

[REDACTED]
Lincoln Highschool

[REDACTED]
, Seattle, WA 98103

June 17th, 2022

Dear Michael Houser,

My name is [REDACTED], I am writing to you as a student of Lincoln Highschool and as a resident of Seattle. I am under the understanding that you as Washingtons State Architectural Historian, thus writing to you about Wallingford Historical Society's proposal to create a historical district covering the vast majority of Wallingford creeping into many other neighborhoods. I am opposed to Wallingford Historical Society's proposal to create a historical district in Wallingford, and I am writing to you to voice my concerns and reasonings behind why I and many other youth in Seattle and at Lincoln Highschool are opposed to a new historical district in our community. Reasons for why Wallingford should not be a historic district are vast and wide but the few that I am focused on are whose history we are preserving, what is the historical significance of Wallingford and how it is significant today, and what types of areas are typically deemed historic in Seattle, through all three of these reasons Wallingford should not be a historical district because of historical redlining in Seattle.

Starting with whose history would we be protecting and preserving in Wallingford if deemed a historical district. As of the most recent census of Wallingford (2009-2013), Wallingford as a neighborhood has a significantly high white population at a massive 79.6% which is higher than most other areas in Seattle. As well as Wallingford has a POC population percentage of 20.9%

compared to Seattle's citywide average of 33%.¹ Now, has Wallingford always been such a white neighborhood? Or is Wallingford some historical safe haven as many of its residents try to take themselves out of the historical redlining of Seattle. Wallingford's historical significance and how it is significant today. Wallingford's historical racial makeup shows clear connections to its racial makeup today. Going back into the deeds of areas around Wallingford (as Wallingford itself didn't have its own rules and regulations for deeds since other neighborhoods occupied the area), Greenlakes' racial restrictions in 1948 said "tract shall not be sold, leased, or rented to any person or persons other than of white race nor shall any person or persons other than of white race use or occupy said tract."² It is interesting that how the historical redlining of Wallingford influences who lives there today, does Seattle need another preserved white neighborhood compared to one not layered in racist past and influenced with a racist and classist future? As such Wallingford is a very privileged neighborhood with 98.6% having a high school diploma or higher compared to Seattle's average of 93%, having 78.3% having a bachelor's degree or higher compared to Seattle's average of 57%. The arguments for Wallingford needing to be a historical district based on preservation of homes for people who cannot afford it is simply not true due to the comparatively high education that its residents have. What should be preserved in Wallingford? The proposed area by Historic Wallingford covers about from Stone Way to just west of I-5.³ Proposing that all of that whole area which covers around fifty-one blocks and hundreds of homes. Does each and every single one of these homes need to be preserved for their "architectural history?"⁴ Or is it a matter of creating an area where people who aren't already and

1. ¹ "[Interactive Timeline](#)". *About the 2010 Census*. U.S. Census Bureau. 2011. Archived from [the original](#) on December 20, 2010. Retrieved June 17, 2010.

² <https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/covenants.htm>

³ <https://www.historicwallingford.org/nrhp-north/>

⁴ <https://www.historicwallingford.org/nrhp-north/>

and families and cultures are whipped out of Seattle, through gentrification and white neighbors moving in and displacing those who cannot afford to stay. Areas typically deemed as unsafe and “hazardous” in 1934 in the “Commercial Map of Greater Seattle” neighborhoods marked as “black only” areas and districts have no representation today in Seattle's historic districts.⁸ And as historic neighborhoods go, they have been completely wiped out and still today as the central districts and others are being gentrified erasing historic culture when itself should be a historic district and not Wallingford whose hands are bloody with redlining and their own profit of land and creating lines today that keep people of color out.⁹

In conclusion, and to shortly summarize why Wallingford should not be a historical district, as well as why Historical Wallingford should prioritize creating historic districts in places where they are needed. As you are Washington States Architectural Historian, I would hope through Seattle's historical and current red lining you see the issues in deeming historically white neighborhoods as historic districts while not creating those in historic black and people of color neighborhoods.

Thank you for your time, [REDACTED]

⁸ <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=11/47.704/-122.529&city=seattle-wa&category=1&adviever=sidebar>

⁹ <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/whos-accountable-for-saving-seattles-cultural-districts-all-of-us/>

Houser, Michael (DAHP)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 31, 2022 11:58 AM
To: Houser, Michael (DAHP)
Subject: Wallingford Historical District

Categories: Red Category

External Email

Greetings, Michael Houser

My name is [REDACTED] and I'm an 11th grader at Lincoln High school in Wallingford and I wanted to speak on how the creation of historic districts in neighborhoods like Wallingford are at the expense of affordable housing.

Seattle's housing crisis is only getting worse so it's essential we do everything we can to increase home affordability. Due to redlining and loan restrictions dating back to the 1960s, Seattle remains one of the most racially segregated cities in the country, something that could be lessened by more upzoning and multi-family housing. Not only is exclusionary housing terrible for racial equity. A study by the National Bureau of Economic Research conducted in 2015 found that from 1964 to 2009 aggregate growth decreased by more than 50% due to exclusionary housing. They found that housing restrictions in high productivity cities limited the amount of workers with access to high productivity thus decreasing the aggregate US growth.

This is where historic districts pose some problems. The proposed Historic Wallingford district, seemingly wants to preserve the "unique" homes in the neighborhood with the honorary title, however as seen in the Ravenna historic district, the classification can also be used to avoid upzoning thus limiting the amount of affordable housing. A similar situation happened in Pioneer square when a proposed construction project bringing 200 homes in place of a building only being used as a parking garage was canceled due to people weaponizing the historic title. Wallingford's homes aren't any different than the rest of Seattle. An honorary title shouldn't be given at the expense of aid to the housing crisis. Please take these ideas into consideration before you make your decision.

Thanks for your consideration,
[REDACTED]

Houser, Michael (DAHP)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, May 28, 2022 8:16 PM
To: Houser, Michael (DAHP)
Subject: Say No To Historic Wallingford

Categories: Red Category

External Email

Dear Michael Houser,

I am addressing you today, not only as a Lincoln student, but as a Wallingford resident. For as long as I can remember, I have lived within the Wallingford community. I have gone to local schools since my days in kindergarten, I spend many mornings on walks around the quiet blocks, and have enjoyed Wallingford's many parks and blooming gardens each and every summer. To me, this neighborhood is almost a part of my identity. So when I heard about the Historic Wallingford's proposal, it seemed almost a given. Why wouldn't we give this neighborhood- one loved and cherished by many- a special designation? But, Mr. Houser, I will tell you why. In order to combat the history of redlining in our Wallingford residences and schools, a vote against Historic Wallingford is necessary to promote anti-gentrification and diversification.

To begin with, it is important to define what redlining was. This process of exclusivity, which began in the 1930's, divided a city into zones based on their desirability. This was based on factors like cleanliness, infrastructure, or building quality. But in reality, these "highly desirable" areas were reserved for people of the caucasian race. In contrast, "hazardous" neighborhoods were designated for people of color. This was the start to a long history of racial segregation, socioeconomic disparities, and housing inconsistencies within Seattle neighborhoods. Even though these policies took place almost 90 years ago, today its impact is still reflected in our schools.

Take, for example, the stark contrast between two of Seattle's high schools: Lincoln and Garfield. On one hand, Garfield is located within the Central District of Seattle, a formerly redlined area. In fact, a 1936 commercial map of Greater Seattle dubbed the Central District as an area "composed of various mixed nationalities... Homes [are] generally old and obsolete in need of extensive repairs." (Mapping Inequality). On the other hand, this same map provided a strikingly opposite description of Wallingford, where Lincoln is located. "The residents are practically 100% American of moderate means, with annual incomes of \$1500 to \$3000... [and] the residences are being maintained in from fair to good conditions" (Mapping Inequality). Today, these descriptions of inequality are visible within Garfield and Lincoln's statistics. Firstly, within Garfield, almost 50% identify as Asian, Black, or Latino/a. Furthermore, they have an expenditure of \$14,483 per student. In contrast, Lincoln, a contemporary beneficiary of historical redlining, has an average expenditure of \$16,000 per pupil. Additionally, its student body consists of 64.7% white identifying students and only 21.8% Asian, Black, or Latino/a identifying students. In brief, Garfield, which was located in a "hazardous" neighborhood, is now a school with a high minority population and low funds, similar to its characterization in the 30's. Lincoln, which was classified as a "desirable" neighborhood strictly for caucasian residents, now has a high population of white students and more economic resources. This data supports a direct tie to Seattle's former redlining.

Now, you may be asking, how do redlining and school segregation have anything to do with Historic Wallingford? The truth is that an honorific and historical title, which is Historic Wallingford's goal, would create incentives for policy makers and voters to turn down up-zoning initiatives. In other words, if Wallingford is dubbed as "protected" or "historical", people would be less likely to support the replacement of old single-family homes with up-zoned multi-family houses. In fact, these up-zoning processes are essential in closing the racial and economic gap that was created by redlining, as up-zoning increases housing that is more accessible to lower income families. In many cases, due to the history of gentrification perpetuated by redlining, lower income families tend to be families of color. Thus, by dismissing the initiatives of Historic Wallingford, you would be supporting a more inclusive and diverse neighborhood. Additionally, you would be supporting an educational space at Lincoln where students from various ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds can come together to learn and collaborate.

So I urge you to vote no on Historic Wallingford's proposal. This neighborhood depends on you to help it become a space where its multi-family homes support anti-gentrification and diversity. It is time that we close the gap of racial and economic inequality that was broadened by redlining: a cruel initiative that needs undoing.

Thank you for your time,


Lincoln High School Junior

Houser, Michael (DAHP)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 12:06 PM
To: Houser, Michael (DAHP)
Subject: Please do not make a Wallingford Historic district

External Email

Hi, my name is [REDACTED] am a student at Lincoln high school. I am writing this letter to ask that you do not make Wallingford a historic district. This affects me in many ways as I live pretty near Wallingford and go to school there. A historic district will affect the housing prices in the area, making it harder to find affordable housing. Along with this it will be much harder for city counsel to be able to permit a building of multi family housing. Without multi family housing it will be very difficult for non-upper class families to move into the neighborhood.

In the Roosevelt historic district there were no multi family homes built after the historic district was put in place. (share the cities speaker) Many more White people have the wealth to buy a house as apposed to renting it and it is much cheaper over time to buy instead of renting. This is due to a generational wealth gap caused by redlining, black people were unable to have as much generational wealth because they couldn't purchase a house to pass down to their children and this still affects their ability to live in a high income neighborhood like Wallingford today.

If a historic district is passed it will become nearly impossible because there will be no ability to build affordable housing in this area and will be reminiscent of a modern day form of redlining. Please don't let this happen to my neighborhood and my city

Thank you

Houser, Michael (DAHP)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 16, 2022 2:33 PM
To: Houser, Michael (DAHP)
Subject: Historic Wallingford Decision

External Email

Dear Mr. Michaél Houser,

My name is [REDACTED], and I am a student at Lincoln High School and a lifelong resident of the Wallingford neighborhood. I am writing this letter to give you my opinion on the proposal currently in consideration to make Wallingford a historic district and give you reasons I feel that Wallingford, my neighborhood, should not be put into the historic registry. Having grown up in this neighborhood and attended nearly every neighborhood school (John Stanford, Cascadia, Hamilton, and Lincoln), I can say with absolute conviction that Wallingford is a segregated neighborhood and its schools reflect that. The only way to rectify this segregation, as well as make space for all the people moving into Seattle, is through the development of more affordable multi-family homes, accessible to large swaths of the population. Were Wallingford to become a historic district, it would bar those advancements in housing and reenforce Seattle's inherently racist history of segregation-via-redlining.

First I'll address my claims that Seattle is segregated, since I know that that is a controversial and off-putting thing to say. Nonetheless, I hope you'll hear me out. I'd like to ask you to take a look at this [interactive map showing the history of Seattle's redlined districts](#). The map shows each outlined area of historical Seattle and its classification, including Wallingford, which was classified as level "B" and described as a "a very popular district to desirable residents". Other neighborhoods in red, are described as "composed of various mixed nationalities" (D5) or simply "the [Black] area of Seattle" (D4). Both these red districts, and the others like them, are classified as red to warn banks and governments against giving residents, *Black American* residents, loans to buy homes or developers against build nice housing there. This redlining means Black Americans in Seattle, and around the country, were less able to buy homes in what were seen as "rich, white neighborhoods" (and are to this day) or less able to get government loans to buy any home at all, no matter where, therefore making them less able to build up generational wealth or move across racial lines. The consequences of this today are the majority white and majority Black neighborhoods in Seattle, which are merely echoes of the districts outlined on the map. Black Seattleites are also more likely to rent their homes since their ancestors were unable to buy, and therefore do not have the same access to generational wealth that white Seattleites have because of the racist and segregationist policies of the past. And since Seattle is a city whose real estate market is skyrocketing in price seemingly every day, affordable housing¹ is more necessary and more needed than ever for the Black and otherwise disadvantaged residents of our city. They can't find that affordable housing in white neighborhoods right now. They are financially and socially blocked from crossing racial lines to create a more diversified city. This is segregation at its roots.

Segregated neighborhoods, of course, create segregated schools. I've been in Wallingford schools long enough to see that firsthand. I could count less than twenty Black classmates in all my years of education. Without diversity in education, we cannot ever hope to build Seattle, Washington, and America as a whole into a place of equality and justice.

What does all this have to do with historic Wallingford? In recent years, Seattle has implemented the Housing Affordability and Livability Act (HALA), which contains numerous policies to make housing in Seattle more affordable. One policy is upzoning, where areas of Seattle that used to ban multi-family housing, mostly rich and white neighborhoods, will have those bans lifted and developers will be allowed and even encouraged to build affordable,

multi-family homes. Many residents of upzoned neighborhoods were and are upset about new developments in their neighborhoods, resistant to change with minds full of preconceived notions and prejudices against renters and those who occupy multi-family housing - mostly people of color, though the nay-sayers would never admit POC as their target and probably don't even recognize their own biases. In January of 2019, the residents of Ravenna-Cowen used their newly acquired National Register listing as a tool to exempt their neighborhood from upzoning^{2,3}. As Share the Cities, a Seattle nonprofit focused on equitable housing, said, "Given the precedent that Ravenna-Cowen set, combined with the history of both the Wallingford City Council and Historic Wallingford opposing zoning changes, one can only assume the Wallingford efforts are meant to obstruct future zoning changes" and therefore further perpetrate the segregationist history of redlining in Seattle. A historic register for Seattle would almost certainly be used to block progress. As a proud Wallingford resident, Seattleite, and future Lincoln alumni, I don't want that to happen. I want to be from a neighborhood I can be proud of, from a school I can be proud of. I want my little brother and any other kids that grow up in this neighborhood or go to these schools in the future to be open-minded, kind, well-rounded people who can understand diverse perspectives and did not grow up in a privileged bubble.

Thank you for listening to, and considering my voice.

Sincerely,



Sources:

1. [How the US made affordable homes illegal](#)
2. <https://mynorthwest.com/3377648/wallingford-historic-district-designation-battle-lines-drawn/>
3. <https://www.theurbanist.org/2021/05/18/roosevelt-needs-a-zoning-refresh/>

Houser, Michael (DAHP)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 16, 2022 2:11 PM
To: Houser, Michael (DAHP)
Subject: Wallingford Should Not be a Historic District -- Student Opinion

External Email

Hello Michael Houser,

I'm [REDACTED] a junior at Lincoln High School, and live in the proposed Wallingford historic district. As a school project, I've been researching what this historic district would mean for neighborhood residents, as well as those living outside of Wallingford. I strongly believe that this historic district should not be put in place, and would like to share the reasoning behind this belief with you. There are two pieces to this issue—the negative impact of preserving a neighborhood such as Wallingford, and the impact that these actions could have on future zoning down the road.

Firstly, Wallingford is not a neighborhood that needs a title of historic district. Important buildings, such as the Good Shepherd Center and Wallingford Center, already have the designation of historic building. When looking at the neighborhood as a whole, there is nothing “unique” that cannot be found across the country. The craftsman bungalows that are so central to Historic Wallingford’s purpose were mass produced in the early 1900s. And when analyzing the breakdown of Wallingford, *Share the Cities* found that it is 85% white, with the average house costing more than 1 million. Is this upper-class, white, generic neighborhood really what the city of Seattle should be focused on preserving?

And secondly, the historic district title has a large possibility of being leveraged to prevent upzoning in the future, which targets racial minorities because of Seattle’s redlining history. As an example, Ravenna-Cowen was in a very similar place in 2019. Less than a month after it was voted to become a historic district, the neighborhood was exempt from upzoning changes that affected other neighborhoods. Seattle has a history of racially restrictive covenants and redlining to prevent people of color from moving to certain neighborhoods, including Wallingford. A clear and proven way to help make Wallingford more accessible for more people is upzoning and allowing multi-family housing to be built, but this is in jeopardy of being blocked if Historic Wallingford’s agenda goes ahead.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this. I hope, when making the decision regarding Wallingford’s historic district, you consider the harm it could have on our community members.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
She/her

Houser, Michael (DAHP)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 16, 2022 9:22 AM
To: Houser, Michael (DAHP)
Subject: Wallingford Historic District Decision

External Email

Dear Michael Houser,

My name is [REDACTED]. I am a junior at Lincoln Highschool and I live in Wallingford. I am writing to you to address what I consider a critical issue. In recent years, Seattle has become an increasingly expensive city, continuously pushing lower-income families away from its center and limiting access to affordable housing. Wallingford is a clear example of this. House prices are skyrocketing, and the idea of turning Wallingford into a historic district fosters this lack of affordable housing. I am writing to you to ask that you please consider not turning Wallingford into a historic district.

Though a historic district does not change the actual laws of the neighborhood, or instate any preventative measures against changing zoning laws, it can make it extremely difficult to gain support for these proposed changes in the neighborhood. Often, the new zoning laws are what make housing accessible and affordable for lower-income families by creating multi-unit homes or smaller homes that take up less expensive land, but with pushback from historic district supporters, these changes often do not happen. The history of the neighborhood is used as an excuse to prevent access to these people. An example is the historic district in the U-district allowed a building to be repurposed to house homeless youth, but the historic district group fought against changing zoning laws that would allow the construction of another floor. This stopped ten units from being added. Ten children were prevented from access to a home because of the historic district pushback. The group known as Historic Wallingford has been promoting these historic titles to try and prevent "historic" buildings from being altered or torn down, however, many of the buildings are not historic in the slightest. An article by Nick Bowman proves this by quoting Share the Cities, a group that fights for equal access to housing, "In fact, this style of home [craftsman bungalows] was packaged and sold by Sears and others en masse in the early 1900s as 'kit houses'". This shows that though a select few of the houses may be considered historic due to their age, the neighborhood itself and many of the houses within it are not memorable landmarks.

Additionally, the lack of community input strikes a cause for concern. Only homeowners are allowed to vote in the historic district election, this eliminates all possibility for renters to have any say in the matter. This is an issue considering that when we look at 2019 data, 40.28% of people living in Seattle were renters. If we take this data and apply it to Wallingford, over half of the residents would not be considered in the vote. Moreover, if a homeowner does not submit their vote in the historic district election, they will be counted as an automatic yes. This highlights a significant issue. You are receiving extremely skewed results on the opinion of the public. How can you base a decision on public opinion and feedback if you are not getting accurate public opinion or feedback?

Therefore, if you chose to make the decision to go ahead with the historic district, please base this decision on what you think is actually best for the neighborhood. I hope you take my views on the subject into consideration and act with the interest of all people in mind, and do not choose to simply cater to the loudest and most domineering of the district's residents. Access to all people is a deeply important issue to me, and I would not like something as fleeting as an honorific title to get in the way of real people and real lives.

Thank you for reading,

[REDACTED]

Houser, Michael (DAHP)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 16, 2022 11:48 AM
To: Houser, Michael (DAHP)
Subject: Historic Wallingford Designation

External Email

Dear, Mr. Houser

My name is [REDACTED], and I am currently a junior at Lincoln High School. Currently in my US history class, we are doing a unit on redlining and housing affordability. Within this unit, we've focused on the effect of making Wallingford a Historic neighborhood. Before I give my opinion on this, I would like to state the background I come from. I grew up in Wallingford, bouncing between multi and single-family housing for most of my life. I attend a predominantly white school and have the privilege of being white myself. I have experienced a lot of the character and personality within the architecture of Wallingford firsthand. However, I still do not think preserving the aesthetic of a neighborhood should be prioritized over the effects it could have on the rest of the city.

The Impacts of Historical Wallingford's goal will perpetuate systemic issues such as racism and the class divide, even if this is not their intention. Even though the current push is simply for an honorific title, there is evidence of titles like this leading to much more detrimental effects in the past, one major one being Ravenna. According to Share the Cities, a local nonprofit, the impact of Ravenna's historical title eventually led to opposing zoning changes in the neighborhood. This opposition to zoning changes led to a lack of multifamily and affordable housing in that area. Making Wallingford a historic district could potentially lead to a ban on future up-zoning in this district. Seattle needs up-zoning for a multitude of reasons. A major one is that only 25% of Seattle is multifamily housing. Most of this multi-family housing is in lower-income neighborhoods because it is what they can afford. By potentially eliminating multi-family housing in Wallingford, we essentially remove low-income people from our neighborhood. One primary reason we see a giant wealth divide in Seattle is due to current housing prices. People with generational wealth, aka white people, can purchase these houses; however, people of color and low-income people cannot. According to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, "When housing costs are more affordable, and housing opportunities are more readily available, there is a lower likelihood of households becoming homeless, and households who do become homeless can exit homelessness more quickly". If we up-zone, there will be more housing opportunities, which could decrease the cost of living in Seattle. Doing this would allow Seattle's outrageously high homelessness numbers to reduce and hopefully enable some sense of desegregation within the city. If we make Wallingford a historic district, we potentially leave it open to zoning restrictions, which would further the wealth disparity and segregation throughout Seattle.

While what Historic Wallingford pursues is not harmful on its own, I believe a prioritization of housing equity over aesthetic should be considered. While you walk through these historic streets, I urge you to think not just about the history of Wallingford, but about the potential consequences for the current people in Seattle. And I encourage you to think outside of a white, presumably middle-class viewpoint and think about the low-income families and people of color who have for far too long been pushed out of neighborhoods like Wallingford.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Houser, Michael (DAHP)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, May 13, 2022 3:11 PM
To: Houser, Michael (DAHP)
Subject: Wallingford Historic District

External Email

Dear Mr. Michael Houser,

My name is [REDACTED] and I'm a student at Lincoln High School, next to the proposed Wallingford historic district. I'm writing because I think that the proposed historic area shouldn't be granted historic status.

It's true that the historic district has some older houses, but the facts are that these houses aren't at all unique in the country or in Seattle. Most of these houses were built in the 1930s and 1940s, and are very similar to the houses that are found all over the city in different neighborhoods such as Queen Anne, Magnolia, Ballard, and many other places. The craftsman houses in the area can be found all over the country as well, as they are cookie cutter kit houses that were sold by the tens of thousands all over the country.

The historic district isn't at all historic or special compared to the rest of Seattle, our class walked through the neighborhood and it looked pretty much exactly like any other neighborhood in north Seattle.

The real reason the historic district is being proposed is because the city is going to be meeting about zoning laws in 2025. Although historic designation doesn't legally affect zoning law changes, it's used by people opposing change to prevent rezoning, as seen in Queen Anne with their historic district. The discussion about affordable housing and apartment zoning is important, so a disingenuous historical designation shouldn't be something that plays into whether an area gets rezoned.

Sources for my information:

<https://seattle.curbed.com/2017/1/5/13737572/seattle-house-styles-cabin-cottage-craftsman-contemporary-modern>
<https://mynorthwest.com/3377648/wallingford-historic-district-designation-battle-lines-drawn/>
<https://seattle.curbed.com/2017/1/5/13737572/seattle-house-styles-cabin-cottage-craftsman-contemporary-modern>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Architecture_of_Seattle?scrllybrkr=35d4bab6

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]