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# MOUNT BAKER HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT



CITY OF SEATTLE  
DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOODS

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WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF ARTIFACTS CONSULTING, INC.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	7
PREHISTORY AND PIONEER SETTLEMENT (TO 1899)	11
EARLY MOUNT BAKER PLATTING AND DEVELOPMENT (1900-1919)	15
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF MOUNT BAKER AREA (1920-1929)	29
DEPRESSION AND WORLD WAR II (1930-1945)	35
DIVERSITY COMES TO MOUNT BAKER (1946-1970)	39
1970S-1980S ISSUES AND RECENT DEVELOPMENT	45
CONCLUSION	47
BIBLIOGRAPHY	49

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## INTRODUCTION

The Mount Baker neighborhood has a unique character that reflects the Mount Baker Park subdivision as an early planned community, which integrated streets and residential development into the area's natural setting. The community takes its name from the spectacular northward view of Mount Baker. The Mount Baker name was first used in the Mount Baker Park subdivision, which was platted as an exclusive residential neighborhood by the Hunter Improvement Company in 1907. At that time, the virtually undeveloped area was considered quite remote from Seattle's downtown.

The Mount Baker area is defined by two north-south ridges; one is along 31st Avenue South from Judkins Street to Mount Baker Boulevard and the second is between Mount Baker Park and Lake Washington along Mount St. Helens Place and Hunter Boulevard. The ridges offer splendid east-facing views, particularly of the lake and Cascade Mountains. Wetmore Slough is located at the south end of the area. The Mount Baker neighborhood developed later than the Rainier Valley and the areas of central Seattle to the north.

For the purpose of this historic context statement, the boundaries of the Mount Baker neighborhood are Judkins Street on the north, Charlestown Street on the south, Lake Washington on the east, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Way (north of Cheasty Boulevard) and Rainier Avenue (south of Cheasty) on the west. (See map of Mount Baker neighborhood.)









## PREHISTORY AND PIONEER SETTLEMENT (TO 1899)

### Native American Use

Prior to the Euro-American settlement of Puget Sound, the “lake people,” a branch of the Duwamish tribe, established winter camps of cedar longhouses along the shore of Lake Washington. The Duwamish are part of the Southern Puget Sound branch of the Coast Salish Indian people.

The lake people or “Xacua’bs” (hah-chu-AHBSH) were a collection of groups whose villages were located along Lake Washington. The main village of the S’kate’lbsabs (skah-TELB-shabsh), who lived along the southwest part of Lake Washington, was at Renton at the confluence of the lake outlet and the Cedar River. Other smaller village sites were scattered along the lake’s shore, including at Bryn Mawr, Brighton Beach, Pritchard Island, and Fleaburg (Leschi). Up to 24 house sites associated with the S’kate’lbsabs have been identified in the area (Buerge n.d., 1-2). The cedar houses were typically 50 by 100 feet and housed three to five families.

The Indian people occupied the village sites during the winter months, from November through March, and in summer they migrated to temporary camps near hunting and fishing grounds. The lake provided habitat for fish species, such as kokanee, suckers, chubb, and peamouth, and for waterfowl, muskrats, beaver, and otters. The Indians also gathered plants for food, including wapato, water lily, and cattail.

The lake people had associated burial sites in Renton, and one may have been in the vicinity of the Columbia City Library (Buerge n.d., 3).

At Wetmore Slough, near today’s Genesee Park and Playfield, the Indian people had a rack that may have been used to dry salmon (Buerge n.d., 3). The Wetmore Slough was known as Ska’bo, meaning “nipple or milk” (Waterman, 96). The creek that emptied into the Wetmore Slough was called Sqa’tsld, meaning “choked up mouth.” Apparently snags blocked the mouth of the creek, which once had a salmon run (Waterman, 96).

According to Indian legend, an earthquake monster, known as aya’hos (“ai-YAH-hos”) or Saiya’hos (“horned snake”) lived near the site of today’s Colman Park (Waterman, 102). This monster was described as spotted and with horns (Buerge n.d., 6-7). This site was also the location of a massive landslide in 1898.



Taylor’s Mill. Source: Rainier Valley Historical Society.

The lake people occupied house sites on the lake until at least the 1860s. One of these was the seasonal camp at "Fleaburg" in the Leschi area, near where the Indians gathered to launch the attack on the pioneers known as the Battle of Seattle (Rochester interview, 4/24/03). By the 1890s, most of the Indian population along Lake Washington was gone, although there was some Indian use of the lake until it was lowered during the ship canal construction in 1916.

An Indian trail followed the Rainier Valley from the Pioneer Square area to Renton, along the approximate route of Renton Avenue and Rainier Avenue.

### Early Ownership and Pioneers

In the 1850s, David "Doc" Maynard (1808-1873) staked a claim in part of the area that became Mount Baker Park and the Rainier Valley, and in the 1860s, David Denny (1832-1903) purchased property in the area. David Denny sold a parcel to the Seattle & Walla Walla Railroad, which then sold the land to Daniel Jones of the Hunter Improvement Company.

Wetmore Slough, which extended south from the approximate location of today's Charlestown Street to Genesee Street and west to Rainier Avenue, was named for Seymour Wetmore who came to Seattle in 1857 (Place names, 1940).

Several saw and planing mills were located along Lake Washington in the 1890s: one at the foot of Charles Street and another at Judkins Street. Guy Phinney built a sawmill on the lake at the foot of Charles Street, which expanded into a planing mill and produced 75,000 board feet of lumber per day. A tramline connected the two sawmill facilities. The workers' houses were constructed on the hillside above the lake. Following a landslide in 1898 that destroyed some houses, the last mill moved to Rainier Beach. It was known as Taylor's Mill and operated at Rainier Beach until 1910.

In 1886, the Spring Hill Water Company constructed a pumphouse on the lake at the future site of Colman Park. This water was pumped to Seattle's downtown during the Seattle Fire in 1889 and proved inadequate to control the blaze. In 1890, the Seattle Water Department purchased the Spring Hill Water Company, including this pumping station. After the water plant was abandoned, the site was transferred to the Parks Department in 1907 and became Colman Park.

The first area to develop was at the north end of Mount Baker ridge, near the sawmills. Some of this land was within Seattle's original 1869 corporate boundaries, which had a south boundary at Hanford Street (this boundary was later moved north to Atlantic Street in 1875). This area became known as Rainier Heights for its panoramic views of Mount Rainier.



Contemporary photograph of the Thompson house, located at 3119 South Day Street. Source: Carol Tobin.

A few pre-1900 houses are located in the area north of Atlantic Street between 31st and 32nd Avenue South. These include the Queen Anne style Thompson house, built in 1897 at 3119 South Day Street. Ernest McKay constructed this house with materials from the sawmill at 30th Avenue South and South Judkins Street. It was built for Seattle attorney Will Thompson, who worked for the Great Northern Railroad (Kreisman 1999, 65). The Thompson house served as the Mt. Baker Sanitarium after World War I and was later a rooming house until 1976.

In 1883, Seattle annexed the area between Hanford Street and Atlantic Street, which includes most of the Mount Baker community.

### Early Transportation

In 1889, banker and promoter J.K. Edmiston began construction of the Rainier Avenue Electric Railway and the streetcar began operation from downtown to Columbia in 1890. In 1891, the line was extended to Rainier Beach to collect freight revenue from Taylor's Mill.

In the early 1890s, the Rainier Heights streetcar line began operation under the Union Trunk Line. This route extended from East Jefferson Street and 21st Avenue (then Barclay and McNair) to 30th Avenue South and South Atlantic Street. The cars operated along Jefferson to 24th Avenue (then Market Street), south on 24th Avenue to Dearborn Street, then east on Dearborn to 30th Avenue South, and then south on 30th to South Atlantic Street (Blanchard 1966, 55). This was a scenic route, with views of Mount Rainier in the distance to the south.

The vast majority of the Mount Baker area, particularly areas south of Atlantic Street, remained undeveloped until after 1900. This is partly because the area remained in the hands of a few owners, and at that time it was considered to be relatively far from downtown Seattle.



### EARLY MOUNT BAKER AREA PLATTING AND DEVELOPMENT (1900-1919)

Seattle as a whole grew phenomenally during the first two decades of the 20th century, from a population of 80,671 in 1900 to 315,312 in 1920, and Mount Baker was a part of this growth surge. In 1907, Seattle annexed the area south of Hanford Street to Rainier Beach.

Most of the development of the Mount Baker area occurred between 1910 and 1929, with the majority of the platting during the decade from 1900-1910 and to a lesser extent after 1910. Development occurred later here than in other areas of southeast Seattle and much later than in central Seattle.

#### York

In 1903, George M. and Martha Taggart platted the York Addition on property south of Hanford Street between 33rd Avenue South and York Road/37th Avenue South. York Road was the county road, which ran from First Hill to the Rainier Valley (Summers 1992, 4). A portion of this road still retains the “York” name, at Walden Street, near the John Muir School. The York name may relate to British settlers in the area or to Taggart’s English heritage (Cary 1994, p. 6).

York Station was a stop on the Rainier Valley streetcar line, and a small commercial settlement grew up around the station at South Walden Street. York Station was originally known as Wetmore Station for the Wetmore family that lived in the area and farmed and grew fruit there. The Wetmores included Frank, Seymour and Birdsey, and their families.

The Taggart family donated the first lot for the Methodist Church and land for the first school in the area, the Wetmore School, built in 1903. The York School, designed by architect Edgar Blair, was constructed in 1910.

In 1910, George M. Taggart lived at 3916 Charlestown Street, and his son David M. Taggart lived at 3207 37th Avenue South.



Ca. 1912 photograph of the Mount Baker neighborhood commercial building and club house. Source: PEMCO Webster & Stevens Collection, Museum of Industry & History, Seattle. All Rights Reserved.



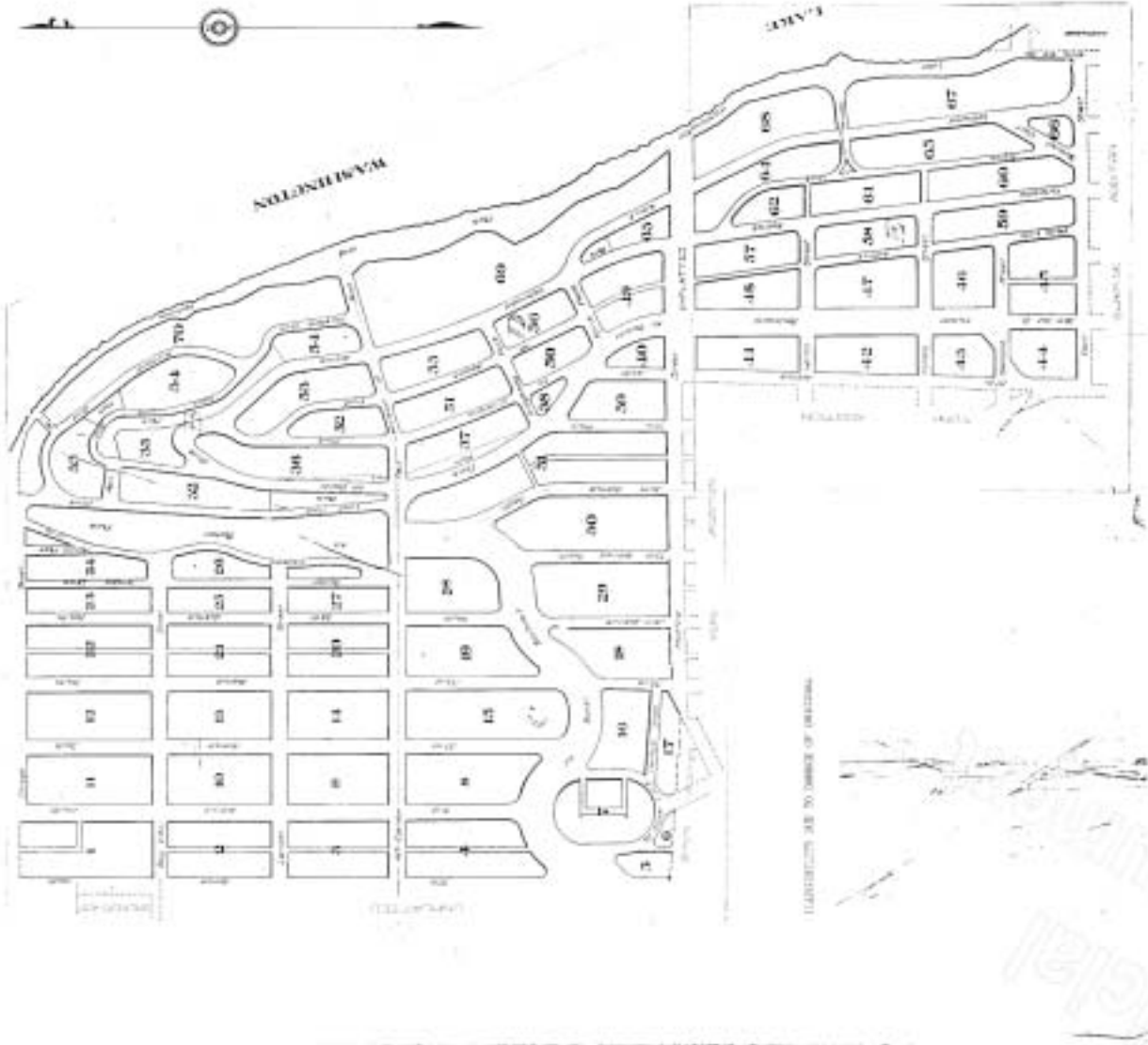
1913 photograph of the intersection of McClellan and Thirty-Second Avenue South. Source: Hall-Summers Collection, Rainier Valley Historical Society.

# MT. BAKER PARK

AN ADDITION TO THE CITY OF SEATTLE

Scale 1"=100'

KEY MAP



The portion of the Mount Baker plat showing Mount Baker Boulevard and Franklin High School. Source: King County Recorder's



## Charles P. Dose, Charles C. Dose and Dose Addition

Charles P. Dose, a German immigrant, was a real estate businessman and banker originally based in Chicago. In 1871, Mr. Dose and his partners Fricke Brothers purchased a 40-acre tract of property in Seattle's future Mount Baker District on Lake Washington (Dose 1924, 1). In 1898, he moved from Chicago to Seattle with his family. His son Charles C. Dose was an architect, and father and son platted the Dose Addition in 1906, on ten acres along South Walker Street between 31st Avenue South and Lake Washington. Their first house in the plat was a cottage at 31st Avenue South and South Walker Street (De Freece, 8/16/1959).

Charles C. Dose designed houses in the subdivision, and the Dose family lived in them, and then sold one house and built another. The Dose Addition had the same restrictions on non-white ownership as Mount Baker Park. The Dose family, especially Mrs. Charles C. (Phoebe) Dose, were actively involved in the creation of the Mount Baker Park Improvement Club.



Ca. 1913 photograph of Franklin High School and nearby residences in the Mount Baker neighborhood. Source: Rainier Valley Historical Society.



Ca. 1914 illustration of the Mount Baker Club House. Source: *Flowers We All Love Best in Mount Baker Park*, (reprint of 1914 ed.).

## Platting and Development – Mount Baker Park Addition (1907)

Developer J.C. Hunter formed the Hunter Tract Improvement Company in 1905. Its officers included Daniel Jones, F.L. Fehren and C.E. Farnsworth, president (Cary 1994, p. 6). Daniel Jones and F.L. Fehren served as sales agents for the company.

The Hunter Tract Improvement Company purchased 130 acres of David Denny's former holdings from Daniel Jones, developer. By this time the Olmsted Brothers had completed their 1903 plan for Seattle's parks and boulevards system and recommended a "Mount Baker Park" on the proposed parkway along Lake Washington. This park was so named because of the views it afforded in the direction of Mount Baker (Olmsted 1903, 54). For the initial layout and planning of the area, the Hunter Tract Improvement Company considered hiring the Olmsted Brothers in 1906, but selected George F. Cotterill of the engineering firm, Cotterill and Whitworth (Rash in Ochsner 1994, 54-55). Cotterill's plan was based on the early bicycle trails he designed, which were also a basis for the Olmsted plan. Cotterill was later mayor of Seattle.

Landscape architect Edward O. Schwagerl, Seattle's former parks superintendent from 1892-1895, was responsible for the landscape design. Another partner in the plat design was the Sawyer Brothers, an engineering firm. In the fall of 1906, John Charles Olmsted provided the Hunter Tract Improvement Company with comments on Cotterill's plan and suggestions for deed restrictions to assure the quality of the development of the plat (Olmsted Associates 1906).

The Hunter Tract Improvement Company and R.V. and Nellie R. Ankeny filed the plat of the Mount Baker Park Addition in June 1907, and it was recorded by the County on July 15, 1907. The plat covered a 70-block area, a total of about 200 acres. Mount Baker Park was the largest subdivision incorporated into the Olmsted Plan, and Mount Baker Boulevard was completed by 1907.

Landscape architect Edward Otto Schwagerl (1842-1910) came to Tacoma in 1890 and became Seattle Superintendent of Public Parks two years later. Schwagerl laid out Kinnear Park. After his tenure with Seattle, he started a private landscape architecture practice in Tacoma and Seattle and designed real estate subdivisions including University Heights Addition (1899) and University Place (1896-97) near Tacoma. Schwagerl prepared an early plan for Seattle's parks, but the Olmsted Brothers were hired to do the official plan (which was similar to Schwagerl's).

The Hunter Tract Improvement Company intended to create an exclusive upper-income community, and deeds of sale contained restrictive covenants relating to minimum setbacks and the value of structures on the lots. (No house that cost less than \$2,000 to \$5,000 per lot, depending on the lot, was permitted in the subdivision, and a minimum 25-foot front setback from the street was required.) Mount Baker was restricted to single family residences only, with the one exception being a single commercial building at 35th Avenue South and South McClellan Street. This commercial building included stores on the street level and a clubhouse above and has been replaced by the Mount Baker Center building (1930).

Mount Baker Park was one of the largest planned communities in Seattle at the time of its platting. It was the first subdivision to be incorporated into larger city planning efforts and included in the Olmsted Brothers plans for the city's system of parks and boulevards. At that time the Mount Baker area seemed far from downtown. Mount Baker Park is a local example of the English or "picturesque" type of landscape planning (Historic Seattle 1976).

The street names in the Mount Baker Park Addition reflect the high hopes for community and emphasize the fine views. These names include Mt. Baker Boulevard, Mt. Rainier Drive, Mt. St. Helens Place, and Cascadia Avenue. George McClellan was a Civil War General and an engineer who tried to locate a railroad route through Snoqualmie Pass (Cary 1994, 6). The viewpoint at the north end of Cascadia Avenue was known as Jones Point in honor of developer Daniel Jones.

The Hunter Improvement Company had a small sales office on 31st Avenue South managed by Daniel Jones (Seattle Times, 8/16/1959). Charles Dose and Daniel Jones petitioned to have the Rainier Heights streetcar line extended to McClellan Street, and it soon became known as the Mount Baker line.



2003 photograph of the Mount Baker Club House. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.



Ca. 1914 photograph of the Charles C. Dose residence located at 3111 Dose Terrace. Source: *Flowers We All Love Best in Mount Baker Park*, (reprint of 1914 ed.).



1920 photograph of the Colman Park Boulevard. Source: Seattle Municipal Archives Photograph Collection, Don Sherwood Parks History, Item No. 28930.

The Olmsted Brothers 1908 supplement to their 1903 plan for Seattle's parks and boulevards addressed the large areas annexed by Seattle in 1907, including the Mt. Baker area. The Olmsted Brothers incorporated the Mount Baker Park Addition into their city-wide plan. Public dedication of the Mount Baker Park, the small parks and the boulevards was an important design feature of the Mount Baker Park subdivision. The plat layout reflects a combination of the gridiron street layout that connects with the Seattle street network and curvilinear streets and boulevards that take advantage of the natural topography of the area, including the two main boulevards, Mt. Baker Boulevard and Hunter Boulevard. Other streets that follow the contour of the ridge are Mt. Rainier Drive, Mt. Baker Drive, Mt. Claire Drive, and Shoreland Drive among others. Mt. Baker Boulevard, which connects with Mount Baker Park and Lake Park Drive and Glenwood Drive on either side of the park, follows a natural ravine that leads from today's Franklin High School eastward and then in a northerly direction to Lake Washington. The layout of the north-south streets south of Mount Baker Park, in particular, takes advantage of the views from the ridge that slopes down to the lake.

The local residents and the developers established the Mount Baker Park Improvement Club in 1909, and today the organization is known as the Mount Baker Community Club. It is one of the oldest continuously active community clubs in the United States (mountbaker.org Web site). The club's original purposes were to promote the physical development of Mount Baker Park in its entirety and encourage homeowners to develop and improve their property, and to organize and aid neighborhood clubs to benefit the community. Among the club's concerns were lighting, schools, police protection, beautification and social life. By 1914, the club had about 100 members (Mount Baker Park Improvement Club 1914, n.p.). The club's motto was "get together: get busy: boost!" Starting in 1912, the club sponsored an annual rose show.

One of the club's initial objectives was to build, own and operate a community clubhouse. At first the club used the second floor of the commercial building at the southwest corner of Mt. Baker Boulevard and Mt. Rainier Drive. A separate clubhouse, located at 2811 Mt. Rainier Drive South, designed by Mt. Baker resident, architect Charles C. Dose, was constructed in 1914 and is still used by the club today. Although Ellsworth Storey proposed plans for a building, and the club hired architects Haynes and Catin to prepare preliminary plans, Charles C. Dose is responsible for the final design (Rash interview, 4/25/03). This Craftsman style building blends well with the overall residential character of Mount Baker Park.

#### Public/Institutional

At the same time as the platting and initial development of the Mount Baker community, parks were set aside and schools constructed.



1914 photograph of Mount Rainier from Lake Washington Boulevard. Source: University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections. A. Curtis 31258.



1917 photograph looking west at Franklin High School. Source: Seattle Municipal Archives.



Photograph of Our Lady of Mount Virgin Catholic Church located at 1531 Bradner Place. Source: Our Lady of Mount Virgin Catholic Church.



2003 photograph of Our Lady of Mount Virgin Catholic Church. Source: Carol Tobin.

The 1903 report of the Olmsted Brothers for Seattle's parks and boulevards recommended that the City obtain the landslide area near the former pumping station as a city park, which they termed "Rainier Heights Park." In 1907, the Parks Department obtained the pumping station property from the Water Department, which became the lower twelve acres of Colman Park. Recommendations for Colman Park and Frink Boulevard were included in the 1908 Olmsted Brothers supplemental plan. The Olmsteds also proposed Frink Boulevard (now part of Lake Washington Boulevard), which followed a curving route through the park to connect with Lake Washington Boulevard. The estate of James M. Colman deeded a large parcel to the park in 1910, and the park was named for Colman, a prominent Seattle engineer and businessman who built Colman Dock, the predecessor of today's ferry terminal.

In 1908, the developers of Mount Baker deeded the land for Mount Baker Park to the City. The Hunter Tract Improvement Company worked with Edward O. Schwagerl in developing initial plans and landscaping for the park. Schwagerl designed the original rustic bridges, which are no longer extant.

Following the 1910 construction of the York School, the opening of Franklin High School in 1912 was a momentous occasion for the Mount Baker community. This prominent Seattle landmark building dominates the Mount Baker neighborhood and the Rainier Valley. It was designed by Seattle School architect Edgar Blair and was once considered "the most beautiful school west of the Mississippi" (Kreisman 1999, 158). The Mount Baker Improvement Club mounted an unsuccessful campaign to change its name to Mount Baker High School (Club scrapbook, 5/8/1912). In 1916, the school district purchased the former Malmo nursery property adjacent to the school for use as a playfield (Club scrapbook, 12/1/1916).

The original Mount Baker Park fire station (Fire Station No. 30), a wood-frame gambrel roofed structure built in 1914, was located at the northeast corner of Hunter Boulevard South and South Spokane Street and is no longer extant (Historic Property Inventory Form, Fire Station No. 30, 2000).

The original Methodist Church in the area was a white wooden building at 34th Avenue South and South Horton Street built on a site donated by D.M. Taggart. This church was abandoned and reconditioned by Presbyterians, and renamed the Mount Baker Park Presbyterian Church in 1910. The Presbyterians held services there until 1916 when they moved to the Mount Baker Clubhouse (Seattle Times, 8/16/1959).

At the north end of the Mount Baker area, Our Lady of Mount Virgin Catholic Church at 1531 Bradner Place was built in 1913 by Italian immigrants. This missionary church was the hub of the Italian community and is discussed in more detail in the North Rainier context statement.

In 1915, a proposed Catholic seminary on the corner of McClellan Street and St. Helens Place sparked considerable controversy in Mount Baker, which considered itself an exclusive residential community (Club scrapbook, 3/22/1915). The seminary was established at 2745 Mt. St. Helens Place after the Mt. Baker Improvement Club lost its court case (Sanborn, 1916).

### Residential Development and Architecture

The Mount Baker Park Addition, in particular, appealed to a wealthy clientele who were attracted to life in an exclusive planned “suburban” community. Many of Seattle’s prominent citizens resided in the area, including Frederick Simpson, Martin Paup, Frank Buty, J.K. Gordon, Charles Horton, and Dr. Albert Bouffleur. Several of these people, including Buty and Paup, constructed office buildings and new apartments in and near downtown (Sale 1976, 103).

The Mount Baker area has a rich array of residential buildings, which include many Craftsman style houses and a variety of eclectic styles. A substantial number of the houses are designs by Seattle’s most prominent architects of their time, including Ellsworth Storey, Bebb & Mendel, Saunders & Lawton, Graham & Myers, Charles Haynes, Andrew Willatzen, Arthur Loveless, and Edwin Ivey. The area also includes many builder-designed Craftsman style houses, several of which were featured in *Bungalow Magazine*. The majority of the older houses in the neighborhood were built in two general time periods: an early phase from 1905 to about 1915 or 1920, and a second phase from 1920 to 1929.

Several of the key houses are described briefly in this context statement.

Before about 1905, there was virtually no development in what became the Mount Baker Park subdivision. McKee’s Correct Road Map of Seattle and vicinity from 1894, shows the name Edwards on the shore of Lake Washington northeast of Columbia City and very little else.



Ca. 1914 photograph of the James K. Gordon residence located at 3311 Cascadia Avenue. Source: *Flowers We All Love Best in Mount Baker Park*, (reprint of 1914 ed.).



Ca. 1914 photograph of the Robert M. Dyer residence located at 3002 Cascadia Avenue. Source: *Flowers We All Love Best in Mount Baker Park*, (reprint of 1914 ed.).



Ca. 1914 photograph of the Charles D. Bowles residence located at 2649 Shoreland Drive. Source: *Flowers We All Love Best in Mount Baker Park*, (reprint of 1914 ed.).



Ca. 1914 photograph of the Ridgley C. Force residence located at 2810 Cascadia Avenue. Source: *Flowers We All Love Best in Mount Baker Park*, (reprint of 1914 ed.).

Because they were platted earlier than Mount Baker Park, some of the oldest houses are in the Dose Addition and near York. As noted above, architect Charles C. Dose and his father designed and built several houses in the area. In 1910, Charles C. Dose designed a large Craftsman and Queen Anne influenced house at 3111 South Dose Terrace and an English Arts and Crafts style half-timbered residence for his father at 2121 31st Avenue South. Another house designed and built by Dose in 1911 is at 3210 South Dose Terrace.

Prominent Seattle architect Ellsworth Storey (1879-1960) designed many houses in Mount Baker, ranging from the modest Storey cottages located near Colman Park to the imposing Classical (Georgian) Revival style Phiscator Estate house at 3311 Cascadia Avenue. The 1907-8 Phiscator Estate house was one of the first houses built in Mount Baker Park. The 1908 Robert M. Dyer house, at 3002 Cascadia Avenue, shows a Prairie style influence, and was the first of three houses Storey designed for Robert M. Dyer. The Storey cottages built between 1910 and 1915 along Lake Washington Boulevard and 36th Avenue South are examples of the Western Stick style and comprise a Seattle landmark district.

Other Storey designs in the area include the Sextan Swanson house and the Swanson and Austin house (both 1913), on the 3200 block of Hunter Boulevard, the Robert M. Evans house (1913) at 2306 34th Avenue South, and a house (1914) at 3515 South Mount Baker Boulevard. Although he worked in a variety of eclectic styles, Storey's most original designs combine chalet, Arts and Crafts, and Prairie School influences into a unique style adapted to the Northwest region (Hildebrand in *Shaping Seattle Architecture* 1994, 107).

On the corner of Cascadia and Sierra Drive, in 1908 J. Frederic Thorne built a lodge in the woods at 3220 Sierra Drive, that was later owned by Alfred Carvill (Strachan, 4/28/1946).

Several Mount Baker houses were published in *Homes and Gardens of the Pacific Coast*, and many of the same houses are included in the Mount Baker Improvement Company's slick promotional publication, "Flowers We All Love Best in Mount Baker Park," issued in 1914.

The Charles D. Bowles residence (1910) at 2649 Shoreline Drive was designed by Seattle architects Bebb & Mendel. It is a large Colonial Revival influenced house that was originally planned as architect Louis L. Mendel's home. Bebb & Mendel was one of Seattle's most prominent architectural firms during the first fifteen years of the 20th century.



Another leading Seattle architectural firm, Saunders & Lawton, designed the imposing house at 2810 Cascadia Avenue South for Ridgley C. and Carolina Force. Built in 1911-1912, this house was featured in *Homes and Gardens of the Pacific Coast*, and is an example of an eclectic mix of styles including English Arts and Crafts. The original landscape design was by the Olmsted Brothers (Johnson 1997, 56).

The Joseph Kraus house at 2812 Mt. St. Helens Place is an excellent example of a Tudor Revival style residence. It was designed by architect F. H. Perkins for industrialist Joseph Kraus and built in 1911 by J.E. Douglas. The landscape elements were carefully integrated into the site, and the house takes advantage of a stunning view of Lake Washington and the Cascade Mountains. It is the only residence in the Mount Baker neighborhood that is a designated Seattle landmark.

Another Seattle architecture firm, Graham and Myers, designed several buildings in the Mount Baker area. One of the best examples is the Tudor Revival style house at 3116 Cascadia Avenue built for Edward Cunningham in 1909.

Local architect Elmer Green designed the Craftsman style house (1913) at 3105 Cascadia Avenue for Clifton A. Stuart. Similar to several other Seattle architects, including V.W. Voorhees, Green advertised his own "Pattern Plan Book" (McAlester 1998, 675).

Seattle architect Charles Haynes was the official architect for the Hunter Tract Improvement Company and designed many houses in Mount Baker Park. Among these are the Robert B. Kellogg house (1912) at 2701 Mt. St. Helens Place, the Hunter Improvement Company house (1913) at 2855 Mt. Rainier Drive, the Frank Buty house (1915) at 3704 South Ridgeway Place, and the house (1915) at 2659 Cascadia South. Frank Buty and his wife Clementina were Italian immigrants, and Mr. Buty was a Seattle banker who constructed the Buty Building in downtown Seattle (Cary 1994, 22).

The prominently sited Dr. Albert I. Bouffleur house (1915) designed by architects Somervell & Putnam, at 3036 Cascadia Avenue South, reflects a combination of Mediterranean Revival and Georgian Revival styles. Dr. Bouffleur was chief surgeon for the Milwaukee Railroad Hospital Association.

Seattle architect Arthur Loveless designed many houses in the Mount Baker neighborhood and worked in a variety of eclectic styles. He designed the Phillip E. Kinzer house (1919) at 3757 South Ridgeway Place. This house is notorious for its residents, Roy and Elsie Olmstead, who were rum runners. The house was raided in 1924, and Mr. Olmstead served time at McNeil Island Penitentiary (Beacon Hill News/South District Journal, December 1979).



Ca. 1915 photograph of the Olmstead residence located at 3757 South Ridgeway Place. Source: Seattle Post-Intelligencer Collection, Museum of History & Industry, Seattle. All Rights Reserved.



Hines Company at York Station. Source: Rainier Valley Historical Society.



1911 photograph of the streetcar at the south entrance to Mount Baker Park running along McClellan. The line provided service to the neighborhood and downtown Seattle. Source: Rainier Valley Historical Society.

In addition to the architect-designed residences, several builders designed and constructed interesting houses in the Mount Baker area. Builder Andrew Peterson developed several distinctive Craftsman style houses on the 3300 block of Hunter Boulevard and elsewhere in the neighborhood. The decorative timberwork, reminiscent of the Stick style, used on the porches of some Peterson houses is especially interesting. Developer Jud Yoho of the Craftsman Building Company, a Seattle pattern book designer, designed a bungalow for the Shirley family in about 1915 (*Bungalow Magazine*, March 1916). Other builders that worked in the Mount Baker area during this time included Johnson and Odin and John Quest and Company, both of whom built several houses on Hunter Boulevard.

### Commercial Development

A few stores were located in the Mount Baker Park subdivision's single commercial building at 35th Avenue South and South McClellan Street. The York Grocery Store delivered groceries to Mount Baker residents. A small commercial district was also located on 31st Avenue between Atlantic and Irving streets. This district included grocery stores, meat markets, beauty salons, a drug store, hardware store, tavern, and an apartment building.

In 1908, Charles Malmo's Nursery was located on property south of Winthrop Street that later became the playfield for Franklin High School (Baists, 1908). This nursery was part of the Italian-operated truck gardens located in the north Rainier Valley and was known for its roses (De Freece, 8/16/1959). By 1917, Malmo's had left the area.

In 1917, Mount Baker residents opposed a proposal to create a manufacturing and business district in the Wetmore Slough area (Scrapbook, 1/3/1917).

### Infrastructure

The paving of the streets in the Mount Baker area was a major concern of the improvement club. In 1916, the club advocated for the widening and paving of Cheasty Boulevard from the junction of Mt. Baker Boulevard and Rainier Avenue up Beacon Hill (Scrapbook, 12/6/1916).

By 1916, one could ride the Mount Baker Park streetcar to downtown without a transfer for only 4 cents (Scrapbook, 4/29/1916).

Also in 1916, the lowering of Lake Washington associated with the construction of the Lake Washington Ship Canal, created problems along Lake Washington Boulevard and in the Wetmore Slough, where the original wetlands were destroyed. At that time, raw sewage from Columbia City and the Rainier Valley drained into Lake Washington via the slough (Scrapbook, 12/6/1916).

By 1918, a portion of Rainier Avenue was open to traffic from York into the city (Club Scrapbook, 12/4/1918). Mount Baker residents urged the city to pave the east side of Rainier Avenue from Columbia City north to Atlantic Street and several other streets in the area in 1920, indicating that paving was still a major issue in southeast Seattle (Scrapbook, 10/6/1920).

#### Social Issues - "Restrictions"

Since Mount Baker Park was designed to be an exclusive single-family residential community, one of the early concerns of the Mount Baker Park Improvement Club was related to social issues, and what became known as the "Restrictions Committee."

Shortly after the turn of the century, the Seattle housing market became segregated, and African Americans were concentrated in two neighborhoods, the Yesler-Jackson area and the east Madison Street area, while Chinese and Japanese people lived in the area of today's International District on the southeast edge of downtown (Taylor 1994, 82). A small district of Italian Americans grew up in the north end of the Rainier Valley. Apartment owners refused to rent to African Americans outside the Central Seattle area and restrictive covenants prevented blacks from being homeowners outside this area (Taylor 1994, 84). Similar restrictive covenants also applied to Asian Americans.

Following 1900, an increasing number of informal and after 1923, formal, restrictions were raised against non-white purchasers of property. (Seattle adopted its first zoning ordinance in 1923.) In 1909, two lawsuits were filed by African-Americans because persons of African descent were not allowed to purchase houses in the Mount Baker Park Addition. Susie Stone, the wife of Samuel Stone, a Capitol Hill caterer, filed one of the lawsuits. Mrs. Stone purchased property through a white intermediary. The developers, presumably Hunter Improvement Company, refused to relinquish the deed, but Stone challenged the developers and the state supreme court ruled in her favor. Following the favorable ruling, Susie and Samuel Stone built their house at 3125 34th Ave South in 1911 (Mumford 1993, 69-70).

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By 1915, the Mount Baker Community Club had formed the “Restrictions Committee,” which was involved in enforcing the restrictions contained in the deeds regarding single family housing only and the restrictive covenants that prevented non-whites from purchasing property in the area. The club passed a resolution stating that the club was against using any lot for clubs, schools, boarding or lodging houses, churches, charitable or religious societies or orders or for any other purpose than strictly detached family residences (Cary 1994, 28).

Horace Cayton (1859-1940), one of Seattle’s most prominent African Americans, lived in the Mount Baker District for a time. Cayton was the editor of the *Seattle Republican*, a newspaper published from 1894 to 1917 that was intended for both black and white readers. Later, he produced *Cayton’s Weekly* from 1916 to 1921 (Taylor 1994, 19-20).



2003 photograph of the James E. Dyer house at 2704 Thirty-Fourth Avenue South designed by Ellsworth Storey. Source: Carol Tobin.

The Mount Baker Park Improvement Club also established a Japanese investigation committee. At a club meeting in November 1919, the club heard from Reverend Murphy in support of the Japanese and from Frank Kannair of the Anti-Japanese League (Seattle Star, 11/15/1919). The committee stated that the Japanese already had the best bottom farmlands and should be kept out of Mount Baker district. There was fear of a “Japanese invasion of the district” (Scrapbook, 11/18/1919).

## GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF MOUNT BAKER AREA (1920-1929)

While most development of the Mount Baker area occurred between 1910 and 1929, more construction occurred during than 1920s than in the previous decade. Seattle's overall growth continued at a fairly rapid pace during the 1920s, from a population of 315,312 in 1920 to 365,583 in 1930. By this time, the population of the Mount Baker area had reached about 25,000 (Dubrow 1995, 14).

### Residential Development

As in the previous decade, many architect-designed, pattern book and builder houses were constructed in the Mount Baker neighborhood. Much of the new housing continued to be in the Craftsman style, with an increasing number of Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and other eclectic styles. A few representative houses are described here.



1932 aerial photograph of the Mount Baker neighborhood. Source: PEMCO Webster & Stevens Collection, Museum of History & Industry, Seattle. Charles Laidlaw, Photographer. All Rights Reserved.



Photograph of the Mount Baker Park United Presbyterian Church, located at 3201 Hunter Boulevard. Source: Carol Tobin.



Photograph of the Muir School. Source: Rainier Valley Historical Society.

Many of the same prominent architects continued to design residences in Mount Baker that had worked there earlier, including Ellsworth Storey, Arthur Loveless, Andrew Willatzen, Edwin Ivey, and Schack, Young & Myers.

Arthur Loveless is known for his designs in a range of eclectic styles. Some of his Mount Baker houses from the 1920s are the Tudor-Revival style residence (1920) at 3121 Cascadia Avenue South, the English cottage style Bowles house (1925) at 2540 Shoreland Drive, and the English country style house (1929) at 3709 Cascadia Avenue South.

Ellsworth Storey's James E. Dyer house at 2704 34th Avenue South, built in 1922, reflects Storey's fondness for the Swiss Chalet style, which is found in several of his buildings of this time. Storey also designed the Harry E. Woolley house (1925) at 3103 Mt. Rainier Drive.

Seattle architect Andrew Willatzen, who is best known for some of his Prairie style houses, designed the Gustav Rasmussen house (1923) at 3211 Cascadia Avenue, which reflects some Prairie style influence despite alterations. Willatzen worked in Frank Lloyd Wright's studio in Oak Park, Illinois before he came to Seattle.

Local architect Edwin Ivey designed several houses in the area, including the French Provincial style house (1922) at 3242 Lakewood Avenue South, and the O.R. Bodine house (1925) at 3236 Lakewood Avenue South.

The Georgian Revival style Edward L. Smith house (1922) at 2520 Mount Baker Drive was designed by Northwest architect and educator Walter R.B. Willcox, who also designed the Queen Anne Boulevard retaining walls.

Examples of builder-designed houses of this period include the A. Koepfli house (1920) at 3248 Lakewood Avenue South and houses at 2736 34th Avenue South (1924) and 3822 South Court Street (1925). During this decade, some smaller vernacular houses were built in the area of the York Addition, southwest of the Mount Baker Park Addition.

There are many unique houses in Mount Baker, and one of the most unusual has come to be known as the "Castle," built in 1929-1932, located in the Dose Addition at 2212 34th Avenue South.

## Public/Institutional

Built in 1923, the Mount Baker Park United Presbyterian Church at 3201 Hunter Boulevard South, was one of the first church designs by the well-known Seattle firm of Albertson, Richardson, and Wilson. It is interesting that this Romanesque Revival style church is located outside the Mount Baker Park Addition. It may be sited here because of the strict single-family restrictions of the plat. Its campanile is a prominent feature in the neighborhood.

In 1924, a north wing designed by school architect Floyd Naramore was added onto the John Muir School (The former York School was renamed in 1921 to honor naturalist John Muir). Floyd Naramore also designed an east wing for Franklin High School, built in 1925.

During the 1920s and 1930s, the beach at Mount Baker Park became very popular and drew people, including Asian Americans, from many areas of southeast and central Seattle, who were not always welcomed by Mount Baker area residents.

At Colman Park, the old city water pumping station was converted to a bathhouse in 1929. This structure remained in use until its demolition in the mid-1960s.

## Commercial Development

Although the Hunter Tract Improvement Company and the Mount Baker Park Improvement Club reiterated that Mount Baker Park should be strictly a residential district, one commercial building was constructed in the area during this decade to meet the demands of the growing population. There was considerable controversy over a proposed movie theater in the new building, which was never included in the final plans (Scrapbook, 1/5/1927).

The Mount Baker Commercial Center, a three-story Art Deco style building designed by Seattle architect John Graham, Sr., opened November 22, 1930. It was touted as "Seattle's finest suburban commercial building." The first tenants included Kefauver Grocery and Meats and Condie's Pharmacy (Franklin Tolo, 11/19/1930). Architect John Graham, Sr. designed many Seattle buildings and was one of the Northwest's finest architects of his time.

## Infrastructure

The most controversial issue at this time was the proposed bridge across Lake Washington. Mount Baker residents strongly opposed construction of a pontoon bridge from Mercer Island to Seward Park (Scrapbook, 3/27/1922). Other early proposed bridge routes included a Juneau Street crossing and one from Madrona Park to Medina.



2003 photograph of the Mount Baker Court Apartments. Source: Carol Tobin.



2003 photograph of the Mount Baker Court Apartments. Source: Carol Tobin.

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In 1926 the Mount Baker Park Improvement Club cited the following reasons for opposing the proposed bridge. It would be unsightly, would obstruct navigation, would interfere with aviation, and would eliminate the ferry routes across the lake (Scrapbook, 9/1/1926).

In the 1920s, the Mount Baker streetcar line ended at Hunter Boulevard, although there was some pressure to extend the line along the boulevard, which aroused considerable opposition. By the late 1920s, double-decker busses began to take the place of streetcars. A new highway connecting Empire Way through Dunlap Canyon to Marginal Way was proposed (Scrapbook, 6/2/1926).

In the 1920s, a branch sewer emptied into Lake Washington near the popular Mount Baker Bathing Beach, creating a health hazard (Scrapbook, 12/7/1921). There were also ongoing sewage pollution problems in the Wetmore Slough area because of sewage systems discharging directly into the slough, and Mount Baker residents pushed for the filling of the slough (Scrapbook, 3/5/1924). In 1924, the City of Seattle commenced construction of a new sewer line along Oregon Street to serve houses south of McClellan Street (Scrapbook, 6/4/1924). A second line was proposed along South Massachusetts Street to serve the area north of McClellan Street. By 1927, some filling of Wetmore Slough had taken place, and there was community interest in making the slough area into a park (Scrapbook, 11/2/1927). This dream did not come to fruition until many years later, when the area became Genesee Park and Playfield in the 1960s.

#### Land Use and Social Issues - "Restrictions"

One of the prominent early families in the Mount Baker neighborhood, Charles P. Dose and his wife, moved away from the area in 1923. The Dose family played a major role in the Mount Baker Park Improvement Club from its outset.



The community continued to enforce the building restrictions and opposed construction of a one-story house on Cascadia Avenue in 1923 (Scrapbook, 3/7/1923).

The club's Restrictions Committee was active. The concern about Asians in the neighborhood heightened during this decade (Scrapbook, 10/6/1926). The club also drafted an agreement not to rent, sell or lease to Negroes and "Mongolians" (Scrapbook, 3/2/1927). A 1928 U.S. court decision affirmed the restriction on property ownership to Caucasians only (Scrapbook, 2/1/1928).

To increase its influence and expand its geographic area, the club encouraged membership outside the Mount Baker Park Addition. Sunrise Addition residents were eligible to join as long as they followed the same restrictions clauses (Scrapbook, 11/7/1928). There were some violations of the restrictions in the Sunset Addition in 1932 (Scrapbook, 5/4/1932).



## DEPRESSION AND WORLD WAR II (1930-1945)

The building boom of the 1920s ended with the Depression, but some new construction occurred in Mount Baker area during the early 1930s. As an affluent community in Seattle, Mount Baker was perhaps harder hit by the Depression than some of the working-class neighborhoods. Some public construction occurred during this period through the Works Progress Administration and other federal programs, although there was relatively little of this in Mount Baker.

### Development

In 1935, as a marketing scheme, Frederick & Nelson built a model house at 3846 Cascadia Avenue South to serve as a furniture display house (Scrapbook 11/6/1935).

The Starr H. Calvert house (1937) at 1908 34th Avenue South was designed by Elizabeth Ayer, the first woman registered as an architect in the state of Washington. Ayer worked for architect Edwin Ivey at the time of this design.

A few architect designs and some builder design and catalog houses were built in the Mount Baker neighborhood during the 1930s, but there was relatively little residential construction in this area during the Depression.

The local fire station was closed in 1933 and reopened during the war in 1942 (Scrapbook, 1/7/1942).

### Infrastructure

In 1937, the Rainier Valley interurban line was replaced by gasoline buses, “trackless trolleys,” that operated on the same route as the old streetcar line (Blanchard 1966, 76-77; Rainier District Times, 9/7/1939). The Mount Baker streetcar line was discontinued about the same time and replaced by trolley buses.

Several major paving projects took place in the 1930s, including the paving of York Road, and repaving of Empire Way. In 1934, the city started a project to repave the east side of Empire Way from the city limits north to Rainier Avenue (Rainier to Dearborn was planned for later) (Scrapbook, 9/5/1934). A major slide occurred at Dose Terrace during the 1930s.



1935 photograph of the former Franklin High School tennis courts during construction. Source: University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, UW207952.

The Mount Baker community's opposition to the proposed Lake Washington bridge continued as the project became imminent. Finally, in 1940, the state constructed the Mount Baker tunnel and the Lacey V. Murrow Floating Bridge to Mercer Island. The bridge was named after the State Highway Director, who was the brother of well-known CBS broadcaster Edward R. Murrow. The once remote and placid Mount Baker neighborhood experienced considerable disruption during the tunnel and bridge construction.

To address the ongoing pollution problems in southeast Seattle and in Lake Washington, the City of Seattle constructed the South Hanford Street tunnel in 1930 to provide additional sewer capacity and to serve a larger area. The South Bayview Street tunnel was abandoned. In 1931, the City completed the Charlestown Street tunnel and a pump station between Rainier Avenue and Lake Washington, which diverted low flows to the south branch of the Rainier Valley trunk and carried sewage to the South Hanford Street tunnel (Phelps 1978, 189).

Filling of the Wetmore Slough continued during the 1930s (Scrapbook, 12/6/1939). In the early 1940s, the city proposed a garbage fill in Wetmore Slough, which aroused considerable antagonism in the Mount Baker community (Scrapbook, 4/2/1941 and 12/31/1942).



1945 photograph of the tunnels leading to the Lake Washington floating bridge. Source: PEMCO Webster & Stevens Collection, Museum of History and Industry, Seattle. All Rights Reserved.

## Baseball History

Ex-big leaguer Daniel E. Dugdale built Dugdale Ball Park on the corner of Rainier Avenue South and South McClellan Street. When it opened in September 1913, this ballfield was considered one of the finest on the West Coast, with a double-deck grandstand. The Seattle team became known as the Seattle Rainiers in 1919 and was renamed the Seattle Indians in 1922. In 1932, a fire destroyed the ballpark.

Emil G. Sick (1894-1964) founded Sick's Century Brewery, which merged with the Rainier Brewery in 1935. The Rainier Brewery had been established by Andrew Hemrich in 1883. At the urging of Seattle labor leader Dave Beck, Sick bought the Seattle Indians franchise for \$100,000, renamed the team the "Rainiers," and built a new stadium at the old Dugdale Park site. Sick's Stadium opened in June 15, 1938. The Vacca vegetable farm, located just east and uphill of Sick's Stadium, was a popular place to watch the games for free.

In 1968, the Seattle Pilots played at Sick's Stadium, but they only spent one season in Seattle and moved to Milwaukee in 1969. Later, a new Rainiers Class A Team played at the stadium, but they left in 1976. The stadium was razed in 1979 (Lustig 1978).

## Social Issues “Restrictions”

During the 1920s and 1930s, Mount Baker had a large Jewish population although there was no synagogue in the immediate neighborhood. Following the construction of several temples farther south in the 1950s and 1960s, some Jewish families moved to Lakewood and the Seward Park areas as well as Mercer Island and the Eastside (Follis interview, 6/30/2003).

The discrimination associated with the “restrictions” precluding non-Caucasians from the Mount Baker area continued during the 1930s. In 1938, the Mount Baker Park Improvement Club successfully dissuaded an African-American family from purchasing a house near Dose Terrace (Scrapbook, 9/7/1938 and 10/5/1938). Also in 1938, the club asked the Park Board to develop a segregation plan for Mount Baker Park; this was directed primarily at the use of the park by Japanese-Americans (Sherwood, 2).

The restrictions were not enforced actively during World War II because of the housing shortage in Seattle during the war and since the war diverted the regular activities of the community club. Local residents planted victory gardens in the Mount Baker area during the war (Scrapbook, 1/28/1943).



Ca. 1947 photograph of the west edge of the Mount Baker neighborhood looking northwest into the North Rainier Valley with Sick's Stadium in the lower left. Source: Hall-Summers Collection, Rainier Valley Historical Society.



## DIVERSITY COMES TO MOUNT BAKER (1946-1970)

Seattle as a whole experienced considerable growth during the war associated with Boeing and the ship-building industry and continued to add population until the 1960s. Seattle's population increased from 368,302 in 1940 to 557,087 in 1960.

During the years following World War II, Mount Baker was transformed from an elite district of mostly wealthy white residents to an ethnically diverse, vibrant, middle- to upper-income community. View neighborhoods along Lake Washington, including Mount Baker, continue to be “Gold Coast” areas in Southeast Seattle today; however, a dramatic transition occurred during the postwar years.



Ca. 1947 photograph of the Mount Baker neighborhood with John Muir Elementary School in the background. Source: Hall-Summers Collection, Rainier Valley Historical Society.

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Mount Baker, despite its rainbow ethnic composition today, is quite different in physical character from other nearby Southeast Seattle neighborhoods including the Rainier Valley, Columbia City, Beacon Hill and, to a lesser extent, the Lakewood and Seward Park communities. The Mount Baker area is the only neighborhood that was platted as an exclusive residential community, and its layout, particularly in the Mount Baker Park development, reflects the topography and natural setting of the area, and none of the other areas do this. Also, Mount Baker's housing stock contains more elaborate buildings and more architect-designed housing than the other Southeast Seattle neighborhoods.

#### Discrimination comes to the forefront

Following the end of World War II, the Mount Baker community again turned its attention toward the enforcement of its housing restrictions policy (Scrapbook, 9/11/1946). During the war, Mrs. John J. (Margaret) Connell at 2812 Mount St. Helens Place used her residence as a boarding house to bring in extra income. The Mount Baker Club went to the extent of hiring the Burns detective agency to enforce the local housing restrictions (Scrapbook, 4/30/1946). The Club took legal action, and the case of Gholson v. Connell was decided in 1948 (Scrapbook, 4/7/1948).

During the 1950s and 1960s, issues of segregation came into the front line. Seattle Mayor Devin's Civic Unity Committee stated that neighborhoods should not segregate. In Mount Baker, concern about a "colored" family purchasing a house in the neighborhood dissipated when the community discovered that it was actually a Brazilian family (Scrapbook, April 5, 1950). Fueled by war-time patriotic fervor and the internment of the Japanese, the community continued to discriminate against Asians into the 1950s.

Despite the actions of the Restrictions Committee, by the early 1960s Mount Baker had begun to change from an all-white to an interracial neighborhood. In 1963 and 1969, reductions in the Boeing workforce precipitated the relocation of many Boeing engineers and executives to other cities.

By the mid-1960s, a group of younger residents led the drive to change the attitude toward persons of color. In 1967-68, the club formed a Committee to Revitalize Mount Baker, aimed at eliminating the earlier racial discrimination and developing new bylaws. The club's name was changed to the Mount Baker Community Club. Much of this was accomplished during the time when Junius Rochester, now a Seattle historian and teacher, was president. Club membership was open to anyone who owned property or resided in the area (Rochester interview, 4/24/2003). A no-dues policy also helped to attract new members.



Roberto Maestas, founder and executive director of El Centro de la Raza, taught at Franklin High School in the mid-1960s, during the time when the neighborhood was in transition (Maestas interview, 8/7/2003).

### Infrastructure/Transportation

In the early 1950s, local residents opposed the extension of the trolley bus route south along on Hunter Boulevard, and this issue continued until the 1970s. Traffic problems on Hunter Boulevard were an ongoing concern during the 1950s, and there was a local outcry regarding the planned extension of Horton Street across the central island on Hunter Boulevard (Scrapbook, 1958-1959 summary).

In 1956-57 the Mount Baker Club requested that the City improve the Wetmore Slough area by grading, filling and construction of a utility/restroom facility.

During the 1960s, the Mount Baker area was affected by highway plans, including the expansion of Interstate 90 and the proposed construction of the R.H. Thomson Expressway, along the approximate route of Empire Way. Originally approved by voters in 1960, the R.H. Thomson Expressway aroused a huge citizen protest spurred by the Citizens Against the R.H. Thomson Expressway (CARHT) organization. Mayor Wes Uhlman decided not to build the highway in 1970, but it was not officially scrapped by city council until 1977.



Ca. 1947 aerial photograph of the Mount Baker neighborhood looking southeast with Franklin High School in the lower left. Source: Hall-Summers Collection, Rainier Valley Historical Society.

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When the expansion of I-90 was originally planned, there was no lid proposed in Seattle west of the tunnel although one was intended for Mercer Island. Central and Southeast Seattle residents supported a lid in this area because of the long-term adverse effects of the highway on their neighborhoods (Rochester interview, 4/24/2003). The lid from the tunnel west to 23rd Avenue South was eventually constructed, and some houses were demolished within the highway right-of-way.

#### Public/Institutional

Starting in 1950 unlimited hydroplane races began on Lake Washington, when Stan Sayres brought the event to Seattle. Sayres located his headquarters for the competition at the Mount Baker Beach until the construction of the Sayres Pits in 1957.

The City constructed one of its first post-war fire stations, Fire Station No. 30, at 2931 South Mount Baker Boulevard in 1949. This modern brick veneer structure was designed by architect Fred B. Stephen and replaced the historic 1914 fire station (Historic Property Inventory Form, Fire Station No. 30, 2000).

At the north end of the Mount Baker area, the St. Clements Episcopal Church moved to 1501 32nd Avenue South in 1948. This congregation, which was established in 1891, is one of the most integrated churches in western Washington (Mumford 1993, 67).

During the 1960s in addition to baseball, two celebrated events occurred at Sick's Stadium: Elvis Presley performed to a sellout crowd, and Floyd Patterson won the first heavyweight boxing match between the world heavyweight professional champion (Patterson), and the world amateur champion, Pete Rademacher.

#### Residential and Commercial Development

Some new residential construction took place in the Mount Baker neighborhood in the post-war period. This primarily took the form of infill single family housing and apartment buildings along the arterials. Portions of the neighborhood were upzoned to allow multifamily dwellings, including areas along Empire Way (now Martin Luther King, Jr. Way) following the enactment of Seattle's 1956 comprehensive plan and subsequent zoning changes. Some modern architect-designed houses in the area include the Milton Stricker houses at 3303 South Massachusetts Street (1968) and 3211 South Massachusetts Street. Milton Stricker is an architect who studied with Frank Lloyd Wright (Woodbridge 1980, 185).

Most of the nearby commercial development has occurred in the Rainier Valley. The intersection of Martin Luther King, Jr. Way and Rainier Avenue South is the commercial hub of the Mount Baker community today.



## 1970s–1980s ISSUES AND RECENT DEVELOPMENT

A few recent events that have happened since 1970 are covered briefly below.

In 1975, Seattle selected Mount Baker as the first action area in its Neighborhood Housing Rehabilitation Program, which provided low interest home loans and counseling to help repair houses to meet current housing codes.

Also in 1975, SouthEast Effective Development (SEED) was founded. SEED is a nonprofit community development corporation that works to strengthen and revitalize the neighborhoods and business districts of Southeast Seattle. Some of SEED's projects in the Mount Baker area include Eagle Hardware (now Lowe's), the QFC on Rainier Avenue, and the Mount Baker Village Apartments at 29th Avenue South and South McClellan Street.

The Rainier Avenue Mount Baker pedestrian overpass that connects areas to the west with Franklin High School was built in 1976.

In 1977, the Seattle Tennis Center opened on Empire Way (now Martin Luther King Jr. Way), on a 12.7 acre site north of Sick's Stadium. The Tennis Center is operated by the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation and was designed by The Burke Associates (South District Journal, 12/8/1976).

Following the failure of the effort to save Sick's Stadium and its demolition in 1979, a CX Corporation electronics plant was developed on the former stadium site (South District Journal, 8/23/1978). Another long-term tenant at the site was the Pepsi Bottling Company. More recently, this site has housed Eagle Hardware and is now Lowe's Home Improvement Warehouse.

In the fall of 1978, as part of many school closures throughout the city due to a decline in school-age population, the Seattle School District closed the Hawthorne School, located at 4100 39th Avenue South in the Lakewood neighborhood. The old school building was demolished and replaced by a new brick-faced building in 1989 designed by architects Waldron, Pomeroy, Smith, Foote and Akira.

In 1982, eight-mile-long Empire Way was renamed Martin Luther King, Jr. Way South to honor the late African-American leader.

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A strong grassroots neighborhood movement to save Franklin High School culminated in the landmark designation of the historic school in 1986. The citizens committee that saved the school was headed by Janice Poska Rochester and Margaret Pageler. In 1989-1990 the school was renovated based on a design by Bassetti Norton Metler Rekevics Architects, and several incompatible additions built in the 1950s were removed.

The 1909 Muir School building was demolished in 1989 and replaced by a building designed by Seattle architects Streeter/Dermanis and Associates.

Over the years Mount Baker has been the home to many of Seattle's leading citizens, including Governor Albert D. Rosellini, County Executive Ron Sims, Mayor Norm Rice, sculptor George Tsutakawa, jeweler Ben Bridge, Uwajamia owner, Tomio Moriguchi, attorney and civic leader Jim Ellis, television news reporter, Mike James, and Peter Fisher of Fisher Flour, among others. Norm Rice served as president of the Mount Baker Community Club in 1977-1978.

The historic Lacey V. Murrow Floating Bridge sank as a result of storm damage in November 1990. In March 1992, the Mount Baker Clubhouse suffered a fire and was subsequently renovated.

The escalating house prices in the Seattle area during the 1990s have made the Mount Baker neighborhood a relatively exclusive community once again.

## CONCLUSION

Mount Baker remains a primarily single-family residential community that retains much of its planned character. This includes the street layout, network of boulevards, parks and open spaces, and the careful arrangement of lots to take advantage of the natural setting and views. The siting of houses reflects the rigid setbacks and standards of the Mount Baker Park subdivision, which required houses that exceeded a minimum cost.

Important themes to be addressed in a survey of the Mount Baker area include architecture, landscape architecture and community planning. Since this is predominantly a single-family neighborhood, both individual residences and groups of houses are worthy of examination.





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