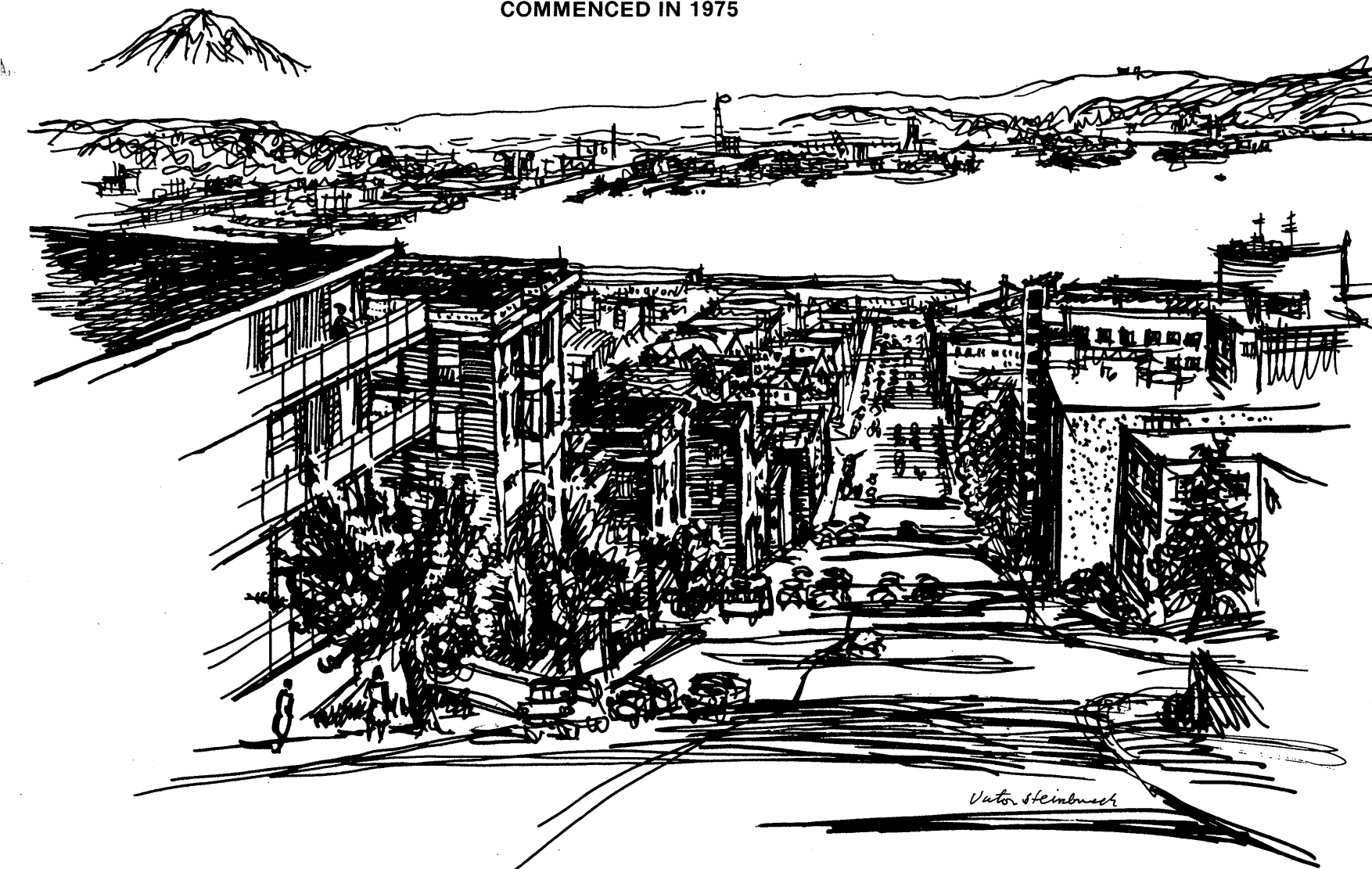


QUEEN ANNE

AN INVENTORY OF BUILDINGS
AND URBAN DESIGN RESOURCES

COMMENCED IN 1975



HISTORIC SEATTLE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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The settlement of Queen Anne Hill began on the south slope overlooking the newly developing city of Seattle. In 1853, Thomas Mercer arrived from the East and filed his donation claim of 320 acres. He called it "Eden" and it included all the land from what is now Highland Drive to Mercer Street and east to Lake Union, which Mercer was to give its name some years later. By 1873, Mercer was selling new homesites on his land to eager buyers.

Mercer was a farmer and dairy man and, like many early settlers, he became involved in lumber operations. Yesler's mill was busy in 1853 producing lumber for sale in California. The supply of wood seemed limitless and readily available. Hillary Butler and George Frye were early loggers on Queen Anne's West side. Pioneer logging operations were concentrated near water where they could be easily floated to the mill. Later, oxen were used to "skid" the logs over roads. Because of the accessibility of Smith's Cove, the West side of Queen Anne was logged first. In 1886, David Denny established a mill on the south shore of Lake Union creating an easy market for the wood from the Eastern slope.

Seattle was originally incorporated in 1869 and the northern boundary was set at Galer (then Gaylor Street), instead of expanding the city contracted and in 1875 the limits were set back to Howell Street. McGraw street was the northern boundary in 1883, and in 1891 the whole hill became officially part of the City of Seattle.

Improvements were continually being made to attract new residents and small businesses to the hill. Many of the first builders used the Queen Anne style of architecture which was in fashion at the time and with the proliferation of this style came the name "Queen Anne Town" which later changed to Queen Anne Hill as styles changed. A much needed street car line was established in the late 1880's and served the residents to the foot of the hill. However, the climb to the top was considered very inconvenient. The First Street Cable Railway Company eventually extended the service to the top, where a business district soon developed and still exists as the major business community. Originally called "Temperance", the steep hill climbed by cable cars was officially named Queen Anne Avenue. The method of weights used to pull the cars up the hill gave the street its common name,

HISTORY

the "Counterbalance" which lingers even though the cars have been replaced.

Queen Anne residents demanded a school in 1889 and they got West Queen Anne Elementary School. The school registers read like a "Who's Who" in Seattle. Other amenities came gradually. Many of Queen Anne's parks and viewpoints were donated by the hill's prominent citizens. Others were given by real estate developers intending that the amenity would encourage sales. B. F. Day donated 8-1/2 acres as a park and playfield on the northern crest of the hill. First named Evergreen Park, it was renamed David Rodgers Park to honor a supervisor in the shipbuilding firm of Skinner and Eddy. In 1891, improvements were being made on the property donated by George Kinnear, a beautiful retreat overlooking Puget Sound. Albert Sperry Kerry and his wife donated a parcel of land on Queen Anne's southern slope in 1907. Now called Kerry Park, this viewpoint park is a great tribute to Mr. Kerry who showed his concern for the livability of the city during his term on the Seattle Park Board and as Director of the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition. More recent additions have been made to the system of parks on the hill such as the Reginald Parson's garden, a private estate given over to public use. In 1903, the Olmsted report suggested that the hill would be particularly desirable place to live for those who enjoy a Sunday drive. The present Queen Anne Boulevard is something less than what the Olmsteds had in mind when they suggested a 150 foot wide boulevard with trees, etc. In 1906, East Queen Anne residents finally insisted on a tree lined street along the crest of the hill. The Park Department relented. As the trees grew, however, attitudes changed and you can now see large blocks of empty spaces where influential people had trees removed from their views.

Queen Anne has had its share of both Seattle's glory and money. During the Gold Rush, many well-to-do people found the views and closeness to the center of the city desirable and built magnificent homes which are still Seattle showplaces today. Though the architectural and environmental fabric of the hill is changing with the intrusion of large apartment complexes into the neighborhoods, the elegance of her past is still apparent in Queen Anne as one of Seattle's fine residential communities.



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Queen Anne is a close-in, mainly residential community of considerably varied social, economic, stylistic, and topographic qualities. The setting is a centrally located hill rising 450 feet from bodies of water or level ground on all sides. Significant natural areas remain only on some of the steep hillside slopes which have not yet been economically feasible to develop. The top of the hill is more level and generally is the location of smaller residences. Queen Anne's growth has taken place over more than a century — almost from the inception of Seattle. Main periods of development and prosperity appear to have occurred during the first part of this century, largely in single family homes both large and small. Later following World War II and especially in the 1960's there was considerable activity in the building of large contemporary apartments along the view slopes, particularly on the southerly portion.

The street pattern is that of Seattle's typical grid system with a few curving boulevards located along the edges of the hill usually where suggested by the Olmsted Brother's planning for the city in 1903. Several viewpoints exposing impressive, dramatic and sweeping panoramas have been developed as minor city parks. Other desirable publicly owned locations are yet available for a more complete system of lookout places.

Queen Anne commands a dominant topographic position and central location with its slopes visible from the freeway as well as from downtown. The hill is frequently silhouetted against the late evening sun giving prominence to the buildings on the top. Queen Anne High School is particularly commanding as are several utilitarian landmarks, including the television, radio and water towers. Another prominent but intrusive structure at the lower level is the Port of Seattle Grain Terminal which interferes with otherwise attractive views of Elliot Bay. New high rise structures have caused similar concern because of their unwelcome view-blocking forms on the south slope.

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Public transportation has always been one of the strongest factors in determining community focus, consequently Queen Anne Avenue is very important as a central spine to the neighborhood. The sense of enclosure and controlled views along Queen Anne Avenue are determined by the topography, as well as by the apartment and commercial buildings along this street which offers an ambience and urbanity potentially rivaling San Francisco's Telegraph Hill.

Residential and building styles vary considerably and are typically representative of the times when they were built. There are relatively few temporary structures although the post-war apartments have been done in this manner, of course. The larger residences still remaining are in the eclectic styles prevalent from 1900 through the 1920's. Most of these are architect-designed in "English" or Tudor Revival, or variations of Colonial Revival styles. Smaller, middle-income residences are commonly from popular builders stock plans usually in a scattered-lot pattern although there are many series of two or more adjacent similar houses. These are in the form of the "Classic Box", Colonial, and with some "English" and Shingle Style. The influence of the Craftsman Style is apparent in the treatment of the eclectic styles of some homes built during the heyday of that style from 1905 to 1920. Apartments and commercial structures range from earlier, very plain massive rectangular brick and wooden forms with a few affecting a more flamboyant eclectic manner during the 1920's and late 1930's to the economical but ostentatious, often superficial appearances of the slick contemporary work of the 1960's.

An arbitrary decision was made to not include the north slope of Queen Anne Hill in this first inventory although that area is an integral part of the community. Limitations of time and volunteer interest were the main reason for this action although there are differences in the character of the northerly area from the area included. It is intended to cover this area in future surveys.

Some of the physical advantages of the Queen Anne community are its convenient, close-in location, established relatively high-density residential character, excellent views, and the fact that its topography negates its use as a thoroughfare to other places thereby making it rather isolated. The stylistic variations of the homes and buildings are less significant than the general homogeneity of residential character and use.

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