

## **VIII. Historic Preservation Element**

Shelton's identity is reflected, in part, in and by its buildings and places. As evidence of the past, the historic buildings, markers, and sites in Shelton are irreplaceable. To ensure that guardianship continues into future generations, Shelton's rich historical heritage should be recognized and protected.

Several factors have contributed to Shelton's present appearance. One was the decision made by the Simpson Logging (Timber) Company in the early years of the twentieth century to move its operational headquarters to Shelton. Under the leadership of Mark E. Reed, members of this firm helped to develop the town into a community for both themselves and their employees. This was especially the case following the creation of the Reed, McCleary and Rainier (Rayonier) mills in the 1920's.

For Mark E. Reed, the role as town builder manifested itself in donations for a hospital and high school, as well as through his services as mayor and Washington State legislator. Here his successful efforts in the 1920's to have the Olympic Highway pass through Shelton contributed to the addition of a new commercial area along First Street. This is not to suggest that others did not make significant contributions to the historical significance of Shelton, but only that in terms of the physical development of the town, Simpson Timber Company's role is of major importance.

A second factor involves the fires that destroyed the wood frame storefronts in the commercial area. These occurred in 1907 (Webb Hotel) and 1914, when most of the commercial area along Railroad Avenue and South Second Street was lost. The replacement of these wood structures with brick ultimately inspired the replacement of others, as well as the construction of new buildings of brick. This re-development, beginning in 1907 and continuing into the 1920's and 1930's, corresponds in time to the introduction of the automobile and street paving. The end result is commercial streetscapes, in strong contrast to the original wood frame "pioneer" buildings. These are the most distinctive features of the twentieth century small town.

A third factor relates to the residential response to Shelton's economic growth. Beyond the town's central core, platted sections were developed into farms or house lots with subsistence gardens. As Shelton grew, however, the farms were divided and sold for new residences. This process continued into the World War II era and it may be possible to date the evolution of housing by the choice of vernacular designs chosen by the builders. Even with this infill, Shelton's gracious lot size has resulted in a spacious ambiance even more pronounced than in most Western cities

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where detached housing is the norm. However, recent growth pressures have created non-compatible construction in Shelton's historic neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Shelton is one of the few "timber" towns to retain one of its mills on the fringe of its downtown. In 2015, Simpson Timber Company entered an agreement with Sierra Pacific Industries to purchase the Oakland Bay Waterfront Industrial site, and to construct a new mill on the site. For decades this site was home to the Simpson Mill and their tenant, Olympic Panel Products, which sold its assets and in 2016 is moving to a new facility in Springfield, Oregon. This investment by Sierra Pacific Industries will ensure the timber and logging industry has a base in Shelton for the foreseeable future.

Many of Shelton's citizens are aware of and wish to preserve Shelton's history and historic resources which include buildings, districts, objects, sites, and structures. In a survey distributed in the spring of 1992, respondents said, among things, that our historic origins set Shelton apart from other towns our size in Washington, and when asked "What three things or places you hope never change in Shelton?", landmarks and historic buildings ranked highly.

## **Current Historic Preservation Efforts**

In December 1992, the City of Shelton adopted a Historic Preservation Ordinance which formed the Shelton Historic Preservation Board (SHPB) and enabled the City to become a Certified Local Government (CLG). A CLG, among other benefits, allows the City to be eligible for Grant funds from the State and Federal Government for historic preservation activities. The CLG Program is administered by the Director of Community and Economic Development. The City has been successful in obtaining grants to help fund several preservation activities, including four inventories (Downtown, Downtown vicinity, Angleside Addition, and Hillcrest neighborhood), interpretive signage, development of design guidelines for local landmarks, and creation of a walking tour map. The City also recently established two historic districts; the North Sheltonville Historic Neighborhood and Local Historic District and the Simpson-Reed Local Historic District.

The Historic Preservation Board reviews and provides recommendations for applications of property placement on the National and Shelton Historic Registers, and provides design review services for properties on the local register and within local historic districts. In addition to reviewing applications, the SHPB has been instrumental in developing design guidelines, providing educational opportunities to the public, developing the foundation material for creating historic districts, and providing an historic preservation prospective for other city projects, such as participating on the Downtown Street Task Force and the Sign Committee. Since the formation of the SHPB, there have been 23 properties added to the Shelton Historic Register and two properties added to the National Register of Historic Places.

## **The Future of Historic Preservation in Shelton**

The high level of public interest in historic preservation in Shelton over the past few years provides an indication that Shelton's historic resources are sure to play an important role in defining the Shelton of the future. Additional publicity, public education, and the addition of properties to the local historic register will continue to aid in Shelton's development. For example, the SHPB engages community members each year to work on and complete a preservation project in the City of Shelton. The City also participates annually in National Historic Preservation Week. The SHPB has also developed an incentive program for properties listed on the Shelton Historic Register. Each building on the local register receives a plaque with the date of the building and acknowledgment of inclusion in the Shelton Historic Register.

As new development and expansion take place, careful identification, restoration, and preservation of Shelton's historic resources are essential to maintaining Shelton's identity. Careful application of goals, policies, and development standards that respect historical resources and support by the City Commissioners will ensure that Shelton's past plays a part in the future.

## **Historic Preservation Goals and Policies**

**HP1. Preserve, maintain, and use historic attributes of Shelton and encourage new development that will enhance and reinforce the historic community identity that will improve the City's aesthetics and economic vitality.**

HP 1a. The City should encourage and promote preservation, restoration, renovation, and official recognition of Shelton's historic resources.

HP 1b. The City should encourage new businesses to locate in the historic downtown.

HP 1c. The City should assist, encourage, and provide incentives for downtown businesses to restore the historic character of their buildings wherever appropriate.

HP 1d. The City should strive to preserve, protect, and enhance Shelton's historic character.

- The City should consider, when appropriate, imposing historic overlay zones in the zoning code that would require design review for construction within the overlay zone similar to the recently adopted North Sheltonville Historic Neighborhood and the Simpson-Reed Local Historic District.
- Gateway corridors are currently designated on US 101 from the north to the Wallace Kneeland interchange and on State Route 3 where it enters the City

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at both the north and south ends. The City should work with the Port of Shelton and the Washington State Department of Transportation to develop design guidelines for the gateway corridors.

- Encourage ongoing maintenance of historic resources to conserve the original components of the resources.

HP 1e. Inventories of neighborhoods and other areas of Shelton should be conducted regularly to identify potential historic districts or properties that are eligible for the national and/or local historic registers.

HP 1f. Formally acknowledge known sites of cultural and/or archaeological significance and work to protect and acknowledge new sites as they become known.

HP 1g. The City should support the formation of potential historic districts by encouraging property owner participation.

HP 1h. Historic markers should continue to be placed on properties on the local historic register. As districts are designated, markers should be placed at the main entrances of the districts.

HP 1i. The City should maintain its Certified Local Government Status to be eligible for federal and state grant funds, to participate in regional training, and to participate in the national register process.

HP 1j. The Historic Preservation Board should continue to update its design guidelines for future preservation and renovation efforts and for the design of new buildings, but should allow for innovative strategies.

HP 1k. The City shall continue efforts to obtain grant funding for historic preservation projects.

**HP2. Develop support for the preservation of significant historic resources and foster civic and neighborhood pride through educational programs.**

HP2a. The Historic Preservation Board should participate in the development of educational programs for the local schools' local history curriculum.

HP2b. The Historic Preservation Board should participate in local historic events and provide educational information.

HP2c. The Historic Preservation Board should develop and sponsor practical workshops for maintenance and renovation of historic properties.