HISTORIC HOMES WALK

His walk begins in Downtown Walla Walla and takes you past a few historic buildings on the way to some of Walla Walla’s grand historic homes on Palouse, First, Newell, Catherine and Birch Streets. It begins and ends at Palouse and Main. Don’t limit yourselves to the homes that are listed below. These suggestions come from books written by Penny Andres on historic homes in Walla Walla and historic research done by the 2020 Historic Building Research Service. Many other homes in these neighborhoods are also worthy of a good look. More information about other Walla Walla historic homes may be obtained at the Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce at 29 E. Sumach.

Distance: Approximately 2 miles

Begin at Palouse and Main

Begin this walk at the corner of Palouse and Main at the Mill Creek Brewpub. Head south on Palouse St. past an antique store on your left in a shop at 41 S. Palouse. Built in 1905. The 19th New England style First Congregational Church is on your left and on your right is the sandstone Central Christian Church. Built in 1906. Cross Alder St. to the 1893 Queen Anne style house at 220 Newell. The large Fitzgerald family from Iowa purchased it in 1899. One daughter, a school principal, lived there until 1976. The 1883 Victorian Stick Style house at 204 Newell has a carriage house in the back. It was built by John Boyer, a pioneer banker in this area, who came from San Francisco where this style was common. Looking diagonally across the street at 392 Catherine is the Sheets-Johnson-Elliott house built in 1871. When it was built it sat in the middle of an alfalfa field and over the years it was the home of several prominent Walla Wallans.

Continue south on Palouse. The gables on the roof and windows of 336 S. Palouse are interesting on the 1909 house on your right. Two brick homes on the left side of the street are 361 S. Palouse built in 1918 for the George Struthers family and 373 S. Palouse built in 1928 for the Ludvig family. The Ludvig house is 6,000 square feet and sits on one acre. In 1880 the Ludwigs established one of the oldest jewelry stores in Washington which was on Main St. where Washington Federal is currently located. They also co-designed the Washington State seal.

Turn right on Newell St. Three houses in this area have been beautifully restored. Next is the circa 1895 Queen Anne style house at 220 Newell. The large Fitzgerald family from Iowa purchased it in 1899. One daughter, a school principal, lived there until 1976. The 1883 Victorian Stick Style house at 204 Newell has a carriage house in the back. It was built by John Boyer, a pioneer banker in this area, who came from San Francisco where this style was common. Looking diagonally across the street at 392 Catherine is the Sheets-Johnson-Elliott house built in 1871. When it was built it sat in the middle of an alfalfa field and over the years it was the home of several prominent Walla Wallans.

Turn left on Catherine and left on Whitman St. crossing to the south side of Whitman. Notice the handsomely restored 1909 house at 504 Catherine on the corner. The Gothic Carpenter style 1903 home at 205 Whitman has interesting pointed gables. Inside is a circular staircase that goes from the first to the third floor.

Continue east on Whitman and return to Palouse St. 302 Whitman was built in 1902. Turn south on Palouse toward the Victorian Queen Anne style house at 529 S. Palouse built by the Dement family in 1885. This is one of the oldest buildings in Walla Walla. On your right at 610 S. Palouse is a Tudor style house built in 1910. As in several of the large historic homes, there was a balcony on the third floor. 712 S. Palouse is a Craftsman style house that was built in 1908. 808 S. Palouse is a very large Craftsman style house built in 1910. Miss Emma Seil’s house at 824 S. Palouse is on your right on the corner of Locust and Palouse. Built in 1929, it is based on Monticello, Thomas Jefferson’s home in Virginia.

Turn right on Locust and turn right again on Catherine St. The on the left at 704 Catherine is a restored 1886 Italianate style house built by a lumber dealer. On the same side of the street, note the 1894 house at 636 Catherine with the wrap-around porch. Recent owners have carefully restored this house and added the porte-cochere.

Turn left onto Thorne St. Thorne St. has houses with streams in the front yard, not uncommon in Walla Walla, which means “many waters.” Walk down this pleasant street which intersects with First Ave.

Turn right on First Ave. This is another tree-lined area with many fine old homes and a treasured tree canopy.

Turn right on Newell. Note the home at 125 Newell built in 1904 with large porch areas. Eighty wagons loaded with rock from Mill Creek were used in its construction.

Turn left at Catherine (you’ve been here before). Head north past the 1902 Gothic style St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. At the intersection of Birch and Catherine is 221 Birch Street, The Ben Grote House. A Neoclassic style mansion built in 1916. Ben Grote, successful in his farming ventures, started one of the large bulk grain elevators in the area.

Turn right on Birch and continue back to Palouse. Turn left on Palouse to Alder. Turn left on Alder Street heading west. The Nano Lopez sculpture “Matilde on Her Way to the Market” is at the entrance to the Walla Walla Public Library.

Return to Palouse and cross Alder to Volunteer Park. The park was established in 1904 to honor Walla Walla men who fought in the 1898-99 Spanish American War in the Philippines. Also, note the memorial to the crew of the Space Shuttle Challenger. Continue north on Palouse and return to Main and Palouse where this walk began.

*Indicates properties on the National Register of Historic Places

If you are interested in additional information, consult the following:
Andres, Penny WALLA WALLA/Her Historic Homes, Volumes I (1991), II (1993), and III (1998)

If you wish to see more of Walla Walla on foot, see The Downtown Walk, The Up Boyer and to Pioneer Park Walk, and the Fort Walla Walla Walk which are described in separate brochures.

Katherine Weingart
Walla Walla Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Visit Walla Walla