



## A Brief History of Historic Wallingford

Historic Wallingford began as a grassroots response to a need for increased civic pride and appreciation for the neighborhood's historic building fabric. When the Wallingford Neighborhood Office, which used to sponsor community events such as historic home tours and the annual Kiddie Parade, closed in 2012, residents lost meaningful ways to come together to celebrate the neighborhood and each other. When redevelopment activity began to speed up shortly after, the need for researching and promoting the neighborhood's existing buildings became alarmingly clear. In late 2016, a group of concerned individuals including local historians and community advocates met and discussed what they would like to see a community organization do to increase civic pride in the Wallingford neighborhood, promote the historic buildings in the area, and help building owners find ways to best take care of their historic properties. Over the next few months, steering committee meetings were held and on June 30, 2017, Historic Wallingford was incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit.

The ball rolled quickly from there. With funding from a Tableau Software Neighborhood Grant, our public website was created and we began planning community events. Over 140 community members attended our public launch party on January 6, 2018 at the Good Shepherd Center; many more than had RSVP'd or could fit in the reserved room! Other public events held in 2018 and 2019 included discussions with Thomas Veith, Paul Dorpat, and Kathryn Rogers Merlino about their published work, a summer potluck picnic, the Wallingford Historic Homes Fair, Wallingford Trivia Night at The Bounty, and the Remodel and Restore Workshop and Home Tour.

Talk amongst members of a historic district in Wallingford began around 2018. After numerous discussions with input from community members and landmarks preservation experts, we decided to pursue a National Register Historic District designation because it best aligned with our mission and would attract visitors interested in historic places. With grant funding from King County's 4Culture and private donors, we were able to hire Northwest Vernacular historic preservation consultants in 2019 to conduct a feasibility study, lead public meetings, and write the nomination report for the historic district. To aid in this effort, volunteers were trained to survey the neighborhood and conduct archival research. After three years and over 2,000 volunteer hours, the area which subsequently became known as the Wallingford-Meridian Streetcar Historic District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on December 9, 2022.

While an honorary designation, we hope that this district will boost pride in the neighborhood and interest in both its social and architectural history. We look forward to celebrating this tremendous achievement with the community and continuing our work to share Wallingford's history in new and impactful ways and to encourage the maintenance and rehabilitation of its older buildings.