

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 4 1986

date entered

MAY 8 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic N/A

and/or common South J Street Historic District

2. Location

street & number 708, 710, 712, 714, 716, 718, 720, 722 South J Street not for publication

city, town Tacoma vicinity of

state WA code 053 county Pierce code 053

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple ownership (see continuation sheet)

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Pierce County Assessor's Office

street & number Room 142, Pierce County Annex Building
2401 South 35th Street

city, town Tacoma, state WA 98419

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Tacoma Cultural Resources Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980-1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

city, town Olympia state WA

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The South J Street Historic District is composed of eight late-Victorian detached row houses. These narrow, two-story frame structures were erected in 1889 and 1890 and display a variety of exterior cladding materials and decoration. The houses are very similar in appearance, utilizing only two slightly different designs in a vernacular Queen Anne Style. The repeated bays and gables of these homes create a distinctly rhythmic pattern that is uninterrupted by intrusions or disturbed by loss of integrity.

The area surrounding the South J Street Historic District is primarily residential in character, and includes structures ranging in age from the late-nineteenth century through the 1970's. The South J Street row houses and a pair of Queen Anne style duplexes on 9th Street are probably the oldest buildings in the immediate neighborhood. Most nearby houses date from the first two decades of this century. American Four-Square or Classic-Box designs predominate, although some Craftsman style homes are also evident. Several turn-of-the-century apartment houses can also be found in the blocks around the South J Street row.

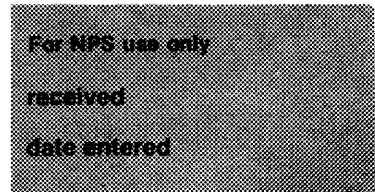
The houses included in this nomination are located on the west side of the 700 block of South J Street. Single lots at either end of the row are vacant, and three houses of later vintage are situated at the north end of the block, two of them facing onto 7th Street. The row houses are set back from the front property lines, and sited on a low bank a few feet above street grade. Each house has concrete stairs set into the slope, and some of the front yards include small concrete retaining walls. No original landscape plantings around the houses have survived. The detached row houses are separated by narrow walkways (less than 6 feet) between each building, and all of them have back yards that extend to the garages located off the alley.

Five of the houses (708, 710, 712, 720, 722) share identical plans and elevations. The three other houses (714, 716 and 718) are also identical and differ from the first group in relatively minor ways. The shape of the projecting window bays and the intersecting roof lines behind them are the most noticeable differences between the two models.

The group of five houses are distinguished by projecting two-story rectangular windows bays. The gable above this bay is perpendicular to the ridgeline of the roof it intersects. The other group of three homes features a polygonal three-sided window bay with a gable roof which projects from the larger gable end of the main roof. All of the houses rest on later concrete foundations and display an irregular plan, although the narrow lots dictated that the buildings be largely rectangular in shape. The typical side-hall plan determines the placement of the entry to the side of the projecting bay, where a small porch becomes another ornamented element. Exterior wall surfaces are sheathed in drop (novelty) wood siding with V-joints. However, imbricated shingle work gives variety to certain areas, including the gable ends and a wide horizontal band between the first and second stories. The shingle patterns are deliberately varied from house to house. This is often the only material difference between houses of the same plan. Another variation is created by reversing the plans. For example, one house will have the porch on the right side of the front elevation, while its neighbor will present a mirror image with the porch on the left.

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4. Owners of Property

- 708 South J Street: Charles G. Hammer
6229 126th Avenue NE
Kirkland, WA 98033
- 710 South J Street: Gary and June Bryan
45 Oriole Lane
Lake Oswego, OR 97034
- 712 South J Street and
714 South J Street: Herbert C. Tisdale
4008 South Pine Street
Tacoma, WA 98409
- 716 South J Street: Sheldon S. Frankel
1605 Division Avenue
Tacoma, WA 98403
- 718 South J Street: Thomas R. Park
718 South J Street
Tacoma, WA 98405
- 720 South J Street: Werner Oquist
720 South J Street
Tacoma, WA 98405
- 722 South J Street: Robert J. Trail
101 East Road North
Tacoma, WA 98406

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Each house in the row includes a very shallow, rectangular oriel window that always projects from the side elevation nearest the bay window. These oriels are covered with gable roofs and supported by several small brackets. Finally, all of the homes in the row display a picturesque roof silhouette of multiple gables. The original wood shingle roofing has been replaced in all cases by asphalt shingles.

The five homes with rectangular window bays feature porches with squared posts that have been chamfered and chiseled with simple rectilinear designs. The porches have dentilated cornices and transverse gable roofs. Simple trim work on these homes includes cornerboards and stick-work patterns on the front bays. The various gables have simple bargeboards that are decorated with applied square blocks. Simply carved rafter tails are exposed except for plain fascia boards attached at the ends. The rooflines of these homes are more complicated than the other model and are enlivened with several offset gables and gablets.

The homes with polygonal window bays have porches with turned posts. The porch roof actually engages one side of the bay. Each side of the bay features a single double-hung window, although the pane in the center of the first floor bay is fixed. Above this fixed window there was originally a simple stained glass transom. However, only 714 preserves this element. Incised window surrounds, paneled aprons, and decorative moldings provide surface variety for this group of houses. Above the window bays, the projecting gable end is supported on large, paired curved brackets that are ornamented with an applied bulls-eye. This gable end also features a small attic window flanked by decorative wooden trim. The roof is detailed with a molded, boxed cornice.

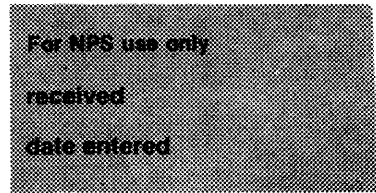
The interiors of all of the houses exhibit the same general plan, although slight alterations to wall arrangements have created variations. A parlor (with fireplace), dining room and kitchen generally comprise the first floor, with several bedrooms on the second floor. The interiors were very simply finished, and included: lath and plaster walls, molded baseboards, window and door trim with bulls-eye corner blocks, metal light fixtures, paneled doors, and a staircase with turned balusters and carved and turned newels.

Originally, the homes had small barns or sheds located at the rear property line. These auxiliary buildings have all been replaced over time, and the present structures are garages and storage buildings mostly dating to approximately 1920.

The historic integrity of the eight row houses is remarkably intact. However, minor alterations have occurred over time. Most of the corbelled chimney caps and fireplace mantels have been removed. Notable technological advances have precipitated kitchen and bathroom remodelings, which is true of most buildings of a similar age. At least half of the original front doors have been replaced at various times, and 720 and 722 incorporate porch posts that replaced the originals in the early twentieth century. The house at 722 experienced some interior readjustments when it was converted to a duplex. A recent renovation of 708 resulted in the replacement of plaster walls with gypsum board, which required the

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removal of much of the interior trim. The rear elevations of several of the houses have undergone incremental changes, including the addition of small ells and porches. The house at 708 was the most dramatically impacted when a modest one-and-one-half story, gable roofed unit was added to the rear of the home shortly after it was completed.

District Boundaries

Within the boundaries established for this district are the original lots for the eight row houses that survive on the 700 block of South J Street. One of the original houses -- 724 South J Street, at the corner of 8th -- was destroyed many years ago, and its now vacant lot is not included in this nomination. None of the buildings in the immediate vicinity of the nominated properties shares the row houses' distinctive design elements, and most date from more recent periods of development. The eight nominated homes form a single unit that is unique in the City of Tacoma.

Contributing and Noncontributing Buildings

Contributing:

Houses at 708, 710, 712, 714, 716, 718, 720, and 722 J Street (Total:8)

Noncontributing: Garages/sheds at the rear of 710, 712, 714, 716, 718, 720, and 722 J Street (Total:7)

For discussion, see Item 8, page 3

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1889, 1890 **Builder/Architect** Builder: Washington Building Association of Tacoma
 (Period of significance: 1889-1890) Architects: Proctor and Dennis

The South J Street Historic District is an architecturally significant complex of Queen Anne style row houses. The eight buildings of this district form the largest group of row houses of this period, quality and style remaining in Washington State. Three of the houses were designed by Proctor and Dennis, a prominent architectural firm in Tacoma. All of the houses were erected by a local building and loan association, which attempted to finance homes for the middle and working classes. The South J Street row houses have maintained their historic integrity, and they remain an important legacy of one of the most prosperous and expansive periods in Tacoma's history.

Six of the South J Street row houses (Nos. 708 through 718) were constructed in 1889, and the remaining two houses were probably finished early in 1890. The area surrounding the row houses was experiencing rapid growth during this period, although the pattern of development was irregular and resulted in a number of vacant lots and blocks. The year 1889 actually proved to be one of the most dramatic in the city's history. In 1887, the Northern Pacific Railroad had finally reached Tacoma, its western terminus, and the city was transformed into the quintessential "boom" town. Population increased by 300 percent between 1887 and 1890, and many believed that the town would become the major economic power in Washington. Boosters anointed Tacoma the "City of Destiny," and predicted that it would become the Pittsburgh or New York of the West.

With such a dramatic influx of settlers, real estate naturally became one of the city's greatest preoccupations. Hunt reports that "man's natural land hunger had been converted by wonderful profit-taking into a speculative mania. The real estate movement that had begun in 1887 and had become tempestuous in 1888, had by the middle of 1889 become a fury." (Tacoma, Its History and Its Builders, vol. 1, p. 497.) The value of new construction in 1889 rose 50 percent over the previous year. The development of streetcars also added to the growth of new neighborhoods. Prior to the development of public transit, workers of necessity lived within walking distance of their places of employment. Streetcars allowed the middle and working classes to move away from the central city into exclusively residential subdivisions. Horse-drawn streetcars were introduced to Tacoma in 1888, and twenty-five miles of electric trolley lines were in operation by 1890. Service was available near the South J Street row houses on K Street and 6th Avenue. Fire insurance maps of the late nineteenth century indicate that there were many other housing projects similar to the South J Street row houses in size or density. However, alterations or demolitions have significantly impacted the historic integrity of most of them.

The Washington Building Association of Tacoma (WBAT) financed the South J Street row houses and also acted as the contractor for construction. The WBAT, a building and loan association, was founded in early 1889. These building and loan associations were cooperative enterprises similar to British building societies. Working or middle class wage earners would purchase "shares" in the association and pay a fixed monthly installment. The money collected was then given to selected members to

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Tacoma, North, WA

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	0	5	4	1	5	7	0	5	2	3	3	5	4	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

B

1	0	5	4	1	5	8	0	5	2	3	3	4	9	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

C

1	0	5	4	1	6	3	0	5	2	3	3	5	6	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

D

1	0	5	4	1	6	2	0	5	2	3	3	5	0	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

E

Zone	Easting		Northing											

F

Zone	Easting		Northing											

G

Zone	Easting		Northing											

H

Zone	Easting		Northing											

Verbal boundary description and justification

New Tacoma Plat and Baker's Addition to New Tacoma, Block 720, lots 4-11.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N.A. code county code

state N.A. code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mark L. Brack

Community Development Department

organization City of Tacoma date August 1985

(206)

street & number 747 Market Street, Suite 1036 telephone 591-5200

city or town Tacoma state WA 98402

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature]

title DEHPO date 3.24.86

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register

date 5/8/86

for [Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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cover the mortgage for a row house. Members were chosen by lottery or money was "auctioned" to that individual willing to pay the most interest. Since bank loans for houses were subject to a high interest rate and complete repayment was expected within a very short period, these cooperatives enabled workers to obtain reasonable loans and to purchase homes for the first time. A building and loan association would sometimes buy larger parcels of land, as in the case of South J Street, and would presumably obtain building materials at favorable prices by purchasing them in quantity, further reducing the cost of the home. These cooperatives were quite successful in the nineteenth century, and thousands of them were in operation across the country by the 1890's.

The directors of the Washington Building Association were undoubtedly far more economically secure than the members. George E. Atkinson, O. B. Hayden, Horatio Clement, and John Brockenborough were leaders of the community and prominent in such businesses as real estate, insurance and building supplies. Whether philanthropy or self-interest was the predominant motivation of these men is impossible to determine. It is obvious that the building trades benefited by constructing these modest homes, and money that might have gone to personal or luxury items was instead invested in a home. A contemporary wrote that building and loan associations were "playing a growingly important part in the building up of the city, and the development of thrift and providence among wage earners... But even more important than their mere material achievements for the city and their members individually, has been their social and moral value... The building society is above all things to be commended as a conservator of the home and family institutions that underlie all our greatness and power." (Linn, p. 184.) The South J Street district remains a fine example of an innovative social and financial endeavor that brought quality housing to the lower middle class.

Architecturally, the buildings are very interesting for their application of late Victorian stylistic motifs to relatively modest homes. Unlike period mansions, which featured a plethora of ornamental millwork applied to forms of dazzling complexity, the row houses rely on simple trim or shinglework arranged in an artful manner, which gives the building the appearance of being highly ornamented. This can be observed in the gables, where the patterns created by the applied trim are reminiscent of the Stick Style. However, other elements place these homes firmly within the Queen Anne idiom. The various cladding materials, particular decorative details, irregularity of plan, oriels and complex roof forms all reflect the influence of this style. Similar two-story Queen Anne homes can be found throughout the city; however, they are invariably interspersed with structures of other styles or periods and they never reveal the uniformity of appearance found at South J Street.

Four other homes in Tacoma are identical to Nos. 714, 716 and 718 on South J Street. These buildings (509 and 513 North E Street; and 1218 and 1220 North I Street) were also constructed by the WBAT and designed by the same architects. Like the South J Street group, these houses are very well preserved, but they are located in more architecturally mixed blocks. (The homes on North I Street are within the Stadium-Seminary Historic District, National Register, 1977.) Unfortunately, many other homes, which may have had a similar genesis, have been altered beyond recognition. The consistency, materials, scale, rhythm, and density of these eight

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narrow homes is similar to that found in some of the nineteenth century districts in San Francisco. However, their distinctly urban character and well-preserved appearance are not typical of Tacoma. The South J Street row houses present an image of late-nineteenth century life unlike any other in the State.

Architects

Research has not uncovered the architect(s) for the five rectangular-bay row houses. It is possible that the entire row was designed by one firm; however, it is known that the WBAT did employ more than one firm for their other projects. Proctor and Dennis have been identified as the architects of 714, 716 and 718 South J Street (polygonal-bay group) by virtue of being identical to houses designed by them on South E Street and North I Street. Proctor and Dennis were in partnership between 1889 and 1892. During this time they designed a number of buildings, including: Nelson Bennett's Queen Anne style mansion, the addition to Stanford White's Tacoma Hotel (1891), the enormous Western Washington Industrial Trade Exposition Building (1891), and the Richardsonian Pierce County Court House (1892-3). Unfortunately, all of these buildings have been demolished.

The brief partnership of Proctor and Dennis was reportedly prosperous, and C. A. Darmer remembers them as being among the most prominent designers of the period. Before the end of the century, Dennis moved to California and entered into a partnership with Farwell. Proctor remained in Tacoma and worked as a carpenter during the depression following the Panic of 1893. When favorable economic conditions returned, he resumed his architectural practice and eventually became State Architect. Proctor died in 1925. His home on Proctor Avenue is one of the few standing buildings that has been identified as his design.

Buildings Contributing to the Significance of the District

The only structures considered as contributing elements of this nomination are the eight row houses. The garages and sheds located behind Nos. 710 through 722 were all constructed at a later time, and they do not share the significant architectural and historical qualities of the row houses.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Tacoma Daily Ledger. January 1, 1890, p. 10; March 7, 1893, p. 8; March 10, 1893, p. 2; October 2, 1904, p. 17; February 19, 1905, p. 15; December 26, 1909, p. 26.

Tacoma News Tribune. February 9, 1925, pp. 1, 9; May 23, 1976.

Spike's Illustrated Description of Tacoma. Tacoma: W. D. L. Spike and Company, 1891.

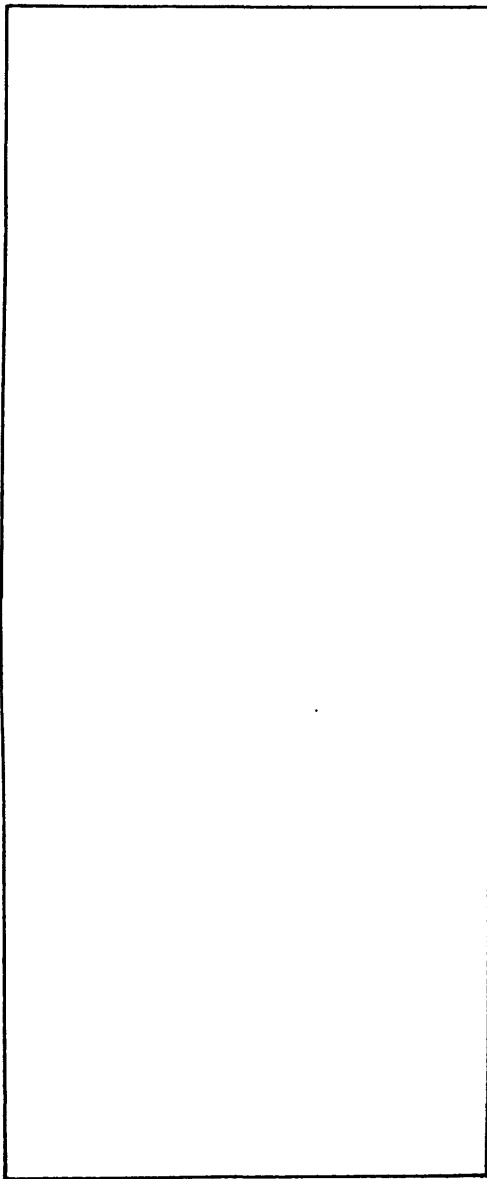
Wright, Gwendolyn, Building the Dream, a Social History of Housing in America. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981.

Historic photographs: The Barnes Collection, AC-62589, at the University of Washington, Northwest Collection; the Bolland Collection, B5341, at the Tacoma Public Library, Northwest Room.



SOUTH 7th STREET

SOUTH K STREET





SOUTH J STREET

SOUTH 8th STREET

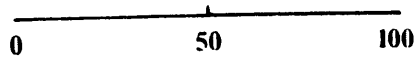
SOUTH J STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT
Tacoma, Washington

KEY

--- district boundaries
 contributing buildings

 noncontributing garages and sheds

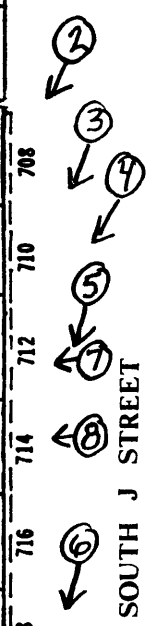
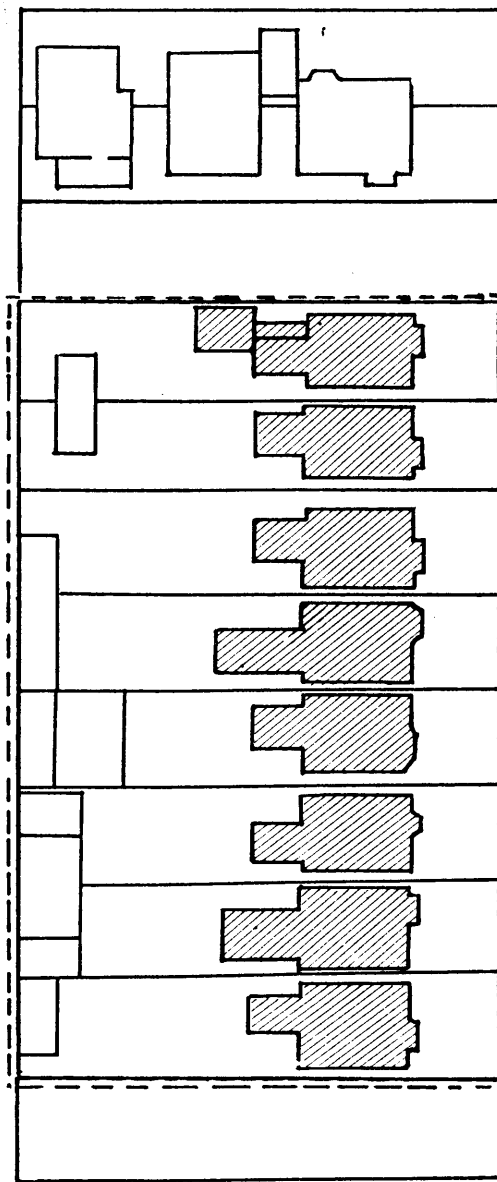
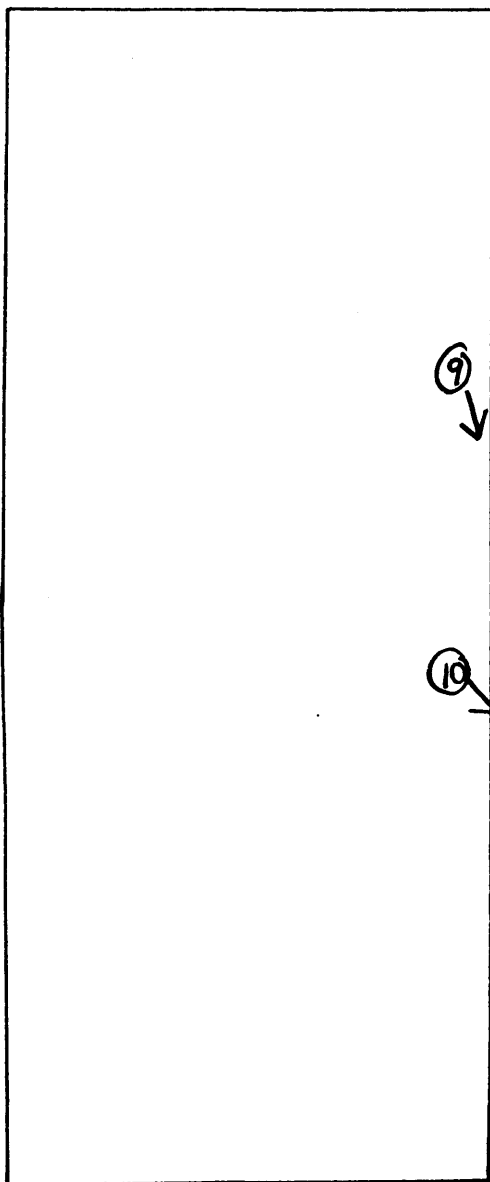
Scale of Feet





SOUTH 7th STREET

SOUTH K STREET



708
710
712
714
716
718
720
722



SOUTH J STREET

SOUTH 8th STREET



SOUTH J STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT Tacoma, Washington

KEY

- district boundaries
-  contributing buildings
-  noncontributing garages and sheds



Scale of Feet

