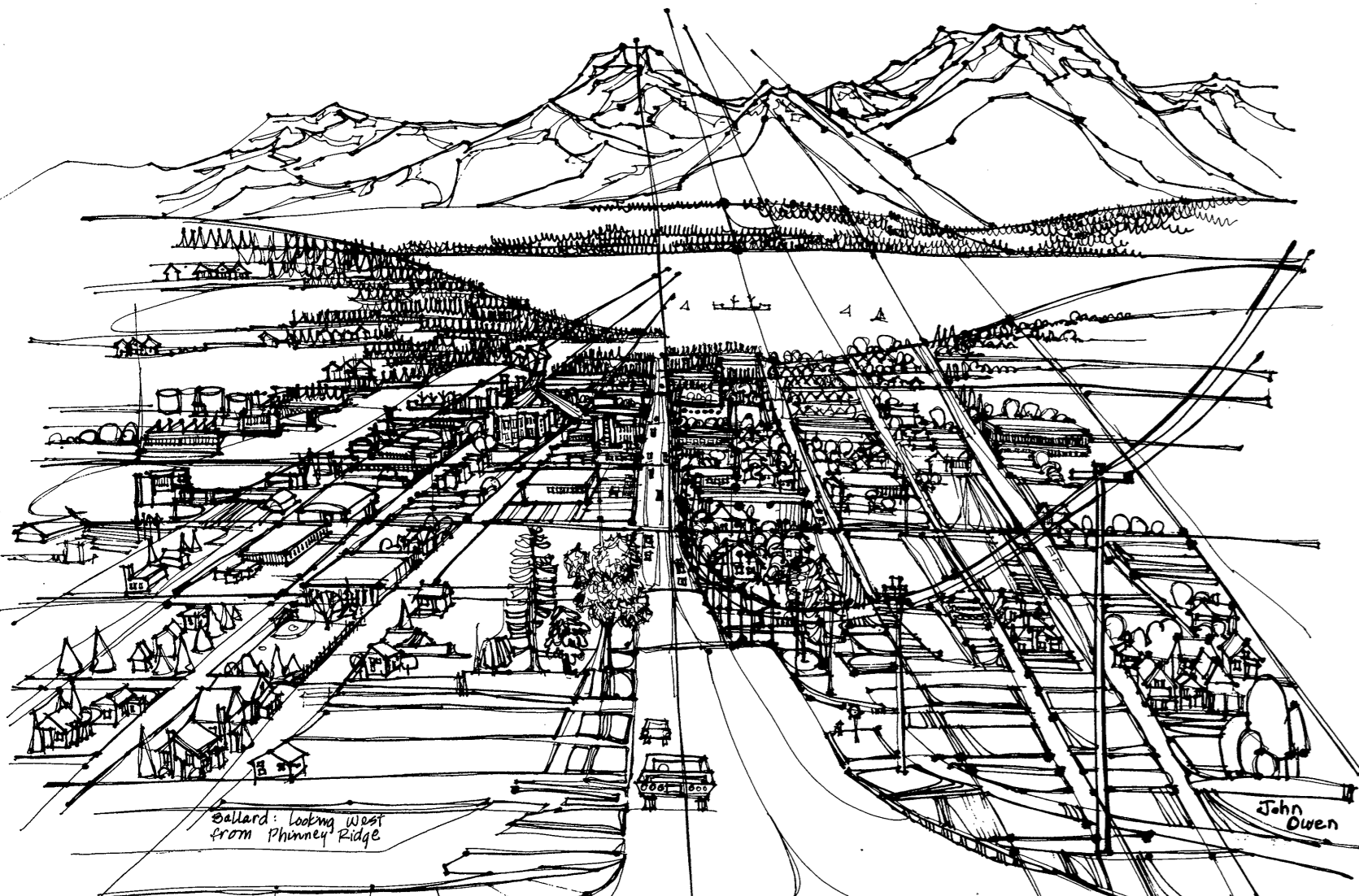


BALLARD

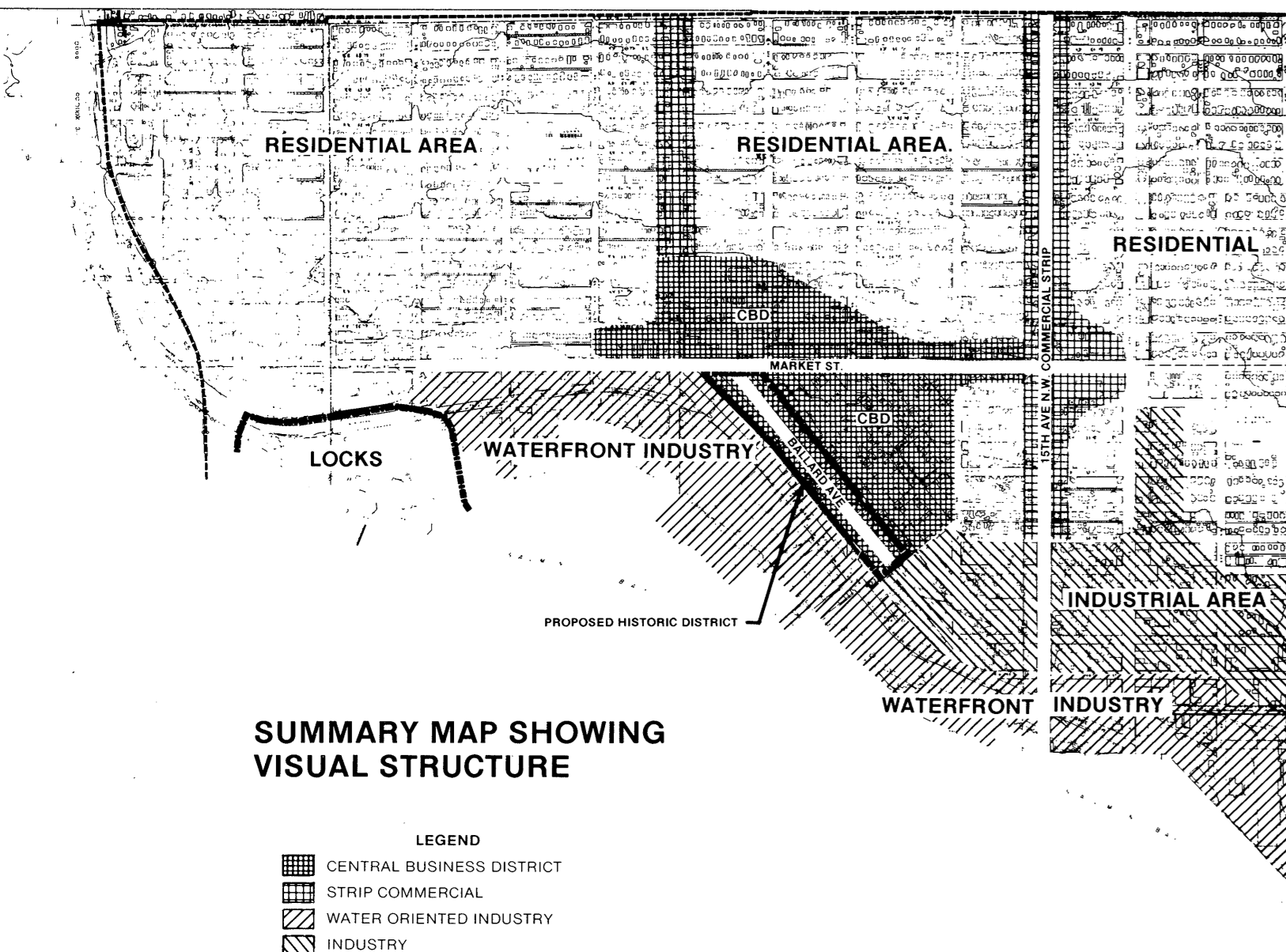
AN INVENTORY OF BUILDINGS
AND URBAN DESIGN RESOURCES

COMMENCED IN 1975



HISTORIC SEATTLE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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SUMMARY MAP SHOWING
VISUAL STRUCTURE

LEGEND
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
STRIP COMMERCIAL
WATER ORIENTED INDUSTRY
INDUSTRY

HISTORY

The town of Ballard began in 1887. In that year Captain William Ballard, with his partners Thomas Burke, John Leary and Boyd Tallman, platted 720 acres on the north shore of Salmon Bay. The 10-acre sites sold for \$50 through the West Coast Improvement Company. The location was perfect for residential and commercial development, and Farmdale Homestead (Ballard's original name) grew rapidly. Captain Ballard persuaded the Stimson Mill to relocate from the Mid-West to the shoreline of Salmon Bay. Stimson had set his sights on the North-west because of its abundance of wood available for mill work so he could not pass up the Ballard offer. The introduction of the mill into the area was a boon to the real estate sales for Captain Ballard was now able to offer employment with property sales. Other mills located near Stimson creating an even higher rate of employment. When downtown Seattle was partially leveled by fire in 1889, most buildings were rebuilt in permanent materials such as brick and stone. However, wooden window framings, paneling and other wooden products were supplied by the Farmdale mills. Farmdale's population was again increased by the influx of Seattlites seeking work in the lumber mills. Thus, the mill town was well on its way to becoming the "Shingle Capital of the World"; a title Ballard later claimed.

The West Coast and North End Railway Company connected the newly named and incorporated town of Ballard with Seattle in 1890. By 1904 Ballard had a population of 10,000 and it was the seventh largest town in Washington by 1907. The town was unable to keep up with the growth. It faced all the problems connected with rapid growth including an inadequate water supply which eventually became the turning point in Ballard's fight to remain independent from Seattle. After finding a dead horse in their reservoir, Ballardites voted to annex to Seattle in 1907. Today, Ballard still has much of the feeling of an independent community.

Thomas Mercer, the first settler of Queen Anne Hill, had an idea in the late 1880's that Lake Union should be con-

nected to Puget Sound. By 1909 Seattlites were anxiously awaiting the Federal Government's decision regarding funding the construction of the Lake Washington Ship Canal and the Government Locks which would complete Mercer's dream. The Government decided affirmatively, and on July 4, 1917, the flagship "Roosevelt" of Admiral Peary's expedition to the North Pole led a marine parade through the new locks for the official opening ceremonies. The locks greatly increased Ballard's industrial and recreational opportunities. They also helped promote the new recreational industry of pleasure boating. Seattle has long been called the "Boating Capital of the World" and Ballard has played a large part in this achievement. In 1958, the Shilshole Bay breakwater was constructed providing a protected harbor for the city's largest marina.

Ballard has never forgotten its humble beginnings as a fishing village. When the locks were completed, the backwater of Salmon Bay became a perfect freshwater home for the fishing fleet which moors at Fisherman's Terminal. The Chittenden Locks were named after Hiram Chittenden, General in charge of the Army Corps of Engineers responsible for the construction of the locks. From the point of their completion to the present, the park surrounding the locks has been developed into a gem of an arboretum through the efforts of Mr. Carl English. The gardens, now called the Carl English Memorial Gardens, take full advantage of the moderate micro-climate available for growing subtropical plant material. Golden Gardens, one of Seattle's largest water oriented parks, is also located in Ballard on Puget Sound. Besides its long beach, this park also offers opportunities for scenic drives through forest like areas.

Many of the early settlers of Ballard were Scandinavians and this group has continued to give Ballard a unique flavor different from other areas. Plans are currently being made to bolster Ballard's independent flavor by restoring Ballard's old commercial street, Market Street Northwest, to reflect the community heritage.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Though the independent town of Ballard has been incorporated by Seattle it retains much of its identity and many small town qualities. This is partly due to the wide range of activities and land uses found as a result of its development history. Like any self sufficient town, Ballard includes residential and commercial areas, and a significant industrial area which gives this neighborhood a diverse cultural, environmental, and economic base.

Ballard is unique in having building types ranging from the late 19th Century to the present within a relatively small commercial area. Fortunately, they are clustered in different geographic sectors of the commercial core i.e. Ballard Avenue, Market Street, and 15th Avenue. Each area has a continuity of building types representative of its development period, giving the sector identity and character.

The unassuming nature of the residential areas is partly due to the gently sloping topographic shelf that gives little contrast and variety to the typical developer houses of various growth periods. This is reinforced by the general lack of street trees and major open spaces. Above all, the anonymity of Ballard is a reflection of the needs and values of the early settlers. The building groups are of the more humble and less expensive variety with little extravagance in architectural detail.

Newer multi-family apartments which are replacing the older housing stock exemplify buildings emphasizing maintenance and building economy, however, the appearance of the general streetscape is becoming stark and somewhat forbidding in its lack of significant landscaping and open space amenities. School playfields and park facilities provide a pleasant contrast where trees are planted along the streets and vegetation generally prevails. The Gilman Playground has provided the "adventure play" opportunity, an idea which originated in Scandinavian countries, and has become a community focal point.

House types in Ballard range from the early pioneer farmhouses, to the post war ranch houses. One can also find many examples of middle class Victorian houses, turn of

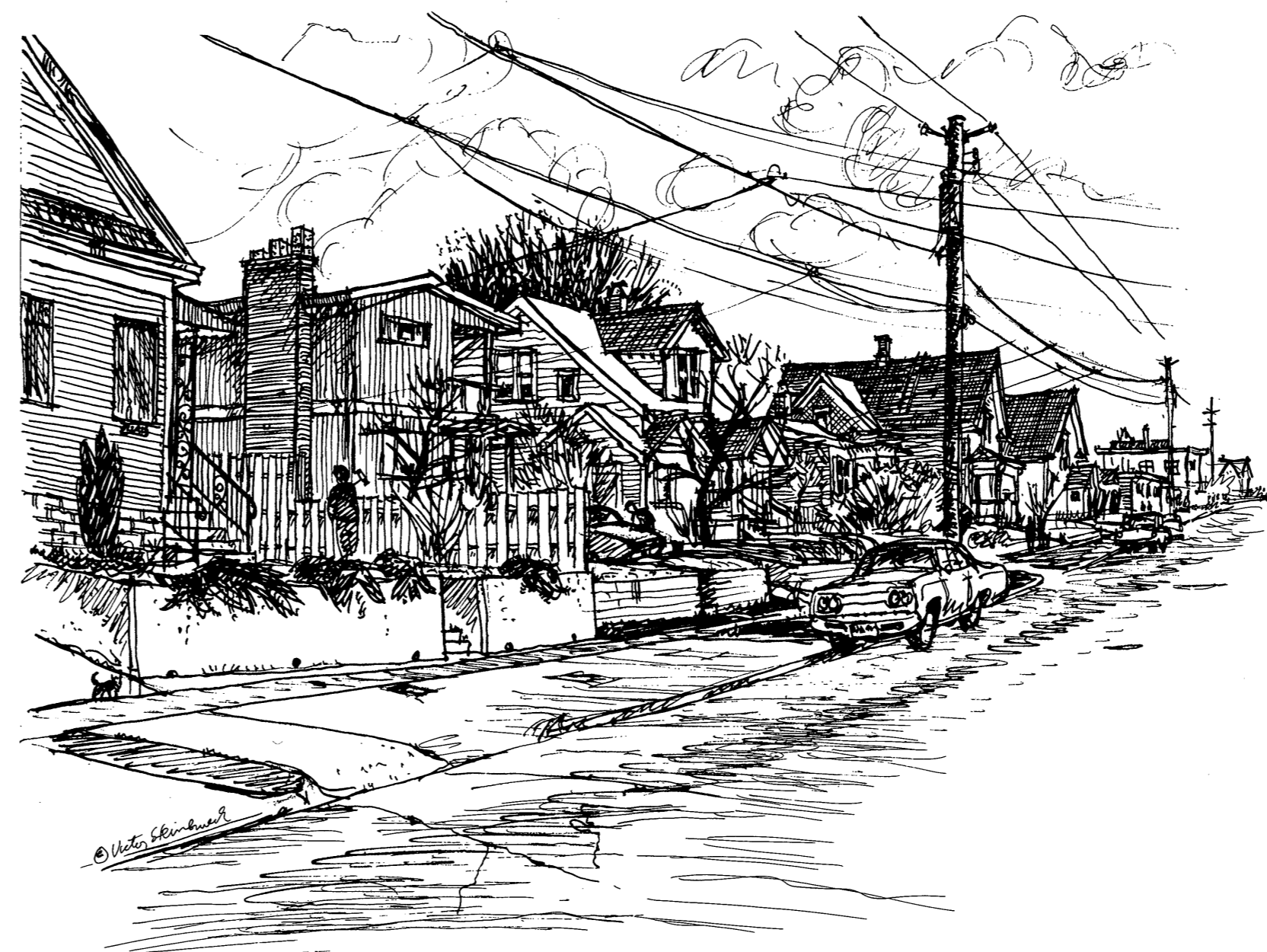
the century company cottages, bungalows, 1920's colonial cottages and post war speculative builder's houses. Often houses of the same type or period are clustered in a group, giving the streetscape an architectural continuity. Although few large apartments have been built, duplexes and triplexes are beginning to intrude into the residential areas, usually near major arterials.

Ballard contains three primary commercial areas: Market Street, Ballard Avenue and 15th Avenue. Market Street forms the spine of the Ballard community, featuring many retail shops, banks, the old and new fire stations and other central neighborhood facilities. The streets immediately north of Market Street are also lined with banks, supermarkets and professional offices.

Running parallel to the waterfront just south of Market Street, Ballard Avenue is the "Heart of Old Ballard" where many of the turn-of-the-century brick buildings are being renovated to house shops, offices, restaurants, and small workshops. Portions of Ballard Avenue have been recently nominated for an Historic Review District which would set guidelines for preserving and reusing existing buildings and street elements. If present remodeling efforts are consistent with the buildings' original character, activities, and surroundings, then Ballard Avenue will regain much of its unique quality as an older commercial street.

Market Street and Ballard Avenue form the core of Ballard's "downtown", which contains three of the community's most important landmarks: Fire Station #18, the Carnegie Free Library and the Stimson Mill Building. Although portions of the central area consist of anonymous parking lots, dilapidated residences and vacant properties, Ballard is fortunate to have a downtown core which can function as a focus for community activity and identity.

In addition to the central commercial area, Ballard also includes 15th Avenue, a large auto-oriented commercial strip. Lined with the usual drive-in restaurants, discount stores, supermarkets, and low-rise offices, 15th Avenue is also the primary north-south traffic arterial linking Ballard to the rest of the city.



NORTHWEST SIXTY-SECOND RESIDENTIAL STREET

The industrial areas along Salmon Bay have a utilitarian ambience at a scale which welcomes observation and learning from the work-a-day environment. Views of warehouses, silos, drydocks, marinas, and manufacturing buildings are available from the waterfront streets. The most accessible views occur at street ends which could be enhanced by design guidance and coordination with surrounding property owners.

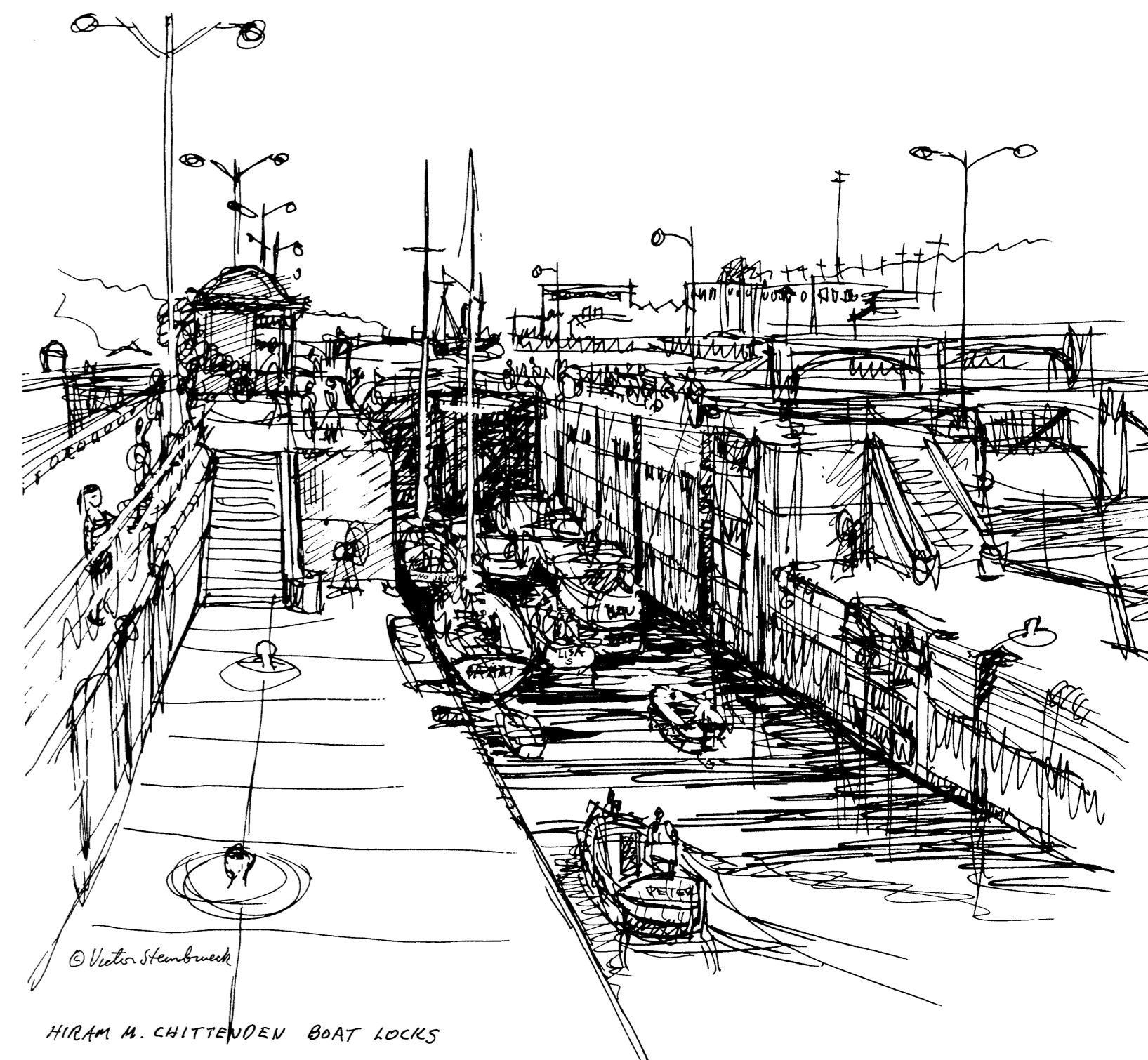
The water oriented industries, i.e. fishing, boat building and repair, have always been associated with Scandinavians, and their ethnic heritage has been central in Ballard's past. However, only recently has the commercial area become interested in generating a self-conscious image in the Scandinavian mode.

The setting along Salmon Bay has not fully developed as an urban design resource. Although the waterfront activities are of interest, few physical opportunities exist

which allow the casual observer to fully comprehend the water/land relationship.

Located at the west of the industrial waterfront, the U.S. Government Locks are the best known urban resource in Ballard. The buildings and locks are excellent examples of concrete design and the administrative and service buildings epitomize the qualities of formal site planning. The gardens and open space are also of significance and offer a collection of native and exotic plants that are of educational value. The nearly completed fish ladder and its accompanying public information facility will further enhance the importance of this enclave of design excellence.

The relative scarcity of designed public spaces (such as the Government Locks) is very likely an integral part of Ballard's image as a matter of fact everyday neighborhood. Ironically, this anonymity helps give Ballard its identity and general significance to Seattle at large.



HIRAM M. CHITTENDEN BOAT LOCKS

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