ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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For questions or more information visit their respective websites at:
http://www.preservationalliance.com/
www.dahp.wa.gov
www.commerce.wa.gov
http://www.tacomaculture.org/historic/home.asp

You can also find online versions of the documents at:

Edited and compiled for Historic Tacoma
By Lauren Perez, 2011 Historic Tacoma Intern
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INTRODUCTION

Historic Tacoma is pleased to present the **Historic Preservation Resource Guide**. The Resource Guide was originally compiled by the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, and, with their permission, we have modified it to meet our local needs.

We are dedicated to preserving Tacoma's architectural legacy through education and advocacy. Our mission is to promote, conserve and enhance Tacoma's architectural character. Stemming from this mission, the Resource Guide provides information about resources available to community leaders who want to incorporate historic preservation into their efforts to protect, strengthen, and improve our neighborhoods.

It is our hope that this compilation of information and materials will serve as a useful reference tool to Tacoma’s leaders.

Sincerely,

Historic Tacoma
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CHAPTER ONE: HISTORIC PRESERVATION BASICS

Why Preserve?
The following text is excerpted from an adaptation of a speech given in San Antonio, Texas in September, 1990 by Dwight Young, director of Planned Giving for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and published as part of National Trust for Historic Preservation Information, Number 48, 1991. Excerpt copyright © 1995, National Trust for Historic Preservation; reprinted with permission:

The word makes me a little uneasy sometimes. "Preservation" has become such a buzz-word that I'm afraid we've forgotten that it describes a simple activity that all of us engage in every day and for some very simple reasons. Now when you strip away all the rhetoric, that's all "preservation" really is: just having the good sense to hang on to something because it's good to look at, because it works, because it links us with a past that we need to remember. That's what we preservationists are all about. It's our job. It's a big job, because what we seek to preserve is more than a single building; it's whole communities. And it's a tough job, too, particularly for those of us who come from communities that are not like Nantucket or Charleston or Boston or San Francisco. The fact is many of us come from places that most people have never heard of. And another fact is those "ordinary" places are eminently worth preserving.

My reason for saying that so confidently has much to do with the nature of history. We make a grave mistake, I believe, when we equate history with fact, for they really are two very different things. When it comes to history, the facts really don't speak for themselves; rather, the historian makes them speak, just as a violinist determines what sounds will come out of his instrument. History is an interpretation of the past. It is a reflective, evaluative, and largely subjective statement about the meaning of the past. Historians who persist in thinking that they are merely reporting the past as it really was, therefore, fail to understand what they are about.

Recently we have begun to realize that our interpretation of the past has some major gaps in it. It focuses on politics and war, the cataclysmic and the unique, and pays scant attention to the broad and ordinary flow of commonplace human experience. As an illustration of this tendency, think about what you know about ancient Rome: I'm willing to bet that it has mostly to do with the intrigues of the Caesars, the long wars all over the Empire, the spectacles in the Colosseum.

Now carry that image forward. If a student far in the future wanted to know about life in our own time, think what a skewed vision he would get if the only history available to him dealt exclusively with Margaret Thatcher and Madonna, bloody civil strife in South Africa and the birth of the first test-tube baby. While those may have been important people and events in the grand scheme of things, I think you'll agree with me that our lives, yours and mine, have proceeded along other, quieter paths and were only slightly affected by those Big Names and Big Deals. And it is just these quieter paths, these places where you and I live and work, these aspects of our lives that affect us most deeply and every day, which are conspicuously absent in most History as we are taught it. Our hometowns, the places that no one has ever heard of, are
worth saving because they are exceptions to the general tendency to overlook or ignore the overwhelming importance of the ordinary in history.

This quote from the nineteenth-century English artist and critic John Ruskin says it best: "Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts, the book of their deeds, the book of their words, and the book of their art. Not one of these books can be understood unless we read the two others, but of the three, the only trustworthy one is the last."

WHAT'S THE TRUTH ABOUT PRESERVATION?

There are a lot of "facts" around about what preservation is and does. Unfortunately, some information is more accurate than others. The following list considers seven of the most common misperceptions:

• Preservation is only for high-style buildings associated with famous dead rich people.
• Preservation is too expensive.
• If my house is listed on a historic register or located in a historic district, I lose all my property rights to the government.
• If a place is listed on an historic register, it's safe from demolition.
• Preservation is bad for business.
• Old buildings aren't safe.
• Preservation only cares about the past.

Myth: Preservation is only for high-style buildings associated with famous dead rich people.

Reality: Preservation actually involves every aspect of America's past. Preservation cares about the homes of the rich and the poor, industrial sites and downtown commercial districts, schools and colleges, religious sites and governmental buildings, parks and other places for recreation, rural landscapes and structures --just about any place that helps tell America's story.

Myth: Preservation is too expensive.

Reality: Good preservation does have costs -- but not preserving costs even more. Demolition has significant expenses: workers who tear down a historic place and carry away the debris must be paid, ugly landfills must be provided to receive construction materials. Additional costs appear if a "replacement" goes in an undeveloped area, since building on open spaces requires creating and maintaining services like roads and sewers. Recent projects prove that preservation is often cheaper. In Chicago, where the public school system is now spending $2.5 billion to upgrade facilities, bare-bones new construction is costing $155 per square foot -- but renovation is costing just $130.

Destroying our past has costs that extend far beyond money. Lost is the work of talented craftsmen who created beautiful, lasting buildings. Lost are the memories and pride that a
community took in one of its landmarks. And lost is the opportunity for future generations to enjoy and to learn from the places that help us understand and appreciate where we came from.

**Myth: If my house is listed on a historic register or located in a historic district, I lose all my property rights to the government.**

Reality: There are many variations on this theme:

- I won't be able to change anything about my house, such as paint color or landscaping or plumbing, without the approval of the "history police."
- I have to open my house for tours.
- I won't be able to sell my house.

None of those statements is true. No one from the local, state, or federal government, for example, is going to block the installation of a dishwasher or hot-water heater. Historic review boards may evaluate major projects, but these locally-chosen boards also give homeowners the opportunity to present their case for making changes. Though many people choose to open their homes to once-a-year neighborhood tours, no one has to give the public access. And it's becoming increasingly clear that being part of a historic district may actually improve property values, since potential buyers know that their community will escape the kind of every-man-for-himself development that ultimately leaves everyone poorer.

**Myth: If a place is listed on an historic register, it's safe from demolition.**

Reality: Unfortunately, buildings that are important enough to have made a local, state, or national register can still be torn down. Listing in the National Register of Historic Places, for example, does provide some protection, since a project built with federal money -- like a highway -- must consider its impact on historic resources, but even then, historic resources can be damaged or destroyed if there is no "feasible" alternative. Because legal protection is limited, it's vital for communities to fight for their historic places. Few new projects -- roads, offices, stores -- have to be built in a specific place in a particular way. Citizens can make sure that their elected officials understand the need to protect the historic places, and find ways to combine the best of the old and the new.

**Myth: Preservation is bad for business.**

Reality: Preservation is actually a good business -- and a big one. A recent travel industry survey found that more than 40% of Americans made visiting a historic place -- a building, battlefield or historic community -- part of their vacations, and that these people spent nearly 40% more than the typical traveler. Communities participating in the National Trust's Main Street program, which revitalizes traditional commercial districts, have generated more than $16 billion in private and public investment since 1980. Preservation is also better business than new construction. A study shows that $1,000,000 spent on rehabilitation will create more jobs and keep more money in the local economy than the same $1,000,000 spent on new construction.
Myth: Old buildings aren't safe.

Reality: It's not the age of buildings that makes them safe from forces like fire and earthquakes and hurricanes -- it's how they're built. Recent disasters have shown that older, carefully constructed buildings may stand up as well as new construction. In 1992's Hurricane Andrew, for example, it was new, cheaply built structures that suffered the most damage. What's equally important is that old buildings can be adapted to include new safety features. Historic schools and office buildings can be retrofitted with modern fire-suppression systems and seismic reinforcement. In the early 1990s, Stanford University showed how modern techniques could preserve and strengthen buildings that had been damaged by an earlier earthquake. Nor does preservation increase the danger from hazards like asbestos and lead paint. If an older building includes either of those materials, they have to be abated whether the structure is demolished or rehabilitated, and often preservation creates less danger because it does not expose the hazards to the air.

Myth: Preservation only cares about the past.

Reality: Preservation does care about the past. It cares about honoring the thoughts, actions and history of previous generations- presented in the places they built, lived in, worked in, and maintained. But preservation also cares about the present and the future. By protecting our past, it helps us remember how we came to be where we are and what we ought to do now. And it cares about giving future generations the same opportunities to enjoy beautiful buildings and landscapes that we have today.

WHO BENEFITS FROM PRESERVATION -- AND HOW?

Preservation can help anyone in any place. It benefits young and old, urban and rural areas, residential neighborhoods and commercial districts. Preservation's advantages range so widely that it's impossible to list them all. But there are at least three that show up again and again.

Appearance
A flat-faced modern office block or an elegantly detailed pre-war commercial building? A strip mall fronted by a parking lot or a pedestrian-friendly retail district? A McMansion with a huge garage or a Victorian with a wraparound porch? Comparisons like these illustrate one of preservation's most obvious advantages: it creates more attractive places to live and work. The style and variety of historic places make communities much better to look at, as the examples below show:

Economics
Preservation isn't something smart people do when they can afford it -- it's something they know that they can't afford not to do. The examples below highlight what studies have consistently shown: protecting and reusing historic places makes good financial sense. When replacement costs of a building with historic character are accounted for, the costs associated with demolition, safe removal and transport of waste, and the manufacture and transport of new materials and building of new construction far outweigh the value of preserving historic buildings.
**History and Culture**

Historic places tell a community where it came from -- what previous generations achieved, what they believed, what they hoped to be. By protecting these places, preservation also helps present and future generations understand the community values applied by past generations to the challenges and opportunities of their times, since it saves valuable resources and recalls a community's goals and dreams.

**WHAT DOES "HISTORIC" MEAN, ANYWAY?**

Let's face it: The label "historic" gets applied to so many different kinds of places—from ancient ruins and Gothic cathedrals to World War II battlefields and Art Deco skyscrapers—that it's sometimes hard to figure out exactly what it means. What is it that makes a place "historic"? And who decides what's "historic" and what isn't? Clearly, it's a complicated issue—but there's a fairly simple way to approach it: Instead of asking, "Is this building historic?", it may make more sense to ask, "Is this building worth saving?" When you strip away all the jargon and rhetoric, historic preservation is simply having the good sense to hang on to something—an older building or neighborhood or a piece of landscape, for instance—because it's important to us as individuals and/or as a nation.

This importance may derive from any of several factors. Some older buildings are important simply because they're good to look at. As one author put it, they are "a gift to the street" whose style, textures, materials and charm (and maybe even eccentricity) enrich and enliven their surroundings. These buildings are worth saving because our communities would be less interesting, less attractive, without them. Others are worth saving because they have plenty of good use left in them. Innovative examples of what's called "adaptive reuse" can be found everywhere. Factories have been turned into convention centers, train stations reborn as restaurants, mills converted into shopping centers, office buildings transformed into apartments, and on and on. This process is good for the environment: Think of it as the Ultimate Recycling. It can be good for the pocketbook too, since reusing an old building means avoiding the expense of demolition and saving materials and craftsmanship that are costly (or even impossible) to replace today.

Finally, some places are worth saving because they link us with our past and help us understand who we are. Places like Gettysburg, the Alamo, Ellis Island, and Independence Hall tell America's story, and we'd never allow them to be destroyed. But places that tell your story are worth saving too: the house where your grandparents lived, the schools you attended, the movie theatre where you had your first date, the church where you were married. That's what historic preservation is really all about. It's about hanging on to what's important.