



**TO:** Elizabeth A. Pauli, City Manager  
**FROM:** Reuben McKnight, Historic Preservation Officer, Planning and Development Services  
Peter Huffman, Director, Planning and Development Services  
**COPY:** City Council and City Clerk  
**SUBJECT:** Resolution – Designating the White Shield Home as a City Landmark and placing said property on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places – April 23, 2019  
**DATE:** April 4, 2019

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**SUMMARY:**

A resolution designating the White Shield Home, located at 5210 South State Street, as a City Landmark and placing said properties on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places.

**STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:**

- Foster a vibrant and diverse economy with good jobs for all Tacoma residents.
- Assure outstanding stewardship of the natural and built environment.

The designation of the White Shield Home as a City Landmark will provide access to development incentives that will encourage reinvestment in this currently vacant and derelict property. It will also provide a means to preserve a historical resource for the benefit of Tacoma residents and visitors, as well as the South Tacoma community.

**BACKGROUND:**

The White Shield Home was nominated to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places by the property owner.

Designed by prominent Tacoma architects George W. Bullard and Hull and built by C. L. Meeker in 1916, this Colonia Revival building was originally a White Shield Home maternity ward for unwed mothers. The White Shield Home is significant for its association with the work of two of Tacoma's pioneering women physicians, doctors Ella J. Fifield and Eva St. Clair Osborn, who were two of the first five licensed women to practice medicine in the City of Tacoma. The home was a refuge to women marginalized by social mores of the Victorian-era. Doctors Fifield and Osborn played important roles in championing women's causes in Tacoma and the nation. The building was recently purchased with the intent of converting into an assisted living facility. The owner also intends to do extensive restoration work.

On January 23, 2019, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (Commission) voted to schedule the nomination for a public hearing. The Commission had its hearing on February 27, 2019. Following the hearing, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend designation of the White Shield Home.

**ISSUE:**

By designating the White Shield Home as a City Landmark, the building will be protected for future generations. In addition, it may become eligible for City historic preservation incentives, including Special Tax Valuation, the Historic Conditional Use Permit, low-interest loans and Transfer of Development Rights.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

If the building is not added to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, future changes to the structure that negatively alter architectural character, including demolition, could take place without the review of the



Commission, provided that all land use and building code requirements were met. In addition, the property would not be eligible for financial and development incentives that encourage adaptive reuse.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff concurs with the recommendation of the Landmarks Preservation Commission to designate the above property as a City Landmark, which will help to preserve this important structure for future generations.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact.