King County Property Photo Digitization Project

In 1937, King County launched an effort to photograph and describe every property in King County for the Works Progress Administration. The program lasted until 1972, however some records include photos taken in the 1980s.

More recently, the state archives has been digitizing these records in compressed pdf files available online. This is plenty sufficient for reading text and getting a quick visual reference, but not for capturing the full details contained in the photographs.

Therefore CHHS aims to scan all the original photographs for every property in Capitol Hill as 600 dpi tif files and make them publicly accessible in an online digital repository.

However, given the lack of funds to host this vast quantity of digital records and the lack of volunteers to acquire all of them, we will start with a narrower scope and scale up over time.

Phase 1: Gather and share existing digital photos

This can be done from home. Rob Ketcherside, Brendon McKeon, and Tom Heuser, (and possibly others) have all collected some of these photographs already for their own research. These photographs should be gathered uploaded into one place, the CHHS flickr feed. They should then be fully described and cited on flickr with a link to the original tiff scan (if/when available) and the corresponding digitized property card pdf on the state archives site (if/when available).

Phase 2: Locate and Scan property photos from all major business districts (in this order)
1. Broadway (Union to Roy)
2. Pike/Pine (Melrose to Madison)
3. Olive Way (Melrose to Broadway)
4. 15th (Madison to Mercer)

This will require bringing a laptop and scanner to the Puget Sound Branch of the State Archives at Bellevue College during business hours. Tiff scans will be made and stored offline until online space becomes available. Then jpeg copies will be made and posted to the CHHS flickr account. Again, they should then be fully described and cited on flickr with a link to the original tiff scan (if/when available) and the corresponding digitized property card pdf on the state archives site if/when available.

Phase 3: Locate and scan all photographs of remaining properties

This phase will follow the same directions as phase 2 for all remaining properties.

Further instructions will be provided