

Manifesting Density

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Abstract

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The following thesis is considered an urban design gesture with architectural elements that redefines a city in need of revitalization. Tacoma's history is one often showcased by the defiant work of the people who may have often caused more harm than good. But through those times, it is important to acknowledge the minority groups that may have interacted with and come face to face with these notable members. Understanding how policy and social events shaped the way minorities occupied space and were often vacated from it eradicated their presence and future. The term minority, in this case also represents those who served as community leaders and even small business owners that served as the backbone of their communities. Manifesting Density focuses on the role of the minority having an inclusive presence. Understanding the power of placemaking expressed in the void we know as architecture that revisits modern forms of culture, education, and production. Within the Theater District of Tacoma, many organizations have explored ways of potentially bringing life back to a vibrant sector of the community. Focusing on how even the smallest gestures make an impact, the Johnson - Cox Building is selected as the anchor for the community. It is with this intervention an exploration takes place through a vessel that has the potential of showcasing many perspectives through the means of convenience and storytelling defined by means of the past and means of today's time.

The following thesis is dedicated to all mentors, advisors and people who have had an impact through my life and academic career. The opportunity to mesh two areas of the Built Environment together has proven to show that with attention paid to community and culture and we can someday mitigate and eventually eliminate destructive tensions and gestures. Designs that intentionally leave little evidence of small business or establishments of color in place to be remembered in the future plans of development. Through the methods of both Urban Design and architecture it is with the following project, **MANIFEST DENSITY** we observe the potential impact of a future intervention. Finding a way to preserve a lifeline of the block while introducing new programs is meant to celebrate an aspect of storytelling with hopes of changing a narrative that often is only told through one perspective in Pacific Northwest History.

Through this process, there have been numerous moments of exploring Tacoma's rich history. Finding a way to compose a meaningful timeline that highlights the moments of social tension along with cultural influence. All while exploring the heart of downtown and the Theater District in order to conduct in person site visits of the Johnson Cox Printing Company. Special Thanks to the following members for providing support, joining meetings and also helping provide a number of perspectives that have brought for another dimension of research through this process:

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Manifesting Density

A Cultural Vessel in the Theater District



EXPOSITION

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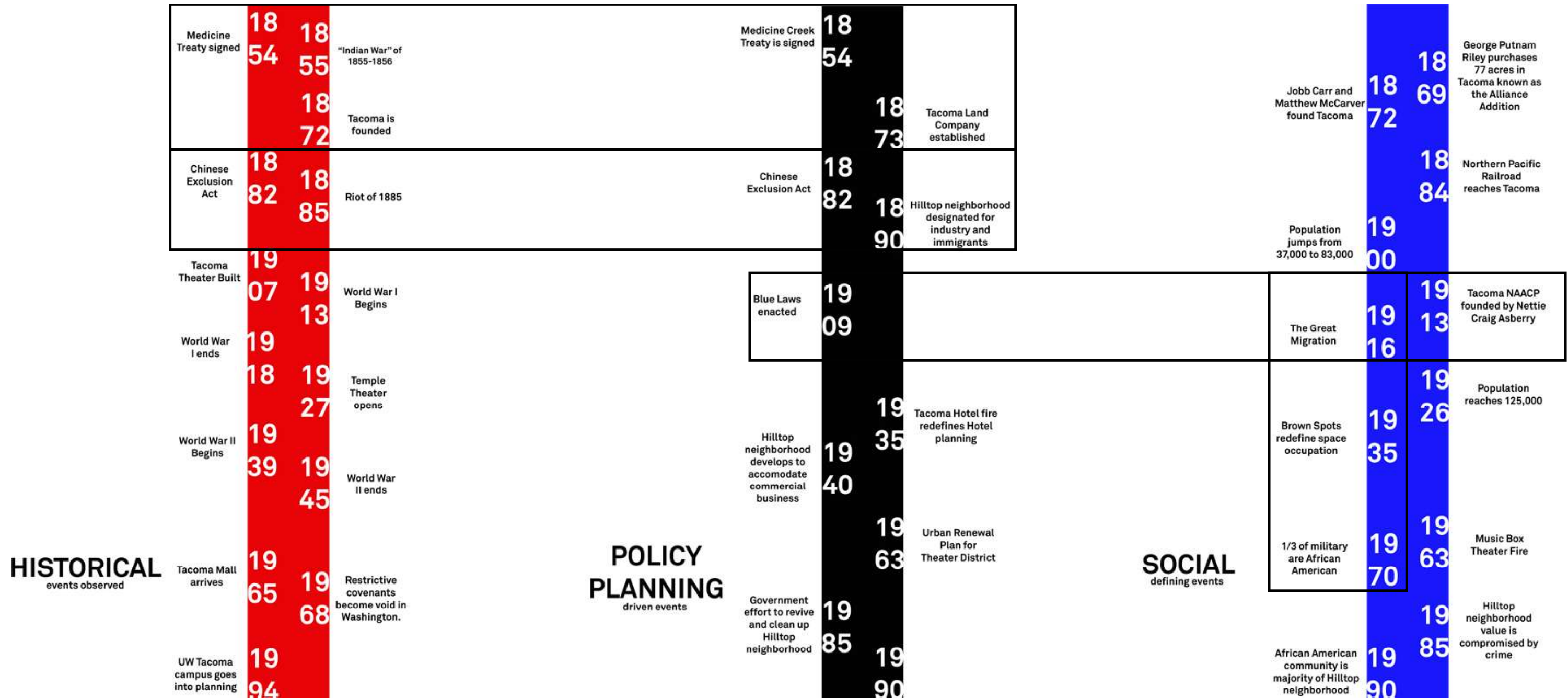
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Manifesting Destiny explores the link between the occupation of people driven spaces and the futurity of those that have stood as the backbone of a community. Concentrating on a singular form that can help shape the beginning of a vibrant district driven by those who have managed to maintain their presence. With a history that has witnessed a perpetual cycle of success and failure Tacoma often finds itself in a cyclical pattern that often questions the identity and its potential. The framework particularly navigates the origins and history of the city while identifying the presence of minorities through its context. Within the Pacific Northwest, minorities often face a number of challenges that both exist regionally and also align with many narratives that exist throughout the country. In a city that has become an engine for well paying, blue collar jobs these individuals tend to reflect a more diverse community. One that differs from its counterpart (Seattle) approximately 30 miles away. With that in mind the people of Tacoma have been the driver behind its history.

The consistent presence of those that have managed to weather the storm, have contributed to its growth. As the influx of residents gravitates further south, there is hope for Tacoma to emerge once again as a landmark city and more modern economy. It will embody and represent the character defined by those that have been overlooked, thrive with limited opportunities and continue to make their presence known. One of those those communities, the Theater District aims to establish a vessel of cultural comprehension through fine arts, education and skill-based learning. While celebrating the people and ventures responsible for contributing to the community and also providing exposure and expansion through opportunity.

The following timelines offer 3 potential perspectives that have shaped the experiences of not just the people, but the built environment. It is with these three scopes we understand through time events shaped the communities we interact within. Witnessing how the impacts of peoples actions have changed the course of life for many is still evident in today's time.



Historical Context

Located approximately 35 miles south of Seattle is Tacoma, a city that rivals its counterpart. Here its presentation looks nowhere similar and yet, with its unique composition, has been defined by a history. It's often cited "God made the world and Men made Tacoma". The details of that statement would stand the test of time as it would begin to take form defined by many eras referencing market changes, growing population (of who is what makes this relevant) and an impact of decisions being made that would affect its future. The city that may have been overlooked and discounted has now shown signs of making a connection defined by the expanding growth of infrastructure and transportation. It's critical that the preservation of Tacoma continues to highlight and preserve its history and also the presence of minorities who have been its lifeline during many unprecedented times of history at its highs and lows.



For years prior to the settlement of men with other intentions the land was occupied by the Puyallup Tribe. The land was sacred to the people, in contrast to the European white man, it was not a commodity labeled by the concept of ownership. The land offered an extension of life, an intimate reflection of who they were as people and lacked a single beneficiary. It served as part of their community and hunting grounds in a region defined by bodies of water near the Puget Sound. The land was a critical resource along with its vast prairies and rich valley country. In the year 1854, Native American tribes would be forcibly removed from their land and displaced to reservations. The Medicine Creek Treaty would eventually take all the farmland without the promised payment initially discussed. Redefining parcels of land that would face an inevitable process that included sales and development.

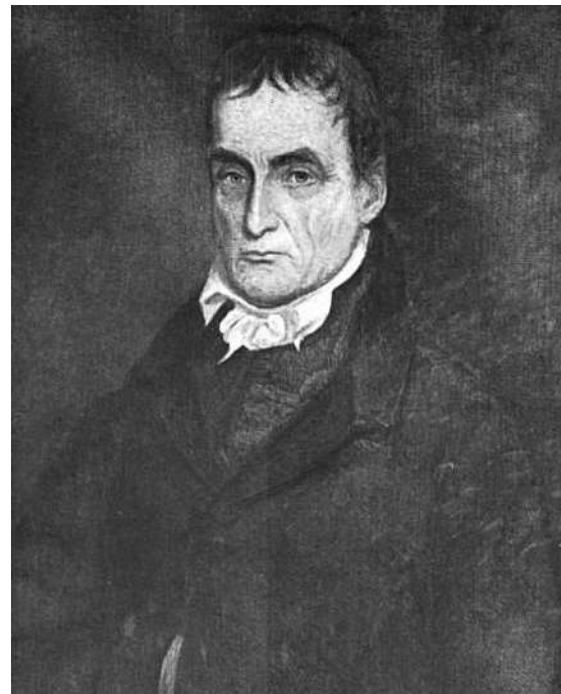
The city was founded in 1872 by Job Carr and Morton Matthew McCarver, a general/teetotaler in which both dreamed of one thing only, railroads. Officially naming it Tacoma, Its name originated from the original name of Mount Rainier. The two specified that the following land would be declared and promptly after the settlement process would take place. On September 10, 1873 it was declared by the Northern Pacific Railroad board the city would be selected as western terminus. The Nisqually Tribe and Chief Leschi would then continue to fight the attempt of stealing the land from its people and would eventually be ruled out by Martial Law. The overwhelming amount of political power would rob them of their homes. Their place of existence had officially taken a new face, and ultimately would confront a new beginning defined by characters who did not look like them or appreciate their culture for that matter.

The endpoint for the transcontinental railroad was designated to connect both the Great Lakes and the Puget Sound. Forty million acres appropriated for transport and access to land that offered farming, ranching, lumbering and mining. Each opportunity of economic growth would continue to separate the land from those who tended it, accepted it as a part of their spirituality and an extension/representation of life. Following the announcement, the Tacoma Land Company would not hesitate purchasing an initial three thousand acres at its final destination to establish the makings of what would become the second largest city in the state of Washington. Once all of the land had been acquired, the most challenging part.

The future of the city would be dependent on an effective plan. One that would establish order, define boundaries, utilize access points and also allow for densification to continue in methods including sprawl. These physical characteristics involve buildings, streets, public space that make up the block, neighborhood and often a city in terms of scale. Understanding scale contributes to the connection that takes place between the population and place. Within the 19th century, the methods for establishing a city were often considered elementary. James Tilton, a surveyor general was given the initial responsibility of manifesting a potential city in the recently acquired land. **The origin of its form is often questioned with the likes of Sacramento and the Australian town of Melbourne.**

1

¹ Karla Wakefield Stover, "1," in *Hidden History of Tacoma: Little-Known Tales from the City of Destiny* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2012), pp. 12-49.



The initial plans drawn by Tilton were never developed but the foundation of his work would eventually fall into the grid plan. Three main avenues parallel to the waterfront would be pivotal along with two others that run up the face of its steep grade. The composition of the following five streets contained blocks with a depth of 120 feet while additional streets were given a width of nearly 40 feet. The significance of these dimensions proved that given the scale of the layout; alleys could not be generated. Towards the south region of the bay, land was intentionally reserved for future development as a possible park/campus. Like many future attempts for the **"City of Destiny"** these intentions never left paper and as the demands within the railroad business would begin to decline Tilton's role as planner had come to an end.

The railroad director of the Land Company had their sights set on an unorthodox, brilliant landscape architect by the name of Frederick Law Olmstead. Popularly known for Central Park in New York established by generous spaces that encouraged leisure and tranquility. That envisionment had become a challenge within the city of Tacoma, its context was completely different from that of a New York City. It lacked a population, high traffic and yet Olmstead was brought in to lay a foundation in which the future would accommodate these spaces, once populated by their predecessors.

What appealed to the settlers of Tacoma was driven by understanding the thought that comes with working with Olmstead. It generated attention in the Pacific Northwest and across the country and more importantly put him up to the test to combat the challenging landscape ahead. **Teaming up with an experienced sanitary and hydraulic engineer, Olmstead looked to create a town that "would balance the sea, forest and mountains".**

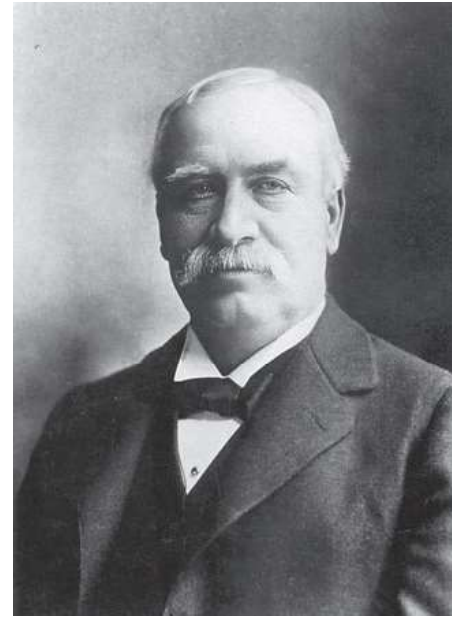
¹ The final design was a product of thought generated without ever physically coming to Tacoma. A system defined by meandering lattice work of diagonals originating from the Northwest while fighting an elevation change towards the canal of Commencement Bay. The heart of the city was defined by the three main avenues of Pacific, Tacoma and Cliff (now Stadium Way) originally pointed out by Tilton. The layout of the grid was often viewed as questionable for many due to the fact that it was modeled after the likes of two contrasting cities of both San Francisco and Chicago. Potential landowners questioned buying corner lots in the downtown area that lacked a sufficient number of four way intersections.

¹ Karla Wakefield Stover, "1," in *Hidden History of Tacoma: Little-Known Tales from the City of Destiny* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2012), pp. 12-49.

Recognized Figures in Tacoma History



Job Carr



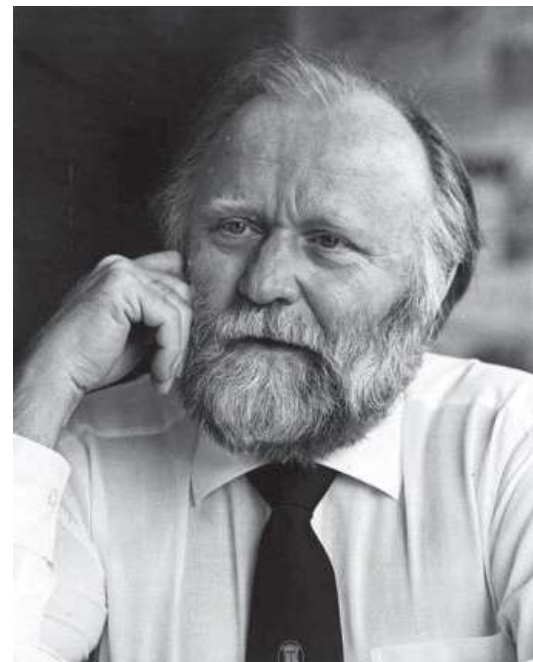
Henry Villard



Jay Cooke



George Francis



Frank Herbert



James S. Russell



Murray Morgan

The criticism of the Olmstead plan proved the lack of ability to design something most efficient for the early development of the town center. The integrity of the business square and the generated curves led to the settlers' severe judgment. These demanding requests were representative of knowing how much the design of the city plays into the Economic success of the people and those that inhabit the town center. The city of Tacoma notified Olmstead that his ideas would not be utilized and that they would be continuing with a traditional grid. The three arteries incorporated are tied to spaces that contributed to the earliest stages of its urban fabric. Lots were being purchased and spaces were defined by the needs of the people and from this point forward the population would begin to increase due to the terminus being established. During the late 1800's is when we begin to understand what begins to take place. People begin to purchase property and the makings of downtown becomes clear.

First, it was the Tacoma Company Building located at the corner of Pacific and 9th. Built in 1874, responsible for guiding many people through the process of acquiring land and encouraging development. The first buildings to go up in the town center included these real estate businesses, a school, hotel and a printing business. Shortly after followed a blacksmith, shoe shop and a dairy. The makings of its history had been concentrated with these goods and services. The settlement had managed to lay the groundwork and within a year of its initial development was looking at a population close to 100 people. People had managed to settle within the town, the suburbs and the wharf. That year, a real estate agent purchased two joined lots of land at the time for 400 dollars, today listed as 909 and 911 Pacific Avenue where two buildings would be built for 1500 dollars. Almost a block further down the Squire Building becomes Tacoma's first frame building located at 726 Pacific Avenue. Shortly after, the North School located at 246 St. Helen's, then The Washington House, believed to be Tacoma's first hotel, was built at 700 Pacific Avenue in 1875 in which the next - door hotel was destroyed by a fire. The following buildings listed would be considered the foundation of development within Tacoma.



Tacoma Land Company

Jobb Carr and Matthew McCarver found Tacoma 1872

George Putnam Riley purchases 77 acres in Tacoma known as the Alliance Addition 1869

George Putnam Riley purchases 77 acres in Tacoma known as the Alliance Addition 1872

At a time where Colonial Capitalism had seemed to pre determine space a man by the name of George Putnam Riley makes a gesture that will impact the outcome of Tacoma to modern day.

Medicine Treaty signed 1854

"Indian War" of 1855-1856

Tacoma is founded 1872

Medicine Creek Treaty is signed 1854

Tacoma Land Company established 1873

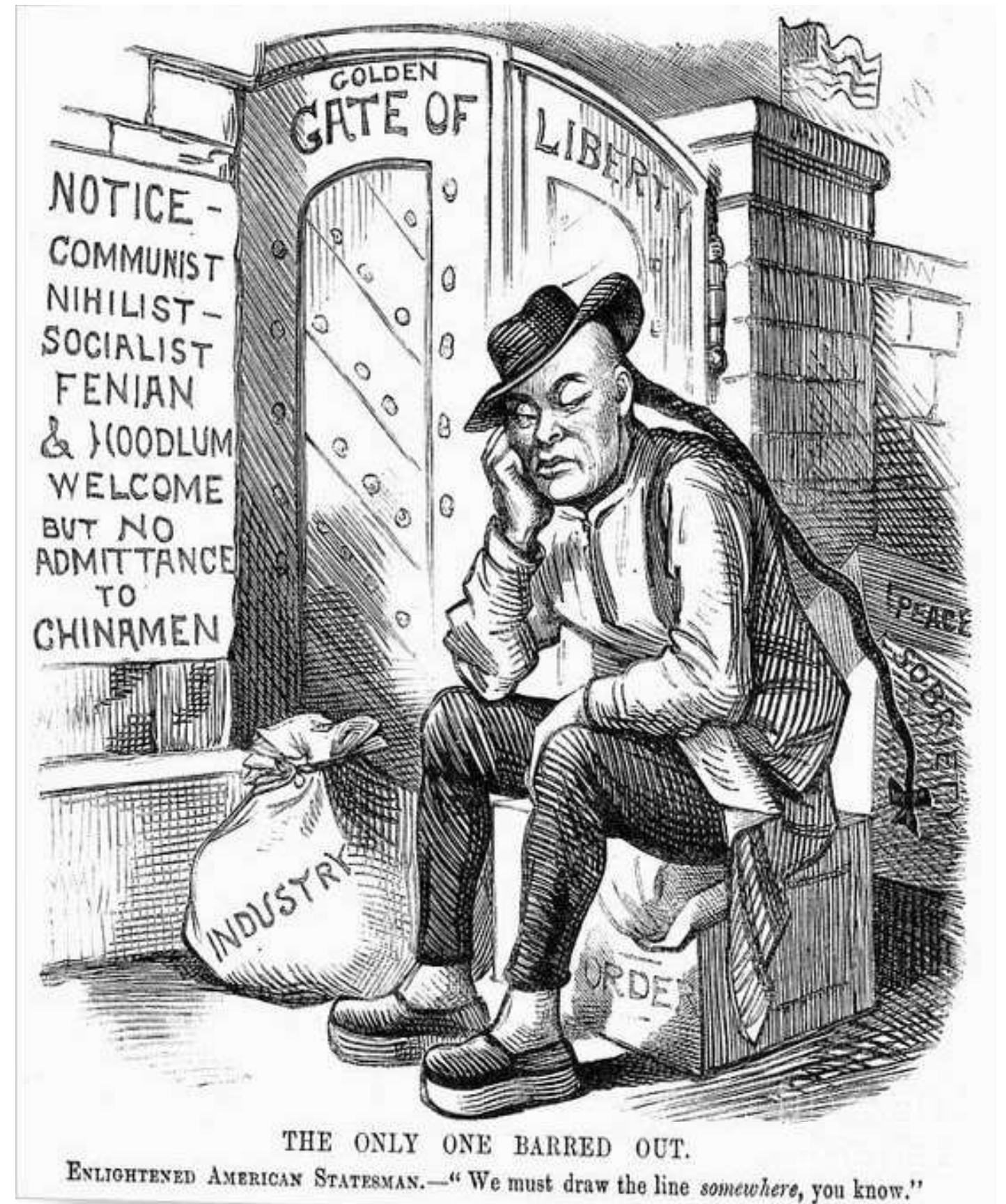
The Land Company proved to be essential towards how real estate would continue to flourish in a way where commerce and production served to be the most important needs of the settler population. In the 1880's the Land Company Building would relocate to 728-730 Pacific Avenue and continue to drive development. While space began to be defined by program a few were noticeable amongst the population. Within months the city had acquired a series of small businesses including a telegraph office, printing shop and a blacksmith. The most difficult challenge at the time was navigating the landscape of the city which sloped upward heading south from the town center. Colonel Ferry persuaded officials to fund a project that would build a shortcut up from Pacific Avenue which is known today as Ninth street.

The process was often frustrating in terms of relying on consistent man power. The initial laborers were Irish immigrants, but many abandoned the work shortly after due to a number of strikes and opportunities for mining out west. Newly freed slaves, immigrants from Mexico and even Confederate Civil War prisoners had been given the chance to and yet the railroad company found little to no success. Charles Crocker and his boss, James Strobridge, looked to hire Chinese laborers to fill the void. Although many criticized that the Chinese were considered to be small in stature, many admitted after time that the Chinese were "conscientious, sober and hard workers" in the words of many settlers described. Within a few years, roughly 80 percent of the Central Pacific workforce was made of Chinese workers.

While in the Pacific Northwest there were many signs of building for a future that will accommodate growth, but in the late 19th century another cultural group faced conflict that led to their limited success and in some cases a mass exodus. The envisioned ideas of expansion and opportunity meant seizing the land and the persecution of the Chinese within Tacoma and many Chinatowns across the west coast. The country had already put forth a series of restrictions meant to dictate what they believed to be a threat. The Chinese Exclusion Act had been put in place to restrict the immigration for all Chinese migrants. In 1885, approximately 500 citizens gathered and marched through Chinatown forcibly removing people from their businesses and homes prior to burning down their communities.



These series of actions were targeted to stroke fear within the Chinese people and the residents of the city. A series of intimidation tactics that initiated a continuation of the anti-Chinese movement along with propaganda. It would continue to be common practice all through the American West with little to no political response and a number of cases where suspects were never convicted. It was recognized as the **“Tacoma Method”** which was carried out and facilitated by Jacob Weisbach, the mayor at the time. The mayor formulated plans to expel the Chinese residents while also discouraging the employment of the Chinese people. The Chinese people arrived in hope of opportunity and with due time, their defiant journey had often started within the mining industry. From there, the large communities often found themselves established well within the context of the town center where mutual aid organizations supported immigrants and offered many employment opportunities. The people made up of the working-class laborers such as laundry workers, grocers and domestic help. They had managed to work themselves into an essential part of the work force that not only helped the city of Tacoma off its feet, but also built the transcontinental railroad and a number of large rail projects throughout the country.



RISING CONFLICT

Within a significant 50 years the Pacific Northwest had vacated the original occupants of Tacoma and had also burned down the communities of those that were the reason for the success of the Northern Pacific Railroad. Up until the conclusion of the 19th century, both cultural groups managed to thrive off limited resources and found success in what made the region remarkable in its right along with an attainable vision for community and opportunity within two distinctive eras. Both the Native Americans and Chinese were representative of resilient groups well defined by the strength of their communities and their ability to preserve their cultures. When we choose to occupy space, it is defined by a series of characteristics that allow us to establish a comprehensive form of perspective. Uses can often shift based on the intent and purpose of the individual or group. We have uncovered the history of the Pacific Northwest defined by methods of forcibly vacating minorities with the intent of maximizing the use of space for the white settlers at that time. The placement of the grid could be well defined by a form of colonial capitalism. This practice had become essential towards a constantly crafted growth that took place within Tacoma with a framework designed to initiate power over the indigenous people, destroy the establishment of the Chinese all while establishing a new set of boundaries and what could be defined as **“imperial placemaking”**.¹

Tacoma experienced an influx of the population accelerated by the Gold Rush and its ease of access thanks to the success of the Northern Pacific Railroad. It had truly become the terminus of the country and possessed space for opportunity, growth and the ability to occupy land with the intention of helping build a growing city. An existence of African American presence had also taken place through the opportunity offered through the well-paying jobs of the railroad company.

Business had flourished with what had brought many pioneers and businesses greatly benefited the African American community. Establishments that included hotels and restaurants downtown that employed a number of leaders from their community. Notable figures. Many included Henry Joseph Asberry, a barber for the Tacoma Hotel that had witnessed the likes of many well-known men to enter his barbershop such as Mark Twain, Calvin Coolidge and Sam Perkins. The city had gained a lot of traction being the terminus of the west coast and to go with the prominent figures of society at that time, the Pacific Northwest would eventually see the emergence of its population density due to the shifting social and political policies within the country.

Blue Laws enacted	1909			The Great Migration	1916	1913	Tacoma NAACP founded by Nettie Craig Asberry
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The Great Migration	1916
Brown Spots redefine space occupation	1935
1/3 of military are African American	1970



At the turn of the century, the Western states had grown to become an ideal destination for individuals, who at this point would be considered foreign to the region or minorities. One of the many movements defined by more than 7 million people particularly African Americans leaving their homes in the South in search of a new life. People migrated to escape existing racial oppression and subjugation. Its reference to being great is often depicted by the social and political aftermath that defines the movement of the people and with that in turn begins to have an impact on how regions begin to shift politically and culturally. During 1890, a notable district of land had been occupied by the industry workers and immigrant settlers which would become the Hilltop neighborhood. The city of Tacoma had developed its own culture in the midst of the Pacific Northwest. Located and identified as the transition point between Portland and Seattle, many understood how the occupation of minorities within these distinct districts could contribute to the perception of cities.

We know the makings of a metropolis are often expressed through the means of establishing a hub for culture, commerce, regional and international connections. When we choose to occupy space, it is defined by a series of characteristics that allow us to establish a comprehensive form of perspective. Purpose can often shift based on the use and of the planned intent of the individual or group. In this case, the city of Tacoma is broken up into a number of districts and neighborhoods, each classified by members of the community and its primary purpose that contributes to the greater context of the city. The greater context could always be defined as character.

¹ Ince, Onur Ulas. "Chapter 2." Colonial Capitalism and the Dilemmas of Liberalism, Oxford University Press, New York, 2020.

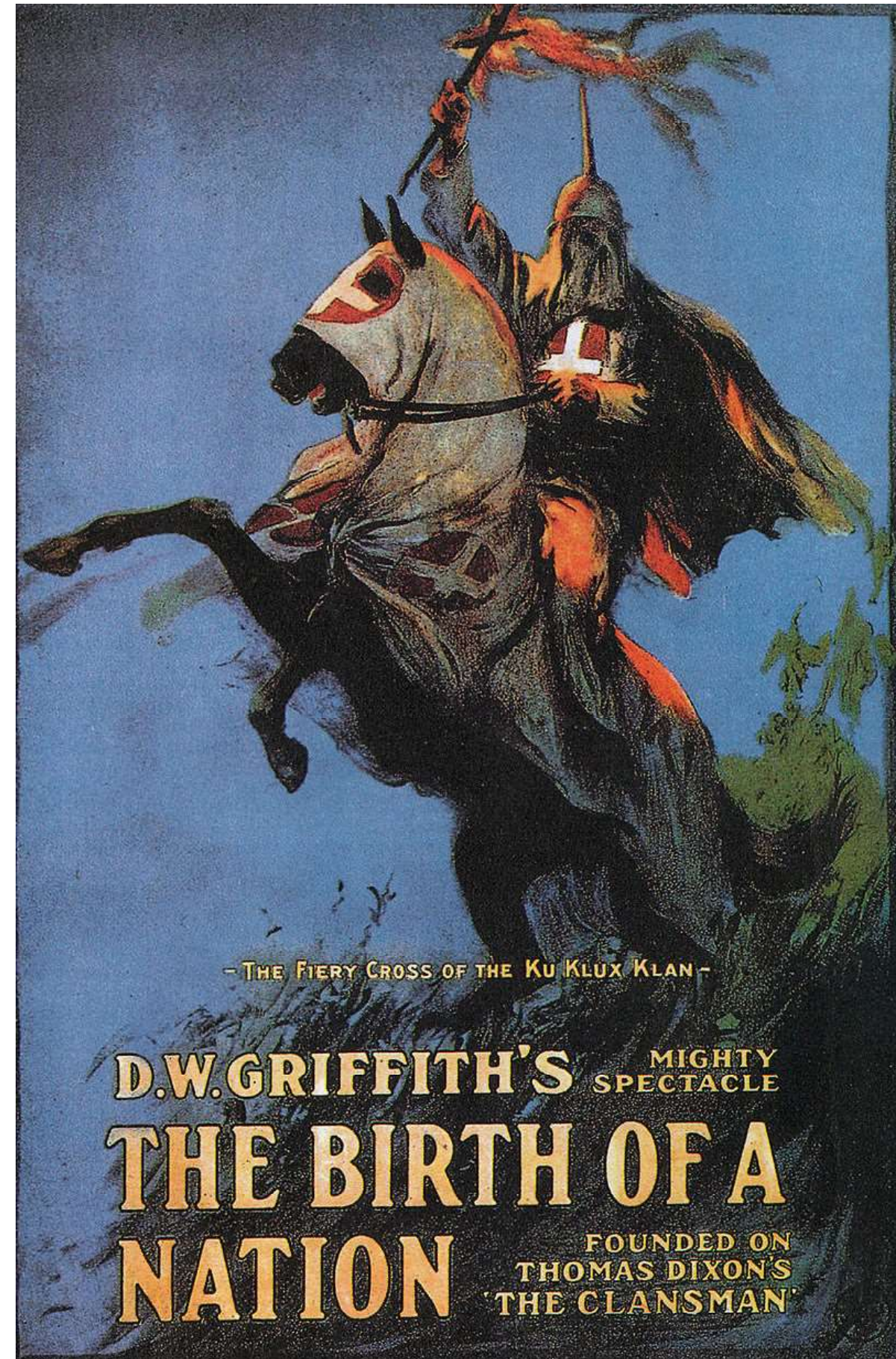
An interpretation starts with an understanding how modern cultural production often possesses a number of traits that establish space making which has always influenced various forms of expression. Tacoma sought to achieve designing a district that could retain culture and exchange various forms while encouraging a future of art, theater and film. The Theater District was born and a turning point was in 1888 when the city aimed to preserve notable venues such as the Rialto and Pantages Theater which eventually opened in 1918. The theaters have helped deliver prominent pieces such as **D.W. Griffith's spectacle, The Birth of a Nation**¹ which was shown in theaters within the downtown Tacoma area. This film had been making its way around the country as a propaganda piece that blamed the social and political implications on the freedom of African Americans from slavery. Organizations such as the NAACP led by Nettie Craig Asberry fought to prevent the showing of the film while writing a letter that had been eventually published in the Tacoma Ledger Newspaper.

¹ D W Griffith, Klansman on Horse, n.d., n.d., accessed April 15, 2022.



Lower Level of Pantages Theater (Tacoma)

Contrary to the work being shared and spread amongst the city, it was more evident than ever that the politically and socially oriented norms have redefined the spaces occupied by the African American community. The places minorities at the time lived, learned and interacted had become significant within the immediate context and a recognizable factor that not only prevailed in Tacoma, but within this region of the Pacific Northwest in cities like Portland and Seattle. During the early 1900's the city continued to thrive as the midway point within the Black community as the working- class people began to finance local businesses, restaurants and nightclubs.



Tacoma welcomed some of the greatest jazzmen and women of the golden age, where music attracted people within the community. Due to “Blue Laws” enacted by the city, ballrooms closed early, so small blacked owned clubs paid city hall and often played in music venues that were strategically located within industrial neighborhoods where they would not bother residents. The nature of spaces were defined as Brown Spots. A lot of these impacts and changes occurred between 1910 and 1970 which afforded many members within the black community to become a prominent part of the labor force in nonagricultural production. Due to that tension between these housing covenants and restrictions, neighborhoods such as the Hilltop community had become the backbone to the identity of Tacoma. Here we recognize the many forms in which we can identify with the observations of W.E.B. DuBois associated with the interpretation of the African American resident.



The constraints placed on people of color often meant that there was a duality to their experiences. One that could be witnessed or participated in with freedom versus the actions often defined in the world of segregation. **“Self-identity extends beyond the two-dimensional mirror”. DuBois states, “The Black American is born with a veil and gifted with second sight in the world that yields no self-consciousness in which they only see themselves through the revelation of the otherworld”**¹. Because of this, the interpretation of the world and space occupied can be seen as another language.

¹ Gooden, Mario. Dark Space: Architecture, Representation, Black Identity. Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2016.

In the light of community members such as Nettie Craig Asbury, Henry Joseph Asberry and George Putnam Riley, we see their actions and celebrate their contributions that are recognized as defining moments in Tacoma’s history. The presence of African Americans spreading through the country fought against the same beliefs and constructs of Griffith’s film. A recognized social implication known as the Great Migration led to the occupation of many well-known cities such as Portland, Seattle and San Francisco. The Northern Pacific Railway Company was responsible for that in more ways than one. The railroad company offered a number of employment opportunities and was often represented by strong middle-class black workers. By the year 1925, Tacoma’s population reached 125,000 residents and part of that was due to the ability for many to recognize the city for its potential and opportunity.

Notable Members within Tacoma’s History



George Putnam Riley



Dr. Nettie Craig Asberry



Henry Joseph Asberry

Monumental moments in the United States history continued to influence the development of the Pacific Northwest growth. World War II created an influx of industrial demand and in cities like Tacoma a need for workers is what began the demand. Demand led to job opportunities, which inherently brought more people of color and immigrants. The Hilltop neighborhood continued to grow and continued to gain much prominence during the commercialization of the city and the growth of the automobile era. The densification of the community is what can positively impact the composition of our cities. Through strategic methods of Capitalism at this time, culture had become a form of currency that influences the way people interact.

Observations should be celebrated, but as tension continues through the country the effects of prejudice, racism and violence comes from political moves strategically designed to control and protect culture, people and ideals being shared. During the 60's and 70's groups were met by housing discrimination, restrictive covenants and redlining. These actions segregated neighborhoods and continued to construct a divide that caused racial disparities in wealth and severed ties from not just spatial occupation, but social occupation. On a social level, we can begin to tie the series of historical events with how the black experience is defined with political and social standards designed to restrict and control how they occupy the Built Environment. These factors never discouraged the African Americans that made Tacoma home. By the year 1970 African Americans made one third of military personnel within Tacoma.

The city's growth had become heavily dependent on the demands of the nation's economy and as time continued to evolve, we witnessed that the recognized form of work never quite adapted. These limits would shape the opportunities that would exist within their communities designed to highlight economic opportunity and a sense of community. A decline had become evident and efforts had taken place to revive the city. There had been a series of government and private efforts initiated to revive "at risk" neighborhoods such as the Hilltop and other funded projects downtown. Similar to others, they did not succeed and Tacoma began to face a cycle of failure after initial practices of Colonial Capitalism led to ways of development only designed to maximize value and coincidentally drive out the people who managed to withstand all the previous challenges the city had faced.

The same presence defined by small business and culture had lost its momentum and support. Especially those owned by minority groups that faced threats, destruction of business or death referenced in the previous act. Unfortunately, reasons for its possible failure could point to its lack of a strong presence for business development and its lack of accessibility to its sister city, Seattle. Tacoma, once recognized as the Terminus, had become a home to a significant population of people. Individuals who have often prevailed from the constructs of racial policy or socioeconomic pressure to establish a legacy. **"Culture thrives off internal/external relationships to place geography and time as an intimacy of one's existence".**¹

¹ Gooden, Mario. Dark Space: Architecture, Representation, Black Identity. Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2016.

Tacoma was in the process of building which often meant maintaining those external connections. While events drove the economy, communities of color put great effort into investing within their internal connections. Finding meaningful ways of building a foundation that strengthened the base of their communities and amplified opportunity. Organizations such as the Tacoma chapter of the NAACP was founded in 1913, the first chapter founded west of the Rockies. The structured group was oriented towards empowering communities and eliminating racial disparities to help advance justice, equality and inclusivity.



Recognizing the actions of the community members within Tacoma, often proved to be the expression of what has always embodied the characteristics of the minority. The resilience of human action could not be defined by place. Wherever people gathered, resided a form of unity and expression. A presence without physical form encased around its members for that sole purpose is what made the power of purpose meaningful. Property was hard to come by, although it was openly available to their white counterparts it was restricted to people of color. Many of these opportunities became a catalyst for the community all while often being hosted within open program spaces such as the outdoors or even churches.



Tacoma's Order of Odd Fellows (1914)

The vehicle of this infrastructure points to how we focus on creating a purpose and use for things in our society. Architecture can be the vehicle to reinforce place, time and form events in order to establish context and encourage a dialogue. This language can be interpreted through the architectural modes that begin to set up a narrative within the community. One meant to be shared and engrained in the identity of the Pacific Northwest.

Our familiarity with other forms of architectural language such as the slave cabin or the shotgun house layout have always proved to be a spatial arrangement often serving as a solution for the purposes of convenience and utility. **Gooden continues within his book, Dark Space, "Architecture can neither be essentialized to race nor racial representations, if so it would result in stereotypes, a commodification of identity and a regime of visibility that reifies the dichotomies of otherness"**¹². His statements begin to make a case for why the significance behind architecture is not defined by its people.

Although the people and programs bring life to the architecture it is simply not classified by those that occupy it. This fact is an issue we see today when we question what architecture looks like for a community it is intended for. The exchange and experience should be witnessed by the interaction amongst the people and the expressive nature of the building as a vessel for experience. The representative cities referenced are similar to not just Tacoma, but many cities across the country that represent robust communities that have often fallen victim to a number of policies and actions targeted to relocate them.

The acts, whether informal or in some cases, laws are coupled with many methods such as colonial capitalism and redlining that strategically find ways to price out, prohibit and even restrict minorities from occupying the Built Environment. Many neighborhoods and districts once viewed as low value or undesirable had suddenly become something of interest. When density becomes evident and property values take off, that same useless land is viewed as space for potential. Land that has been cultivated and revived through those that were often left on their own to support one another.

Native American groups, who lived on the unmarked land and simply made use of what nature respected the earth for what it is. However, over time they were promptly invaded and forcefully removed to make room for settlers looking to make the West their home. Laying down a city grid and establishing a connection through Railway systems is what brought more pioneers in then hope of a brighter future and fresh start while their counterparts were marched to reservations, appropriated pieces of land designated with limited resources, a lack of infrastructure and a complete divide from other neighboring cities. That same Railway was constructed in due process, but not by the settlers but a combination of the Irish, freed slaves, immigrants from Mexico and in many of the Chinese. All looking to seize the opportunities and hopes for a better future as well. The convenience of the Chinese population was no longer needed in the eyes of the settlers. They had become a threat to the fabric of the city due to their ability to cultivate success in the city center. Residences, small businesses and a community that established a very visible structure. The Chinese Exclusion Act forcefully removed them from their homes and centers of commerce, destroying their property, which was again, given to them as low value and of limited use. The Great Migration a few decades later brought African Americans to the west for the same reasons the Chinese migrated, opportunity.

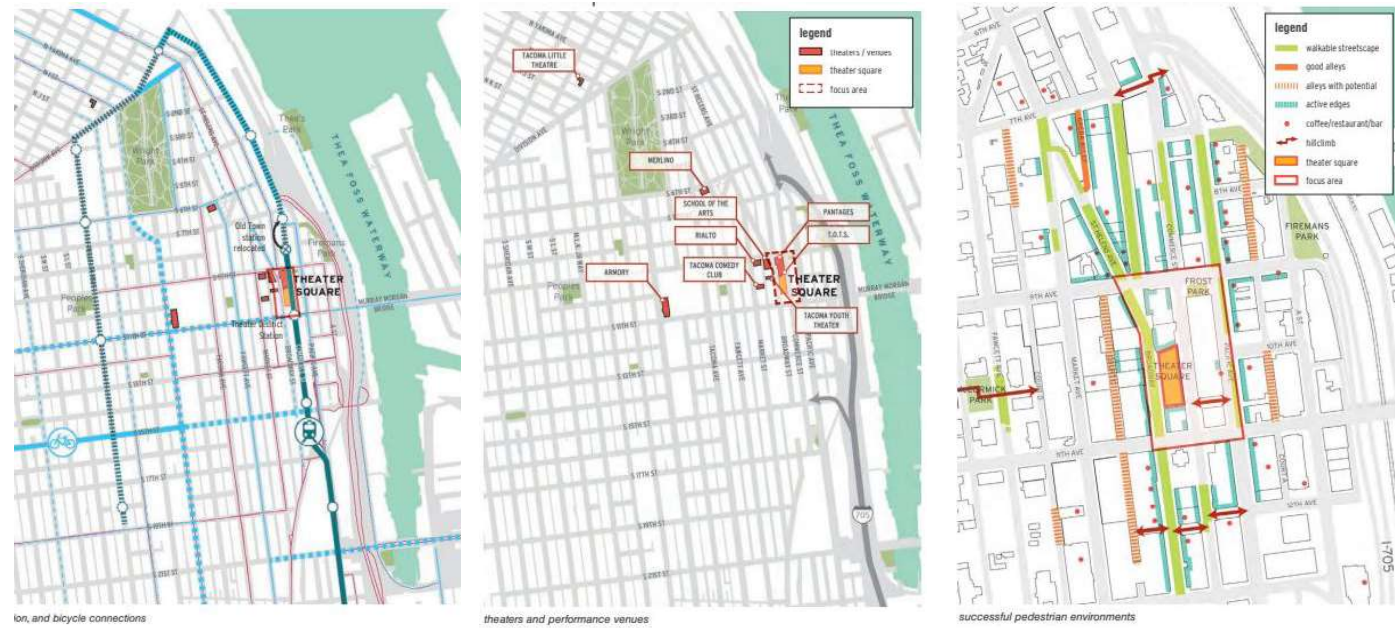
The nature of space designated for minority groups was often considered to be one of low value. Analogous to the previous minority groups mentioned, there is a consistent character defined by the people that have been controlled by space and policy. Analogous to Chicago and San Francisco, the formation of community is what has not only preserved but influenced growth for the people that have often fought against the covenants and policies designed to control and remove them. There is a spirit that embodies the Native Americans, Chinese and African Americans in their respective eras that have shown the resilience and power granted through opportunity and intent. It is with both culture and community we continue to hear stories, understand their history and highlight notable figures that have helped build the community while influencing the future of their people in the cities they occupy.

The growing concern for many developing cities is that the process of urban revitalization often does not include keeping the essential components that make these communities vibrant in its plans. The cultural and social integrity lacks and often.

1 Gooden, Mario. Dark Space: Architecture, Representation, Black Identity. Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2016.

2 Dark Space

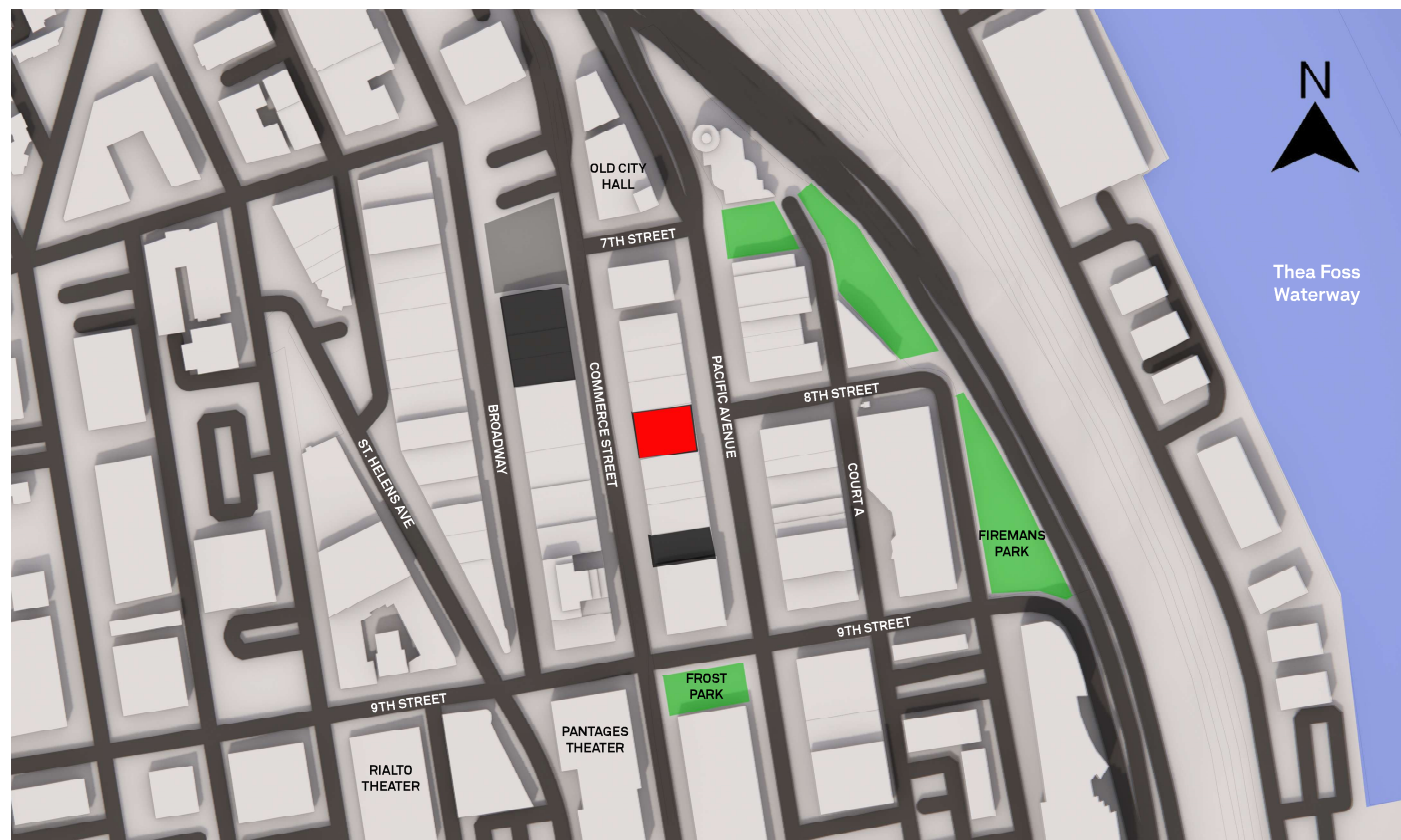
CLIMAX



The following maps depict the elements that define the Built Environment. Ways of navigating and moving through the neighborhood by the means of pedestrian movement and transportation.



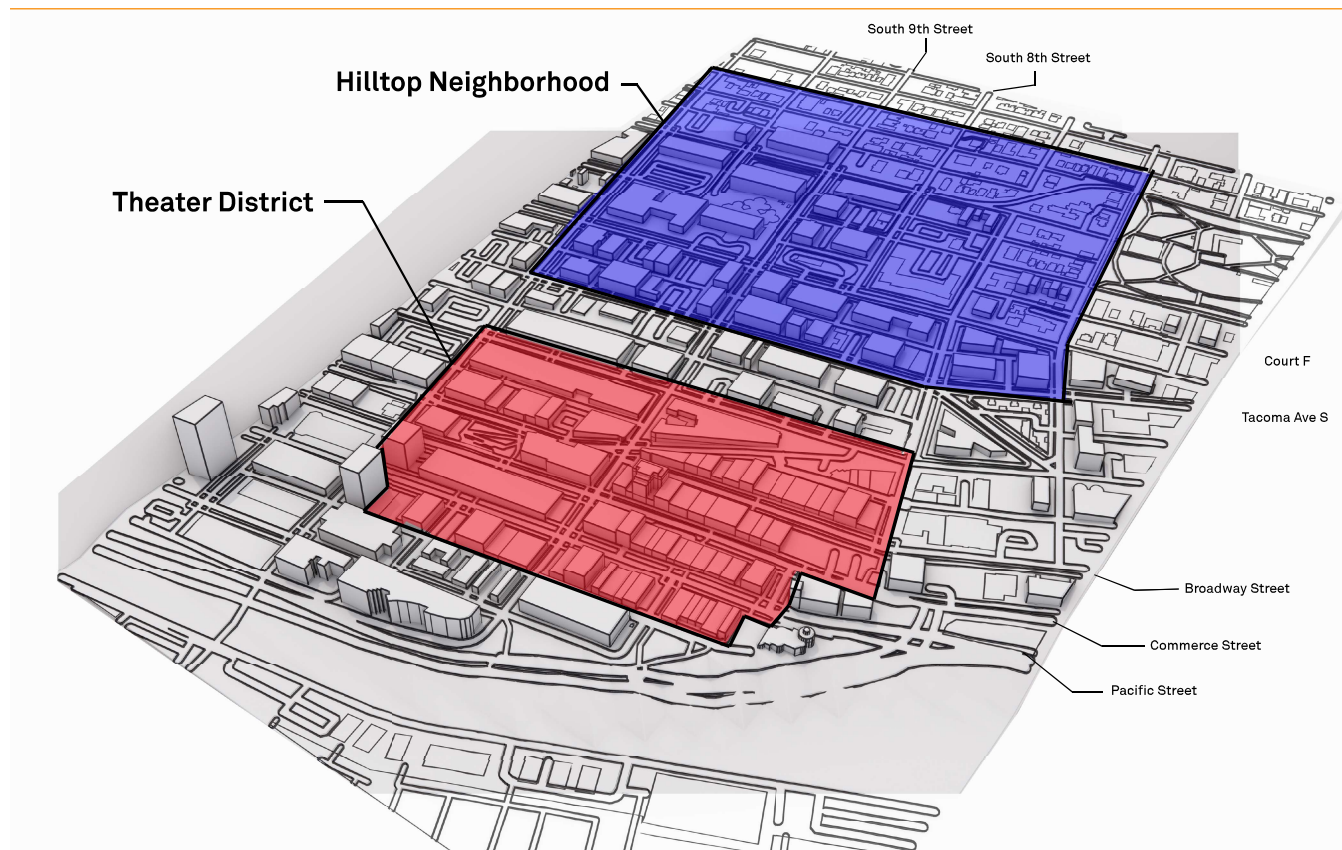
Theater District Zone



Site Location Map

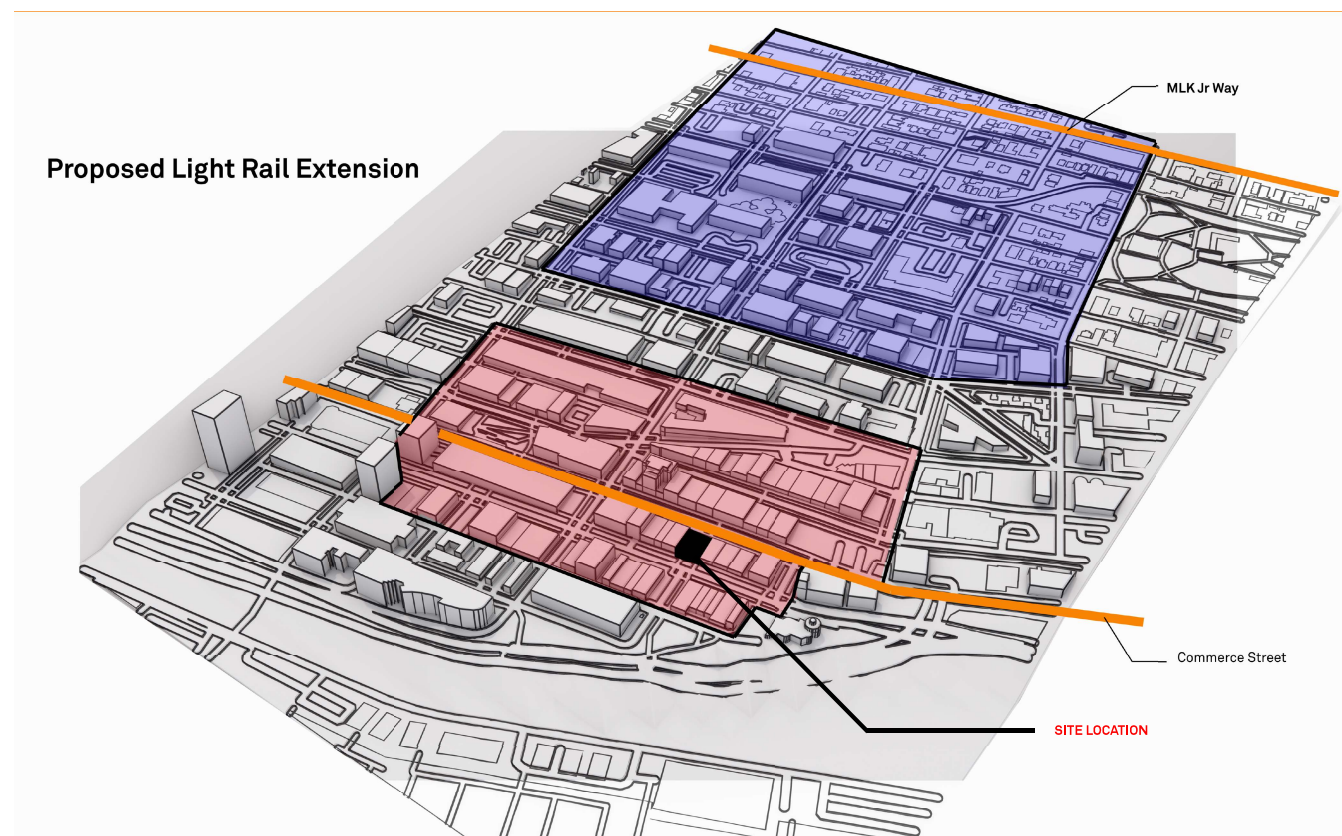


Street Identity Map



Located at 726 Pacific the Johnson Cox printing company is housed within one of the oldest frame buildings in Tacoma.

The small business operates out of 5 spaces within the downtown area and the following is currently on the National Registry of Historic Buildings.



The Johnson Cox building would be considered an anchor for the Tacoma community. Coexisting at the time of the construction and fall of many theaters for the community. Today their initial goals have shifted beyond its original scope. Being able to sustain itself involved shifting from photo/film production was convenient and to continue

The following project is designed to continue promoting Education, Commerce and Culture within the Theater District. The context of the neighborhood emphasizes the history of Tacoma's love for Theater all while embracing the nature of street conditions. The context of the neighborhood will address the composition of the streets, specifically Commerce and Pacific Street.

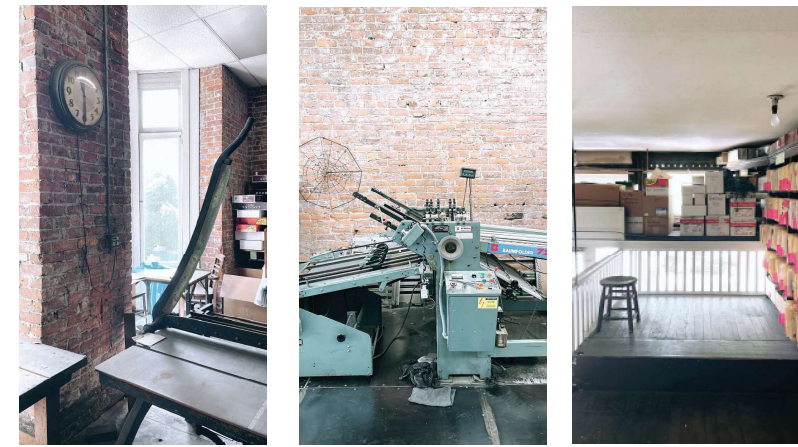
One street is indicated by a number of restaurants and small businesses at the crux of 9th street while the other may be defined by production and a street train that connects a majority of Tacoma while making its way south to the Hilltop neighborhood in an extension planned in the next two years.

Johnson-Cox Building

The initial entryway point of the site. Here the front desk offers services with exposure to immediate services for clients.



Pacific Street Facade
Section 1: Operations



A reserve of old items from the early 20th century. Some are viewed as relics while the filing system is only backlogged up to 10 years.

Extension Annex 1

Offices extend into the annex with quick access to a number of services that had consistent usage and now lacks activity.



Pacific Street Facade
Section 2: Operations



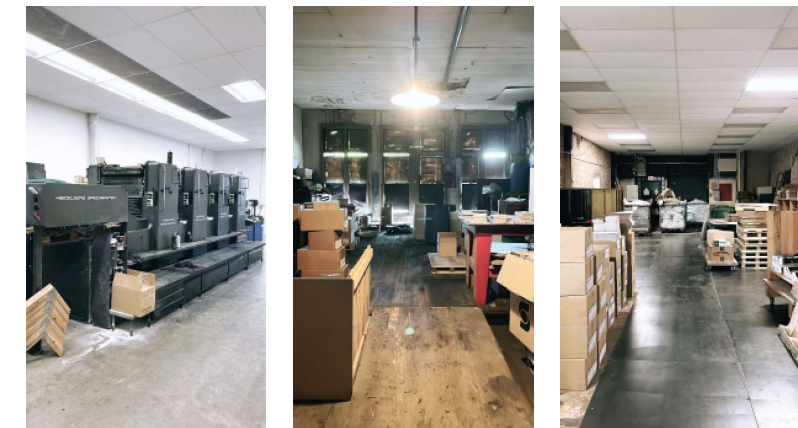
The paint shop, photo darkroom and additional storage are in resultant of spaces that have lost usage.

Extension Annex 2

A reserve production and storage space to satisfy an abundance of services at peak season. Storage holds items that have yet to be given a purpose and are potentially seen as a rental space in the future.



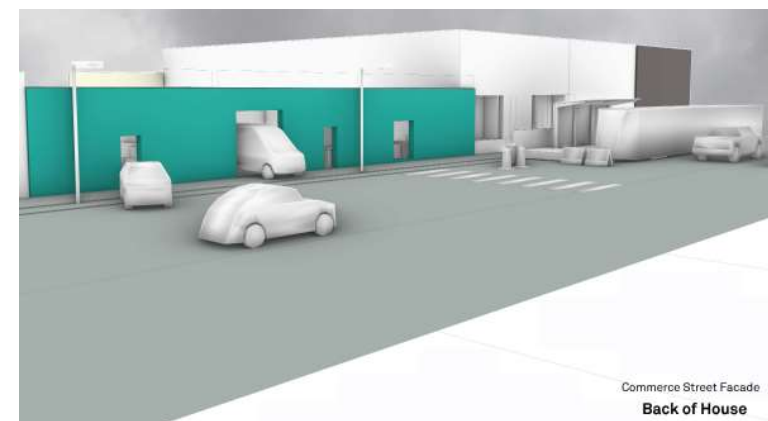
Pacific Street Facade
Section 3: Operations



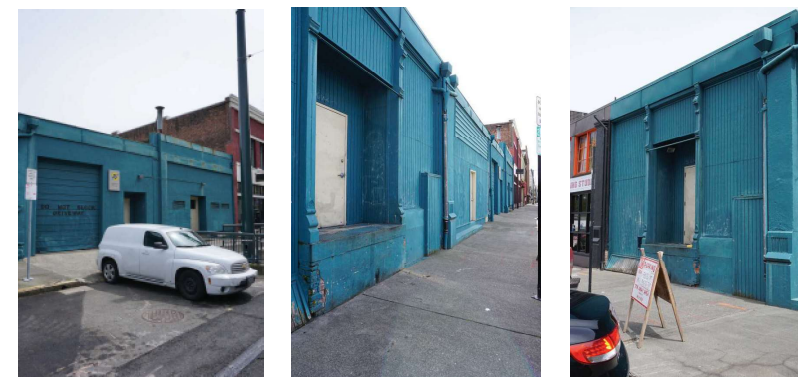
Owners of Johnson Cox contemplate how the following space will be used in the future.

Commercial Access Point

Limited access points are arranged to have items prepared and shipped off. Access doors are available.



Commerce Street Facade
Back of House

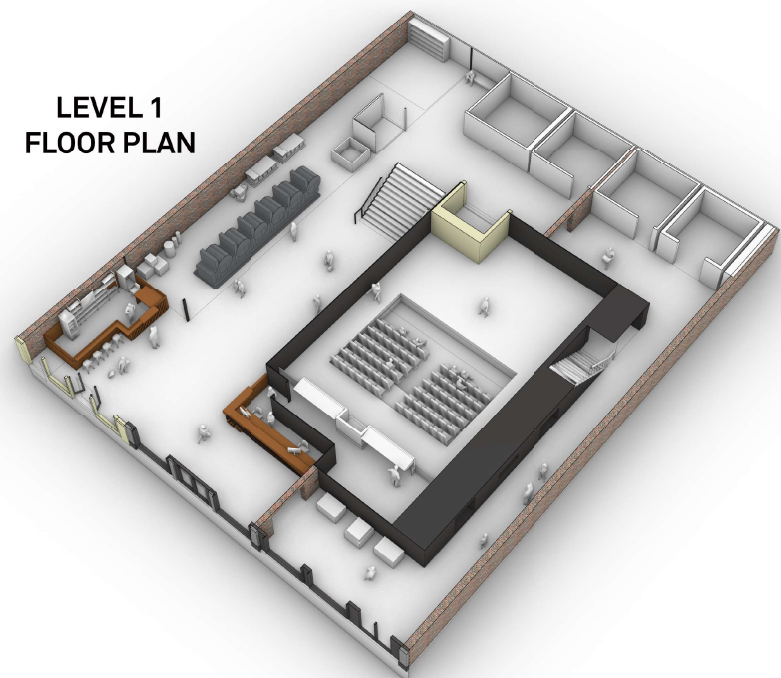


The facade along the Commerce Street end is quite limited to simply production. Bringing life to activity would activate the sidewalks in an area that lacks life.

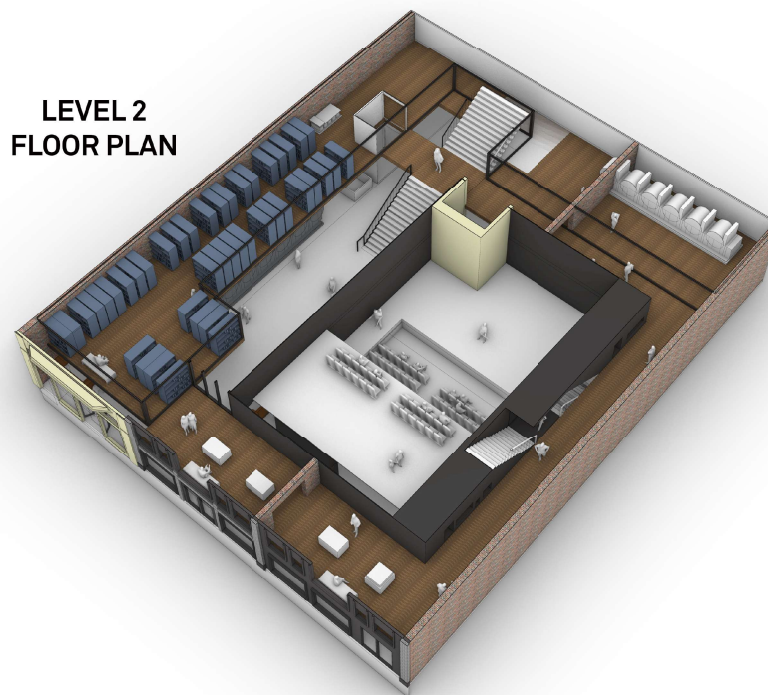
FALLING ACTION



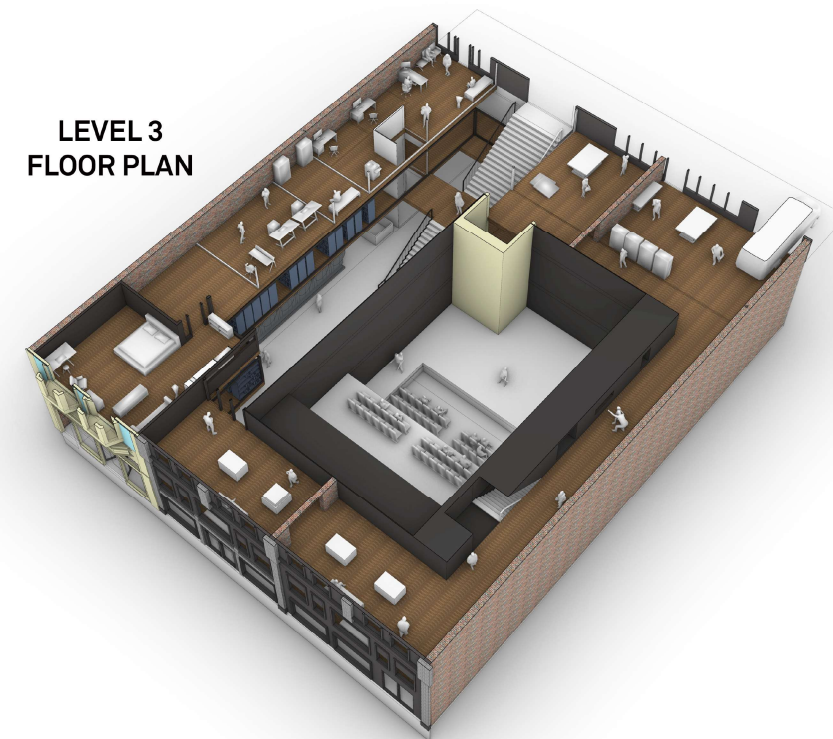
LEVEL 1
FLOOR PLAN



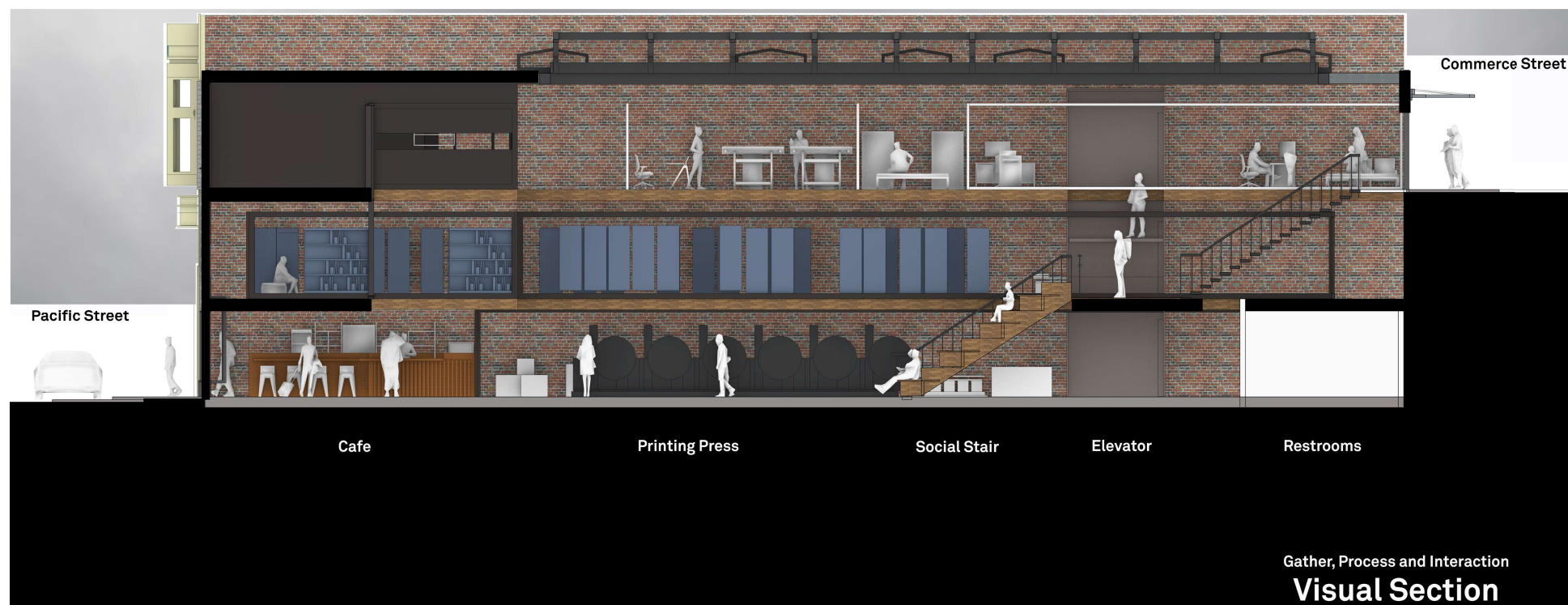
LEVEL 2
FLOOR PLAN

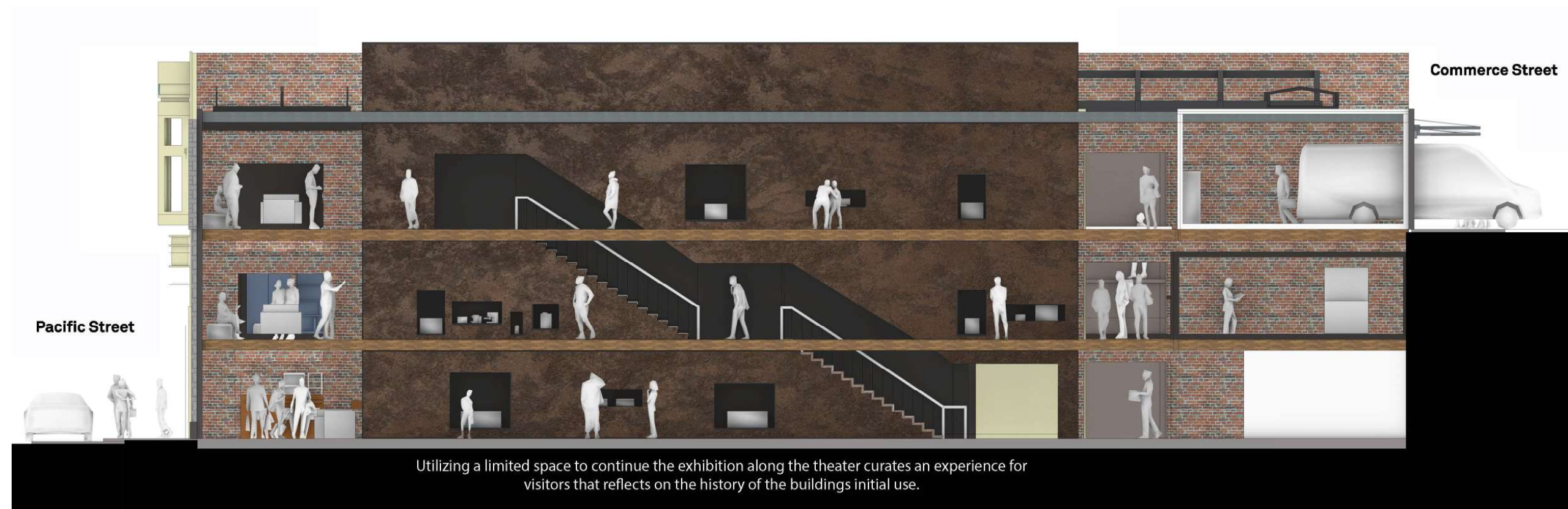
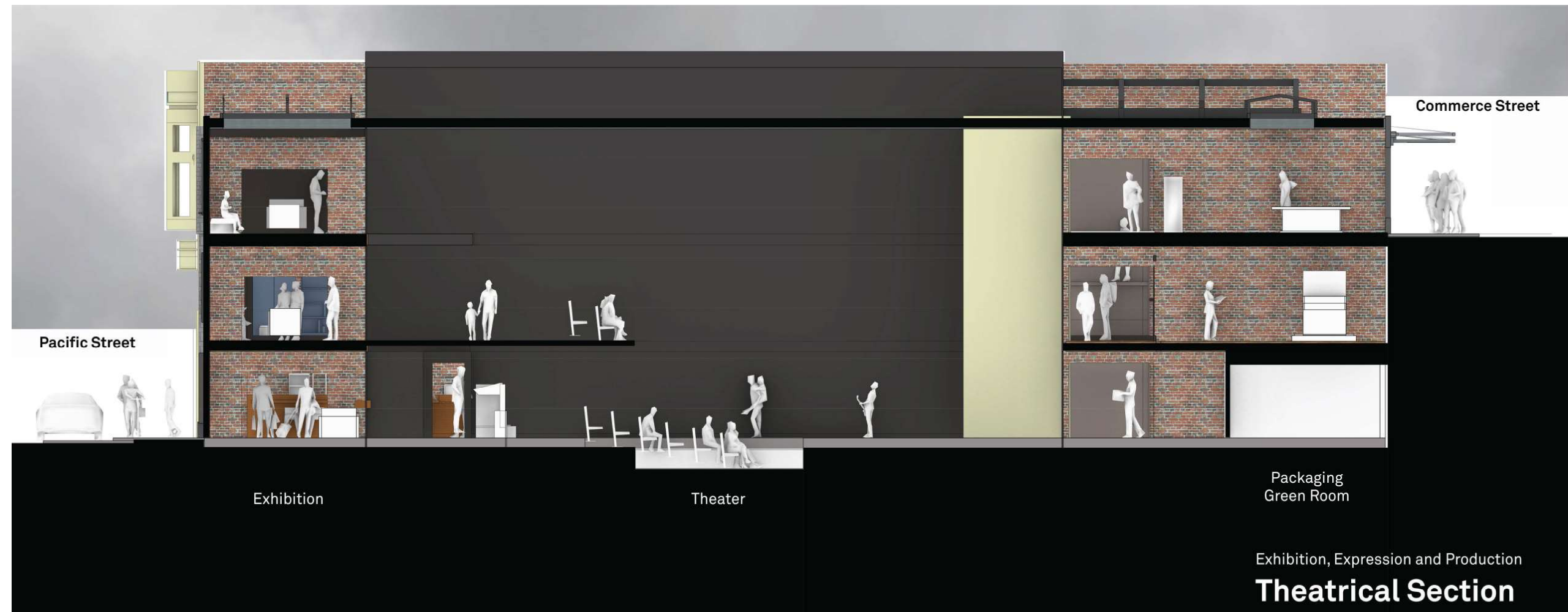


LEVEL 3
FLOOR PLAN



Although the streets are different the Theater aims to establish a thoroughfare that will simplify the passage of pedestrians. Other urban design oriented plans will address the width of sidewalks, a possible lane change and storefronts emphasized to bring more life to the street. A form expressed through gesture, symbolizes and communicates how a perspective is exchanged. Mario Gooden, architect and author implies the cultural transference driven by the significance of the African American community. "We stand out, there's clarity that cannot be defined by the singular form". Many cities across the country that represent robust communities have often fallen victim to a number of policies and actions targeted to relocate them.





The future of the Theater is designated to spark growth within the district. It currently possesses vacant properties which could infill projects to revive some residential units in the town center and also promote a series of production/exhibition spaces that continue to highlight and amplify the presence of small business owners and entrepreneurs.

This success can be defined by the presence of some larger businesses that embody the history and nature of Tacoma being defined by its grit. Blue collar workers, often well known within the Industrial driven enterprises and manufacturing can help mold the metropolis to become a city that champions artisans being the source of success. That nature of the city is defined by those who managed to always stay through the ups and downs. Becoming the lifeline of the community, a diverse range of individuals



The Commuter, a first generation student with interest in furniture and set design utilizing the light rail extension as a means of getting back and forth between home and Theater on weekends. Hailing from the Hilltop neighborhood, shows interest in becoming a poet and public speaker. A first (nth generation resident) and product of Tacoma. Often auditioning and collaborating with fellow speakers and performers at the Theater.



The (Amplifier), the figurative pulse that holds down the neighborhood. The epitome of reliable businesses that start small and have the ability to become the essential pillar of the city. Occupied within one of the oldest frame buildings in Tacoma and a critical component to the site.



The Apprentice, an experienced veteran in art set design, furniture and industrial design. A former graduate of the (Local college residency program) aiming to expose the possible career paths possible with the workshop as a medium for reassuring exposure within fields they lack representation.

RESOLUTION

These uses are now channeled with a set of 3 new minorities in mind: The Amplifier, The Apprentice and The Commuter. Utilizing the space, along with others as a thoroughfare to fight dense blocks, encourages a public space while increasing exposure to events and activities that tend to happen behind closed (once restricted) doors.

The connection between history and narrative is provided through the void of the historical figures. Minorities were often controlled in terms of social spaces and designated areas of operation. Excluding minorities while also being responsible for the erasure of the minority history and culture has been an evident process of Colonial Capitalism. Seeing how in modern day, two distinctive districts that exist have been both the Theater District and Hilltop Neighborhood. Historically, the connection between the two can be tied by the past of theater and production. On the other hand, the future is now in the legacy of the current infrastructure in Tacoma where the people have an impact on how we share space and program. The purpose is to take the findings of our past, understand the pitfalls that have led to a struggle for the community and emphasize programs that provide opportunities for all people with no limitations.

The print shop provides Tacoma with a legacy of products. Analogous to many other existing print shops that once existed in the Theater District, they were known for their posters and flyers. Theaters showing "The Birth of a Nation" were screened and promptly faced backlash from members such as Dr. Nettie Craig Asberry.

The proximity to the Hilltop neighborhood often comes into question. The tension behind racism and policies meant to control, manipulate people had been tied to spaces such as print shops responsible for producing content designed to send the wrong message at the time. Today we look at the print shop, specifically the Johnson Cox print shop is recognized as a vessel from the past. A small business defined by craftsmanship faces the modern day challenge of understanding how to adapt to modern times. With that being said, the Theater District has always aimed to expand with the intent of being inclusive. Those opportunities understood with the future of an existing business meant that attempting to reclassify the given space was important. George Putnam Riley represented the past with his intentions of buying property and having an intention of using space to house a community while Henry Joseph Asberry embodied the strength of what we see in the existing printing company today.

The voids of planning, historical relevance and social interaction provided in the three timelines gave us perspective on the separate entities that controlled many people at the time. Being able to capture the accomplishments and ideals of the 3 minorities of the past meant that the people of today could understand their stories while also being given an opportunity to tell their own. Programmatically, the exhibition spaces, theater and cafe help compliment the resultant space. People now have a social space that amplifies the power of narrative, while coinciding with one of the longest standing businesses in the city. The people of today are what create an impact, but more importantly within the existing structure we also have artifacts of the past that tell us of a past that we must not forget as we hope to change the face of Tacoma's future with intentional design, strategic planning and improved transportation plans.

The acts, whether informal or in some cases, laws are coupled with many methods such as colonial capitalism and redlining that strategically find ways to price out, prohibit and even restrict minorities from occupying the Built Environment. Many neighborhoods and districts once viewed as low value or undesirable had suddenly become something of interest. When density becomes evident and property values take off, that same useless land is viewed as space for potential. Land that has been cultivated and revived through those that were often left on their own to support one another. Cultural transference occurs in a literal sense defined by architectural and spatial expression. Dark Space continues to highlight the generalizations often made in various communities of color. **"The intersection of architecture and Black American life does not express the static identity or ethnic identity"**¹

¹ Gooden, Mario. Dark Space: Architecture, Representation, Black Identity. Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2016.

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