portland's history, the Historic Alphabet District also contributes to the city's architectural legacy. The district harbors a great number of Portland's first-class multi-family housing, many of which were built in anticipation of the Lewis and Clark Exposition of 1905. The neighborhood's proximity to both the fair and the central business district made it prime real estate for those wishing to capitalize on the Exposition's success. When the Exposition succeeded beyond all expectations, many of the developers and builders who had constructed first-class residential hotels and high-rent elevator apartments in the West End continued to capitalize on the situation. The Exposition had facilitated a population explosion in Portland that was accompanied by a sharp demand for urban housing. Once again, the West End's proximity to downtown Portland as well as its transit-supportive environment appealed to developers and builders who wished to satisfy market demand. They were also drawn to the neighborhood's fashionability, which lessened the then-suspect desire to occupy multi-family housing.

Market demand, however, could not be wholly sated by the single-family home, the building type that characterized the West End neighborhood at the turn of the century. Other building types had to be introduced to the neighborhood's architectural landscape. The grand mansions of the West End neighborhood were gradually razed to make room for a variety of multi-family housing types. An increasing number of residential hotels and high-rent elevator apartments appeared in the neighborhood. They were soon joined by duplexes and fourplexes.

This concentration of multi-family housing types established a locational precedent for Portland's second great building boom of the 1920s. However, unlike the first boom, the second focused on single-family homes for the developing suburban market; thus, the majority of homes subsequently built were located on Portland's eastside. It should be noted that the American public was

beginning its long love affair with the automobile and living further from downtown was no longer as calamitous as it had once seemed. The second building boom was like the first, though, in its inclusion and siting of multi-family housing in the West End neighborhood. The district's success as an area of multi-family housing during the first boom encouraged developers' and builders' return during the second boom. In the second go-round, though, developers and builders focused on a specific type of multi-family dwelling: the apartment building. As a result, the Historic Alphabet District contains the greatest intact collection of upper class multi-family housing in the city of Portland. In addition, many of those buildings were designed by a number of locally prominent architects who wished to showcase their talents in the city's most fashionable residential district. In fact, many of those same architects did not limit their work to multi-family housing but also found elegant expression in single-family homes commissioned by their wealthy West End clientele.

Finally, the West End's role during both building booms occasioned a pattern of land use development that is unique in Portland's history. The prominence of the West End during both building booms produced a neighborhood with one of the highest population densities in the city. Facilitated by an efficient streetcar system, the West End's commercial corridors flourished alongside increasing neighborhood density. Avenues such as NW 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> contained a mix of both multi-family housing and retail and service businesses—producing a historic streetscape of a type no longer found in the city. The combination of such high population densities and nearby commercial uses appeared in no other Portland neighborhood, both then and now.

In conclusion, the Historic Alphabet District stands as an excellent example of an exclusive community composed of many of Portland's influential leaders during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It also endures as an intact representation of the development of high-quality multi-family housing in the city of Portland, with a number of apartment buildings and residential hotels in the area. Indeed, the Historic Alphabet District is unique in Portland for its concentration of early twentieth century multi-

family structures designed in a variety of architectural styles. Given that context, the Historic Alphabet District clearly reveals itself as an integral component to a study of Portland's history.



# **HISTORIC ALPHABET DISTRICT GUIDELINES**







Wilfred & Gustav Burkhardt Building,  
500-510 NW 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue



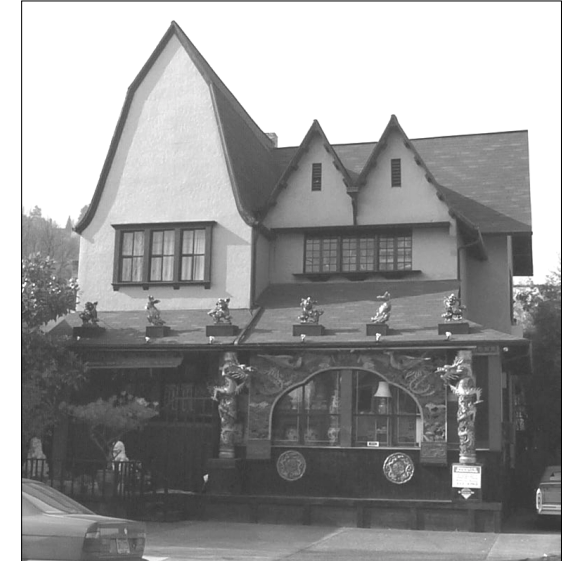
Swedish Tabernacle (Mission Theater),  
1624 NW Glisan St

## Background

The federal age requirement for National Historic Register designations is 50 years. In most eastern cities and states, many buildings and districts have been in place for over 200 years. The desire to preserve changes that occurred to structures over their lifetime is relevant to these eastern landmarks and districts. Different architectural styles and development markets have functioned concurrently over long periods of time to alter existing buildings. These changes can attain a level of historic significance that merits protection. In contrast, buildings and districts in western states have not been subject to significant changes in architectural styles. However, in a relatively short period of time, buildings may be altered from their original state due to changes in local development markets. In the Historic Alphabet District, the oldest structures date back to the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The majority of changes over the intervening years may be characterized as use changes that maintain the original character of the structure rather than architectural changes.

*This guideline may be accomplished in the Historic Alphabet District by:*

**A:** Incorporating exterior design elements that relate to the historical original as well as to alterations that have been thoughtfully integrated with the original structure. Design elements that are most often altered include roof pitches, porch elements, windows, sheathing materials and decorative elements such as gable ornamentation. Alterations to the roof gables, sheathing materials, and roof pitches as well as the use of a distinct color system on the exterior finish help to create a unique identity for this non contributing building within the Historic Alphabet District.



Augustus Oberdorfer House, 725 NW 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

## Historic Alphabet District Guideline 1:

***Historic changes. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance will be preserved.***

*This guideline may be accomplished in the Historic Alphabet District by:*

**B.** Using façade treatments such as porches and windows to unify the adaptive re-use of a former duplex unit. This building has incorporated ground floor and below grade retail and provided access to the upper story offices and residences. The porch unifies the buildings while maintaining historic details such as porch columns.



Annie Eickorn House, 902-910 NW Kearney Street

*This guideline may be accomplished in the Historic Alphabet District by:*

**C.** Extending similar sheathing materials and window styles when a building is adaptively reused. The Munly Buildings were remodeled from residential to retail use. The original façade was altered to increase retail space at the porch entrance and retail use now extends below grade. The use of lap siding and alterations to original bay windows were designed to be compatible with the historic character of the district. The enclosure of part of the building's porch changed the building form while retaining the historic details of the porch columns and moldings. The enclosure is accomplished with large sheet glass that reveals the building's shape prior to the adaptive re-use.



Mary Munly Houses #1 & #2 (l - r),  
720-722 NW 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

*This guideline may be accomplished in the Historic Alphabet District by:*

**D.** Maintaining architectural details or adding new design elements in the process of altering the intended use of the original structure. The ornamentation of the gable ends and dormers as well as the post and baluster detail of the porch were maintained when this multifamily apartment building was converted to condominiums.



George H. William Townhouses, 133 NW 18<sup>th</sup> Ave.



The Campbell Townhouses, 1705 - 1719 NW Irving Street

## Background

Materials used for the original construction of buildings contribute to the character of the Historic Alphabet District. Exterior materials can highlight important architectural elements of a structure. Cornice treatments provide a transition from the structure to the sky, window treatments provide a consistent rhythm to building facades, and brickwork can visually define floor transitions. Historic

materials and their use in the building design constitute a base of reference for historic preservation efforts. As time passes, these materials age and deteriorate. In many cases, replacement is complicated due to difficulties locating historic materials, modern code requirements, and the cost of replacement material. Efforts should be made to preserve historic materials or replace them with high quality facsimiles because of the contributing role construction materials play in the Historic Alphabet District.

## Historic Alphabet District Guideline 2:

***Differentiate new from old. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will retain historic materials that characterize a property to the extent practicable. Replacement materials should be reasonable facsimiles of the historic materials they replace. The design of new construction will be compatible with the historic qualities of the district as identified in the Historic Context Statement.***<sup>94</sup>

<sup>94</sup> The Context Statement for the Historic Alphabet District is presented in Section II of this appendix

*This guideline may be accomplished in the Historic Alphabet District by:*

**A.** Siting additions that follow the form of the existing structure. The rooftop addition on the Victoria Inn uses different construction materials, incorporates a cornice treatment that matches the first floor transition element, and is setback from the plane of the historic walls. The addition echoes the form of the original building, harmonizing the building and the addition, while using setbacks and changes in materials and color to create a clear distinction between the historic fabric and the addition.



Hill Hotel (Victoria Inn),  
2255-2261 W. Burnside Street

*This guideline may be accomplished in the Historic Alphabet District by:*

**B.** Maintaining the original entry proportions and replicating original design elements. This former fire station was redeveloped as a residential building. As part of the adaptive re-use the main entry and garage doors were replaced. Ground floor entry columns were replaced with fiberglass replicas.



Portland Fire Station No. 17, 824 NW 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue

*This guideline may be accomplished in the Historic Alphabet District by:*

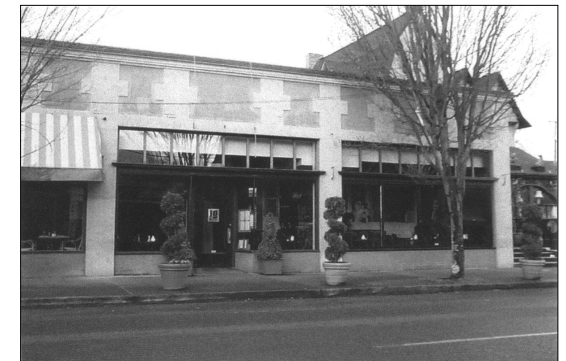
**C.** Altering ground floors while allowing uses permitted by the underlying base zone. The ground floor of the Savoy was altered significantly from the original residential use to storefront commercial. Exterior alterations, such as large bays of ground floor windows were done in a manner that maintained the historic fabric of the building. The storefront spaces facing the sidewalk respect the Savoy's structural system. Steel lintels supporting the upper floors differentiate the ground level adaptive re-use. Window systems and doors in the new commercial spaces employ transoms and clerestory details that relate to nearby contributing commercial buildings.



Interstate Fruit Growers Building (The Savoy),  
2307 NW Hoyt Street

*This guideline may be accomplished in the Historic Alphabet District by:*

**D.** Incorporating historic window elements and unique tile work to storefront façades in a manner that respects the integrity of the district. Clerestory windows are widely used in the Historic Alphabet District and were employed in the remodel of the building. The tile work is an example of a change in historic materials that can add to the character and quality of the building in a manner reminiscent of the district during periods of historic significance.



McGinn Investment Co. Building (Papa Haydn),  
701-717 NW 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue



Couch Family Investment Houses and  
Campbell Townhouse  
1700 Block of NW Irving Street



Looking northeast along NW Irving, between  
NW 19<sup>th</sup> & NW 20<sup>th</sup> Streets

## Background

The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission identified the Historic Alphabet District as a significant City resource. The district contains a diverse set of architectural styles and building types. Contributing single family residences, townhouses, and apartment buildings can be found on many streets in the Historic Alphabet District. Recent changes that have occurred in the form of exterior alterations or new construction have, for the most part, been carried out in a manner that has enhanced the neighborhood's historic character. This can be attributed to the sensitivity of developers and the high level of neighborhood involvement in the growth of the community.

*This guideline may be accomplished in the Historic Alphabet District by:*

**A.** Connecting a new building to existing structures in a historically sensitive fashion. Roof styles, pitches, and other architectural details from the adjacent historic building are incorporated in the design of the new building. The Abbott Hall addition has maintained the building proportions and roof shapes of the MacKenzie House. The addition has also incorporated an arched portal entry that matches the style of some MacKenzie House windows.



## Historic Alphabet District Guideline 3:

***Hierarchy of Compatibility. Exterior alterations and additions will be designed to be compatible primarily with the original resource, secondarily with adjacent properties, and finally, if located within a historic or conservation district, with the rest of the District. Where practical, compatibility will be pursued on all three levels. New development will seek to incorporate design themes characteristic of similar buildings in the Historic Alphabet District.***



Abbott Hall and MacKenzie House,  
NW 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue and NW Hoyt Street

*This guideline may be accomplished in the Historic Alphabet District by:*

**B.** Matching the proportions and incorporating the architectural details of surrounding buildings into the design. The Kearney House fits into the historic context of the area through the use of architectural details found in contributing properties such as roofline treatments.



The Kearney House Apartments,  
824 NW 20<sup>th</sup> Street

*This guideline may be accomplished in the Historic Alphabet District by:*

**C.** Using set backs at the ground floor that key off of the scale of adjacent compatible structures. The Barcelona Apartments has employed a second story setback to differentiate ground floor flexible retail space from upper story residences. The cornice lines and opening proportions relate strongly to the adjacent landmark property.



The Barcelona Apartments, 202-218 NW 20<sup>th</sup> Street

*This guideline may be accomplished in the Historic Alphabet District by:*

**D.** Developing vertical mixed-use buildings that add to the character of the developments along NW 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. The large multi-pane window spans the full length of the ground floor to create an engaging street frontage that corresponds with the eclectic nature of other commercial district buildings. The residential portion of the development is set back from the primary building plane and uses balconies to relate with the street.



L & G Ltd. Partnership Building,  
404-410 NW 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

**Applicability Chart for Projects Located within the Historic Alphabet District**

<b>DESIGN GUIDELINES</b>	<b>PROJECT TYPE</b>	<b>Mixed Use, Commercial Industrial Institutional</b>	<b>Multi-Dwelling</b>	<b>New Single and Attached Dwelling</b>	<b>Residential Exterior Alterations; Single and Attached</b>	<b>Open Space</b>	<b>Signs and Awnings</b>	<b>Storefront Remodel</b>
<b>PORTLAND PERSONALITY</b>								
Community Plan Area Character								
Historic and Conservation Districts*	❖	❖	❖	❖	❖	❖	❖	❖
Gateways	❖	❖				❖		
<b>PEDESTRIAN EMPHASIS</b>								
The Pedestrian Network	❖	❖				❖	❖	❖
Stopping Places	❖	❖						
The Sidewalk - Level of Building	❖	❖						❖
Corner that Build Active Intersections	❖	❖						❖
Light, Wind, Rain	❖	❖						❖
<b>PROJECT DESIGN</b>								
Outdoor Areas	❖	❖	❖					
Main Entrances	❖	❖	❖					❖
Landscape Features	❖	❖	❖			❖		
Parking Areas and Garages	❖	❖	❖					
Crime Prevention	❖	❖	❖			❖		
Architectural Integrity	❖	❖	❖		❖		❖	❖
Blending into the Neighborhood	❖	❖	❖		❖		❖	❖
Interest, Quality and Composition	❖	❖	❖		❖		❖	❖

\* Including the Historic Alphabet District interim design guidelines

**ORDINANCE NUMBER 174327**

\*Adopting interim design guidelines for the Historic Alphabet District Historic Design Zone. (Ordinance)

The City of Portland ordains:

Section 1. The Council finds:

1. Oregon administrative rules require that local governments protect properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Portland complies with these rules by automatically designating as City of Portland historic landmarks and districts. This automatic designation provision is listed in the City's zoning code, Section 33.445.110, Automatic Historic Designation.
2. In compliance with State Land Use Goal 5, the City of Portland requires that guidelines of design acceptability be adopted before a design zone can be activated and before the design review procedure is applicable to development.
3. Portland has requested, and been granted, status as a Certified Local Government (CLG) by the State Historic Preservation Office. The advice of a CLG is sought by the SHPO as part of SHPO's Advisory Committee consideration of a nomination for listing a property, or district, in the National Register of Historic Places. The status of the City as a CLG also requires the City to address the content of the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for during historic design review.
4. Approval criteria for historic design review in National Register Historic Districts, if special design guidelines do not exist at the local level, are the based on U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Design Review. Portland has listed the content of the U.S. Secretary of Interior's Standards in its zoning code, Section 33.846.140 C. Approval criteria for Historic Landmarks, Conservation Landmarks, and Historic Districts without adopted design guidelines. The ten criteria listed in 33.846.140 C. are the designated approval criteria for historic design review in Portland's historic districts for which special district design guidelines have not yet been created. These approval criteria will apply to the proposed Historic Alphabet District should the district be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, unless other design guidelines are adopted specifically for the Historic Alphabet District.
5. The U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Design Review are generalized for all properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places and are applied throughout the United States of America. The standards focus on alteration of landmark structures. As a result, the provisions of 33.846.140 C are of limited value for new construction in National Historic Districts.
6. Portland has adopted guidelines of design acceptability for several historic Districts; these include East Portland/Grand Avenue, 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Skidmore Fountain/Old Town, Yamhill, and Ladd's Addition.
7. The Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places has the authority to designate landmarks or districts as National Landmarks or National Historic Districts. Nominations for listing are forwarded to the Keeper by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) after notice and at least two hearings at the state level. In October of 1999 the SHPO Advisory Committee held their first hearing on the proposed listing of Historic Alphabet District in the National Register. A second hearing is scheduled in May 2000.



8. Oregon law requires local jurisdictions to protect and enhance structures and districts of historical significance. This is accomplished through the creation of local historic design zones with adopted guidelines of design acceptability.
9. Policy 12.7 of Portland's *Comprehensive Plan* is accompanied by **Objective A**, calling for the establishment of design guidelines which ensure the continuation of each design district's desired character, (including historic design districts).
10. The listing of the proposed Historic Alphabet District in the National Register of Historic Places will result in the district's becoming a historic design zone in which alterations to existing buildings and new construction become subject to historic design review.
11. The Northwest District Association (NWDA) and many concerned residents of Northwest Portland have been working for over a decade to develop a nomination for the creation of a historic district within Portland's Northwest District.
12. In the early 1990s the SHPO awarded two grants to NWDA to inventory historic resources. These grants included support for the potential documentation of one or more historic districts within NWDA's boundaries.
13. Policy 12.7 of Portland's Acknowledged Comprehensive Plan calls for establishing design review requirements in those areas which are important to Portland's identity, setting, history and to the enhancement of the City's character.
14. In the fall of 1997, the City of Portland Bureau of Planning received an additional grant from the SHPO to finish and format a proposal for a national historic district within NWDA. City Council authorized application for the grant with passage of Ordinance No. 170988, and authorized acceptance of the grant with passage of Ordinance No. 171763.
15. Bureau of Planning staff and volunteers from the Northwest Community worked throughout 1998 to develop a specific district proposal. Three public workshops were held, for which all affected property owners received notice. This process led to the refinement of the work from the early 90s into the proposed Historic Alphabet District.
16. Several property owners within the boundaries of the proposed Historic Alphabet District perceive the approval criteria contained in 33.846.140 C. as unreasonably vague. They have worked with advocates of the Historic Alphabet District's listing in the National Register of Historic Places to identify an alternative that will allay their concerns.
17. The first of the two required hearings before the SHPO Advisory Committee was held in October 1999. At that hearing opponents and proponents of the Historic Alphabet District's listing in the National Register of Historic Places requested a delay in the second hearing while they sought to reconcile their conflicting views. The second hearing before the SHPO's Advisory Committee was scheduled for February 2000. It was deferred by the SHPO until May 2000.

18. Concern about the uncertainty in the historic design review process was raised by the application of provisions of 33.846.140 C. to recent design review cases in the nearby King's Hill Historic District. The vagueness of the approval criteria listed in 33.846.140 C, as applied to new construction, was recently commented on by the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA). LUBA's decision in LUBA No. 99-105, Goose Hollow Foothills League vs. City of Portland was for one of the historic design review cases that raised concern among some Historic Alphabet District area property owners.
19. In discussing concerns about historic design review, opponents and proponents of the Historic Alphabet District examined design guideline documents in use in different historic districts in Portland. They found the *Community Design Guidelines* to be clear and specific enough to reduce fear of unpredictable consequences of the perceived vague historic design review criteria in 33.846.140 C.
20. Policy 12.7 of Portland's *Comprehensive Plan* is also accompanied by an **Objective C**, which calls for design guidelines to share the public's concern and objectives for the design review process with developers and designers through the use of examples illustrating ways to comply with the guidelines. The approval criteria of 33.846.140 C lack the illustrative examples called for in Objective C. In contrast the *Community Design Guidelines* are fully illustrated with examples of how each guideline may be met, including examples from the Alphabet District.
21. Historic design review in Portland's historic conservation districts uses the applicable design guidelines of the *Community Design Guidelines* as the mandatory approval criteria. The *Community Design Guidelines* were adopted with Ordinance 171589 in September 1997. The *Community Design Guidelines* is a sophisticated document that was created to replace the older *Albina Community Design Guidelines*, adopted in 1993. The City's experience in the application of the *Albina Community Design Guidelines* to development projects between late 1993 and the end of 1995, lead to the development of the *Community Design Guidelines*.
22. A review of the Secretary of Interior's Standards found four guidelines whose content was not covered by the *Community Design Guidelines*. Working with both proponents and opponents of the listing of the Historic Alphabet District in the National Register of Historic Places, three supplemental guidelines were developed, including illustrative examples of projects that meet each of the three guidelines. The fourth topic, not covered in the *Community Design Guidelines* was archeological resources. An interim guideline on archeological resources is not needed in the Historic Alphabet District. The nomination of the historic alphabet district does not include designation on the basis of the presence of archeological resources. This review is included in Attachment A and is provides additional findings supporting the adoption of interim design guidelines for historic design review.
23. Notice of the scheduled Historic Landmarks Commission hearing on interim design guidelines was mailed to all affected property owners, neighborhood and business associations, the SHPO, and interested parties on February 11, 2000. The notice included the scheduled date for the City Council's hearing and deliberations. A reminder notice was sent to recipients of the first notice on March 3, 2000.

24. A report on special district and interim design guidelines for the Historic Alphabet District was developed for consideration by the Historic Landmarks Commission. The report included the three proposed supplemental guidelines and the *Historic Context Statement* for the Alphabet District under consideration by the SHPO Advisory Committee.
25. On February 22, 1999 the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission held a hearing to consider the nomination of the historic Alphabet District for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Commission found that the proposed district met three of the four criteria for listing in the National Register. Meeting any one of the four criteria is the threshold for listing.
26. The three criteria The Historic Alphabet District meets are:
  - A. The Historic Alphabet District is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history **(Criterion A)**; and
  - B. The Historic Alphabet District is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past **(Criterion B)**; and
  - C. The Historic Alphabet District embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction **(Criterion C)**.
27. The Landmarks Commission found that the district did not meet the fourth criteria, or threshold requirement. The Historic Alphabet District has not yielded, nor is it likely to yield information important in prehistory or history **(Criterion D)**. The Nomination of the Historic Alphabet District was based on Criteria A, B, and C only.
28. Archeological resources did not play a role in the nomination process of the proposed Historic Alphabet District. The City's inventory of archeological resources has not identified this area as one of significant potential for archeological finds.
29. The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission recommends that the Portland City Council adopt the *Community Design Guidelines* as the interim design standards for the proposed Historic Alphabet District. The adoption of the *Community Design Guidelines* and the subsequent use of these design standards for historic design review will ensure the preservation of important historic and cultural features in the proposed Historic Alphabet District. Interim design standards will provide clear guidance to property owners as to their responsibilities and opportunities during the design review process. In addition, with interim design guidelines, property owners will be able to identify development opportunities and predict future uses.

The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission recommended to the SHPO that the Historic Alphabet District be nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under all three criteria.

30. Furthermore, the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission recommends the adoption of three additional guidelines in the form of an addendum to the *Community Design Guidelines* as a means to adequately meet the design standards set forth in the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Design Review. Although identified in Section 33.846.140 subsection C of Portland's zoning code, these guidelines require clarification. These are:

**Guideline 1:** Historic changes. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance will be preserved;

**Guideline 2:** Differentiate new from old. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will retain historic materials that characterize a property to the extent practicable. Replacement materials should be reasonable facsimiles of the historic materials they replace. The design of new construction will be compatible with the historic qualities of the district as identified in the Historic Context Statement; and

**Guideline 3:** Hierarchy of Compatibility. Exterior alterations and additions will be designed to be compatible primarily with the original resource, secondarily with adjacent properties, and finally, if located within a historic or conservation district, with the rest of the District. Where practical, compatibility will be pursued on all three levels. New development will seek to incorporate design themes characteristic of similar buildings in the Historic Alphabet District.

31. The Alphabet District possesses an architectural and development history that is unique in Portland. Historic design review will create a standard for development that protects the character of the historic district. The creation of district design guidelines will complement the historic character of the neighborhood when historic and non-historic noncontributing structures apply for design review, ensuring that these structures are compatible with district's historic character.
32. Adopting interim design guidelines for the Historic Alphabet District will significantly increase support for the district's creation.
33. The proposed *Interim Design Guidelines* for the Historic Alphabet District are the unanimous recommendation of the Historical Landmarks Commission for their use in conducting design review procedures in the Historic Alphabet Historic Design Zone.
34. Former opponents of listing the Historic Alphabet District in the National Register of Historic Places, want assurance that the enactment of interim design guidelines will occur at least 30 days before the SHPO's second hearing on the Historic Alphabet District. The second hearing is scheduled in early May 2000. The Historic Landmarks Commission and City Council approval of the interim design guidelines by early April will allow these former opponents to support the district creation.
35. It is in the public interest, and critical to the successful implementation of the Historic Alphabet District's historic design zone, that historic design review be guided by the procedures and guidelines contained within the *Community Design Guidelines* as augmented by three supplemental guidelines, that collectively ensures compliance with the U.S. Secretary of Interior's Standards.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Council directs:

Section 1:

- a. Portland's *Community Design Guidelines*, as adopted by Ordinance No. 171589, are hereby adopted as the interim design guidelines for historic design review in the proposed Historic Alphabet District;
- b. The *Community Design Guidelines* are to be supplemented with three additional guidelines (Historic Alphabet District Special Addendum Guidelines) to ensure that the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Design Review are met. These supplemental guidelines are listed in Attachment A, *Commission Report on Interim Design Guidelines for the Proposed Alphabet District as proposed by The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission*;
- c. The Historic Alphabet District Context Statement listed in Attachment A, *Commission Report on Interim Design Guidelines for the Proposed Alphabet District as proposed by The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission*; are hereby adopted as the document that will be used to guide interpretation and application of the interim design guidelines during the design review process in the Historic Alphabet District.
- d. The Portland Bureau of Planning will develop special design guidelines tailored specifically for the Historic Alphabet District that will supersede adopted interim measures, as resources are available. It is desirable that the special district design guidelines for the Historic Alphabet District be developed and adopted within the FY 00-01 and FY 01-02 budget cycle.
- e. The Historical Landmarks Commission and the City Council on appeal, shall conduct design review in the Historic Alphabet District using the *Community Design Guidelines* supplemented by the three additional guidelines listed in Attachment A. These interim guidelines of design acceptability will be used until superseded by permanent special district design guidelines developed and adopted for the Historic Alphabet District.
- f. The Background and Findings presented in Attachment A, *Commission Report on Interim Design Guidelines for the Proposed Alphabet District as proposed by The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission*, are hereby adopted as additional findings supporting the adoption of interim design guidelines for the Historic Alphabet District.
- g. The review body conducting design review is authorized to waive individual guidelines for specific projects, based on their finding that such waiver will better accomplish the *Comprehensive Plan's* Urban Design Goal policies and objectives.
- h. The review body may also address aspects of a project's design, which are not covered in the guidelines, where the review body finds that such action is necessary to better accomplish the *Comprehensive Plan's* Urban Design Goal policies and objectives.
- i. The Historical Landmarks Commission may modify, delete, or add to these design guidelines where such a change will aid in the accomplishment of the *Comprehensive Plan's* Urban Design Goal policies and objectives; provided, however, that the specific modification, addition, or deletion may not take effect until approved by the Portland City Council.

Section 2. The Council declares that an emergency exists because provision of certainty about the use of interim design guidelines in the Historic Alphabet District will provide the assurance needed for those who have opposed the district's creation to support the district's creation at the SHPO Advisory Committee this coming May. These interim design guidelines will take full force and effect when, and if, the Historic Alphabet District is listed in the National Register of Historic places.

Passed by the Council,  
Mayor Vera Katz  
M. Harrison  
April 28, 1994

By

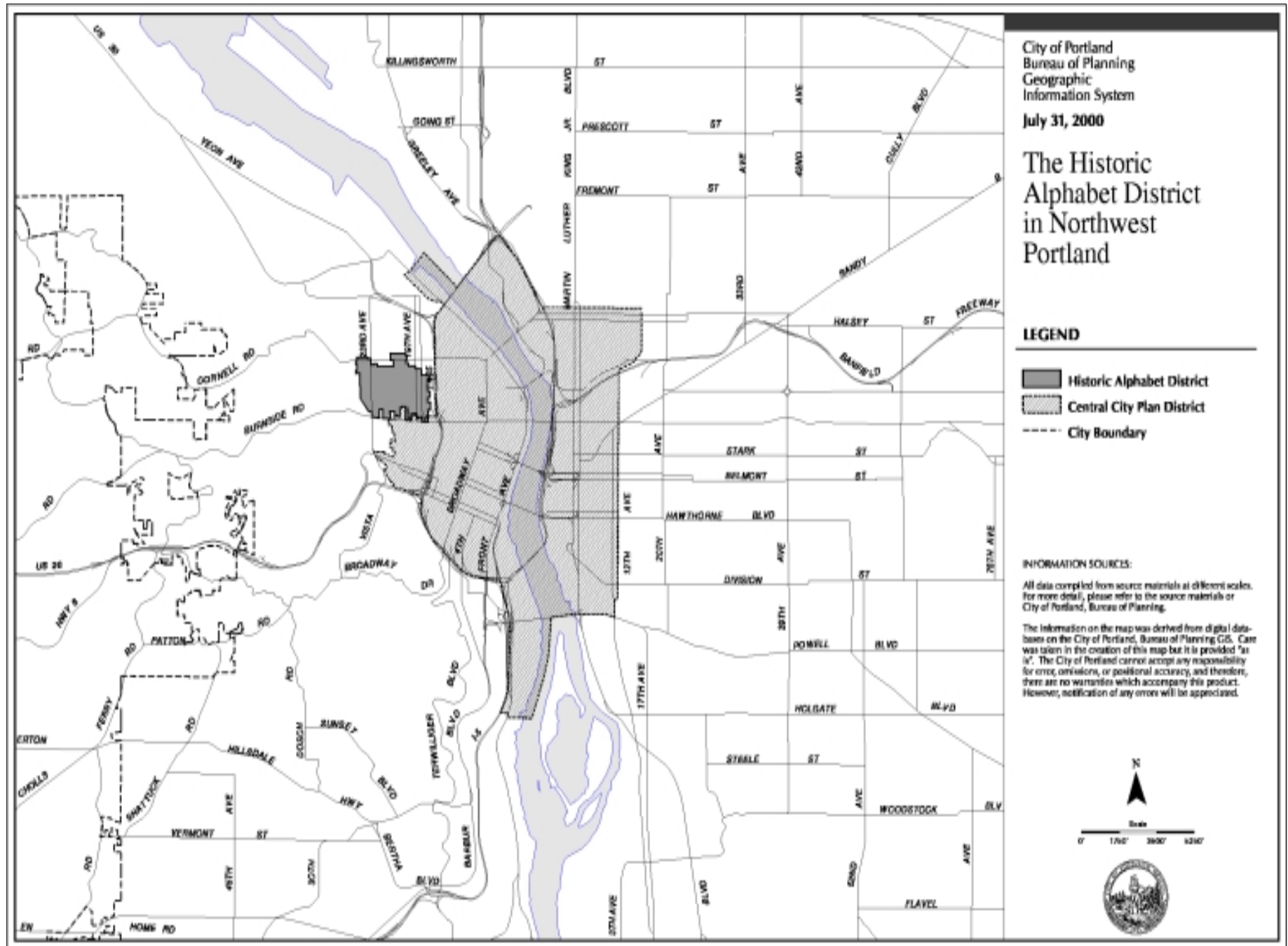
Gary Blackmer  
Auditor of the City of Portland

Deputy

**APPENDIX A:**  
**GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF THE HISTORIC ALPHABET DISTRICT**









**APPENDIX B:**  
**PORTLAND ZONING CODE SECTION 33.846.140 (C)**



### **33.846.140 Historic Design Review**

The approval criteria for historic design review are:

- A. Historic District approval criteria. In a Historic District with adopted design guidelines, proposals will be approved if the applicable design guidelines are met. In a district where the City has not adopted design guidelines, the approval criteria are listed in Subsection C., below.
- B. Conservation District approval criteria. In Conservation Districts, proposals are evaluated using the district's adopted design guidelines.
- C. Approval criteria for Historic Landmarks, Conservation Landmarks, and Historic Districts without adopted design guidelines. The approval criteria for Historic Landmarks, Conservation Landmarks, and proposals in a Historic District that does not have adopted design guidelines are:
  - 1. Historic character. The historic character of the property will be retained and preserved. Removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that contribute to the property's historic significance will be avoided;
  - 2. Record of its time. The historic resource will remain a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historic development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings will be avoided;
  - 3. Historic changes. Most properties change over time, those changes that have acquired historic significance will be preserved;
  - 4. Historic features. Generally, deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where practical, in materials. Replacement of missing features must be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence;
  - 5. Historic materials. Historic materials will be protected. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials will not be used;
  - 6. Archaeological resources. Significant archaeological resources affected by a proposal will be protected and preserved to the extent practical. When such resources are disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken;
  - 7. Differentiate new from old. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials that characterize a property. New work will be differentiated from the old;
  - 8. Architectural compatibility. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will be compatible with the resource's massing, size, scale and architectural features. When retro-fitting buildings or sites to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities, design solutions will not compromise the architectural integrity of the historic resource;
  - 9. Preserve the form and integrity of historic resources. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic resource and its environment would be unimpaired; and
  - 10. Hierarchy of compatibility. Exterior alterations and additions will be designed to be compatible primarily with the original resource, secondarily with adjacent properties, and finally, if located within a Historic or Conservation district, with the rest of the district. Where practical, compatibility will be pursued on all three levels.



**APPENDIX C:**  
**HISTORIC ALPHABET DISTRICT CONTEXT STATEMENT REFERENCES**





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