



Placing Wahlgren’s Florist Shop on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places
 City of Tacoma | Planning and Development Services
Council Study Session
April 6, 2021



OVERVIEW



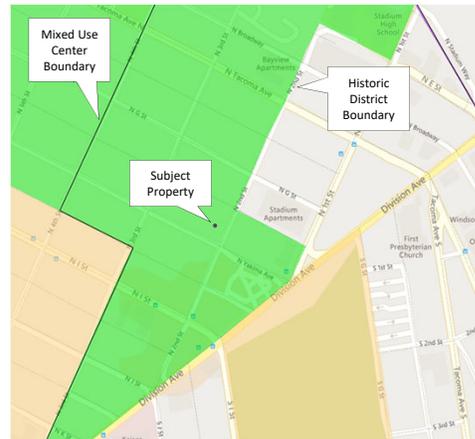
- Landmarks Preservation Commission’s recommendation to designate 201 N Yakima as historic
- Overview of subject properties
- Overview of prior discussions and issues



BACKGROUND



- 201 and 205 N Yakima lie within the Stadium Seminary National Register District, and within the Mixed Use Center and Downtown Subarea
- Both properties are planned for redevelopment



3

BACKGROUND



201 N Yakima

- Built in 1949 for Wahlgren's Florist Shop
- Many architectural elements remain
- Alterations include loss of Vitrolite glass parapet, removal of sign, and an addition
- Not inventoried in the Stadium Seminary Nation Register District nomination



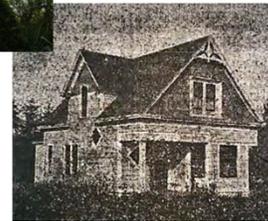
4

BACKGROUND



205 N Yakima

- Built c. 1902 as residence
- Converted to multifamily before 1930s
- Alterations include infill of alcove porch, additional entrances, an additional porch, and removal of ornamentation
- “Secondary” structure in the Stadium Historic District nomination



5

BACKGROUND



FEBRUARY 2020
HISTORIC PROPERTY ASSESSMENT

201 & 205 N YAKIMA AVENUE



- Demolition within the Stadium Seminary Historic district requires review by LPC
- Owner submitted a historic assessment report for LPC review, per code requirement
- On 4/22, LPC recommended formal consideration of both properties for historic designation per TMC 13.12.570

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6

ISSUES



(continued)

- The site is within the Mixed Use Center, as well as within the Stadium Historic District, representing potentially competing policy objectives for Council to weigh.
- The Mixed Use designation was created in 1993. The National Register Historic District was established in 1977. The overlap between the two areas is over 10 blocks.
- Designation will also significantly impact the proposed development project on the site. The owner is opposed to the designation.
- Alternatives?



9

ISSUES



Design Alternatives/Discussion

- Comment at IPS Committee whether there might be a “build around” or “build over” design compromise
- Owner submitted following massing studies in response to IPS discussion
- LPC has not reviewed or considered the merits of the proposed project, or any of the potential alternative approaches
- None of the alternatives meets the historic standards and the developer’s feasibility requirements



Proposed project, image provided by owner

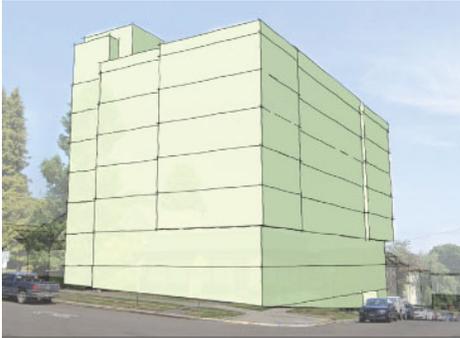
10

ISSUES



OPTION 1: PROJECT PROPOSAL

Proposed project that complies with current zoning. Does not incorporate any historic elements or ideas.



Residential Units: **78**
 Parking Stalls: **46**
 Approximate Area: **71,890 SF**

Pros

- Allows for highest and best use
- Provides a balanced mix of unit types

Cons

- Requires demolition of existing flower shop

11

ISSUES



OPTION 2: FLOWER SHOP RECALL

Similar massing and capacity of original proposal while paying homage to the flower shop with a facade design and proportion that recalls its defining characteristics.

Residential Units: **77**
 Parking Stalls: **46**
 Approximate Area: **72,082 SF**

Pros

- Pays homage to neighborhood history
- Parking and most units preserved

Cons

- Recalled parapet eliminates two-bedroom unit
- Significant losses associated with representation of the flower shop - increased building size and costlier architectural detailing
- Unit reconfiguration from original design required at southeast corner for levels 2-7
- Need City Council direction to Landmarks Commission to approve this option with no loss of units or parking



12

ISSUES



OPTION 3: PRESERVE FLOWER SHOP

Preserves original portion of flower shop and builds around it. Does not result in a feasible number of units or code-required number of parking stalls so is not an option that could be built.

Residential Units: **59**
 Parking Stalls: **23**
 Approximate Area: **50,765 SF**

Pros

- Preserves original structure

Cons

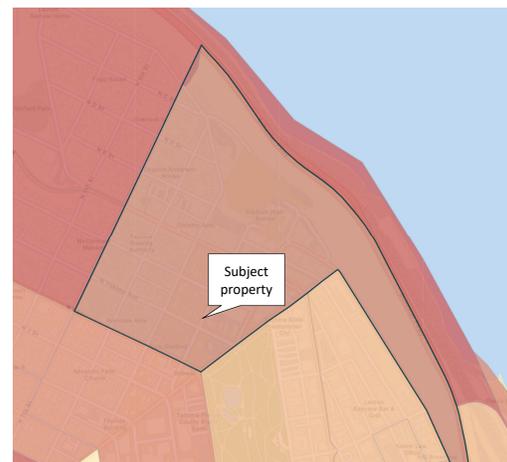
- Cannot be built
- Significantly reduced unit and parking count
- Unit distribution is marginalized. No two-bedroom units, only a single one-bedroom unit

13

HEALTH, EQUITY & SUSTAINABILITY ANALYSIS



- Designation of the Wahlgren's Florist Shop could prevent or reduce the number of new housing units available in this area, which is a very high opportunity area.
- There is not an economic analysis that quantifies this effect, however, and the Landmarks Commission did not review the merits of any future development.
- Generally, staff believes that historic preservation promotes walkability and livability within a city, and potentially enhances the urban experience for all groups.



Tacoma Equity Map

14

OUTREACH



- The process for Landmarks designation includes public meetings and hearing as outlined in TMC 13.07.
- The properties have been discussed at 5 Commission meetings:

April 22	Consideration of Historic Assessment report	
Aug 12	Preliminary review of nomination	
Sept 9	Public Hearing	
Sept 23	Review of comments and testimony	
Oct 14	Adoption of findings and recommendation	

15

OUTREACH



- The Commission received approximately 16 written comments at its April meeting, and 19 written and oral comments were received at the September hearing.
- Hearing comments (15) generally fell into the following categories:
 - Buildings are historically and/or architecturally significant (9)
 - Concerned with the proposed development (4)
 - General support (5)

16

OUTREACH



(Comments, continued)

- Opposing comments (4) included:
 - The Wahlgren family does not support
 - City needs housing
 - Supporters of nomination want to prevent apartment buildings
 - City needs development
 - Buildings do not meet historic criteria

17

NEXT STEPS



- Council Committee Review – January 13, 2021
- Council Study Session – April 6, 2021
- City Council Consideration – April 13, 2021
- Resolution Effective Date – April 13, 2021

18

RECOMMENDATIONS



The Landmarks Commission recommends the Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee forward the following to City Council for consideration and approval:

- Adoption of a resolution designating the Wahlgren Florists Shop at 201 N Yakima to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places.

19



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