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**History Makers**

By **Todd Matthews, Editor**  
 Nov 21 2006

When Tacoma resident Sharon Winters looks at the city's historically significant buildings, she grows concerned.

A wrecking ball's shadow looms over First United Methodist Church – a 90-year-old building sold by the congregation to MultiCare Health System in May for \$8 million. The church plans to move into new headquarters; the hospital wants to tear down the building and expand its campus; and preservationists have until Nov. 21 to file an appeal with Pierce County Superior Court.

The 80-year-old Mattson Mansion in the city's north end was razed in a single afternoon last spring. The building, a staple of historic home tours, slipped through cracks in the city's historic preservation list (though some 1,200 buildings comprise the list, the Mattson Mansion wasn't one), will be replaced by a new 10,000-square-foot Craftsman-style home.

"The city is at a very vulnerable time right now," explains Winters, former chair of the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission, during a meeting earlier this month at a downtown coffee shop. "It's a very exciting time for Tacoma, but also a very vulnerable time for the old structures in town."

Enter Historic Tacoma -- a grassroots organization formed this summer by Sharon Winters and fellow historians Michael Sullivan, Reuben McKnight, Morgar Alexander, and Eugenia Woo to address public policy concerns related to the city's historic-style buildings. Winters, the group's board president, is the public face of a renewed interest in the city's history. In August, Historic



(PHOTO BY TODD MATT)

Historic Tacoma board president Sharon Winters outside Old City Hall. "The city is at a very vulnerable time right now," explains Winters. "It's a very exciting time for Tacoma, but also a very vulnerable time for the old structures in town."