

1620 16th Avenue Landmark Nomination

BOLA Architecture + Planning

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1. INTRODUCTION

Background

This report was developed to document a property at 1620 16th Avenue for the non-profit organization and owner, Jewish Family Service. The property contains a two-story wood-frame residential building dating from ca. 1893, which was constructed originally as a single-family dwelling and converted to a multi-family residence with four apartments by the 1920s. The building currently contains five rental apartment units. Jewish Family Service, a social service agency with longstanding ties to the neighborhood, acquired the property in 2016, along with the adjacent parking lot to the south.

The organization acquired the subject property approximately two years ago and the site to the south of it in the mid-1990s. It is proposing a new, larger multi-family apartment building and parking garage as part of a redevelopment of the two sites. This landmark nomination of the building was prepared at the request of Jewish Family Service in response to the permit requirements for its proposed development. As the property owner, it is seeking an evaluation of the building's status by the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board.

Research

This nomination report includes an architectural description and a historic context statement, along with property data, bibliography, and illustrations. The research and report development were undertaken by Principal Susan Boyle and Preservation Planner Meagan Scott of BOLA Architecture + Planning. The research was initiated in April 2018, and involved visits to the property in May and October 2018 to review and document the surrounding context, site, and building conditions.

Research included later reviews of historic maps and photos, property tax and permit records, and archival newspaper articles. Sources of information include surveys, publications, and reports:

- Current King County property information and the historic tax assessor's property records card from Puget Sound Regional Archives
- Digital collections of the Seattle Municipal Archives (SMA), Seattle Public Library (SPL), University of Washington Libraries Special Collections (UWLSC), and Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI); and historical census data from digital sources and publications
- *Polk Directories*, historic Sanborn Insurance Company maps and Baist maps, and *Seattle Daily Times/Seattle Times* articles from the archival database at the Seattle Public Library
- Historic property surveys from databases of the City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods (DON) and Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), and the Historic Seattle-sponsored 1975 Urban Inventory of Capitol Hill
- A Phase 1 Environmental Report on the property provided by the owner
- Information from an interview with the prior property owner
- Seattle's Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) permit records

The 1975 Capitol Hill, First Hill, and Central Area historic and urban surveys by Nyberg and Steinbrueck, and DON historic sites survey forms were consulted to help identify comparable residential buildings in the area dating from ca. 1890 to 1910. Additional information about the building's history was provided by the former building owner, Joan Zegree.

Seattle's Landmarks Process

(Note: This section summarizes information for readers unfamiliar with the local landmark process.)

Historic landmarks are those individual properties that have been recognized locally, regionally, or nationally as important resources to the community, city, state, or nation. Official recognition is provided by listing in the State or National Registers of Historic Places and locally by the City of Seattle's designation of a property as historic landmark. The local landmarks process is a multi-part proceeding of three sequential steps by the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board:

- 1) a review of the nomination and its approval or rejection
- 2) a designation
- 3) negotiation of controls and incentives by the property owner and the City's Historic Preservation Office and its approval by the Board

A final step in this landmarks process is passage of a designation ordinance by the City Council. These steps all occur with public hearings to allow input from the property owner, applicant, the public, and other interested parties. Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board is quasi-judicial, with the Board ruling rather than serving as in advisory capacity to another commission, department, or agency. The City's Preservation Ordinance (SMC 25.12.350) requires a property to be more than 25 years old and to "have significant character, interest or value, as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, State or Nation." It must have integrity, or the ability to convey its significance. The ordinance also requires that a property meet one or more of six designation criteria:

- Criterion A. It is the location of, or is associated in a significant way with, an historic event with a significant effect upon the community, City, state, or nation.*
- Criterion B. It is associated in a significant way with the life of a person important in the history of the City, state, or nation.*
- Criterion C. It is associated in a significant way with a significant aspect of the cultural, political, or economic heritage of the community, City, state or nation.*
- Criterion D. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or of a method of construction*
- Criterion E. It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder.*
- Criterion F. Because of its prominence of spatial location, contrasts of siting, age, or scale, it is an easily identifiable visual feature of its neighborhood or the City and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood or the City.*

More than 460 individual properties have been designated as local landmarks under the city ordinance, along with others located in one of eight historic districts. Anyone can prepare a landmark nomination. However, the Landmarks Board's review cannot consider future changes or uses, or other land use issues.

2. PROPERTY DATA

Historic Name: Conover Residence

Present Name/Address: 1620 16th Avenue

Location: The property is located between E Olive Street and E Madison Street in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood

Tax ID Number: 723460-0470

Legal Description: Lot 2, Block 11 of Renton's Addition to the City of Seattle, According to the Plat Thereof Recorded in Volume 3 of Plats, Page 118, Records of King County, Washington.

Construction Date: ca. 1893

Original Designer: Unknown

Original Builder: Unknown

Original Use: Single family residence

Present Use: Five-unit apartment building

Size: 7,200 square feet (0.165 acre) site and 5,003 gross square foot, 3,617 net square foot buildings (King County Property Record)

Original Owners: Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Conover, ca. 1901 – ca. 1926

Later Owners: Walter E. Griffn (or Griffen) (1936 – 1947)
Ernest P. Norton (1947)
Citizens Savings and Loan (1951)
Nellie Standar (ca. 1953 – 1976)
Joan Zegree/1601 Associates (1976 – 2016)

Present Owner: Jewish Family Service, dba 1620 Holdings LLC (8.22.2016 – Present)
Excise No. 2818666, Recording No. 20160829000599)

Representatives: Keara Kazanjian, Director of Facilities
Jewish Family Service
1601 16th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98122

Russ Woodruff, Principal
Milestone Management Group

Consultant: Susan Boyle, AIA, Principal
BOLA Architecture + Planning

3. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Neighborhood Setting

Located on the east side of 16th Avenue, between E Olive and E Madison Streets, the subject property is situated near the top of the ridge of Capitol Hill, southeast of Kaiser's Capitol Hill medical campus. The recently constructed Bullitt Center is two blocks south, while the neighborhood's retail center on 15th Avenue extends northward from E Madison Street. The neighborhood was developed largely in the early decades of the 20th century, with the platting of residential lots for middle- and upper-income residents. On the block a variety of plat shapes and sizes resulted from the angled street grid, and the presence of an alley to the east and south which curves rather than running straight through the block.

The neighborhood contains a range of residential buildings, ranging from single-family residences and duplexes or tri-plex dwellings dating from the 1890s, to three- and four-story apartment houses from the teens, and 1920s and newer multi-family residences, including apartment and mixed-use buildings of up to five and six stories. (Figures 20 – 25) It contains religious buildings, including Congregational, Methodist, and Christian Science churches, a synagogue, and a Russian Orthodox cathedral. (Figures 12 & 13) Several of these are designated Seattle landmarks, and at least two have been changed serve office or residential uses, most recently the First Church of Scientist (1906-1909), at 1519 E Denny Way/1841 16th Avenue. The site of the 1907 Temple de Hirsch is situated several blocks to the southwest. Other nearby buildings include the former Caroline Kline Galland House/Elderhouse Northwest, a National Register-listed property at 1607 17th Avenue, and the Bullitt Foundation at 1501 E Madison Street.

The site and parcels in the block to the north of it are zoned L-3 (Low-Rise residential, up to 40'), while the adjacent parking lot and other parcels to the south are zoned NC3-65. Madison Cross, a five-story, mixed-use building at the south end of the block, at 1600 E Madison Street, dates from 1998. The Jewish Family Services building is situated across 16th Avenue, having moved to that location in 1992. The organization was founded in 1892 and has been in the Central Area or Capitol Hill since 1953. It provides emergency service, assistance to refugees, the homeless and the aged, a food bank, and other programs. Its three-story Jessie Danz building, at 1601 16th Avenue, dates from 1998.

The Site and Garage

According to current King County assessor's data, the lot size is 60' by 120' and 7,200 square feet (0.17 acres). The parcel is located mid-block, between E Olive and E Madison Street. A 16'-wide paved alley runs behind 1620 16th Avenue. The layout of parcels on the block are shown on an early Sanborn Insurance Company map from 1893. At that time, 16th Avenue was identified as Joy Street, while 17th Avenue was Chestnut Street and E Pine was Mastic Street. These early names were changed by ca. 1905. (Figures 5A – 5C)

The site contains a front yard setback of approximately 31' deep, and side yard setbacks are of 2' to 3' on the north and range from 2'-2'' to 12' on the south. The rear yard is approximately 42.5' deep. (Figures 42 – 45. and current the Site Plan, Figure 50.) Landscaping consists of a variety of deciduous trees, which encircle the back yard and the north side of the front yard, and grass. (Figure 26) Concrete steps lead up to the front yard from the sidewalk at the southwest corner of the site. A narrow concrete walkway leads to the front porch while another walkway leads along south side of the house to the back porches and garage. The grade at the west property line is held by a short retaining wall. Wood picket fences enclose the back yard, while the south side yard is secured by a taller chain link fence.

The topography at 1620 16th Avenue slopes down from an elevation of 428' at the northeast corner to an elevation of 418' at the southwest corner. This slope was accommodated in original grading of the site,

which provided a raised front yard, set 4' to 5' feet above the sidewalk. The original building appears to have been set at or near grade at the back and placed over brick footings or piers. The first-floor level was set at an estimated 2.5' above the front yard grade, where it was accessed by steps. At some time after the 1930s, the house appears to have been raised several feet for a new concrete foundation and footings, and expansion of the basement for an additional small apartment unit. (Figures 27 – 28) The original wood framed porch was upgraded with concrete cheek blocks and steps, structured to provide a below-grade access to a basement apartment.

The 20' by 20' garage is an accessory building. (Figure 45) This garage is a simple, freestanding wood framed structure near the southeast corner of the site with a low-slope gable roof. It provides covered parking for two vehicles and is accessed off the alley.

The Dwelling

The primary building on the site is the dwelling. A tall, two-story residence, it contains an attic and basement, and has a primary front facade facing west onto 16th Avenue. Its massing consists of a steep hipped roof with a north-south ridgeline, and a U-shaped footprint. A 6' by 12' front portico is situated at the center of the symmetrically composed primary facade (Figures 27 and 31 – 32). The building's north, south, and east facades, which face onto side and rear yards, appear secondary (Figures 32 – 33 and 42 – 43).

Historic maps and property tax records indicate the original building was L-shaped with outermost dimensions of 44' by 40'. A second two-story wing on the northeast was added, and the southeast two story wing was expanded later with a flat-roof, single story addition. (Figures 33 – 40) The two tall back wings appear similar. Measuring 16' and 18' wide, they extend from the main wing to create an open space between them, approximately 8' wide and 13' to 17' deep. (Figures 36 – 39) The single story, flat roof addition at the southeast corner appears in the 1954 property tax record photo. It may date from 1953, the year noted for a remodel in the tax assessor's record. The roof form, and smaller window sizes, and interior finishes of this addition support the post-war construction date.

The original building features some characteristics of the Colonial Revival style, notably on the primary west facade. (Figures 17 – 18) Constructed with wood framing and originally clad with narrow horizontal wood siding, it appeared upright with vertical proportions. As shown in the 1936 tax assessor's record photo, the hipped roof features slightly curved eaves, and gable roofed wall dormers at the attic level on the south and east sides, along with a pedimented front cross gable with eave returns. (Figure 17) The roof overhangs project slightly beyond over a frieze ornamented with dentils, which is carried around the building. The roof retains two brick chimneys although the fireplaces that they once served no longer operate.

The primary facade is composed with a single story, flat roofed porch detailed with a semi-circular front projection, and paired wood columns at the outer edges. It originally featured turned wood balustrades at the first floor landing and roof. Other elements on this facade include a central Palladian window at the second floor and an arched head window above it at the attic level, both with divided lights. The wood panel-type central entry door at the first floor is flanked by sidelights. Original windows that remain are largely wood frame, double-hung types; central ones on the east and west facades contain divided lights. (Detailed jamb trim on the Palladian side windows provides a sense of what may have been typical original window trim.) Currently there are shutters at each of the four front windows. (Figures 26 – 31)

Other original exterior elements that have been lost include the original narrow wood siding, with an estimated exposure of 3" to 4", wide corner trim boards, four double-height engaged wood pilasters placed near the outer corners and beside the porch, and molding at the windows. The entry porch

landing was set several feet above grade in contrast to the original siding, which carried down to near grade, while the current siding stops several feet above grade, exposing the concrete foundation. The roof was finished originally with wood shingles; by the mid-1930s, these were replaced with patterned composition roof shingles.

Interior Features

According to the 1936 King County Tax Assessor's property record, the two-story building contained 1,748 square feet. By that date it provided two two-room apartments and two three-room apartments; a handwritten note on the record card adds a five-room apartment, which appears to be the basement unit. The present building contains five units, averaging 723 square feet each. It has been expanded to the basement and attic to make up 3,617 net square feet according to the current assessor's property record.

The five flats include one three-bedroom unit, two studios and two one-bedroom units along with a common laundry. The first and second floor dwelling are accessed primarily through the front lobby and primary interior stair hall (**Figures 48 – 49**). There are also secondary non-original entries off stairs on the back (**Figures 38 – 40**). As reported by the former owner, a small studio apartment is situated in the west end of the basement and the largest apartment is the two-bedroom flat on the south side of the first floor. The north side of the first floor contains a spacious studio. Its large front room was reportedly once a ballroom. The southern of the two two-bedroom second floor units was linked by an internal staircase to the attic, which is finished and incorporated into the dwelling below, while the other two-bedroom unit on this floor spans the entire front of the building.¹

The assessor's record notes ceiling heights of 7'-6" in the basement, 9'-8" at the first floor, and 9'-6" at the second floor. (**Figures 15 & 16**) Floors were finished with fir and maple along with some cement and ceramic tile, while walls and ceilings were plastered. Heat was and still is provided by hot water radiators from an oil-fired burner in the basement. Three of the apartment units reportedly have fireplaces with tile surrounds and mantles, but these are no longer operational. Plumbing fixtures vary in date, while the kitchen cabinets appear to date from the 1920s and the 1950s. The typical interior doors are painted multi-panel type, while those leading from the lobby are fire-rated flush types (**Figure 48**).

Changes through Time

The building's construction was cited in 1936 record as "medium, special," with "medium" interior and exterior, and "cheap" foundation, while the current building quality is noted as "good." By 1936, the foundation was concrete. Changes to original exterior features are apparent by comparing the 1936 and 1954 tax record photo and current conditions (**Figures 17 & 18**).

- Addition of poured-in-place concrete foundations, front porch landing, steps, and cheek blocks
- Raising of the floor level or lowering of the front grade to accommodate a basement apartment, along with its new, small single-hung windows in the exposed foundation wall, and entry
- Replacement of the fine scale horizontal wood siding with taller, grooved asbestos shingles with a 10" exposure, and removal decorative wood pilasters on the front façade and wide corner trim
- Removal of decorative window trim on the front (west) facade, and installation of window shutters
- Replacement of turned wood balusters with painted metal railings at front porch and portico
- Construction of a single-story, flat roof addition at the southeast corner
- Addition of a wood-framed landing and stairs on the back, to exit the second-floor units, along with a secondary back stair from the south unit

¹ Zegree.

4. HISTORIC CONTEXT

Neighborhood History

The property at 1620 16th Avenue is located on Capitol Hill near the north-south ridge at the top of the hill. It is one block north of E Madison Street. This Seattle neighborhood is bordered by First Hill on the south, the I-5 Freeway to the west, and Portage Bay to the north. Its east and southeast boundaries are set at Madison Valley and the Central District (**Figures 1 & 2**).

Originally platted by Arthur Denny before 1861, Capitol Hill did not immediately develop as a residential area. Settlement began in the 1870s and 1880s after its timber was cleared. In 1876, the City purchased 40 acres from J. M. Coleman for what became City Park in 1885; the name was changed to Volunteer Park in 1901. To the north of the park was the early Masonic Cemetery, later called Lake View Cemetery, and the Grand Army of the Republic Cemetery, established in 1895.² The primary developer of the area to the south of City Park, known originally as Broadway Hill, was James Moore. Moore acquired 160 acres in 1900 and renamed the district, cultivating the area as an upscale residential neighborhood. In the meantime, single-family residential development moved south and eastward to the top of the ridge (**Figures 3 & 4**).

In 1891, an electric trolley line was constructed along Broadway Avenue, linking Capitol Hill to both First and Beacon Hills. The street was paved in 1903 and quickly became a favorite route for cyclists, and then motorists. Between 1907 and 1909, trolley routes were extended along 15th, 19th, and 23rd Avenues, and the Bellevue-Summit line was added in 1913. East-west streetcar lines included Pike Street, Madison Street, and the Yesler-Jackson route. Transportation routes and neighborhood commerce has continued to follow the pattern established by early streetcar and cable car routes, with neighborhood and destination stores, cafes, and other facilities in a linear fashion along the three streets (**Figures 8 – 10**). This pattern is evident along 15th Avenue near the intersection of Madison Street, approximately two blocks southwest of the subject property.

In 1890, the Pontius/Lowell School opened, followed by construction of Seattle/Broadway High School in 1902, and Stevens Elementary in 1906. Early civic construction included the Lincoln Reservoir (1900) and Volunteer Park Tower (ca. 1901). A number of religious institutions were also built, including the Capitol Hill United Methodist Church (1906, presently occupied as an office) at 128 16th Avenue E, and the former First Church of Christ Scientist at 16th Avenue (1914, recently adapted for residential use). Many Jewish families began settling the area nearer to Madison Street in close proximity to the Temple de Hirsch Sinai synagogue, which was constructed in 1907-08. The city's early Jewish community was made up largely by well-educated Ashkenazi Jews of German descent (**Figures 11 & 12**). In 1910, this community was made up by an estimated 4,500 residents, many of whom settled in Seattle's Central Area and Capitol Hill.³ Later, in 1938, the Greek Orthodox Church, St. Nicholas, was built on 13th Avenue near E Howell Street.

Residential Development on Capitol Hill

The last decade of the 19th century saw considerable urbanization. The downturn and depression that the city experienced after the Panic of 1893 was soon followed by the Alaska Gold Rush in 1897, which helped the revival of the local economy. Seattle's population grew from 42,837 in 1890 to 80,671 in 1900. It boomed during the first two decades of the 20th century and then stabilized in the early 1930s; in

² Dorpat.

³ Sanders, n.p.

1910 the population stood at 237,194; 321,931 in 1920; 363,426 in 1930; and 368,302 in 1940.⁴ Some of the residential growth was on Capitol Hill (**Figure 4**). While the significant growth was due largely to annexations in 1904, 1907, and 1910, the second decade represented an increase in city residents and a corresponding rise in housing needs.

Large residences for upper middle-class families and modest houses for working families were built near the ridge of Capitol Hill in the 1880s and 1890s, although few of these survive in the area surrounding 1620 16th Avenue. These turn of the century houses, were designed in a variety of styles: Four Square or Classic Box, Vernacular, Colonial, Neoclassical, Arts and Crafts, and Tudor Revival. Grand residences on Capitol Hill included those along “Millionaire’s Row” (14th Avenue E), Federal Avenue E, Aloha Street, and 16th, 17th, and 18th Avenues. Close by examples of these types of large houses include the Gaffney House, a National Register-listed three story, 8,394 square foot residence at 1605 17th Avenue (adapted for congregate housing) and the former Singerman Residence (the Gaslight Inn), a 7,700 square foot landmark at 1727 15th Avenue.

In the teens and 1920s, many wood-framed and brick clad apartment houses were constructed as the city grew denser in response to the needs of its rising population. Examples of these types of buildings include three apartment buildings on the same block as 1620 16th Avenue (**Figures 19, 21 & 23**).

- Marquis Coop at 1605 E Olive Street (1926), a four story, 40,100 square foot building directly north of the subject property, on a 14,400 square foot lot with 37 apartments and a garage for 37 vehicles
- Garden Court at 1631 16th Avenue, a four story, 48,840 square foot building to the west of the subject property, on a 28,842 square foot lot, with 74 units
- Cascadia Apartments at 1621 17th Avenue (1924), a 19,032 square foot, four story building to the northeast across the alley, on a 14,400 square foot lot with 34 units. It is connected to an early house at 1633 17th Avenue, which dates from the 1890s.

By 1940, most of the immediate neighborhood’s residential buildings had been constructed. Multi-family residences made up most of the housing stock in the census tract in which the subject property is located. A census analysis from this date indicates that 10 to 14 percent of dwellings had been constructed by 1899, while an estimated 80 percent were built between 1900 and 1930. Residential buildings containing five or more units made up 50 to 74 percent, while 25 to 49 percent were detached single-family residences. Owner-occupied residents in 1940 made up 5 to 24 percent of the total population. Of these, only 35 to 44 percent carried mortgages, while others were owned outright – an indicator of long-term ownership. Mean monthly rents for dwelling units were \$20 to \$24/month in 1940, which were very close to the city’s median of \$22.25/month rent.⁵

From the decades of the 1930s through the 1960s, some the larger single-family residences in the surrounding area were converted into boarding houses, nursing homes, and other types of congregate facilities. By 1940, the neighborhood’s population was made up increasingly by older and childless residents rather than families, and/or those with low incomes, including students, artists, and retirees. The demographic character of the neighborhood has changed once again in the past six decades. The 2010 U.S. Census noted that this area had about 5,150 residents with an average age of 34 years, with 2,893 households, made up largely by single people, with 75 percent of residents living in rental units.⁶

⁴ Schmid, pp. 56 – 58.

⁵ Schmid, pp. 218 – 236.

⁶ USBoundary.com.

Construction History

No original drawings have been discovered to verify the specific construction date of the building. Local newspaper citations in the *Seattle Times* database (which includes newspapers back to 1895) are limited to advertisements from 1903 through the 1940s. There are only three permit records on file in the permit rolls at SDCI. The original designer and builder remains unknown, and the names of the later builders are not cited or are illegible in these records.

The King County Tax Assessor's archival property record card notes an original construction date of 1916, which is crossed out with 1894 written in, with the later date possibly suggesting an alteration in that year. (There are no permit records to confirm the date of 1894, though Nellie Standar, who owned the building from ca. 1953 to 1976, cited this date in a conversation with a more recent owner, Joan Zegree.) A construction date of 1893 appears to be confirmed by the building footprint outline on the site shown on an early 1893 Sanborn Insurance Company map. Citing these historic maps, a recent environmental report on the property also notes "a likely construction date of 1893-1894" for the subject building, and for another residence to the south at 1612 16th Avenue.⁷ The Baist map of 1912 shows the building at 1620 16th Avenue along with a detached accessory building, which was likely the garage, as a permit notes that one was constructed in 1909. (**Figure 9**) In ca. 1914, a 9' by 15' sleeping porch was constructed; the permit record does not identify its location.

The neighborhood's construction history is illustrated also in historic maps and property records. The 1893 Sanborn map shows four buildings on the 12 lots in Renton's Addition Block 11, one being the subject house, which was then L-shaped. By 1905, there were similar sized single-family dwellings on nearby parcels. The later additions to the subject building are shown on an updated Sanborn map. (**Figures 5A-5C**) The 1912 Baist map indicates only one vacant lot on the block on which the subject house stands, while the block on the west side of 16th Avenue contains buildings on five lots along with many more vacant parcels. (**Figure 6**) Aerial photographs from 1936 show the immediate surroundings as a mix of small-scale, single- and multi-family residences including apartment buildings. (**Figure 7**)

Several former surrounding buildings dated from the early 20th century. To the north of the subject parcel was a single-family dwelling set in the middle of a 120 square foot corner parcel. Shown in the 1904 Sanborn map, it was apparently demolished for the construction of the existing apartment building to the north in the mid-1920s. To the south of 1620 16th Avenue, on the adjacent triangular-shaped parcel made up by Lot 1 of Block 11 Renton's addition, an early 20th century wood frame apartment house was demolished to make way for the current parking lot in ca. 1972.

Three available records from the SDCI permit rolls note changes on the property. A permit from 1909 is for construction of a "one story frame garage," and one from 1914 notes, "build sleeping porch." Newspaper advertisements indicate the conversion of the single-family residence into a four-unit apartment building by 1925. A later permit from 1937, though largely illegible, notes expansion of the basement or a portion of it to be used for storage. This permit also notes "no change in occupancy."⁸

According to the tax assessor's archival records, the building was remodeled in ca. 1953, and changes are evident in the King County Tax Assessor's record photo from this period. Between 1937 and 1954, a new addition had been constructed at the southeast corner, which changed its footprint from an L-shape to a

⁷ PBS, p. 10 and 12.

⁸ The permit date, March 3, 1937, and the occupancy note suggest the basement was not remodeled for the fifth apartment at this time. The August 16, 1937 tax record photo shows the house five months later, set at what appears to be its original grade, and the assessor's typed record notes "four-family flat, 10 rooms, 4 apts: 2 2-room and 2-3 room. Later hand-written changes cite "15 rooms" and add one 5-room apartment to the units.

U-shape. (Figures 15 – 16) The revised Sanborn map from 1950, shows the U-shape and the second single-story addition on the building's southeast corner along with the rectangular footprint of the detached garage near the southeast corner of the lot and the alley. Records do not clearly cite a date for the basement apartment.

Ownership and Occupancy History

The identities of the original designer and builder remain unknown. *Polk Directories* dating from 1894, indicate that in 1900, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Tallmadge Conover lived at 1514 Renton Avenue. This address was changed in the following year's directory as the street name was changed to 16th Avenue and the number as well to 1620 16th Avenue. (Figure 13 & 14) The address of 1514 appears as the prior address in the 1893 Sanborn map, while the address noted on the 1905 Sanborn map is 1620 16th Avenue. (The street was identified earlier as both Joy Street Renton Avenue.) And while a historic photo from 1889 suggests that Conover also owned another house at 5260 17th Avenue NE, that dwelling appears to have been a real estate investment. The *Polk Directory* lists and other information confirms that C. T. Conover was the original owner as well as occupant of the house. In 1891, he married Mary Louise Burns, who appears to have been its up until her early death in 1914. The couple had at least two children: Tallmadge (b. April 3 – December 11, 1896)⁹ and Cecil (b. 1898). In 1931, C. T. Conover married his second wife, Idelle M. Conkling.

Charles Tallmadge Conover (1862-1961) was born in Esperance, New York, the son of Abram and Harriet M. Conover (nee Tallmadge). He worked as a journalist in New York State for two years before moving to British Columbia, Canada, and then to Washington State. He was employed by the *Tacoma Ledger* in 1887 – 1888, after which he briefly served as the city editor for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. At that time, he was one of several journalists who covered the last legislative session of the Territorial Legislature in Olympia. “In 1888, he formed Crawford & Conover with another P-I reporter, Samuel Leroy Crawford. Crawford & Conover were real estate and financial brokers, and after a slow start, became quite successful.”¹⁰ The firm eventually took on advertising services, and Conover, an advocate of advertising, is credited with coining the name, “the Evergreen State,” as well as the moniker for Seattle, “the Queen City.” Conover was also instrumental in efforts to retain the name of Mount Rainier, and in the early 1930s he chaired the Seattle Chamber of Commerce publicity campaign. Samuel L. Crawford died in 1916, and at some time in the early 20th century his son, Clayton Crawford, joined the firm and eventually became its secretary-manager. Tallmadge Conover also joined his father's company.

Crawford & Conover is noted in *Seattle Times* articles from 1900 through the 1920s as real estate agents for other property owners as well as developers who platted and sold property throughout the city, at some point through their sales agent, the P. Kennard White Organization. Newspaper notices and advertisements cite the early Renton Addition, which Crawford & Conover cleared and platted, along with later properties including University Heights/University Gardens and Bella Vista in the University District, Juanita Beach Camps, Lago Vista and Vista Hermosa near Juanita Bay and Kirkland, the Hanford Addition on Beacon Hill, and Arlington Heights on Magnolia Bluff.¹¹

In mid-May 1929, following the death of P. Kennard White, C. T. Conover announced the emergency close-out sale of the firm's remaining properties and the establishment of a successor, the Walter M. Fisher Company.¹² In early 1930, the “double tragedy” of a murder and suicide of Clayton Crawford, led C.T. Conover to announce the liquidation of all the firm's real estate. This included an apartment site at

⁹ *Seattle Times*, December 11, 1896.

¹⁰ *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, November 3, 1888.

¹¹ *Seattle Times*, January 20, 1929.

¹² *Seattle Times*, May 19, 1929.

8th and Madison, industrial and warehouse parcels on Harbor Island and Railroad Avenue, acreage in Oak Harbor, Shelton and the Richmond Highlands; and his own 29,000 square foot homesite in the Madrona District.¹³ Conover's firm remained in business, and he eventually retired from it in 1941. By 1944 he sold the company to two young real estate developers, Albert Balch and Ralph Jones.

Conover had written books about Alaska coal mining in 1911 and 1914, a local history, *Mirrors of Seattle*, in 1923, a biography of Judge Thomas Burke in 1926, and *Romance of Seattle Real Estate* in 1938. Following his retirement, he began writing a column in the *Seattle Times*. C. T. Conover was active in public affairs and was a member of the Rainier Club, the Holland Society of New York, and the Sons of the American Revolution, and he helped found the Seattle Humane Society. He was cited in a 1957 *Seattle Times* article as a Seattle Pioneer.¹⁴ He died in August 1961 at age 99.

Newspaper articles and ads between 1906 and 1913 indicate that the Conovers alternated between living in the subject house and renting it. An advertisement in the *Seattle Times* from June 11, 1908 provides some detail: "to let – handsomely furnished 8-room residence for one year, to small private family." C. T. Conover owned the house for over 30 years. His company advertised the property for sale in 1926, for a price of \$12,500.¹⁵ It may have been sold to a private party, but by 1934 it had been taken over by the bank.¹⁶ According to the King County Tax Assessor's record, Walter E. Griffin owned the property by 1936. (Griffin was also a resident in 1940-1944 according to *Polk Directory* listings.) Ernest P. Norton purchased the property for \$17,000 in June 1947. In May 1951, the owner was Citizens Savings and Loan, which acquired it for a price of \$8,468.

Occupants of the dwelling varied over time. A *Seattle Times* advertisement from February 2, 1912 indicates the Conovers sought a tenant to sublet the "comply furnished" house until June 1st. W. D. Skinner, a general freight and passenger agent for the Oregon-Washington Railroad & Navigation Company in Portland and Seattle, rented the house for a time in the early teens. According to *Polk Directories*, C. T. Conover lived in the house in 1920, but had moved out by 1925, although he still owned it. By 1925 the original single-family residence had been converted into four "homey apartments with fireplaces and all conveniences." A *Seattle Times* 1925 ad notes the first tenant was a teacher who was "delighted."¹⁷ Two of the apartments in the building, both two-rooms, rented for \$32.50 each, while a larger four-room unit was rented for \$55. By 1936, the Depression era rent rates for 1620 16th had been lowered, and the four-unit apartment in the building brought in only \$29.50/month. From 1925 through at least 2005, many different apartment tenants are listed in the *Polk Directories*. Almost all appear to be single people, and half were women, many with a "Mrs.," likely indicating they were widows. There were few long-term tenants, as most stayed for fewer than five years.

From ca. 1940 to 1951, the building was known as the Betty Lee Apartment, and from 1966 to 1990 as the Standar Apartments, named for its former owner from ca. 1953 to 1976, Nellie Standar.¹⁸ Ms. Standar sold the property to Joan S. Zegree in 1976. Throughout the mid- to late-20th century, the property's value fluctuated. The County's assessed values dropped from the mid-1930s until the mid-1960s. By 1983 it was assessed at \$79,700; in 1993 at \$190,000; in 2003 at \$393,000; and in 2013 \$793,000, with only \$1,000 for improvements. In 2018 the land value was assessed at \$1,404,000. A company established by Jewish Family Service, 1620 Holdings LLC, purchased the property in 2016.¹⁹

¹³ *Seattle Times*, April 11, 1930.

¹⁴ *Seattle Times*, April 28, 1957.

¹⁵ *Seattle Times*, October 10, 1926.

¹⁶ *Seattle Times*, December 7, 1934

¹⁷ *Seattle Times*, August 23, 1925.

¹⁸ *Polk Directories*, cited by PBS, Appendix D, and by Joan Zegree.

¹⁹ King County Assessor i-Map, Property Report Detail.

The Building Type and Style

As a two-story single family residence, 1620 16th Avenue is a common building type on Capitol Hill. Along with some other dwellings in the area, it dates from the pre-1900 era. This part of Seattle and nearby First Hill and the Central Area were included in historic and urban neighborhood surveys led by Folke Nyberg and Victor Steinbrueck in the mid-1970s. The resulting survey maps note that “Capitol Hill contains as wide a range of residential building types and styles as any community in Seattle. Moreover, the architectural quality of houses and apartments on Capitol Hill is quite high... Besides the fine upper economic class houses, there is also a remarkable quantity of middle-income houses of varying types and styles ...”²⁰

This survey cited two buildings on the same block and the facing block (directly across, on the west side of 16th Avenue) as “significant to the city” – the National Register-listed Gaffney House/Elderhouse Northwest (1906), at 1605 17th Avenue, and the landmarked Patrick J. Sullivan House (1898) at 1632 15th Avenue. In addition, five buildings in this same block area, including 1620 16th Avenue, are cited as “significant to the community.”²¹

There is no comprehensive historic survey of late 19th and early 20th century residences in the surrounding area although several DON historic inventories from ca. 2008 refer to an estimated “2,200 houses that are still extant out of more than 5,000 that were built by the end of Seattle’s Central Area, Eastlake, First Hill, Leschi, Madison Park, Madrona and North Capitol Hill neighborhoods.” The Nyberg-Steinbrueck neighborhood surveys noted houses on Capitol Hill as representing different styles and eras: Plain Early houses from 1895 to 1910, Classic Boxes from 1900 to 1910, and Shingle Style and Colonial and Tudor Revivals beginning in 1900. Those in the Central Area included “the varieties of late nineteenth-century houses... the Pioneer Style, the Classic Box, and the Ornate Victorian...”

The house at 1620 shares characteristic with the Classic Box style with its a hipped roof, although its proportions are more vertical in contrast to the generally rectangular shape of the Classic Box. As with the subject building, the typical size and massing gave a Classic Box style house “a more formalized and traditionally conservative status.” This formality contrasts with “asymmetrical massing, romantic imagery and flamboyant ornamentation” of the eclectic Victorian style.²²

The DON historic inventory forms note other styles for early residences in the area, including Pioneer Vernacular and several variant types of Queen Anne style houses. A preliminary review of extant and intact dwellings from the 1890s to 1910 indicates a wide range of styles on Capitol Hill and in the Central District. (**Figures 50 – 66**) In this context, the building at 1620 16th Avenue is one of many singular style houses. It appears to be a variant on the Colonial Revival style, with characteristic features including the hipped roof and central portico front porch, Palladian and arch head windows, and denticulated frieze along with the original siding, decorative details and trim, which have been lost. Less characteristic are the 1:1 double-hung windows, which appear to be original. Designs for the Colonial Revival residential style borrowed elements from Georgian and Adam style precedents during the period of 1780 – 1810, rather than Dutch Colonial prototypes. Built with both exaggerated details and well as more simplified details, the hipped roof subset of this style were most frequently built in the period from 1880 to 1910 and were more popular in the Atlantic Seaboard.²³

²⁰ Nyberg and Steinbrueck, “Central Area” and “Capitol Hill” map.

²¹ 1633 17th Avenue (1894), at the southwest intersection of E Olive and 17th Avenue; the Cascadia Apartments at 1621 17th Avenue (1924), east across the alley from 1620 16th Avenue; 1601 16th Avenue (1958), at E Pine and 16th Avenue; and 1631 16th Avenue (1921), an apartment condo building at E Olive and 16th Avenue.

²² Nyberg and Steinbrueck, “Central Area” map.

²³ McAlester, pp. 140-144, 155-158 and pp. 321-326.

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“Just Like Home,” April 23, 1926, p. 32.

“A Fine Little Apartment,” October 10, 1926, p. 52.

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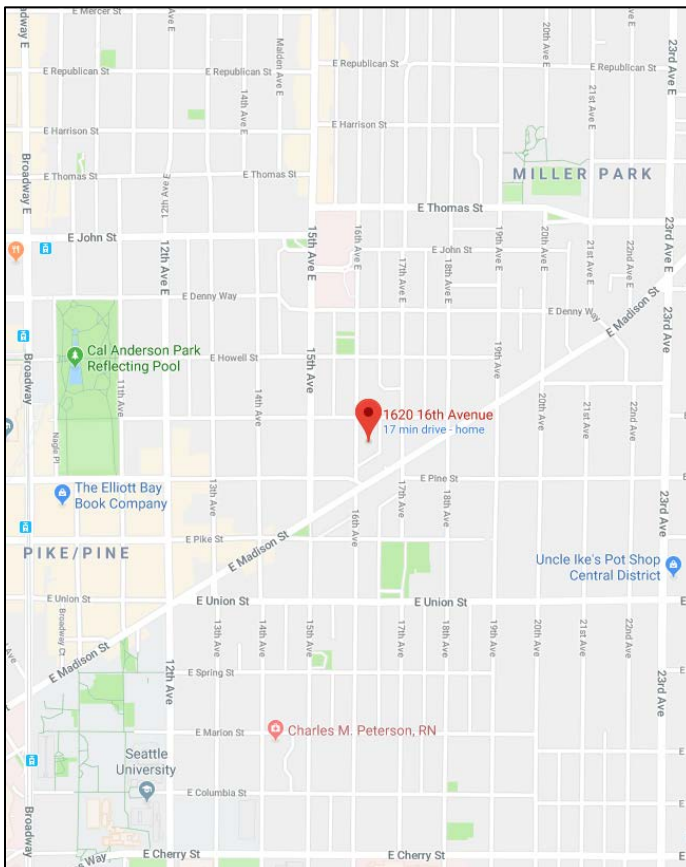
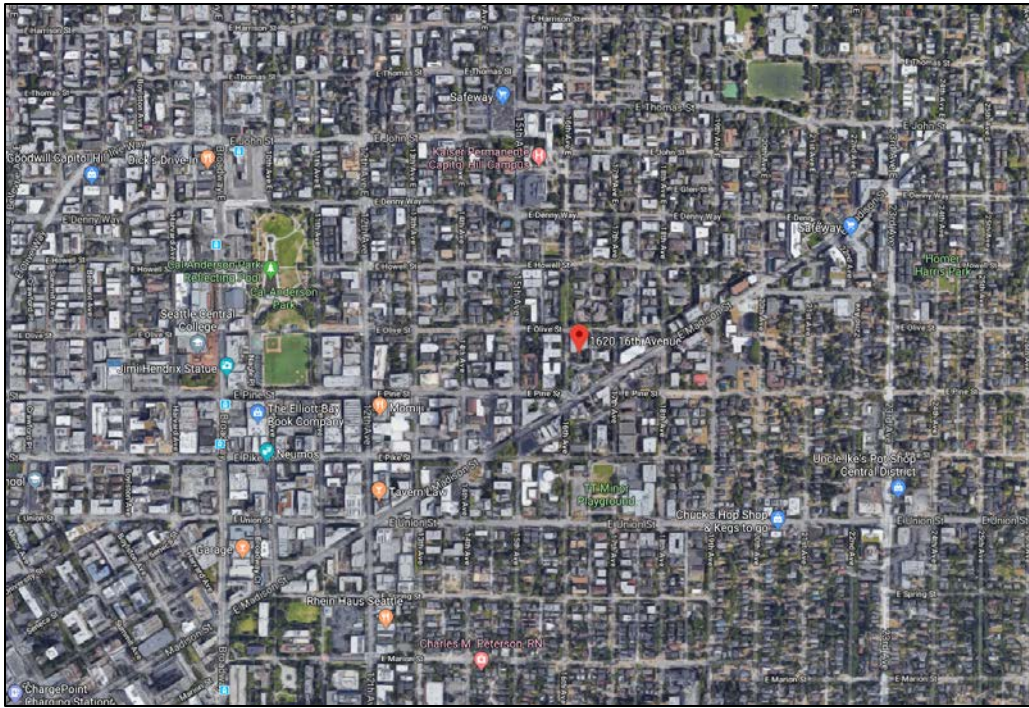
Site Plan

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Comparable Residences in the Surrounding Area

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Historic and Contemporary Maps



Vicinity Plans

Figure 1. Above, an aerial photo of the surrounding area (Google, 2018). North is oriented up. The subject building is marked with a pin. Madison Street is the diagonal arterial separating Capitol Hill and the Central Area neighborhoods

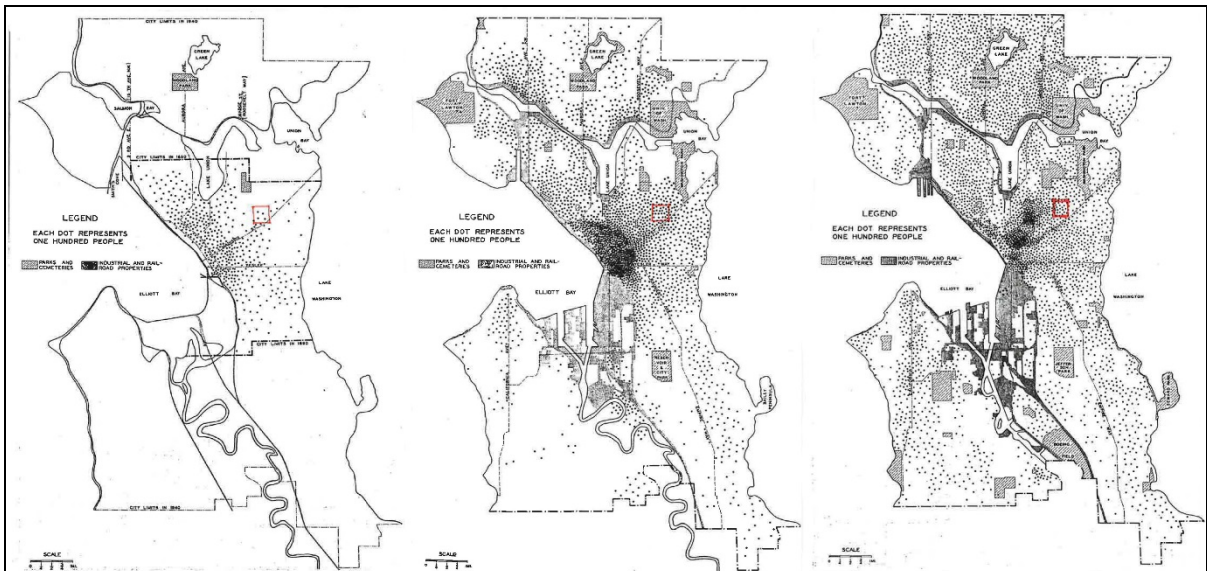
Figure 2. Left, a graphic map view (Google, 2018).

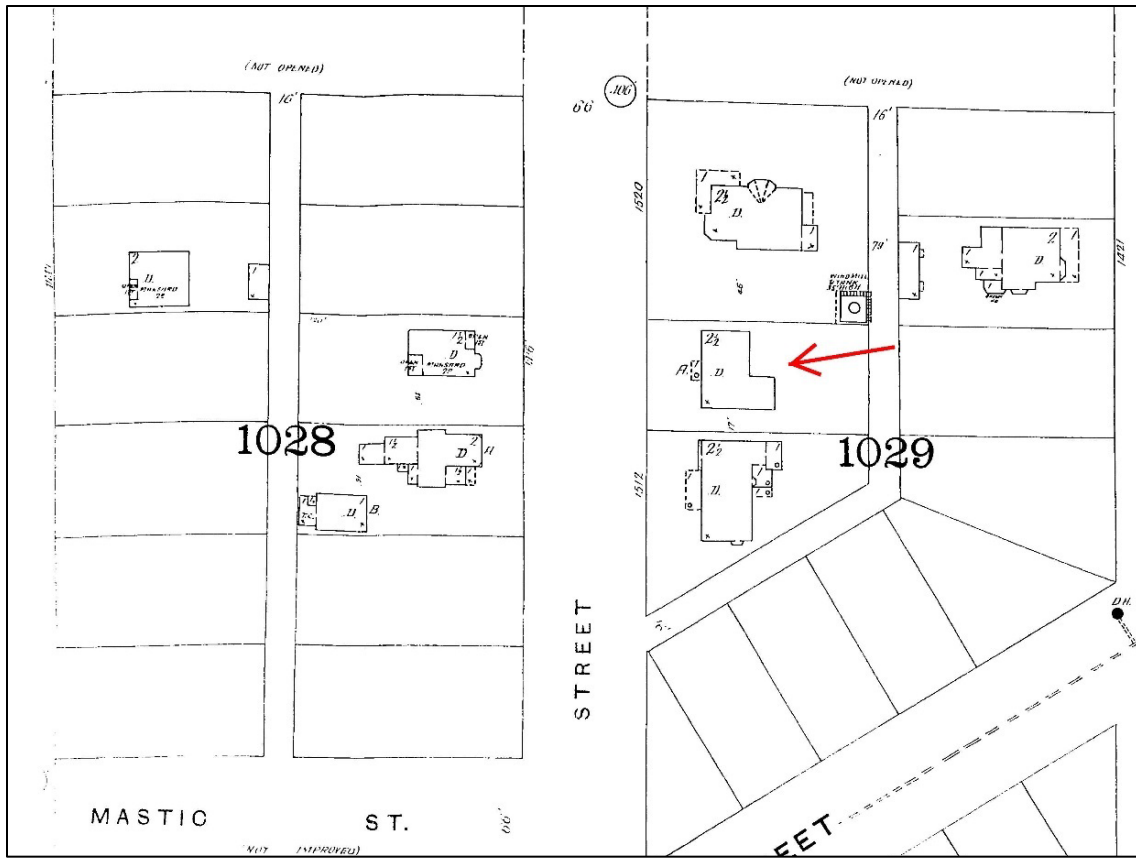
Neighborhood Development



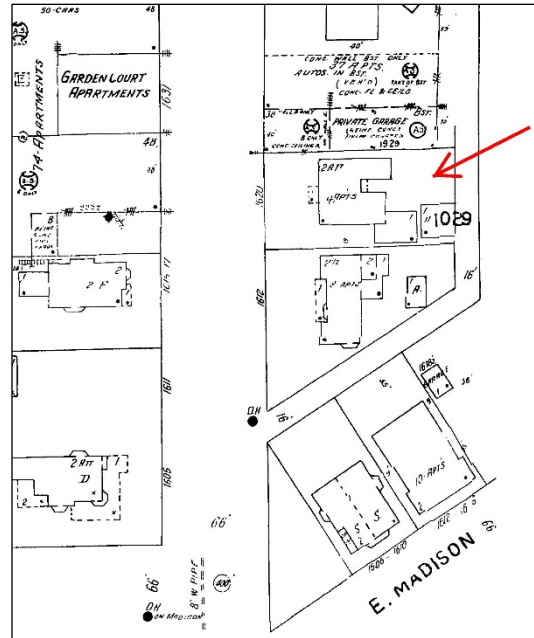
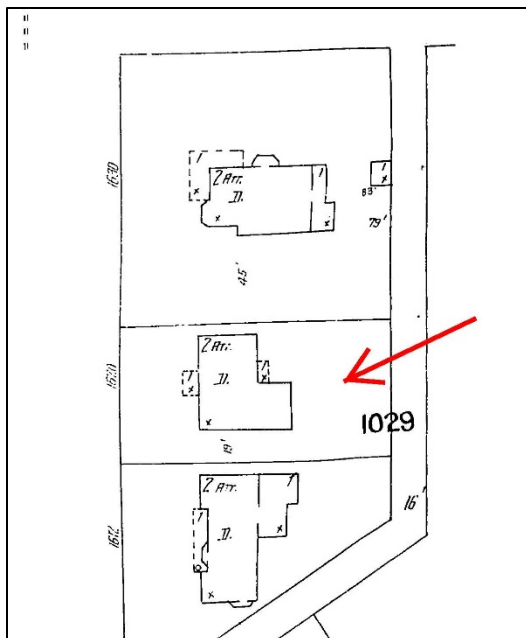
Figure 3. Above, portion of an 1891 Bird's Eye View of Seattle showing parts of downtown Seattle, First Hill, Capitol Hill and areas to the east (University of Washington Special Collections [UWLSC], item MAP123). The area in which the subject property is located is within the red circle.

Figure 4. Below, a composite view of population growth in the city in 1890, 1900 and 1940 (left to right). The approximate location of the census tract containing 1620 16th Avenue is outlined in red (Schmid, p. 56-58).





Figures 5a, 5b and 5c. Above, an excerpt from an 1893 Sanborn Insurance Map, Vol. 2, Sheet 84 showing the blocks on both sides of what was later renamed 16th Avenue. Inserts, below, from a Sanborn map of 1905 (left) and an updated Sanborn map of 1950 (right) showing later construction on the subject site, including the northeast expansion, southeast addition, and the garage (Volume 2, Sheet 223; Seattle Public Library).



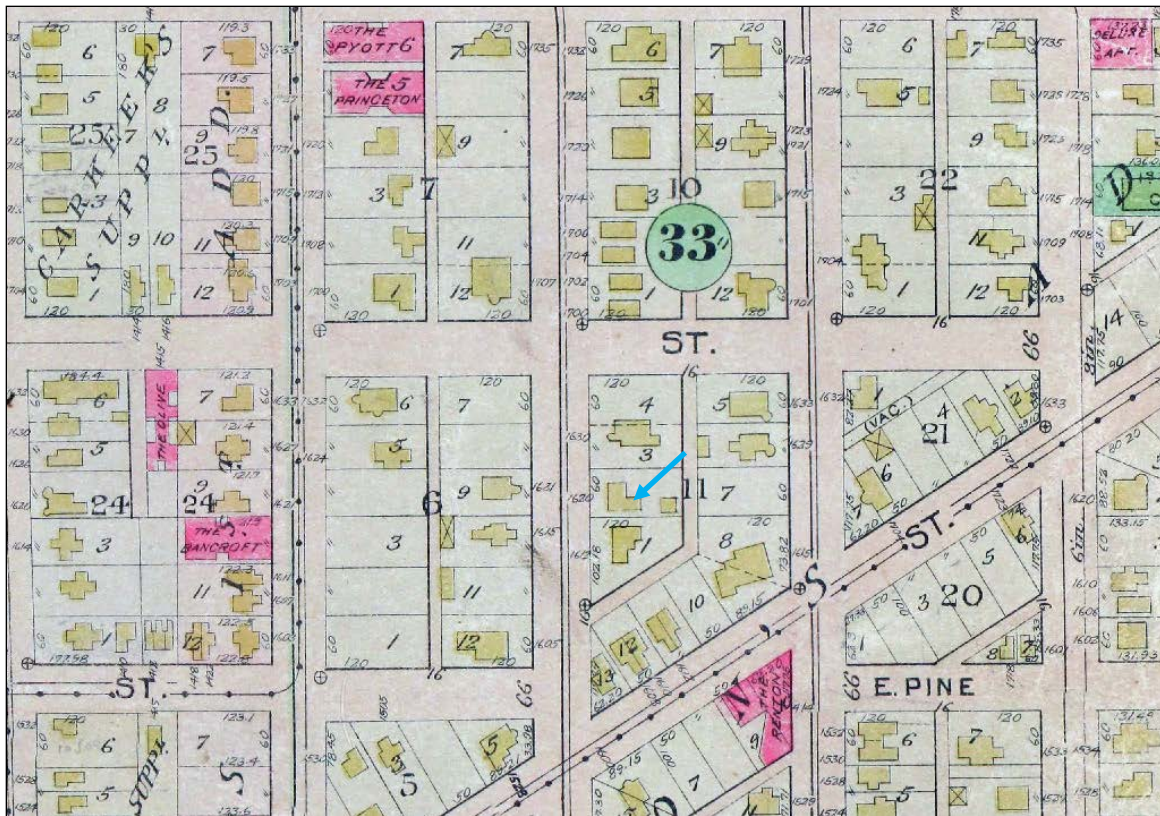


Figure 6. Above, an excerpt from the 1912 Baist Map, Plate No. 7. North is oriented up. A blue arrow identifies the site of the building at 1620 16th Avenue. It appears similar to other wood-frame houses in the area in contrast to larger apartment buildings, which are generally indicated by the pink color denoting masonry construction. The garage is shown on the site, which is accessible from the alley, streetcar lines are indicated along nearby E Madison Street, 15th Avenue, and western parts of E Pine Street (DorpatLomontSherrard blog).

Figure 7. Left, an aerial view of the neighborhood and the property in a 1936 photograph (King County i-Map). North is oriented up. By this date most of the surrounding lots contained buildings. The subject property is identified with a blue pin.

Historic Photos



Figure 8. Above, a tinted photo looking east on Denny Way in 1895, indicating the density of residential development on Capitol Hill (Museum of History & Industry [MOHAI], item 2002.3.262).

Figure 9. Below right, a view of the nearby residential neighborhood at 17th Avenue and E Denny Way in 1912 (Seattle Municipal Archives [SMA], item 6134).

Figure 10. Below left, a view of 15th Avenue north of E Olive in 1910 (SMA, item 40083).





Early 20th century neighborhood development included a number of religious institutions. **Figure 11.** Above left, a former church at 128 16th Avenue E (1906, currently an office building (BOLA). **Figure 12.** Above right, an undated photo of the original Temple de Hirsch synagogue (1907, demolished) (HistoryLink, 10.30.1998).

Figures 13 & 14. Below, historic portraits of the original owners, C.T. Conover in 1893, and Mrs. Mary Louise Conover in an undated photograph (UWLSC Order POR270 and POR2220 respectively).




King County Assessor's Property Tax Record Cards

Figure 15. Below, the County Tax Assessor's property record of August 1937 (Puget Sound Regional Archives).

1 DISTRICT		RENTON'S ADDITION				NAME	2
2 ADDITION		SECTION	TWP.	N. RANGE	EWM; BLOCK	11	TRACT OR LOT NO.
3 ADDRESS-PROPERTY		1620 16 th Avenue				CONT. PURCHASER	
4 FEE OWNER		WALTER E. GRITEN				10-19-36	
5 ARCHITECT						CONTRACTOR	
ORIG. COST \$	BASEMENT	STORE FRONTS		EXTRA FEATURES			
	40% concrete floor	double hung glass wood sash		medium; special			
6 BUILDING		EXTERIOR		CONSTRUCTION			
4 family flat		frame; cedar		medium interior medium FOUND. cheap			
2 story				REFRIGERATION			
10 rooms	FOUNDATION			7 CONDITION: EXTERIOR medium INTERIOR medium FOUND. cheap			
4 apts; 2 2-room	concrete			8 MAIN SUPPORT COLUMN 8 x 8 FOOTING SPAN FT.			
2 3-room				9 FIRST FLOOR JOIST 2x10 16 INCH CENTERS BRIDGED NO			
1 5 Room	ROOF			10 BUILDING finished			
	composition shg			11 GROSS INCOME \$ EXPENSE \$ NET INCOME \$			
INTERIOR				12 DEPRECIATION: COND. 44 % OBSLSE. % ECON. SUIT. % TOTAL %			
10 plastered				YEAR BUILT 1916 1944 REMODELED 1953 1960			
10 fir				EFFECTIVE AGE 20 YEARS FUTURE LIFE 25 YEARS			
				DIMENSIONS SEE BELOW x SQUARE FT. AREA CUBIC FT.			
				1748			

FLOORS 4 fir; 6 maple	
2 cement tile	
FIRE PLACE 3 brick; tile face	
PLUMBING 9 fixtures; 4 tub-legs; 5 toilet; 4 basin; 4 sink; 1 hot water tank; 1 laundry tray; good	
TILE WORK no	
WIRING Box cable wiring	
HEATING hot water; Argo; oil burner; Oilomatic	
ELEVATORS no	
LOBBY	
CEILING—HEIGHT basement 7 1/2'	
1st floor 9'8"; 2nd floor 9 1/2'	



1620 16 Ave. Renton Add. 1-2

IMPROVEMENT VALUE	
MAIN BUILDING	\$ 24,400
OTHER BUILDINGS	\$ 2,500
DEPRECIATED VALUE	\$ 22,900
ASSessed VALUE	\$ 24,000
DATE	8-16-37

LAND INFORMATION	
1. SIZE	x level; above 3'
2. STREET—ROAD	graded; asphalt unpaved alley
3. SIDEWALK	concrete; sewer
4. LANDSCAPING	lawns; shrubs; poor condition
5. TREND	stabil value \$
6. USE	residential
7. DISTRICT	medium old

O	C	OWNER OR CONTRACT PURCHASER	DATE	FILE NO.	PRICE	MTGE.	STAMP
		Edward P. Norton	6-18-47	3698104	17,000		17
			5-7-51	E332	8,468.18		

REMARKS DIMENSIONS: 16x44; 18x40; 12x27;
 GARAGE 20x20 = 400" A-V 107

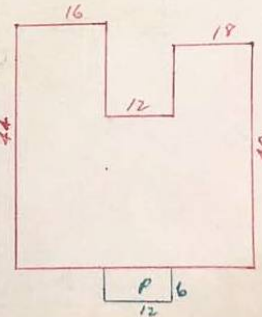




Figure 17. Above, the King County Tax Assessor's record photograph from August 1937.



Figure 18. Above, a similar photo view as Figure 17, dating May 25, 1954. By this date the building was modified to accommodate a basement and a one-story flat roof addition made at the southeast corner. Original siding was replaced by asbestos shingles with tall exposure, and engaged wood pilasters, corner trim and decorative window was removed. The porch were rebuilt with stepped concrete steps and cheek blocks and the portico's original turned wood balustrades were replaced with simpler metal railings.

Current Views



Figure 19. Above, a current aerial map of the subject property. North is oriented up (King County Assessor i-Map, aerial photograph with topography, April 2018).

Surrounding Context

(Unless otherwise noted, current photos are by BOLA and date from April and October 2018.)



Figure 20. Above, looking southeast on 16th Avenue toward E Madison Street showing the adjacent parking lot (1972), and the five-story mixed-use building at Madison Street containing the Central Co-op and its garage (1998).

Figure 21. Below, looking northwest at the Garden Court (1929), 1631 16th Avenue.





Figure 22. Above, looking northeast at the Marquis Apartments (1926), 1605 E Olive Street.

Figure 23. Below, looking west at the former German House (ca. 1894), 1633 17th Avenue at the northeast corner of the block (Google, May 2017). The building is currently under deconstruction.





Figure 24. Above, looking southwest on 16th Avenue at the Jewish Family Service building, 1601 16th Avenue (1998) and portion of the neighboring Garden Court building.

Figure 25. Below, looking northwest at the corner of 16th Avenue and E Olive Street.



The Site and Building



Figure 26. Above, view looking northeast at the primary (west) facade and front yard from 16th Avenue.



Figure 27. Above, the entry porch entry and entry to the basement apartment.

Figure 28. Below, detail view of basement window, and concrete porch steps and cheek blocks.





Figure 29. Above, a detail view of the upper story windows and trim, non-original balustrade and siding.

Figures 30. & 31. Below, detail views of the entry and front porch.





Figure 32. Above, view looking north at the south and part of the west facade.

Figure 33. Below, looking northwest at the south facade, back wings, single-story southeast addition and a portion of the detached garage.





Figure 34 & 35. Above left and right, looking northwest from the alley at the detached two-car garage and back fence.

Figure 36. & 37. Below left and right, views looking west and northwest at the back northern wing and partial southern wing.





Figures 38. & 39. Above left and right, the opening and exterior stair between the two east wings. Paired windows in the center with decorative divided lights, open onto the interior stair landing, while other windows into the apartments are simpler 1:1 sash. The attic dormer windows visible above.



Figures 40. & 41. Above left and right, view looking southwest west at the southeast addition and south back wing, and stair detail.

Figures 42. & 43. Setbacks: Below left, looking west at north setback. Below right, east along the south setback.





Figure 44. Above, looking southeast in the rear yard at the garage.

Figure 45. Below, looking northeast at the back yard and neighboring buildings.



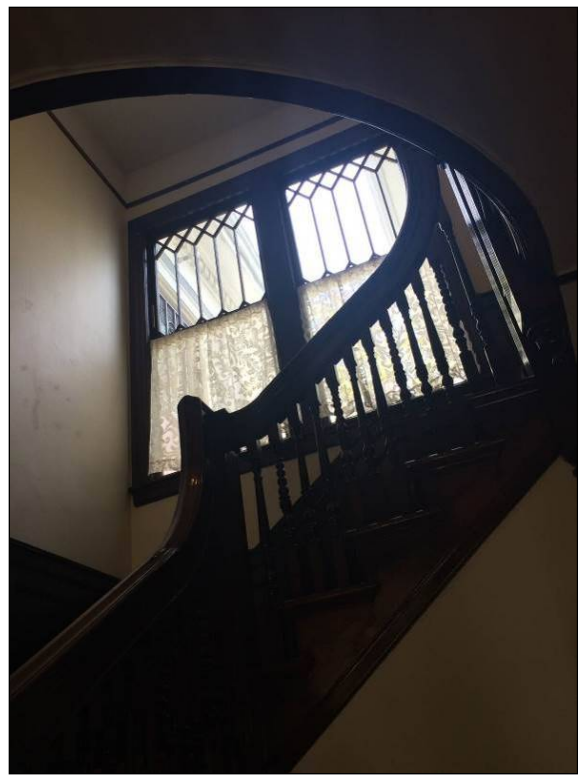


Figure 46. Top left, view looking east from the entry door at the lobby and central staircase.

Figure 47. Top right, looking up the main stair and landing. Four of the five apartment units are accessed from this central space.

Figures 48. & 49. Above left and directly above, interior spaces in Units 2 and 3.

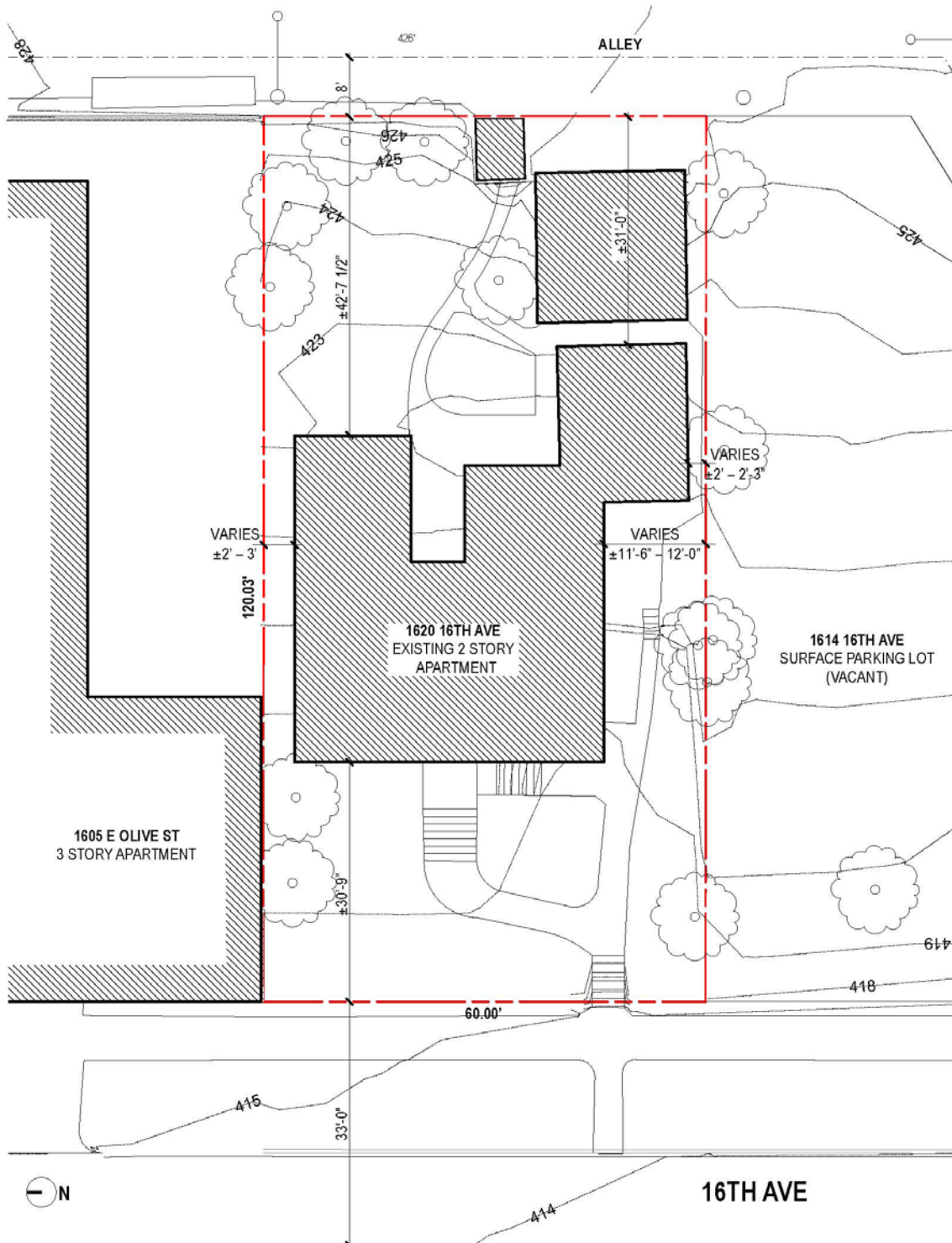


Figure 50. Above, a current site plan of 1620 16th Avenue. (Weinstein A/U, 2018)

Comparable Residences in the Surrounding Area

Photos below and on the following pages illustrate comparable dwellings from 1890 to 1904 in the surrounding Capitol Hill and Central District areas (between Broadway and 23rd Avenue, north of Cherry Street and south of Republican Street). Some of these buildings are identified in prior Nyberg-Steinbrueck and DON historic surveys. The buildings are shown chronologically. Unless otherwise noted, historic photos are from the King County Assessor's property record cards (Puget Sound Regional Archives). Current photos are by BOLA unless indicated otherwise. Construction dates are those cited in King County property tax records or DON inventories.

Figure 51 A & B. 2204 E John Street (1890), Parcel 095500-0120
Below left, 1937; below right, current.



Figures 52 A & B. 983 21st Avenue (1893), Parcel 722850-1375
Below left, 1937; below right, current view (Google, 2018).



Figures 53 A & B. 805 15th Avenue (1895), Parcel 1710400070
Below left 805 15th Avenue (1895), Parcel 171040-0070



Figures 54 A & B. 802 21st Avenue (1895), Parcel 912610-1345
Below left, 1991 (DON); below right, current (King County 2018).



Figures 55 A & B. 508 21st Avenue (1894), Parcel 912610-0980
Below left, 1937; below right, current.



Figures 56 A-D. 521 & 517 21st Avenue (both 1895), Parcel 912610-0535 (521) & 912610-0530 (517)
Below left and right, 1937; bottom left and right, current.



Figures 57 A & B. 621 & 619 21st Avenue (both 1895), Parcel 912610-0375 (621) & 912610-0370 (619)
Below left 1958; below right, current.



Figures 58 A & B. – No used

Figures 59 A & B. 1815 E Jefferson (1901), Parcel 794260-1645
Below left, 1937; below right, current.



Figures 60 A & B. 1510 E Columbia (1901), Parcel 225450-1731
Below left, 1944; below right, current.



Figures 61 A & B. 831 15th Avenue (1902), Parcel 171040-0100
Below left, 1937; below right, current.



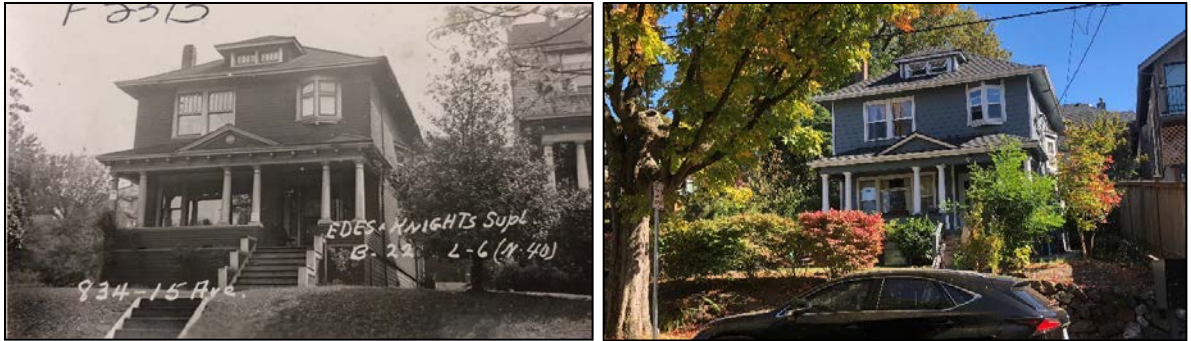
Figures 62 A & B. 815 15th Avenue (1902), Parcel 171040-0080
Below left, 1958; below right, current.



Figures 63 A & B. 230 10th Avenue E (1902), Parcel 600350-1400
Below left, 1937; below right, current.



Figures 64 A & B. 836 15th Avenue (1902), Parcel 225450-1780
Below left, 1937; below right, current.



Figures 65 A & B. 133 13th Avenue E (1903), Parcel 600300-1965
Below left, 1937; below right, current.



Figures 66 A & B. 225 14th Avenue E (1904), Parcel 600350-1795, the Cooper House (Seattle landmark)
Below left, 1937; below right, current.

