

THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION MOVEMENT IN KING COUNTY

The King County Landmarks and Heritage Program combines traditional and innovative historic preservation practices in the most comprehensive heritage program in Washington State. In 1998 alone, the Landmarks and Heritage Commission served as the landmarks board for 10 suburban cities, in addition to its work in unincorporated King County. In this same year it administered approximately \$800,000 in grant funds and provided a wide range of technical assistance and training services to over 150 organizations and agencies throughout King County.

King County is a complex region in which to work. It encompasses 2,200 square miles and is home to 1.6 million residents. It is the tenth most populous county in the United States and, as of 1999, has 39 cities within its borders. Its geography is varied, stretching from the islands of Puget Sound to the crest of the Cascade Mountains. Within this region the challenges facing historic preservationists are multifaceted, ranging from preservation of archaeological sites to conservation of small-town historic commercial cores. The agricultural buildings and landscapes of the county are threatened by development. His-

toric vessels that sailed and steamed through the waters of Puget Sound and serviced its earliest communities are decaying. Much has been accomplished but a great deal remains to be done.

DEVELOPING A LANDMARKS PROGRAM

King County's preservation program was the outgrowth of several important trends and factors, but two catalysts stand out as being particularly significant. The first of these is the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which spurred the development of federal, state, and municipal preservation programs; and the second is the United States Bicentennial of 1976, which mobilized people across the country to get involved in heritage activities. Together, these initiatives contributed to a new public history ethic in the region to preserve the wealth of historic and cultural resources in place—as part of the environment, as part of communities—and to organize and mobilize the citizenry to get the job done. These initiatives were the primary factors in the growth of heritage organizations in King County

and were the determining factors in the establishment of King County's Office of Historic Preservation in 1978 (now the Landmarks and Heritage Program).

During its preparations for the Bicentennial, the King County Arts Commission established a Historical Committee, and Commissioners Dottie Harper, Elaine Griffin, and Pat Brunton were instrumental in getting the Landmarks and Heritage Program under way. King County funds were appropriated to make small grants for heritage programs. From these grants came a number of historic site guides, history books, and museum exhibits. In that same year, the Arts Commission hired Art Skolnik as Historical Coordinator to work with historical organizations and to plan for historic preservation in the county. Concurrently, representatives from a number of different heritage groups began to meet and discuss common interests. Working with the county's historical coordinator these activists organized a working group that incorporated as the Association of King County Historical Organizations (AKCHO) in July 1977. During this period the county launched the first phase of its Historic Resource Inventory project, which surveyed and documented 540 properties with the assistance of AKCHO members.

In 1976, the county amended its Comprehensive Plan to include provisions to guide land use decisions involving historic sites. In 1978, with assistance from the AKCHO, the county organized an Office of Historic Preservation and appointed Jake Thomas the first Historic Preservation Officer.

King County recognized early on that economic incentives play an important role in encouraging private investment in historic building preservation and restoration. Shortly after establishing the Office of Historic Preservation, the county authorized Federal Housing and Community Development Block Grant funds for historic building restoration. Providing incentives to property owners would become increasingly important after the county passed its Landmarks Ordinance. Although the authority to designate landmarks without property owner consent and to regulate changes to historic properties is a key feature of the ordinance, incentives would prove critical to the success of the program.

In 1979, AKCHO representatives once again worked with the county, this time to establish the Museum Assistance Program, unique in the region, which continues to administer grant funds and provide technical assistance to many area heritage groups. The Community History newsletter, issued

Pacific Coal Company, Newcastle, 1909.





Tribal workers in the Snoqualmie hop fields, now Meadowbrook farm. Hops was one of the county's traditional early crops.

since 1983 by the Landmarks and Heritage Program, was a direct outgrowth of the AKCHO minutes and newsletter. Charles Payton has served as the coordinator and support for these allied organizations and compiles and edits the newsletter.

As the county's historic preservation program gained momentum, AKCHO members turned their attention to developing a mechanism for protecting significant historic resources. In 1980, the King County Council adopted Ordinance 4828, which established the King County Landmarks Commission to designate resources of historic or architectural significance as landmarks and to regulate their restoration, alteration, and demolition. The commission's authority, however, extended only to unincorporated King County.

The ordinance outlined objective criteria against which all landmark nominations are to be reviewed for eligibility and also stipulated that the commission adopt design standards to guide its deliberations. One of the most important elements of the ordinance is the provision that designation does not require the consent of the property owner, reflecting the belief that landmarks are a community resource, protected and preserved for the benefit of all.

Criteria established by the county generally conform to those used by the National Register, the state, and the city of Seattle to determine landmark status (see criteria in appendices B and C). The key differences are the age factor—the city designates properties 25 years old or older, whereas the county recognizes properties 40 years old or older—and the provision in the county criteria for designation of archaeological sites that yield important prehistorical or historical information.

An object, improvement, site, or district may also be designated a Community Landmark if it is valuable for its prominence, age, siting, or scale but does not meet the more stringent criteria for designation as a King County Landmark. Community Landmarks are identifiable visual features of a neighborhood or area and contribute to the neighborhood's or area's distinctive quality or identity. In Seattle, this urban design character is one of the criteria in evaluations for landmark status and is given equal weight to other criteria.

By 1981, nine Landmarks Commission members had been appointed, the majority initially recruited from AKCHO member groups. The first chair of the commission was also AKCHO's first

president, Phyllis Keller. The first King County landmarks were designated in 1982. In King County work focused on protecting individual buildings and ensembles of buildings. And unlike the dense urban environment of Seattle, King County preservationists faced the unique challenges of protecting predominantly rural resource types. The early designations tended to focus on properties of obvious aesthetic, architectural, or historical significance. The historic contributions of women and ethnic groups and the simple vernacular forms of architecture which predominate in unincorporated King County, particularly properties associated with the county's agricultural history, were often not addressed.

In an effort to better identify, evaluate, and protect heritage resources throughout the county, the Office of Historic Preservation undertook the preparation of King County's Heritage Resource Protection Plan in 1983. Modeled after a program developed by the U.S. Department of the Interior, its purpose was (1) to develop a process for efficient coordination among agencies that deal with issues affecting historic resources and (2) to establish a framework for rational, consistent decision making in the management of historic resources.

The approach used to develop the plan included dividing cultural resources into 14 groups based upon King County history: (1) Agricultural; (2) Commercial/Professional/Office; (3) Defense/Fortified/Military; (4) Educational/Intellectual; (5) Entertainment/Recreational/Cultural; (6) Funerary; (7) Governmental/Public; (8) Health Care; (9) Industrial/Engineering; (10) Landscape/Open Space; (11) Religious; (12) Residential/Domestic; (13) Social; and (14) Transportation. The study identified characteristics that define and give meaning to each resource group and established a context for evaluating King County vernacular buildings and rural landscape. Completed in 1985, the plan provided a comprehensive framework for future designation of properties in King County. Also in 1985, the county revised its Comprehensive Plan by adding a chapter called "Heritage Sites" that articulated eight historic preservation policies.

Since 1982, the county has designated nearly 70 individual landmarks and four historic districts. Nevertheless, this represents only a small percentage of those buildings and sites that are potentially eligible for recognition and protection. Furthermore, the rate of development in King County has far out-

paced the abilities of the Office of Cultural Resources. By the end of 1979, King County had identified over 900 historic sites, ranging from log houses to dairy farms to steamboats. They stretch across the landscape from Skykomish to Vashon and Enumclaw to Shoreline. But rapid population growth and expansion of industry and commerce into rural landscapes has taken its toll. In less than 20 years, in some of the county planning areas, more than 40 percent of these important sites and properties have been lost.

EXPANDING THE SCOPE

The focus of the King County program has evolved considerably over the last ten years under the leadership of Historic Preservation Officer Julie Koler. While individual landmarks are still designated, much more attention is paid to historic districts and downtown revitalization. Concerns about broad community appearance and landscape/townscape conservation issues are at the forefront. And archaeological site identification and protection is a top priority. Better understanding of the broad cultural attitudes which underlie preservation and recognition of the critical role which education plays in engaging the public in the business of preservation are important underpinnings of the program's growth.

Expansion of the program has also grown out of changing concepts of what is historic and what should be preserved. More and more people recognize that historic preservation is central to our quality of life and has more to do with the present and the future than with the past. Increasingly, historic preservation is rooted in the need for interconnectedness and continuity in our local communities. This awareness was stimulated and strengthened by the structure of the King County program and its close ties with the larger heritage community through the AKCHO network.

King County formally recognized the changing nature of historic preservation and its role in enhancing quality of life for county residents when it revised Ordinance 4898 in 1992. Among the revisions was changing the name of the Landmarks Commission to the Landmarks and Heritage Commission to reflect its role in providing funds and technical assistance for a broad range of heritage organizations and activities.



Cedar Mountain, 1889, was one of many towns in the county that existed solely to house workers in the local timber industry

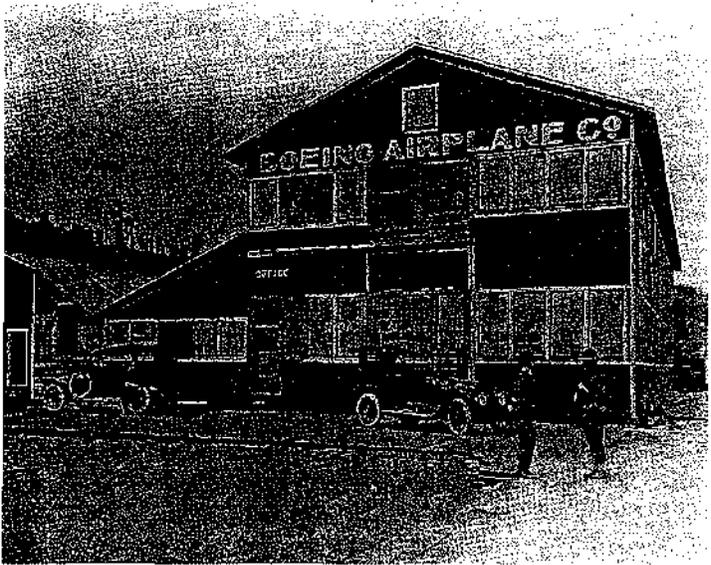
The ordinance was also revised to clarify and strengthen the commission's authority to protect landmark properties from demolition and moving. These revisions were inspired by the loss of two significant buildings in the Burton Historic District on Vashon Island. Burton is typical of the many small "crossroads" communities that once dotted the rural landscape of King County. As gathering places for residents of outlying areas, these communities historically consisted of a general store/post office, perhaps a cafe, church, livery stable or garage, a few residences, and often a warehouse, grain elevator or other storage or shipping facility for goods. Typically, these crossroads communities were clustered around transportation nodes such as the intersection of two or more roads or the intersection of a road with a river or railroad crossing.

In King County today only a handful of these communities remain sufficiently intact to convey their historic origins. Burton was one of them. The community's significance was documented in 1985 for inclusion in the county's Historic Resource Inventory as a historic district; however, it was not designated as a King County Landmark District until 1990. The landmark designation was triggered by property owners' requests to relocate two historic houses from the center of the district to outside the district boundaries. In their place the owners pro-

posed to construct an inn. The houses were modest, vernacular buildings which had not been significantly altered since their construction in the early years of this century. As individual buildings, neither one was eligible for landmark designation but their location at the center of the district provided a critical anchor for the area's overall visual integrity.

The Landmarks Commission acted quickly to designate the district and to work with the property owners to explore adaptive reuse of the houses for innkeeping purposes; however, a number of forces converged which eventually thwarted these efforts. The property owners, already well along in their planning for the inn, were not amenable to revising their plans to incorporate the historic buildings. Their sentiments were supported by some of the adjacent property owners, who were surprised by the swiftness with which the commission designated their buildings as part of the district and were wary of the implications of designation for their own properties.

Following a long and contentious review of the Certificate of Appropriateness application to move the buildings, the commission denied the request, in large part because the property owners failed to provide convincing evidence that removal of the buildings was necessary in order to establish an inn on the site. The property owners appealed the decision to



The Boeing Airplane Company "red barn" at its original site near the Duwamish River, 1917.

the King County Council, the council overturned the commission's denial of the application, and the buildings were subsequently removed from the district. Following the loss of these houses, the commission removed Burton from Historic District designation, citing irrevocable loss of historic fabric and overall visual integrity.

The Burton Historic District might still be intact today if not for an important missing piece in the commission's arsenal of regulatory tools. Although the ordinance gave the commission authority to deny relocation of landmark buildings, and even provided for evaluation of the economic impact on the property owner of approval or denial of such a request, it failed in two critical areas. It did not require that the owner prove a condition of unreasonable economic return, and in doing so take into consideration all available economic incentives and other possible alternatives to moving the buildings. Nor did it spell out the information that is required of the property owner to support a claim of unreasonable economic return. Had these provisions been in place at the time, the commission would have had a much stronger legal basis on which to deny the request.

King County's commitment to historic preservation and the heritage community was further articulated in the Comprehensive Plan, which was revised in 1992. The new "Cultural Resources" chapter of the plan significantly expands the original "Heritage Sites as Open Space" chapter to protect and enhance the King County cultural environment and regional

cultural systems. It includes policies to preserve significant historic resources and to guide King County in creating and sustaining heritage facilities and services. The chapter focuses on the need for partnerships and collaboration with other jurisdictions, organizations, and individuals.

To ensure that all county residents have access to the tools of preservation, in 1994 the Landmarks and Heritage Program developed what is now called the Historic Preservation Interlocal Agreement Program. As of 1999, 10 cities in the county participate in this program and several more are interested in joining. In order to participate, a city must adopt a landmarks ordinance modeled after the county's and then enter into an interlocal agreement with the county for provision of designation and regulatory services. All municipally designated landmarks within the cities are eligible for participation in the county's incentive programs.

As the legislative and legal underpinnings for historic preservation have been strengthened by the county, so too has its commitment to funding historic preservation activities. Several factors have contributed to this. During the 1980s, federal cutbacks in funding for domestic programs decreased dollars available to the preservation community. In King County, the Community Block Grant moneys that had been used for restoration projects were eliminated for that purpose in 1989. This, combined with rapid loss of historic resources due to suburban growth, led to a special initiative by the Landmarks Commission in 1989 to establish stronger local support and to build an incentive package which would encourage people to restore and preserve their buildings.

PROVIDING INCENTIVES

Today, King County has an array of incentive programs ranging from low-interest loans to special tax programs which encourage property owners, nonprofit organizations, and local governments to preserve their historic properties.

Tax Programs

The controls imposed by landmark designation are balanced by a generous program of incentives. Two of these programs, Special Valuation and Current Use Taxation, rely on the local property tax system to create preservation incentives. The Special Valuation program, enacted by the state in 1985 and

implemented in King County in 1989, subtracts eligible costs associated with the restoration of historic properties from the owner's property taxes for up to 10 years. The primary benefit of the program is that during the 10-year special valuation period, property taxes do not reflect the value of improvements made to the property. The Landmarks and Heritage Commission acts as the review board for projects in King County. The typical restoration project in the county is generally much smaller than the large commercial rehabilitation projects that have benefited from this program in the city of Seattle.

A program of broad appeal in King County has been the Current Use Taxation program. Under this program, property owners may be eligible for some tax relief if their land contains one or more cultural or natural resources, such as designated landmarks, archaeological sites, forest or farmland, recreation areas, watersheds, or scenic view corridors. Implemented in 1992, the program works to preserve open space on private property by establishing a "current use taxation" property tax assessment that is lower than the "highest and best use" assessment which would otherwise prevail. The reduction in taxable value ranges from 50 percent to 90 percent for the portion of the property in "current use." Landmarks qualify for a 50 percent reduction in the taxable value of the land portion of the assessment. City of Seattle landmarks and properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places are also eligible to participate in this program.

The Tax Reform Act of 1986 permits owners of buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places to take a 20 percent income tax credit on the cost of rehabilitating these buildings for industrial, commercial, or rental residential purposes. Many King County landmarks are eligible for listing in the National Register. An owner investing in rehabilitation of a registered historic property will have credit against federal taxes. The Preservation Assistance Division of the National Park Service monitors this program.

Low-Interest Loan Program

Revolving loan funds have long been an important preservation tool, largely because of the limited funds available to most preservation organizations and because these programs leverage a tremendous amount of private-sector support. A revolving loan fund is a pool of money that is loaned out, often at

significantly reduced interest rates, and as the loan is paid off, the funds return to the pool to be loaned out again. Most preservation loan funds are used to purchase endangered properties either directly or by means of loans to other parties.

King County launched its revolving fund in 1992 when the King County Council appropriated \$500,000 for that purpose. Unlike many preservation loan funds, the King County program is used for restoration and rehabilitation purposes rather than to purchase endangered properties. The Landmarks and Heritage Program works cooperatively with two private banks to administer the program: residential loans are available through Washington Mutual Bank for owner-occupied landmark properties; and loans for commercial properties are available through Valley Community Bank in Duvall. Interest rates for both programs are generally three to four points below the current market rate.

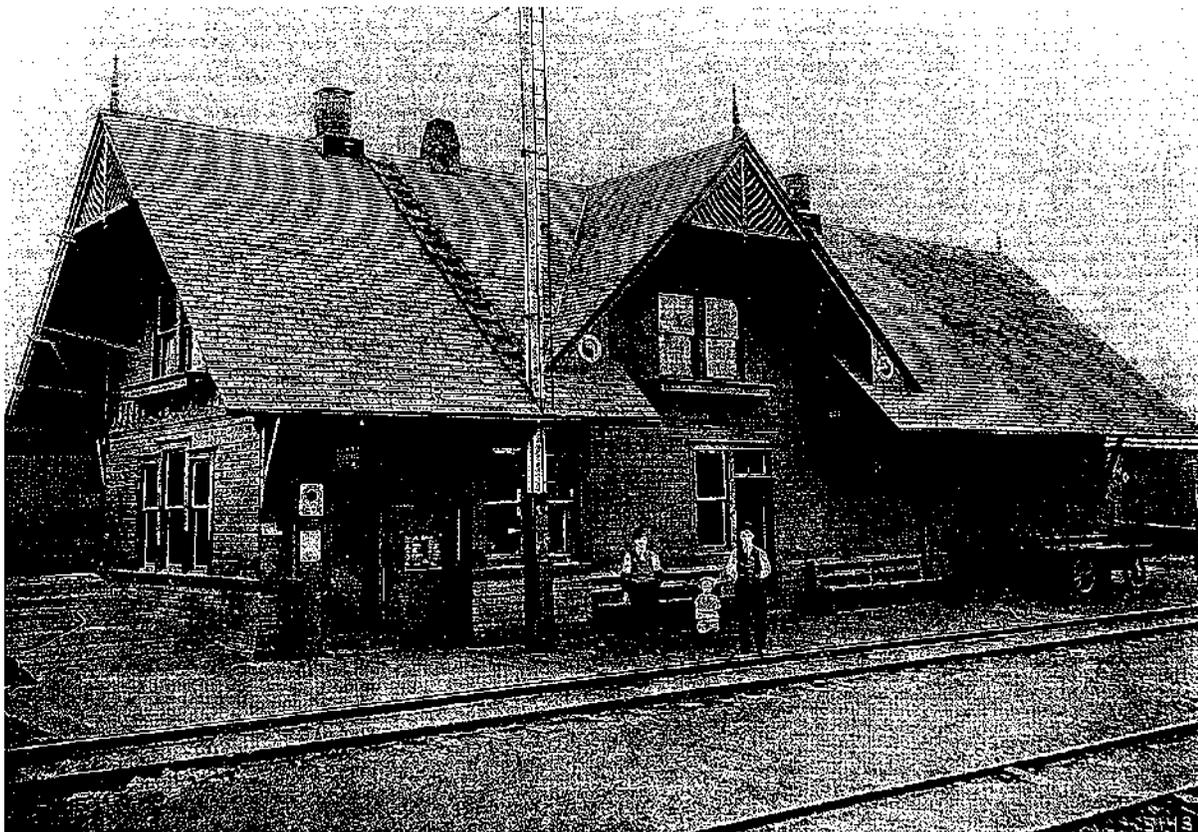
Only property owners of King County landmarks and landmarks located in participating "interlocal" cities are eligible to apply at this time. However, it is a goal of the Landmarks and Heritage Commission to increase the principal available in the fund and to expand the pool of eligible properties to city of Seattle landmarks and those listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Use of the fund may also be expanded to include purchase of endangered properties.

Grant Programs

King County has supported landmark restoration and rehabilitation projects through direct grants-in-aid for many years. Relatively small investments of public dollars have leveraged millions of private dollars and returned scores of deteriorated historic buildings to new life.

King County's Hotel Motel Tax revenue funded grant programs have become significant sources for the support of landmark restoration and historic preservation projects in Seattle and King County. Of particular note is the Cultural Facilities Grant Program, which supports landmark projects, although its uses are currently restricted to a particular category of properties. For the first two years of the program, funds could be used to purchase, restore, or rehabilitate any designated King County landmark. However, in 1992 state legislators restricted the pool of eligible applicants. Eligible properties now must be used predominantly as cultural facilities.

Through the Cultural Facilities Grant Program,



Vital transportation links in early King County, such as the Kenaskat Station of the Northern Pacific Railroad, have disappeared.

landmark properties throughout King County have been restored and adaptively reused, including the Enumclaw Masonic Hall, the Blue Heron Art Center/Vashon Odd Fellows Hall, the Dougherty House in Duvall, the Snoqualmie Railroad Depot, the Neely Mansion and its Japanese American bathhouse, the Issaquah Railroad Depot, and the Renton Fire Station.

King County has also invested millions of dollars in the restoration and adaptive reuse of a number of city of Seattle landmarks that are also cultural facilities, including the Good Shepherd Center, the *Virginia V*, the schooner *Wawona*, the Georgetown Steam Plant, the Dearborn House, the Rainier Valley Cultural Center, ACT Theater, the Seattle Asian Art Museum, the Log House Museum, and the Pike Place Market.

The Cultural Facilities Grant Program has supported the acquisition, construction, and rehabilitation of museums and other heritage facilities, as well as equipment, fixtures and other fixed assets, including storage fixtures, environmental controls and lighting systems.

Recognizing that the Cultural Facilities Grant

Program is limited in breadth, the King County Council from time to time makes special grant monies available to support landmark restoration, stabilization, and rehabilitation. In 1993, the council made a special appropriation of \$100,000 to stabilize four endangered landmarks in rural communities. In 1995, \$500,000 was awarded to 30 landmark projects. Grant awards ranged from \$2,920 for facade stabilization of the Colvos Store on Vashon Island to \$67,000 for restoration of the administration building at Camp Waskowitz, a Civilian Conservation Corps Camp located in North Bend.

From its inception, the Landmarks and Heritage Program has nurtured the belief that historic preservation is about more than saving buildings. It is also about saving the stories of the past and making that history come alive in museums and through education programs and interpretive materials. Since 1990, the Landmarks and Heritage Program has helped heritage groups of all types reach a broader audience and deepen understanding and appreciation of the past. The Special Projects Grant Program has helped fund a variety of heritage activities ranging from historic resource surveys in the cities to the pub-

lication of major new histories to the development of long-term exhibits. It is also a major funder of exhibits, videos, and tour guides that feature landmarks and historic sites in Seattle and King County. Finally, the Cultural Education Grant Program has brought heritage organizations and specialists into classrooms across the county to develop educational resources that allow students to better understand our past and to cultivate a sense of place. It is, perhaps, the region's greatest source of support for historic preservation education programs that interpret the built environment as well as archaeological heritage.

Technical Assistance

Owners of designated King County landmarks and landmarks located in participating cities are eligible to receive a range of technical assistance services from the Landmarks and Heritage Program. Primary among these are consultations with members of the Design Review Committee, who review and approve all changes to designated features of significance of landmark properties. The committee comprises architects and preservation specialists, who share their technical and practical information. In addition, the office maintains information on both preservation issues and local history and publishes the monthly newsletter *Community History*, which keeps readers informed of issues and changes in the historic preservation field on a statewide level.

Although King County has made significant advances in the last 20 years in the preservation funding arena, much work remains to be done. Among the immediate goals are establishment of an annual dedicated revenue source for landmark restoration and archaeological site preservation, and significant expansion of the loan fund. The county is also actively exploring opportunities for expanding the private sector's role in supporting preservation.

CHALLENGES

The greatest threat to the county's historic resources is the rapid pace of suburban development, which is destroying archaeological sites and historic agricultural communities and landscapes and sending property values skyrocketing. Continued efforts in integrating preservation into local land use planning, developing local political support for preservation, and finding new funding sources are critical if preservation is to succeed in this environment.

Many smaller communities around the county, such as Fall City and Preston, and cities such as Kirkland and Shoreline are reeling under the impact of new and proposed development. Destruction of significant historic buildings and incompatible infill development in these areas have disrupted the ambiance of once peaceful communities. Developers are constructing new buildings to the full extent permitted under land use laws. The county and its partner cities must look carefully at existing land use controls in older areas to ensure that zoning densities, height allowances, and floor area ratios do not encourage destruction of the historic environment. Building codes must also be systematically examined to reduce conflict with preservation goals. Much work remains to be done in the field of archaeology as well. Current laws are inadequate to protect these non-renewable resources.

One Eastside city that has responded to the challenges of growth is Kirkland. The Kirkland Historic Commission was founded in 1976 and changed its name in 1992 to the Kirkland Heritage Society to reflect the broader objectives of its members. Some of the organization's goals include: recording and collecting historical data for eventual establishment of an archive and museum; locating, designating, and protecting historic sites and structures; creating and promoting legislation for such preservation; and encouraging private-sector acquisition of endangered sites. In 1994, Bob Burke and Barbara Loomis took the lead in preparing a preservation report to educate and provide adequate resources to the city council, the growth management commission, planning commission, and city staff in updating the Land Use Policies Plan. The report included an overview of Kirkland history, identified historic resources based upon 1992 and 1994 surveys, and suggested a historic preservation plan element and implementation strategies.

Despite its small membership (about 100), the Society has increased public awareness of heritage in the community with programs in oral history, a curriculum for elementary schools, historic interpretive markers, and monthly lectures. Downtown property and business owners have recently organized a Main Street program modeled after the program initiated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Their most visible effort in 1999 was the successful move of the Greek Revival style Christian Science Church (1922)—the last historic church building in the city—from a site scheduled for con-

dominium development to safe ground at the the corner of Central Way and Market Street.

The King County Landmarks and Heritage Commission's work to maintain its existing programs and to develop a regional preservation program requires maintaining and developing local political support for preservation. The successes to date are the result of working closely with AKCHO and with King County elected officials to ensure that preservation interests are on the table at all times. Now efforts must be directed to the suburban cities where elected officials and staff are facing preservation issues for the first time. Successful partnerships with the cities must be based on strong local leadership, which requires a clear understanding of the importance of preservation to their communities and a clear vision of what preservation can and cannot do for their communities.

A successful regional preservation program requires adequate staffing and broad volunteer assistance. It also requires that preservationists be represented on the many boards and commissions that do not have preservation as their primary function, such as planning commissions and urban design boards. It is only through the political process that preservationists will make preservation a priority of local government.

With broadened political support, King County's preservation community can continue to expand funding opportunities, but, in the competition for scarce public dollars, this will require even greater innovation and accountability. Accessibility to historic properties must be expanded to a broader public, and education must be at the forefront of this effort. Improved funding for preservation will require that new and stronger networks be established between local governments, preservationists, nonprofit organizations, and the private funding community.

Preservation of rural agricultural resources is one of the most challenging issues confronting King County. As historic farming practices die out, or as new farming technologies render buildings obsolete, the impetus to retain the historic buildings is gone. Nowhere is this more evident than in the dairy communities of the Snoqualmie Valley and the Enumclaw Plateau. Here, the once prominent dairy industry has all but disappeared, and the picturesque barns, outbuildings, and landscapes are being lost at a rapid rate.

New Approaches

Historic preservation has been democratized in King County. The Landmarks and Heritage Commission no longer focuses only on individual buildings or districts. Today the commission is concerned with preserving entire landscapes, roadways, and communities. But the tools for this work are inadequate. A new vocabulary is required.

To address this expanded view of what is worthy of being preserved, the commission is exploring several new approaches, one of which is the conservation district. Unlike traditional historic districts, conservation districts are not limited to areas of obvious architectural value or certifiable historic significance, nor are they constrained by specific age requirements. They are designed to protect areas whose character or value is found in the relationships among topography, vegetation, architecture, open space, and other appurtenant features, regardless of age. These areas have a distinct local identity worthy of preserving, but they may not have architecture as a primary focus. History as a criterion of significance may not be applicable. As communities and rural areas throughout King County are threatened by rapid growth, conservation districts may be an important new mechanism for protecting special qualities that would otherwise be lost.

The evolution of King County's Landmarks and Heritage Program must also include ongoing refinement of the existing regulatory framework. At this writing, the commission is reviewing a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of the Elliott Farm, the last intact example of an early-20th-century dairy farm in the Maple Valley area. The farm is sited on a knoll above the Cedar River just east of the city of Renton. Highly visible to travelers on the adjacent Maple Valley Highway, the farm is cherished by residents of the area and passersby alike.

The farm was purchased in 1995 by a developer who subsequently constructed housing units on land adjacent to the farm and who now wants to demolish the farm buildings to construct additional units. The owner's argument for demolition is that the buildings have deteriorated beyond the point of reasonable restoration. Not convinced, the commission hired its own experts to assess the situation and their findings support adaptive reuse of the buildings as a viable alternative to demolition. But the commission's hands are tied. Although it can deny the demolition request, the ordinance does not contain minimum maintenance or antineglect requirements,



The various outbuildings and barns of Elliott Farm could be razed for housing.

thereby leaving the owner free to effectively demolish the farm by not maintaining it.

In response to the Elliott Farm controversy, the Landmarks and Heritage Commission is considering revising the ordinance to include minimum maintenance or antineglect (or affirmative maintenance) requirements. Minimum maintenance provisions typically stipulate that buildings be maintained in accordance with local building and housing codes, while antineglect requirements often go a step further by specifying a list of defects that must be repaired on a continuing basis. While provisions such as these raise a number of questions, such as how inspections of landmarks for defects are to be made and who pays for the necessary repairs, they are a necessary part of the commission's tool kit if preservation is to succeed.

At the same time the commission refines its approach to preservation of the built environment, it is creating a comprehensive archaeological resource protection program. In 1999, working in partnership with the King County Transportation Division,

the commission will begin a countywide planning process to identify, document, and protect the rapidly disappearing archaeological resources located throughout the county.

As it explores new tools to get the job done, the King County Landmarks and Heritage Program is also exploring new strategies and organizational structures for funding historic preservation. A goal of the commission in the millennium is to educate those individuals and entities who control wealth about the value of historic preservation. Foundations, corporations, and local endowments have the potential to support preservation activities at a much higher level than is now the case. Other local governments must also be encouraged to step up to the funding plate. Perhaps the time has also come for the formation of a broad-based regional preservation agency that can actively leverage public dollars through private and corporate grants and provide a cohesive, articulate voice for historic preservation and heritage in this region.