

Historic Context

The Sehome Neighborhood – Then and Now

The Sehome Neighborhood is located within the City of Bellingham in Whatcom County, Washington. The neighborhood, as we know it today, might be characterized as three distinct geographical areas that developed sequentially over time. The original town of Sehome, at the south end of Elk Street in the 1850s, expanded northward to create a second area, a well-developed commercial center at the end of the 19th century.¹ These two successive business corridors created a need for adjacent residential development. Near the Holly and Elk Street commercial center, a high-end residential area emerged on the western slope of Sehome Hill. Large homes built on North Garden and other streets nearby were walking distance from the owners' downtown workplaces. As growth continued into the 20th century, working-class housing was built further east, creating what is now known as the Sehome Hill Historic District (SHHD). Finally, with the era of the automobile and highway construction, the most rural part of the Sehome neighborhood developed around the old Maple Valley Road, which became State Highway 99, and is today's Samish Way, serving residents and automobile tourists in the post-war period.

The historic context that follows details the events and development patterns that produced the various geographical "character" areas within the current Sehome Neighborhood. The content is derived, in part, from several National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nominations for individual properties, as well as from the comprehensive histories presented in the NRHP "MPD: Commercial Buildings of the Central Business District of Bellingham, 1882-1915" and in the "Sehome Hill Historic District – National Register of Historic Places Nomination." See "Further Reading" for a list of relevant nominations.

Origins of Sehome

The town of Sehome was sited on Bellingham Bay in the northwest corner of Washington Territory. It was the first of four settlement towns around the Bay to be platted, in May 1858. The early history of Bellingham is one of shifting names and boundaries. Its boundaries now encompass the four original towns -- Sehome, Whatcom, Bellingham, and Fairhaven -- that were located in close proximity to each other around the crescent of land surrounding the bay.

The expectation that one of the original four boom towns would become the location for the terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad fuelled land speculation as early as 1870, and led each town to promote itself to attract residents and investors. This speculation abated when Tacoma, 120 miles to the south, was selected as the terminus for the Northern Pacific and the tracks were laid inland, avoiding Bellingham altogether. The line was completed in 1883, and Seattle was chosen for the primary West Coast depot for the Northern Pacific in 1891. The local railroad, the Bellingham Bay and British Columbia Railroad (BB&BC), begun in 1883-84, spurred development and growth in the 1880s and 1890s. By 1891, the towns on Bellingham Bay had access to railroads moving in all directions.²

Densely forested with old-growth evergreens, the area was rich in natural resources of timber, coal, and fish. The earliest residents were the Coast Salish Native Americans. The area's Coast Salish are various small, regional groups residing in Western Washington and southwest British Columbia, subsiding largely on marine resources. Prior to European contact, the Lummi, Nooksack, Nuwhaha, and Samish tribes

¹ Elk Street was renamed State Street in 1926. This document reflects that shift by using "Elk" until 1926, and "State" for the period after the name change. The same protocol is used for Dock Street, which was renamed Cornwall Avenue in 1925.

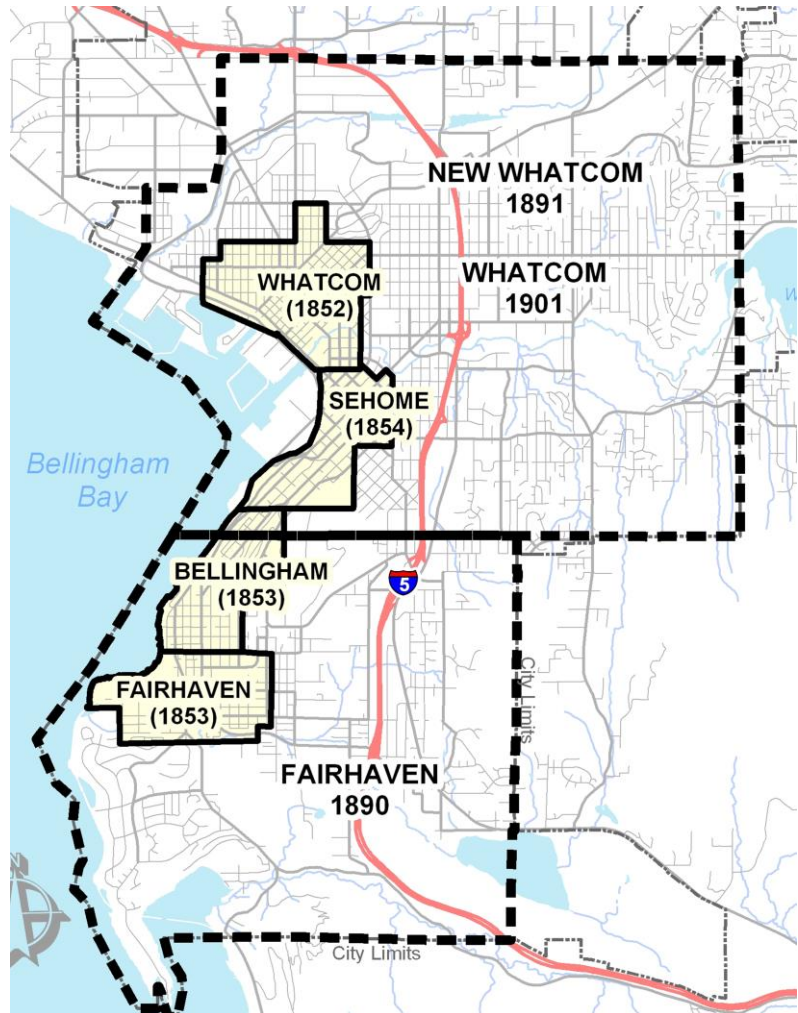
² Edith Beebe Carhart, *A History of Bellingham, Washington, Compiled from Newspaper Articles, City Directories and Books of Local History by the Bellingham Public Library* (Bellingham: Argonaut Press, 1926, 1968), 30; Beth Kraig, "A Slow Game: The Bellingham Bay Improvement Company and the Economic Development of Bellingham, 1900-12," Master's thesis, Western Washington University, 1981, 13, 30; Wes Gannaway and Kent Holsather, *Whatcom Then & Now: A Pictorial History of Whatcom County with An Emphasis on the Cities on Bellingham Bay during the Centennial Year of Bellingham* (Bellingham, WA: LoneJack Mountain Press, 2004), 35; James W. Scott and Daniel E. Turbeville, *Whatcom County in Maps, 1832-1937* (Bellingham, WA: Center for Pacific Northwest Studies and Fourth Corner Registry, 1983), 28-29.

fished sockeye salmon and gathered shellfish in the bay's fertile tidelands. The Lummi lived along Whatcom Creek, where they had established camps near the bluff by the Creek. When the first settlers, Captain Henry Roeder and Russell Peabody, arrived and built their lumber mill to take advantage of power from the Whatcom Creek waterfall, the Lummis began to trade with the newcomers. The first Indian Agent for the region estimated the Native American population in the area to be 1,252 in 1858, shortly after the arrival of the first pioneers.³ The early settlers were drawn by the abundant natural resources that could be extracted or harvested to produce wealth. Accordingly, the first development in the town of Sehome was concentrated on mining, while Whatcom's primary industry was its lumber mill. Both towns ultimately became part of the City of Bellingham in 1904.

Sehome's eventual emergence as a commercial center may be first attributed to the prospects of the coal mine below Sehome Hill, near what is today the intersection of Laurel Street and Railroad Avenue.⁴ In addition, the town's development was also affected by a gold rush in British Columbia, the arrival of rail transportation, land speculation, and booming residential real estate sales. These various themes, characteristic of nineteenth-century regional development in the western United States, all contributed to the growth and ultimate prominence of Sehome.

Early Mining Interests

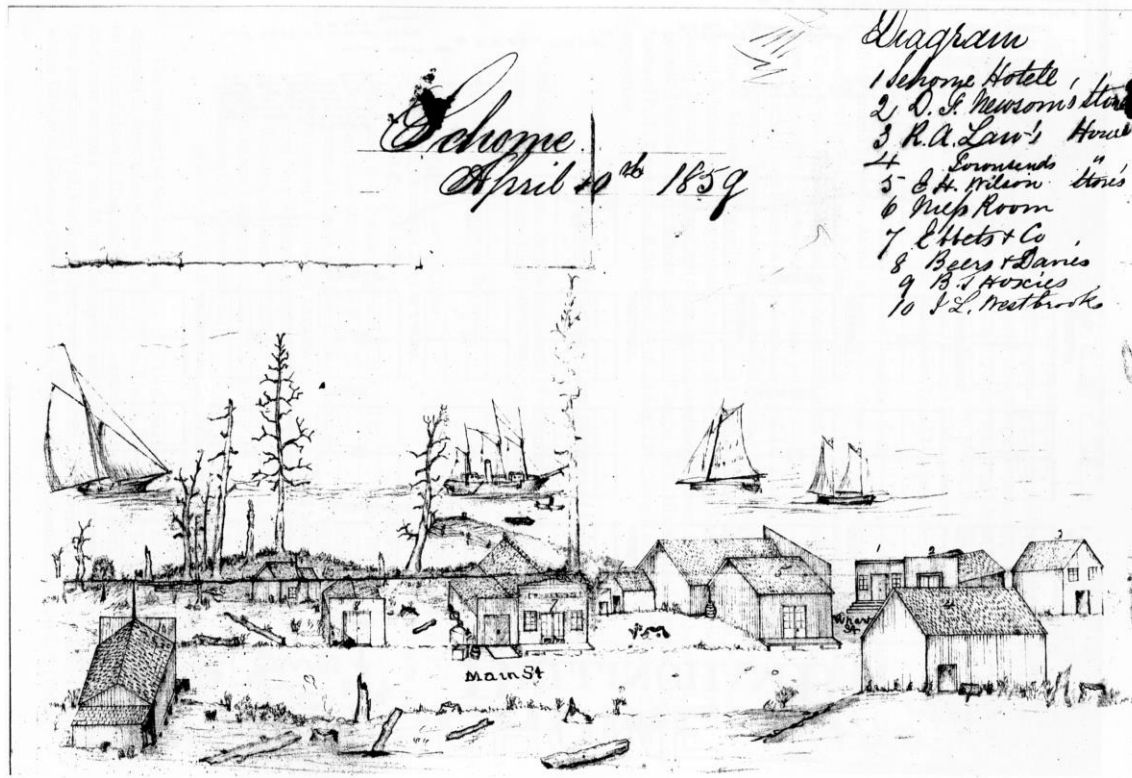
Sehome originated as the company town for the Bellingham Bay Coal Company (BBCC). While logging in 1853, two of Roeder's employees discovered coal among the roots of a fallen tree. Roeder held the initial claim to most of the property that became Sehome; he quit his claim and sold his holdings to a San Francisco mining syndicate which began operating the mine as the BBCC. The company purchased a total of 3,000 acres from various donation claims for a potential mine. In its first year of business, enough coal was extracted from the



Map illustrating the evolution of the four original towns and their consolidation over time, which created the City of Bellingham in 1904.

³ Lelah Jackson Edson, *The Fourth Corner: Highlights from the Early Northwest* (Bellingham, WA: Whatcom Museum of History and Art, 1968), 7; Kathryn Franks, "Commercial Buildings of the Central Business District of Bellingham, Washington, 1882-1915," National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Nomination, April, 2003, Sec. E, 4; E. Rosamond Ellis Van Miert, *Settlers, Structures, and Ships on Bellingham Bay* (Bellingham, WA: E.R.E Van Miert, 2004), 66.

⁴ Various histories place the mine opening in slightly different locations because of subsequent man-made changes in the topography. A geological report located the original opening at the high bank above the beach on the site subsequently graded for the BB&BC Railroad circa 1888, see Tetra Tech, Inc., *Bellingham Abandoned Mine Land Survey Final Report*, Englewood, Colorado, for the U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Surface Mining (Denver, Colorado, December, 1984), 8-9.



Captain Pickett's "Diagram of Sehome" dated April 10, 1859. Courtesy Whatcom Museum of History and Art.

mine to send one or two fully-loaded ships every week to San Francisco. The prospects of this mine, the first successful coal operation in Washington Territory, gave Sehome the apparent advantage among the four Bellingham Bay settlement towns.⁵

In 1858, Sehome experienced a fleeting boom due to the Frasier River gold rush in British Columbia, which brought 8,000 eager miners to Sehome and Whatcom. Advertisements in the *Northern Light*, the area's first newspaper, show businesses offering the miners board and lodging, provisions, liquors, groceries, baked goods, and mining equipment. The influx



Bellingham Bay Improvement Company Mill with Sehome Dock in 1900.

was curbed, however, when British Columbia's Governor James Douglas required permits from Victoria for mining and the Bellingham Bay settlers rejected contracts with local shipping firms. The immediate usefulness of the docks at Sehome and Whatcom, its competitor, as points of departure for British Columbia was diminished. The gold rush population growth thus proved to be only transient. In 1860,

⁵ Edson, 187-88.

Sehome's population was 80, and 33 homes had been abandoned. A drawing attributed to Captain Pickett from 1859 shows that little remained from this brief boom.⁶

Sehome's mine at first prospered under the supervision of P.B. (Pierre Barlow) Cornwall and Edmund C. Fitzhugh. Cornwall held a variety of positions for the San Francisco-based company, at one time serving as managing agent and subsequently as an elected trustee. During the period that Fitzhugh supervised the mine and its company store, the operation was the largest employer in the Northwest. Fitzhugh's wife, E-yam-alith, was a daughter of Chief Sehome, and the town's Clallam name, "S'<yah-whom," honored her Native American father. Fitzhugh, also the first Washington Territory Indian Agent, later became county auditor and a United States District Judge under President Buchanan.⁷

Early growth associated with the mine continued until its closure in 1878; during most of this time Sehome predominated among the four towns. Sehome's population increased from 80 in 1860, to 258 in 1870. By 1870, the mine employed 60 white men, and at the height of its productivity in 1873, 100 men worked the mine, around 40 of whom were Chinese immigrants working the chutes and cleaning coal. The Chinese workers were paid less than their American counterparts and were more often injured. Despite some financial success, the mine had dangerous levels of methane gas; it experienced flooding, surface cave-ins, fires, and accidents. Cornwall dug the mine deeper in 1876, looking for better quality coal. The following year, he consulted with mine expert B.B. Jones and W.A. Goodyear, a geologist from San Francisco.

Cornwall closed the mine in 1878 because of the low quality of the coal, and in 1888, Cornwall, now president of the BBCC, had the tunnel at the intersection of Holly Street and Railroad Avenue filled. Sehome's population plummeted with the closure of the mine. Only five families remained, and merchants who had catered to the miners could not sustain their businesses.⁸ In September 1889, the coal company reconstituted itself as the Bellingham Bay Improvement Company (BBIC) and began to engage in various speculations on Bellingham Bay. The newly incorporated company planned to log the vast land holdings it had formerly mined to promote development and increase the property value in Sehome.



Early Garden Street in foreground, seen from Sehome Hill, with stumps remaining from logging exploits.

⁶ Beth Kraig, "The Bellingham Bay Improvement Company: Boomers or Boosters?" *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 80, no. 4 (October 1999), 123; Carl F. Batchelor, "Subsidence over Abandoned Coal Mines: Bellingham, WA," Master's thesis, Western Washington University, 1982, 9; Kent Holsather and Wes Gannaway, *Bellingham Then & Now* (LoneJack Mountain Press: Bellingham, WA, 2008), 60 and 37; Edson, 93-94; Van Miert, *Settlers*, 46.

⁷ Van Miert, *Settlers*, 17-26; Bruce Cornwall, *Life Sketch of Pierre Barlow Cornwall* (San Francisco: J.M. Roberson, 1906), 57- 59, 76, 81; Sehome History Group, *At Home on the Hill* (Bellingham, WA: self-published, 2000), caption to figure 4.

⁸ Edson, 192.

The mine closure was a setback, but the town's eventual commercial success was strengthened by several advantages. Sehome's deep water dock could anchor ships 50 feet from the shore, and was also the place where the region's mail was delivered from Seattle. The telegraph office was found in Sehome's former BBCC's company store.

Moreover, Sehome was the first among the four settlement towns to build a school, in 1861. The board-and-batten school was located near the intersection of Maple and Dock (now Cornwall) Streets.⁹ Despite these advantages, a historic photograph of Elk Street in 1885 shows only a dirt road running through its commercial district and ending near Maple Street.

As logging came to an end and the massive remaining stumps were removed, exploitation of natural resources continued, and the land itself became a valuable commodity.



Elk Street, 1885.

P.B. Cornwall's company owned most of the land and continued to play a major role in Sehome's development after the mine closed in 1878. Cornwall established his Bellingham Bay and British Columbia Railroad (BB&BC) in 1883, although progress on the regional railroad, funded with federal land grants, was halting at best. Initially, the BB&BC planned for the railway to reach the Burrard Inlet in British Columbia, but this route was abandoned when the predecessors to the Great Northern (Fairhaven & Southern and the New Westminster & Southern) made the connection with Vancouver.

BB&BC's 23-mile mainline to Sumas was finally completed in March 1891, and the depot on Railroad Avenue, originally called the Canadian Pacific Depot, was built that same year.¹⁰ Cornwall also owned and operated the street railway system and the street lights. In 1888, the BBIC built waterworks and an electric plant, and it subsequently gained franchises for these utilities with New Whatcom.¹¹



View down Holly St with Jones & Carlyon's real estate office (left), 1899. The original location of Samuel Altshuler's Red Front clothing store is also on that side of street.

⁹ Lottie Roeder Roth, ed., *History of Whatcom County*, 2 vols. (Chicago, Seattle: Pioneer Historical Publication Company, 1926), 1: 125.

¹⁰ Edson, 248-49; Jeff Jewell, Historian and Archivist, Whatcom Museum of History and Art, e-mail of September 12, 2013.

¹¹ Franks, Sec. E, 8; Roth, 1: 309, 314; Edson, 250-51.

Sales of property in Sehome lagged at first as Cornwall waited for the land to appreciate. Glenn Hyatt, BBIC manager in 1886, was charged with inexpensively promoting land sales and attracting new industries to the area. To increase the value of its holdings, the BBIC asked buyers for 50% in cash and required that they “improve,” or built upon, their lots.

Sehome real estate started to sell in mid-1888. A local agent, Mrs. N.M. Peck, capitalized upon the emerging boom. She opened an office in June 1888 and promoted Sehome as “the Place to Boom Yourself into a Home.” Her advertisements urged buyers to “Catch on Quick If [They] Would Be Rich.”¹²

By July 1888, Sehome experienced a further rise in sales, and properties on Elk Street were increasingly in demand. A corner lot at Elk



Elk Street being planked circa 1898.

and Holly that had been sold in the spring of 1888 for \$520 (over \$13,000 in current dollars), was resold to Carmi Dibble, a real estate agent and city official involved in Sehome’s incorporation and mergers before the City consolidation, for \$2,500 (around \$63,000 today) in mid-August.¹³ Real estate speculation continued to gather strength in 1889, and Sehome was second only to Fairhaven in land sales on Bellingham Bay. By 1890, there were 13 real estate agents in the vicinity of Elk and Maple Streets. Reginald Jones and E.F.G. Carlyon (a native of New Zealand) developed hundreds of lots.¹⁴

The only commercial building that remains in the Sehome neighborhood from this speculative boom era is the B.B. Jones Block (built 1890-91), a two-story brick building in the Queen Anne style with an octagonal turret at 932-936 State Street. In 1891, the U.S. Customs was located at its ground floor, and William Jones, the son of mine expert B.B. Jones, lived upstairs. The building later housed the Bellingham Bottling Works.¹⁵

The construction of infrastructure, particularly the installation of utilities and street improvements, was the next task for Cornwall’s BBIC. In 1896-97, a newly-built reservoir water system on Sehome Hill extended service to Garden and High Streets.¹⁶ Garden Street had streetlights,



Railroad Avenue between E. Maple & E. Chestnut.

single bulbs in metal frames hung on wire, at major intersections nearest to the Central Business District (CBD). Elk Street, still a dirt road, was graded, planked, and had street lights installed by 1888. In 1898, High and Dock Streets were replanked, and adjacent streets with east-west orientations -- Chestnut,

¹² Peck’s ad is reproduced in Van Miert, *Settlers*, 226.

¹³ Roth, 1: 350-51; The Inflation Calculator, <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/infl.cgi>.

¹⁴ Roth, 1: 357 and 361; Van Miert, *Settlers*, 212.

¹⁵ Artifacts Consulting, *Bellingham Central Business District: Historic Resource Survey & Inventory Report*, prepared for the City of Bellingham (Bellingham, WA, 2012), 12.

¹⁶ Roth, 1: 500. A remnant of the former reservoir remains on Sehome Hill, behind Western Washington University’s Edens Hall.

Maple, Laurel, Holly, and Magnolia -- were also planked. Elk Street, finally paved with cedar blocks in 1899, was the first thoroughfare in the city to have “modern pavement.”¹⁷

Consolidation of the Bellingham Bay towns had been discussed as early as 1858; it would spare them the expense of duplicating services and governments. Yet rivalries among the four towns, and the property interests of the various claimholders, had impeded the process. Progress was made in 1889 as Sehome and Whatcom were connected by a viaduct. The early Bellingham Bay Electric Street Railway (1891) also forged connections and symbolized newly-found cooperation. Whatcom and Sehome subsequently merged to become the consolidated “New Whatcom” in 1891, with a population of 3,000 residents.

The name of New Whatcom was changed to Whatcom in 1901, at which time the population had reached 10,000. The new “Bellingham” finally emerged after a vote in October 1903, and a new city charter was adopted in July 1904.



New Whatcom after name change, 1890.

Merchants, Bankers, and Businesspeople

The development of two successive business districts on Elk Street is significant to the Sehome Neighborhood's commercial evolution. The earliest businesses developed in the southern part of Elk Street. The most enduring of these enterprises was the Morse Hardware Store, operating for 120 years in several buildings and through many expansions. Robert Morse opened his hardware business in the Kalloch Building at 1047 Elk Street in 1884, sharing the building with a pharmacy; the Morse family lived above the store. By 1902, Morse had moved his business into a more substantial structure, a broad two-bay storefront with Chuckanut sandstone (a local material characteristic



Morse Hardware Store, circa 1902, with 1886 and 1892 buildings.

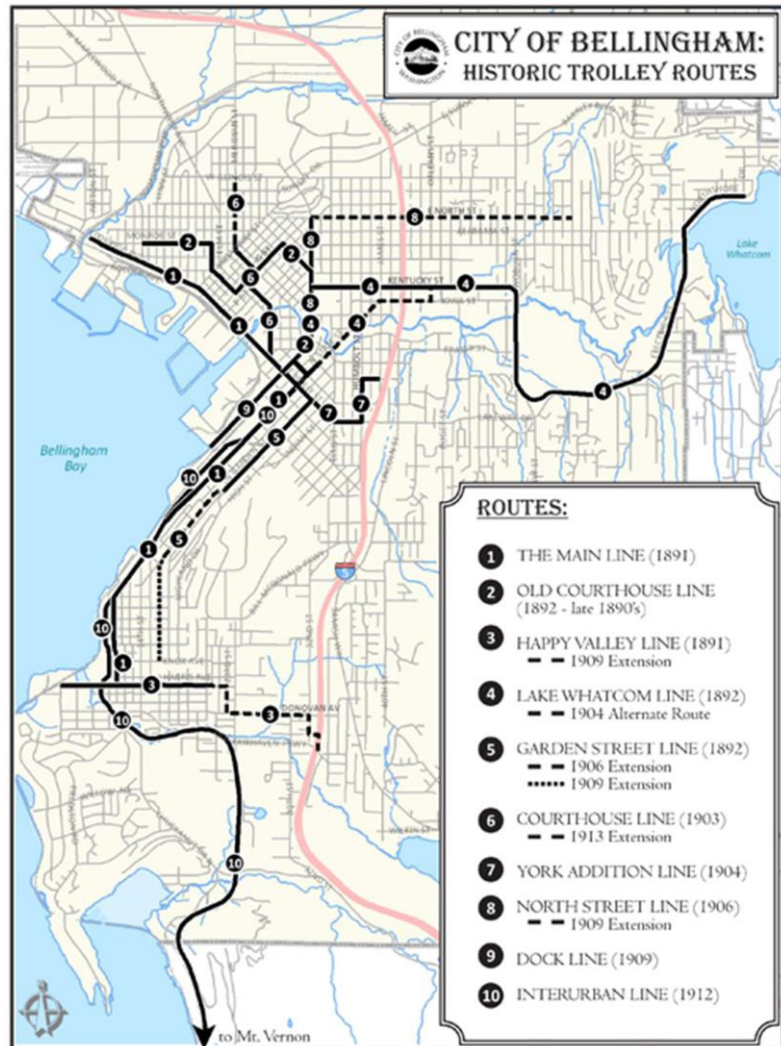
¹⁷ Roth, 1: 310 and 312; City of Bellingham, *Public Works Department, Public Works Board Proceedings*, 14 vols. 1904-1973. Administrative Files for Bellingham Municipal Government, Washington State Archives, Bellingham, Washington, 1: 225.

of Bellingham's early downtown), on the first level and brick on the second.

Morse also owned two wood frame buildings to the north, and his business eventually occupied almost a full block. Through successive expansions, Morse expanded his line to make his store essential to the neighborhood. Upon Morse's death, April 12, 1920, his son Cecil became president of the hardware store.¹⁸

Elk Street commercial development spread to the north, creating an even more robust business district by 1890. As Sehome's forests were cleared away, expansion became feasible. After Sehome and Whatcom had joined to become New Whatcom, it was no longer necessary to have two commercial centers, and Sehome's city center came to predominate as Whatcom's decreased in importance.¹⁹ Most significantly, there was a concentration of commercial construction around the Elk and Holly Street intersection. The area's commercial significance was largely derived from its transportation advantages, supplied by the Main Line on Elk Street and the first North Garden Line, both of which began streetcar service in 1892. In addition, the train station was only one block from Elk Street, on Railroad Avenue, near the Sehome Dock at the southernmost end of Dock Street, renamed to honor Cornwall in 1925. After consolidation, Elk Street, the main north-south thoroughfare, experienced a building boom. Its proximity for rail freight -- particularly the back door Northern Pacific alley freight that served Morse Hardware, Union Auto, Pacific Grocery, Fussner Monuments, Walton Beverage, and Albers Feed -- gave Elk Street a major advantage.²⁰

The busy intersection at Elk and Holly was once considered the most desirable commercial property in the newly consolidated city. The local newspaper in March 1906 reported that the southwest corner of the intersection, where Charles F. Roehl planned to build his six-story Alaska Block (built 1909) to house the Star Drug Company "will command a rental that will pay handsome interest in the amount invested."²¹ This corner also included the Exchange Building (built 1908), which joined two earlier buildings, the Pike Block (built 1891) with the Puget Sound Traction and Light Company, and the Sunset Block (built 1891).



Map illustrating how the Bellingham streetcar system developed over time.

¹⁸ Ramon Heller, *Sell 'em Low - Send and Get More: A Centennial History of Morse Hardware Company, 1884-1984* (Self-published: Bellingham, WA, 1984), 8, 11-12; 40-42; 53, 66.

¹⁹ James H. Vandemeer, "The History of Existing Structures within the Area of the Whatcom Creek Redevelopment Project, Bellingham, Washington," Master's thesis, Western Washington University, 1973, 110.

²⁰ Jewell, e-mail of September 12, 2013.

²¹ *Reveille* for March 23 and 24, 1906, quoted in E. Rosamond Ellis Van Miert, *Old Hotels of the Bellingham Bay Cities: the Byron, the Leopold, the Henry, and the Bellingham (Towers)*, (Bellingham, WA: E.R.E Van Miert, c. 1998), 248.

The commercial district where Elk Street intersected with Holly Street acquired a mix of retail businesses, restaurants, offices, and hotels. Historic photos show massive excavations for these downtown buildings, particularly the large Exchange Building. Its name was apparently chosen in imitation of the many exchange buildings nationally, particularly the second New York Stock Exchange located at 18 Broad Street (built 1903) in New York City. Bellingham's Exchange, a four-story brick building, was intended to give businesses a centralized location in the newly consolidated city. Progress of the construction, announced in January 1904, was delayed as construction materials were in demand for the rebuilding of San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake.



Bellingham Bay National Bank.

The 1920s were an especially prosperous time for the commercial Elk Street corridor. An important addition, bridging the original town of Sehome on the southern part of Elk Street with the second commercial corridor to the north, was the Gothic-style Bellingham Herald Building (built 1926), of steel construction faced in terra cotta and stone, at the corner of Elk and Chestnut Streets. After the *Herald* graced the city with this elegant six story-building, 50 merchants on Elk Street petitioned the City Council to change the street's name to the more metropolitan "State" Street, which was accomplished on April 13, 1926. The new *Herald* quarters added to the stock of distinguished State Street buildings dating back to the early 1900s.



Local Bellingham architect F. Stanley Piper designed many Bellingham buildings, including the Bellingham Herald Building.

Commencing another episode in its commercial development, Sehome was the first of the four towns to have a chartered bank, supported by the BBIC, and Elk Street evolved into a financial center.²² In January 1889, the BBIC announced the opening of its Bellingham Bay National Bank of Sehome, the first national bank in all of Whatcom County, located on the west side of Elk Street, mid-block between Maple and Laurel, in the Strand building; it subsequently moved nearby to the Slade Block on the northeast corner of Elk and Chestnut Streets. In June 1890, the Columbia National Bank of Sehome opened. The 1890 reincorporation of Sehome with Whatcom precipitated name changes for both banks to replace the name of the former town with "New Whatcom." As symbols of their confidence and success, the banks each moved to more impressive quarters. Bellingham Bay National built a stone building in early 1891 on the

²² Mark Shifflette, "Hotel Laube -- National Register Nomination, July 2003," Sec. 8, 5.

northeast corner of Holly and Elk Streets while Columbia National Bank bought and moved into the four-story Lighthouse Building on Holly and Dock (now Cornwall) Streets at the end of that same year.²³

During the New Whatcom era, the northern commercial corridor attracted an excess of banks, a total of six, in addition to four others in Fairhaven. Most of them were unable to survive the Panic of 1893, following the collapse of the New York Stock Exchange in June 1893. Columbia National closed on June 23, 1893. Bellingham Bay National established an emergency banking exchange, and Charles Cissna, owner of the Fair Department Store downtown, issued hand-printed script to be used for purchases in his store. Finally, with an economic recovery in the wake of President McKinley's election in 1896, banking in New Whatcom began to return to normal. In post-consolidation Bellingham, banks proliferated, including an impressive new building, extant today, on the corner of Holly and Cornwall, for the Bellingham National Bank (built 1912-13), designed by local architect F. Stanley Piper with John Graham.

In the decade after consolidation, the business center began to move away from the former Elk Street corridor and began to concentrate around Railroad, Chestnut, Prospect, and Grand streets. The Elk Street commercial corridor evolved to become more working class and was the site of many boarding houses, cafes, and saloons.



The "new" four-story Sehome Hotel on Elk Street, 1888.



Late 1920s photo showing hotel corridor on State Street.

²³ Keith A. Murray, *The Story of Banking in Whatcom County* (Self-published: Bellingham, WA, 1954), 15-16.

The Crash of 1929 strongly affected Bellingham and Whatcom County banking. During the Great Depression that followed the Crash, local businesses suffered. There was little construction, and many local businesses had to lay off workers. In May 1939, First National was sold to a Seattle-based bank and became a local branch. Of all the pre- and post-consolidation banks, only Bellingham National survived into the 1950s as a locally-owned bank to mark its 50th anniversary in 1955.²⁴

Another episode in Sehome's development was its contribution to the hotel industry on Bellingham Bay. The town had the first Sehome Hotel, managed by Mrs. Teresa Eldridge; the small building lodged and boarded coal miners and was expanded to become the Keystone Hotel. In late 1888, a new four-story Sehome Hotel was constructed on Elk Street, about three blocks south of the older Sehome Hotel.



YMCA (1906), designed by Alfred Lee.

The new hotel boasted modern conveniences: an elevator, speaking tubes, and electric lights. By the time the town was part of consolidated New Whatcom in 1891, there were 17 hotels, with 11 on Elk and Maple Streets alone.²⁵ In addition, the upper floors of a number of commercial buildings in this busy corridor were used for lodging and rooms. In the first decade of the twentieth century, some of these mixed-use buildings included the Daylight Building (built 1904), the Windsor and Laube Hotels (both also 1904), and the Dahlquist Building (built 1908). By the 1940s, Bellingham was touting itself as a convention city; the 100 rooms in the Hotel Henry and 50 more in the Columbia Hotel, both on State Street, contributed to the total of 1,000 rooms available in the City.²⁶

Elk Street was a corridor frequented by travelling salesmen. The Laube, and others hotels in the corridor, served a different clientele from the physical laborers who lived on Railroad Avenue. The hotels provided food service, sample rooms for the salesmen to display their products, and a lobby area for writing up accounts. As the era of the travelling salesman passed, many single-room occupancy residences (SROs) on and around the 1200 block of State Street drew tenants who could not afford or otherwise manage to rent apartments.²⁷ The Laube Hotel is a three-story brick building with Chuckanut sandstone, originally with 51 rooms. The more modest Windsor Hotel is located directly to the south of the Laube. It operated as a hotel from 1904 until the mid-1960s, and beyond that time was used as a SRO dwelling.

The Exchange Building, originally constructed as an office block, later served as a hotel. The building was converted into the Hotel Henry in 1923. Henry Schupp and associates bought the building in June 1920 with the intent of converting it to a hotel with 80 rooms and 50 baths. Local architects T.F. Doan and F. Stanley Piper oversaw the conversion. The 1923 improvements included the new Tulip Room, a dining room and convention hall. The owners subsequently expanded the hotel for Tulip Festival tourists in 1929. In 1942, after 20 years as a hotel, it became the new YMCA, replacing the original YMCA at

²⁴ Ibid., 35-37.

²⁵ See Van Miert, *Settlers*, 250, 247.

²⁶ "Golden Jubilee Number," *Bellingham Herald*, June 23, 1940, cited in Van Miert, *Old Hotels*, 327.

²⁷ "One of the Best on the Sound," *Daily Reveille*, February 3, 1904, and *The Weekly Blade*, January 13, 1904.

311-313 East Holly Street.²⁸ Smaller hotels on State Street included the Columbia Hotel, at 1247 North State Street, and the western-themed Antlers Hotel on the 1300 block.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, the Holly-Elk Street area was the location of the City's first YMCA on Holly Street, also known as the Odd Fellows Hall (built 1906), designed by Alfred Lee, an architect particularly well represented by a number of buildings still standing in today's Sehome neighborhood.



YWCA on North Forest Street.

The original Bellingham YMCA is a Richardsonian-style building with dramatic arches, its front façade laid in with heavy Chuckanut sandstone. The Young Men's Christian Association, founded in London in 1855, combined a religious agenda with the camaraderie of an all-male environment, shunning the drinking and smoking traditional in earlier men's clubs. The first YMCAs were sectarian and exclusive: membership was only extended to members of Protestant churches. Around the turn of the century, the YMCA began changing its focus to emphasize athletic facilities and dormitories.²⁹ In Bellingham, the original YMCA had dormitory rooms upstairs, and the tradition of providing housing continued when the "Y" moved from the Odd Fellows building in 1942. The "new" YMCA on the corner of Holly and State Streets maintained a residence hall from 1942-75. The dormitories filled a need for low-income housing that had been previously supplied by boarding houses.

North Forest Street in the Sehome neighborhood is the location of the Young Women's Christian Association or YWCA, a Bellingham organization that dates back to 1907. The current YWCA at 1026 North Forest Street was dedicated on March 21, 1915.

The Young Women's Christian Association shared the YMCA founders' emphasis on providing a place to meet in an atmosphere where healthy, chaste pursuits would fill a void that would otherwise give way to vice. In Bellingham, a member of the club was designated to meet all trains and steamships to make sure that any single women arriving alone would not be lured into prostitution. In subsequent eras, the YWCA established programs that would help unskilled women find suitable local employers.³⁰

Unlike the YMCA, to which dormitories were a later addition, the YWCA provided housing from its inauguration. Because one of its most significant missions was helping women in need, the Bellingham YWCA always provided short-term housing. The need was particularly acute during the Great Depression. The YWCA lowered its room rates in 1931 and offered 543 free breakfasts and beds for needy women in 1932.³¹ Over the years, the local YWCA has become much less of a social club, and much more an organization to provide social support and housing to vulnerable women.

²⁸ *Bellingham Herald*, December 2, 1922; Van Miert, *Old Hotels*, 75, 80, 267, 276, 294.

²⁹ Mark A. Swiencicki, "Consuming Brotherhood: Men's Culture, Style, and Recreation as Consumer Culture, 1880-1930," *Journal of Social History* 31 no. 4 (1998), 803, n. 59; Pamela Lupkin, *Manhood Factories: YMCA Architecture and the Making of Modern Urban Culture* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xv, xvii, 3, 115.

³⁰ Lynne Masland, *100 Years of Challenge and Change: Whatcom Women and the Bellingham YWCA* (Bellingham, Washington: The Bellingham YWCA, 2008), 8, 30, and 36.

³¹ "First Efforts to Cope, 1930-1932," *The Great Depression and Its Fifty Year Shadow*, Proceedings of a Conference held at Western Washington University, November 1981, edited by Phyllis Bultmann, Occasional Paper #18 (Bellingham, WA: Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, 1982), 64.

Residential Development

The Sehome neighborhood, densely developed with residences today, evolved in large part due to the active role of new developers, a further episode in its history. In the nineteenth century, land subdividers and developers sold individual, unimproved lots to homeowners or to speculators for resale. These developers, and the early twentieth-century home builders that followed them, might pave roads and provide street lights, but they did not develop large tracts as later suburban developers would.³² The local BBIC was part of this national trend in community development.

The BBIC, formerly involved in commercial real estate, turned to residential land sales in 1900, selling individual lots from its more than 3,000 acres in holdings. Yet the company did not want to invest heavily in the cost of infrastructure to develop home sites or to increase taxes on land it hoped to sell in large parcels for industrial use. New industries would further boost the area -- and thus the value of the company's holdings. This caution about sinking large amounts of capital into residential development was not unusual for the era. In the late nineteenth century, subdivisions tended to be small and grew slowly as new street grids were added. Developers depended on the city to install water and public utility systems, but they did pave roads and supply street lights to enhance the growth of subdivisions. Although the BBIC made only modest attempts to interest home builders, the majority of its earnings at this time were nevertheless from home site sales.³³



Morse House on North Garden Street, a pattern house.



Morgan House circa 1916, a pattern house.

³² Linda Flint McClelland, David L. Ames, and Sarah Dillard Pope, "Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States, 1830-1960," National Register Bulletin (Washington D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service 2002), Sec. F, 62 and E, 8.

³³ Cornwall had added to the holdings by the purchase of an additional 880 acres in 1888, Kraig, "A Slow Game," 25, 62. Also see Kraig, "Boomers or Boosters?" 128.

The BBIC's efforts to sell real estate lasted from the dawn of the 20th century into the 1930s. By the 1920s, the BBIC was primarily involved in real estate. In contrast to its earlier, parsimonious policy, the BBIC offered generous financing in the early 1920s, advertising "easy terms of payment." The company also offered to finance the lumber for the new homes and let the buyer pay it off with a deposit and 100 monthly payments. The BBIC continued to sell off its vast land holdings until the Great Depression, at which time it had sold most of the original 3,000 acres it had owned.³⁴

North Garden Street

Development around the turn of the 20th century in the Sehome neighborhood follows, for the most part, the temporal succession of national transportation patterns in the United States. Before the installation of the street car lines, North Garden and its adjacent cross streets formed an early residential suburb, convenient to the downtown in the days of the walking city. The pedestrian city had a circumference of about two miles, the distance residents without horses and carriages could easily walk. Upper middle class merchants and entrepreneurs built a concentration of impressive Queen Anne and Classical Revival houses as early as 1890. Several of these extravagant homes built in the 1890s are on North Garden



Birney Car, Garden Street Line on State Street.

Street. During the first decade of the twentieth century, several large Arts and Crafts houses were also added to the neighborhood. These homes were convenient to the growing downtown commercial area, and thus residential development "up the hill" coincided with the emergence of the north Elk Street commercial core. Two impressive extant Queen Anne houses on North Garden Street were adapted from pattern books. The Morgan Mansion at 1200 North Garden was derived from a pattern book published by Robert Shoppell, while the Morse House at 1014 North Garden was inspired by a design from George F. Barber's catalog, *The Cottage Souvenir No. 2*, which contained 59 house plans.³⁵

Two other early residents of this new pedestrian suburb around North Garden Street were the owners of the Bloedel-Donovan Mill. Julius H. Bloedel lived at 1020 North Garden, in an Arts and Crafts house designed by Alfred Lee. Bloedel had been involved in mining during the 1890s, but was primarily a lumber man. In 1913, Bloedel-Donovan acquired the waterfront Bellingham Bay Lumber Company mill (yet another of Cornwall's properties), at one time reputed to be largest mill in the world. By 1925, it employed 2,000 workers, operating four sawmills and four shingle mills, among other endeavors.³⁶ Bloedel-Donovan's headquarters at Pine and Cornwall Streets, the main mill office for 30 years, is currently office space.

³⁴ George H. Bacon, *Booming and Panicking on Puget Sound* (Bellingham, WA: Whatcom Museum of History and Art, 1970), Preface; Percy Livesey, "It's Easy to Own a Home Here," in Bellingham Chamber of Commerce, *The Show Window* 2, no. 2 (January 1921), 27; Kraig, "Boomers or Boosters?" 132.

³⁵ Jeff Jewell, "The Morgan Mansion on Garden Street," *The Journal of the Whatcom County Historical Society* 9 (December 2009), 11-12; Brian L. Griffin and Neelie Nelson, *My Darling Anna: Letters from Fairhaven 1890* (Bellingham, WA: Knox Cellars Publishing Company, 2009), 287.

³⁶ Sehome History Group, 15; Roth, 2: 671-73.

The Edward Fischer/J.J. Donovan House at 1201 North Garden Street was built by an agent for the BB&BC Railroad, with lumber from the Bloedel-Donovan mill. Fischer began the building but never completed it; he sold it in 1900 to his colleague at the railroad, engineer J.J. Donovan, also President of the First National Bank. Donovan came to Fairhaven in 1888, after railroad contractor Nelson Bennett hired him to complete a survey for a rail line from Seattle to the settlement towns on Bellingham Bay. After purchasing the house, Donovan finished the interior, giving it some of its more elaborate features, such as art glass. Further remodeling occurred after a car crashed into the house (c. 1908).



Edward Fischer/J.J. Donovan House, Garden Street.

As streetcar use expanded the perimeter of the city, new streetcar lines contributed to the Sehome neighborhood's early residential development. This phase in Sehome's history was characteristic of other streetcar suburbs developing nationally from 1888-1928, part of "the new period of suburbanization" ushered in by the electric-powered streetcar system developed in 1887 by Frank J. Sprague of Richmond, Virginia. The two 1892 lines on Elk and North Garden Streets formed links between the neighborhood and downtown. The first streetcar tracks in Bellingham, a two-mile stretch on Elk and Holly Streets, were formed by nailing 40-pound strap iron rails onto planked wood streets, which unfortunately needed replacement every four years. The cars covered the same distance in ten minutes that pedestrians had previously traversed in thirty, opening new areas for residential development. Local streetcars reached a speed of 30 mph.³⁷



The expanded St. Luke's Hospital.

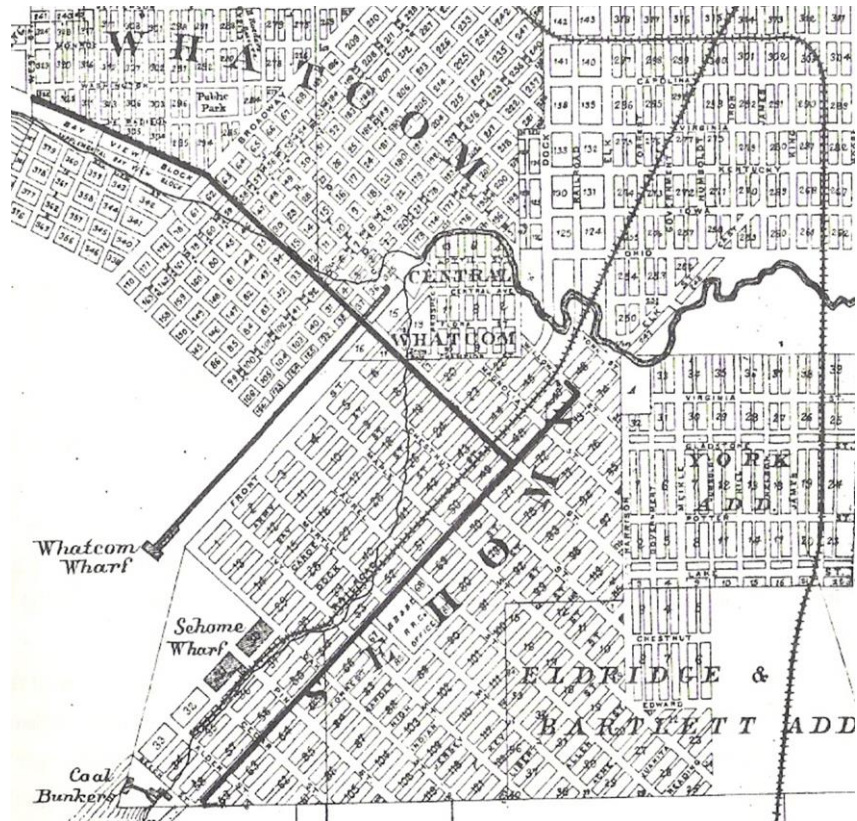
As streetcar lines and extensions were added, development in the new "Sehome neighborhood" progressed further uphill. The Episcopal St. Luke's Hospital benefited from the new transportation. The hospital's first purpose-built facility was the Nurses' Quarters on the corner of Jersey and East Chestnut at 1210 Jersey Street, later demolished for an expansion. The York Addition streetcar extension via Holly Street (1904) went uphill to the hospital and, correspondingly perhaps, in 1905, the hospital built an addition.

³⁷ McClelland, Sec. F,54; Daniel E. Turbeville, "The Electric Railway Era in Northwest Washington, 1890-1930," Master's thesis, Western Washington University, 1976, 25, and 148; Dorothy Koert and Galen Biery, *Looking Back: The Collectors' Edition, Memories of Whatcom County/Bellingham* (Republished, updated and revised by Grandpa's Attic, 2003), 124, 126, and 237.

The streetcar also facilitated construction of housing on High and Indian Streets, and eventually further uphill to Indian Terrace. By 1920, the Garden Street Line, with its two early extensions of 1906 and 1909, traveled between Knox Street and downtown via Holly, Garden, and 16th Streets. The Garden Line was serviced by a "Birney Car," a lightweight and economical model that needed only a single operator.³⁸

In Bellingham, as throughout the United States, streetcar lines influenced the placement of community services such as groceries and drugstores; apartment buildings also sprang up near well-traveled lines.

Further development in the Sehome neighborhood was facilitated by the coming of the automobile age. Streetcars had literally paved the way for the next mode of transportation since the railway company had first paved the streets for their own use.³⁹ Streetcars and automobiles coexisted in the United States between 1910 and 1930, but nationally, most streetcar service had ended by the mid-1920s as automobile ownership became more widespread. In Bellingham, streetcar service hung on until 1938 when it was replaced by a combination of automobile use and a bus system. The 1913 Sanborn map shows the alleys behind the large North Garden Street homes lined with garages, replacing the sheds shown on the 1904 map. Nationally, after 1900, driveways at the sides of homes also began to be used to access garages. Garages, attached or detached, began to appear in house plans by the 1920s.⁴⁰



Map showing additions to Sehome.

Much of Sehome's early working class housing was constructed in what we now know as the SHHD. The District lies within the Eldridge and Bartlett Addition, named for early settlers and claim holders, Theresa and Edward Eldridge, and pioneer Erastus Bartlett. An additional 320-acre claim by Thomas and Betsy Jones included the land around Jersey, Key, and Liberty Streets that is also part of the SHHD.

This 25-acre addition was platted on April 2, 1889. The District experienced a concentrated period of development between 1895 and 1930 and is characterized by single-family homes, mostly in the bungalow or Foursquare forms and the Queen Anne and Craftsman styles, notable for their high-quality woodwork on both the interior and exterior.⁴¹

³⁸ Jewell, conversation with Lynette Felber, March 13, 2013, and e-mail correspondence of March 7, 15, and 16, 2012.

³⁹ Turbeville, *Electric Railway*, 163.

⁴⁰ McClelland, Ames, and Pope, Sec. F, 55; Sec. E, 5 and 28.

⁴¹ Carol Yoon, "Sehome Hill Historic District – National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 2000," Secs. 8, 2; 8, 5; and 7, 2; Sehome History Group, 7.



View from Trezise Apartments on High Street in 1920s, looking northwest.

In contrast to the merchant and business owners who built homes on North Garden Street in the 1890s, early residents of the SHHD were primarily employed by the lumber industry. Although the population was largely Scandinavian, City directories also reveal the names of German, Italian, and Scottish immigrants. Houses in the District were often built by local Scandinavian carpenters. Financing a home at this time was difficult, so builders often completed one home and occupied it while they constructed another one and then sold the first. One of the most prolific builders was a Norwegian millworker, Hans O. Knutson. Other builders who have been identified include Peter Osberg, Anton and Hans Swanson, Peder Erickson, and Alfred Lokness. This area of the Sehome neighborhood experienced an exceptionally large increase of housing between 1905 and 1910; during this brief five year period, 48 homes were built. This period of concentrated construction coincides with the popularity of the Craftsman style in the Pacific Northwest. Craftsman bungalows represent the major building type in the SHHD.⁴²

The Sehome neighborhood's centralized location -- its proximity to the CBD, to the Garden Street Line, to St. Luke's Hospital, and to the Normal School that is now Western Washington University (WWU)⁴³ -- led to a proliferation of apartment buildings in the early decades of the twentieth century. In the mid- to late-1920s, the neighborhood acquired many new apartments in a variety of building styles: Beaux-Art, Craftsman, Mediterranean, Exotic-Moorish. The Garden Line made apartments in the uphill, residential part of Sehome (around High and Indian Streets, for example) particularly convenient for working and middle-class residents -- laborers, clerks, and small business owners working downtown -- as the listings of residents' professions in City directories show. Students, who have since come to populate much of the Sehome neighborhood, generally lived in lodging and boarding houses in the early part of the twentieth century since the university required that they have close adult supervision.

Apartment buildings' owners often lived in, or adjacent to, the apartments that produced income for them. For example, local businesswoman and artist Molly O. Trezise (1871-1946) supplemented her income with rentals in the handsome stucco Beaux-Arts apartment building still in use today, designed by T. F. Doan, that came to be called the Trezise Apartments (built 1922) at 804-806 1/2 High Street .

She owned and managed the units from 1923 to 46.⁴⁴ Apartment buildings were often named for owners. One example of this practice is the Schermerhorn Apartments (built 1926) at 505 North Garden Street, built by contractor Herman A. Schermerhorn, who lived in the house next door at 501 North Garden Street. Similarly, the stucco McCush Apartments (built 1928) at 500 East Myrtle Street were owned by John McCush, who lived in the stucco house directly east at 508 Myrtle Street with his wife Catherine and daughter Mary in 1928. Although naming an apartment after its owner was common and served the pragmatic purpose of identification for prospective tenants, other apartments were given suggestive and memorable names such as the exotic "Alamo" (built 1927) at 412 East Maple, or the "Kulshan" at 1011

⁴² Sehome History Group, 9; Yoon, Sec. 8, 5.

⁴³ The Normal School went through a series of name changes but became "Western Washington University" in 1977.

⁴⁴ Jewell, conversation of March 3, 2013 and e-mail of May 7, 2013; Polk directories; Sanborn maps.

High Street. The three-story Beaux Arts Kulshan (built 1919) was originally named “The Hull,” after its owner John G. Hull, who made his living in real estate. By 1923, the “Hull” had been renamed the “Kulshan.” Naming apartment houses could contribute to their sales value and caché.

Other types of apartments have been created from single-family houses in the Sehome neighborhood to meet the demand for rental space. One example of this conversion is significant for the history of its original owner. The Frances C. and Dr. William H. Axtell House at 413 East Maple Street was built in 1902 by Frances Axtell (1866-1953). Frances Axtell was a politician with both a state and a national reputation in the early twentieth century. She became one of the first two women representatives to the Washington State Legislature in 1912. In 1926, Axtell converted the Classical Revival-style house into apartment units, planning the layout herself and altering the exterior.⁴⁵



Kulshan Apartments, 1011 High Street.

Historically, residents in the Sehome neighborhood were often students, staff, and faculty attracted to the area for its convenience to the Normal School, now WWU. The area on the hill was selected in 1893 as the location for a state teaching college, first identified as The New Whatcom Normal School, constructed on a ten-acre site that was part of the BBIC's holdings. An initial appropriation began construction in 1895, but the school was not opened until fall of 1899 due to lack of subsequent funding. The presence of the campus encouraged a proliferation of rooming houses in its early years. Advertisements in the local newspaper circa 1916 show the Normal School President seeking room-and-board arrangements for the “worthy, needy student.”⁴⁶ Though boarding houses are no longer common, the area surrounding the campus is still largely characterized by multifamily housing, much of which is occupied by students, both purpose-built apartments and single-family houses converted into rooms and apartments. The campus currently has 224 acres, including part of the Sehome Hill Arboretum, which forms a lush backdrop to the university buildings.⁴⁷

The Normal School had little on-campus housing for much of its early history. Edens Hall (built 1903), a wood building, became the first dormitory in 1907 and housed 28 female students. Off-campus housing was overseen by the College Men's and Women's Deans, through whom students had to secure their housing. The protection and safety of female students was a particular concern. The Dean of Women kept a list of “Inspected Off-Campus Housing” and a “Directory of Women's Residences,” approved housing for unmarried women students under 21 years of age. One of these privately-owned dormitories for women was Western Manor, a house still standing at 805 Garden Street. Built as a single-family residence in 1913, it was converted into a private dormitory in 1961.⁴⁸ Another dormitory was located in the former home of J.J. Donovan after his wife Clara died in 1936. Eventually, the State of Washington bought the Donovan house to serve as a women's dormitory for the campus, now WWU. In 1950, the house was called “Senior Hall.” From 1990 to the present, a dentist has operated his business from the ground floor, and student rooms are still offered for rent.

⁴⁵ Thelma Follett, “Dr. William H. & Frances C. Axtell House, Whatcom County, Washington, National Register of Historic Places,” September 29, 2008, Secs. 7 and 8.

⁴⁶ *American Reveille*, August 1916.

⁴⁷ Edson, 174; Koert and Biery, 2003, 320-21.

⁴⁸ Inez Sorenson, *The Adventures of A College Housemother, 1959-2001* (Self-published: Bellingham WA), 2001.

As Sehome is a mixed-use neighborhood that has included a university, a hospital, and two churches, non-residential growth precipitated the loss of residential resources. The presence of the campus, for example, effected change in the Sehome neighborhood as housing was lost to expansion for new university buildings. Housing on the 500 and 600 blocks of Garden and High Streets between Oak and Cedar, for example, was demolished and the Viking Union was constructed on this site in 1959.

At the north end of campus, the Mathes and Nash dormitories were added between 1967 and 70. More housing was removed on Indian Street, north of Higginson Hall, to create university parking.⁴⁹ An increased need for parking at the First Presbyterian Church at 1031 North Garden Street also led to the demolition of apartments on Laurel Street at the intersection with North Garden Street. The Church bought the properties and demolished them to install a parking lot in 1958.⁵⁰



1938 photo showing blocks of North Garden and High St. housing later lost to Western Washington University expansion.

⁴⁹ Jewell, March 3, 2013; 1950 Sanborn map.

⁵⁰ Keith A. Murray, *Centennial Churches of Washington's 'Fourth Corner'* (Bellingham, WA: Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, Western Washington University, 1985), 162.

Southeastern Sehome: Highway 99, Samish Way, and Interstate 5

A third distinct geographical area, more recently rural in character than those that developed earlier, is centered around Samish Way at the southeastern portion of the Sehome neighborhood. Development in this area was galvanized by its location on a major thoroughfare. In the early 1930s, it was served by central Maple Valley Road, a gravel rural route. By 1936, the road had become part of Highway 99 (also known as Pacific Highway 1). The original Pacific Highway largely followed the route of existing roads and extended 310 miles north-south through the state.⁵¹ From the south, Highway 99 entered Bellingham at Samish Way and reached the CBD at Holly Street, where it continued to pass through downtown onto Prospect and Dupont Streets, eventually making a slight turn at Northwest Avenue, moving northward toward Canada.

The automobile era precipitated commercial growth and tourism around Samish Way after Highway 99 became the central road connecting Bellingham to points north and south. Post-war federal funding fostered the evolution of such country roads into highways. Congress had proposed a national freeway system in 1944, but the question of how to finance (e.g. through tolls or gasoline tax), such a massive construction project was controversial. The controversy was negated when President Eisenhower presented his plan for a National System of Interstate and Defense Highways to Congress on February 21, 1955, pledging both federal funding and oversight. This plan marked a change in policy, as the federal government had not previously been actively involved in state highway planning. Following in the wake of the Highway Defense Fund, initiated by President Truman in 1956 to create four-lane highways to function as escape routes in case of atomic bombs, Highway 99 was enlarged as part of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways to become Interstate 5.⁵²



State Highway signs for State Highway 99 in 1951 at the corner of Maple and Ellis Streets.

⁵¹ City of Bellingham, Planning and Community Development Department, *Samish Way Urban Village Subarea Plan*, November 2009, 4; Chuck Flood, *Washington's Highway 99* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2013), 8.

⁵² Larissa King, "Old Highway 99: Shaping Bellingham's Future," City of Bellingham website, http://www.cob.org/services/neighborhoods/historic/hwy_99/elm.html.

As automobile ownership became widespread and the federal highway system emerged, tourists looked for inexpensive lodging near the road, drawing business away from the city center hotels. A succession of lodging types -- auto camps, tourist cabins, and finally, motels -- developed to meet the needs of automobile tourists. In a transitional period for lodging, by 1945 the area had gained the Spanish Village Auto Camp at 146 Samish Highway, as well as more conventional lodging, the Knox Cedar Chest Inn at the corner of Samish and 36th Street.

By 1955, Highway 99 had spurred construction of many motels, gas stations, and other roadside businesses in the vicinity. The city directories list seven auto courts and motels each year in 1950, 1955, and 1959.⁵³ In 1950, the Evergreen Auto Court and Motel at 1015 Samish Highway and the Lakeside Motor Hotel at Samish and 48th Street provided lodging, while the Johnson Motor Service (built 1933) at 218 Samish Highway served motorists' automobiles. Motels were cheaper to build than their predecessors, freestanding tourist cabins, because of the common walls. Their construction boomed in the late 1950s and 1960s: by 1964 there were 61,000 motels in the U.S.⁵⁴ Two motels located in southeastern Sehome in 1964 were the Key Motel and Park Motel at 212 and 101 Samish Way North, respectively.



North end of Happy Valley, just south and east of Sehome Hill. A number of houses were moved for the expansion of Western Washington University. Photo by Jack Carver.



Aloha Motel on Samish Way.

⁵³ Van Miert, *Old Hotels*, 203.

⁵⁴ John Jackle and Jefferson S. Rogers, *The Motel in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 61; James Belasco, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1979), 142-45.

In a subsequent episode of the federal highway program, the construction of Interstate-5 through Bellingham was accomplished in three phases between 1953 and 1966, moving from the north of the City to the south. The third phase affected Samish Way: the Interstate was routed to the south of Lake Padden and alongside of the Old Samish Highway. This phase was completed by between 1963 and 1966.⁵⁵

Portions of two early motels from the period before the Interstate was built survive today. The Aloha Motel at 315 North Samish Way was an expansion of the former McRae's Motor Hotel (circa 1950-60). Similarly, the Cascade Inn at 208 North Samish is a remodel of the former Belle Auto Court (built 1950), later called Bell Motel circa 1955-67.⁵⁶

Conclusion

As the original town of Sehome expanded and developed from a settlement town into the lively mixed-use neighborhood it is today, three distinct areas formed a ring around Sehome Hill. Development in the neighborhood from the mid-1850s to the present reflects local manifestations of national themes: resource extraction, entrepreneurship, commercial development, real estate speculation, and the impacts of successive forms of transportation. With the expansion of WWU over the years, the surrounding neighborhood became densely developed with varied forms of housing to serve an increasing student population. The neighborhood's plentiful built resources – grand Queen Anne-style homes, single-family bungalows, apartment buildings, motels, churches, a hospital, an armory, and a commercial business district – offer tangible evidence telling stories of its evolution from a small coal mining town into a vibrant and diverse neighborhood.



The Washington National Guard Armory, just after completion in 1910

⁵⁵ James V. Hillegas, "Pushing Forward with the Determination of the Machine Age': Interstate 5 is Built through Bellingham, Washington, 1945-1966," *The Journal of the Whatcom County Historical Society* (April 2004), 108; Jewell, e-mail of June 4, 2013.

⁵⁶ Flood, 21 (photo c. 1957); Polk directories.

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- City of Bellingham Website. <http://www.cob.org/government/index.aspx>.

APPENDIX 4

Washington State Archives, Northwest Regional Branch, Western Washington University.

Western Washington University (special collections).

Whatcom Museum of History and Art Photo Archive.

Whatcom County Genealogy Website: <http://theusge.nweb.org/wa/whatcom/directories.htm>