Researching the History of Seattle and King County Buildings

The Seattle Public Library

Special Collections Department
1000 Fourth Ave, Seattle WA 98104

In collaboration with

The King County Archives

King County

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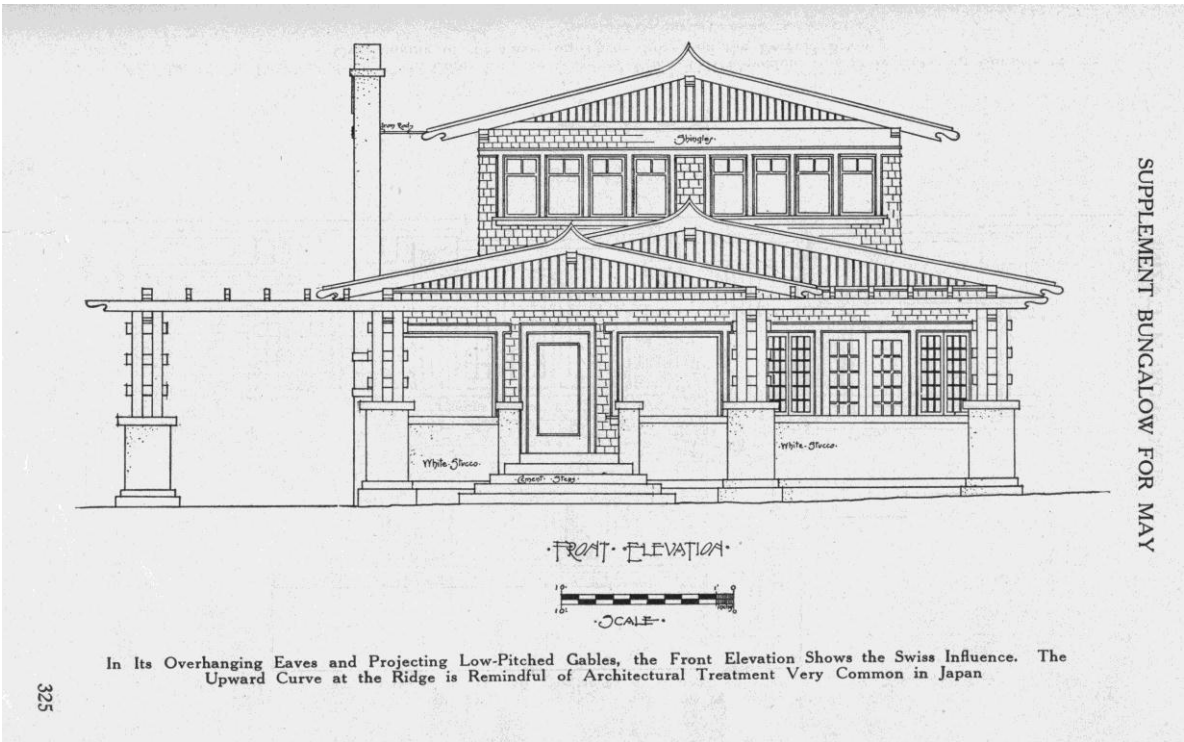

Image Source: Bungalow Magazine, May 1915, p. 325

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Overview

Why research the history of a building?

Houses, commercial buildings, parks and gardens, roads, bridges, churches, and clubs all have a history. You can find information that will help you understand when they were built and who occupied them. Learning how the building or structure was used and valued in the past can help us appreciate our communities, their growth and changes.

What sources are available for building history research?

Gather all the information you already have. If the building you're researching is your own, you may have documents such as deeds, tax assessments, articles, photographs, information from previous owners and memories from neighbors. Make copies of important documents and keep your originals at home.

Information about a building will be found in a wide variety of documents including secondary and primary materials; in various formats including print, electronic, photographic, archival, oral history, and even artifacts from the building itself. Historical records and materials are distributed among many agencies in the area, and you may need to make multiple visits as you uncover new details about your building. There may be classes offered locally that address areas of your research. Learning how to access these records and how to incorporate the information into your research in an orderly manner will save you time and improve your research.

Many good sources are available for free online, and many of these are listed in the Websites and Online Resources section of this guide. In addition to these specific resources, general web search engines (e.g., Google) can uncover a wealth of information about buildings. Search for everything you know about the building: the building itself as well as names of people associated with the building, nearby businesses, streets, events, etc. As you discover more details throughout your search continue to search online to uncover more.

Don't be afraid to talk to people. In addition to formal records, residents and neighbors often know a great deal about the history of buildings, some of which may not be written down anywhere. And don't hesitate to ask a librarian at any point along the way! Stop by the Seattle Room of The Seattle Public Library during open hours or contact us with questions.

How to use this guide

This resource guide presents the basic steps for conducting research on buildings in Seattle and King County. Each section contains tips and suggestions for different aspects in the process of building history research. Resources are mentioned briefly in the text of the guide, and full descriptions of resources with contact information and web URLs are contained in the Directory section at the end of the guide. The directory is divided into three categories:

- Agencies: Local agencies with services or collections that are of use to building history researchers. Contact information and websites are provided. Many agencies have excellent websites, although in many cases, not everything will be available online.
- Websites and Online Resources: Full addresses and descriptions of all websites mentioned in this guide. Some agency websites that are particularly useful on their own are listed in both the Agencies and Websites sections of the directory.
- Print and other Resources: Particularly useful print resources which can be found in local libraries or other collections, with descriptions of where to find them and how to use them.

When an agency, a website, or a print resource is mentioned in the text of the guide, a link will take you directly to the appropriate section of the directory. (In the case of websites, links within the document will take you directly to the website; however, you may wish to view the directory entry for websites to see the full URL and a description of what resources can be found there.)

Keeping records

Keeping accurate records of your research with full citations will make your work much more useful to you—and to future historians of the building you are researching.

Workbooks and Checklists

The Workbooks and Checklists section of this guide has forms that will help you organize the information you collect and help you use that information as you further your search.

Photograph Log

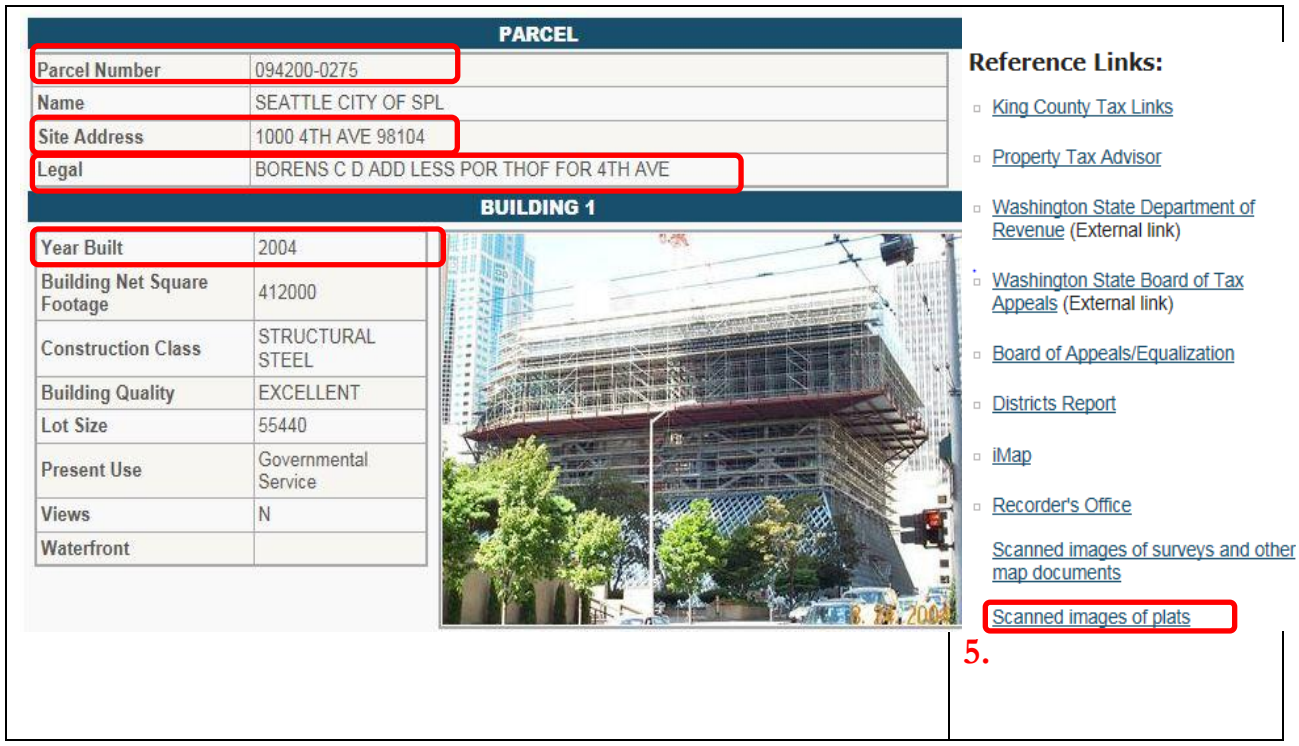
During the course of your research you'll uncover (and possibly create) many interesting photographs that you'll want to consult. Having a "research" copy will help you go back and "look again" at an image with new information you have uncovered. Keep a low resolution copy for this purpose and record the full citation for the image.

Legal Records

Legal records are generated by government agencies during the course of their work. These records are public documents, and can give you a good starting point for collecting information about a building.

Parcel Viewer (Seattle and King County)

The King County Parcel Viewer is an excellent place to collect some of the basic legal information about a piece of property. Search by address, street intersection, or parcel number to bring up a parcel, and select "Get Property Report" to view the property report with more detailed information. When the property report loads, click "Property Detail" (top bar, right side) to show the detailed report. Several key sections of the property report are particularly useful for building research.



1.

2.

3.

4.

PARCEL	
Parcel Number	094200-0275
Name	SEATTLE CITY OF SPL
Site Address	1000 4TH AVE 98104
Legal	BORENS C D ADD LESS POR THOF FOR 4TH AVE

BUILDING 1	
Year Built	2004
Building Net Square Footage	412000
Construction Class	STRUCTURAL STEEL
Building Quality	EXCELLENT
Lot Size	55440
Present Use	Governmental Service
Views	N
Waterfront	

Reference Links:

- King County Tax Links
- Property Tax Advisor
- Washington State Department of Revenue (External link)
- Washington State Board of Tax Appeals (External link)
- Board of Appeals/Equalization
- Districts Report
- iMap
- Recorder's Office
- Scanned images of surveys and other map documents
- Scanned images of plats

5.

Example Parcel Viewer Property Report

1. Parcel number: This is the numeric identifier for the property. You need this (plus the legal description) to get property records, including property record cards (1937-1972) and property folios (1972- ca 2003) from Puget Sound Regional Archives, and tax records from the King County Assessor's Office.
2. Street address: This is useful for research in city directories and for finding your property on maps. Keep in mind that the street address, street name, and street designations may have changed over time—see the Street Names section of this guide for more information about researching streets.
3. Legal description (a and b below can be found in "Property Detail"):

a. Quarter Section, Section, Township, Range: The section- township-range system describes land in relation to a specific baseline and principal meridian. The section-township-range legal description is useful for finding early land records—such as survey notes, donation land claims, homesteads, and early land transfers—prior to when property became urbanized. The description on the Parcel Viewer example can be read as "the southwest quarter of Section 32, Township 25 North, Range 4 East." Townships and ranges always have a directional designation, but land in Seattle will always be in a north township and an east range, so these directions may be left off the descriptions on the parcel viewer. One section is one square mile of land (640 acres). For more information on understanding township-range descriptions, see About.com's webpage on land records, or E. Wade Hone's *Land and property research in the United States*.
b. Plat Name, Plat Block, and Plat Lot: This is the more detailed legal description of property as residential areas were developed. This description is important because parcel numbers and addresses may have changed over time. You can use this description to find your property on historic real estate maps and to obtain a property record card (1937-1972) and a property folio (ca 1972-ca 2003) from the Puget Sound Regional Archives. The plat name is the first part of the "legal description" on the property report—in the example above, Boren's CD Addition. The plat block and lot numbers are labeled as such.

4. Year built: This is a good starting point for determining the date of construction. In many cases this date will be accurate, but it may also be an estimate based on various factors. It's always a good idea to verify the year built using additional sources, such as Seattle city directories; building permits; deeds and mortgages; Sanborn and real estate atlases; and tax assessment rolls. **Please note:** No buildings are currently listed in the King County Assessor Parcel Viewer as built in the 1800s. In 1999, in reaction to potential Y2K computer problems, the King County Assessor changed all 1899 and earlier construction dates of buildings to 1900.
5. Scanned images of plats: This link located at the bottom of the right column will take you to the King County Recorder's Office's digital image of the plat map for the location. Plat maps show the date the property was platted, original street names, platted lot lines and names of the plat/subdivision owner and developer.

Other helpful information accessible on the parcel viewer's property report (but not pictured in the above example) includes:

- Current (business & residential) and historic (primarily residential) photos
- Tax roll and sale history going back about twenty years, including names of property owners/taxpayers
- Other property details, including square footage, zoning information, and basic floor plans

Other Records

Several other sources will help you find important property records beyond what the parcel viewer covers.

Assessment Records of the Property (Seattle and King County)

The assessed value of the property is listed in the Assessment Rolls for the period 1891-1941, also on property record cards for the period 1937 to 1972, and in the King County Department of Finance Assessment Rolls and Tax Payments for the period 1974 to 2006, all located at the Puget Sound Regional Archives.

King County Real Property Assessment and Tax Rolls (1891-1941) list assessments for every parcel of land in King County for the following years – 1891 (incomplete), 1892, 1895, 1896, 1900, 1905, 1910, 1915, 1920, 1925, 1930, 1935, 1941. These records are organized by property legal description. The Assessment Rolls were usually compiled in the spring and early summer. Each listing includes a legal description, property owner, assessed value of improvements (buildings, docks, etc.), if any, who paid the property tax and date paid.

Assessment Records from ca 1983 to present are available online through the King County Parcel Viewer. Sales history is recorded on deeds at the King County Archives**.** The assessment history of a property can be interesting; for example, a sudden increase in assessments may tell you the year the building was built or when other significant improvements were made on the property. Probate records for owners may also reveal other aspects of a property's financial history including an inventory of property owned at the time of death, rent payments, maintenance and building improvements during the time the estate was being probated.

Building Permits and Plans (Seattle and King County)

Building permits are one of the best resources for documenting the construction history of a building. Original building permits usually include property owner, architect (if one was used), builder/contractor, permit date and sometimes building completion date. Later permits will document additions, remodels, repairs, etc.

Seattle: The Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD) Microfilm Library has building permits from ca 1895 to present which are organized by address. However, addresses sometimes change. If a building permit is not listed under the current address of a building, for example 915 E Pine, look at adjoining addresses (ie 911, 913, 917, 919 E Pine). Also, if a building was originally on a corner lot, lookup possible addresses which might have existed on the other street.

The pre ca 1974 permits are summarized on a permit history card, which is usually the first image on the permit microfiche. The history card lists permit number, year issued and a very brief description of the construction. Copies of the original permits can be obtained at the DPD Microfilm Library Counter.

A useful resource at the Microfilm Library Counter are the Building Permit Street Ledgers (1907-1951). Street Ledgers list every building permit issued along a specific street for the period 1907 to 1951. The

permits are entered in chronological order listing street address and building permit number. There is one series of ledgers for 1907-1930 and another series for 1931-1951.

For pre-1907 permits the Microfilm Library Counter has two fragile photocopied volumes of street ledgers. These ledgers are organized by street names, but the listings are not well organized. A street name might be listed on two, three or more pages throughout the volumes. Be aware the street names may have changed since 1907.

They also have building plans of residences constructed after 1974. For commercial buildings and apartments a few building plans exist prior to 1970 but nearly all exist after 1970.

Seattle building permits are published daily in the Daily Journal of Commerce (aka Daily Bulletin) (ca 1895-). These listings will sometimes include the architect even if he/she is not listed in the original building permit. If the original building permit is not located but the approximate construction date can be established the building permit might be located in these listings. The periodical Pacific Builder and Engineer (1904-1965) also lists building permits. Copies are available at the Seattle Public Library, Central Branch and the University of Washington Libraries, Newspapers and Microforms.

King County: Unincorporated King County and each incorporated city retain their jurisdiction's building permits. Building permits for unincorporated King County exist starting in the late 1970s and are organized by address. Contact the King County Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER) Records division. Earlier King County building permits may be listed in the Daily Journal of Commerce newspaper and in the Pacific Building and Engineer periodical. DPER has building plans after 1987.

Other ways to Establish Construction Dates (Seattle and King County)

The King County Property Record Cards (compiled in 1937 and updated through 1972) almost always list building construction dates. However, these dates are not entirely reliable for buildings constructed prior to 1937 and should be confirmed using other resources.

King County Real Property Assessment and Tax Rolls (1891-1941) mentioned above in the Assessment Records section can provide helpful information to establish building construction dates to within a five year period (or less during the 1890s). Look for the five year period when the assessed value of the improvement(s) increases from $0.00, which means the property is vacant, to some amount over $25 to $50 which likely means there is a residence on the property. If the property is in Seattle look up the owner/taxpayer name in the Seattle directories during that five year period to determine if, and when, the owner first occupied the house.

City directories can be good resources for establishing building dates. If the original house owner occupied the residence it would be possible to establish the construction date to within one year using city directories. Polk directories were usually compiled in the later winter and spring of the publication year. For a listing of available directories of other King County towns go to the Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries website.

Side sewer cards and maps listing sewer connection permits are located at the Seattle Department of Planning and Development website. These permits allowed building owners to hook up to a sewer line. If a house was constructed after sewers were laid in the street, the sewer permit may establish an approximate construction date. Seattle Public Utilities Records Vault has records to establish the year sewer lines were laid on specific streets.

King County Deeds and Mortgages (1853 to present) are located at the King County Archives. If the building construction date is narrowed down to a three- to five-year period, deeds, mortgages, and/or liens may help to establish the construction date. If the seller is a carpenter, builder, or contractor, he may have constructed the house to sell. The seller's occupation may be listed in the Seattle Polk Directories or United States Census records. If the property purchaser obtains a mortgage, it may be to finance the building construction. Liens might be placed by building contractors or sub-contractors on the property during construction. The General Recordings Index (1853-ca 1971) indexes deeds, mortgages and liens. Copies of documents can be obtained from the King County Archives.

Maps and atlases can help determine when a building was constructed. In particular, Baist and Kroll real estate atlases, and Sanborn Fire Insurance maps show footprints of buildings over time. By comparing maps from different years, you can see when a building first appears and help determine if building additions have been added to the residence. A number of King County towns have Sanborn maps which are listed in Maps and Atlases section.

Property Owners (Seattle and King County)

There are various sources you can consult to find the names of property owners:

- Property deeds and indexes are located at the King County Archives. There are two groups of indexes, both organized by date. One series is organized by the seller's name and the other series is organized by the purchaser's name.
- Assessment records are also helpful, because the person assessed for tax is typically the property owner: Assessment rolls (1892–1941) and property record cards (1937–1972) are held by the Puget Sound Regional Archives. The Assessment Rolls, organized by legal description, list the property owner and who paid the property tax. The Property Record Cards may not list every owner.
- Seattle tract books (1907–ca 1990), also known as Property Abstracts, held by the Seattle Department of Planning and Development list property sales by legal description. The Tract Books are organized by Plat name and Block number, list ownership changes and provide deed citations.
- Seattle City directories list residents, who may or may not be property owners. Beginning in 1938, the R.L. Polk added a new section to Seattle city directories – a reverse directory organized by address that uses a circle-within-a-circle symbol to show that the building occupant is the building owner.
- Census records (1860-1940) show occupancy but may also indicate whether the occupants are renters or owners.

- Real estate atlases and subdivision maps may tell you who owned larger pieces of unplatted property at certain times. They do not provide owners of platted lots.
- Searching Bureau of Land Management (BLM) General Land Office (GLO) Cadastral Records by section-township-range legal description will show you the first recorded private owners of a piece of property, and how the property was obtained from the federal government (homestead, donation land claim, cash purchase, etc.).
- The back side of Side Sewer Cards, available from the Department of Planning and Development's website, list property owners and the date when side sewers were installed or maintained.
- Building permits often list the property owner at the time the building permit was issued.
- King County Archives has microfiche of an Excise Tax Index (1961-1976) organized by legal description and a Sales History Index (1973-1981) organized by parcel number. Both provide property sales references.
- King County Parcel Viewer lists property sales deed references from ca 1983 to present (not all property sales during this period may be listed).

Real Estate Sales Price

Warranty deeds may include the real estate sales price. But, often deeds will list the price as $1.00 or $10.00 and other valuable considerations, or similar language, which is not the actual price paid. Following are some ways to establish the real estate sales price.

1853 to April 1935

a) The warranty deed may list the sales price.

b) A real estate contract will likely list the sales price although some contracts may not include the down payment. After the real estate contract is paid off the seller will issue a warranty deed to the purchaser.

c) Mortgages may list the sales price but they may not include the down payment. When searching for mortgages in the General Recording Grantee/Grantor Indexes be aware that the person receiving the loan is the grantor and the person or lending company that is giving the loan is the grantee.

May 1935 to Present

The sales price can usually be established for real estate sales that occurred after May 1935 even though the price is not listed on the deed by the following means:

Conveyance Tax (May 1, 1935 to April 30, 1982) During this period a real estate sales conveyance tax was paid and conveyance tax stamps were placed on the deed. The tax rate was $1.00 per $1,000.00 of value. Add up the conveyance tax stamps and multiply by 1,000. Please note: Do not include documentary stamps which were used for filing and recording fees.

Excise Tax (April 1, 1951 to present) Excise tax affidavits list the real estate sales price. The affidavit number is listed on the deed and start with the letter 'E'. Copies of affidavits are available at the King

County Archives for the period May 4, 1951 to February 5, 1952 and from January 1, 1961 to present. (April 1951, February 1952 to December 1960) the amount of the excise tax is usually noted on the deeds. For the period April 1, 1951 to June 30, 1982, multiply the tax amount by 100 to arrive at the sales price.

Inherited Real Estate (1853-present) Since inherited property is not sold to the heirs no sales price can be established. The appraised value of the property may be listed in the probate file of the deceased.

Land Records

The land on which a building sits also has a rich history that can be uncovered. Seattle's landscape has undergone enormous changes throughout its history. Many parts of the city have been raised, lowered, or otherwise engineered to create more developable land. Questions to investigate include: What was on the property before the building you're researching? How has the land changed over time? How has it been developed and divided?

Native American Settlements (Seattle & King County)

Most written records begin with cadastral surveys and donation land claims. However, Native American settlements can be documented in this region and make an interesting starting point for land research. Two sources for an overview of Native history in what is now Seattle and vicinity are Tom Dailey's *Coast Salish Map* and Coll Thrush's *Native Seattle* which has a section titled "An Atlas of Indigenous Seattle" (p. 209-255) Cadastral Survey Township maps and field notes (1855 and later) may reference Native American trails.

Other Native American resources include:

- *The Geographical Names Used by the Indians of the Pacific Coast* at the University of Washington Libraries. Much of volume 12 (April 1922) p. 175-194 relates to the Puget Sound region.
- *Puget Sound Geography* by T.T. Waterman is located at The Seattle Public Library, Seattle Room.
- *The Duwamish, Lummi, Whidbey Island, Skagit, upper Skagit, Swinomish, Kikiallus, Snohomish, Snoqualmie, Stillaguamish, Suquamish, Samish, Puyallup, Squaxin, Skokomish, upper Chehalis, Muckleshoot, Nooksack, Chinook and San Juan Islands tribes of Indians, claimants, vs. the United States of America, defendant. Consolidated petition. No. F-275* located at the University of Washington Libraries.
- 4Culture *Native American Heritage Resources* is a bibliography of books and periodicals relating the Native Americans in King County and vicinity.

Cadastral Surveys (Seattle and King County)

Original cadastral survey plats maps (also called township maps) and field notes are available online from the Bureau of Land Management and on microfiche at the University of Washington Libraries, Newspapers and Microforms. The Washington Digital Archives also has digital images of some of the Cadastral Survey maps. Survey plats are maps showing any land ownership occupants prior to at the

time of the survey; survey plats use township-range designations. Field notes are what were used to create the survey plats. Field notes show detailed information about the land prior to development: for example, trees, some ground cover, creeks, other physical features, roads, Indian trails and existing land occupants at the time of the survey. These are the best source documenting the pre-settlement natural environment. The area within the current Seattle City Limits was surveyed from 1855 to 1862. The rest of the county was surveyed from 1855 to the 1890s.

Transfers of Land and Property Sales (Seattle and King County)

The Bureau of Land Management General Land Office Records website allows you to find the original transfer of land from the federal government to an individual owner or homesteader. The records show how the land was first acquired and the date of legal transfer. Different types of transfers (e.g., donation land claims, homestead grants, cash sales, and scrip/warrants) have different requirements and may produce additional records. You can order the land entry case files or surrendered military bounty land warrants from the National Archives using Form Number NATF 84.

The National Archives Pacific Northwest Region (Seattle) has the Bureau of Land Management General Land Office (GLO) Tract Books which provide the date the homestead claim was originally made and the date it was finalized. The Bureau of Land Management Land Patent website provides only the date the homestead claim was finalized. There have probably been many transfers of land between individuals since the original transfer of federal land. The For later sales the King County Archives has, on microfilm, deed indexes and copies of deeds, which show land transfers, on microfilm. The Puget Sound Regional Archives has original deed indexes, and the King County Archives has the original deed books. See Property Owners above for other sources.

Recorded Plat Maps (Seattle and King County)

When areas started to become urbanized and residential areas were being established, land developers created subdivisions and platted their land into small tracts or residential lots and laid out streets. Scanned images of these plats are available online through the King County Parcel Viewer Property Report. Copies are also available at the King County Recorder's Office and the King County Archives. Plat maps show the date of platting, original street names, and names of the property owners or developers filing the plat.

Unrecorded Plat Maps (Seattle and King County)

Some plat maps were not officially recorded but may be referenced in deeds as unrecorded plats. These plats are not available through the King County Recorder. Some unrecorded plat maps are available through King County Archives.

Environmental Impact Statements (Seattle and King County)

Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for nearby properties can provide a wealth of historical information about land and property, if your property is near a project for which an EIS was generated. The Seattle Public Library has many draft and final EISs regarding construction projects, and many can also be found online by searching for the name of the project. Drafts often have more history than final statements, so be sure to look at both if available. EISs are created when the use of a property is

changing significantly—especially after the 1970s. Search for nearby properties such as parks, redevelopment of industrial areas, cleanup sites, civic improvement projects, etc. Copies of some EIS reports are also located at the University of Washington Libraries.

Maps and Atlases

Maps and atlases can tell you a great deal about your property and the surrounding area. Look at changes over time, and different maps of the same property. Maps can show you clearly when street names and addresses change, when buildings appear, and some information about construction. For more information about maps and atlases and where to find them, see the Maps and Atlases section of the Directory in this guide.

People

Buildings are more than just structures. From architects to builders to owners to residents to neighbors, many people are associated with any building. As Kyvig and Marty put it in *Nearby History*: "People walk around them, go into them, move up and down and about in them; look at them from the outside and out of them from the inside; work, play, eat, sleep, relax, entertain, make love, worry, and squabble in them. Buildings interact with the economic, social, aesthetic, and physical lives of those who use them. People and buildings exist in an organic relationship."

This section provides some tips and suggestions for tracking down the people associated with a building and researching their histories. The genealogy librarians at The Seattle Public Library can also help you with your research. Other area genealogical societies and libraries, such as the Seattle Genealogical Society and the Fiske Genealogical Library, have additional genealogy and local history materials.

City Directories (Seattle)

The first Seattle residential directory was published in 1876. For the next decade a number of Seattle directories were published locally. In 1887 and 1888 R.L. Polk & Co. issued a Puget Sound Directory which included a Seattle section. In 1889 they started a Seattle directory which, except for some years during the 1890s, 1940s, and early 1950s, was issued annually until 1996.

City directories typically include the names, occupations, and addresses of residents. Beginning in 1912 the Seattle Polk Directories started including the wife's name with the husband's entry. By scanning through the other individuals with the same last name you may find other relatives living at the same address. Starting in 1938, the Polk directories include reverse listings by address, making it relatively easy to find out who was living at a particular address. For earlier reverse listings (the first in 1928) there are "house and street" directories, which typically only include households with telephones. Cole's/Cole directories published from 1969 to date continue to provide reverse listings by address and later also by telephone number. Seattle directories were generally compiled in late winter and spring of the publication year.

Seattle Polk Directories (1889-1996) are located at The Seattle Public Library, Central Library; Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries; Puget Sound Regional Archives, and located at the

Bellevue College campus (earliest 1910, collection not complete). The Seattle Public Library online collection has about thirty Seattle directories (1867-1940) that have been digitized, including a 1928 Reverse 'house and street' address directory.

Seattle directories were generally compiled in late winter and spring of the publication year.

City and Suburban Directories (King County)

Directories of most areas and towns in King County, outside of Seattle, were not published consistently leaving many gaps in the date ranges covered. The Seattle Public Library, Central Library History desk on level 9 has a list of their city directory holdings. Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries webpage has a list of King County and Pacific Northwest directories in their collection.

Phone Books (Seattle and King County)

The Seattle Public Library, Central Library History desk on level 9 has an extensive collection of Seattle and King County telephone books. Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries has a search page to locate King County and Pacific Northwest telephone books in their collection.

Census Records (Seattle and King County)

U.S., Territorial, and State Census records for Washington, King County, and Seattle can provide useful information about individuals and their families. The amount of information varies from year to year, but typically includes names of everyone living in the household along with their occupations. Starting in 1880 the U.S. Census lists family relationships, parents' birthplaces, and street names for urban residents. Later U.S. Census records from 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930 & 1940 also provide the full street address for urban residents. These records are available online through free (familysearch.org and the Washington Digital Archives) and subscription (Ancestry Library Edition & HeritageQuest) databases and are searchable by name, age, birthplace, etc. If you don't have the name of the resident, you can determine the Census Enumeration District for a particular address using the E.D. Finder search tool at Stevemorse.org. You can then browse the U.S. Census by Enumeration District to find the street name, address, and residents. It's important to note that the street may be listed on multiple pages and even and odd numbered houses are often listed separately. If you have the name of the owner/occupant and are unable to find him/her listed, try searching using the Soundex Code or looking through the census enumeration district that the house is located in (the occupants name might be misspelled or incorrectly transcribed).

Death Records (Seattle and King County)

Locating the date of death for an individual is standard genealogy work. Official death records for Seattle and King County start in 1881 and 1891, respectfully. Sometimes an individual is listed in both Seattle and King County death ledgers. One of the ledgers may have information on an individual not included in the other ledger. The records prior to 1900 are spotty and are not a complete list of deaths in Seattle and King County.

These early death records are available in print, microfilm, and online depending on the time period. From 1907 to the present, death records are kept by the state and can also be acquired through King

County Vital Statistics. Indexes are available on microfilm and online. Once you have the date of death you can request a death certificate, search for an obituary, and check for probate records, each of which can provide useful information about an individual and his/her family.

Indexes (see Directory for full citations):

- 1881–1907. Seattle death records, 1881–1907, by South King County Genealogical Society. Transcribed from the original volume which is located at the King County Archives. This published volume contains some transcription errors.
- 1891–1907. King County, Washington deaths, 1891–1907, by South King County Genealogical Society. Transcribed from the original volume located at the King County Archives. This published volume contains some transcription errors. A digital version is available through the Washington State Digital Archives.
- 1883-1960. Washington, Deaths, 1883–1960 – Ancestry Library Edition.
- 1891-1907. Washington, County Deaths, 1891-1907 – Ancestry Library Edition & FamilySearch.org.
- 1907–1960. Washington Death Index – FamilySearch.org & Washington Digital Archives. Index includes spouse and parents' names when available.
- 1907–1964. Washington Death Index on microfilm. Separate films by decade or 5-year period. Names are organized by Soundex Code and first name. (To find Soundex codes for particular names, use RootsWeb's Soundex Converter.)
- 1940–1996. Washington Death Index – Ancestry Library Edition . Index includes name, date and place of death, age, and for later records Social Security Number. Index is missing most records from 1955-1964.
- ~1962–Present. Social Security Death Index – Ancestry Library Edition & America's Genealogy Bank.
- 1965–2000; 2000–2003. Washington Death Index & supplement on microfiche. Names are organized by Soundex Code and first name. (To find Soundex codes for particular names, use RootsWeb's Soundex Converter.)

Obituaries & News Articles (Seattle and King County)

If you know the name and date of death of an individual, you may find an obituary published in a local newspaper within a week to ten days following the date of death. Obituaries often provide information about an individual's life, career, and surviving family members. News article obituaries (non-paid) or other news items may be indexed in The Seattle Public Library's Northwest Index and the University of Washington's Pacific Northwest Index. For a full text search of the Seattle Times you can check Seattle Times Historical Archives or World Newspaper Archive, both of which include the *Seattle Times* from 1900 through 1984. For more recent obituaries from the *Seattle Times*, you can check Legacy.com, which provides the date of publication along with the beginning text of the obituary. You can order the full obituary directly for $1.95 or contact The Seattle Public Library to ask about getting a copy from the microfilm. Historical issues of the *Seattle Times* and *Post-Intelligencer*, as well as a number of other

historical newspapers, are available on microfilm on Level 9 of The Seattle Public Library's Central Library.

A digital version of the Seattle Times (1900-present) with full text keyword search is available through The Seattle Public Library (for cardholders) and the University of Washington Libraries. Search suggestions – search by address including variants (3225 N Union St; 3225 No Union, etc.); names of occupants and/or owners (First and last name or initial & last name; Middle name and last name, or initials & and last name; or variant spellings of last name, etc.). You can limit search by date range.

The website Find a Grave can also be an excellent source for death information. In addition to death dates and locations of gravesites, this website often includes photos and biographical information. Users can add records and information to the site, so it is growing daily. The Seattle Genealogical Society provides a local obituary search services for a small fee. The funeral home and cemetery may have additional records in their archives as well.

Marriage Records (Seattle and King County)

There is no single comprehensive index of marriage records in King County. Various records are held at the King County Archives, the Puget Sound Regional Archives, and the King County Recorder's Office. The King County Archives has a helpful webpage on determining how to find different types of records by date range. All King County marriage records are digitized and available online.

The marriages from 1855 to 1989 are available online through the Washington State Digital Archives and the marriages from 1990 to present can be ordered through the King County Archives or the King County Recorder's Office. At the Washington State Digital Archives webpage, try the minimum number of research terms and be aware that there may be transcription errors. The Seattle Public Library has a statewide marriage index from for the period 1968 to 2003. The King County marriage returns that exist are also available through the Washington Digital Archives. The Seattle Public Library has a statewide marriage index from the period 1968 to 2003.

Familysearch.org also includes Washington State Marriage Records 1855–2008 (Incomplete, and does not include King County).

Court Records, Including Divorce, Probate and Wills (Seattle and King County)

Civil, Divorce, Probate, and Criminal case files often have a wealth of information on individuals. The King County Superior Court Clerk's office has case files and indexes to all Superior Court cases. The Puget Sound Regional Archives has indexes to all civil and probate cases from ca 1889 to ca 1972. The Washington State Digital Archives has a database indexing all Territorial Court Cases (1854-1889) which they call Frontier Justice. For information on ways to obtain King County Court records see the King County Archives website on finding court and legal records.

Divorce Records (Seattle and King County)

For divorce cases in King County (1855-present), contact the Superior Court Clerk. For historical divorce records in King County from 1854 to 1977 (index) and 1854 to 1971 (case files), contact the Puget Sound Regional Archives. The Seattle Public Library has a statewide divorce index for 1968 to 2003.

Washington Courts webpage has a statewide court case index from the early 1980s to present. For additional information about online divorce indexes and searching tools see the King County Archives' website on frequently requested records.

Probate Records and Wills (Seattle and King County)

Probate is the process of validating wills and distributing estates, when supervised by a court. Wills, if they existed, would usually be filed with the Probate Case file. For historic and current Probate case files, contact either the King County Superior Court Clerk's Office (1854 to present) or the Puget Sound Regional Archives (1853 to 1977). 73To access early probate records, you can check the Index of probate court records, 1854–1917, King County, Washington published by the Eastside Genealogical Society. For additional information on locating probate records, see the King County Archives' website on frequently requested records.

FamilySearch.org has digitized a selection of King County Probate Records from the mid to late 1800s

Locating Former Building Occupants & Their Relatives

Living descendants, relatives and neighbors can often provide a wealth of information about the people associated with a building, from personal recollections to records and family histories. Some tips for finding living people:

- Obituaries for surviving family members
- Wills and probate records for heirs
- The Reference USA subscription database, available to Seattle Public Library cardholders, provides current listings by name, address, and phone number for the United States.
- Local telephone directories - The Seattle Public Library and the Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries have extensive holdings of phone books.
- Local city directories - The Seattle Public Library and the Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries have extensive holdings of directories. Long term nearby residents can be identified by going through the reverse city directories.
- Old neighbors can be a good source of information. Look in the reverse address sections of R. L. Polk and Co. Directories over a span of years to identify long term residents living near the house. Contact them about neighborhood history and occupants of the house being researched.
- Local Cole's reverse directories with listings by address and telephone number
- U.S. Phone and Address Directories, 1993–2002 and U.S. Public Records Index sub-databases in the Ancestry Library Edition subscription database provide information from directories and other public records.
- Sound Politics Washington State Voter Database provides information on currently registered voters.
- Finding birthdays & related persons in one step on the Stevemorse.org website provides a one-step form for searching multiple online public records search databases. Most of the public records sites charge a fee for a full report, but there are usually enough details provided for free that will help you locate the people you're looking for.

- The King County Law Library has a public sleuthing webpage of links to public record websites.
- Searching on Facebook and other social networking sites can often turn up information about living people—including contact information.
- If the house or building you are interested in is not your own, go talk to the people who live there. Tenants, even, may know things, and certainly the building owners do. Likely they'll even take you on a tour if you ask politely.

Structure and Style of the Building

Now you can take a closer look at the building itself. What materials is it made of? Are they original? Does the building represent a particular architectural style, or is it a hodgepodge of different styles? Understanding the details of the physical building is helpful both for historical context and for preservation.

The Structure of the Building

Understanding the construction and materials of your building helps you get to know your building well. Historical clues can be hidden within the physical materials. For example, bricks manufactured before a certain date were often made locally, and may be stamped with the name or symbol of the producer. Crawl spaces were often excavated after a house was built; over time, people brought bucketfuls of dirt up through the kitchen. You may be able to find the actual soil in the backyard.

What to Look For

The building's structure can help you to date the building and its component parts, and to understand the methodology used to make it. What tools were used? What materials were available? Where did they come from? What did builders have to do to make the building? Looking at the specific components of the structure also helps you to develop a vocabulary when comparing your building to others. For preservation and restoration work, familiarity with the physical structure of the building will help you to decide whether to save, restore, or replace certain elements.

Every element of the structure can tell you something about the history of the building, and you can learn more about each of them. Here are some suggestions for questions to ask and details to pay attention to:

Construction

In the majority of residential buildings, there was no architect or design professional. So locating the "original" blueprints for a house will be impossible. However, a close examination of the physical structure can reveal a number of important details about the construction of the building. The foundation materials may include brick, concrete, concrete block, or stone. The inside walls of the foundation may contain clues about the uses of the cellar area as a food storage area or additional living space. In some instances houses were built over a spring and supplied potable water for the household. There may be water stains or marks in the basement indicating the possibility that the cold water from the spring was used as an ad hoc refrigerator. The chimney most likely will originate in the basement and may have been converted to a furnace heating system at a later date. The foundation may not be as

large as the building above it and this could indicate an addition was constructed after the original building. By comparing the location of the building with the diagram on fire insurance and real estate atlases, you might discover if it had been moved on the site, perhaps reoriented.

Many houses in the Seattle area are framed in wood purchased from local mills. Commercial buildings will most likely be made from brick, masonry, and stone with metal or wood framing. During a remodel you might be able to find a mark or stamp on the wood that will give the name of the local sawmill or dealer. In the case of a brick building, you might be able to find the name of the brick manufacturer. In either case additional research can be done to learn more about these companies, such as where they were located and how long they survived.

Most residential construction in this region uses “platform framing” in which shorter lumber pieces are used to build each floor (platform) of the building. However, there are some buildings that predate the widespread use of platform framing and in these you might find large old-growth lumber used as posts or other supports.

The exterior of the building may be covered with wood clapboards in one of several styles. Some clapboards are beveled and overlap. Their widths can vary. Some clapboards are called “shiplap” and form a smooth façade. It is not unusual to find a house where these original clapboards have been covered with asbestos or asphalt siding. In the original building the window trim would have been installed over the clapboards and thus would protrude. The asbestos siding is installed over the clapboard and right up to the window trim.

The chimney may be a decorative part of the exterior of the building and have fieldstone, brick, cut stone, or masonry detailing.

Flooring in a building is attached over the floor joists (larger dimensional lumber that forms the skeleton of the floor). There is usually a subfloor which in older buildings can be tongue-and-groove Douglas fir; later, oak boards would be used. Some of the flooring can be wide fir boards. Generally the subfloor was covered by a hardwood floor often covered in houses with carpet. In bathrooms tile was usually installed on the floor. In kitchens you might find original linoleum hiding under vinyl titles.

Walls are made by attaching material to the studs. This material can be a lathe (a lattice) used to form a grid for plaster. The lathe and plaster walls will look uneven and be cracked. Some walls were covered with panels of wood. Wallpaper coverings are common—in fact, you may find several layers of wallpaper. In some rooms, notably dining rooms, you may find a brocade wall covering. By the 1950s drywall or “sheetrock” was becoming more common.

Electric service in the house may have been added after the house was built. Early “knob and tube” wiring may be found in attic spaces but most of it has been replaced in residential architecture in this region. Light fixtures like sconces and ceiling mounts will probably be original to the house (or to the date when the electric service was installed.)

Water service to the building may have started out as a well and cistern in the yard. Soon a handpump in a large sink in the kitchen would have brought water directly into the house. Water to the bathroom along with "indoor plumbing" meaning either a sewer connection or a septic drain field would have been welcome improvements.

Most houses in Seattle had some form of central heating. Wood and, more importantly, coal were fuels used. The coal mines southeast of Lake Washington were important sources.

The doors in a house are often original, but may be covered with layers of paint from past remodeling. The hanging hardware and the door knobs and coverplates may also be original (and covered with paint). Try to locate the name of the manufacturer of the hardware and look for early manufacturers' catalogs to see if you can find a picture of the original. The hardware on built-ins may prove interesting as well.

Insulation has had an interesting history. Many houses were not insulated at all while other builders tried to plug up the gaps with anything handy. Old heavy blotters used by newspaper printers to interleave the lead type of a page must have been free because they are very common as insulation. You may also find old newspapers and magazines. All of these artifacts contain interesting history of the day.

Changes to the physical structure of the building or the property can also be interesting to look at. For example, have additions been made since the structure was first built? Has the lot been subdivided? Have there been outbuildings (e.g., garage, shop, privy, chicken coop, barn)?

Resources

You can learn a great deal about the structure of a building simply by taking a close look at the building and the surrounding area. Take some photographs of the interior, exterior, and each floor. You might even want to engage in some backyard excavation, particularly around outbuildings—this may be the only way to find out how outbuildings were used. Take an archaeologist's view of your yard: excavation can produce artifacts, and give you a better sense of what it was like to live day-to-day in the building.

You may unearth a potshard, a bottle or a long lost marble. Depending on what you find there may a catalog for the "collectible." For example, the old marble may be in a catalog of children's toys from that period. Bottles of all kinds have been documented by collectors who prize early specimens. Handle these discoveries carefully. You may want to consult a book such as Jane S. Long's *Caring for your family treasures.*

Several other sources can tell you things about the structure that you might not be able to find through observation alone:

- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Seattle (1884 to 1960) can provide much detail about the physical construction and uses of a building, the presence of outbuildings, changes in orientation, and changes in the landscape (e.g., streets and nearby buildings).
- Seattle building permits (ca 1895 to present), available at the Seattle Department of Planning and Development in the Microfilm Library, can tell you about original construction and later

additions. Building permits usually include property owner, architect, if one was used, and the builder. They also provide the original address and, if the building was moved, the permits sometimes include the former address.

- Unincorporated King County building permits (late 1970s to present) are available at the Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER) Records counter.
- King County Assessor Property record cards (Seattle and King County), held by the Puget Sound Regional Archives, can tell you about building materials, additions, and other changes. These records were originally compiled from 1937 to 1940 and include photographs of every significant building. These records were continually updated and photographs were taken of new buildings constructed from 1941 to ca 2003 and additional photographs of preexisting buildings were taken if there were significant alterations to the exterior. Building photographs are sometimes available of houses built at one location and later moved and of buildings that no longer exist. These records are organized by parcel number and legal description.
- Historic photo collections may have a picture of your building, especially if it's prominent or if it was constructed by a well-known architect. Even if your building is not particularly noteworthy, historic photos of nearby buildings (next door, across the street, etc.) or public works projects may have your building in the background. There are many excellent local digital photo collections, including University of Washington Libraries Digital Collections, Seattle Municipal Archives Photograph Collection, the Museum of History and Industry's (MOHAI) Photo Archive and The Seattle Public Library's Seattle Historical Photograph Collection. (Many of these collections also have numerous historical photos which have not yet been digitized. See the Directory section of this guide for more about specific collections, including contact information.) Former owners or residents of the building may also have photos. If your building existed anytime from the late 1930s until ca 2003, the property record card held at the Puget Sound Regional Archives likely also has a photo taken during that time. The property report available via the King County Parcel Viewer often has current and historic photos of buildings.
- Check lists of landmarked buildings to find a structure that is similar to yours. You may want to read more about the landmarked building for clues and ideas about additional research. The process to gain landmark status requires considerable research which can be helpful if you want to incorporate historic elements in updates, restorations, or remodels.
- Catalogs/pattern books were produced by architects and builders to advertise the types of buildings offered. Some manufacturers of building parts such as doors, windows, staircases, and hardware produced these catalogs which can be helpful in determining the look of the original installation.

The Style of the Building

Determining the architectural style of a building can be an exercise in frustration since many buildings were not designed to embody one particular genre. Elements from several styles are often used in the design of a building with varying degrees of success. Try to isolate the various elements by using a style guide, house "plan books," or buildings that are similar to yours that have been identified as historic landmarks.

Style guides and plan books

Style guides for residential architecture include (full citations in Directory):

- McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A field guide to American houses*.
- Poppeliers, John C., S. Allen Chambers, Jr. *What style is it?: a guide to American architecture*.
- Woodbridge, Sally Byrne. *Guide to architecture in Washington State: an environmental perspective*.
- Frank, Ann Wall. *Northwest style: Interior design and architecture in the Pacific Northwest*. San Francisco: Chronicle, 1999.
- Swope, Caroline T. *Classic houses of Seattle: high style to vernacular, 1870-1950*. Portland, OR: Timber Press, 2005.

House plan books can be good examples of pre- and post-World War Two architecture. Search for these in The Seattle Public Library catalog. From the main catalog screen, select "Subject" from the drop-down menu, and enter "Architecture, Domestic – United States – Designs and Plans" in the search box (you can leave out the punctuation marks). Look for plan books from the time or style period of your building. (Many such plan books/catalogs have been reprinted.) Examples include:

- Yoho, Judd and Merritt, Edward L. *Craftsman bungalows: design from the Pacific Northwest*.
- Radford, William A. *The Most Popular Homes of the Twenties*.
- Stickley, Gustav. *Craftsman houses: The 1913 catalog*.

Many other books about Seattle homes and architecture can be found by searching The Seattle Public Library catalog. From the main catalog screen, select "Subject" from the drop-down menu, and enter "Architecture, Domestic – Washington (State) – Seattle" in the search box (you can leave out the punctuation marks).

Architecture Websites

A number of helpful online resources exist for learning more about the style and architecture of a building (websites and descriptions are also listed in the "Websites & Online Resources" section of the Directory):

- University of Washington Libraries Digital Collections' Architecture of the Pacific Northwest Database is a database of architectural drawings representing regionally significant architects and designers from the 1880s to the 1980s. The Building Styles section includes descriptions of styles with links to drawings representing each style.
- The Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation provides an Architectural Style Guide for use in preparing nominations for state and national registers of historic places. It explains specific architectural details that can be found in historic buildings.
- Old Houses Style Guide features descriptions of different architectural styles with well-illustrated examples and further resources.
- About.com: Architecture includes house style guides with photos, diagrams, and building plans.
- The HistoryLink article "Housebuilding in Seattle: A History" provides an overview of Seattle housebuilding, with explanations of styles and prominent examples.

- A Seattle Dream Homes page on Seattle Architecture includes information about Seattle architects and architecture. While this site is poorly organized and somewhat difficult to navigate, it has links to some useful resources for identifying the style of a house, including a guide to popular Seattle architectural styles by decade.
- The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods Historical Sites Database includes detailed descriptions and photographs of many Seattle buildings, and is searchable by the architectural style of a property. Even if your building is not included on the survey, looking at other buildings can give you information about the style of your building.
- The website for the Documentation and Conservation of the Modern Movement, Western WA has a style guide for Modernism.

Landmarks and historic building directories

Another way to learn how to identify your building's style and materials is to study other historic structures that are listed on several landmarks inventories. Landmark nominations are extensively researched and may offer clues about your building or suggest additional avenues of research. Plus, you may be able to visit and tour these buildings and experience their historical significance firsthand. Each of the lists (city, county, and state) includes information about the landmarking process.

Official landmarks lists and designation information exist at city, county, state, and federal levels:

- Seattle Landmarks and Designation
- King County Historic Preservation Program
- National and State Register of Historic Sites, maintained by Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (includes National Register of Historic Places, Heritage Barn Register, and the Washington Heritage Register)

Not all historic buildings have achieved landmark status. Many useful guides describe the histories and locations of Seattle's historic buildings, including:

- Seattle Department of Neighborhoods Historical Sites Database. The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods also has nominations to landmark buildings including files on nominations approved and denied.
- Library of Congress: Historic American Buildings Survey.
- Historic Seattle Preservation and Development Authority. *An urban resource inventory for Seattle [a visual inventory of buildings & urban design resources for Seattle]*.
- Crowley, Walt. *National Trust guide Seattle: America's guide for architecture and history travelers.*
- Swope, Carolyn. *Classic houses of Seattle: High style to vernacular, 1870–1950*.
- Elenga, Maureen R. *Seattle architecture: A walking guide to downtown*.
- Aldredge, Lydia S., ed. *Impressions of imagination: Terra-cotta Seattle*.

Architects and Builders

In many cases you can research the specific architects and builders who designed and constructed your building. Some tips for researching these names:

- Building permits, available from the Seattle Department of Planning and Development, Microfilm Library may list the names of architects and builders.
- If the building is included on the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods' Historical Site search, this page will generally list architects.
- Many of the suggestions in the People section of this guide are useful for finding out about the people who worked on your house.
- The Seattle Public Library Seattle Room has a card file and scrapbooks on architects and architecture, which references news articles and articles in architectural publications. The University of Washington Libraries' Pacific Coast Architecture Database has similar information in electronic form.
- Jeffrey Ochsner's *Shaping Seattle architecture* is an excellent resource for learning about major Seattle architects. The book includes 45 in depth architect profiles plus an appendix with brief descriptions of about 80 additional architects.
- Building permits and announcements (Seattle and sometimes King County) The Daily Journal of Commerce (aka Daily Bulletin) (ca 1893 to present) and the Pacific Builder and Engineer (1904 to 1965) may include building permit lists and announcements which may include more details on the buildings including the architect's name. Seattle building permits are always listed. King County permits are occasionally listed.
- Dietz, Duane. *Architects and Landscape Architects of Seattle, 1876 to 1959*; an annotated list compiled from city directories (Seattle: 1994). Available at Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries. Compiled from the Architects' category in the Polk Seattle directory classified business section.
- The Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries has clipping files on many local architects. The files include photocopies of articles and newspaper clippings. Some have lists of buildings designed, etc.

Historical Context

Understanding the context means that you see how your building was a part of the general activities of the time. Was your property a farm or orchard? Was it close to a school, a church, or one of the early transportation lines? When did electricity, running water and indoor plumbing arrive in your neighborhood? What was it like when The Great War finally ended? What sort of lives did the people who lived in your house lead? Were there weddings in the living room?

It is helpful to have a basic understanding of the sequence of historical events—a timeline or chronology, so that you can fit your house and people into the context of the times. HistoryLink has a brief thumbnail history of Seattle you may find helpful. Other excellent sources of Seattle History include Clarence Bagley's *History of Seattle*, Murray Morgan's *Skid Road*, and Richard Berner's *Seattle in the 20th Century* which is a three volume work covering the period 1900 to 1950 with excellent footnotes and an extensive bibliography.

After you have developed a timeline and learned more about the structure, you'll want to read about the context of your neighborhood. Neighborhoods are dynamic places where changes happen all the time. The old school is torn down to make way for a new library, the big house becomes a bed-and-breakfast, widening a street and changes in zoning create a more densely populated neighborhood. Maybe you have the last fruit tree from the old orchard of the original settlement. Reading about neighborhood history will put your building in context and make its history come alive for you.

Seattle Neighborhood and King County Town Histories

Numerous sources are available to help you learn about the history of Seattle neighborhoods and King County towns. Here are a few tips to get you started:

- Search The Seattle Public Library catalog for Seattle neighborhood or King County town histories. From the main catalog screen, select "Subject" from the drop-down menu and enter "[neighborhood name] (Seattle, Wash.) – History" in the search box (you can leave out the punctuation marks) or [town name], Wash.-History. The University of Washington Libraries catalog is another useful resource.
- Search the Northwest Index at The Seattle Public Library Seattle Room for "Seattle. Districts. [neighborhood name]" or town name. This index includes newspaper and periodical articles about the neighborhoods and towns and other neighborhood and town histories.
- Search the Pacific Northwest Index at Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries . Compiled by University of Washington Libraries staff, it is a subject index to newspapers, periodicals and portions of books.
- HistoryLink neighborhood and town thumbnail histories. From the main HistoryLink page, search for "[neighborhood or town name] thumbnail history."
- The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods' website has context statements about many Seattle neighborhoods, in addition to inventories of city-owned buildings, neighborhood commercial properties, and residential structures constructed prior to 1906. They are written by very well-credentialed local historians and architectural historians.
- The Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project's Segregated Seattle website has information about segregation and racially restrictive covenants in Seattle neighborhoods.
- Local historical societies may have additional historical research about a neighborhood. The Museum of History and Industry is the Seattle and King County historical society. In addition, many Seattle neighborhoods and King County regions have their own historical organizations. Historic Seattle's survey profiles of local historical organizations and the Association of King County Historical Organizations' member list includes contact information for many local historical societies.
- King County Archives includes some records relating to county services headquartered within Seattle city boundaries, and areas of Seattle that were once part of unincorporated King County.
- If there is limited information on the history of a neighborhood or town that is being researched look at histories of nearby neighborhoods or towns.
- The Seattle Municipal Archives has many records relating to Seattle records and its neighborhoods.

- Other possible sources are histories of nearby parks, schools, post offices, fire stations, churches, businesses, organizations, libraries, etc. Contact the organization to find out what histories and historical records they have.
- The Shoreline Historical Museum is a good resource for North Seattle and King County history from 85th to 205th streets. They also have historical information on the area of north Seattle (85th to 145th) prior to the 1952 to 1954 period when the City of Seattle annexed this area.

Neighborhood Changes

What did the neighborhood look like? What existed there at different times? What notable landmarks have changed or disappeared (e.g., highway construction, Century 21, Playland, Luna Park)? To learn more about physical features of the neighborhood—such as streets, churches, cemeteries, landmarks, parks, businesses, libraries, and schools—and how they have changed over time, look at city directories, the Seattle Public Library Special Collections' Northwest Index, the Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries Pacific Northwest Index, library catalogs, and maps and atlases. Some additional resources are useful for specific neighborhood features:

Street Names (Seattle & King County)

How did your street get its name? Why is your street wider or narrower than others in the neighborhood? Have street names or designations changed over time?

Maps and atlases can show how street layouts and names have changed. Plat maps will show original street names. City directories also may list renaming or renumbering of streets. In Seattle there was significant renaming of streets in 1895 and after the 1907-1910 annexations. For a list of 1895 street name changes, see Polk's Seattle City Directory 1895-1896. Another source is *List of Changed Names of Streets* by C. M. Anderson Engineering Co. (1905?) available at the University of Washington Libraries.

Doug Cardle's *About those King County place-names* includes the origins (some speculative) of many Seattle street names. Original research on street name origins can be quite challenging, but a good starting place is the Seattle Municipal Archives Council Bills and Ordinances database. Changing the name of a street typically involves a city ordinance, so a search for a street name in this database can give you an idea of when your street got its name. The Municipal Archives website also includes a map of street designation changes. Unincorporated King County street name changes were approved by the King County Commissioners and are noted in their Proceedings which are located at the King County Archives.

Annexations (Seattle)

Seattle has annexed areas of unincorporated King County at least 40 times since the City was incorporated in 1869. There were significant annexations to the city during 1891, 1907-1910, and 1952-1954. Maps showing annexations are in Myra Phelps book titled *Public Works in Seattle* (pp 217, 224), which also includes a list of annexations (pp. 222-223). A digital version is available at the Seattle Municipal Archives webpage. Before they became part of the City most of the government records that exist are at the King County Archives. The Seattle Municipal Archives does have some records of towns

that were annexed to the Seattle. They include Ballard, Columbia, Georgetown, South Park, Southeast Seattle, and West Seattle.

Birds Eye Views of Seattle

A number of Bird's Eye views of Seattle and vicinity were published from 1878-1925. They provide an excellent visual representation of how the city developed and changed during that period. Editions were done in 1878, 1884, 1889 (pre fire), 1891, 1904, and 1925. Copies are available at the Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries and The Seattle Public Library, Central Library. Some Birds Eve Views are available online. A publication about Pacific Northwest Birds Eye Views is *Panoramas Of Promise: Pacific Northwest City and Towns on Nineteenth-Century Lithographs* (1984) by John W Reps.

Aerial Photographs (Seattle and King County)

The first county wide aerial photographic survey was completed in 1936. Digital images of the 1936 aerials are available through King County iMAP and the Road Services Map Vault. Between 1936 and about 1959 just a few Seattle and King County aerial photograph surveys were done. Starting in 1960 they were done more often, once every one to three years. A number of agencies have aerial photographs. Each agency has different holdings, ways to access the images, and reproduction fees. •

Aerial photographs of Seattle and King County can be found online at the King County Road Services Map Vault (1936) and in person at the Seattle Public Utilities Engineering Records Vault (1929-1993). Other repositories are the Map Division University of Washington Libraries and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (Olympia).The Seattle Public Utilities Records Vault has Seattle only aerial photographs taken in 1929 (incomplete), 1934 (incomplete), 1936, 1952, 1960, 1965, 1970, and 1993.

Cemeteries (Seattle and King County)

The Seattle Public Library owns two books on the history of Seattle cemeteries (see Directory for full citations): *A History of the Cemeteries in the City of Seattle* by Laura C. Daly, and *Cemeteries of Seattle* by Robin Shannon. You'll also find short histories of Seattle cemeteries on HistoryLink. See also 4Culture Cemetery Heritage Resources, which is a bibliography of Seattle and King County cemeteries.

Parks

Longtime Seattle Parks' employee Donald Sherwood compiled detailed histories of Seattle parks from 1972 until his death in 1981. Many of these histories are available online, and printed versions are available at The Seattle Public Library. Seattle Municipal Archives has a more thorough Sherwood Parks History Files with additional information on Seattle parks.

Schools (Seattle)

See the Directory for a description of the Seattle Public Schools Archives, which houses records of school buildings, staff, and students. The Seattle Public Library has many school histories and other historic school information. The Seattle School District has published four editions of school histories (1951, 1961, 1974, 2002). Each edition has information not found in other editions. The most recent edition is Nile Thompson and Carolyn Marr's *Building for Learning*.

Schools (King County)

4Culture has an online bibliography titled "Schools & Education in King County". Another useful resource is Angie Burt Bowden's *Early Schools of Washington Territory* (Seattle, 1935) which includes a section on Seattle and King County schools (pp 175-242, 517-524).

Utilities and Services

It can be interesting to find out when different utilities and services reached your building, to help understand what life was like for its residents. Myra Phelps' *Public Works in Seattle* is an excellent starting point for the history of utilities and other projects of Seattle's Engineering Department. The Seattle Department of Planning and Development's Side Sewer Cards can show you the dates that side sewers were installed at a specific address and the surrounding neighborhood, as well as providing names of property owners and contractors. The Seattle Public Utilities Engineering Records Vault can provide the dates that streets were originally graded and paved, and when sidewalks, sewers, and water mains were laid. King County infrastructure records are not as complete and are at various agencies. Road records are at the King County Archives and other records are online at the King County Road Services Map Vault. Sewer and water lines records may be at local sewer and water districts.

Transit

Walt Crowley's *Routes* and Leslie Blanchard's *The street railway era in Seattle* are good overviews of the history of public transportation in Seattle. City directories also include descriptions of transit routes, and many public transit route maps are available at The Seattle Public Library and the Seattle Municipal Archives. The Puget Sound Regional Archives has a large collection of transit records in the Metro collection including street car and bus line route histories.

Newspapers (Seattle & King County)

In addition to finding information about the building itself, searching through newspapers can give you a wealth of information about the building's historical context. Try to search as broadly as possible to find out what was newsworthy. Historic newspaper indexes such as The Seattle Public Library's Northwest Index, the University of Washington's Pacific Northwest Regional Newspaper and Periodical Index, and databases such as America's GenealogyBank, Seattle Times Historical Archives, World Newspaper Archive, and Chronicling America allow you to perform a wide variety of searches. Look for mentions of the neighborhood, people, businesses, streets, addresses, etc. Even advertisements can contain interesting information! Anything that you already know about the building can lead you to articles that will uncover things you don't know.

Searching through newspaper back files in print and on microfilm (which you can do at The Seattle Public Library and at the University of Washington Libraries – Microform and Newspapers Collection) is a bit more daunting but can be quite rewarding. Once you've narrowed down a date your building was built (or other important dates in the building's history), in can be worth looking in newspapers published around that date to see what was going on or if there is any mention of your building or the neighborhood. The University of Washington Libraries has a card file organized year by year listing all of the local and regional newspapers in its collection on microfilm.

Directory of Agencies, Websites, and Print Resources

This section provides detailed information about the resources mentioned in the text of the guide. Agencies, websites, and print resources are all listed separately, in alphabetical order. Some resources may be listed in more than one category. For example, the Seattle Municipal Archives is listed as both an agency and a website because of its significant physical *and* online collections.

Agencies

The following agencies are places in or near Seattle and King County that are of particular interest to building history researchers. Most provide services to researchers, and are worth contacting or visiting. This directory includes contact information and a description of the services provided.

4Culture

101 Prefontaine Place South
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: 206-296-7580
Email: See website for individual email addresses
Website: http://www.4culture.org/

4Culture is King County's cultural services agency and provides a variety of technical papers and historical papers regarding heritage and preservation in King County, which are available on the 4Culture website. Some publications of interest are:

- **Historical Papers**
  - Map & Place Name Resources
  - Seattle Neighborhood History (bibliography)
  - King County History (bibliography)
  - Business History in King County (bibliography)
  - King County Transportation History (bibliography)
  - Schools & Education in King County (bibliography)
  - King County Agricultural History (bibliography)
  - Cemetery Heritage Resources (bibliography)
  - Native American Heritage Resources (bibliography)
  - King County Planning Areas History (bibliography)

4Culture's blog, Blog4Culture (http://blog.4culture.org/), contains up-to-date information of interest to the heritage community.

The King County Historic Sites Inventory has information on about 1,400 historic properties in the greater King County area and these can be located with the help of the staff. The staff can offer technical assistance to citizens interested in historic properties.

Association of King County Historical Organizations (AKCHO)

P.O. Box 3257
Seattle, WA 98114
Website: http://www.akcho.org/
No office hours or location.

The Association of King County Historical Organizations (AKCHO) includes heritage organizations and museums, as well as individuals interested in the history of Seattle and King County. The membership directory (http://www.akcho.org/members.php) on their website will connect researchers to additional collections of documents, photographs and realia, as well as the holding organization's website. AKCHO maintains a calendar of events (http://www.akcho.org/calendar/index.php) including lectures, workshops and exhibits.

Fiske Genealogical Library

1644 43rd Avenue E.
Seattle, WA 98112
Phone: 206-328-2716
Website: http://www.fiskelibrary.org/

The Fiske Library was founded in 1971 by Arthur Fiske and includes a variety of genealogy materials from Washington State and many other localities. Their website provides information on the Fiske Library holdings and lists programs in their quarterly online newsletter.

Historic Seattle

1117 Minor Ave, Suite 100
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: 206-622-6952
Email: See website for individual email addresses
Website: http://www.historicseattle.org/

Historic Seattle is a public development authority set up by the City of Seattle. Although it does not receive city funding, its mission is "to support and enhance the city of Seattle architectural history." Historic Seattle also manages a Foundation that provides additional support for preservation activities.

1. Historic Seattle did an early (1975-1976) inventory of historic properties in selected neighborhoods. The following neighborhoods were published: Alki/Admiral; Ballard; Capitol Hill; Central Area; Denny Regrade; Eastlake/Cascade; First Hill; Fremont; Green Lake; International District; Madrona, Leschi and Madison Park; Montlake; Mount Baker; Queen Anne; University District; and Wallingford. This inventory can be viewed in print at The Seattle Public Library, Special Collections (Call # 917.972 H629U).
2. Historic Seattle's website has a list of local neighborhood historical organizations as well as national organizations, including contact information.

3. Landmark nomination workshops are offered each year.
4. Information on tax credits, financial advice concerning rehabilitation and restoration projects is available.
5. Educational programs during the year include house tours, lecture series, and membership activities.
6. Historic Seattle has a list of craftspersons that specialize in techniques and methods of construction from historic time periods.

King County Archives

1215 E. Fir St.
Seattle, WA 98122
Phone: 206-296-1538
Email: archives@kingcounty.gov
Website: http://www.kingcounty.gov/operations/archives.aspx
Hours: By appointment

The King County Archives maintains original records for many county agencies that can prove useful when researching individuals. The collections of the King County Archives contain historic maps and photographs which may incidentally show buildings or property ownership in relation to such things as roads, bridges and shorelines. The archives have original aerial photographs of King County taken for tax purposes in 1936 and 1961 (incomplete). In addition, they have other historical photographs from public works projects that may include incidental images of houses and people. The 1936 aerial photographs have been digitized and are available via the King County Road Service Division's Map Vault Database and as a layer in the King County IMAP.

Road establishment maps, highway plans and survey records may also indicate the natural environment of land prior to its development by building. Researchers should clearly understand that there are no name or address indexes to specific structures, property owners, or land parcels. The most reliable access to these records is by township-range legal descriptions. In addition, the King County Archives holds limited plans, photographs or site maps of some historic county government buildings.

The Archives website also features many useful guides for finding King County records, including:

- Environmental history: http://www.kingcounty.gov/operations/archives/environmentalhistory.aspx
- Birth, marriage, and death records: http://www.kingcounty.gov/operations/archives/vital.aspx
- Court and legal records: http://www.kingcounty.gov/operations/archives/court.aspx
- Frequently requested records: http://www.kingcounty.gov/operations/archives/Frequent.aspx

These guides provide links to external agencies when appropriate. Plat records, and property records such as mortgages, deeds and liens, are held and indexed by the King County Recorder's Office.

King County Assessor's Office

King County Administration Building Rm. 708

500 Fourth Ave.
#ADM-AS-0708
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: 206-296-7300
Email: http://info.kingcounty.gov/about/contact/default.aspx
Website: http://www.kingcounty.gov/Assessor.aspx

The King County Assessor's office can provide you with the parcel number for a property when supplied the address. They can also provide information on recent tax assessments.

King County Department of Permitting and Environmental Review

35030 SE Douglas St., Ste. 210
Snoqualmie, WA 98065-9266
Phone: 206-296-6600
Website: http://www.kingcounty.gov/property/permits.aspx

The Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER) is the King County agency that issues building and use permits for properties located in unincorporated King County. They also enforce county land use and building codes, staff the King County Fire Marshal , and issue business licenses.

King County Recorder's Office

King County Administration Building, 4th Floor
500 Fourth Ave.
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: 206-296-1570
Website: http://www.kingcounty.gov/business/Recorders.aspx

The King County Recorder's Office can provide copies of most post August 1991 recordings (deeds, easement, mortgages, covenants, etc.). They can also provide regular and oversized copies of all plat maps (1853-present) and most short plats and surveys (1973-present). Many of these are also available online.

King County Superior Court Clerk's Office

King County Courthouse
516 3rd Avenue, Room E-609
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: 206-296-9300
Email: clerksofficecustomerservice@kingcounty.gov
Website: http://www.kingcounty.gov/courts/Clerk/Records.aspx
Case Search: http://dw.courts.wa.gov/

The King County Courthouse maintains King County Superior Court records and case files, including civil & divorce, probate, and criminal case records. Indexes are available.

Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI)

Sophie Frye Bass Library
5933 6th Avenue S
Seattle, WA 98108
Phone: 206-324-1126 Extension 137 or 237
Email: library@mohai.org
Website: http://www.seattlehistory.org
Hours: By appointment.

The Museum of History and Industry, formerly the Seattle Historical Society, has artifacts, photographs, books, maps, ephemera, manuscripts, and archival collections that span all of Seattle history. Of particular note are the over three million photographs in their photograph collection, several thousand of which are available online. The Museum has moved to the United States Naval Station at the south end of Lake Union and the Research Library is now located in the Georgetown neighborhood.

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

National Archives at Seattle
6125 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, Washington 98115-7999
Phone: 206-336-5115
Email: seattle.archives@nara.gov
Web site: http://www.archives.gov/

The National Archives holds records created by the federal government, including information on land patents, the original transfer of land from the government to individuals through homestead applications, donation land claims, land sales, land warrants, etc. They have General Land Office Land Patent Tract Books organized by Section-Township-Range. The Tracts Books list the individuals name, date of initial settlement and claim, date claim was finalized and land patent issued. Tract books also list claims that were started but not finalized. The individual homestead application and land patent records are available at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., but can be ordered online.

The Archives has a wide variety of other records of genealogical interest such as Federal District Court files, inmate registers, census records, Bureau of Indian Affairs records, military records (mostly Navy and Coast Guard), and Chinese Exclusion case files. Federal records created in the Washington Territory and Washington State along with the U.S. census and other microfilms are located at the National Archives at Seattle.

Puget Sound Regional Branch of the Washington State Archives (aka Puget Sound Regional Archives)

3000 Landerholm Circle SE
Bellevue Community College Building N
Bellevue, WA 98007-6484
Phone: (425) 564-3940
Appointments recommended
Email: Archives@bellevuecollege.edu
Website: http://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/archives_puget.aspx

The Puget Sound Regional Archives holds King County Assessor's Property Record Cards (1937-1972), and Folios (1972-2003) which include information on every King County parcel of land and nearly every building that existed from 1937 until 2003. A property record card includes building photograph(s), construction date, and building footprint and may include some property sales. The Property Record Cards are arranged by parcel number and legal description, so you will need this information when requesting copies. This information is usually included on any deeds or tax records that you might have. If not, you can find this information using the King County Parcel Viewer and associated property report or by contacting the King County Assessor's Office.

The assessment tax rolls (1891/1892–1941) compiled by the King County Assessor's Department, organized by legal description, give information on ownership, who paid the property tax, the assessed value of any improvements (typically buildings) on the property. Years available: 1891 (incomplete), 1892, 1895, 1896, and every fifth year from 1900 to 1941. They also show the changes of property ownership and development in subdivisions and can be used to document neighborhood growth.

The Puget Sound Regional Archives also has civil, probate and criminal case files (1854-1971), incorporation papers (1869-1971), and transit line histories.

Seattle Architectural Foundation (SAF)

Rainier Square, Atrium, 3rd Level
1333 5th Ave
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: 206-667-9186
Website: http://www.seattlearchitecture.org/
Hours: 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

The Seattle Architectural Foundation is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to promoting public awareness of the contribution of architecture and urban design to the quality of life. The Foundation funds projects, exhibits, programs, and tours of interest to the community. Tour calendars and brochures are available at the foundation and at The Seattle Public Library.

Seattle City Clerk

Office of the City Clerk
600 4th Avenue, Floor 3
PO Box 94728
Seattle, Washington 98124-4728
Phone: 206-684-8344
Email: clerk@seattle.gov
Website: http://www.seattle.gov/LEG/CLERK/CLERK.HTM

The clerk's office has several online indexes including, Council Bills/Ordinances, City Council Resolutions, Comptroller/Clerk Files. For additional information see the Seattle Municipal Archives.

Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

Historic Preservation Program
700 5th Avenue, Suite 1700
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: See website for individual phone numbers
Email: See website for individual email addresses
http://www.cityofseattle.net/Neighborhoods/preservation/

Information about historic districts and designated Seattle landmarks is available from the Historic Preservation Program. It is important to call ahead and make an appointment to find these materials and to receive help from the staff. The Historic Preservation Program has information about the process of landmark designation for the City of Seattle and keeps files of past nominations both approved and denied. Buildings that are listed as Seattle landmarks have City of Seattle ordinance numbers which means the City Council approved the designation. The City of Seattle ordinances are available at the City Clerk's office and will contain supporting documentation about the building.

Website includes information about the ongoing Historic Resources Survey, including many neighborhood histories and context statements. Their website also provides a searchable database of historic properties in Seattle.

Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD) Microfilm Library

Seattle Municipal Tower
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019
Phone: 206-684-8600
Email: dpd_microfilm@seattle.gov
Website: http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/

Building permits are generally available from ca 1895 to the present. They include entries for date issued, date completed, property owner, architect, builder, and a brief description of what is being constructed. Permits can be accessed by address (usually) or by permit number. Another resource to locate building permits is Street Ledgers (1907-1951). Organized by street name, Street Ledgers list in

chronological order every building permit that was issued along a street. Each entry lists building address and permit number.

Building plans for commercial buildings, single family residences, and duplexes are available starting in 1974 and can be accessed by address. The few plans that exist prior to 1974 are of commercial buildings and apartment houses. Prior to this time, plans were kept for one to two years before being destroyed. Building plans have been converted to microfilm and are available at the Microfilm Library. Visit the Microfilm Library's website for more information. Copies of the plans from the microfilm can be made, but they will not be to scale. A list of the pre-1974 plans can be found via the Seattle Municipal Archives website. See the Seattle Municipal Archives section of this document for how to access the list.

The DPD provides a variety of resources including zoning information and an online permit database that includes permits filed from 1983 to present. They also maintain a side-sewer permit card database (1900-present). The side-sewer cards include address, permit number, date filed, owner's name, and contractor's name. The online database is searchable by address and parcel number.

The Microfilm Library has Property Abstracts, which list every real estate sale in Seattle from 1907 to ca. 1990. These records are organized by plat name and block number.

Seattle Genealogical Society

6200 Sand Point Way, NE
Seattle, Washington 98115-0329
Phone: 206-522-8658
Email: SeattleGenealogicalSociety@gmail.com
Website: http://www.seattlegenealogicalsociety.org/

The Seattle Genealogical Society's library includes a variety of genealogy materials from Washington State and many other localities. They are the oldest genealogical society in Washington State and were founded in 1923. Their website provides information on library holdings and programs, and also provides links to genealogy related websites with emphasis on the Pacific Northwest. For a small fee they will attempt to locate obituaries listed in local newspapers.

Seattle Municipal Archives

Third Floor, City Hall
600 Fourth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98124-4728
Phone: 206-233-7807 or 206-684-8353
Appointments recommended.
Email: archives@seattle.gov
Website: http://www.cityofseattle.net/cityarchives/
Website for building history: http://www.cityofseattle.net/CityArchives/Research/researchbldg.htm
Website for Subject Files: http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/fold1.htm

Website for Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use Finding Aid:
http://clerk.seattle.gov/~scripts/nph-brs.exe?s1=2004-03&l=50&Sect6=HITOFF&Sect5=ARCH1&Sect4=AND&d=SERS&p=1&u=%2F%7Epublic%2Farch1.htm&r=1&f=G

In addition to city ordinances, City Council minutes, and administrative records, Seattle Municipal Archives has The Don Sherwood Parks History Collection (1884-1985) that includes documents, history, and photographs about nearly all Seattle parks. These can be helpful in understanding neighborhood histories. The Archives compiled an inventory of blueprints from commercial properties in Seattle (1905-1960) from the Department of Construction and Land Use (now the Department of Planning and Development or DPD). The title is Cline, Scott and Graham Haslam. A guide to permit Plans of the Department of Construction and Land Use (Seattle: Seattle Municipal Archives, 1997). Microfilm copies of these blueprints are also available from the DPD. Items in the inventory can be found by searching in the Seattle Municipal Archives Subject Files online index for the record series number: 2004-03.

There are several online databases available on the archives website and on the City Clerk's website that may be of interest. In particular, the Seattle Municipal Archives Photograph Collection includes photographs of city projects (sewers, paving, etc.) that may include houses and buildings in the background.

Archives staff is small so be sure to call ahead to make an appointment for help. The Archives Gazette, which is published by the Seattle Municipal Archives and is available on their website, will help you learn more about the wealth of information in the archives.

Seattle Municipal Archives also houses information from other city departments about electrical service, transportation routes for early trolley cars, etc. These departments' archives may contain documents and photographs that have information about your property.

The Seattle Public Library: Special Collections

Central Library, Levels 9 & 10
1000 Fourth Ave.
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: 206-386-4636
Contact: https://www.spl.org/using-the-library/get-help/ask-a-librarian
Website: http://www.spl.org

The Seattle Public Library Special Collections Departments includes the Hugh and Jane Ferguson Seattle Room, the Genealogy Section, and the Aviation Room. In the Seattle Room, you'll find Seattle City Directories, Baist's and Kroll real estate atlases, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, flat maps of Seattle, the Northwest Index (biographical, subject, and architecture card files), clippings files and scrapbooks (including architecture), and a large selection of books and other materials relating to Seattle history. Genealogical materials relating to Seattle are available on Levels 9 & 10. In the Genealogy collection, you'll find additional materials from around the United States that can provide background information

on individuals associated with your property. The library also provides several subscription databases that can be helpful, including the Digital Sanborn Maps, America's Genealogy Bank, Ancestry Library Edition, and Heritage Quest Online.

Hugh and Jane Ferguson Seattle Room (level 10) Hours:
Monday - Thursday: 11 a.m. –6 p.m.
Friday: Closed
Saturday and Sunday: 1 p.m. –5 p.m.

Genealogy Desk (level 9) Hours:
Monday: Closed
Tuesday-Sunday: 11 a.m.–noon; 1–3 p.m.
Appointments are available Tuesday through Friday between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m.

Seattle Public Utilities Engineering Records Vault

Seattle Municipal Tower (formerly Key Tower)
700 Fifth Avenue, 47th Floor
Seattle, Washington 98104
Phone: 206-684-5132
Website: http://www.cityofseattle.net/util/Engineering/Records_Vault/

Archive of Seattle City property information, including maps, aerial photographs, city plans and other publications, and survey information. The Records Vault is open to the public, but visitors should bring property parcel number (available from the King County Parcel Viewer or King County Assessor's Office) and legal description. They also have records on when street infrastructure improvements (paved streets, sidewalks, sewer lines, water lines, fire hydrants, etc.) were made and have surveys and maps showing locations. They usually have the original topographic surveys of roads before they were graded and paved.

Seattle Public Schools Archives

John Stanford Center for Educational Excellence
2445 3rd Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98134
Phone: 206-252-0795
Email: archives@Seattleschools.org
Website: http://www.seattleschools.org
Hours: by appointment

Call ahead for information and appointments to use the archives. The archives include records of school buildings, staff, and students. These records include photographs, the Seattle School census records from 1912-1934, school board minutes from 1882 to present, annual reports, and newspaper clippings from 1927 to present. The School Archives also has school annuals of Junior High/Middle Schools and High Schools.

University of Washington Libraries: Built Environment

334 Gould Hall
Box 355730
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98195-5730
Phone: 206-543-4067
Email: alanmich@uw.edu
Website: http://www.lib.washington.edu/be/

Library contains over 50,000 books, theses, and journals relating to architecture and the built environment. Website has a link to Pacific Coast Architecture Database.

University of Washington Libraries: Map Collection and Cartographic Information Services

Suzzallo Library, Ground Level [Note: Moved from the basement]
Box 352900
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98195-2900
Phone: 206-543-9392
Email: maplib@u.washington.edu
Website: http://www.lib.washington.edu/Maps/

The University of Washington Libraries Map Collection is the premier cartographic collection in Washington State, with over 267,000 map sheets, 80,000 aerial photographs, and 2,000 atlases. Historic map collection includes an extensive collection of topographic maps of Washington State. Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries also has an extensive collection of local maps.

University of Washington Libraries: Microform and Newspaper Collections.

Suzzallo Library, Ground floor
Box 352900
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98195-2900
Phone: 206-543-4164
Email: mcnews@u.washington.edu
Website: http://www.lib.washington.edu/Mcnews/

The Microform and Newspaper Collections include microform copies of the Washington State Cadastral Township Surveys and Field Books. The King County Cadastral Surveys were started in 1855 and completed in the 1890s.

They have microfilm copies of Sanborn Fire Insurance maps of Seattle (1884-1960) and other local towns.

They also have an extensive collection of microform Newspapers from Seattle, King County and around the state. They have a very useful resource – a year by year card index listing Seattle; King County; and Washington State newspapers available on microfilm.

University of Washington Libraries: Special Collections

Special Collections Division
University of Washington Libraries
Allen Library South, Basement
Box 352900
Seattle, WA 98195-2900
Phone: 206-543-1929
Contact form: http://www.lib.washington.edu/specialcoll/general/questionform.html
Website: http://www.lib.washington.edu/speciaLcoll/

In addition to extensive research collections, Special Collections has many unique resources for the study of Seattle's architecture, including architectural plans; drawings and renderings; photographs; construction specifications; correspondence, books and pamphlets; advertising and promotion materials; architect clipping files; and newspaper and periodical articles. The work of more than 180 architects and architectural practices is represented in the collection. The Pacific Northwest Card Index lists references for tens of thousands of sources in all subjects for the study of local history. You'll also find many online finding aids, databases, and digital collections on their website. Of particular interest are their large collection of digital photographs and images. They also have a database listing their holdings of city directories and phone books.

Special Collections has an extensive collection of Seattle and King County Maps including numerous editions of Kroll Seattle Real Estate Atlases (1st edition in 1912), and Kroll and Metsker King County Atlases and Baist Seattle Real Estate Atlases (1905, 1908, 1912). Both Seattle Atlases published by Kroll and Baist atlases show approximate building locations.

Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

Suite 106
1063 South Capitol Way
Olympia WA 98501
Phone: 360-586-3065
Website: http://www.dahp.wa.gov

Washington's primary agency for historic preservation. Website includes National Register of Historic Places, new Heritage Barn Register, and the Washington Heritage Register, as well as other resources for preservationists.

Websites and Online Resources

The following websites and online resources are useful for local building research. Some websites are maintained by agencies listed in the Agencies section of this directory, but are listed again here because they are of use on their own.

About.com: Architecture

http://architecture.about.com/

A good general introduction to architecture. Includes house style guides with photos, diagrams, and building plans.

About.com: Genealogy: Section, Township, Range

http://genealogy.about.com/cs/land/a/public_lands.htm

A good, clear description of the section-township-range system for describing land, as well as many other tips for finding land records and conducting genealogy research.

America's GenealogyBank

http://infoweb.newsbank.com/gbnl/

Historical Newspapers archive includes electronic, fully searchable newspapers for Bellingham (1903-1934), Olympia (1891-1942), & Tacoma (1889-1909). America's GenealogyBank is available to Seattle Public Library cardholders and in any location of The Seattle Public Library.

Remote access to this database is available for free to Seattle Public Library cardholders.

Once you have your library card, just scroll down on the library's Genealogy Resources page to "America's GenealogyBank":

A) Next choose "Historical Newspapers (1690 - 1977)"
B) In the "include keywords with search" box, put in any word or phrase. Phrases should be surrounded by double-quote marks. Also be sure and check the "Washington" State box, to be searching Washington State newspapers only.
C) Retrieve your results one at a time. Note that you can download the page images in PDF format.

Ancestry Library Edition (In-Library Use Only)

http://www.ancestrylibrary.com

Genealogical information and records from around the world. For Washington State, this database includes a variety of birth, marriage, and death indexes; federal, state, and territorial census records; passenger and crew lists, naturalization indexes and passport applications; and public records indexes and historic telephone listings (1993–2002). Available at any Seattle Public Library location. A personal subscription to the site is also available at http://www.ancestry.com.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) General Land Office (GLO) Records

http://www.glorecords.blm.gov/

Search for federal land patents (the original transfer of land ownership from the federal government to individuals). Search by name or by Section-Township-Range.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Cadastral Survey Township Maps & Field Notes
http://www.blm.gov/or/landrecords/survey/ySrvy1.php

View cadastral surveys and field notes. Cadastral surveys are the origins of section-township-range legal descriptions of land, and were used to define boundaries for describing individual ownership. Survey plats are maps showing any land occupants at the time of the survey. Field notes show detailed information about the land prior to development: for example, trees, creek widths, trails, and other physical features. Includes help files to learn about and navigate records.

Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers
http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/

This database of the Library of Congress provides electronic access to historic American newspapers, including many smaller historic Seattle and King County newspapers. Includes Caytons Weekly (Seattle) 1916-1921; Seattle Republican (aka Republican) 1894-1915; and Seattle Star (1899-1947). Additional titles, including selections from the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, will be added over time as part of the National Digital Newspaper Program.

Coast Salish Map
http://coastsalishmap.org/start_page.htm

Includes map of permanent Coast Salish village sites in and near what is now Seattle, as well as sites around the Seattle area that were mentioned in stories.

Craftsman Homes Connection
http://www.crafthome.com/

Directory of décor products for restoring craftsman style homes.

Digital Sanborn Maps 1867-1970
http://sanborn.umi.com/

Remote access to this database is available for free to Seattle Public Library cardholders. Numerous editions of the Seattle Sanborn Atlas were published from 1884 to ca 1960. Other King County towns are also available.

Familysearch.org
http://www.familysearch.org/
https://familysearch.org/search (Search Records, which includes Washington Death Index 1907–1960 and a variety of other Washington records).

FamilySearch is a genealogy organization and service provided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. On this site, you can access a broad selection of genealogy databases and search the catalog

of the largest genealogy library in the world. The site includes U.S. Census records, Seattle & King County death records (ca 1890-1907), Probate Records (1854-1927), Index of Washington State Death Certificates (1907-1960), Washington marriage records, King County Annual Children Censuses [FamilySearch refers to it as King County School Registers] (1892-1942), King County General Recordings Index (Direct & Indirect from 1853-1921), and many other genealogy databases for Washington, the U.S. and other countries.

Find a Grave

http://www.findagrave.com/

User-maintained website with information about locations of gravesites. Often includes photos and other biographical information, and is updated daily.

Google Earth

http://earth.google.com/

View satellite imagery, maps, terrain, and buildings for any location.

HeritageQuest

http://www.heritagequestonline.com/hqoweb/library/do/index

Includes genealogy books and serials, primarily from the early 1900's and the complete U.S. Federal Census of King County, Washington Territory & State (1860-1920, 1940). Also includes records of genealogical significance from the U.S. Serial Set. Digitized books are fully searchable and printable.

Historic Map Works

http://www.historicmapworks.com/

Historic Map Works is a database of historic maps, atlases, and gazetteers from around the United States. They have a strong collection of Metsker's county maps for Washington State, having recently purchased the publishing arm of Metsker Maps (Note: The Metsker Maps of Seattle store at First and Pike is a separate retail entity affiliated with the Kroll Map Co. of Seattle, and was not part of the purchase). This is a subscription site, but allows free registration with limited viewing and searching abilities.

HistoryLink

http://historylink.org/ (Main page)
http://historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=7934 ("Thumbnail History of Seattle")
http://historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=9116 ("Housebuilding in Seattle: A History")

Online encyclopedia of Washington state history. Includes histories of Seattle neighborhoods and King County towns, people, events, and other topics of historical interest. HistoryLink articles are well-researched and well-cited, so be sure to read the article bibliographies to find sources for further research.

King County iMAP
http://www.kingcounty.gov/operations/gis/Maps/iMAP.aspx

View King County geographic information in an interactive map display. Includes property information, natural features, political boundaries, planning information, and much more. Includes 1936 aerial photographs with an feature that overlays current property lines.

King County Parcel Viewer (with Property Report):
http://gismaps.kingcounty.gov/parcelviewer2/

Search by property address, intersection, or parcel number. Links to property report with information on the building, including current taxpayer name, legal description, parcel description, and year built. Property report then links to additional information such as original plats and surveys and post August 1991 images of deeds. The King County Assessor's Office can also give you the information if you have the building address.

King County Road Services Map Vault
http://info.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kcdot/roads/mapandrecordscenter/mapvault/

Database of scanned images, including road construction plans, road establishment documents, survey drawings, public right-of-ways, survey drawings, some plat maps, topographic maps, and 1936 aerial photographs. Searchable by project name, road name, or section-township-range legal description.

Legacy.com
http://www.legacy.com

Legacy.com allows you to search for relatively recent obituaries "from more than 1500 newspapers worldwide." Their Obitfinder allows you to search by first and last name, state, time period, newspaper, and keyword, and includes obituaries from the Seattle Times from about 2002 to present. Results typically provide the date of publication and the obituary text. You can also contact The Seattle Public Library to ask about alternative sources.

Library of Congress: Historic American Buildings Survey
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/habs_haer/

Digitized images of drawings, photographs, and other information about historic buildings. National in scope, but you can search for "Seattle" or "Washington" to see local buildings.

NOAA Office of Coast Survey
http://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/csdl/ctp/abstract.htm

The Office of Coast Survey's Historical Map & Chart Collection is a rich archive of high-resolution images capturing a vast wealth of the U.S. government's historical surveying and mapping. The collection of over 35,000 scanned images - covering offshore and onshore sites - includes some of the Nation's earliest nautical charts, bathymetric maps, city plans, and Civil War battlefield maps. The site includes several early maps of Seattle and the Pacific Northwest. Of particular note are pre-1900 maps depicting Seattle's shoreline topography prior to regrading and reclamation in downtown Seattle, Belltown and the SoDo neighborhood.

Northwest Digital Archives

http://nwda.wsulibs.wsu.edu/index.shtml

Provides access to digitized archival and manuscript collections and finding aids for archives in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Alaska, and Washington.

Old Houses

http://www.oldhouses.com/
http://www.oldhouses.com/styleguide/ (Style guide)

Directory of current and archival real estate listings for historic homes. Additional resources include an old house style guide, preservation organizations, and suppliers and services for restoration.

Pacific Coast Architecture Database

https://digital.lib.washington.edu/architect/

Electronic database covering architecture of California, Oregon, and Washington. Searchable and browseable by architects, structures, images, partners, exhibits, and publications.

Puget Sound River History Project

http://riverhistory.ess.washington.edu/

The Puget Sound River History Project studies the historical landscape of Puget Sound's lowland rivers and estuaries as a dynamically linked geophysical, ecological, and human system. The historical emphasis is on conditions at the time of earliest Euro-American settlement in the mid-19th century, but also includes the landscape's post-glacial, Holocene (10,000 yrs. BP) evolution and the last century and a half of change. Of particular note are the 19th century topographic maps, aerial photos and plat maps found here:

http://riverhistory.ess.washington.edu/data.php

Reference USA

http://www.referenceusa.com/Home/Home

Phone book listings for U.S. businesses, U.S. residents, and Canadian businesses. Includes many ways to search: by address, phone number, business type or size, geographic area and more.

RootsWeb
http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/

RootsWeb.com is the Internet's oldest and largest free genealogy community. Includes a wide variety of tools and information for genealogy. Specific items of interest are genealogy message boards and mailing lists and user submitted family trees.

Seattle Architecture (Seattle Dream Homes)
http://www.seattledreamhomes.com/PageManager/Default.aspx/PageID=399251&NF=1 (Main page)
http://www.seattledreamhomes.com/PageManager/Default.aspx/PageID=2079496&NF=1
(Architectural styles in Seattle through the decades)

Information about Seattle architects and architecture. While this site is poorly organized and somewhat difficult to navigate, it has links to some useful resources for identifying the style of a house, including a guide to popular Seattle architectural styles by decade.

Seattle City Clerk
http://www.seattle.gov/LEG/CLERK/CLERK.HTM

The clerk's office has several online indexes including, Council Bills/Ordinances, City Council Resolutions, Comptroller/Clerk Files.

Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project: Segregated Seattle
http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/segregated.htm

Information about segregation and racially restrictive covenants in Seattle and King County neighborhoods. This database does not list all racially restrictive covenants in Seattle and King County.

Seattle Department of Neighborhoods Historical Sites Database
http://web1.seattle.gov/dpd/historicalsite/

Searchable database of sites in Department of Neighborhoods' Historic Resources Survey. You can search by address, neighborhood, architect, etc. This is an ongoing project, and many areas of the City are yet to be surveyed. If there's a record for your building on the survey, much work has already been done. Information includes historic names, style, year built, significance, description of appearance, construction details, and a very complete bibliography. They also have context statements of at least 22 neighborhood and city wide historic resource surveys. These are excellent reports which include information on city development, neighborhood histories, and residential and commercial building styles.

Seattle Municipal Archives
http://www.seattle.gov/CityArchives/ (Home page)
http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/CBOR1.htm (Ordinance database)
http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/phot1.htm (Photograph collection)
http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/maps1.htm (Map index)

Seattle Municipal Archives has many useful online tools, including a database of city council bills and ordinances, a historic photo collection, and a digital map collection. They also have online indexes to their General Files (1870s-1905), Comptroller/Clerk files (1895-present) and City Council Proceedings (1881-1901). Digital photos include public works projects, City events, City sites and facilities, and elected officials. Over 110,000 photos are indexed, of which 95% are available digitally. The map index includes records for over 1,500 maps, of which about 75% are available digitally. Many of the Municipal Archives materials are only available in person at the Seattle Municipal Archives.

The Seattle Public Library

http://seattle.bibliocommons.com/ (Library catalog)
http://www.spl.org/library-collection/articles-and-research/local-history
(Local History Databases and Websites)
http://www.spl.org/library-collection/articles-and-research/genealogy
(Genealogy Databases and Websites)

Search the library catalog by keyword, subject, title, and author for topics related to your research. Directories of local history and genealogy databases and websites provide access to databases mentioned in this guide, such as Ancestry Library Edition, America's GenealogyBank, and Seattle Times Historical Archives. Some subscription databases require a Seattle Public Library card and four-digit PIN for use outside the library, others are available only at Seattle Public Library locations.

The Seattle Public Library Historical Photograph Collection:

http://cdm16118.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p15015coll4

The Seattle Historical Photograph Collection contains more than 1,500 images that illuminate the early history of Seattle. . The majority of these photographs have been digitized, and include some of the earliest images in the collection. The remaining photographs will be added as they are digitized. To view photographs that have not yet been digitized, visit the Seattle Room of The Seattle Public Library.

Seattle Times Historical Archives and Seattle Times (1985-current)

The Seattle Public Library provides remote access for the Seattle Times (1900-current) using your library card number and PIN (personal identification number). You'll find the two databases described below listed under "Seattle Times" on our Website:

http://www.spl.org/databases

1) Seattle Times Historical Archives (1900 - 1984). This resource is made possible through a generous grant from The Seattle Public Library Foundation. The Seattle Times Historical Archives is the fully digitized text and page images of the newspaper for 1900-1984. This powerful search engine enables you to search for any keywords in the text including telephone numbers, street addresses, advertisements and classified ads. You can also search by date, a date range, or pre-defined time periods. A "snippet view" with your words/phrases displayed should give you a sense of whether the article is on topic. Once you find an article of interest, you can download a PDF file of the page, email the page, save electronically, or print.

2) Seattle Times (1985 - Current) Full-text articles from the Seattle Times Newspaper from 1985 to present. The Seattle Times (1985 - Current) will present you with several "drop down" menus which you can use to tailor your search. For example, you can search for words/phrases in the headline, lead paragraph and/or "all text" for fulltext of the newspaper. Be sure and enclose phrases in double-quote marks. Also, keep in mind that while this is a "fulltext" database, it excludes some parts of the newspaper, such as obituaries, weather and classified ads

Sherwood Park History Files

http://www.cityofseattle.net/Parks/history/sherwood.htm

Historical information about many Seattle city parks. A print edition that may include additional information about certain parks is also available at the Seattle Room of The Seattle Public Library, and the Seattle Municipal Archives has a more thorough Don Sherwood Parks History Collection.

Side Sewer Cards and Maps (Department of Planning & Development)

http://web1.seattle.gov/dpd/sidesewercardsv2/

Side sewer cards (1900-present) show the dates that side sewers were installed at a specific address and the surrounding neighborhood, as well as providing names of property owners and contractors. The date the side sewer was originally connected may be a clue of the building's construction date. They also include maps showing building outlines on the property along with locations of the side sewer.

Soundex Converter

http://resources.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/soundexconverter

The Washington Death Index on microfilm is arranged by Soundex, which is a "sounds like" coding system for surnames that brings similar names together in an index. When using records arranged by Soundex, you can find the appropriate code by using a Soundex Converter.

Sound Politics Washington State Voter Database

http://www.soundpolitics.com/voterlookup.html

Information about currently registered voters, including partial address, birthdate, and voting districts.

Stevemorse.org

http://www.stevemorse.org/census/index.html (ED Finder)

This website provides a wide variety of "one-step" tools for searching various online resources, including public records databases, passenger list manifests, and census records. In many cases these tools provide a more robust search interface than provided by the sites being searched. Of specific interest is the 1900 to 1940 Census ED (Enumeration District) finder for large cities. This "one-step" tool provides an easy way to determine the ED for a given location using the cross streets of a nearby intersection. You can then use the ED to browse only the part of the U.S. Census that likely includes the property in question. This is useful because the U.S. Census for major cities during this time period typically include both the street name and address of the households being enumerated. Note: If you already have the

name of residents for the property during census years, you can search by name using Ancestry Library Edition.

USGS: The National Map

To search for, view, and download any of the more than 200,000 USGS Topographic Maps dating back to 1884, go to the Historical Topographic Map Collection:

http://nationalmap.gov/historical/index.html

University of Washington Libraries Digital Collections

http://content.lib.washington.edu/

Online database of historic photos, maps, and other digitized materials from the University of Washington Libraries.

Architecture of the Pacific Northwest Database

http://content.lib.washington.edu/acweb/index.html (Main page)
http://content.lib.washington.edu/acweb/styles.html (Building Styles)

A database of architectural drawings representing regionally significant architects and designers from the 1880s to the 1980s. Building Styles section includes descriptions of styles with links to drawings representing each style.

Washington Digital Archives

http://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/

Searchable database of electronic records from Washington State and local governments. Seattle and King County Records series include some birth records, Seattle and King County Territorial and 1892 Census records, naturalization records, death records, cemetery records, cadastral survey township maps, land records, index to all territorial court case files (referred to as Frontier Justice), and King County marriage records (1853-1989).

Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

http://www.dahp.wa.gov (Main page)
http://www.dahp.wa.gov/historic-register (National and State Register)
http://www.dahp.wa.gov/learn-and-research/architectural-style-guide (Architectural Style Guide)

Washington's primary agency for historic preservation. Includes National Register of Historic Places, new Heritage Barn Register, and the Washington Heritage Register, as well as other resources for preservationists.

Washington State Department of Natural Resources

http://www.dnr.wa.gov/Pages/default.aspx

This site offers links to maps, permit information and GIS resources.

Washington State Library: Historical Maps
http://www.sos.wa.gov/history/maps.aspx

Digital collection of historical Washington and Pacific Northwest maps, from state and territorial government records, historic books, federal documents and the Washington State Library's Northwest collection.

Washington State University Libraries: Early Washington Maps
http://content.libraries.wsu.edu/index.php/cdm/landingpage/collection/maps

Hundreds of digitized maps of Washington, including many of Seattle and surrounding areas.

World Newspaper Archive
http://www.lib.washington.edu/types/enewspapers/

Includes electronic coverage of the Seattle Times, 1900– 1984. Remote access is available to University of Washington students and faculty, and access to any researchers is available in person at the University of Washington Libraries. Also available through The Seattle Public Library website for cardholders only – listed under Seattle Times Historical Archives.

Print and Other Resources

Resources mentioned in this section are generally not available online, but are available at The Seattle Public Library or other local agencies and repositories.

City Directories

R. L. Polk & Co. and other Seattle City Directories are available at The Seattle Public Library Seattle Room from 1876 through 1996. Starting in the late 1880s they were published every year with few exceptions. (The University of Washington Libraries Special Collections, Puget Sound Regional Archives, and Seattle Municipal Archives also have city directory collections. A small, but growing, number of city directories have been digitized and are available online. You can view a listing of online city directories at http://sites.google.com/site/onlinedirectorysite/Home/usa/wa/king.). You'll find a selection of early directories in the Seattle Public Library's digital Seattle City Directories collection. Ancestry Library Edition also includes digitized Seattle city directories from 1872 to 1960 in their U.S. City Directories, 1821-1989 database. Many of these are incomplete, but can be searched by name, keyword, address, etc.

City directories typically include the names, occupations, and addresses of residents. Starting in 1938, the Polk directories began reverse listings by address, making it relatively easy to find out who was living at a particular address. For earlier reverse listings (the first in 1928) there are 'house and street' directories, which typically only include households and businesses with telephones. The 1928 directory is also included in the digital Seattle City Directories collection. The front matter of city directories also includes important contextual information about businesses, streets, and transportation.

Maps and Atlases

Maps are important sources of information about the region. Early maps tell us about beginning transportation routes, the original natural landforms, and even notes about early settlement. Later maps were made for more specific reasons. Some were made to document the materials used in the building for insurance purposes (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps) and others were made to clearly delineate buying and selling real property (Kroll Atlases and other plat maps). The City of Seattle has annexed several large tracts of land around its borders and later maps reflect these increases.

There are numerous historic maps in The Seattle Public Library Seattle Room and other local map collections, and they generally serve two purposes for the building researcher. Some maps are useful for contextual information about the neighborhood and surrounding area, and others are useful for specific research about the building and property.

Large-Scale Maps and Aerial Photographs

- Cadastral Survey Maps: (1855-1890s). (See the Land Records section of this guide for a detailed description of cadastral surveys) Survey plats and field notes are available online from the Bureau of Land Management, and on microfilm at the University of Washington Libraries – Microform and Newspapers Collection**.**
- The Seattle Room of The Seattle Public Library has a large collection of single-sheet maps of Seattle and surrounding areas. You can search the Seattle Public Library catalog for these maps: From the main catalog screen, select "Subject" from the drop-down menu, and enter "Seattle (Wash.). Maps" in the search box (you do not need to include punctuation marks).
- The King County Archives has the Timber Cruise (Surveys) (1907-1967) which show the natural environment and the early stages of development of portions of the County. There were six timber cruises conducted by the King County Assessor: 1907-1908, 1913-1915, 1926, 1936-1937, 1953-1958, and 1962-1967. The earlier timber cruises usually include more information than later cruises. One square mile sections were surveyed only if they had harvestable timber. Section maps show location and types of timber, natural features (rivers, mountains, lakes, swamps, etc.), transportation routes (railroad lines, roads, skid roads), cleared land, farmland, and structures. Additional information is included in notes supplementing the section maps.
- Aerial photographs of Seattle and King County can be found online at the King County Road Services Map Vault (1936) and in person at the Seattle Public Utilities Engineering Records Vault (1929-1993). Other repositories are the Map Division University of Washington Libraries and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (Olympia).
- Many major historical map collections have been digitized and are available online. Useful mapping websites for local building and property research include: Seattle Municipal Archives Map Index; Washington State University's Early Washington Maps; Washington State Library's Historical Maps; Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project's Segregation Maps; King County Road Services Map Vault; King County iMAP; NOAA; the Puget Sound River History Project; USGS Topographic Maps and Google Earth. (For more detailed descriptions of all these map collections and sites, see the Websites and Online Resources section of the Directory in this guide.)

Small-Scale Maps

- Seattle Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlases were issued in 1884, 1888, 1893, 1904-1905, ca 1917-1919, ca 1950, ca 1960. These are very detailed maps showing building footprints, construction # of floors, and use building usage; distances between buildings; outbuildings; and streets, parks, and neighborhood features. Available in print at The Seattle Public Library Seattle Room, on microfilm at the University of Washington Libraries – Microform and Newspapers Collection, and online from The Seattle Public Library's Databases and Websites page (requires Seattle Public Library card for access and is listed under the heading 'Digital Sanborn Maps'). Sanborn atlases were released as a base book with updates pasted in periodically. Updates are almost always noted in the first few pages of the atlases. Useful to determine building remodels and to determine if buildings were moved or destroyed. Sanborn maps of King County towns and cities include: Auburn aka Slaughter (1890-1943); Bellevue (1929-1944); Black Diamond (1912-1929); Bothell (1912-1932); Carnation aka Tolt (1914-1930); Duvall (1917-1930); Enumclaw (1908-1943); Fall City (1908-1930); Issaquah (1908-1930); Kent (1890-1944); Kirkland (1892-1942); North Bend (1911-1930); Orillia (1912-1929); Preston (1908-1930); Redmond (1908-1930); Renton (1904-1944); Seattle (1884-1960s); Skykomish (1908-1930); Snoqualmie (1908-1944); and Vashon (1914-1929).
- Kroll Real Estate Atlases (1912–present)(Seattle and King County): In 1912 Kroll Map Company issued a Seattle Real Estate Atlas which covered Seattle from 85th Street on the north to Roxbury Street on the south. As King County developed they would issue Supplemental volumes that covered most of the developed portion of King County. Each double page of the atlas (approximately 28 inches by 28 inches) depicts one square mile. The atlases show building footprints, roads, plats, streetcar line routes, parks, schools, etc. Available in print at The Seattle Public Library Seattle Room and the Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries and on microfilm at the University of Washington Libraries – Microform and Newspapers Collection. These are also available at the Kroll Map Company (2700 3rd Avenue, Seattle). Puget Sound Regional Archives has some later editions. The 1912 Kroll atlas is available via the U.S., Indexed County Land Ownership Maps, 1860–1918 section of the Ancestry Library Edition database.
- Baist Real Estate Atlases (1905, 1908, 1912) (Seattle): Detailed maps that show plat locations, platted lots, developed and undeveloped roads, streetcar line routes, building footprints (approximate) and building materials (bricks, wood, concrete, etc.). The atlases show subdivision names and approximate footprints of buildings. The three editions document Seattle's rapid development from 1905 to 1912 when the city's population more than doubled to about 260,000. Baist Atlases are not as detailed nor as accurate as the Sanborn maps. Copies are at The Seattle Public Library, Central Library and Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries. Digital images of the 1905 and 1912 edition are available online.
- Bird's Eye views of Seattle and Vicinity. At least six Seattle bird's eye views were issued from 1878 to 1925. They provide excellent visual representation of Seattle's growth and development during that period. Images are available on-line and at the University of Washington Library, Special Collections and at the Seattle Public Library, Central Branch.

- McKee Seattle map (1894) (Seattle): "McKee's Correct Road Map of Seattle and Vicinity" (1894) from a survey in 1892 and 1893. Excellent map depicting Seattle at the end of its first major boom (1888-1892). It shows railroad lines and main roads. Depicts buildings with dots showing where the development was concentrated. Copy at Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries, The Seattle Public Library, and online through Washington State University Library digital map webpage.
- Subdivision (plat) maps: Plat maps are filed with the county usually when residential areas are being developed, and are available online through the King County Parcel Viewer Property Report. Copies are also available at the King County Recorder's Office and King County Archives. These plat maps show the date of platting, original street names, and names of plat developers.
- King County Atlases (Township maps): King County Atlases were first issued by Anderson Map Company in 1889. They were periodically revised and reissued by Anderson Map Company (1906) and later by Kroll Map Company (first issued in 1912) and Metsker Map Company. Revised editions were issued into the 1970s. They show some land ownership, road development and names, railroad lines, post offices and towns. Each sheet covers one township (36 square miles). The 1889 Anderson King County atlas is available in The Seattle Public Library Seattle Room, Later editions are located at The Seattle Public Library and at Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries. Many are available online at Historic Map Works as well.
- Numerous city and county engineering maps, including engineering quarter section maps, aerial topography maps, sewerage and drainage topography maps, and basemaps are available from the Seattle Public Utilities Engineering Records Vault and through the King County Road Services Map Vault.

Newspapers & Magazines

Historic newspaper indexes such as The Seattle Public Library's Northwest Index, the University of Washington's Pacific Northwest Regional Newspaper and Periodical Index, and databases such as America's GenealogyBank, Seattle Times Historical Archives, World Newspaper Archive, and Chronicling America can provide you with a wealth of information about buildings, people, businesses and neighborhoods.

Both The Seattle Public Library and the University of Washington Libraries – Microform and Newspapers Collection have extensive collections of local newspaper and magazine back files on print and microfilm.

- *Seattle Times*
- *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*
- *Seattle Daily Bulletin/Daily Journal of Commerce (ca 1893-present)*
- *Pacific Builder and Engineer (1904-1965)*

All these publications feature news and information about new construction and buildings, including houses. In addition, many smaller or more specific newspapers exist which often provide interesting

context if not specific building information. Many historic newspapers are not indexed in any way, so searching can be painstaking, but is often well worth the effort.

Seattle was settled by people from everywhere, so it's also worth checking newspapers from other areas. You may find information about early Seattleites in the Portland Oregonian, for instance, or the San Francisco papers, or even in the New York Times archives. This is also true of builders, architects, and supplies.

Other Books

Unless otherwise noted, all of the books listed below are available on Levels 9–10 of The Seattle Public Library, Central Library. Clicking on the title of the book in this list will link you to its entry in The Seattle Public Library catalog.

Aldredge, Lydia S., ed. *Impressions of imagination: Terra-cotta Seattle*. Seattle, WA: Allied Arts of Seattle, 1986. Seattle Public Library Call Number: 720.97977 Im7.

Armbruster, Kurt E. *Orphan Road: The Railroad Comes to Seattle 1853-1911*.Pullman, WA: Washington State University Press, 1999. Seattle Public Library Call Number: 385.09797 ARMBRUS 1999.

Anderson, C. M. Engineering Co. *List of Changed Names of Streets*. Seattle: C. M. Anderson Engineering Co, ca 1905. Located at University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections.

Anderson, Dennis A. and Katheryn Hills Krafft. "Pattern Books, Plan Books, Periodicals" in Ochsner, Jeffrey Karl. *Shaping Seattle Architecture: A Historical Guide to the Architects*.Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994, pp. 64-71. Seattle Public Library Call Number: 720.92279 Sh222.

Anderson, Dennis A. & Katheryn H. Krafft. "Plan and Pattern Books: Shaping Early Seattle Architecture" *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* Vol. 85 #4,October 1994, pp. 150-158. Located on Level 10.

Anderson, Judy. *The Library Book: A Good Book for a Rainy Day, A Century of Seattle Public Library 1891-1991*.Seattle: 1991. Seattle Public Library Call Number: 027.47977 An23L.

Bagley, Clarence B. *History of Seattle from the earliest settlement to the present time*. Chicago: S. J. Clarke, 1916. 3 volumes. Seattle Public Library Call Number: R979.72 B146H.

Also available online at: http://www.archive.org/details/historyofseattle01bagl; http://www.archive.org/details/historyofseattle02bagl; http://www.archive.org/details/historyofseattle03bagl.

Berner, Richard C. *Seattle in the 20th century*. Seattle, WA: Charles Press, 1991–1999. 3 volumes. Volume 1 (1900-1920), Volume 2 (1920-1940), Volume 3 (1940-1950). Seattle Public Library Call Number: 979.7772 B457S. Also available online at www.pauldorpat.com.

Best, Brooke V. *Celebrating 150 Years: Architectural History of West Seattle's North End*. Vashon, WA: Capturing Memories, 2003. Seattle Public Library Call Number: 720.97977 B464.

Blanchard, Leslie. *The street railway era in Seattle: A chronicle of six decades.* Forty Fort, PA: Harold E. Cox, 1968. Seattle Public Library Call Number: R388 B592Sa.

Bowden, Angie Burt. *Early Schools of Washington Territory.* Seattle: Lowman and Hanford, 1935. Seattle and King County pp 175-242, 517-524. Seattle Public Library Call Number: R379.797 B672E.

Cardle, Doug. *About those King County place-names.* Seattle: Coastal Press, 1989. Seattle Public Library Call Number: R979.777 C179A.

Cline, Scott and Graham Haslam. *A Guide to Permit Plans of the Department of Construction and Land Use.* Seattle: Seattle Municipal Archives, 1997.

Crowley, Walt. *National Trust guide Seattle: America's guide for architecture and history travelers.* New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1994. Seattle Public Library Call Number: 979.778 CROWLEY 1998.

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Workbooks and Checklists

Land Records

	Tax ID Number
	Parcel Number
	Legal description (lot, block)
	Legal description (Quarter, Section, Township, Range)
	Address of property Date range
	Address of property Date range

Construction History

Building Permit #	Date/Architect/Builder/Description
Building Permit #	
Building Permit #	
Side Sewer Permit	Description
Property Record Card	Source & Description
Assessor Folio	Source & Description
Sanborn Map	Year and Page
Sanborn Map	Year and Page #
Kroll & Baist Atlases	Year and Page
Kroll & Baist Atlases	Year and Page

Owners

	Record	Dates	Source
	Native American site reference		
	Cadastral Survey Field Notes		
	Donation Land Claim Owner:		
	Platted: Owner		
	Subdivided: Owner		
	Subdivided: Owner		
	Surveys (registered)		
	Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlas		

Occupants

Name	Occupation	Year(s)	Source

People

Name	Birth/death date	Relationship to building	Notes

Building Structure and Design

Element	Physical description of materials, construction	Date range	Notes
Foundation			
Framing			
Exterior cladding			
Porch			
Windows			
Doors			
Interior-walls			
Interior-ceilings			
Interior-floors			
Interior-plumbing			
Outbuildings			
Additions			
Natural setting: stream, lake			
Natural setting: orchard, farming			

City/County Infrastructure

Infrastructure	Notes	Dates
Water Service		
Electric Service		
Sewer Service		
Telephone Service		
Permits		
Sewer Side Cards		
Transportation-street construction		
Transportation-public		

Photograph and Image Log

Image description	Date	Repository/library

Resources

Date	Author	Title	Notes