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1. Introduction

Background
The University of Washington is anticipating a new UW Police Department Building, to be located on the adjacent block west of the main campus between 15th Avenue NE and University Way NE and immediately south of Gould Hall. Currently there are two existing structures within the proposed site, at 3945 and 3937 15th Avenue NE.

The two existing structures were both originally constructed as single family houses when the University District was being developed in the early 1900’s. They were acquired in the 1960’s as the University of Washington expanded toward the southwest, and served as the home for several university related uses. This Historic Resource Addendum provides a description of the history and architectural character of these two structures, as well as their historical significance as judged by the preservation policies and criteria outlined in the 2003 Seattle Campus Master Plan.

Research Methods
The research used in the preparation of this HRA included documentation of plans and modifications from the University of Washington and its Facilities Records, research of the history of the University District and previous Historic Survey Reports, a search of historic photographs in the UW Libraries Special Collections, and on-site investigations and documentation of current conditions.

Project Goals
As part of the University’s goal of constructing a new facility for the Campus Police Department, the existing structures on the proposed site need to be removed. The goal of this HRA is to analyze the history and character of these existing structures to determine if they have historic significance, and to suggest mitigation measures if needed.
The University Stewardship and Historic Preservation Policies
The University of Washington Campus Master Plan approved in 2003 sets forth the project review process to insure historic context. Excerpted language from the Campus Master Plan:

- “To further ensure that historic resources are considered, the University will prepare an Historic Resources Addendum (HRA) for any project that makes exterior alterations to a building of over 50 years old. The HRA will be an attachment to all project documentation and be considered by the appropriate decision maker.

- The information and analysis provided in the HRA provides a framework and context to insure that important elements of the campus, its historic character and value, environmental considerations and landscape context are preserved, enhanced, and valued. The HRA further insures that improvements, changes and modifications to the physical environment may be clearly analyzed and documented.”

View of the University of Washington Campus, 1938
Guidelines for Evaluating Historic Resources

General guidelines are outlined in the Campus Master Plan for use in evaluating historic structures and proposed changes. The following is a summary of each guideline that applies to the structures located at 3945 and 3937 15th Avenue NE. A more detailed description is provided in the Historic Context and the Architectural Description sections of this HRA.

- **Age of project building, adjacent buildings and open spaces.**
  The single family residence at 3945 15th Avenue NE was constructed in 1918. The University purchased the property in 1962.
  The single family residence at 3937 15th Avenue NE was constructed in 1922. The University purchased the property in 1961.

- **Information regarding the architect of the original building.**
  There is no record of the original architects of these houses. It should be noted that many houses of this period, especially those of a modest nature, were constructed from stock plans found in mail-order house plan books popular at the time.

- **Description of interior and exterior, and site surroundings of the building or campus feature, including the traditional views of the site, if any.**
  The two houses are located on the west side of 15th Avenue NE directly across from campus, and the main facades face the street. Although there are mature trees and landscaping in the front yards the houses can be seen by pedestrians and vehicle traffic travelling north and south. There are no views of the houses from campus due to the retaining wall and mature landscaping on the east side of the street and the row of Guthrie Annexes 1-3, which face Guthrie Hall.

  The exterior of the houses are typical of the Craftsman Style, with raised covered porches, horizontal clapboard siding, and brick fireplace chimneys. A more detailed description of the exterior features will follow in Part 4 Architectural Description. The interior of the houses was not observed.
Information regarding the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or of a method of construction, if any. Both houses exhibit the architectural characteristics of the Craftsman Style, which started in California and became widespread from 1900 to about 1930 as an affordable middle-class house.

Potential mitigation measures, such as façade treatment, street treatment and design treatment sympathetic to the historic significance of the development site or adjacent campus feature, if any. Mitigation measures are discussed in the Evaluation and Recommendations section.
3. Historical Context

Development of the University of Washington Campus

The city of Seattle was one of several settlements in the mid to late 19th century vying for primacy in the newly formed Washington Territory. In 1854, territorial governor Isaac Stevens recommended the establishment of a university in Washington.

In 1861, scouting began for an appropriate 10 acres (4 ha) site in Seattle to serve as the campus for a new university. Arthur Denny, along with fellow pioneers Edward Lander and Charlie Terry, donated a site on “Denny’s Knoll” in downtown Seattle. This tract was bounded by 4th and 6th Avenues on the west and east and Union and Seneca Streets on the north and south.

UW opened officially on November 4, 1861, as the Territorial University of Washington. The following year, the legislature passed articles formally incorporating the University and establishing a Board of Regents. By the time Washington entered the Union in 1889, both Seattle and the University had grown substantially. Enrollment had increased from an initial 30 students to nearly 300, and the relative isolation of the campus had given way to encroaching development. A special legislative committee headed by UW graduate Edmond Meany was created for the purpose of finding a new campus better able to serve the growing student population. The committee selected a site on Union Bay northeast of downtown, and the legislature appropriated funds for its purchase and subsequent construction. The University relocated from downtown to the new campus in 1895, moving into the newly built Denny Hall.

Organizers of the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition eyed the still largely undeveloped campus as a prime setting for their world’s fair. They came to an agreement with the Board of Regents that allowed them to use the campus grounds for the exposition. In exchange, the University would be able to take advantage of the development of the campus for the fair after its conclusion. This included a detailed site plan and several buildings. The plan for the A-Y-P Exposition prepared by John Charles Olmsted was later incorporated into the overall campus master plan and permanently affected the layout of the campus.

On the west side of the central campus, Architecture Hall is the last remaining major building from the A-Y-P. Just to the south a series of small buildings formed the west edge of campus with their backs toward 15th Avenue NE. This grouping is called the Guthrie Annexes as they house Department of Psychology support functions for Guthrie Hall. Guthrie Annex 1 and 2 are Post-World War II temporary wood frame buildings, and Guthrie Annex 3 was built in 1942 for the Home Economics Department.

Gould Hall was completed in 1971 just west of the campus on NE 40th Street between 15th Avenue NE and University Way NE as the University of Washington continued to expand toward the west and south.

Original University of Washington building on Denny’s Knoll, c. 1870

View toward Mt. Rainier - Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition on the UW Campus, 1909

View of the University of Washington Campus, 1967
Historical Overview of the University District

The expansion of Seattle northward beyond Union Bay and Portage Bay in the late 1800s was led by developer James Moore, who laid out streets and lots for a new townsite that he called “Brooklyn” because it was across the water from the main community like the one in New York.

By 1890 the land was cleared, roads were graded and lots were being sold with the added news that the adjacent section would be the new home for the University. The next year much of the land north of the current Ship Canal, including Brooklyn, was annexed to Seattle.

The construction of a trolley line to connect Brooklyn to the rest of the city included University Station, located at the corner of University Way and 42nd Avenue. Gradually, the area became known as University Station and later University District, and the original street names designated by Moore were also changed – Columbus Avenue became University Way, and Tremont became 15th Avenue NE.

As the University of Washington grew and hosted the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, development of the University district expanded rapidly. Churches, apartment buildings and houses were constructed to meet the growing population. Following the completion of the Wallingford trolley in 1917 the major commercial heart of the district shifted to the north to University Way and 45th Street.

Street Map of the University District, 1893

View of University District, 1905
4. Architectural Description

Timeline and Uses
The structure at 3945 15th Avenue NE was constructed in 1918 as a single family residence. The property was acquired by the University in 1962 and it was used as the Office of Veteran Affairs. Site improvements including the lawn to the south were done in 1972. A series of interior renovation projects were completed in 1981 and 1990, the latter for the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Institute.

The structure at 3937 15th Avenue NE was constructed in 1922 as a single family residence. The property was acquired by the University in 1961. An interior renovation project was done in 1968 for use as the Social Work Annex and in 1969 a detached garage structure off the back alley was demolished. Site improvements including the lawn to the north were done in 1972. A series of interior renovation projects were completed in 1976 and 1990 for the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Institute.

Setting and Site Features
The two houses are located on the west side of 15th Avenue NE directly across from the University of Washington campus. NE 40th Street at Gould Hall is an important pedestrian and vehicular entrance to campus, but south along 15th Avenue NE is a high retaining wall at the sidewalk and mature landscaping on the upper bank. There is no direct route or visual connection to campus from the site.

The structures are directly south of Gould Hall and face NE 40th Street to the east. There is a sidewalk and walkways to the front porches, several mature trees and shrubbery in the front yards, and a large lawn between the buildings. The front (east) elevations are visible to pedestrian and vehicular traffic on NE 40th Street both north and southbound, but the houses are not visible from campus.
Style of Architecture

The structure at 3945 15th Avenue NE was constructed in 1918, and the structure at 3937 was constructed a few years later in 1922. Both were part of the development of Brooklyn (University District) after the A-Y-P Exposition. The neighborhood consisted mostly of single family houses in the Craftsman Style that was gaining popularity during this period, and many were built from stock plans in mail-order plan books. The two houses on the site fit the exterior character and features of the Craftsman Style. There is no record of the original architects, but there are similar examples in the plan books.

Exterior Features

The house at 3945 15th Avenue NE is a one storey structure with the main floor raised approximately 4’ above grade with a daylight basement below. The roof is a shallow pitch hip with composition shingles and the walls are painted horizontal wood clapboard siding. There are a few original wood windows with a grid pattern of divisions, but most have been replaced with vinyl windows. The front porch is a covered with a hip roof extension and features painted wood latticework at the corners.

The house at 3937 15th Avenue NE also has a main floor raised approximately 4’ above grade with a daylight basement below, and a partial second floor with dormers facing east and west. The roof is a steep gable with composition shingles and cross gable roofs at the dormers. The large roof overhangs are supported by wood braces. The walls are painted horizontal siding, and the original wood windows with a decorative pattern of divisions are intact. Large bay windows on the main floor are centered on the north and south elevations, and a tapered brick chimney is prominent at the southeast corner. The front porch extends across the full width of the front elevation, and is covered by a shallow pitch roof supported by large tapered columns on brick bases.

Interior Features

The two structures are currently vacant and the interiors were not observed. However, the following description of the interior finishes is from the PBS Engineering+Environmental Report dated April 2012.

The interior finishes of the house at 3945 15th Avenue NE include plaster walls and ceilings, carpet, floor tiles, glued-on ceiling tiles and fluorescent light fixtures. This description indicates that the original character of the interior has been significantly altered.

The interior finishes of the house at 3937 15th Avenue NE include plaster and gypsum wallboard walls and troweled-on textured ceilings, carpet over wood floors, sheet vinyl flooring and fluorescent light fixtures. This description indicates that the original character of the interior has been significantly altered.
Current Conditions

The house at 3945 15th Avenue NE is in fairly good condition, with roofing and exterior paint well maintained. The house at 3937 15th Avenue NE is in poor condition with peeling paint and evidence of rot on the porch flooring.
5. Evaluation and Recommendations

Evaluation of Historic Significance
The two houses were constructed when the University District was being developed in the early 1900's, and were part of the expansion of Seattle toward the north. Much of this development consisted of single family residences, and most of the houses were modest structures of the Craftsman style popular at the time. The houses were likely built from standard plan books with no (or very little) architectural design input.

The University District Historic Survey Report was prepared in September 2002 by Caroline Tobin and Sarah Sodt for the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, Historic Preservation Program. The purpose of this survey was to provide a basis for nominating and evaluating potential landmarks in the district, and provide a tool for City staff as part of the environmental review during permit processing when proposed projects affect older buildings. The inventory identified 126 properties of historical or architectural interest within the University District, including theaters, hotels, churches, apartments, fraternity and sorority houses, and single family residences. The houses at 3945 and 3937 15th Avenue NE were not included on the list of historical or architecturally significant structures.

Impact of Proposed Demolition
Because the two houses are modest structures built in the Craftsman style which is typical of many Seattle neighborhoods, and because they were not found to be historically significant in the 2002 University District Historic Survey Report, there is no negative impact associated with the proposed demolition.

Mitigation Recommendations
No mitigation measures are necessary.
6. Drawings and Records

Aerial Photo of Site

3945 15th Ave. NE
3937 15th Ave. NE
NE 40th Street
NE Campus Parkway
Brooklyn Avenue NE
University Way NE
15th Avenue NE
NE Pacific Street
Floor Plans for 3937 15th Avenue NE, 1987

Floor Plans for 3945 15th Avenue NE, 1986
View of 3945 15th Avenue NE from Street

View of 3937 15th Avenue NE from Street
7. Bibliography and Sources


King County Department of Assessments for Parcel 1142002535.

PBS Engineering+Environmental, New UW Police Station – Project No. 203612, April 2012.

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Collegiate Gothic Style 1890-1940.

Caroline Tobin and Sarah Sodt, University District Historic Survey Report, For Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, Historic Preservation Program and University District Arts & Heritage Committee, September 2002.


University of Washington Facilities Records List,.

University of Washington Libraries, Manuscripts and Special Collections.