

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

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1. Name of Property

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historic name Hoben Park

other names/site number Arcade Park, Nile Park, Ladies Park  
AHRS Site No. SEW-00662

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2. Location

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street & number 401 Railway Avenue

not for publication n/a

city or town Seward vicinity n/a

state Alaska code AK county Kenai Peninsula code 122

zip code 99664

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Hoben Park  
Kenai Peninsula, Alaska

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination      request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant      nationally      statewide X locally. (      See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Judith E. Buttner  
Signature of certifying official

May 4, 2006  
Date

Alaska  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property      meets      does not meet the National Register criteria. (      See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
    See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the  
    National Register  
    See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the  
    National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]

6/21/2006

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

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**Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)**

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property (Check only one box)**

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>  1  </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<u>      </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<u>      </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<u>  1  </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
	<u>  0  </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register n/a

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) n/a

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**6. Function or Use**

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**Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)**

Cat: landscape Sub: park

**Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)**

Cat: landscape Sub: park

=====

**7. Description**

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**Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)**

n/a

**Materials (Enter categories from instructions)**

foundation n/a  
roof n/a  
walls n/a  
other n/a

**Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)**

Hoben Park is a small tract of land in downtown Seward owned by the City of Seward. Resurrection Bay and a sidewalk are to the south. The Alaska SeaLife Center is to the west, Railway Avenue is to the north, and the old Alaska Railroad depot (listed in the National Register of Historic Places, July 16, 1987) is to the east. The south side of the park is 240 feet long, the north side is 218 feet long, the east side is 45 feet long, and the west side is 50 feet long.

When created in 1923, the park had a decorative wrought iron and concrete fence on its north and west sides, with a concrete pedestal at each corner. The northeast corner had a tall, tapered concrete column. This column had a hanging lamp at the top and a ball-shaped finial. The north wall had a gated opening with a step leading down to the park. The east side of the park had a wire fence with a wood trellis and the south side had a wire fence along with a hedge and lilac bushes. A circular pool originally had a bowl shaped fountain, which was replaced with a pedestal fountain in the early 1930s. Large concrete flower planters, benches, and several birdhouses were in the park. It had rose bushes and a well-manicured lawn. A poplar tree, original to the park, has matured and is near the middle of the park's south boundary.

Today the west side has the original concrete wall and pedestals. The iron fence has been removed. A poured concrete wall similar to the original has replaced the north wall. The current north wall is six feet south of the original to accommodate widening the street. The concrete column at the northeast corner has been removed. In place of the gated opening and step is an opening flanked by pedestals. The wire fences have been removed. The

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8. Statement of Significance  
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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.) n/a

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

landscape architecture

Period of Significance 1923-1948

Significant Dates 1923

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) n/a

Cultural Affiliation n/a

Architect/Builder n/a

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)**

"Arcade Building One of the Most Modern and Commodious Structures Ever  
Built in the Territory." *Seward Gateway*, December 5, 1925: 16.

Barry, Mary J. *Seward, Alaska: A History of the Gateway City*. 3 volumes.  
Seward, Alaska: M J P Barry, 1993, 1995.

Mobley, Charles M. *Historic Architecture Survey of the Waterfront, Seward,  
Alaska, for the Proposed Institute of Marine Science Facility*.  
Anchorage, Alaska: Charles M. Mobley & Associates, 1994.

Wilson, William H. *Railroad in the Clouds: The Alaska Railroad in the Age  
of Steam, 1914-1945*. Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Co., 1977.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS) n/a**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been  
requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

**Name of repository:** Seward Public Library

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** less than one

**UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)**

	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>
1	06	364380	6664205	3		
2				4		
	<u>See continuation sheet.</u>					

**Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)**

Hoben Park is on Lot 2A, Waterfront Tracts 1998 Replat, a subdivision of Lots 1 and 2 Waterfront Tracts, City of Seward. It is within the SW ¼ of Section 10, Township 1 South, Range 1 West, Seward Meridian. The park is bounded by Railway Avenue to the north, the old Alaska Railroad Depot to the east, Alaska SeaLife Center to the west, and a sidewalk to the south.

**Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)**

Widening Railway Avenue and replacing the sidewalk and wall of the park reduced the park from its original size by approximately six feet along its north boundary. The west boundary is the original wall. The south boundary is defined by a sidewalk placed beyond where the original fence stood. The east boundary is its original boundary adjacent to the old railroad depot.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**name/title** Jessica M. Benson, Intern

**organization** Office of History and Archaeology  
Alaska Department of Natural Resources

**date** March 15, 2006

**street & number** 550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1310

**telephone** 907-269-8755

**city or town** Anchorage **state** AK **zip code** 99501-3565

\*assisted by Shannon Kovac, Chair, Seward Historic Preservation Commission, City of Seward, P.O. Box 167, Seward, Alaska 99664-0167

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old railroad depot stands to the east where it has stood since 1928. There is a sidewalk on the south side of the park. The park has several trees and bushes.

The City of Seward has started restoring the park to its historic appearance. Three fluted lampposts have been installed along the north wall on top of the concrete pedestals. The ground has been leveled and the poplar tree has been manicured. Plans include installing a replica fountain.



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**Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)**

Hoben Park is important for its association with the City of Seward's promotion of itself as the "Gateway to Alaska" to attract visitors to the town. The City of Seward completed the park in time for President Warren G. Harding's visit on July 13, 1923. Harding was the first U.S. President to visit Alaska. He came to drive in the golden spike signaling completion of the 470 mile government-built Alaska Railroad that connected the year-round ice free port at Seward and the interior hub-city of Fairbanks. Seward residents expected the railroad to bring more visitors, Alaskans and others, to their town. The park was located by the town's main dock and near the railroad depot. Its intent was to be enjoyed by travelers arriving by train or by sea. The period of significance starts with the park's creation in 1923 and ends when Harry V. Hoben, for whom the park is now named, died in 1948 and regular maintenance of the park ceased for a period of years. Today, it is a park in the core commercial area of the community and intended primarily for the enjoyment of visitors.

Historic background

In 1923 the Seward City Council discussed downtown beautification projects. Council members considered two parcels of government owned land near the dock "to make an ornamental park area so visitors would find a pleasant scene when arriving by ship or train" (*Seward Gateway*, 1923, 16). Businessmen Harry V. Hoben and Al Davis, who owned Alaska Transfer Company, leased the land to the east of the city's main dock from the federal government. The land was leveled, lawn and trees planted, and a fountain installed in April 1923. The park, initially called Arcade Park, was completed in time for President Warren G. Harding's arrival by ship at Seward on July 13, 1923. Harding was the first U.S. President to visit Alaska. The primary purpose of his trip was to drive in the golden spike signaling completion of the government financed and built Alaska Railroad. While in Seward, Harding walked around town and chatted with residents.

The park is named for Hedley V. "Harry" Hoben (1873-1948), a prominent Seward resident. Hoben served as mayor of Seward from 1918 to 1919. He ran the Seward water system from 1915 to 1947 and owned the *Seward Gateway*, the local newspaper and printing press from 1917 until 1941 when fire destroyed his Arcade Building. He had other business interests including the Alaska Transfer Company. Hoben lived and had his offices in the Arcade Building, located directly across the street from the park. He was a member of the Chamber of Commerce, a Mason, an advocate for public safety, a landowner, and a philanthropist. He was an avid outdoorsman and sportsman, managing the champion Seward baseball team beginning in 1915. He became president of the Seward Baseball Association in 1924. Hoben oversaw maintenance of the park from 1923 until his death in 1948. He had his maintenance men from the Arcade Building keep up the park.

Over the years, Hoben Park has been known by several names. It was called Arcade Park from 1923 to 1924. When it was known as Nile Park, perhaps due

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to Hoben's involvement with the Masons whose meeting place was Nile Temple at Sixth and Adams Streets, it "presented a pastoral appearance, with the grass mowed and lambs gamboling about the lawn" from 1925 to 1927 (Barry, vol. 2, p. 5). During this time the concrete walls and iron fence were installed. From 1928 into the 1950s it was known as Hoben Park. In the late 1950s, the park became known as Ladies Park, which might have originated with the Ladies Aid Society of the Methodist Church, or might have been inspired by the Ladies Outing Club. In 1995, the Seward City Council officially named the site Hoben Park.

After Hoben's death in 1948, the park changed. At various times it had a basketball court, a dogsled monument and an Iditarod Trail sled dog race monument. These have been removed. Today, community residents are interested in restoring the park to its historic appearance and preserving it. Developments around the park, in particular the SeaLife Center, have increased tourism to Seward in the last decade. The City of Seward has started rehabilitating the park to its historic appearance.

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**Additional Documentation**  
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====  
**Property Owner**  
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Seward

street & number P.O. Box 167

telephone 907-224-4050

city or town Seward state AK zip code 99664-0167

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**Section photograph identification**  
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1. Hoben Park  
Kenai Peninsula, Alaska  
Lee Poleske  
March 2006  
P.O. Box 871, Seward, Alaska 99664-0871  
Looking east
2. Hoben Park  
Kenai Peninsula, Alaska  
Lee Poleske  
March 2006  
P.O. Box 871, Seward, Alaska 99664-0871  
Looking west
3. Hoben Park  
Kenai Peninsula, Alaska  
Photographer unknown  
Circa 1930s  
Resurrection Bay Historical Society (65.1.1), P.O. Box 55, Seward,  
Alaska 99664-0055  
Looking east over the west wall at park and old railroad depot
4. Hoben Park  
Kenai Peninsula, Alaska  
Photographer unknown  
Circa 1930s  
Resurrection Bay Historical Society (65.1.4), P.O. Box 55, Seward,  
Alaska 99664-0055  
Looking west at park

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

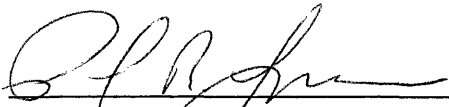
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NRIS Reference Number: 06000515                      Date Listed: 6/21/2006

Hoben Park    Kenai Peninsula                      AK  
Property Name    County    State

N/A  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper    6/21/2006  
Date of Action

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Amended Items in Nomination:

**Significance:**  
The Area of Significance is revised to read: *Community Planning & Development*.  
[Community Planning and Development better addresses the importance of the site as an illustration of the community's efforts at civic beautification and infrastructure development associated with the significant twentieth century build-up of the community. The low integrity of the park's overall design features lessens the potential significance of the site as a work of formal *landscape architecture*, as normally associated with Criterion C.]

These clarifications were confirmed with the AK SHPO office.

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**DISTRIBUTION:**  
National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)