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John Jacobs  
Sue North  
Rachel da Silva  
Lois Skeels  
Stephanie J. Pulakis  
Sheila B. Noonan  
Valerie Hamrick  
Breda Malcolm  
Nance Rosencranz  
Blake Miller  
Evelyn Twelker  
Sandra Bettis  
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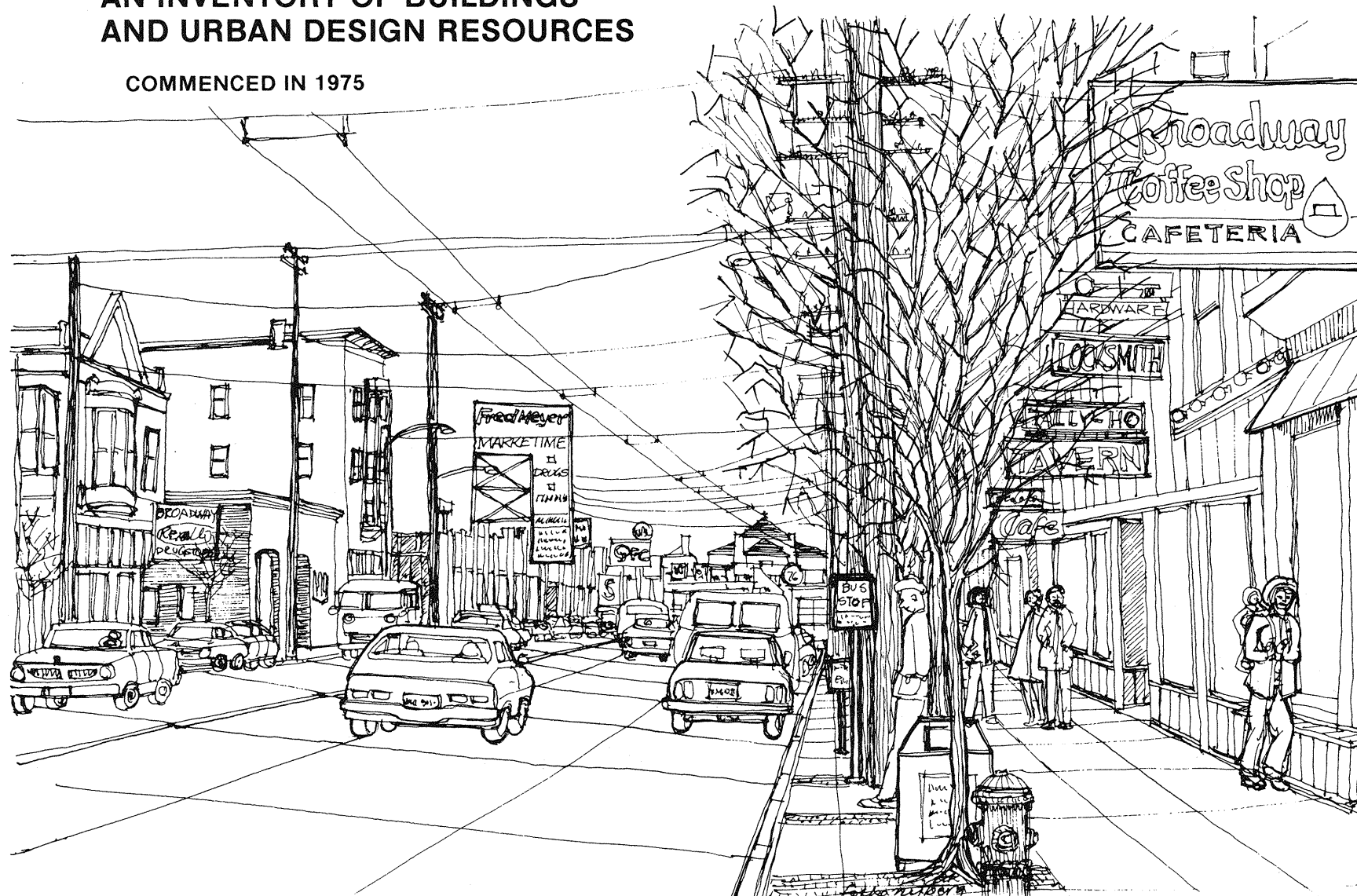
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# CAPITOL HILL

## AN INVENTORY OF BUILDINGS AND URBAN DESIGN RESOURCES

COMMENCED IN 1975



## HISTORIC SEATTLE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

CONSULTANTS: FOLKE NYBERG  
VICTOR STEINBRUECK

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The central location of Capitol Hill has always made this neighborhood a desirable location for those who work in downtown Seattle. Its development was closely related to the early economic fortunes of the city and like Queen Anne, has numerous examples of larger houses and mansions representing the taste and attitudes of Seattle's major growth periods. These attributes are not as significant as the outstanding natural and man-made setting which makes much of the quality of Capitol Hill synonymous with the genteel residential life of the city in the early years of this century.

In spite of major physical changes to the original community structure, many of these qualities survive with some of the streets still considered to be ideal residential locations. The Central Freeway has been extremely disruptive to the original configuration of Capitol Hill by separating the northern portion at the Roanoke interchange. Similarly, the same Highway I-5 structure and cut is a strong barrier between the Eastlake neighborhood and the western section of Capitol Hill. This major revision of the physical aspects and appearance of Capitol Hill has resulted in serious changes in the quality of the residential environment along the right of way. New apartments have been built along the edge to capture the dramatic westerly views. Noise and air pollution were additional environmental impact considerations which adversely offset the view advantage created by the freeway.

Major social changes in the residential population have paralleled the changes generally taking place in Seattle. Recent apartment construction has resulted in an increase in the

rental population of Capitol Hill while the number of owner occupied single family residences has decreased. Commercial services have accommodated this change by an influx of shops and restaurants catering to the new residential mix. Chain stores and drive-in restaurants, with their complementary parking lots, are replacing privately owned community businesses. Their intrusion into the commercial streets, particularly along Broadway, has had a negative effect upon the composition and ambience of the streetscape as well as the physical identity of the community.

Fortunately, residents of the community have been organizing to participate more effectively in future changes and developments. Current attempts to maintain a significant close-in single family population greatly depend upon halting the gradual erosion of the environmental quality of the streets caused by changing land uses.

Institutions are playing an important role in the future development of Capitol Hill. For instance, the Seattle Central Community College is expanding, as are the Group Health Cooperative Hospital facilities. The demand for parking and resultant traffic have generated transitional areas along the edges of these institutions as well as adjacent to growth oriented businesses.

Good, convenient public transportation has always been one of the advantages of the Capitol Hill area. Several bus lines directly connect to the downtown core and to the north, providing an alternative to the automobile and comfortably serving the densely populated residential areas.

## URBAN DESIGN ELEMENTS

As one of Seattle's oldest and most distinguished residential areas, Capitol Hill is well endowed with urban design resources. The parks, playgrounds, and open spaces along the hillside are well appreciated for their contribution to the general appearance of Capitol Hill. On closer scrutiny, however, it is apparent that the general high quality of architecture and landscaping of the residential streets and the resultant streetscapes are the most significant aspects in giving Capitol Hill an ambience of its own.

The large trees along many of the streets, i.e., Harvard Avenue North, Federal Avenue North, etc., are as significant as the excellent architecture that is so prevalent in this neighborhood. Many well cared for private gardens also contribute in reinforcing a sense of place that typifies Seattle's best residential areas. The mixture of multi-family and single family buildings has also given the neighborhood a range in age and socio-economic groups that makes Capitol Hill (as in the case of Queen Anne) urban in its diversity. Convenient access to Downtown minimizes the need for a dependence on a car while aiding the strongly pedestrian-orientation. The Broadway and 15th Avenue Business Districts cater to the pedestrian and have continued to support a streetscape that is hospitable to those on foot.

The abundance of well designed brick apartments from the late 1920's and early 1930's is also an important urban design resource.

As building groups, they reinforce through a consistency of the streetscape, while providing pleasant living conditions for the residents. Some structures excel in the use of Tudor and French Renaissance eclecticism and therefore are equally important as architectural examples.

The Interstate Freeway, while providing new views west over Lake Union, the Denny Regrade and the Olympics beyond, has been excessively disruptive to residential qualities. Large new apartment slabs along the western slope block views from behind them. Similarly, the noise generation of the Freeway is an unmitigating obnoxious presence to the new as well as old residents of this area.

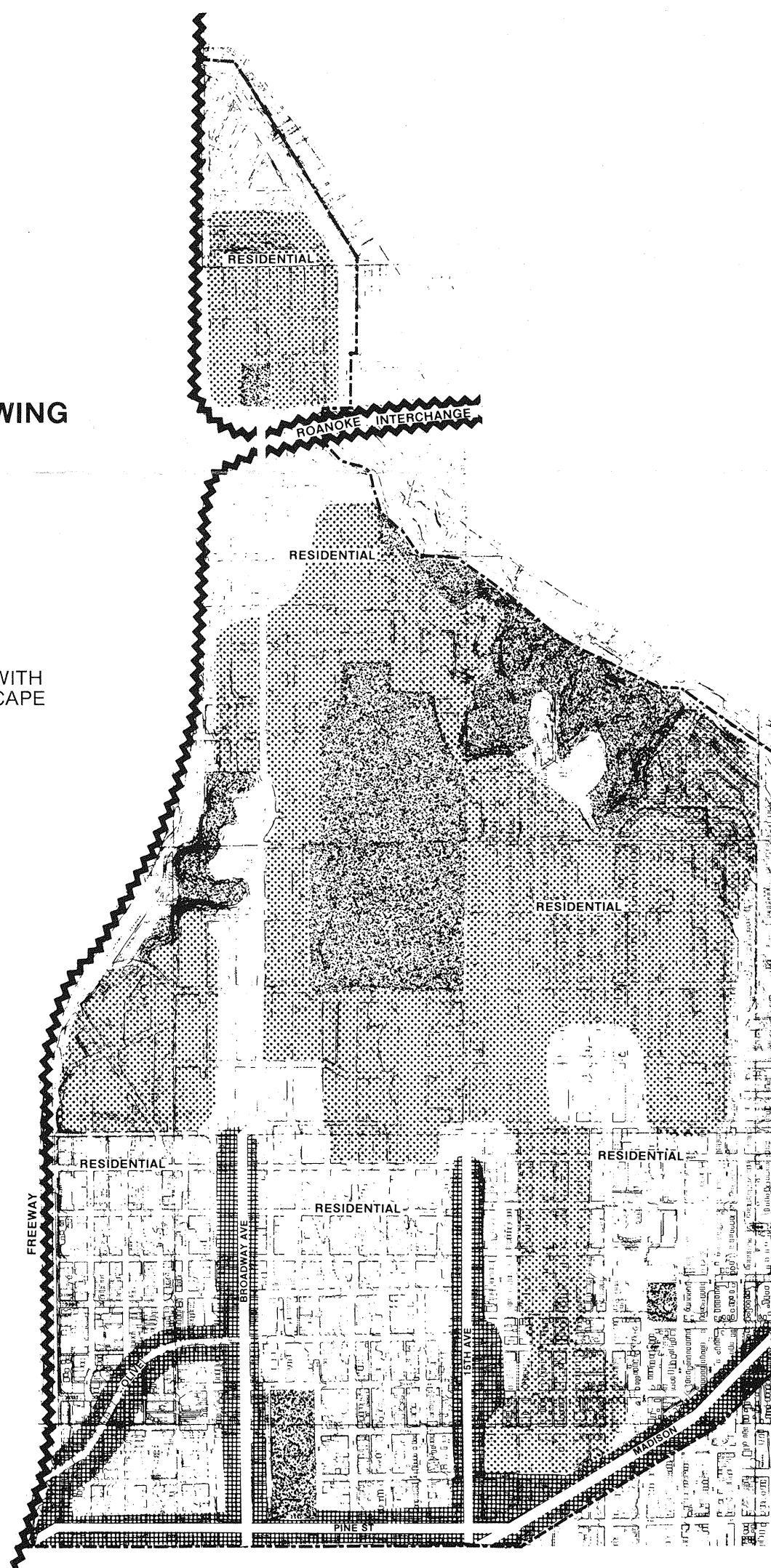
Landmark buildings, e.g., St. Marks Cathedral, the Volunteer Park Water Tower, etc., are of high urban design quality and give Capitol Hill an easily recognized presence among the other hills in Seattle. The formalized viewpoints from Capitol Hill are also frequently locations of civic art and further the impression of the neighborhood as being central in the life of the City.

The importance of the resources which provide amenities to the residential population should be stressed in order to continue confidence in Capitol Hill's future as a close-in residential area. As it now exists, it is well worth emulating as an "in-town" residential community.

## SUMMARY MAP SHOWING VISUAL STRUCTURE

### LEGEND

- OPEN SPACE
- COMMERCIAL AREA
- RESIDENTIAL AREA WITH SUPERIOR STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS



## SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS

50 DECORATED COTTAGES c. 1890 Excellent home maintenance has preserved this group of small houses as a rare example of a typical turn of the century residential street.	76 DUPLEX c. 1890 The functional yet visually interesting arrangement of living units make this early duplex an example worth emulating.	24 J. CLISE HOUSE c. 1894 Picturesque middle-class Victorian combining Eastlake and Queen Anne styles. Complex but well composed architectural forms with varied ornamental details in wood.	16 LEARY HOUSE 1903 Episcopal Diocese of Olympia. Architect: A. Bodley. Prominent and picturesque siting adds to this structure which combines Shavian and Jacobethan styles.	75 NUGENT HOUSE 1906 Interesting for combining aspects of different styles. Queen Anne in massing and form - Colonial in detail.
49 CAPITOL HILL METHODIST CHURCH 1906 Architect: J. C. Fulton. This distinctive Romanesque styled church built on the Akron plan is also noteworthy for its stained glass windows.	55 HOLY NAMES ACADEMY 1906 Architect: C.A. Breitung. Monumental domed structure in Renaissance Revival style. Well situated with tree-lined streets. Prominent in distant city views.	7 A.J. RHODES HOUSE 1911 Architect: Warren Gould. A Mediterranean style Renaissance Revival mansion in terra cotta. Includes a symmetrical formal garden. Prominent because of style, location.	20 SAM HILL HOUSE c. 1910 (G. Pletscheff) Architect: Sam Hill? Built by Hill for expected visit of the Prince of Belgium. Excellent concrete workmanship in Classic Revival manner.	26 O. W. FISHER HOUSE 1913 (I. Nielsen) Architect: Beazer Brothers. House of similar style next door built for brother O.D. Fisher in 1909. Tudor Revival style with timber and brick.
48 FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST 1914 Architect: Bebb & Mendel. Well-designed, monumental imposing example of Classic Revival style in sandstone. Characteristic of its conservative era.	21 SCHEETZ HOUSE 1914 (C. Scheetz) Architect: J. Cote. A most authentic example of New England Colonial style. Well maintained on an important residential street.	29 R. D. MERRILL HOUSE 1917 Architect: Warren Gould. This Georgian Revival mansion is perhaps the finest high-style residence in the city. Appropriate coach house and formal garden.	39 BELROY APARTMENTS 1930 Architects: Bain and Pries. An unusual progenitor of contemporary architecture done in a skillful, direct manner. Strong horizontal banding drama tizes the hillside location.	37 LOVELESS APARTMENTS AND SHOPS 1931 Architect: A. Loveless. An appropriately scaled and creative handling of the English Gothic style. Includes a pleasant interior court.
69 SEATTLE ART MUSEUM 1932 Architect: Carl F. Gould, Sr. Important civic building with dignified, clean facade and inner court architecturally in advance of its time.	58 ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH 1932 Architect: A. H. Albertson Assoc. with Joseph Wilson as designer. Contemporary in character although strongly influenced by vertically of gothic.	6 NICHOLS HOUSE 1939 Architects: Thiry & Shnay. A fine example of an international style house. Note the cubic forms, cantilevered portico, corner window and unornamented surfaces.	79 W. EGAN HOUSE 1958 (D. Jorgensen) Architect: Robert Reichert. Unique contemporary form far in advance of its time in the personal style of a talented architect. Shape reflects adjacent hillside.	78 STEISSGUTH HOUSE 1961 Architect: D. Steissguth. A contemporary house which fits well into the neighborhood context because of skill in echoing the forms, materials, and details of older homes.

## COMMON BUILDING TYPES

Capitol Hill contains as wide a range of residential building types and styles as any community in Seattle. Moreover, the architectural quality of houses and apartments on Capitol Hill is quite high. There is a wealth of fine, architect designed mansions, usually grouped along "prestige streets" near to Volunteer Park. Many of these large homes were built in the first two decades of this century and were done in the then popular eclectic styles, most notably the "Tudor" and "Colonial" styles.

Besides the fine upper economic class houses, there is also a remarkable quantity of middle income houses of varying types and styles. Especially common on Capitol Hill are "1900 Classic Box" houses which were popular between 1900 and 1920 for their ample interior space and conservative appearance. Other popular house styles are the craftsman style, the colonial style, and the builder's Tudor cottage. Again, it is the quality of detailing, the landscaping and the setting within the streetscape which often elevates Capitol Hill's common housing stock above those of many other communities.

The area's apartments, both old and new, vary widely in style, size and architectural quality. Medium-sized brick, stucco, and timber Tudor apartments are common and are often clustered together giving the streets on which they face a romantic, medieval flavor. In fact, the plentitude of Tudor (or Gothic) houses and apartments landscaped with large street trees contribute significantly to Capitol

Hill's image as an established residential community with a unique European flavor; an example of how a popular architectural style, even though blatantly eclectic, can influence a district's popular image.

Two common building types found on Broadway Avenue's commercial district are the small, anonymous storefront and the auto showroom. Many of the old showrooms, which remain as momentos from the time when Broadway was "auto row", have been converted to other uses and are still distinctive streetscape elements because of their fine detailing and orientation to the pedestrian. Driven-in restaurants and supermarkets with their plastic, impersonal character and vacuous parking lots have tended to disrupt and impersonalize Broadway's streetscape in recent years.

Institutional buildings are also prominent, and the area is especially rich in important religious structures. However, the expansion of some large institutions, such as Seattle Central Community College, have had a disruptive effect on their surroundings.

A very promising trend occurring on Capitol Hill, as well as in other parts of the city is the rehabilitation of older buildings to house new and different activities. Conservation of older structures such as Firehouse Number 7 and the Broadway Herfy's Restaurant not only makes sense economically but helps to build the community's identity and continuity with the past.

PLAIN-EARLY HOUSE 1895-1910 Straight-forward homes built by the area's early residents feature simple basic forms and minimal ornamentation.	CLASSIC BOX 1900-1920 Bulky rectangular massing with a hipped roof usually featuring conservatively classic elements and eclectic ornamentation. Occasionally craftsman-like.	SHINGLE STYLE HOUSE WITH GAMBREL ROOF 1900-1920 Middle-class house type scattered throughout the area. Wide variations in sizes combining a range of stylistic elements.	TUDOR REVIVAL 1900-1930 False timber, stucco and brick facades, and steep roofs are the characteristics of these luxury homes, often architect designed for well known wealthy families.	COLONIAL REVIVAL 1900-1940 Conservative traditionalism is expressed in these very popular homes of varying size, quality, and age. A false gambrel roof identifies the "Dutch Colonial" type.
BUILDER'S TUDOR COTTAGE 1918-1940 Unpretentious, owner operated street corner shops in various architectural styles serve as neighborhood focal points throughout the community.	TUDOR-GOTHIC APARTMENTS 1900-1940 These picturesque apartments are often referred to as "Anhalt" apartments for a local developer. Interesting derivative of the medieval style.	ANONYMOUS 1920's APARTMENT Simple forms with some eclectic (often "Gothic") terra-cotta decoration characterize these commonly scattered, medium-rise, brick apartments.	PIGEONHOLE APARTMENT 1960 Open outside corridors, linking together all of the living units, comply with building codes but not with human needs for privacy and enjoyment.	CONTEMPORARY APARTMENT 1960 Depending upon their location, scale, and architectural design, new apartments can either disrupt or complement the existing residential environment.
NEIGHBORHOOD STORE Unpretentious, owner operated street corner shops in various architectural styles serve as neighborhood focal points throughout the community.	COMMERCIAL STRIP STOREFRONTS Such anonymous storefront buildings provide a suitable backdrop for individualistic signs, window displays, and pedestrian scale elements.	INSTITUTIONAL COMPLEX Although such building groups are visual landmarks, their large scale and auto-oriented activities are often in conflict with the residential areas.	DRIVE-IN Impersonal chain-franchise drive-ins with excessive parking lots and garish signage and styling are too common along Broadway, much to the detriment of the streetscape.	RE-CYCLED AUTO SHOWROOM Some of the renovations of existing buildings for new uses such as "Herfy's" restaurant show architectural imagination and sensitivity to community identity.