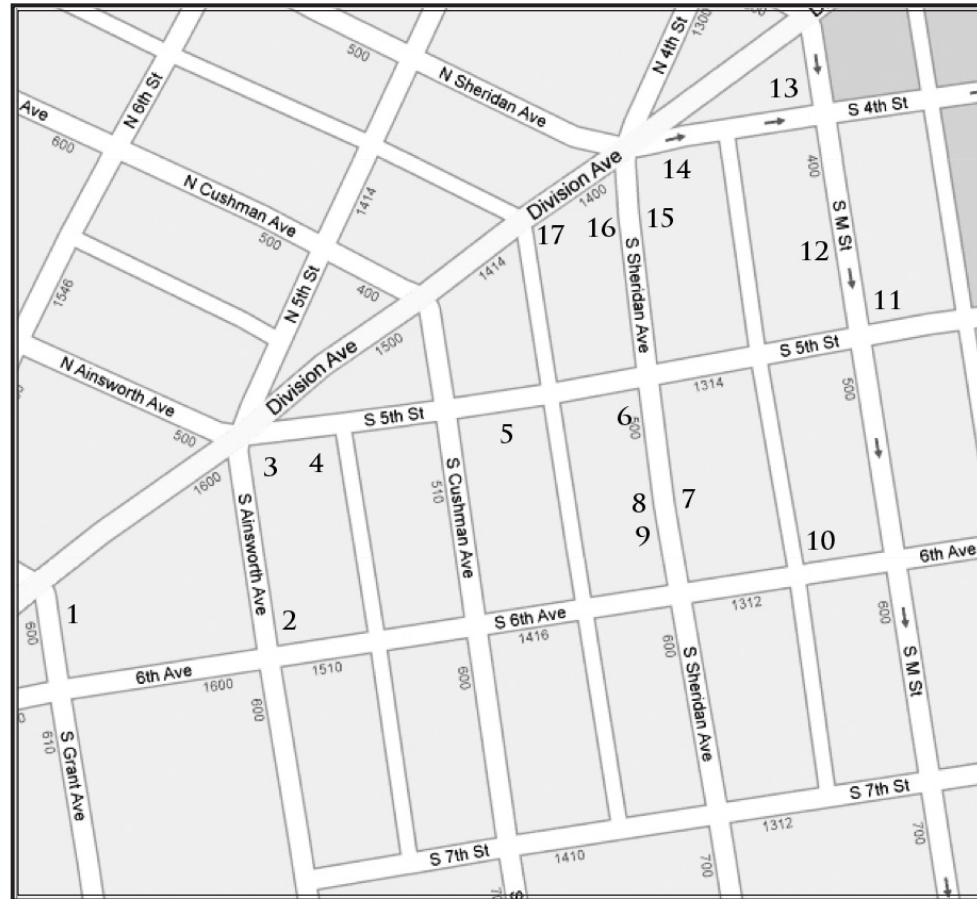


# WEDGE DISTRICT WALKING TOUR

This tour is a quick introduction to the Wedge neighborhood. The route tours the heart of the district and introduces you to a variety of styles and architects.

1. 1619 Sixth Avenue
2. 1521 Sixth Avenue
3. 1520 South 5th Street
4. 1516 South 5th Street
5. 1416 South 5th Street
6. 502 South Sheridan Avenue
7. 505 South Sheridan Avenue
8. 506 South Sheridan Avenue
9. 514 South Sheridan Avenue
10. 1305 Sixth Avenue
11. 421 South M Street
12. 412 & 416 South M Street
13. 1304 Division Avenue
14. 1318 South 4th Street
15. 405 South Sheridan Avenue
16. 410 South Sheridan Avenue
17. 1414 Division Avenue



Maps courtesy of Google.com

## A WALKING TOUR OF THE WEDGE DISTRICT



Cresco Court Apartments, 1521 6th Avenue • Tacoma Public Library, BU-10444

TACOMA, WASHINGTON



# TACOMA’S WEDGE DISTRICT

The Wedge District is a residential neighborhood (named for its wedge shape) located between 6th and Division Avenues, from South L Street to its tip at Sprague Avenue. Historically, the neighborhood extended eastward to Wright Park and around the Fannie Paddock Memorial Hospital (currently the MultiCare campus) on Martin Luther King Jr. Way (originally named K Street).

The Wedge was historically considered a desirable residential area due to its proximity to downtown businesses and was surrounded by streetcar lines that connected it to downtown, Old Town, Defiance Park, and other areas of the city. A number of business people lived in the Wedge, and notable bankers, attorneys, architects and developers called the neighborhood home.

Notable residents included:

- Andrew Titlow, an early Tacoma banker and attorney who lived at 410 S. Sheridan Avenue
- Frank and Ethel Mars, founders of the Mars Candy Company, lived at 504 S. Sheridan Avenue
- Anne Kincaide, Titanic survivor lived at 1405 S. 5th Street
- H. W. Manike, who owned and operated a florist shop and green houses, at (507–515 South M Street) for fifty years
- Silas Nelsen, a nationally recognized architect with work featured in Better Homes & Gardens

The earliest surviving houses in the Wedge were built in 1889, the first year of Washington’s statehood. A number of smaller working class houses were built in the 1920s. There are several apartment buildings and commercial buildings along 6th Avenue.

## Start at the corner of South Grant Street and 6th Avenue

### 1 1619 SIXTH AVENUE

Architects Stanley T. and Frederic Shaw designed the Gothic Revival style First United Presbyterian Church. Built in 1922, this building was a community gathering place. The social hall was originally open every night of the week. The business community of the Sixth Avenue district supported the church and helped the building committee raise funds. The Sunday School building originally housed 26 classrooms with a roof garden for social functions in the summer months. The auditorium was designed to seat 400. The large tower over the front door is truncated, but was originally designed to have a tall steeple.



Tacoma Public Library, BU-18

The complicated concrete stonework and window tracery for this building were made by Hector MacLaine. This was the first time that this type of complicated work was produced in Tacoma, previous churches had sent to other cities for the molds. Hector made more than 200 different molds, each turned with carpenter hand tools. A native of Scotland, Hector was trained as a shipwright.

### 16 410 SOUTH SHERIDAN AVENUE



Titlow Residence before Larson’s remodel • Tacoma Sunday Ledger, December 13, 1929.

Naval fleets. Mr. Titlow resided at this house until his death in 1923. Shortly after his death, contractor Andrew Larson purchased the home and converted it into an apartment building, changing the roof to its current configuration. Mr. Larson owned the house until his death in 1951.

## Return back to Division Avenue

This impressive home was built in 1909 for William A. Taylor, a local newspaper pressman. The residence has predominately Craftsman details with the broad gable end, exposed rafter tails and basic rectangular shape. The shingled walls and half timbering in the gable end are common for the style. However, this rather elaborate example of the style showcases Classical porch columns, and unusual design feature. The multi-light upper window sashes on the main floor and the multi-lights on all second floor windows are another uncommon feature for this style, and would have been more commonly found in Colonial Revival homes.



Tacoma Public Library, BU-10043

## Continue back to First United Presbyterian Church

Researched by Caroline T. Swope, Kingstree Studios  
With assistance from Tarjei Bryn, Will Deuring, Dani Gager, Chester Holt, Christina Huggins, Rhain Leddy, Kelsie Moore, Ho Duoung Nguyn, Joseph Perez, Peter Sebersson, Sonia Singh, and Kirk Swanson (Pacific Lutheran First Year Experience, 2008–2009)

Designed by Erin E. Clarkson

Funded by Historic Tacoma, the North End Neighborhood Council, the Tacoma Historical Society and Pacific Lutheran University First Year Experience



Turn left onto South Sheridan for a quick detour to see the next two houses

15 405 & 407 SOUTH SHERIDAN AVENUE

Architect Silas Nelsen, and his wife Gerda, owned two building lots on South Sheridan, and had originally planned to build the garage before the home was constructed. Silas then decided to build a small cottage (407 South Sheridan Avenue) on the future garage foundation and live in the petite residence with his wife and young daughter while his larger home was under construction during the late 1920s. The total exterior dimensions of the cottage are 18x20.” After the Tacoma Ledger ran a Sunday story on the property, hundreds of people flocked to see the “Toy House,” as it was nicknamed. At least two families immediately commissioned Nelsen to build similar residences for them. The Colonial Revival house at 405 South Sheridan Avenue was selected as one of the ten most beautiful homes in Tacoma by the Tacoma Society of Architects in 1931. Nelsen’s designs caught the attention of “Better Homes & Gardens,” which showcased a number of his petite Colonial designs in both 1936 and 1937. The periodical also named him one of eight leading residential architects in America.

Silas Nelsen’s son, “Little Si,” was well known in the neighborhood during the 1940s. As a child he became particularly enamored with Tacoma’s street cleaning crew and followed them to the Jason Lee School until the crew brought the five year old back home. He then started sweeping the leaves into piles. The commissioner of public works at the time (A. R. Bergersen) had a child’s size sweeper made for Little “Si,” who was then given the special charge of watching over South Sheridan Avenue between 5th and 6th.



405 South Sheridan Avenue • Kingtree Studios



407 South Sheridan Avenue • Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio Collection, 113

SILAS E. NELSEN

Silas E. Nelsen, a native of Wisconsin, moved to Washington State in 1900 with his parents. He started his career as a naval architect but eventually moved into residential and civic architecture. He moved to the Puget Sound area as an adult and worked with the architectural firm Heath Gove and Bell for four years. He then started his own practice and designed more than 150 homes, 15 churches, numerous buildings at the University of Puget Sound, and the original main library addition. Silas’ own house at 405 South Sheridan (1926) and the Fred Corbit House at 2820 North Stevens (1928) both won several awards. In addition to his residential work, Nelsen worked on a number of civic, commercial and religious commissions. He designed St. Nikolas Greek Orthodox Church (1925), Central Baptist Church (1950), Anna Lemon Wheelock Library (1927), Tacoma Mountaineers Building (1956), Johnson Candy Company (1949), Mueller–Harkins Motor Company (1948), and several fraternity houses at the University of Puget Sound.

3118 North 13th Street, 1927	405 South Sheridan Avenue, 1928
3009 North 28th Street, 1927	407 South Sheridan Avenue, 1926
3711 North 36th Street, 1928	2820 North Stevens Street, 1926
3716 North 36th Street, 1933	2214 Tacoma Avenue North, 1933
4115 North 38th Street, 1926	3815 North Tyler Street, 1928
3820 North Adams Street, 1925	2420 North Union Avenue, 1925

2 1521 SIXTH AVENUE



Tacoma Public Library, BU-3392

The Bungalow Courts, built in 1927, were designed to serve as seventeen apartments. Each consisted of three rooms and a breakfast nook. Interior trim was hardwood with hardwood floors. Kitchens and bathrooms had terrazzo flooring. A number of built–ins, typical of the early 20th century design aesthetic were featured, including built–in ice boxes, medicine cabinets, ironing boards, cupboards and linen closets. Four of the units had wall–beds, designed to fold up into the walls. They were constructed by Peter C. Creso, a prominent builder in Tacoma. A native of Alsace–Lorraine, he moved to Tacoma in 1889.

The Bungalow Courts were later used as motel rooms under the name City Center Motel. In 1983 the Salvation Army renovated the structures to provide emergency assistance for homeless families.

At the corner of 6th Avenue and South Ainsworth, turn north

AINSWORTH AVENUE

Ainsworth Avenue was originally platted as “P” Street. In 1893 the street’s name was changed to Ainsworth, to honor Captain John C. Ainsworth, an early Tacoma developer. Ainsworth was an early west coast pioneer. Originally from Ohio, he became a Mississippi River captain and sailed between St. Louis and points on the upper river. The discovery of gold in California led Ainsworth west, and he arrived in Oregon by 1850. While Ainsworth spent a considerable amount of his time in Oregon, he was a major investor in Tacoma real estate and helped facilitate the Northern Pacific railroad’s construction between the Columbia River and Puget Sound. Ainsworth maintained a house in Lakewood (the Boatman–Ainsworth Residence) from 1878–1889.

From 1914–1918 Frank C. and Ethel Mars, founders of the M & M–Mars Candy Company resided at 504 South Ainsworth. Frank, a native of Minnesota, learned how to make chocolates as a child. By the early 20th century Frank and Ethel V. Healy Mars moved to Tacoma where he sold candy wholesale. The couple made candies in their home kitchen and soon rented a factory that employed more than 100 people. Their company was located at 1147 South Tacoma Way, and later moved to 2919 South Alaska Street. The couple stayed in Tacoma for only a few years before returning to Minnesota (and later moving to Illinois) and incorporating the Mars Candy Company.

Turn right at the corner of South 5th Street



### 3 1520 SOUTH 5TH STREET

This house was built for John and Alfrida Peterson in 1910. John and his brother Peter were Swedish immigrants who arrived in Tacoma in 1891. They worked on the construction of the Pierce County Courthouse before starting their own business, Peterson Brothers, in 1894. The brothers sold hay, grain and feed from a location at South 10th and K Streets. They eventually purchased a feed mixing and grinding mill at 13th and Wilkeson Streets. John was also president of Peterson Brothers Wood, Grain and Coal Company, Peterson Brothers Investment Company, and president of the West Coast Chair Company. The Peterson brothers also built the Roosevelt Apartment building at 1104 South Yakima Avenue. John was active in the Chamber of Commerce and the Swedish Mission Tabernacle (922 S. I Street). The house remained in the family until 2003.



Kingtree Studios

### 4 1516 SOUTH 5TH STREET



Tacoma Public Library, BU-1600

This American-Foursquare house was built by H. Lundgren in 1910 for John and Lydia Hartman. The couple, natives of Indiana, arrived in Tacoma in 1889. He served as a city council member from 1894 to 1901 and was elected Pierce County Sheriff in 1901. From 1903–1905 he served as secretary and treasurer of the Atlas Foundry & Machine Company (the company is still in business). He was engaged with civic work and was active with the Chamber of Commerce, the Elks, the Tacoma Rotary, the Masons, the Odd Fellows, The Knights of Pythias, and Luther Memorial Church (424 S. I Street). John died in 1931; Lydia passed in 1942.

## HOKAN LUNDGREN

Swedish born Hokan Lundgren immigrated to the United States with his wife, Elsa, in 1901. Lundgren's experience (he was fifty-years old at the time of immigration) helped him become superintendent for the North Tacoma Shingle Company. Most of the homes he financed were in the Wedge Neighborhood. The Lundgren's moved to Los Angeles around 1912 and remained there until he died in 1942.

507 South Ainsworth Avenue, 1911  
902 North L Street, 1909  
1418 South 5th Street, 1909  
1420 South 5th Street, 1909

1512 South 5th Street, 1910 (Lundgren's own house)  
1516 South 5th Street, 1910  
3401 North 36th Street, 1902

Turn left onto Division Avenue

### 13 1304 DIVISION AVENUE



Tacoma Public Library, BU-10434

The Berg Apartments were built in 1916 by Gus Berg. Gus was a resident of the Wedge neighborhood and lived at 520 South Sheridan Avenue. Mr. Berg, born in Sweden, had lived in Tacoma since 1888. He was also a resident of the Wedge neighborhood, building and living in a house at 520 South Sheridan Avenue. He financed and operated several apartment buildings including the Kelly Arms and the Bergonia (1016 South 8th). Mrs. Amanda B. Zachary purchased the 18-unit building in 1926.

### 14 1318 SOUTH 4TH STREET



Tacoma Public Library, BU-12648

The architectural firm of Russell & Babcock built this Swiss-styled house for Worthington W. and Ida Pickerill in 1906. Mr. Pickerill was president of the Washington Automobile Company. The couple lived in the house through 1912. The house had a series of owners. From 1919–1923, Benjamin and Anna Snyder resided here. Benjamin was an engineer. In 1923, James T. Gregory purchased the house. Mr. Gregory was president of the Tidewater Mill Company, vice-president of the Warren Soule Fairhurst Company (drygoods company, located at 1754 Pacific Avenue—operational from 1926–1961) and director of the National Bank of Washington. Mr. Gregory lived in the house until his death in 1938. The next long-term owners were Dr. Wilbur T. and Myrtle Ely, who purchased the property in 1942. Both the Elys were physicians—he was a naturopathic. In 1949, the house was purchased by Dr. Leo and Helen Scheckner, and they remained until 1953.



Turn left onto South M Street

Built in 1918, the Nason Apartments was designed with six apartment units. Each originally had two entrances so that “tradesmen may deliver their goods at the rear without disturbing the tenants in front.” The apartments had polished fir floors and painted beam ceilings. The kitchens and dining rooms had built-in sideboards and cupboards of natural fir.

This building was constructed by Tacoma musician D. P. Nason. Nason was supervisor of music for the Tacoma Public School system. Originally from the east coast, he received training at the New England Conservatory of Music, and arrived in Tacoma in 1905. He left Tacoma to attend a year and a half in advanced training at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Berlin and then moved to Portland where he became an orchestra leader and helped organize the Portland symphony. In 1920 the Nasons sold the property to Mrs. Genevieve Hartzell of Youngstown, Ohio for \$25,000. Mrs. Hartzell was sister of Tacoma resident Mrs. Isaac Pincus.

12 412 & 416 SOUTH M STREET  
412 SOUTH M STREET



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Built around 1922, this Craftsman house was home to Glenn O. Portrude from the mid 1930s until the late 1940s. A native of Jackson, Michigan, Glen moved to Tacoma in 1898. He was an engineer for the Northern Pacific Railroad until his retirement in 1950. An active participant in local fraternal organizations, he was a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers for 50 years and a member of the Northern Pacific Veteran’s Association. He was also a 50-year member of the Tacoma Elks Lodge 174.

11 421 SOUTH M STREET



Tacoma Public Library, BU-421

Built around 1916, this Craftsman house was home to John G. and Anna Liljebeck from the 1920s until the 1950s. John, a native of Sweden, lived in Tacoma for more than thirty years. He worked as a paving contractor in the firm of Anderson & Liljebeck. He was a member of the Scottish Rite and the Lutheran Church. Anna was also a native of Sweden.

416 SOUTH M STREET



Kingtree Studios

5 1416 SOUTH 5TH STREET



Kingtree Studios

This Craftsman house was built in 1909 by Carl Johnson, a Swedish immigrant. Carl was a member of the Carpenters’ Union Local #70. His wife, Hannah, was from Waverly, Nebraska. The couple were members of First Covenant Church. In 1917 Mrs. Augusta Gehri (widow of Adolph Gehri) purchased the residence. Mr. Gehri was a native of Switzerland and his wife was born in Germany. The Gehri family founded Gehri Sheetmetal Works in 1892. Their company provided metal work for Stadium High School, Lincoln Park High School, the Old Courthouse, and Armory, and St. Patrick’s church. Augusta lived in the house until the late 1930s when her daughter, Margaret A. Gehri, took control of the property. Margaret was the treasurer and bookkeeper for Gehri Sheetmetal Works, and worked for the company from the time she graduated Stadium High until she retired at age 88. The house was sold after Ms. Gehri entered a nursing home in 1990. Ms. Gehri died in 1992.

Turn right onto South Sheridan Avenue

6 502 SOUTH SHERIDAN AVENUE



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This Free–Classic Styled Victorian was built in 1901 for James Carter and Gladys Todd. The house was built by general contractor Edward C. Hill, brother of prominent Tacoma architect Frank. D. Hill. James, a native of Iowa, moved to Tacoma at age 29 and started the Ship Chandlery Company. Todd was engaged with a number of businesses throughout the years, and was last manager of the Puget Sound Bank Building (1115 Pacific Avenue). The Todd family lived in the house until the 1930s when the J. W. Temple family purchased the property. In 1942 the residence, like many larger homes in the city, was subdivided to provide apartments for the influx of shipbuilders during World War II.

FREE CLASSIC VICTORIAN STYLE

The Free Classic Victorian is a sub-style of the traditional Queen Anne Victorian that more people are associated with. Free Classic homes often have the irregular massing of a Queen Anne, with the towers, bay-windows and porches, but start to have more restrained decorative elements. Instead of multiple styles of shingles and extensive gingerbreading, these houses have more restrained ornamentation with classically inspired details. While many people do not think of classical columns and Palladian windows as particularly Victorian in style, perhaps one third of Queen Anne homes had such details. This stylistic variation became increasingly common after 1893, due in part to classical design influences from the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago that year. By 1900 the Colonial Revival and Neoclassical Revival styles had begun to surpass the Victorian styles in popularity.



## 7 505 SOUTH SHERIDAN AVENUE

This Craftsman residence was designed and built by George F. Murray in 1919. His father was an agent for Hudson’s Bay Company store in Steilacoom. George was born at Muck Creek (near Spanaway), and with the exception of time spent at Portland College, he lived in the area all his life. This house was built for his family, wife Bessie F. and their only child, Catherine Murray Brooks. Murray was a prominent Republican, serving two terms as county clerk and two terms as a state legislator. He left the state legislature in 1926 and worked for Tacoma City Light until his retirement in 1929. George was an active member of Lebanon Lodge and Christ Episcopal Church (316 N. K Street). George remained at this residence until his death in 1954. Bessie continued to live here through the 1960s.



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## 8 506 SOUTH SHERIDAN AVENUE



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This residence with Colonial Revival detailing was built in 1901 by Edward Cook Hill for Robert L. Vance. Vance was the proprietor of the North Pacific Lunch Room and served as the county’s treasurer as well. The house has had numerous owners and renters. In 1910 retired Captain Alfred G. Laffin and his wife Eva resided here for a year. Laffin was a lawyer. From 1924–29 Wilber R. and Clara May Todd owned the residence. Todd was assistant manager of Crown Drug Company, located at 1102 Pacific Avenue. The next long term owners were Leon R. and Eva N. Evans who purchased the property in 1934. Mr. Evans was an engineer for Tacoma’s Department of Public Utilities. The couple resided in the house until Mr. Evan’s death in 1942.

### SHERIDAN AVENUE

Sheridan Avenue was originally named “N” Street. The name was formally changed to Sheridan Avenue in 1908 to honor General Philip H. Sheridan. Sheridan grew up in Ohio and graduated from West Point. In 1855 he headed west with the army and helped survey the first railway route to Oregon. Sheridan’s rise to major general was in part facilitated by his association with General Ulysses S. Grant, who transferred Sheridan from his command in the west to the Army of the Potomac during the Civil War. Sheridan’s crushing use of scorched earth tactics helped win the war for the Union. Sheridan’s later life was spent fighting Native Americans during the Great Plains Indian Wars. He continued to use his scorched earth campaigns and advocated the wholesale slaughter of Bison as a way to deprive plains Native Americans of their primary food source. Sheridan was pivotal in the development of Yellowstone National Park, and promoted military control of the area for protection until the National Park Service took control in 1916.

## 9 514 SOUTH SHERIDAN AVENUE



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Built in 1904, this residence was the home of Andrew and Bertha Tweeden. Tweeden and his business partner, Adelbert U. Mills, designed and built the house. Tweeden and Mills were partners in the Northwest Bridge Company from 1899 until 1909. The company specialized in both general construction and bridge work. Mills was a contractor. Tweeden was also responsible for building 612 South Sheridan (where he was the first resident). After Andrew’s death in 1923, Bertha sold the property to Solomon H. and Goldie N. Farber, who owned the house until their deaths in the late 1940s.

Jay. R. and Irene A. Merrick purchased the house in 1948. Mr. Merrick was the owner of Jay Merrick Jewelry Store and his wife worked as a secretary for Calvary Cemetery. Mr. Merrick died in 1977. Ms. Merrick continued to live in the house until her death in 1990. The Merricks were active in the community. Mr. Merrick belonged to the Knights of Columbus, the Elks, the Eagles, the Bellermino Boosters (serving as their first president), and the Washington State Jewelers Association, where he also served as president. The couple were members of St. Rita’s Catholic Church (1401 S. Ainsworth). Ms. Merrick was a member of the Catholic Woman’s Club and Catholic Daughters.

### Turn left onto Sixth Avenue

This apartment building, constructed in 1910, is Neoclassical in style. The Neoclassical style utilizes some of the same design elements as the Colonial Revival style, although proportions are often different. Facades are generally symmetrical. Porches are monumental in scale, reaching the full double-story height of the building. As a result, the columns are large, usually referred to as “colossal.” Porticos, instead of full façade porches, are common, further emphasizing the height of the columns. Windows and doors are placed symmetrically, and the multiple lights that were common with Colonial Revival are less frequent, with sometimes only the top portion of the window having multiple panes. Clustering multiple windows is more likely in this design than in the Colonial Revival style. Other features are side wings, roofline and porch-level balustrades, exaggerated broken pediments, and paneled front doors. This apartment building with its hipped roof, delicately detailed column capitals, turned balustrades and leaded fanlight in the attic level epitomizes the style.

Neoclassical Revival architecture developed in part from the public’s earlier interest in Colonial Georgian and Federal forms. But other styles blended into the mix, including civic architecture from Greece and Rome, and Neoclassical forms from the Italian Renaissance (which were loosely based on Greco–Italian forms). Designers blended architectural details from these periods.

Ernest Goettling, a native of Germany, was the contractor responsible for the construction of this apartment building and the one next door at 1301 Sixth Avenue.

## 10 1305 SIXTH AVENUE



Kingtree Studios