

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name South Park Blocks

other names/site number N/A

Name of Multiple Property Listing N/A

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

2. Location

street & number 1003 SW Park Avenue

☐

not for publication

city or town Portland

☐

vicinity

state Oregon

code OR

county Multnomah

code 051

zip code 97205

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance: national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria: X A B X C D

Ian P. Johnson

Ian P. Johnson (Feb 4, 2022 11:34 PST)

02/04/22

Signature of certifying official/Title: Associate Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

X entered in the National Register

 determined eligible for the National Register

 determined not eligible for the National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain:)

Paul R. Lusignan

Signature of the Keeper

03/23/2022

Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | private |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | public - Local |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - State |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - Federal |

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | object |

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | | buildings |
| 1 | | site |
| 1 | 4 | structure |
| 4 | 9 | object |
| 6 | 13 | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LANDSCAPE: park

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor

recreation

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LANDSCAPE: park

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor

recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals

Modern Movement

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: N/A

walls: N/A

roof: N/A

other: Earth, Brick, Concrete

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

Summary Paragraph

The South Park Blocks (SPB) is an 8.76-acre city-owned park located in downtown Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon (see Figure 1). The twelve-block park, officially addressed as 1003 SW Park Avenue, is a linear north-south contiguous greenspace set amidst a mix of dense, mid-rise buildings and immediately bounded by cultural venues, apartments, Portland State University (PSU) campus buildings, and historic churches. The SPB extends 1,560 feet from SW Salmon Street (north) to SW Jackson Street (south) and is bounded by SW Park Avenue E (east) and SW Park Avenue W (west).¹ The park serves as the anchor of downtown's cultural and educational districts, with the six northern blocks designated as part of the Cultural District in 1999, while the six southernmost blocks are known as the University District and act as a shared public space for the PSU campus.² The SPB reflects an evolutionary designed landscape developed from 1852 to 1973 that illustrates larger changes in public recreation, community development, and park design. Landscape character-defining features of the park include its continuous overarching canopy of mature deciduous trees (see Photos 7-9), gradual south-to-north sloping topography, symmetrical and asymmetrical spatial relationships of its walkways, integration into Portland's narrow block development scheme, and its axial north-south viewsheds framed by the linear arrangement of trees. Additional character defining features include the park's circulation pattern that reflects the SPB's evolution over time and 1973 pedestrian mall at the southern portion, featuring alterations completed in 1973 that integrated the park into the PSU campus. The park is also characterized by its functionally diverse mixture of plazas—including an amphitheater, public artwork, sitting areas, and playground—interspersed by blocks that feature raised and level planting beds, and mowed grass ground planes. While some of these features—like some of the park furniture, light system, hardscape and play equipment—are less than fifty years old and don't contribute to the park's historical significance, they tend to be consistently and harmoniously integrated into its overall design. Alterations within the SPB that have occurred either during or after the period of significance (and do not convey significance unto themselves) include the redesign of circulation systems in the blocks between Jefferson and Market streets (Block Nos. 7-9), and repaving plaza and pathway surfaces in Block Nos. 7–12 in the 1980s; changes to the Simon Benson Memorial and regrading of Shemanski Square (Block No. 12) in 1987; addition of two streetcar shelters in 2007 and the Portland Loo in 2012; realignment and replacement of the 1960s children's playground (Block No. 1) with a new play structure in the 1990s; introduction of native and ornamental plantings; upgrades to park benches and light fixtures; and installation of additional public art, plaques, and commemorative markers. The SPB continues to serve its original function and retains its historic integrity and ability to convey its significance under National Register Criteria A and C, and Criterion Consideration G.

¹ The eastern and western perimeter streets are variously named as SW Park Avenue, SW 9th Avenue, SW Park Avenue E, SW Park Avenue W, SW Park Avenue East and SW Park Avenue West.

² Although there is a distinction between the "Cultural District" and "University District," they represent a single, unified entity that share the same historical context and period of significance. Further, the recommended draft of the SPB Master Plan describes the park as encompassing these two distinct areas. MIG, Inc., *South Park Blocks Master Plan Update*, "Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities Report," Final Draft (prepared for Portland Parks and Recreation, August 2019), vii.

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There are six contributing and 13 non-contributing resources within the SPB.³ Contributing resources include one site, four objects, and one structure: the SPB designed landscape and its constituent elements (site); Shemanski Fountain and *Rebecca at the Well* sculpture, 1926 (object); single-bowl Benson Bubbler, 1917 (object); four-bowl Benson Bubbler, 1917, 1959 (object); *Farewell to Orpheus* statue, 1973 (object); and Smith Center Amphitheater and Stage, 1973 (structure). These resources all date within the park's period of significance (1852-1973) and contribute to its significance. Non-contributing objects are as follows: 1) Theodore Roosevelt *Rough Rider* statue granite pedestal base, 1922; 2) Abraham Lincoln statue granite pedestal base, 1928⁴; 3) Pedestal Clock, c. 2002; 4) *Peace Chant* sculpture, 1984; 5) *In the Shadow of the Elm* art installation, 1984; 6) *Holon* sculpture, 2001; 7-8) "Portland State University" granite monument signs, 1988; and 9) Simon Benson Memorial, 1959, altered 1987⁵. Four non-contributing structures include: 1) Portland Loo, 2012; 2-3) two streetcar shelters, 2007; and 4) 1990s children's play structure. These non-contributing resources fall outside the park's period of significance and/or lack sufficient integrity and, therefore, do not contribute to its significance.

Narrative Description

The narrative description of the SPB is guided by *National Register Bulletin 18: How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes*.⁶ As a type of cultural landscape, designed historic landscapes are typically "consciously designed or laid out by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, or horticulturist according to design principles" and "may be associated with a significant person(s), trend, or event in landscape architecture" and can include parks and campuses.⁷

Originally conceived in 1852 by Daniel H. Lownsdale, the park was first depicted on an 1852 plat map and the Brady Map.⁸ Envisioned as "one long, uninterrupted promenade park," it was one of three city parks first dedicated for public open space.⁹ It was the city's action in 1877 that established the park's formal landscape design, under the guidance of horticulturist Louis G. Pfunder. Pfunder's original design intent is still clearly visible for the entire length of the park in the expansive ground plane, axial tree-planting plan, and continuous overarching tree canopy that promotes linear vistas. These represent some

³ Numerous plaques and commemorative markers are found throughout the SPB. They are not substantial in size and scale, and do not have a direct relationship to the park's overall significance. They are considered minor objects and, therefore, not included in the resource count.

⁴ The Roosevelt and Lincoln statues were removed by Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) as of October 2020; all that remains are the granite bases. Both resources are considered non-contributing since they lack integrity.

⁵ The Simon Benson Memorial was altered significantly in 1987 and no longer retains sufficient integrity to convey its historical significance.

⁶ J. Timothy Keller and Genevieve P. Keller, *National Register Bulletin 18: How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Interior, 1994).

⁷ Charles A. Birnbaum, *Preservation Briefs 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Interior, 1994), 1-2.

⁸ The 1852 donation of the park blocks is recorded in the early maps and surveys of the townsite, beginning in 1845 with the Pettygrove/Stark "Plan of Portland" map (OHS #82329), which did not include the parks blocks. The ca 1846 "Plan of Portland" depicts eleven narrow blocks from SW Clay to SW Stark streets, as well as the two Plaza Blocks (OHS Negative #82328). Lownsdale's donation of land for public use was further recorded in the ca 1850 "Brady Map" showing the addition of eight narrow park blocks at the south end. The Brady Map was recognized as a record of the land grant by the Common Council on April 9, 1852. Portland City Auditor Archives, Map A217.020, on file at the Oregon Historical Society.

⁹ Junior League of Portland, *A Guide to Portland's Historic Parks and Gardens* (Portland, OR: Junior League of Portland, 1985).

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of the basic design characteristics of a “promenade,” a distinctive park type that emerged in American cities in the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁰

The park’s most distinctive feature from this early period is its linear alignment of deciduous trees, including fully-matured American elms (*Ulmus americana*), elm hybrids (*Ulmus spp.*), northern red oaks (*Quercus rubra*), sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) and other species. Over time, the fencing that inhibited movement within the park was removed and more “interior” uses were introduced between 1908 and 1920s with the insertion of plazas, seating areas, and public monuments. By the early 1970s, the southern portion of the park was modified into a “pedestrian mall,” which itself became a distinctive park type in American cities in the 1960s and 1970s.¹¹ Part of a federally-funded urban redevelopment project that integrated the SPB into the PSU campus, it overlaid a modernist aesthetic design while retaining the park’s essential characteristics—namely the axial alignment of mature deciduous trees and the mowed grassy ground plane.¹²

The well-defined boundaries are reinforced by the park’s development along a narrow, rectangular block grid; unifying tree canopy; perimeter pedestrian promenades; and street rights-of-way. Further, each block is framed by perimeter curbing or embedded brickwork, which delineates the park’s physical boundaries.

The SPB’s transition over time is captured through a descriptive assessment of the park’s various design expressions and natural features, including its existing topography; surrounding land uses; circulation system; spatial relationships; views and vistas; vegetation; landscape dividers; site furnishings; uses of water; lighting; and public art, statues, and commemorative markers. After reviewing these features, the narrative provides a block-by-block description of the extant park features while also identifying contributing and non-contributing resources within the SPB boundaries. For reference, the contributing and non-contributing resources in the SPB appear in Table 1.

Table 1: Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources in South Park Blocks

| CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES | NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES |
|--|--|
| South Park Blocks Landscape (site) | Two-faced Pedestal Clock, c. 2002 (object) <i>Block No. 5, p. 17</i> |
| Shemanski Fountain and <i>Rebecca at the Well</i> Sculpture, 1926 (object) <i>Block No. 12, p. 25</i> | Theodore Roosevelt <i>Rough Rider</i> Statue Granite Pedestal Base, 1922 (object) <i>Block No. 10, p. 22</i> |
| Single-bowl Benson Bubbler, 1917 (object) <i>Block No. 8, p. 20</i> | Abraham Lincoln Statue Granite Pedestal Base, 1928 (object) <i>Block No. 11, p. 24</i> |

¹⁰ Wendy R. Jacobson, “The Nineteenth Century American Promenade: Precedent and Form,” *The Journal of Public Space*, vol. 2, no. 4, 2017, 37.

¹¹ The American pedestrian mall, originally introduced from European cities in the post-WWII period, were conceived as a way to address the urban crisis in U.S. cities during this period. Samantha Matuke, Stephen Schmidt, and Wenzheng Li, “The Rise and Fall of the American Pedestrian Mall,” *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability*, July 2020, 2.

¹² A December 5, 1970 memorandum from PSU’s Building and Planning Manager describes the plan’s main features, including preserving the park’s grass and tree areas, along with restoring the adjacent streets to pedestrian use as originally intended. Efforts were made to ensure that all of the large elms were left intact and the root systems were protected. Memorandum from Malcolm McMinn, PSU Building and Planning Manager, to Mark Howard, December 15, 1970.

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| | |
|--|--|
| <i>Farewell to Orpheus</i> Statue, 1973 (object) <i>Block No. 5, p. 17</i> | <i>Peace Chant</i> Sculpture, 1984 (object) <i>Block No. 9, p. 20-21</i> |
| Smith Center Amphitheater and Stage, 1973 (structure) <i>Block No. 4, p. 16</i> | <i>In the Shadow of the Elm</i> Art Installation, 1984 (object) <i>Block No. 7, p. 19</i> |
| Four-bowl Benson Bubbler, 1917, 1959 (object) <i>Block No. 12, p. 25</i> | <i>Holon</i> Sculpture, 2001 (object) <i>Block No. 3, p. 16</i> |
| | "Portland State University" Granite Monument Sign, 1988 (object) <i>Block No. 1, p. 13-14</i> |
| | "Portland State University" Granite Monument Sign, 1988 (object) <i>Block No. 6, p. 18</i> |
| | Simon Benson Memorial, 1959, altered 1987 (object) <i>Block No. 12, p. 25</i> |
| | Children's Play Structure, n.d. (structure) <i>Block No. 1, p. 13</i> |
| | Portland Loo, 2012 (structure) <i>Block No. 9, p. 21</i> |
| | Streetcar Shelter, 2007 (structure) <i>Block No. 6, p. 18</i> |
| | Streetcar Shelter, 2007 (structure) <i>Block No. 7, p. 19</i> |

SETTING

The SPB is a linear north-south greenspace in the heart of Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. Encompassing an 8.76-acre site immediately southwest of the downtown core, the urban public park is set on a gently north-sloping site that extends approximately 3,100 feet from SW Jackson Street (Block No. 1) to SW Salmon (Block No. 12), along an NNE-SSW axis, parallel to the Willamette River frontage to the east. The twelve-block sequence is bounded by SW Jackson Street to the south; SW Salmon Street to the north; SW Park Avenue to the east and west (see Figure 2). To the east is Portland City Hall and other government buildings, as well as two of the city's earliest public squares (now known as Chapman and Lownsdale Squares). The areas to west and south include the Interstate 405 right-of-way; Goose Hollow multi-family residential neighborhood; and the West Hills single-family neighborhood. In general, the surrounding context is urban and dense (see Photos 14 and 15).

The park's immediate setting has evolved as the heart of Portland's cultural and educational districts, including a mix of cultural, religious, educational and institutional buildings that serve as framing architecture. These include the Portland Art Museum (PAM), Oregon Historical Society (OHS), PSU, and four historic churches—St. James Lutheran Church, First Congregational Church, First Christian Church and the 6th Church of Christ Scientist. The six southernmost park blocks serve as a shared public space for the PSU campus.

A unique characteristic of the park is its siting within the active city street grid, with open vehicular road traffic extending around and through the park blocks. The southern portion (Block Nos. 1–6) is largely closed to vehicular traffic along the SW Park Avenue East and West streets, allowing increased

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pedestrian-only circulation through the PSU campus (see Figures 14 and 15; Photos 11-14). The northern portion (Block Nos. 7-12) accommodates one-way vehicular traffic along these perimeter streets. East-west cross streets extend through the park to allow one-way vehicular traffic. Two of the streets are used as the Portland Streetcar right-of-way, including SW Mill Street (westbound line) and SW Market Street (eastbound line). Three cross streets within the PSU blocks are closed to vehicles, including SW Hall, SW Harrison, and SW Montgomery streets.

Landscape Characteristics

Topography

Overall, the topography of the SPB descends from south to north approximately 100 feet over its twelve-block stretch; descending from about 185 feet above sea level (asl) at SW Jackson Street to about 88 feet asl at SW Salmon Street. The high point is located in the southern six blocks, known as the University District, and the low point in the northern six blocks, designated as the Cultural District. The park's gradual north-south rise in elevation terminates a few hundred feet short of the West Hills, which rise sharply south of the Stadium Freeway up to nearly 1,000 feet asl.¹³ Changes in elevation from the east and west are fairly moderate with slopes of about 5 feet to 10 feet over the width of most blocks. The most notable topographic changes occur in the block between SW Main and SW Salmon streets where the center of the park is notably crowned to the east and west with a curved concrete retaining wall that forms a seating niche for the **Simon Benson Memorial** (non-contributing object) and a broad concrete stair along the slope at the corner of SW Park Avenue E and SW Salmon streets, added in 1987. The topography of the SPB has not been dramatically altered from its period of significance.

Surrounding Land Uses

Land use within the park primarily consists of recreational uses that include pedestrian walkways, a playground, the **Smith Center Amphitheater** (contributing structure), gathering spaces, public art, bench seating, and lawn areas for informal recreational opportunities. To the east and west of the park and across SW Park Avenue E and W are a variety of building types and property uses. The six-block stretch south of SW Market Street contains a mix of educational and residential buildings, including Parkway Manor, Jeanne Manor, Vue Apartments, Park Plaza Apartments, Simon Benson residence, Blackstone Apartments, Lincoln Hall, Cramer Hall, Smith Memorial Student Union, Maseeh Hall, Millar Library, Shattuck Hall, and Stott Center. The area between SW Jefferson and SW Market streets is mostly residential, including Cumberland Apartments, Gallery Park Apartments, Southpark Square Apartments, and University Park Condos. Several of the apartment buildings feature a mixture of uses with storefronts situated on the first floor. Buildings to the north of SW Jefferson Street are primarily institutional, including PAM, former Portland Masonic Temple, OHS, Portland 5 Centers for the Arts, and Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. Several notable churches are located on either side of the SPB including the St. James Lutheran Church, Sixth Church of Christ Scientist, First Christian Church, First Congregational United Church of Christ.

There are three neighborhoods within the vicinity of the SPB. The six blocks of the SPB's Cultural District between SW Salmon and SW Market streets are part of the Downtown district neighborhood, while the six blocks between SW Market and Jackson streets are located in the University District/South Downtown

¹³ This change of elevation reflects how the SPB sits within the area that slopes from Portland's West Hills to the Willamette River. MIG, Inc., *South Park Blocks Master Plan Update*, "Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities Report," 45.

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district neighborhood. Adjacent lots along the west side of Park Avenue W between SW Salmon and SW Market streets fall within the West End district neighborhood.¹⁴

Circulation System

The SPB's circulation system has evolved over three distinct chronological periods, but largely respects Portland's 1846 grid plan.¹⁵ Consistent with the first period of development and initial planting in 1877, Block Nos. 7 through 12 feature perimeter sidewalks that circumnavigate the respective blocks with pedestrians separated from vehicular traffic by a raised concrete curb. Block Nos. 6 and 7 are partially curbed for perimeter pedestrian circulation on SW Market Street, SW Mill Street, and SW Park Avenue W, while SW Park Avenue E is restricted for non-vehicular use, as a part of the 1970s PSU pedestrian mall redevelopment. The streets between SW College to SW Montgomery streets (Block Nos. 2–4) were also vacated and converted to pedestrian walkways with the 1970s pedestrian mall redesign. Block No. 5 incorporates a pedestrian walkway along the east side, with one-way vehicular traffic along the west side. The pedestrian mall terminates at SW College Street with Block No. 1 entirely curbed with the reintroduction of vehicular traffic around its perimeter. Block No. 1 features a sidewalk and seating area on its north side along SW College Street and an off-center walkway that leads to the playground. Block No. 1 also features a radial perimeter due to changes in the street network (see Figure 18).

In addition to the original perimeter circulation pattern, pedestrian traffic within the park was improved during the second period of park development in the early twentieth century. The removal of perimeter fencing promoted interior uses and created opportunities for commemorative and public art in centrally-located plazas. Historic photographs (dated 1911-1915 and 1949) of the park blocks indicate the presence of both diagonal (X-pattern) and north-south oriented walkways, with some converging on a central plaza.¹⁶ In the 1980s, the walkway systems between Jefferson and Market streets (Block Nos. 7–9) were redesigned in a cruciform pattern featuring hexagonal asphalt pavers and concrete borders.¹⁷ Block Nos. 7 through 11, for instance, presently are defined by a cruciform plan system consisting of two parallel north-south and two parallel east-west paved paths separated by vegetated panels. This cruciform circulation is offset in Block No. 12 due to the installation of the **Shemanski Fountain and Rebecca at the Well Sculpture** (contributing object) (see Photo 1; Figure 16).

¹⁴ The surrounding east side is zoned primarily Central Commercial (CX), allowing high-density development. The west side is a mix of CX and Central Residential (RX), allowing medium to high-rise apartments and condos, as well as retail, institutional, and service-oriented uses. MIG, Inc., *South Park Blocks Master Plan Update*, "Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities Report," 19.

¹⁵ Portland's townsite was laid out in 1845 along a sixteen-block grid with each block measuring 200' square and containing eight 50' x 100' lots. One 80' wide main street ran parallel to the Willamette River and was crossed by seven streets, each 60' wide. The plat was enlarged in 1846 by the addition of a row of blocks to the west and by six blocks to the north. The north blocks were separated from the original plat by a four-block reserve tract that was later subdivided. Hilary Mackenzie, "The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development" (Master of Architecture diss., University of Washington, 1988), 3.

¹⁶ See for instance photos contained in MIG, Inc., *South Park Blocks Master Plan Update*, "Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities Report," 37 (Block No. 2) and 41 (Block No. 12).

¹⁷ The redevelopment of the Cultural District in 1984 and 1987 by Walker Macy landscape architects added dual cross blocks oriented along an east-west axis, creating the cruciform-shape pattern that exists today. James Mayer, "Central City Plan," *The Oregonian*, March 25, 1988; Janet Goetze, "Simplicity Key Word for Park Blocks Plan," *The Oregonian*, September 20, 1983; Herbert Beals, "Park Blocks" NRHP Nomination Form, Draft (Portland: City of Portland, Bureau of Parks and Recreation, 1995), 15-16; MIG, Inc., *South Park Blocks Master Plan Update*, "Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities Report," 39.

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The third period of development, introduced with the pedestrian mall redevelopment in the early 1970s at PSU, included redesigning the interior circulation system within Block Nos. 2 through 6. Movement was directed through diagonal walkways to the pedestrian mall or to the perimeter sidewalk along SW Park Avenue W along the west side of Block Nos. 5 and 6. While Block No. 5 features a symmetrically placed set of intersecting diagonal walkways, Block Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 6 feature asymmetrically placed diagonal walkways that direct pedestrians between PSU campus buildings while also providing access to the **Smith Center Amphitheater** (contributing structure) (see Photo 21). A narrow centrally located walkway extends from SW College Avenue and terminates at the playground located on Block No. 1.

Vehicular traffic is currently restricted within the PSU campus within the pedestrian mall, as well as along SW Montgomery, SW Harrison, and SW Hall streets to accommodate the Portland Streetcar line. SW Mill Street is partially restricted east of SW Park Ave W due to the Portland Streetcar line. Low, round concrete planters are placed to inhibit vehicular access.

A combination of hexagonal and square asphalt pavers, brick pavers, and exposed-aggregate concrete paving are used throughout the park along the pathways, central plazas, and at the base of benches. The restrained material palette serves to further unify the space. Perimeter pathways are paved in a mix of exposed-aggregate concrete with brick curbing or hexagonal asphalt pavers with concrete curbing. Walkways in the PSU blocks (Block Nos. 1–6) feature the paving installed in the early 1970s and consists of exposed-aggregate concrete with earth-tone brick borders, while the northern portion (Block Nos. 7–12) features hexagonal asphalt pavers with concrete curbing. Plaza areas feature hexagonal and square asphalt pavers, and exposed-aggregate concrete paving with brick curbing.¹⁸ The hexagonal and square asphalt pavers appear to date from the 1980s alterations. Some of the bench seating (Block Nos. 7–12) is set on recessed pads of hexagonal pavers with concrete edging, placing them apart as areas for rest.

Spatial Relationships

The spatial organization of each block is primarily defined by its circulation, vegetation, and small-scale features which is reflective of three broad patterns of development. The first is defined by its linear processional aspect, which originated from the park's initial design by Pfunder as a "promenade-style" park, and generally followed since that period. The second period is characterized by the interior linear placement of pedestrian circulation and plazas that likely occurred in the early twentieth century, which created a sense of enclosure and seclusion from the surrounding buildings and streets. The third period of spatial relationships include the diagonal walkways, amphitheater, and public art placement in the 1970s pedestrian mall.

A spatial attribute that physically distinguishes the SPB from its surrounding cityscape, illustrating a major character defining feature, is that each block is based on a 124' x 200' rectangular module, in contrast to the city's standardized 200' square block grid.¹⁹ The park's initial planting in 1877 included five rows of trees across its width and accommodated plank boardwalks along the east and west perimeter.²⁰ With

¹⁸ Between 1920 and 1930, street improvements were carried out in the form of interior and perimeter walkways with hexagonal concrete pavers. According to Beals' research, documentation is lacking about the exact dates and location of these walkway improvements. Beals, "Park Blocks" NRHP Nomination Form, Draft, 13.

¹⁹ The nominal block dimensions of 100' x 200' are referenced as the basis for the City of Portland planning grid.

²⁰ The 1862 city ordinance defined street widths, including the SPB, as 60 feet wide; however, the 1877 park layout paid no attention to this and made the park wider. This made the street more or less align with the block to the north of SW Salmon Street, where the Arlington Club is located, which incorporates a 50 foot right-of-way. This block provides an example of the typical 124 foot width that measures 100 feet center-to-center and accommodates roughly 12-foot wide sidewalks along the east and west rights-of-way. The original plank sidewalk was replaced with

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the SPB Urban Renewal Development Project in the 1970s, the southernmost blocks (Block Nos. 2–6) were expanded to accommodate pedestrian walkways in the neighboring rights-of-way.²¹

One of the park's most distinctive spatial features is its canopy of deciduous trees arranged within an ordered grid, extending throughout the linear block sequence (see Photos 6–9). Pfunder's original landscape design, still evident today, was defined by an axial grid of five north-south rows and nine east-west rows (see Figure 8). An 1878 aerial photograph depicts the park's initial planting of elms and Lombardy poplars between SW Salmon and SW Hall streets, with the trees planted in five rows of nine trees spaced 20' to 22' apart on the north-south axis and 20' apart on the east-west axis.²² An engraving from *West Shore Magazine*, c. 1882, shows the park development from the corner of SW Park and SW Montgomery streets (see Figure 10).²³ The symmetrical alignment and overarching tree canopy create a sense of order, formality, and uniformity. The tree trunks further reinforce the linearity and axial symmetry. The overall spatial experience is of generous open space and long horizontal viewsheds that encourage movement and contemplation.

Gathering Spaces

The SPB is characterized by its linear movement through the twelve-block open space sequence, providing both formal and informal gathering spaces. Central plazas within the park blocks were added starting in the 1920s to provide places to gather. These include Lincoln Square, Roosevelt Square, Joseph Shemanski Square, Smith Plaza, Peace Plaza, Holon Gathering Place, and PSU children's playground. These plaza areas typically feature a focal point, such as a sculpture, fountain, public artwork, or amphitheater space. The 1987 redevelopment of the Cultural District resulted in alterations to the blocks between SW Salmon and SW Market streets, with the expansion and repaving of the central plaza areas. The more activated blocks are host to seasonal events, such as the Wednesday Farmer's Market (Shemanski Square); Saturday Portland Market (University District); and the Party in the Park (Smith Plaza).²⁴

Views and Vistas

Views within the SPB are varied with the northern park blocks featuring vegetation patterns that tend to limit some views both inward and outward. The linear arrangements of trees, however, tend to focus viewsheds in a linear north-south fashion. Due to the comparable lack of intervening vegetation, views tend to be open in the southern portion of the SPB in line with modernist approaches to site design that emphasized easier maintenance and surveillance/safety.²⁵ During the late fall, winter, and early spring, the park's viewsheds become more expansive with the trees, walkways, and neighboring buildings channeling perspectives to longer distances.

concrete sidewalks which were improved over time; however, the basic concept in terms of alignment was more or less consistent. The SPB is physically delineated by a raised concrete curb along the northern six blocks, which disintegrates along the southern portion due to the 1970s pedestrian mall alterations. William J. Hawkins III, personal communication with Brooke Best, June 12, 2021.

²¹ The streets between SW Market and SW College streets were closed to vehicular traffic and converted to paved pedestrian walks. These changes increased the park area from 2.9 to 7.2 acres. Walli Schneider, "City Streets Yield to Park Blocks Plan," *The Oregonian*, August 23, 1971, 7; Tom Ferschweiler, "Mall Plan for PSU Approved" *The Oregonian*, March 10, 1971, 4.

²² Oregon Historical Society, Image 23454.

²³ Oregon Historical Society, Catalog Number OrHi 734.

²⁴ MIG, Inc., *South Park Blocks Master Plan Update*, "Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities Report," 19.

²⁵ Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Boston, MA: MIT, 1982), 152.

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Vegetation

Vegetation in the SPB includes trees, tree canopy, grassy areas, and a variety of raised and level planting areas featuring native and ornamental trees, shrubs, roses, and perennials. As stated under “Spatial Relationships,” the park’s most prominent feature is its deciduous trees arranged within an ordered grid, extending throughout the linear block sequence (see Photos 6–9). Pfunder’s original landscape plan featured a block-by-block perimeter ring of more than 240 American elms, with each block infilled with other deciduous species to create a formal, symmetrical layout of five north-south rows and nine east-west rows.

Since its original planting, the park has garnered an array of deciduous tree species due to tree losses from storms and disease. While some fully-matured American elms (*Ulmus americana*) remain, the park also includes elm hybrids (*Ulmus spp.*), northern red oaks (*Quercus rubra*), sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) and other species (see Photos 19 and 20).²⁶ Pfunder’s intentional choice of broadleaf deciduous tree species creates a physical impact on a user’s experience in different seasons—offering changing fall color, sunlight from increased canopy transparency in winter (allowing the visitor visual access to the surrounding architecture), and shade in the summer.²⁷ The symmetrical alignment and tree canopy unifies the pedestrian’s park experience and visually defines the park boundaries amidst its dense urban surroundings.²⁸ The tree canopy also includes linden (*Tilix cordata*) and hawthorn trees.

In addition to the tree cover, each park block features a ground plane dominated by large areas of grassy mowed lawn, added in 1908 under the direction of parks superintendent Emanuel T. Mische (see Photo 7).²⁹ Several blocks feature raised or level planter beds, added in the early twentieth century, that help to frame walkways and/or a central plaza (see Photos 9 and 10).³⁰ Three of the flowerbeds flanking the central plaza feature formal rose gardens, while the others include ornamental plantings. The raised beds further accentuate the block’s symmetry and axial alignment.

Landscape Dividers

When first planted in 1877, the SPB was fenced with a two-rail wood fence placed around the perimeter of each block (See Figure 8). The fencing provided protection for the trees from street traffic, prevented pedestrian crossings of the park space, and served as an initial divider; these fences were subsequently removed. Raised curb planting beds added within some of the northern blocks in the early twentieth

²⁶ American elms (*Ulmus americana*) and elm hybrids (*Ulmus spp.*) account for roughly 52% of the trees in the SPB. MIG, Inc., *South Park Blocks Master Plan Update*, “Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities Report,” 47.

²⁷ More recently, the City’s tree succession plans have incorporated a broader range of decorative and native deciduous species including disease-resistant species of Elm (*Ulmus americana*), Linden (*Tilix cordata*), Oregon White (Garry) Oak (*Quercus garryana*) and European Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*).

²⁸ It is likely Pfunder anticipated the grid of deciduous tree crowns maturing over time to create a visually-consistent structure and singular identity. The choice of deciduous trees, which occupy a small footprint at their base, allows open space that accommodates multiple uses below the canopy.

²⁹ The 1901 Parks Report recommended a number of park improvements, including plans to “grade and crosswalk the Park Blocks as fast as means are provided; to make smooth lawns and judiciously cull inferior trees which can be replaced by others.” It also recommended planting some of the blocks in “flowering shrubs and central beds of flowers.” Portland Parks Commission, *Park Commission’s Report 1901*, 8; Henry Kunowski, Nicholas Starin, Liza Mickle, Richard Engeman, and Chet Orloff, *Open Space & Park Development 1851-1965* (Portland, OR: Portland Parks and Recreation, January 2010), 13.

³⁰ According to Chet Orloff, flowerbeds were added under Mische, following the Olmsted Plan. Historical photos indicate that additional planting beds were added by the 1920s. Chet Orloff, “Portland Park Blocks,” accessed July 29, 2020, https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/portland_park_blocks/#.XyRIAC2ZNp8.

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century were enclosed with low chains supported by short bollards to protect the plantings. Photos of the park indicate that these chains and bollards were removed by the 1950s.

The blocks were differentiated from street level by continuous concrete curbs around each block that were first installed by the late-nineteenth century. Some of the curbing along the southern park blocks was removed when the University District pedestrian mall was installed in the early 1970s.

Site Furnishings

The SPB features bench seating throughout the park, positioned along the walkways and central plazas. Seating in the northern blocks (Block Nos. 7–12) consists of wood-slat benches with metal frames.³¹ These benches are similar—in materials, style, and general location—to the benches shown in historic photographs from the 1920s. As part of the 1980s Cultural District redevelopment plan, hardscape alcoves featuring hexagonal asphalt pavers were incorporated along the north-south walkways to serve as recessed pads for bench seating.³² Block Nos. 1–6 feature niche bench seating areas and concrete board game tables, installed in the 1970s as part of PSU's redevelopment plan, offering places to sit and gather (see Photos 11, 23 and 24). Seating consists of wood-slat benches mounted on a continuous low brick base, or seatwall. The benches vary in size between 6' and 8' long. Most of the benches are backless, while some have angled, wood-slat backs. Seating areas are positioned along the block edges, interior pathways, and central plazas. Some of the seating areas are grouped around exposed-aggregate concrete game tables with checkerboard tile tops. The **Smith Center Amphitheater** (contributing structure) in Block No. 4 features four tiers of low bench seating, angled to face an elevated stage at the northeast side. Other site furnishings include round, exposed-aggregate concrete and metal-slat trash receptacles. The concrete receptacles, located in the University District, date from the 1970s redevelopment. A two-faced **pedestal clock** (non-contributing object) is also located in Block No. 5.³³

Uses of Water

There are currently several fountains located within the SPB and they include the Shemanski Fountain, *Farewell to Orpheus* (fountain added in the 1980s) and two Benson bubblers – a single-bowl bubbler and a four-bowl bubbler.³⁴

Lighting

Light fixtures in Block Nos. 7–12 are fabricated of cast-iron and feature a fluted, tapered standard with a bell-shaped flare at the base (see Photos 8 and 16). The urn-shaped globes have a decorative metal band detail and metal finials. Light fixtures in the PSU blocks (Block Nos. 1–6) differ slightly and consist of cast aluminum, shallow-ribbed standards with a simple banding detail and coved base at the top (see

³¹ Park benches, donated by the Portland Junior League, were installed in 1985 along Block Nos. 7–9. Junior League of Portland, *A Guide to Portland's Historic Parks and Gardens*.

³² MIG, Inc., *South Park Blocks Master Plan Update*, "Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities Report," 39.

³³ It appears that another clock may have been installed at the north end of Block No. 2; all that remains is the concrete plinth and metal standard. The current clock was likely placed in the SPB between 2002 (NERI trademark date) and 2009 (historic photograph). See

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Park_Blocks#/media/File:South_Park_Blocks_PSU.JPG.

³⁴ Wealthy lumberman Simon Benson donated \$10,000 to the city for twenty drinking fountains to be installed throughout the downtown. Designed by prominent architect A.E. Doyle, these "Benson bubblers" provided public drinking water. It led to the installation of 50 four-bowl fountains. The four-bowl bubbler is part of the Simon Benson Memorial located at the park's northern terminus. Dr. William Willingham, Henry Kunowski, Nicholas Starin, Liza Mickle, Richard Engeman, and Chet Orloff, *City of Portland Civic Planning, Development, & Public Works, 1851-1965: A Historic Context* (prepared for the City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, March 2009), 31.

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Photo 7). They consist of a mix of glass and acrylic globes, with some exhibiting the band detail and metal finials.

Historic photographs of the park from the 1870s to the 1960s do not depict lighting within the SPB. With the urban redevelopment of the park's southern portion, modern acrylic globe lights were introduced as part of a unified design aesthetic found elsewhere in the redevelopment area, including the Halprin Open Space Sequence. The 1970s lights were subsequently replaced, as the light poles and luminaires throughout the SPB appear to date from the 1980s.³⁵

Public Art, Statues, and Commemorative Markers

Introduction of the statues and public art into the SPB started in the 1920s with the 1922 Theodore Roosevelt *Rough Rider* statue (pedestal remaining), 1926 Shemanski Fountain and *Rebecca at the Well* sculpture, and 1928 Abraham Lincoln statue (pedestal remaining). Additional public art was introduced starting in the 1950s with the Simon Benson Memorial (1959; altered 1987), *Farewell to Orpheus* statue (1973), *Peace Chant* sculpture (1984), *In the Shadow of the Elm* art installation (1984), and *Holon* sculpture (2001). PSU granite monument signs were added in 1988 to delineate the northern and southern terminus of the college campus along the SPB. The SPB has provided opportunities for adding commemorative markers throughout its history, which serve as memorials. These objects are diminutive in size and scale, and do not have a direct tie to the park's significance; therefore, they were not considered in the resource count.³⁶

BLOCK-BY-BLOCK PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

A block-by-block description of the SPB (as of May 2021) is summarized below, starting at Block No. 1 on the southern terminus and continuing north to Block No. 12. Figures 18–29 include a detailed plan of each block, depicting its tree canopy, circulation pattern, landscape features, contributing and non-contributing resources, and other physical characteristics.

South Park Block No. 1: Bounded by SW Jackson St. (S) and SW College St. (N), between Park Ave. E (E) and Park Ave. W (W)

Block No. 1 is the southernmost terminus of the SPB, situated north of the Interstate 405 right-of-way (see Figure 18). Like the northernmost block (Block No. 12), it terminates in a curved boundary at its southern edge. The block occupies a gently sloping site that descends in elevation towards the north. The block is framed by a play court to the east and the 1951 Park Plaza Apartments to the west. All of the perimeter streets accommodate one-way vehicular traffic.

The block is characterized by an open grassy area with a **children's play structure** (non-contributing structure) near the midsection (see Photo 15).³⁷ A low brick wall with a wire mesh safety fence encloses the irregularly shaped playground area, covered with a bark-mulch play surface. A polished granite **"Portland State University" granite monument sign** (non-contributing object, 1988) is positioned at

³⁵ Mayer, "Central City Plan."

³⁶ Commemorative plaques and markers include the Portland Junior League plaque (1985), Cultural District granite plaque (1999), Lincoln Bicentennial granite marker (2009), "In Loving Memory of the Artist Francisco Omier" memorial plaque (2016), memorial plaque from Arab-American Community Center of Oregon and PSU (1995), David and Wynne Spiegel memorial plaque (undated), Garry Oak plaques (undated), Terence O'Donnell pink granite marker (undated), and Julie S. Vigeland bronze memorial plaque (undated).

³⁷ The play structure was installed sometime in the 1990s, according to site managers. Photos from the 1960s show the play area sited closer to SW College Street than the current location. MIG, Inc., *South Park Blocks Master Plan Update*, "Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities Report," 25.

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the block's southeast corner. The gateway monument delineates the southern entrance to the PSU campus.³⁸ The eastern edge is lined with fifteen basalt boulders, defining the park's perimeter.

At the north end, a niche seating area, added in the 1970s as part of PSU's redevelopment plan, is located mid-block and set back from the street. Similar to the other PSU blocks (Blocks Nos. 1–6), the low seating features four 8' long wood-slat backless benches mounted on a 12" high continuous brick base.

Pedestrian circulation consists of a single concrete pathway that extends from the northeast corner to the play area to the south. Unlike the other PSU blocks, Block No. 1 does not include perimeter sidewalks, and is defined by a raised exposed aggregate concrete curbing. A 12' x 12' concrete slab is located at the block's northeast side, near SW College Street, which formerly served as a picnic table area but no longer contains the picnic table. Exposed aggregate concrete step pavers are installed at the south end of the play area and lead to the block's southern edge.

The block retains some of the tree planting plan's axial alignment and includes fourteen historic trees and eight replacement trees.³⁹ Three mature trees are aligned along the north end. The southern radiused perimeter is planted with a grove of locusts.⁴⁰ Other tree species include a mix of elm and oak.

Ten light fixtures are situated along the block's perimeter, including four on the east and west sides and two at the north end. Similar to other PSU blocks (Block Nos. 1–6), these fixtures, that post-date the period of significance, feature slender cast aluminum standards with urn-shaped globes.⁴¹ A single, contemporary cobra-style streetlight is positioned at the south end that is not consistent with the majority of lighting in the SPB.

South Park Block No. 2: Bounded by SW College St. (S) and SW Hall St. (N), between Park Ave. E (E) and Park Ave. W (W)

Block No. 2 is a gently sloping site that descends towards the north and is characterized by two triangular grass-covered ground planes bisected by a diagonal pathway (see Figure 19). The block is framed by the 1915 Shattuck Elementary School to the east and Stott Center/Viking Pavilion to the west. The north, east and west perimeter streets serve as pedestrian-only access and consist of exposed-aggregate

³⁸ The gold lettered granite monument sign replaced wooden signage installed in 1977, hand carved by former Smith operations manager, Jim Sells. Bryce Henry, email correspondence to Leslie Hutchinson, June 9, 2021.

³⁹ Tree age data was derived from City and PSU Maps and Surveys and from Purdue University Landscape Report (dated April 10, 2018) as calculated by tree age determination at breast height method. Tree caliper measurements and species depicted on the Block Detail Plans (Figures 19–30) are from Portland Parks and Recreation and PSU "South Park Blocks: Benefits of Trees" brochure with current data updates from field surveys. Measured diameter in inches for each tree was multiplied by the Purdue University Specie Growth Factor to yield their approximate age in years. Lindsey Purcell, "How Old Is My Tree?" Purdue University Landscape Report, April 10, 2018, <https://www.purduelandscape.com/article/how-old-is-my-tree/>. For the purposes of this nomination, references to "historic tree" relates to the tree's likely presence in the SPB during the park's period of significance. Portland Parks and Recreation, "South Park Blocks: Benefits of Trees" brochure, published with excerpts from Professor Joseph Poracsky, PSU Dept of Geology, *Wild in the City, A Guide to Portland's Natural Areas*, March 2005.

⁴⁰ The radiused perimeter of Block No. 1 was created between 1970 and 1981. See 1970 and 1981 aerials for Portland, Oregon in www.historicaerials.com, accessed August 4, 2021.

⁴¹ The light fixtures in the PSU blocks follow a design specification used throughout campus and are similar to other city-specified light fixtures. They are distinguished by their shallow-ribbed standards with a simple banding detail and coved base at the top. Some of the globes feature metal banding and metal finials. These fixtures appear newer than those in the northern portion (Block Nos. 7–12).

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concrete with a brick border detail.⁴² The south cross street (SW College Street) accommodates one-way vehicular access through the park blocks.

Niche seating areas are positioned along the south, west, and east edges. Similar to the other PSU blocks (Block Nos. 1–6), the low seating contains wood-slat benches mounted on a continuous brick base. On the south end, the seating area is mid-block and contains four 8' long wood-slat benches with angled backs. Seating on the east side is centered on the block and contains three 8' long benches, flanked by two 5' diameter concrete planters. On the west side, the seating area is at the north end and contains three 8' long benches.

The block is bisected by a single diagonal walkway that extends from the southeast to the northwest corner (see Photo 24). The walkway features exposed-aggregate concrete paving with a brick border. At the midsection, niche seating areas are on each side of the pathway, containing two 8' long wood-slat benches mounted on a low brick base. A concrete plinth with a metal standard is located at the block's north end; it appears to be a similar design to the pedestal clock plinth block located on Block No. 5 but is missing the clock face.

The tree canopy on this block retains some of its axial alignment of five north-south rows and includes fifteen historic trees and three replacement trees. Three mature elm trees at the south end are set in circular brick pavers. Tree species include a mix of elm and linden.

Seven light fixtures are situated along the block's perimeter, including three on the east and four on the west sides. Similar to other PSU blocks (Block Nos. 1–6), the fixtures, that post-date the period of significance, feature slender cast aluminum standards with urn-shaped globes.

South Park Block No. 3: Bounded by SW Hall St. (S) and SW Harrison St. (N), between Park Ave. E (E) and Park Ave. W (W)

Block No. 3 is a relatively flat site with four triangular grassy areas defining the ground plane. The grass perimeter is edged with brick detailing (see Figure 20). The block is framed by PSU's Maseeh Hall (formerly Neuberger Hall) to the east and Millar Library to the west. All the perimeter streets serve as pedestrian-only access, featuring exposed-aggregate concrete paving with a brick border detail (see Photo 14).

Niche seating areas are positioned on the block's north, south, and east edges. Similar to other PSU blocks (Block Nos. 1–6), the low seating contains wood-slat benches mounted on a continuous brick base. The south end features a grouping of four 6' long backless benches and two exposed-aggregate concrete game tables with checkerboard tile tops. The north end contains two groupings at the east and west sides. The east side, fronting Maseeh Hall, contains two benches with angled backs. Round exposed-aggregate concrete trash receptacles are placed near the seating areas.

Interior pedestrian circulation includes intersecting diagonal walkways, creating an offset "X" pattern. The walkways converge on a central gathering space, known as Holon Gathering Place, added in the 1970s redesign of the University District. The walkways and plaza area are paved in exposed-aggregate concrete hardscape edged with a brick border in a soldier course pattern. The plaza is positioned off-

⁴² SW Hall and SW Harrison streets, along with the east and west perimeter streets, were closed to vehicular traffic as part of the 1970s PSU redevelopment plan. This circulation change helped unify the block sequence within the PSU campus.

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center, slightly to the west and south, and contains three 8' long wood-slat benches aligned along the east and west sides. The benches are mounted on a continuous brick base.

The focal point of the plaza is the **Holon sculpture** (non-contributing object), an abstract artwork by sculptor Donald Wilson, installed in 2001 (see Photo 13). Named for the Greek word "whole," the granite sculpture sits on a raised brick plinth block, with a plaque that recognizes the establishment of social work education at PSU in 1961 and honors Dr. Gordon Hearn, the school's founder and first dean.⁴³

The tree canopy on this block retains some of its axial alignment of five north-south rows and includes fifteen historic trees and eight replacement trees. A mature tree at the northeast corner is encircled by a raised brick surround. Tree species feature a mix of oak, elm, and maple.

Nine light fixtures are situated along the block's perimeter, including four on the east and five on the west sides. Similar to other PSU blocks (Block Nos. 1–6), these fixtures, that post-date the period of significance, have slender cast aluminum standards with urn-shaped globes.

South Park Block No. 4: Bounded by SW Harrison St. (S) and SW Montgomery St. (N), between Park Ave. E (E) and Park Ave. W (W)

Block No. 4 occupies a gently sloping site that is largely paved, with a triangular grassy area at the northwest side and a rectangular grassy area at the south end (see Figure 21). The block is framed by PSU's Smith Memorial Student Union to the east and the five-story Blackstone Apartments to the west. All of the perimeter streets are used for pedestrian-only access, featuring exposed-aggregate concrete paving with a brick border detail.

The turf area at the south end is defined by a low brick wall, oriented along an east-west axis, that contains five wood-slat backless benches. A low, angled brick wall delineates the grassy area to the northwest. Niche seating with exposed-aggregate game tables with checkerboard tile tops is positioned at the northwest corner. Round concrete trash receptacles are placed near the seating area.

The block is dominated by the **Smith Center Amphitheater** (contributing structure), added by 1973 as part of the PSU redevelopment plan, situated immediately west of the Smith Memorial Student Union (see Photo 21).⁴⁴ The amphitheater features an elevated brick stage at the northeast side and four tiers of low seating, angled along gentle terraces to face the stage. Continuous brick stairs and three circular raised brick planters are incorporated into the stage area. Amphitheater seating consists of wood-slat backless benches mounted on metal frames or low brick walls. Additional features of this gathering space include concrete bollards with internal lights and circular (raised and inset) brick tree surrounds.

Interior circulation includes an off-set diagonal walkway extending from the southwest to and a smaller diagonal pathway from the northwest corner to the amphitheater.⁴⁵ The pathways and amphitheater plaza feature exposed-aggregate concrete paving edged with multi-tone brick in a soldier course pattern.

The tree planting's axial grid of deciduous trees is partially intact and includes seventeen historic and four replacement trees. The grass-covered southern border retains a row of three mature trees. A mature tree

⁴³ The original sculpture, which was installed in 1979 and fabricated from white Indiana limestone, was destroyed by an act of vandalism in 2001 and replaced with this granite sculpture in 2004. Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 110.

⁴⁴ This represents the largest gathering space in the SPB and is activated throughout the year with the weekly Farmer's Market and Party in the Park. MIG, Inc., *South Park Blocks Master Plan Update*, "Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities Report," 20, 24.

⁴⁵ Harrison and Montgomery streets are closed to vehicular traffic, except for the Portland Streetcar.

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at the southwest side is enclosed in a raised, circular brick planter; some of the trees are ringed with circular brick surrounds set into the concrete paving, integrating it into the 1970s amphitheater design. Tree species include a mix of elm, linden, and maple.

Three light fixtures are situated along the block's perimeter, including one at the north end and two at the west side. The fixture at the southeast corner is missing. Similar to other PSU blocks (Block Nos. 1–6), these fixtures, that post-date the period of significance, feature slender cast aluminum standards with urn-shaped globes.

South Park Block No. 5: Bounded by SW Montgomery St. (S) and SW Mill St. (N), between Park Ave. E (E) and Park Ave. W (W)

Block No. 5 is a gently sloping site with four triangular, grass-covered areas defining the ground plane (see Figure 22; Photo 12). The south and east perimeter streets are used for pedestrian-only access and are paved with exposed-aggregate concrete with a brick border detail. The west perimeter streets is open to one-way vehicular traffic. To the north, the westbound Portland Streetcar runs on a single track between Block Nos. 5 and 6 in the SW Mill Street right-of-way.⁴⁶ Crosswalks are positioned on the east and west sides of the street.

The southern terminus of this block has a small plaza area featuring a cast bronze sculpture entitled ***Farewell to Orpheus*** (contributing object), designed by PSU art professor emeritus Frederic Littman (see Photo 22). The sculpture, which was added in 1972-1973 as part of the PSU Urban Renewal Development Project, was sculpted by Littman in 1968 of a female nude on a floating mount above a reflecting pool and fountain. The figure depicts Eurydice, wife of the mythical Greek prophet Orpheus, who was forced to return to the underworld.⁴⁷ A plaque at the edge of the pool states, "Provided for your enjoyment by private citizens through the PSU Foundation and the City of Portland urban renewal program." Surrounding the reflecting pool on the north and west sides is a low brick seating wall with three 8' long wood-slat backless benches. A large, sloping triangular planting area to the north, which frames the sculpture and reflecting pool, is planted in native trees, shrubs and other plantings.⁴⁸

At the north end of the block is an operational **12' tall, two-faced pedestal clock** (non-contributing object).⁴⁹ Manufactured by NERI, a company headquartered in Longiano, Italy, the clock was likely placed at its current location between 2002 (trademark date) and 2009 (historic photograph).⁵⁰ The clock, which was made in Italy, is mounted on a stone base secured to a concrete plinth. Due to the placement of the clock in the park after the period of significance, it is not a contributing resource.

Interior circulation is defined by 8' wide diagonal pathways featuring exposed-aggregate concrete paving with brick edge detailing. The walkways extend from the block's outer edges to converge on a central plaza, forming an offset "X" pattern. A niche seating area on the plaza's east side contains four wood-slat

⁴⁶ The sidewalk at the north end has been replaced with dirt and mulch; the raised concrete curbing is still intact. Two metal posts are installed along this strip to serve as supports for the streetcar overhead line.

⁴⁷ The sculpture was installed and dedicated as a gift to the university in 1973. The water feature is not original to the sculpture and was added in the early 1990s as one of four fountains on PSU campus' "Walk of Heroines." Portland State University, "Walk of the Heroines," accessed June 28, 2021, <https://www.pdx.edu/heroines/>.

⁴⁸ The native plantings were added in sometime in the 2000s. A photo from the 1990s shows the area planted in turf. MIG, Inc., *South Park Blocks Master Plan Update*, "Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities Report," 24.

⁴⁹ It appears that another clock may have been installed at the north end of Block No. 2; all that remains is the concrete plinth and metal standard.

⁵⁰ A variation of this two-faced pedestal clock is still available in the NERI product catalog, https://www.nerinorthamerica.com/System/103896/Neri_Products_Street%20furniture_Series_Scilla_en_it.pdf.

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benches mounted on continuous brick base. Two 6' long metal benches are positioned on the plaza's west side.

The tree planting's axial grid of deciduous trees is partially intact and includes thirteen historic trees and eleven replacement trees. Tree species include a mix of oak, beech, and maple.

Nine light fixtures are situated along the block's perimeter, including four at the east and west sides, and one at the southwest corner. Similar to other PSU blocks (Block Nos. 1–6), these fixtures, that post-date the period of significance, feature slender cast aluminum standards with urn-shaped glass and/or acrylic globes .

South Park Block No. 6: Bounded by Mill St. (S) and SW Market St. (N), between Park Ave. E (E) and Park Ave. W (W)

Block No. 6 is a sloped site descending downwards towards the north with a predominantly grass-covered ground plane (see Figure 23). This block delineates the northern edge of the University District and shift to the Cultural District (Block Nos. 7–12).⁵¹ It is framed by PSU's Lincoln Performance Hall (former Lincoln High School) to the east and a five-story Art Deco style apartment building and Parkmill building to the west. The western perimeter street is used for one-way vehicular traffic, while the eastern perimeter street is used for pedestrian-only circulation. At the south end, the westbound Portland Streetcar runs on a single track between Block Nos. 5 and 6 in the SW Mill Street right-of-way. A raised platform along the south end of the block has a **streetcar shelter** (non-contributing structure) located mid-block. The metal-frame, curved-roof structure with glass panels was added in 2007.⁵² To the north, the eastbound streetcar runs on a single track along the SW Market Street right-of-way. ADA crosswalks are positioned on the east and west sides of both street crossings.

Interior circulation is limited to two short diagonal pathways at the north end, extending from mid-block to the outer edges along the east and west sides. The walkways are paved in exposed-aggregate concrete with a brick border.

Niche seating areas are centered on the east and west sides of the block (see Photo 11). The east side, fronting PSU's Lincoln Hall, contains a recessed paved area with three 8' long benches. The west side has a recessed paved area with two 8' long benches. Similar to other PSU blocks (Block Nos. 1–6), the low seating contains wood-slat benches with angled backs mounted on a continuous brick base.

The tree canopy on this block retains much of its five north-south axial rows and includes sixteen historic deciduous trees and eighteen replacement trees. Tree species include a mix of elm, maple, linden and ash.

Eight light fixtures are situated along the block's perimeter, including three at the east and west sides, and two at the north end. Similar to other PSU blocks (Block Nos. 1–6), these fixtures, that post-date the period of significance, feature slender cast aluminum standards with urn-shaped glass and/or acrylic globes. A polished granite "**Portland State University**" **granite monument sign** (non-contributing object, 1988) is centered at the block's north end, delineating the northernmost entrance to the PSU campus.⁵³

⁵¹ The six northernmost blocks of the SPB were designated as a "Cultural District" in 1999.

⁵² MIG, Inc., *South Park Blocks Master Plan Update*, "Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities Report," 20.

⁵³ Similar to Block No. 1, the gold lettered granite monument sign replaced wooden signage installed in 1977. Henry, email correspondence to Leslie Hutchinson, June 9, 2021.

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South Park Block No. 7: Bounded by SW Market St. (S) and SW Clay St. (N), between Park Ave. E (E) and Park Ave. W (W)

Block No. 7 occupies a low-sloped site featuring three rectangular grassy areas and a paved main plaza (see Figure 24; Photo 7). One-way vehicular traffic is oriented on the east and west perimeter streets. To the south, the eastbound Portland Streetcar runs on a single track along the SW Market Street right-of-way. A **streetcar shelter** (non-contributing object) is located mid-block at the southern perimeter. The metal-frame, curved-roof structure with glass panels was added in 2007.⁵⁴ The cross street at the north end (SW Clay Street) accommodates one-way vehicular traffic.

The block includes a continuous perimeter promenade featuring hexagonal asphalt pavers with concrete curbing. The east and west promenades measure 4' wide, while the north and south measure 8' wide. Interior circulation is defined by a cruciform pattern system with hexagonal asphalt pavers.⁵⁵ It consists of two parallel north-south walkways flanking a central grassy area, and two narrower, perpendicular (east-west) walkways. The intersecting walkways converge on a paved central plaza. The walkways and plaza feature hexagonal asphalt pavers with concrete curbing.

A public artwork, entitled ***In the Shadow of the Elm*** (non-contributing object), was added to the plaza in 1984 as part of the Phase 1 redevelopment of the Cultural District. Designed by Oregon artist Paul Sutinen, it consists of 169 pieces of individually-cut white granite, embedded into the hardscape. Measuring 45' x 40', the memorial work is a depiction of the shadow of a tree "that ostensibly once existed within the grid of trees in the block."⁵⁶ The sculpture includes two inscriptions: one on a limb (northwest corner) that reads "Paul Sutinen 1984" and another on a circular granite piece (south end) that includes the name of the artwork and artist's signature. In 1995, a tree was planted immediately south of the art installation to commemorate lives lost in the Oklahoma City bombing. A memorial plaque from the Arab-American Community Center of Oregon and PSU is inset in the turf.

The tree canopy on this block retains much of its axial alignment of five north-south rows, including seventeen historic trees and nineteen replacement trees. Tree species include a mix of primarily oak, elm, maple and ash.

Fifteen park benches are arranged in pairs along the north-south central pathways and central plaza.⁵⁷ The benches are set on recessed hexagonal concrete-paved pads and consist of 6' long metal-frame and wood-slat benches. Sixteen light fixtures are situated along the block's perimeter, including four positioned at each corner of the plaza. Similar to Block Nos. 7–12, these fixtures post-date the period of significance and differ slightly from those in the PSU blocks (Block Nos. 1–6), featuring a fluted, tapered standard with a bell-shaped flare at the base and urn-shaped globe.

⁵⁴ MIG, Inc., *South Park Blocks Master Plan Update*, "Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities Report," 20.

⁵⁵ The cruciform pattern hardscape, added in the 1980s, is distinguished from the older diagonal pathway and features dual north-south walkways and cross-block connections with hexagonal asphalt pavers and concrete curbing. Goetze, "Simplicity Key Word for Park Blocks Plan."

⁵⁶ Portland Parks and Recreation, "South Park Blocks," accessed July 28, 2020, <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/finder/index.cfm?action=ViewPark&PropertyID=674&searchtext=south%20park%20blocks%20>

⁵⁷ One park bench is missing at the southwest side.

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South Park Block No. 8: Bounded by SW Clay St. (S) and SW Columbia St. (N), between Park Ave. E (E) and Park Ave. W (W)

Block No. 8 is a relatively flat site featuring rectangular grassy areas and a paved central plaza (see Figure 25; Photo 8). The block is framed by Gallery Park Apartments to the east and the seven-story Jeanne Manor to the west. All four perimeter streets are used for one-way vehicular traffic.

This block features a similar circulation pattern to Block Nos. 7–11, including a continuous perimeter promenade on all four sides and interior cruciform pattern pathways. The east and west promenades measure 4' wide, while the north and south measure 8' wide. Interior circulation includes two parallel north-south walkways flanking a central grassy area and third rows of trees, and two perpendicular (east-west) walkways, which converge on a paved central plaza. The walkways and plaza feature hexagonal asphalt pavers with concrete curbing.

At the north end of the plaza is a **single-bowl Benson Bubbler** (contributing object). Lumberman Simon Benson gifted twenty drinking fountains, known as 'Benson Bubblers,' designed by architect A.E. Doyle in 1912.⁵⁸

The tree canopy on this block retains some of its axial alignment including twelve historic trees and thirty replacement trees. Tree species include a mix of oak, elm and maple.

Eighteen park benches are positioned along the north-south pathways and plaza area.⁵⁹ The benches are set on recessed hexagonal concrete-paved pads and consist of 6' long metal-frame and wood-slat benches. A Portland Junior League plaque (1985) embedded in the hardscape at the block's north end commemorates the League's seventy-five years in Portland with a donation of fifty-two park benches in three blocks (Block Nos. 7–9).

Sixteen light fixtures are situated along the block's perimeter, including four on the north and south ends; two on the east and west sides, flanking the walkways; and one at each corner of the plaza. These fixtures, that post-date the period of significance, feature tapered cast iron standards with urn-shaped globes.

South Park Block No. 9: Bounded by and SW Columbia St. (S) and SW Jefferson St. (N), between Park Ave. E (E) and Park Ave. W (W)

Block No. 9 is a gently sloping site featuring six open grassy areas and a paved central plaza (see Figure 26). The block is framed by First Christian Church to the east and two churches (St. James Lutheran Church and Sixth Church of Christ, Scientist) to the west. All four perimeter streets are used for one-way vehicular traffic.

This block features a similar circulation pattern to Block Nos. 7–11, including a continuous perimeter promenade on all four sides and interior cruciform pattern pathways. The east and west perimeter promenades measure 4' wide, while the north and south measure 8' wide. Interior circulation includes two parallel north-south walkways flanking a central grassy area and center row of trees, and two perpendicular (east-west) walkways, which converge on a paved central plaza. The walkways and plaza feature hexagonal asphalt pavers with concrete curbing.

⁵⁸ Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 104.

⁵⁹ One park bench is missing at the southeast side.

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The block was included in the 1984 Phase 1 redevelopment of the Cultural District with the installation of the **Peace Chant sculpture** (non-contributing object) in the plaza. Designed by Eugene sculptor Steve Gillman, the non-representational piece is composed of several large, carved white granite blocks.⁶⁰ A bronze plaque on the plaza's south end describes the artwork as "the first known peace memorial in the State of Oregon." Portland City Council designated this block "Peace Plaza" on May 15, 1985.⁶¹ On the west side of Park Avenue in front of St. James Lutheran Church, there is a large bronze plaque for the Peace Plaza, along with another piece by Gillman entitled *From Within, Shalom*. The plaque and sculpture are situated outside of the SPB boundaries.⁶² Set in a grassy area at the plaza's east side is a 20" x 40" pink granite marker dedicated to Terence O'Donnell, who died in 2001. The marker reads: "In honor of historian Terence O'Donnell, consummate storyteller and friend of Persians."⁶³

The tree canopy on this block retains some of its axial alignment, including thirteen historic trees and twenty-one replacement trees. Tree species include a mix of oak, elm, maple, beech and sycamore.

A "**Portland Loo**" (non-contributing object) was added in 2012 at the south end of the block.⁶⁴ The public restroom is an oval-shaped metal structure. Eleven park benches are positioned along the north-south pathways and plaza area. The 6' long wood-slat benches are set on recessed hexagonal concrete-paved pads.

Sixteen light fixtures are situated along the block's perimeter, including four on the north and south ends; two on the east and west sides, flanking the walkways; and one at each corner of the plaza. These fixtures, that post-date the period of significance, feature tapered cast-iron standards with urn-shaped globes. Three high-intensity lights are installed in the central plaza to illuminate the Peace Chant sculpture; they are non-character-defining.

South Park Block No. 10: Bounded by SW Jefferson St. (S) and SW Madison St. (N), between Park Ave. E (E) and Park Ave. W (W)

Block No. 10 is a gently sloping site featuring four rectangular grassy areas and a central plaza. Raised concrete planter beds are positioned along the central north-south axis and mid-block at the east and west sides (see Figure 27). The block is framed by OHS to the east and PAM to the west (see Photo 17). All four perimeter streets are used for one-way vehicular traffic.

⁶⁰ Gillman designed the sculpture to "create a space where people could sit and have quiet time. In his work, he uses the nature of the stone to create a feeling of space and time, juxtaposing natural, manmade, and architectural elements to remind us of man's place in nature." Cyclotram, "Peace Chant," last modified October 5, 2013, <https://cyclotram.blogspot.com/2013/10/peace-chant.html>.

⁶¹ The Peace Plaza used to contain a War Memorial Board with the names of persons killed in World War II and the Korean War, which remained in place until 1961. *The Oregonian*, May 16, 1985, 33; *The Oregonian*, September 21, 1984, 33.

⁶² St. James Lutheran Church owns the sculpture, which is part of Peace Plaza and a companion piece to Gillman's *Peace Chant*. The bronze plaque includes a poem by Cora Lee Beard Whiteneck, titled *Harmony and Peace*. *From Within, Shalom* was dedicated by Rabbi Joshua Stampher of Congregation Neveh Shalom, in memory of Whiteneck. Portland Public Art, "Peace Plaza," last modified August 28, 2006, <https://portlandpublicart.wordpress.com/2006/08/28/peace-plaza/>.

⁶³ O'Donnell is the author of several definitive Oregon state history books, including *That Balance So Rare*, *The Story of Oregon*, *An Arrow in The Earth*, and many other books, essays and letters to *The Oregonian*. Portland Public Art, "Terence O'Donnell," last modified August 28, 2006, <https://portlandpublicart.wordpress.com/category/terence-odonnell/>.

⁶⁴ *The Oregonian*, June 30, 2012.

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This block features a similar circulation pattern to Block Nos. 7–11, including a continuous perimeter promenade on all four sides and interior cruciform pattern pathways (see Photos 9 and 10).⁶⁵ The east and west promenades measure 4' wide, while the north and south measure 8' wide. Interior circulation includes two parallel north-south walkways flanking a central grassy area, and two perpendicular (east-west) walkways. The intersecting walkways converge on a paved central plaza. The walkways feature hexagonal asphalt pavers with concrete curbing, while the plaza is distinguished by its square asphalt pavers.

A **granite pedestal base** (non-contributing object) is located in the central plaza (see Photo 5).⁶⁶ The raised base contains a bronze plaque stating: "Presented to the City of Portland By Dr. Henry Waldo Coe, Lifelong Friend of Theodore Roosevelt, Dedicated to the Children of America." The block was renamed "Roosevelt Square" by the city.⁶⁷ A 16" x 18" granite plaque is embedded in the hardscape at the statue's north side, commemorating the area's designation as a "Cultural District" in 1999.

The tree canopy on this block retains some of its axial alignment of five north-south rows of trees, including eight historic trees and fifteen replacement trees. A row of linden and hawthorn trees are aligned along the east and west edges.⁶⁸ Other tree species include a mix of oak, elm, and maple.

⁶⁵ Renovations were undertaken in 1987 on the three northern blocks (Salmon to Jefferson) following the same circulation pattern and design elements as the 1984 renovations, including cruciform pattern walkways with hexagonal asphalt pavers. MIG, Inc., *South Park Blocks Master Plan Update*, "Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities Report," 12.

⁶⁶ An 18' tall bronze equestrian Theodore Roosevelt *Rough Rider* statue originally stood on the pedestal base. Designed by American sculptor Alexander Phimister Proctor, the statue depicted Roosevelt in his Spanish-American War uniform mounted on his horse, leading his cavalry regiment called the 'Rough Riders.' The statue, along with the nearby statue of Abraham Lincoln, was toppled on October 11, 2020, during the "Indigenous Peoples Day of Rage." Roosevelt was an avid conservationist best known for his expansion of the national park system; however, these conservation efforts came at the expense of Native American tribes. He also believed in white superiority and vocally supported eugenics. The statue was removed as of October 2020. Junior League of Portland, *A Guide to Portland's Historic Parks and Gardens*; Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 107; Shane Dixon Kavanaugh, "Portland Protesters Topple Statues of Theodore Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln in 'Day of Rage'; Police Declare Riot," *OregonLive*, updated October 12, 2020; Aaron Mesh, "Father's Day Off: Portland Protesters Tore Down Statues of Presidents. New Rules May Keep Them Grounded," *Willamette Week*, June 23, 2001, 6.

⁶⁷ The public monument was dedicated in 1922 as a gift to the city from Dr. Henry Waldo Coe, a physician who founded the Morningside psychiatric hospital in East Portland. Coe is remembered as a philanthropist who donated four expensive statues, including Roosevelt and Lincoln in the SPB, Joan of Arc in Laurelhurst, and George Washington in Rose City Park. Less known is his active role institutionalizing Native Alaskans at Morningside. Prior to statehood, there were no services available in the Territory of Alaska for individuals dealing with mental illness or developmental disabilities. "At the time, mental illness was considered a crime. Alaskan adults and children were arrested, convicted of being insane and sent by the federal government to live at Morningside Hospital in Portland, Oregon." Sometime prior to 1904, the Department of the Interior had entered into negotiations with Dr. Coe with reference "to the care of the insane in Alaska." At least 3,500 Alaskans were sent to Morningside between 1904 and the 1960s, when it closed. A series of investigations in the late 1950s revealed widespread financial abuse by the Coe family—"subverting money intended for care of patients to items of personal gain like trips and art...And there were substantial questions raised about care." These hearings led to the passage of the Alaska Mental Health Enabling Act of 1956, which "set the stage for the termination of the arrangement the federal government had with the Coe family to use Morningside Hospital." Ellen Ganley and Karen Perdue, *Morningside Hospital.com*, accessed December 17, 2021, <https://www.morningsidehospital.com>.

⁶⁸ Hawthorns are deciduous, flowering trees that are members of the large rose family and can reach a height of 25' to 35' with a similar spread. Lindens are medium- to large-sized deciduous shade trees with strong horizontal branches that form a pyramidal or rounded structure.

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A unique character-defining feature of this block are the six raised planting beds that frame the central plaza.⁶⁹ Likely added sometime in the early 1900s under the direction of parks superintendent Mische, they include two rectangular beds at the north and south ends, and one rectangular bed flanking the east and west sides. Three of the flowerbeds contain award-winning roses such as Julia Childs, Crimson Bouquet, Singin' the Blues, Passionate Kisses, Whisper, Mardi Gras. Other planting beds include a mix of ornamental plantings.

A stone marker near SW Jefferson Street and SW Park Avenue contains "The Great Plank Road" plaque. The bronze marker, installed by the Lang Syne Society in 1960, commemorates the construction of a wooden plank roadway that provided a transportation route between Portland and the agriculturally rich Tualatin Valley to the west.⁷⁰ The bronze plaque states, "As a community effort it brought farm produce to our docks and established Portland as the first market and shipping point for the original old Oregon Country."

Four memorial plaques have been added near the plaza area. These include the David and Wynne Spiegel memorial bronze plaque, installed at the east side of the north-south pathway; "In Loving Memory of the Artist Francisco Omier 2016" memorial plaque, located at the plaza's north side of the plaza; and two Garry Oak plaques, installed at the plaza's southwest corner. One is a pink granite plaque that reads, "Garry Oak Tree planted in 1877 by Alice Henderson Strong, 1852–1946." The other is inscribed with this message: "This tree was planted in May 2001 to commemorate the original Garry Oak planted by A.H. Strong. It was moved in 1993. Among Portland's first families the Strongs made major contributions to early civic life."

This block contains twenty-one park benches aligned along the interior north-south pathways and plaza area. The 6' long wood-slat benches are arranged in pairs and set on recessed hexagonal concrete-paved pads.

Sixteen light fixtures are situated along the block's perimeter and central plaza, including four on the north and south ends; two mid-block on the east and west sides; and one at each corner of the plaza. These fixtures, that post-date the period of significance, feature tapered cast-iron standards with urn-shaped globes. One high-intensity light fixture is installed in the northeast corner of the central plaza to illuminate the statue.⁷¹

South Park Block No. 11: Bounded by SW Madison St. (S) and SW Main St. (N), between Park Ave. E (E) and Park Ave. W (W)

Block No. 11 is a sloped site featuring six grassy areas and a paved central plaza (see Figure 28). The block is framed by First Congregational Church to the east and the Mark Building (former Portland Masonic Temple) to the west (see Photo 18). All four perimeter streets are used for one-way vehicular traffic.

⁶⁹ Flowerbeds, shrubs, and colorful ornamentals were added in the early twentieth century under Mische, following the Olmsted Plan. Orloff, "Portland Park Blocks."

⁷⁰ The plank road was inspired by the pioneer tanner Daniel H. Lownsdale, who scouted the route and received a state charter from the Oregon Territorial Legislature in 1851 permitting construction. Although the plaque dates from the park's period of significance, it does not have a direct tie to the resource's significance. *The Oregonian*, May 15, 1960, 1, 9; Tyler Wayne, "Great Plank Road," *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, accessed July 28, 2020, https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/great_plank_road/#.XySEnC2ZNp8.

⁷¹ The base for another fixture is intact at the southwest corner of the plaza, but the lamp pole has been removed.

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This block features a similar circulation pattern to Block Nos. 7–11, including a continuous perimeter promenade on all four sides and interior cruciform pattern pathways. The east and west promenades measure 4' wide, while the north and south measure 8' wide. Interior circulation includes two parallel north-south walkways flanking a central planting strip and two perpendicular (east-west) walkways, which converge on a paved central plaza. (see Photo 4). The walkways and plaza feature hexagonal asphalt pavers with concrete curbing.

A **granite pedestal base** (non-contributing object) is located in the central plaza (see Photo 3).⁷² The block was designated "Lincoln Square" in July 1928.⁷³ A 24" x 24" Lincoln Bicentennial granite marker was installed in 2009 at the north side of the statue's base. Another marker, Julie S. Vigeland bronze memorial plaque, is embedded in the hardscape at the east side of the plaza, commemorating Vigeland's service on the Portland Park Board from 2009 to 2016.

The tree canopy on this block retains much of its axial alignment of five north-south rows and includes eighteen historic trees and eighteen replacement trees. Tree species include a mix of oak, elm, maple, and beech. The central planting beds are planted with a mix of small trees and low shrubbery, including daylilies, sword ferns, hellebore, hydrangeas and heuchera.

This block contains eighteen park benches aligned along the interior north-south pathways and plaza area. The 6' long wood-slat benches are set on recessed hexagonal concrete-paved pads.

Sixteen light fixtures are situated along the block's perimeter and central plaza, including four on the north and south ends; two mid-block on the east and west sides; and one at each corner of the plaza. These fixtures, that post-date the period of significance, feature tapered cast-iron standards with urn-shaped globes. Two high-intensity light fixtures are installed at the northeast and northwest corners of the central plaza to illuminate the statue.

South Park Block No. 12: Bounded by SW Main St. (S) and SW Salmon St. (N), between Park Ave. E (E) and Park Ave. W (W)

Block No. 12 is the northernmost terminus of the SPB, bounded by SW Salmon Street (see Figure 29). The block is a relatively flat site containing a large paved central plaza surrounded by sloped perimeter turf areas (see Photo 16). The north end, which is elevated from the streetscape (SW Salmon Street), is accessed by a set of curved concrete steps at the northeast corner and a sloped, 12' wide pathway at the

⁷² A 10' tall bronze Abraham Lincoln statue originally stood on the pedestal base. Dedicated on October 5, 1928, it represented one of four statues (along with the Roosevelt statue that stood at Block No. 10) given to the city by Dr. Henry Waldo Coe, installed one year after his death. Designed by sculptor George Fite Waters, it depicted the Lincoln of the Civil War years: "He is standing in the familiar pose, with head bowed and shoulders drooped, a sad but kindly expression on his face." The statue, along with the nearby statue of Theodore Roosevelt, was toppled on October 11, 2020 during the "Indigenous Peoples Day of Rage." Though Lincoln is chiefly remembered for the Emancipation Proclamation, he held racist views of Black people and presided over the removal of Native Americans from their land. The statue was removed as of October 2020. Norma Catherine Gleason and Chet Orloff, *Portland's Public Art: A Guide and History* (Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society, 1986), 43; Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 106; Kavanaugh, "Portland Protesters Topple Statues of Theodore Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln in 'Day of Rage'; Police Declare Riot"; Mesh, "Father's Day Off: Portland Protesters Tore Down Statues of Presidents. New Rules May Keep Them Grounded," 6.

⁷³ A 1949 photograph shows the statue was placed along the centerline of a walkway lined with a continuous row of benches. The square was enlarged with the 1987 Cultural District redevelopment. MIG, Inc., *South Park Blocks Master Plan Update*, "Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities Report," 21, 23.

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northwest corner.⁷⁴ The block is framed by the Center for Performing Arts (formerly Portland Publix Theater) to the east and Roosevelt Hotel to the west. The four-story Arlington Club, completed in 1910, is located across the street at the block's northern terminus. The Arlington Club's classically proportioned front entry lies directly on axis with the middle of the park blocks, serving as a northern focal point.

All of the perimeter streets accommodate one-way vehicular traffic. This block features a continuous perimeter promenade on all four sides. The east and west promenades measure 4' wide, while the north and south measure 8' wide. Interior circulation includes cruciform pattern pathways at the south end, with diagonal pathways at the northeast and northwest corners. The south end includes two sloped north-south walkways and two sloped walkways, oriented on an east-west axis. The pathways at the elevated north portion lead to a large gathering place, known as Joseph Shemanski Square. Like Block No. 10, the walkways feature hexagonal asphalt pavers with concrete curbing, while the plaza is distinguished by its square asphalt pavers. Unlike other park blocks, this plaza is defined by a 15" high concrete wall along the perimeter of the plaza that serves as a seating area. The low, curved wall at the radiused northern terminus was intended as a low-profile stage along the street frontage.

At the plaza's south end is the **Shemanski Fountain and Rebecca at the Well Sculpture** (contributing object), added in 1926. Commissioned by architect Carl L. Linde and designed by Thayer Logan, the fountain consists of a triangular, three-columned (Corinthian order) structure built of Oregon sandstone (see Photo 1). The cupola features a red cast stone roof. At its center is the bronze statue by sculptor Oliver Laurence Barrett, depicting an urn-carrying maiden and three water basins for dogs.⁷⁵ The fountain was installed on a new concrete base in 1987, when it was restored; the fountain's mid-block location remained unchanged.

The **Simon Benson Memorial** (non-contributing object) delineates the park's northern terminus. It is positioned within a curved, recessed niche that faces the SW Salmon streetscape directly on axis with the main entrance of the 1910 Arlington Club (see Photo 2). A planting area above the Benson Memorial provides a backdrop to Shemanski Square. The 1959 memorial designed by architect A.E. Doyle was composed of a **four-bowl Benson Bubbler** (contributing object) mounted on a single post.⁷⁶

A round bronze plaque with a *bas relief* of Simon Benson, designed and cast by Benson High School teachers and students, is set in the curved concrete wall and dedicated to his memory. The memorial was redesigned in 1987 when the original 3' tall freestanding, arched brick wall was replaced with the concrete retaining wall. All that remains from its original design is the bubbler, bronze plaque, and landing steps. The Benson Memorial no longer retains sufficient integrity to convey its period of significance and, therefore, is non-contributing.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ The block was redesigned in 1987 to create a level gathering space and renamed Shemanski Square. It included installing the retaining wall and staircase/sloped walkway along SW Salmon Street. MIG, Inc., *South Park Blocks Master Plan Update*, "Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities Report," 12.

⁷⁵ The fountain and sculpture were given to the city in 1926 by Portland businessman Joseph Shemanski, a Polish Jewish immigrant who founded the Eastern Outfitting Co. Linde's original sculpture was originally set amidst trees, shrubs, and grass. Its design depicted a bowl of flowers, which was later changed to include the urn-carrying maiden. City of Portland, Historic Resource Inventory; Gleason and Orloff, *Portland's Public Art: A Guide and History*, 43; Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 105.

⁷⁶ These drinking fountains, known as 'Benson Bubbblers,' were gifted to the city by Lumberman Simon Benson. They were designed by architect A.E. Doyle in 1912. This four-bowl bubbler was incorporated into the Simon Benson Memorial in 1959. Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 104.

⁷⁷ City of Portland, Historic Resource Inventory; Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 104.

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The tree canopy on this block retains two of its five axial rows and includes sixteen historic trees and two replacement trees.⁷⁸ Tree species include a mix of oak, elm, beech, and red bud. A small central planting bed, flanked by the parallel interior pathways, is located at the south end of the block.

This block contains twelve park benches aligned in pairs along the interior pathways and plaza area (facing towards the Shemanski Fountain). The 6' long wood-slat benches are set on recessed hexagonal concrete-paved pads.

Sixteen light fixtures are situated along the block's perimeter and central plaza, including four on the north and south ends; two mid-block on the east and west sides; and four along the plaza. These fixtures, that post-date the period of significance, feature tapered cast-iron standards with urn-shaped globes. Two high-intensity light fixtures are installed at the plaza's southeast and southwest corners to illuminate the Shemanski Fountain.

HISTORICAL INTEGRITY

The SPB retains sufficient integrity of its important features to convey its historic significance under National Register Criteria A and C. Designed historic landscapes have unique attributes that often complicate the evaluation of integrity, since they are living landscapes that are more susceptible to change. Alterations within the SPB that don't relate to the period of significance have been confined primarily to changes to some of the interior circulation systems and hardscaping; introduction of native plantings and plant maintenance; and upgrades to park benches and light fixtures. While some original materials have been replaced and updated, the changes were part of regular maintenance or improvement programs and were generally necessary to preserve the overall design. The SPB, which survives as one of the city's earliest public parks dedicated in 1852, retains integrity of location, setting, design, feeling, and association. Changes to the park's historic fabric have slightly diminished its integrity of materials and workmanship. Specific to the seven aspects of integrity:

Location: The park remains in its original location with minimal changes to its historic boundaries and alignment. Changes in 1964 with the construction of the I-405 Freeway (also called the Foothills Loop Freeway) resulted in the removal of the park's two southern most blocks, between SW Clifton and Jackson streets. The realignment along the park's southern portion, along the PSU campus, occurred under the 1970s pedestrian mall redevelopment, which is part of the period of significance and covered under Criterion Consideration G.

Design: The overall SPB linear park sequence is largely intact from its original dedication in 1852 and initial planting plan from 1877, and is illustrative of evolving landscape design trends over the past 150 years. The park continues to convey its original "promenade" plan, carried out by horticulturist Louis Pfunder, featuring an expansive ground plane; formal, symmetrical layout; grid of five north-south rows of deciduous trees in axial alignment, or allées, creating long horizontal sight lines; and perimeter pathways, or promenades. Early-twentieth century improvements included the addition of internal circulation systems and central plazas. The last major period of development, which took place during the 1970s urban renewal era, incorporated a Modernist "pedestrian mall" concept that includes asymmetrically

⁷⁸ A topographic survey (dated April 1986) shows a smaller, Y-shaped paved area with the remainder of the site as turf sloping down toward SW Salmon Street and planted with rows of trees. The square's 1987 alterations included removing turf along the north side and changing the sloped topography. MIG, Inc., *South Park Blocks Master Plan Update*, "Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities Report," 23.

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placed diagonal walkways, an amphitheater (Block No. 4), and other modest design elements to its southern portion. The design modifications to the SPB through 1973 are significant as they convey the park's evolution of design.

Design changes since 1973 include modifications to the blocks between SW Market and SW Jefferson streets in 1984, including the introduction of dual north-south walkways and cross-block connections and single luminaire light standards, as well as repaving walkways, sidewalks, and plazas with hexagonal asphalt pavers. In 1987, similar changes were made to the blocks between SW Salmon and SW Jefferson streets. That same year, the Shemanski Square (Block No. 12) was modified to establish a larger level gathering space, elevated stage area, and retaining wall and staircase added along SW Salmon Street. New square and hexagonal pavers were installed and a new concrete base was created for the Joseph Shemanski Fountain. The Simon Benson Memorial, located at the northern terminus of Block No. 12, was also modified with the replacement of the original brick retaining wall with a curved concrete wall. In 2001, the Portland Streetcar platforms and tracks were installed along SW Market and SW Mill streets and included the addition of two streetcar shelters. The SPB continues to communicate its original design intent and essential character of a simple ground plane with an overarching canopy of deciduous trees; restrained planting and materials palette; and framing architecture of civic, institutional, residential, and educational buildings.

Setting: The park retains integrity of setting as a twelve-block linear park in the heart of downtown Portland, set amidst a dense urban context. Buildings that lie across the street from the park reflect the neighborhood's architectural evolution, ranging from multi-story apartment buildings to museums, churches, former schools, and PSU academic buildings. Its function as a respite from urban life and as a public open space amenity endures today, as it is surrounded by the rapidly-increasing density and development.

Feeling: The SPB retains a high degree of integrity of feeling and continues to convey its original linear promenade function along with the historical evolution over time. The formality and restrained nature of the linear urban park is seen in the axial alignment of trees and is further reinforced by the linear north-south promenade paths, internal plazas, seasonal variations of the deciduous tree canopy, opportunities for seated repose and communal gathering spaces, and axial viewsheds.

Association: The SPB retains integrity of association due to its direct ties to the city's initial community development and subsequent parks development. These associations are conveyed by the discernable evolution of the SPB's promenade design and modifications over time that directly relate to larger local trends in landscape design and urban planning and development. Subsequent modifications in the 1980s have not significantly diminished its integrity of association.

Materials and Workmanship: Alterations within the park during the period of significance generally contribute the SPB's significance, but some modifications have reduced the SPB's integrity of materials and workmanship. The planting plan has been altered in recent years to respond to overgrowth, while respecting the design intent. Over time, some of the park's deciduous trees have outgrown their original footprint, causing overcrowding, and others have been lost to age or disease or damaged due to wind or ice storms. The City's tree succession plan was updated in recent years to incorporate greater biodiversity through a broader range of decorative and native deciduous species, including disease-resistant species of Elm (*Ulmus Americana*), Linden (*Tilia cordata*), Oregon White (Garry) Oak (*Quercus garryana*), and European Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). Some of the large deciduous trees were replaced with slower-growing or smaller species.

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Other changes in the 1980s include the walkways along Block Nos. 7, 8 and 9, which were replaced with cruciform-shaped paths and distinguish them from the older diagonal layout. The three northern blocks (Block Nos. 10–12) were altered in 1987 when the pathways and plazas were repaved with hexagonal asphalt pavers. Shemanski Square (Block No. 12) was redesigned into a level gathering space and elevated stage area, which included installing a retaining wall, staircase, and sloped walkway along the north end. More recent changes include the installation of public monuments, fountains, sculptures, plaques, and other public art; upgrades to light fixtures; and replacement of park benches. The materials and workmanship related to those park blocks modified during the urban renewal era (Block Nos. 1–6) appears to be largely intact with the exception of the lighting replacements and realignment of the 1960s playground on SW College Street (Block No. 10), and the replacement of its play equipment, in the 1990s.

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8. Statement of Significance

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.)

Property is:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B removed from its original location. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | C a birthplace or grave. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | D a cemetery. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | E a reconstructed building, object, or structure. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | F a commemorative property. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years. |

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Community Planning and Development

Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance

1852-1973

Significant Dates

1852: Dedication of South Park Blocks

1877: Original landscape plan by Louis G. Pfunder

1903: Olmsted Brothers Plan

1908: Landscape improvements under Mische

1973: SPB Urban Renewal Development Project
complete

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (if applicable)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Pfunder, Louis Gustav (Horticulturist)

Mische, Emanuel T. (Park Superintendent)

Campbell, Yost, Grube & Partners (Architects)

Sasaki, Hideo (Landscape Architect)

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Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for the SPB begins in 1852, when the string of blocks between Stark and Clay streets was dedicated for public use, and continues through 1973, marking the completion of the federally-funded SPB Urban Renewal Development Project. The park is significant for the broad, overarching community vision it embodies. This span of time, which encompasses the SPB's major periods of development, reflects the evolutionary arch of park planning and landscape design trends within a local context. From its initial establishment as a fenced "promenade" in the mid-nineteenth century, it was subsequently improved during the City Beautiful Movement period to encourage internal pedestrian movement. Still later, during Portland's urban renewal era, the six southernmost "University District" blocks were integrated into a pedestrian mall characterized by its restrained, Modernist aesthetic. Its physical changes over time mirrored the surrounding urban context—shifting from an exclusive residential neighborhood surrounded by large single-family mansions to a cultural and educational hub that attracted churches, museums, schools, entertainment venues, and large apartment buildings.

Since the end date falls just outside the fifty-year threshold, Criterion Consideration G applies (see below). The SPB's modifications in the early 1970s directly relate to the city's large-scale urban renewal efforts that reshaped the urban fabric of downtown Portland. The SPB included a re-envisioning of the six southernmost blocks (Block Nos. 1–6) as a "pedestrian mall" that integrated the park into the PSU campus, which culminated with the installation of the *Farewell to Orpheus* sculpture in Block No. 5. This redevelopment actively considered public views in urban planning that led to a balanced design, respectful of Pfunder's original axial, formal design and linear tree alignment while applying an overlay of modern landscape design movements. This was achieved through a collaborative design process overseen by the Portland Development Commission (PDC), PSU, and City of Portland that involved the architectural firm of Campbell, Yost, Grube, & Partners, who retained nationally-renowned landscape architect Hideo Sasaki as a consultant, as well as the PDC's prominent group of design-review consultants including Walter Gordon, George Rockrise, Pietro Belluschi, and Paul Hayden Kirk.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Since the end date of the period of significance falls outside the conventional fifty-year threshold, Criterion Consideration G is addressed in the nomination as the SPB Urban Renewal Development Project represented the culmination of planning efforts that began in the 1950s, when Portland State collaborated with the PDC to re-envision the "University District" blocks as its 'outdoor living room.' The SPB project has a direct tie with trends in Portland's planning and urban renewal history, reflecting an important part of the park's design evolution. The landscape design and urban renewal project design work began in 1969 but did not complete construction until 1973, and was significant within the broader context of Portland's large-scale urban renewal development that reshaped downtown's urban fabric. It survives as an intact example of an urban pedestrian mall whose purpose was to "create a plan which relates to, and interacts with, the surrounding city in terms of vehicular traffic, pedestrian movement, use of the Park Blocks, utility systems, and planning considerations."⁷⁹ A focus of the redevelopment was the addition of the Smith Plaza Amphitheater, transforming Block No. 4 into an open plaza. Another integral element was the *Farewell to Orpheus* cast bronze artwork, installed in 1973 at the south end of Block No. 5, sculpted by Frederic Littman. As importantly, this period of development illustrates the collaborative and publicly-informed design process between the PDC and PSU—and informed by

⁷⁹ Michael Campbell, Yost Architects & Planners, Portland State College Development Plan (Portland, OR: Portland State College, October 1966), 9.

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strong public opinions and a nationally recognized group of design professionals and reviewers—to create a design that integrated the park’s southern portion into the PSU campus, while retaining the individual blocks, grassy ground plane, and linear arrangement of trees within the park.⁸⁰

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

The SPB is historically significant at the local level under Criterion A, in the area of Community Planning and Development, due to its direct association with events and trends that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local history. The park is especially important for the community vision it embodies, illustrating the evolution of park planning and urban development in downtown Portland from its initial dedication in 1852 to 1973, coinciding with the completion of the urban renewal project of the SPB’s southern portion.⁸¹ Initially reserved as parkland in 1852, the park gradually evolved into a linear public promenade in the heart of rapidly developing nineteenth and twentieth century downtown Portland. Unlike any other downtown resource, the SPB is the best representation of the city’s development history that has endured throughout the city’s changing urban context. Figuring prominently in numerous plans including John C. Olmsted’s *1903 Portland Park Plan*, Edward Bennett’s Greater Portland Plan of 1912, and Max Loeb’s 1932 proposal for Memorial Park and Civic Center for the Hill South of the Park Blocks in Portland, the park’s physical evolution mirrored the changing urban context around it; from being surrounded by large single-family mansions to becoming an area that attracted churches, museums, schools, entertainment venues, and large apartment buildings. At the end of its period of significance in the early 1970s, the park became the center for the SPB Urban Renewal Development Project that illustrated the viability of urban renewal as a policy tool and for its influence in defining Portland’s urban spaces. Further, it showed how the PDC, PSU, and City of Portland implemented a large-scale park redevelopment, while balancing public concerns about the park’s sylvan character.⁸²

The SPB is also locally significant under Criterion C, in the area of Landscape Architecture, as a designed historic landscape embodying the distinctive characteristics of its type, period of construction and method of construction. The twelve-block long park reflects evolving landscape design trends over the past 150 years, that began as a fenced “promenade,” or linear park type, in the mid-nineteenth century that was improved during the City Beautiful Movement in the early-twentieth century to promote internal pedestrian movement and provide focal points for commemorative public sculptures and artwork. During Portland’s 1970s urban renewal era, the park’s southern portion was integrated into a “pedestrian mall,” reflecting a Modernist aesthetic as a part of the SPB Urban Renewal Development Project. The park also derives significance as reflective of the

⁸⁰ Following the completion of the SPB Urban Renewal Development Project, the new design was recognized by several professional groups. In 1973, the Oregon Architectural Barriers Council, for instance, gave the project a recognition certificate “for providing accessibility to physically disabled persons and those in wheelchairs.” That same year, the Oregon Association of Nurserymen gave a landscape award to landscape architect Michael Parker for his efforts on the project. *The Oregonian*, June 20, 1973; *The Oregonian*, December 14, 1973.

⁸¹ While there is an NRHP Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) Form entitled “The City Beautiful Movement and Civic Planning in Portland, Oregon 1897-1921” that provides an appropriate historic context for understanding the importance of its early development, the SPB is not being listed under that document as the park’s period of significance predates and postdates the time period for that document. Despite not evaluating the SPB within the MPD, it demonstrates that the park is individually eligible for listing in the NRHP. Cielo Lutino, Blaine Merker, and Robin Green, “The City Beautiful Movement and Civic Planning in Portland, Oregon 1897-1921” NRHP MPD (prepared for the City of Portland Bureau of Planning, 2000).

⁸² It should be noted that the SPB Urban Renewal Development Project is named in a variety of different ways in period sources. This includes “Park Blocks Development,” “South Park Blocks Improvement,” and “South Park Blocks Mall Development” among others. For the purposes of this nomination and to be consistent with the SPB Master Plan, it is referred to as the “SPB Urban Renewal Development Project.”

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work of master horticulturist Louis G. Pfunder (original 1877 design), as well as City Superintendent of Parks Emmanuel T. Mische, who were significant individuals associated with the park's early evolution.

In terms of Criterion Consideration G, the park's period of significance continues through 1973 with the re-envisioning of the six southernmost blocks as a "pedestrian mall" under the federally-funded SPB Urban Renewal Development Project. These early 1970s changes have a direct tie to Portland's planning trends and large-scale urban renewal efforts that reshaped the downtown's urban fabric. The resulting design of the University District blocks respected Pfunder's original design intent, specifically its linear alignment of five rows of trees, while incorporating a modern landscape aesthetic. Further, the collaborative and publicly-informed design process involved nationally renowned landscape architect Hideo Sasaki and Campbell, Yost, Grube, & Partners, along with Walter Gordon, George Rockrise, Pietro Belluschi, and Paul Hayden Kirk as the PDC's design-review consultants. As the description and narrative statement of significance relates, the SPB district possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of a site, structure, and objects united historically and aesthetically by plan and physical development.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

PRE-EUROPEAN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Although the period of significance for the SPB begins in 1852, the area was inhabited long before white settlers arrived in the area and have a rich and complicated history tied to Native American habitation. To acknowledge the past experiences of marginalized communities, this nomination provides broader pre-European historical narrative that is intended to reveal a more accurate and inclusive understanding of this place and recognizes the important under-represented history of the Pacific Northwest Indigenous community.

The pre-contact history of the SPB and its environs starts with geology. The region's oldest rock formations, consisting of granite rising at the western entrance to the Columbia Gorge near Troutdale, date back as 14 million years old. Following the Missoula Floods, the site's topography was revealed: an accumulation of nearly 20 feet of floods sediment, underneath which lies Troutdale Formation deposits, consisting mostly of gravels and sands.⁸³ Since then, these unstable silt deposits have continuously eroded towards the river. The Portland West Hills Fault also extends northwest, parallel to the Willamette River towards its confluence with the Columbia River. A small creek, known as Tanner Creek, emerged from the West Hills just northwest of the SPB site and flowed diagonally east toward the Willamette River, traversing the sloping landscape that was to become the Portland townsite.⁸⁴

Indigenous tribes have populated the Portland Basin since roughly the time of the Missoula Floods approximately 12,000 years ago.⁸⁵ The Portland Metro area rests on traditional village sites of the Chinook, Clackamas, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Kalapuya, Molalla, Multnomah, Tualatin, and Wasco, among other peoples, who made their homes along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers.⁸⁶

⁸³ As a result of the Missoula Floods, early archeological sites were obliterated. Virginia Butler, 2021 SALC Donor Recognition Event, accessed April 5, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzPIELHS8M>.

⁸⁴ Dr. Scott Burns, in-person interview, January 3, 2019.

⁸⁵ The Portland Basin, also referred to as the Wapato Basin, is a topographic and structural depression that marks the northern terminus of the Willamette Lowland in Oregon, stretching from Vancouver southward to Oregon City and is bisected by the lowermost reaches of the Columbia River. Butler, 2021 SALC Donor Recognition Event.

⁸⁶ See also Stephen Dow Beckham, *Oregon Voices: Voices From Two Centuries* (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2006); S.D. Beckham, *The Indians of Western Oregon: This Land Was Theirs* (Coos Bay, OR: Arago Books, 1977); Yvonne Hadja, *The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon: The First Oregonians* (Portland, OR: Council for the Humanities, 1992); and Boyd, Robert, Kenneth Ames and Tony A. Johnson, ed. *Chinookan*

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The territory surrounding the SPB was likely inhabited and shared by the Upper Chinookan-speaking Multnomah and Clackamas people. The Multnomah and Clackamas people, along with the Cathlamet and Lower Chinook people, were part of the same linguistic and geographical group collectively known as the Chinookan people. The Chinookan people resided from the mouth of the Columbia River to Willamette Falls, a point on the Willamette River at the present-day location of Oregon City. Chinookan villages were primarily located along the floodplain and main channel of the Columbia River, along its major tributaries and channels, and along sloughs, lakes, and ponds.⁸⁷ Clackamas territory was upriver from the Multnomah territory, along both sides of the Willamette River, from approximately present-day downtown Portland to present-day Oregon City.⁸⁸ The Clackamas also occupied and lived extensively along the Clackamas and Sandy Rivers and along the southern bank of the lower Columbia River, overlapping the Multnomah, and east of the Willamette River to the Cascade Mountains.⁸⁹

The archaeological record in the Portland Basin (including documented sites on Sauvie Island, in the vicinity of Portland Airport, Lake Oswego, Oregon City, and Portland proper) reveals a rich record of human activity, but is not well-studied.⁹⁰ Historic period documents chronicling indigenous habitation of the area is limited and no historically documented ethnographic village locations are known to overlap with the SPB.⁹¹ General Land Office records such as plats and survey notes, however, provide some glimpses of the landscape in the early stages of transformation near the SPB.⁹² In the cadastral survey field notes of Butler Ives and other surveyors who laid out the township boundaries and subdivisions in 1852, the natural and manmade landscapes are briefly discussed.⁹³ An overview plat of the Township 1S, Range 1E dated May 20, 1852, shows the configuration of 5 ½ city blocks in downtown Portland on the west side of the Willamette River and the

Peoples of the Lower Columbia (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2013). Claudia Welala Long, "Urban Indians in Oregon," *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, accessed April 5, 2021, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/urban_indians/#.YGtX2S1h1p9.

⁸⁷ Robert Boyd and Yvonne Hadja, "Seasonal Population Movement along the Lower Columbia River: The Social and Ecological Context," *American Ethnologist* 14 (2), 1987, 309-328; David V. Ellis, Judith S. Chapman, and John L. Fagan, *Cultural Resources Reconnaissance Survey and Inventory of the Portland Segment of Level 3's Proposed Fiber Optic Line from Portland, Oregon to Seattle, Washington* (Portland, OR: Archaeological Investigations Northwest, Inc., 1999).

⁸⁸ Michael Silverstein, "Chinookans of the Lower Columbia," in Northwest Coast, edited by W. Suttles. *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 7. W.C. Sturtevant, general editor (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), 534.

⁸⁹ Robert H. Ruby and John A. Brown, *A Guide to the Indian Tribe of the Pacific Northwest* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 25.

⁹⁰ Anthropologists estimate that at its peak, the Kalapuyan population reached 13,500 people. Kalapuyans moved seasonally to different parts of the Willamette Valley, "gathering plants, hunting wild game and fowl, and manipulating the environment through fire to increase the availability of certain foods and resources." William Robbins, "A Changing Landscape and the Beginnings of White Settlement," *The Oregon History Project*, accessed December 21 2021, <https://www.oregonhistoryproject.org/narratives/this-land-oregon/resettlement-and-the-new-economy/a-changing-landscape-and-the-beginnings-of-white-settlement/#.YclamC1h2fU>.

⁹¹ There is an archeological site immediately southeast of the SPB, along with an Indian camp site dating from the late 1800s where 4th Ave. S crosses I-405; both sites fall outside the park's boundaries. David Ellis, Willamette CRA, email correspondence, June 4, 2020; Robert Boyd and Henry Zenk, "Portland Basin Chinookan Villages in the early 1800s," *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, accessed April 5, 2021, https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/wappato_valley_villages/#.Wc1MbVXytpg; Robert Boyd, Yvonne P. Hajda, and Henry B. Zenk, "Chinookan Villages of the Lower Columbia," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 117, No. 1, 2016, 6-37.

⁹² Aron N. Langley, *Assessment of Historic Land Survey Notes and Their Utility in Geographical Studies*, Master of Arts dissertation, University of Montana, 2004. See also S.M. Galatowitsch, "Using the Original Land Survey Notes to Reconstruct Presettlement Landscapes in the American West," *Great Basin Naturalist*, 50(2) 1990, 181-191.

⁹³ The Portland townsite was situated in Township 1 South, Range 1 East, Willamette Meridian (T1S, R1E, W.M.), which encompasses the boundary surveys of several donation land claims in the immediate vicinity of the SPB including Daniel H. Lownsdale, Benjamin Stark, W.W. Chapman, Stephen Coffin, and Elizabeth and Finice Caruthers. Stephen Dow Beckham, email correspondence to Brooke Best. December 21, 2021.

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location of the ferry to the east bank.⁹⁴ An examination of the surveyor notes include descriptions of the historical landscape and its native vegetation, confirming that the river's west bank was a dense, coniferous forest (including fir, hemlock, willow, and cottonwood) that was in the initial stages of clearing by early settlers, such as W. W. Chapman, and installation of the road grid plan.⁹⁵ Further, these field notes make no mention of indigenous habitation in the SPB vicinity. As historian Stephen Dow Beckham states, "There is nothing in the [GLO survey] field notes for these claims to suggest there were any meadows or open areas suitable for camas harvest or seed-gathering by Native Americans. There is no identification in any of the donation land claim surveys for the Willamette River corridor in this township and the next one north of any Indian village (standing or abandoned)."⁹⁶

What is known is that nearby Sauvie Island at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers supported small familial bands of Native American hunter-gathers. During Lewis and Clark's explorations of the area in 1805 -1806, they visited the Multnomah village situated on the upriver end of Sauvie Island, also known as "Wappato Island" for its abundance of the edible wapato root that indigenous people cultivated there. Lewis and Clark estimated the population to be roughly 200 people, but changed that to 800 after seeing it in late March 1806 on their return upriver.⁹⁷ Ethnohistorian Robert Boyd estimated the population at 15,545 from Willamette Falls to the Pacific Ocean, with "twice as many Native people gathering on the Lower Columbia during fishing season."⁹⁸

An indigenous village was located south of downtown near the current streets of SW Jefferson and Front Avenue, according to the recollection of pioneer W.S. Powell.⁹⁹ The village of "*Nemalquinner*" occupied the eastern side of the Willamette River, near present-day community of St. Johns, approximately five miles downriver from the SPB, and had a population of 100 to 200 at the time of Lewis and Clark's passage through the area in 1805-1806.¹⁰⁰ The area that became Goose Hollow included Native American encampments "in the

⁹⁴ U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records for Township 1S, Range 1E, Cadastral Surveys,

https://gloreCORDS.blm.gov/details/survey/default.aspx?dm_id=354989&sid=2qfpc1h.spy&surveyDetailsTabIndex=1.

⁹⁵ U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records for Township 1S, Range 1E, Survey Field Note Records, Volume OR-D0007, 209-211 (Finice Caruthers); 212-214 (Elizabeth Caruthers); 441-444 (W.W. Chapman); 445-448 (Stephen Coffin); 452-453 (Benjamin Stark).

⁹⁶ Beckham has examined "every claim survey from the mouth of the Willamette to Willamette Falls on both the east and west banks and found no Indian village identifications in the 1850s or the 1860s of any kind in the immediate river corridor, the most likely location for such features. William Clark in 1805, however, found unoccupied Indian plank lodges but that was downstream from Swan Island or Mock's Bottom by the reckoning of most who have studied his journal and cryptic map of the lower Willamette River." Beckham, email correspondence to Brooke Best. December 21, 2021; U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Cadastral Surveys, <https://www.blm.gov/or/landrecords/survey/ySrvy1.php>.

⁹⁷ Robert Boyd, Yvonne Hadja, and Henry Zenk, "Multnomah (Sauvie Island Indian Village)." *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, accessed April 12, 2021, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/multnomah_indians/#.YHTAVS1h1p8.

⁹⁸ Andrea Janda, "A Lower Columbia Chinook Historical Timeline," *Publichistorypdx.org*, accessed April 12, 2021, <http://publichistorypdx.org/projects/chinook/lower-columbia-chinook-historical-timeline/>.

⁹⁹ Powell recounted that smallpox ravaged the community and people "were buried in burial grounds where is now Montgomery and Third streets." *The Oregonian*, Oct. 5, 1905, 14.

¹⁰⁰ Boyd and Hadja, "Seasonal Population Movement along the Lower Columbia River: The Social and Ecological Context"; Ellis, Chapman, and Fagan, *Cultural Resources Reconnaissance Survey and Inventory of the Portland Segment of Level 3's Proposed Fiber Optic Line from Portland, Oregon to Seattle, Washington*; Robert Boyd and Yvonne Hadja, "Ethnohistory of the Wappato Valley," in *An Inventory of Cultural Resources and an Evaluation of the Effects of the Proposed North Coast Feeder Gas Pipeline, Located between Deer Island and Sauvie Island, Lower Columbia River Valley, in Oregon*, by Charles Hibbs, Jr., and David V. Ellis, Section D (Portland, Oregon: Charles Hibbs and Associates, Inc., 1988), 7.

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hollow near today's Alder Street, and Native women sold baskets, kindling, and berries to nearby households."¹⁰¹

Decades before the influx of pioneers started arriving in the Oregon Territory, Congress passed a law ostensibly aimed at respecting the land and rights of indigenous peoples:

The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress; but laws founded in justice and humanity, shall from time to time be made for preventing wrongs being done to them, and for preserving peace and friendship with them.¹⁰²

Unfortunately, the aspirations laid out in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 were largely eliminated by race-based legislation involving land rights and education practices aimed at minimizing native culture and religion.¹⁰³

The arrival of white explorers, fur traders, and ultimately settlers introduced diseases that ravaged Native populations. In the early 1830s, a devastating epidemic of malaria hit the Wappato Valley especially hard, leaving behind few survivors on Sauvie Island. From the 1840s to 1860, additional population declines resulted from skirmishes and wars with white settlers and miners. By 1845, American settlers, missionaries and traders began to outnumber indigenous populations in the Willamette Valley.¹⁰⁴

To spur migration into the Oregon territory, Congress passed the Distribution-Preemption Act of 1841 recognizing squatters rights.¹⁰⁵ In 1843, non-Native settlers in the Willamette Valley established a provisional government. Settlers were able to claim 640 acres at no charge, although no treaties were signed with Native Tribes. Oregon Territory's first Congressional representative, Samuel Royal Thurston, took on the land issue by authoring the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850. The legislation recognized past claims granted under the provisional government, created the Office of Surveyor-General of Public Lands, and made land grants to new settlers. It offered 320 acres for no fee to qualifying adult U.S. citizens (married couples received an additional

¹⁰¹ Tracy J. Prince, "Goose Hollow," *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, accessed April 5, 2021, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/goose_hollow/#.YGyz5C1h1p8.

¹⁰² Northwest Ordinance, July 13, 1787, Documents Illustrative of the Formation of the Union of the American States, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1927, House Document No. 398.

¹⁰³ The federal Boarding School Era policies, which lasted from the mid-1800s through the 1960s, marked the beginning of a long campaign to integrate indigenous people into the Western culture. More than 60 of their Tribes in Oregon were terminated by the federal government in 1953, and Oregon denied voting rights until the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Their faith traditions were outlawed until 1993. Long, "Urban Indians in Oregon"; Coalition of Communities of Color and Portland State University, *The Native American Community in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile*, accessed April 5, 2021, <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/civic/article/505489>; University of Portland, *Leading with Tradition: Native American Community in the Portland Metropolitan Area*, accessed April 5, 2021, <https://www.up.edu/inclusion/files/leading-with-tradition.pdf>.

¹⁰⁴ These introduced diseases are thought to have included smallpox, malaria, dysentery, and measles which killed 90% of the entire population. American explorer David Douglas recorded villages in western Oregon with no inhabitants, possibly due to diseases. David Lewis, "Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde," *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, accessed April 5, 2021, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/confederated_tribes_of_grand_ronde/#.YGyqiY1h1p8; Boyd, Hadja, and Zenk, "Multnomah (Sauvie Island Indian Village)"; Janda, "A Lower Columbia Chinook Historical Timeline"; Lewis, "Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde."

¹⁰⁵ It allowed settlers to claim 160 acres in new territory; after residing on the property for 14 months, a claimant could purchase the land for \$1.25 per acre. Margaret Riddle, "Donation Land Claim Act, spur to American settlement of Oregon Territory takes effect on September 27, 1850," Essay 9501, *HistoryLink.org*, accessed December 17 2021, <https://www.historylink.org/file/9501>.

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320 acres in the wife's name) who occupied their claims for four consecutive years.¹⁰⁶ Section 4 of the Oregon Donation Land Law (ODDL) outlined the requirements for eligibility: "granted to every white settler or occupant of the public lands, American half-breed Indians included, above the age of 18 years, being a citizen of the United States, or having made a declaration according to law of his intention to become a citizen."¹⁰⁷ Members of Native tribes were not U.S. citizens and, therefore, could not own land under the law; this essentially extinguished Native title to land and leaving "the whole of the most desirable portion open to white settlers."¹⁰⁸

By the 1850s, Tribes ceded their homelands through negotiated treaties or executive agreements with the United States.¹⁰⁹ In 1851, Congress passed the Indian Appropriations Act, which created the Indian reservation system and provided funds to relocate tribes onto farming reservations. Between 1852 and 1853, white volunteer forces ruthlessly drove local tribes from their traditional hunting and gathering grounds.¹¹⁰

The Willamette Valley Treaty, signed in 1855, was intended to remove the tribes from western Oregon, from lands desired by American settlers.¹¹¹ The U.S. government removed most of the surviving tribes and bands in 1856 to the newly-established Grand Ronde Reservation in the southern Yamhill valley, making way for American pioneer settlement and alleviating the mounting conflicts among the tribes and settlers, miners, and

¹⁰⁶ Amendments in 1853 and 1854 cut the size of allowable claims by half. In 1853, provisions were added to recognize a widow's right to a land claim. The law was further amended in 1854 granting donations to orphans and allow settlers arriving before April 1, 1855, to stake a claim. Single women who had never married could not stake claims. Although slavery was prohibited by law in Oregon, some of these settlers brought slaves with them. John Scott, Oregon Donation Land Law (ODLL), Willamette Heritage Center, accessed December 17, 2021,

https://www.willametteheritage.org/assets/LaRC/bios_histories/Oregon_Donation_and_Land_Law.pdf; Riddle, "Donation Land Claim Act, spur to American settlement of Oregon Territory takes effect on September 27, 1850."

¹⁰⁷ William G. Robbins, "Oregon Donation Land Law," *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, accessed December 17, 2021, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/oregon_donation_land_act/#.Ybz0Vy1h2fU.

¹⁰⁸ Dr. Virginia Butler described how Euro-Americans saw indigenous people as "passively" living off the land and justified this land-taking based on moral value of agriculture. In 1868, Gilbert Malcom Sproat from the Commission on the Joint Committee on Indian Reserves wrote, "...we might justify our occupation of Vancouver Island by the fact of all the land lying waste without prospect of improvement." Butler, 2021 SALC Donor Recognition Event; Robbins, "Oregon Donation Land Law."

¹⁰⁹ Most tribes were party to seven treaties ratified by the U.S. Congress including the Rogue Rivers (1853, 1854), the Cow Creek Umpqua Band (1853), the Chasta Costa (1854), the Yoncalla and Molala (1854), the Kalapuya (1855), and the Molala (1855). Lewis, "Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde."

¹¹⁰ Robbins, "Oregon Donation Land Law."

¹¹¹ Lewis points out that the chiefs realized that if they remained, they would only survive a few more years as tribal populations "were collapsed from diseases, and being worn away through multiple acts of aggression by settlers engaged in the colonization of Oregon." David G. Lewis, "The Willamette Valley Treaty (Treaty with the Kalapuya, Etc.) Signed January 22 and Ratified March 3, 1855," *Quartux Journal*, accessed April 28, 2021, <https://ndnhistoryresearch.com/2018/01/16/the-willamette-valley-treaty-treaty-with-the-kalapuya-etc-signed-january-22-ratified-march-3-1855/>.

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ranchers.¹¹² Most of the land claims were located in the Willamette, Umpqua, and Rogue river valleys. By 1856, more than 7,000 settlers had acquired more than 2.5 million acres of property.¹¹³

In 1887, Congress passed the General Allotment Act, known as the Dawes Act, which sought to divide the communal land base of Tribes and extinguish tribal sovereignty through assimilation.¹¹⁴ Subsequent race-based laws concerning land distribution and ownership seriously damaged the legal standing of indigenous tribes in the Portland Basin and the Pacific Northwest.¹¹⁵

INITIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPB AS A PROMENADE: 1852–1910s

Portland's Early Public Parks and Initial Development of the SPB

The platting of Portland began in 1845, when Asa Lovejoy and Francis Pettygrove acquired land claims and hired a land surveyor to lay out the townsite along a grid of sixteen blocks 200' square and divided into eight 50' x 100' lots. Between the blocks were strips of 60' wide cross streets and 80' wide north-south streets, which were dedicated as public right-of-way to accommodate streets, curbing, and sidewalks. These sixteen blocks ran along the Willamette River in two parallel rows of eight blocks from SW Washington Street (north) to SW Jefferson Street (south). The next year, another row of blocks was added; in 1850, the city grid had grown by two more rows.¹¹⁶

Portland's public parks had a difficult time getting established in the last half of the nineteenth century. The city's first parks were dedicated as public open space in 1852, including the Park Blocks and the Plaza Blocks (today's Chapman and Lownsdale Squares).¹¹⁷ At the time, the municipal government "struggled to provide

¹¹² Prior to removal to the reservation, there were roughly 60 different tribes from six different language groups in western Oregon. The U.S. military forced at least 27 of those tribes to resettle at the Grand Ronde Agency, including the Kalapuyans; Chinookans; Molala Northern, Santiam, and Southern; the southwestern Oregon tribes; Chastacosta; and a few people from other tribes including the Shasta, Klamath, and Klickitat. The 61,440-acre reservation consisted of former Donation Land Claim allotments that had been settled by pioneer families and purchased by the U.S. Army to create a temporary reservation away from most white settlements. P.B. Sincott, the Indian agent at Grand Ronde in 1877, described conditions on the reservation: "The Indians of this agency are kept in a state of constant uneasiness and insecurity by reports of whites with whom they come in contact to the effect that they are soon to be removed from their present homes, and that the deeds to their lands are valueless, and may at any time be annulled or canceled." Lewis, "Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde."

¹¹³ Riddle, "Donation Land Claim Act, spur to American settlement of Oregon Territory takes effect on September 27, 1850."

¹¹⁴ In 1891, 270 tribal members at Grand Ronde Indian Reservation, mainly men and unmarried women, gained allotments. "By July 1901, 33,468 acres were allotted to 274 Indians, leaving 25,791 acres unallotted and 440 acres reserved for government purposes. Because much of the reservation went unclaimed, the Indian Office negotiated a sale of surplus lands for a flat sum of \$28,500, or about \$1.10 an acre. Each tribal member was given \$72 per capita for his or her part of the sale." Lewis, "Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde."

¹¹⁵ PSU created the Indigenous Nations Studies and the American Indian Teacher Program and the Native American Student & Community Center, where groups such as the United Indian Students in Higher Education (UISHE) continue to gather. Long, "Urban Indians in Oregon."

¹¹⁶ Mackenzie, "The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development," 3; Willingham, Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *City of Portland Civic Planning, Development, & Public Works, 1851-1965: A Historic Context*, 3; John Tess, "Historic Resources in Downtown Portland, 1906-1914, Historic Resources in Downtown Portland, 1915-1931," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, October 2007), E2.

¹¹⁷ The Plaza Blocks occupied a two-block site in central downtown east of the SPB. Although Lownsdale had set aside eleven blocks in the 1848 plat, he did not actually deed it to the city, giving them clear title to the land. Junior League of Portland, *A Guide to Portland's Historic Parks and Gardens*; E. Kimbark MacColl and Harry H. Stein, *Merchants, Money, and Power: The Portland Establishment, 1843-1913* (Portland, OR: The Georgian Press Co., 1988), 169; Willingham, Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *City of Portland Civic Planning, Development, & Public Works, 1851-1965: A Historic Context*, 20.

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basic public services such as streets and sidewalks, police and fire protection, and sanitation, and the foundation was laid for other developments related to art, architecture, engineering, and landscape architecture.”¹¹⁸ The establishment of the SPB as a public resource reflects Portland’s early patterns of growth and civic goals. Despite legal difficulties regarding Lownsdale’s legal title to the SPB land, its designation as a linear park set an important example for subsequent efforts to plan and develop parks and open spaces elsewhere in the city.¹¹⁹

The promise of Portland’s growth was due primarily to its being one of few deep-water ports in the Pacific Northwest; however, future success as a port city was not certain since the city initially faced competition from others along the Lower Columbia. Few were willing to risk their wealth in early land speculation, as the budding city’s future growth depended on maritime commerce and related industries to sustain economic growth and land values. As a result, there was little to spend on public amenities like parks, especially larger tracts of newly-dedicated public lands such as the Park Blocks and those along the Willamette riverfront.¹²⁰

Early businessmen like Asa Lovejoy and Benjamin Stark were soon joined by Daniel Lownsdale, William Chapman, Stephen Coffin and Captain John Couch. Lownsdale, a native of Kentucky, arrived in Portland in 1845 where he established a tanning business on his 640-acre claim adjoining that of Lovejoy and Pettygrove, to the south and west of the original townsite. His business was advertised as “situated in the midst of plenty of hemlock, the only good tanbark which can be procured in the Territory.”¹²¹ In 1848, Lownsdale bought out Pettygrove’s 320-acre interest. The plat from this year shows an expansion of the existing 200’ block grid that depicts a string of narrow park blocks along the western edge.

By March 1849, Lownsdale took on two new partners, Stephen Coffin and William Williams Chapman. Chapman, an attorney and politician, was needed to help sort out the various land claims and sales: “Oregon had not yet been admitted to the Union, and already the land at the Portland townsite had changed hands several times. Lots had been subdivided and sold. The land was held jointly by the partners so that each transfer of property carried all of their names.”¹²² In 1850, Lownsdale and Stark agreed to simplify the development rights to the townsite with Stark retaining ownership of a roughly 48-acre triangular segment bounded by Burnside Street (N) and Stark Street (S) and the remaining 600-acre undeveloped portion held jointly by Lownsdale, Coffin, and Chapman.¹²³

Lownsdale and his partners devoted their energies to promoting the development of Portland. In 1850, they commissioned a new survey of an expanded townsite encompassing an additional 100 blocks. As the leading promoter, Lownsdale “reserved 22 blocks for parks and set aside two blocks for a public market and customs

¹¹⁸ Willingham, Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *City of Portland Civic Planning, Development, & Public Works, 1851-1965: A Historic Context*, 1.

¹¹⁹ Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *Open Space & Park Development 1851-1965*, 1.

¹²⁰ Early land ownership claims were often dubious around the 1846 acquisition of the Oregon Country. E. Kimbark MacColl, *The Growth of a City: Power and Politics in Portland, Oregon 1915-1950* (Portland, OR: The Georgian Press Co., 1979), 5.

¹²¹ Brian Booth, “Portland’s Park Blocks: A Chronology,” draft, 1999; MacColl and Stein, *Merchants, Money, and Power: The Portland Establishment, 1843-1913*, 169.

¹²² Mackenzie, “The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development,” 6.

¹²³ Stark’s triangular portion of property, depicted on an 1853 map, delineates the park continuing through it as a connective park block; however, by 1859, his property is shown as outlots. Stark sold the property in 1865 to Patrick Raleigh, who platted it without a public park and, thus, made it difficult to line up with Couch’s property as it was laid out True North, while Lownsdale’s was to Magnetic North. Mackenzie, “The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development,” 3; Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 4; Willingham, Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *City of Portland Civic Planning, Development, & Public Works, 1851-1965: A Historic Context*, 3.

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house.”¹²⁴ Drawn by John Brady and known as the “Brady Map,” it depicted a series of linear blocks running from Stark Street approximately half as wide as the standard 200’ grid. A plat map, prepared in December 1852, dedicated a string of contiguous, narrow blocks between Stark and Clay streets, labeled “Park Street” (see Figure 6). These maps laid out the intent for these blocks as open space for public use and enjoyment. That same year, Portland’s Common Council adopted the Brady Map as “the plan of the Streets, Blocks and Public Property of the City of Portland.”¹²⁵



ca1850 Brady Map. The South Park Blocks are illustrated as shaded rectangles that extend from left to right.

Image courtesy of City of Portland Archives [A2017-020]

¹²⁴ Willingham, Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *City of Portland Civic Planning, Development, & Public Works, 1851-1965: A Historic Context*, 3.

¹²⁵ Brady Map, ca 1850, on file at the Oregon Historical Society; Lownsdale Plat Map, December 3, 1852, on file at the Oregon Historical Society; Howard McKinley Corning, *Dictionary of Oregon History* (Hillsboro, OR: Binford & Mort, 1956), 152-3; Eugene E. Snyder, *We Claimed this Land: Portland's Pioneer Settlers* (Hillsboro, OR: Binford & Mort, 1984), 64.

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1852 City Record Map December 9, 1852

Image courtesy of City of Portland Archives [A2011-033]

At the time of its dedication as park blocks, the Portland townsite consisted of a few scattered log cabins and a “stump-strewn muddy rise.”¹²⁶ The city’s rapid growth in the 1840s was “partly fueled by the demand for food and lumber in the California goldfields and also by the construction of a plank road to the Tualatin Plains called Canyon Road.”¹²⁷ While Lownsdale’s motivations behind the dedication were never explicit, his education and travels to Europe exposed him to European-influenced civic design ideas.¹²⁸ His first European trip was followed by his marriage to his first wife in 1830, who died soon thereafter. Between 1842 and 1844, Lownsdale returned to Europe where he visited various countries.¹²⁹ During this time, Lownsdale likely became

¹²⁶ Mackenzie, “The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development,” 6.

¹²⁷ This wagon road linked the rich agricultural lands to the west with the growing city, assuring its future. Willingham, Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *City of Portland Civic Planning, Development, & Public Works, 1851-1965: A Historic Context*, 4.

¹²⁸ Harvey W. Scott, ed., *History of Portland, Oregon* (Portland, OR: D. Mason & Co., Publishers, 1890), 97.

¹²⁹ Lownsdale was in poor health and this trip was recommended by his doctor. Access Genealogy, “Biography of Daniel H. Lownsdale,” accessed April 5, 2021, <https://accessgenealogy.com/dataset/history-of-the-pacific-northwest-oregon-and-washington-1889>.

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“familiar with the boulevards, squares, and public spaces of European cities” and experienced “how much people enjoyed open public spaces within the city and how planned open spaces could enhance development.”¹³⁰ Lownsdale must have realized the need for public greenspace in the heart of the city, and his vision “ensured, if nothing else, as the city grew, open space would be preserved at its core where high land values would otherwise have eventually precluded it.”¹³¹ It would take another twenty years for the City to execute any park expansion or improvements.¹³²



Portrait of Daniel Lownsdale

Image courtesy of Oregon Historical Society [72569]

Promenades in Nineteenth Century American Landscape Architecture Design

The initial landscape design of the SPB was characterized by its formal axial layout along a twelve-block stretch, illustrative of a “promenade” park, or linear park, that gained popularity during the mid-nineteenth century. This distinctive type of park design often featured a long ribbon of greenspace linked together by a common design scheme within a relatively dense environment. During this period, American cities were considering the role of parks and public spaces within the broader urban planning process. One of the oldest forms of dedicated open space was the public square, which played a primary role in the planning and design of many European towns and cities, emerging as an important component of America’s built environment.¹³³ From the mid to late 1800s, the urban park vision centered on providing natural settings in an urban environment, or so-called “pleasure gardens.” Either as a part of a pleasure garden, popular streets or parkways, and reservoirs or as a discrete park type set within an urban street grid, promenades played an important part in the history of designed historic landscapes in the U.S., Oregon, and Portland. The term ‘promenade’ referred to “an area of ground suitable for walking and riding” and was generally applied to urban public spaces. Derived from the French ‘promener’ (to walk), it took on a distinctive meaning in the mid to late

¹³⁰ Mackenzie, “The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development,” 6.

¹³¹ Beals, “Park Blocks” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 17.

¹³² Lutino, Merker, and Green, “The City Beautiful Movement and Civic Planning in Portland, Oregon 1897-1921” NRHP MPD, 11; Tong, *South Park Blocks Historical Study*, 37.

¹³³ Like Portland, San Francisco laid out a city-wide design for streets and parks that included two public squares (now known as Union and Washington squares). Lutino, Merker, and Green, “The City Beautiful Movement and Civic Planning in Portland, Oregon 1897-1921” NRHP MPD, 27; “History of Union Square Park,” San Francisco Park Alliance, accessed June 15, 2021, <https://www.sfparkalliance.org/iur-parks/parks/union-square>.

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nineteenth century to connote “the act of walking leisurely in a social setting.” It grew as a venue for social representation and fashion replete with prescribed rules of decorum.¹³⁴ Promenades were found in cemeteries, along busy streets or boulevards, as well as besides water reservoirs and embankments, and eventually in urban parks. In the case of the SPB, the promenade park was flanked by narrow roadways that served to diminish urban traffic and create a more comfortable central mall in the middle. Many places designated as promenades were also referred to by other terms that described either their accessibility to the public, such as public square or ground, or their association with entertainment, such as park or pleasure ground. Examples include the State House Yard in Philadelphia, the Battery Park in New York, Boston Common, and the National Mall in Washington, DC, all of which were also called promenades.¹³⁵ While promenades could be formally landscaped places, they could also be informal areas, such as those described in a 1786 account of Savannah, South Carolina’s “sand bank called the Bluff that remains partly dry in the winter and serves as a public promenade.”¹³⁶

The act of promenading was initially an orchestration of genteel urban society; however, the landscaped promenades (in its noun form) where this activity occurred were often “frequented by all classes of people...to observe and engage the public life of the city” and often featured shaded linear or curvilinear pathways in urban, park-like settings.¹³⁷ One of the earliest public promenades in the U.S. was contained in Pierre L’Enfant’s 1791 plan for the Washington, DC capitol, featuring a “grand tree-lined central public walkway that came to be known as ‘The Mall’.”¹³⁸ By the late 1700s, Boston had created a half-mile long tree-lined promenade, known as the “Mall,” along the eastern frontage of the Boston Common.¹³⁹ Influential public figures, including Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., who had traveled to Europe in 1850 and toured Britain’s Birkenhead Park, believed that parks should provide a natural, somewhat pastoral environment where city residents could escape the hustle and bustle of city life.¹⁴⁰ Olmsted wrote “eloquently of the virtues of European promenades that they had visited, urging creation of more public pedestrian concourses in American cities.”¹⁴¹ Olmsted also touted city squares, claiming they are “much used by people [and are] distinctly ornamental incidents of city life.”¹⁴²

Soon, pedestrian promenades and “parkways” accommodating both carriages and pedestrians appeared, offering respite from the crowded, unhealthy conditions that characterized rapidly industrializing cities. As importantly, they fulfilled a range of social and recreational goals, in a variety of social contexts. For the affluent upper class, it offered an alternative setting to the formal parlor or structured social event. Further, these

¹³⁴ Jacobson, “The Nineteenth Century American Promenade: Precedent and Form,” 44; “Promenade,” History of Early American Landscape Design, a project of the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, accessed July 30, 2021, <https://heald.nga.gov/mediawiki/index.php/Promenade>.

¹³⁵ Jacobson, “The Nineteenth Century American Promenade: Precedent and Form,” 48; “Promenade,” History of Early American Landscape Design.

¹³⁶ Carl R. Lounsbury, *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture & Landscape* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 292.

¹³⁷ Jacobson, “The Nineteenth Century American Promenade: Precedent and Form,” 44-45.

¹³⁸ L’Enfant envisioned this active public space as “a national promenade to promote democratic engagement among citizens of the new republic.” Jacobson, “The Nineteenth Century American Promenade: Precedent and Form,” 42.

¹³⁹ A smaller walkway lined with shade trees was developed along Boston Common’s Park Street boundary. “Within a couple of decades these promenades were extended to encompass the entire perimeter of the Common.” Jacobson, “The Nineteenth Century American Promenade: Precedent and Form,” 42.

¹⁴⁰ “Olmsted Designed New York City Parks,” New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, accessed June 15, 2021, <https://www.nycgovparks.org/about/history/olmsted-parks>; National Association of Olmsted Parks, <http://www.olmsted.org/>.

¹⁴¹ Jacobson, “The Nineteenth Century American Promenade: Precedent and Form,” 43.

¹⁴² Lutino, Merker, and Green, “The City Beautiful Movement and Civic Planning in Portland, Oregon 1897-1921” NRHP MPD, 27.

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outdoor settings provided a means for its citizens to “engage in the social practice of ‘seeing and being seen,’ while enjoying a casual stroll along comfortably scaled, shaded pathways.”¹⁴³ For some, part of the motivation for setting aside public space was “to recruit and retain workers with the offer of pleasant and healthful settings to enjoy on Sundays, their sole day of leisure.” Olmsted viewed the promenade as a “gregarious” space that would “attract large numbers of people of all classes to observe and engage the public life of the city.”¹⁴⁴ For Central Park, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux designed a half-mile long formal promenade with benches that offered both “opportunities for respite and observation of the energetic flow of pedestrians.” The Mall was also planted with double rows of elm trees, which were specifically chosen for their “lofty stature and spreading canopy at maturity, which had the dual effects of not only providing shade, but as importantly, defining the spatial volume of the promenade corridor at a scale appropriate to its breadth.”¹⁴⁵ Boston’s elm-lined Commonwealth Avenue mall, developed in the mid-nineteenth century, shared these characteristics. Within a couple of decades, these promenades were extended to encompass the entire perimeter of Boston Common, offering “fine views of the bay and adjacent Common.”¹⁴⁶

Olmsted also was responsible for the introduction of the street-related promenade, modelled after Parisian boulevards. By the 1870s, his Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn stretched from Prospect Park to Ralph Avenue. Olmsted’s intent with these scenic routes was to connect the various local parks to form a larger network. This was indeed the case with Olmsted’s Plan for Portland’s park system.¹⁴⁷

The endurance of the promenade suggests that certain physical and spatial characteristics common across the type may account for its success:

For example, a promenade that was well connected to local streets would benefit by enhanced accessibility to neighboring populations, while connections to through routes could negatively impact the tranquility of the setting. The nature of adjacent land uses could influence the number and type of residents or visitors who were likely to populate the promenade, while alignment, dimensions, scale and amenity features could affect the continuity, comfort, and pleasure of the promenade experience.¹⁴⁸

From the promenade’s earliest design iterations, shade tree plantings were an important amenity feature “that not only defined the spatial boundaries of the promenade and moderated the microclimate, in addition the closely spaced plantings delineated the various functional corridors.” Additionally, building facades that lined street promenades “yielded consistent spatial enclosure that supported linear movement along the corridors.”¹⁴⁹ Benches, lighting, and park furniture were also integral elements of these promenades to enhance comfort and safety, as well as to encourage lingering. Interestingly, these amenities didn’t appear to be implemented at the SPB until the early twentieth century.

¹⁴³ Jacobson, “The Nineteenth Century American Promenade: Precedent and Form,” 38.

¹⁴⁴ Olmsted proposed a similar concept for Brooklyn’s Prospect Park: “Men must come together, and must be seen coming together, in carriages, on horseback and on foot, and the concourse of animated life which will thus be formed, mist in itself be made, if possible, an attractive and diverting spectacle.” Jacobson, “The Nineteenth Century American Promenade: Precedent and Form,” 43-44.

¹⁴⁵ The concourse for Central Park was sited well within the park boundaries in order to separate it from the urban context and “embed it more effectively in the naturalized landscape that characterized the park.” Jacobson, “The Nineteenth Century American Promenade: Precedent and Form,” 54.

¹⁴⁶ Jacobson, “The Nineteenth Century American Promenade: Precedent and Form,” 43.

¹⁴⁷ Jacobson, “The Nineteenth Century American Promenade: Precedent and Form,” 45.

¹⁴⁸ Jacobson, “The Nineteenth Century American Promenade: Precedent and Form,” 46.

¹⁴⁹ These trees “were highly valued for the welcome shade they cast on walkways in the spring and summer months, and for conveying a restorative natural quality that distinguished the settings from their urban surroundings.” Jacobson, “The Nineteenth Century American Promenade: Precedent and Form,” 58.

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In many cities, like the SPB, promenades would eventually become more than recreational and social gathering spaces, but places for parades, public celebrations, demonstrations, and other expressions of political sentiment.¹⁵⁰ They remained important public spaces in many American cities up to the twentieth century, “when changes in social mores and the withdrawal of middle classes to domestic suburban realms diminished the popularity of public promenading as a social pursuit.”¹⁵¹

Portland’s Promenade and the Role of Horticulturist Louis G. Pfunder

Following Lownsdale’s death in 1862, nearly one-third of the property known as “Park Row” reverted to private ownership through a faulty deed. Lownsdale’s former spousal heirs entered into a tortuous, decades-long legal battle with the city, contesting the validity of the Lownsdales’ land transactions. His wife Nancy had not signed any documents transferring ownership and six of the northernmost parcels (Stark to Salmon streets) were lost to development in 1873, because the City Council was unwilling to purchase them from Lownsdale’s heirs. This effectively subdivided the park land in two, forming the South and North Park Blocks.¹⁵² The Portland Parks Commission noted this loss in their 1901 report:

This failure of title deprives the public of continuous Park Blocks through the heart of the city, and is greatly to be deplored. A repurchase at this day, exclusive of improvement, would cost a quarter million. The time may come when the city will be glad to condemn and repossess them at even double the price.¹⁵³

By 1869, a string of Park Blocks had been platted north of Ankeny Street to the river. The following year, the City Council authorized the purchase of the park blocks from SW Ankeny to Salmon streets at \$3,000 per block. The owners wanted \$6,000 per block and the deal was never closed. Other proposals were presented over the next year but the August 31, 1871 issue of *The Oregonian* emphasized the civic importance of the park blocks: “There is a settled feeling among the citizens of Portland that the interest of the people, the future, and character of our city and the health and comfort of the inhabitants all depend greatly on the opening and ornamentation of this grand avenue and thoroughfare through the center of the City, north and south.”¹⁵⁴

Chapman and his wife, Margaret, sold to the city the seven park blocks between SW Salmon and Mill streets for \$6,250. In 1871, Coffin deeded the blocks between Mill and Jackson streets to the city for \$2,500. Despite the sale, it was not until 1876 that the City had clear title to the SPB.¹⁵⁵

The gently northeast-sloping park blocks site was cleared of its native conifer tree cover sometime in the 1860s, probably for much-needed timber for an expanding city. True to Portland’s early moniker ‘Stumptown,’ the park blocks parcel remained undeveloped and littered with tree stumps (see Figure 7).¹⁵⁶ Between 1852 and 1876, the land was used by the public as a roadway for wagons and carriages, and were “park-like” in

¹⁵⁰ Jacobson, “The Nineteenth Century American Promenade: Precedent and Form,” 46.

¹⁵¹ Jacobson, “The Nineteenth Century American Promenade: Precedent and Form,” 38.

¹⁵² The NPB passed to city ownership under less contentious circumstances than their counterparts to the south, with Couch dedicating the five park blocks between Ankeny and NW Glisan streets to the public on January 25, 1865, deeding them to the city as an outright gift. Corning, *Dictionary of Oregon History*, 152-3; Snyder, *We Claimed this Land: Portland’s Pioneer Settlers*, 64.

¹⁵³ Portland Parks Commission, *Park Commission’s Report 1901*, on file at the Portland Archives and Records Center.

¹⁵⁴ Mackenzie, “The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development,” 10.

¹⁵⁵ Booth, “Portland’s Park Blocks: A Chronology”; Mackenzie, “The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development,” 7; Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 4.

¹⁵⁶ The SPB tract remained in this state for twenty-four years while the extent of Lownsdale’s gift remained in dispute. It was not until 1876 that the transfer of the land to the city was resolved by then Associate Justice Matthew Paul Deady of the Oregon Supreme Court. in Lownsdale vs. the City of Portland Volume 1, Deady’s Reports, 4. The witness, Short, referred to in the report was R.V. Short, Member of the Constitutional Convention of Oregon, 1857.

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name only. The town had developed as a strip several blocks deep along the Willamette River, with the park blocks sited on the outskirts of town with “scattered, white-washed frame houses on either side of the dedicated area. There were no true streets, only dirt paths which turned to mud in rainy weather. The land had been cleared and the parkway was filled with stumps. At the southern tip of the south park blocks dedication, the land was fenced and used as pasture. Beyond that was a baseball field.”¹⁵⁷

Period accounts in *The Oregonian* described the park’s setting in 1871 as “ungraded and ornamented only with stumps and logs.”¹⁵⁸ Although unimproved, the residents of Portland held aspirations for the area as a public amenity to be proud of. This included one Portland resident who wrote in an 1871 letter to the *Oregonian*:

We want the blocks in the Park improved and ornamented by trees, walks, fountains and shrubbery. We want the opportunity of accruing health, virtuous pleasure and the recreation of our families in beautiful parks – the like of which we have no means to provide ourselves.¹⁵⁹

It wasn’t until the 1870s that the city began to consider development of the Park Blocks. In February 1877, the Portland Common Council passed an ordinance authorizing the Committee on Streets and Public Property to receive bids for supplying and planting 600 shade trees for the ten blocks between SW Salmon and Hall streets.¹⁶⁰ “Trees considered suitable were White Elm, Silver leafed and Lombardy Poplars, Locust, Linden, Rosewood, European Ash, Box Elder, Cork Elm and Oregon and Red Maples.” Evidently, the committee “did not receive a satisfactory bid for the proposed 600 trees, for they signed a contract for only 104 trees.”¹⁶¹ Another ordinance (No. 1933) was approved on March 7, seeking bids for the construction of fences around the blocks.¹⁶² According to Herbert Beals’ 1995 research on the Park Blocks, the only indication otherwise was a resolution dated May 11, 1869, to the City’s Common Council from William Cree and John M. Buck of the Committee on Streets and Public Property, calling for the planting of some small trees in ‘public squares’ and installation of “suitable racks to guard them from injury.”¹⁶³ It is not clear, however, whether this applied to the SPB or just included the two “Plaza Blocks” squares.

The city contracted Louis Gustav Pfunder to execute the planting plan for ten of the park blocks between SW Salmon and SW Hall streets. Pfunder is one of the representative florists of the City of Portland, born in Mülheim, Germany, in 1845.¹⁶⁴ At fourteen years of age, Pfunder began an apprenticeship in gardening and horticulture at three of the most celebrated palace gardens in Germany, Alsace and Switzerland dating from the late-seventeenth century.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁷ Mackenzie, “The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development,” 12.

¹⁵⁸ Tong, *South Park Blocks Historical Study*, 2.

¹⁵⁹ Tong, *South Park Blocks Historical Study*, 4.

¹⁶⁰ Ordinance No. 1929 authorized the solicitation of bids for “setting out shade trees on Park Blocks 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 (as they were then identified) on the streets adjacent thereto, or on so much thereof as they may deem expedient.” Beals, “Park Blocks” NRHP Nomination Form, 12.

¹⁶¹ Tong, *South Park Blocks Historical Study*, 37.

¹⁶² Beals, “Park Blocks” NRHP MPD Nomination Form, 12.

¹⁶³ Beals, “Park Blocks” NRHP Nomination Form, 12.

¹⁶⁴ In 1845, Mulheim was part of the Grand Duchy of Baden. Long known for its academic and merchant life, the region passed briefly to Prussian hands before ultimately being absorbed by the expanding German Empire. Matthew Hayes, “Louis Pfunder House” NRHP Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, 2005), 11.

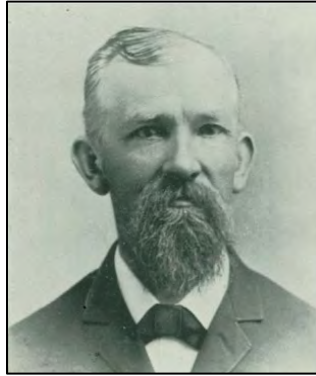
¹⁶⁵ By this period, the master-apprenticeship system was adopted as the formal education process for employment in specialized and skilled occupations.

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Portrait of Louis Gustav Pfunder

Image courtesy of City of Portland Archives [A 2004-002.3151]

By the mid-nineteenth century, European garden design had matured from playgrounds of royalty into grand-scale civic amenities executed in an ordered, compartmentalized, often bi-axial style. They imposed an order and geometry that seemed to extend as far as the eye could see. Pfunder was first exposed to the garden design and plant sciences during his apprenticeship training under master Swiss florist and horticulturist, A.L. Heitz. "Heitz's aesthetically pleasing and revolutionary greenhouses were considered engineering marvels of their time, and were celebrated throughout Europe."¹⁶⁶ He spent three and a half years studying under Heitz before leaving for Bulweil, Alsace, in 1862 to continue his apprenticeship under the celebrated botanists at Banman and Company, where he "learned the process of budding and grafting and the care and treatment of shrubbery and trees."¹⁶⁷ Upon completion of his two-year apprenticeship, Pfunder returned to Germany, where he was offered employment tending the expansive palace gardens at Schlosspark Nymphenburg in Munich. In the mid-1860s Pfunder's training was briefly interrupted by a year's conscription into the German Army. Following his discharge, he reestablished his career moving to Frankfurt to landscape and replant the city's public gardens that had been damaged by recent civil strife. In March 1866, Pfunder decided to take his talents to America. On his arrival in New York City, he was brought on to work on one of America's greatest landscapes, New York's Central Park, the work of master landscape designer, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.¹⁶⁸ In 1868, he embarked for San Francisco, where he worked for a year as a florist at Golden Gate Park. "It was in San Francisco that Pfunder's work ethic and imagination caught the attention of Portland's foremost banker and merchant, William S. Ladd."¹⁶⁹ Ladd summoned him to Portland to lay out and improve the grounds of his family estate in Dunthorpe, Oregon, as well as serve as superintendent of Ladd's conservatory, which "boasted the first and finest greenhouse constructed in the Pacific Northwest."¹⁷⁰

Pfunder went into business in 1870 at the corner of Clay and 3rd streets. In 1878, he purchased one-half block cornering 9th and Washington Streets, establishing his garden known as "Oregon Homestead." It was here that he erected a series of greenhouses, "heated by hot water and arranged for the forcing of roses and other flowering plants for the florist business, and also choice semi-tropical plants for decoration purposes."¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶ Hayes, "Louis Pfunder House" NRHP Nomination Form, 11.

¹⁶⁷ H.K. Hines, *An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon* (Chicago, IL: Lewis Publishing Co., 1893), 599.

¹⁶⁸ One source cites that his first engagement was with a florist in Union Hill, NJ, with whom he worked for a year. Hines, *An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon*, 599.

¹⁶⁹ Hayes, "Louis Pfunder House" NRHP Nomination Form, 12.

¹⁷⁰ Hayes, "Louis Pfunder House" NRHP Nomination Form, 11-12.

¹⁷¹ Hines, *An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon*, 599.

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Pfunder married Rosa Zeigler, a native of Germany, in 1874. Together, they made their first trip to their native country in 1883 and upon their return a year later, they built a residence and garden, which he called "City Park" and used for florist purposes. In 1890, he acquired a four-acre property in the Mt. Tabor neighborhood. It was during this time that he became widely known as a horticulturist.¹⁷²

For the SPB, Pfunder was tasked with the planting of 104 Lombardy poplars and elms along the park's ten-block stretch between SW Salmon and SW Hall streets. Pfunder's landscape concept would eventually feature a block-by-block perimeter ring of more than 240 American elms, with each block infilled with other deciduous species. Trees were planted in five rows of nine trees spaced 20' to 22' apart on the north-south axis and 20' apart on the east-west axis. A historic photograph from 1878 shows 45 American elms and Lombardy poplars per block (see Figure 8). An 1882 engraving and additional photographs from the 1880s depict the Park Blocks' initial tree plantings, along with the plank sidewalks along the outer row for pedestrians, wooden barriers to protect the trees on the outermost perimeter, and split-rail wood post fence to protect the inner three rows of trees (see Figures 9 and 10).¹⁷³

The Nineteenth Century Urban Context of the SPB

By the end of the 1870s, the SPB had taken on a more ordered appearance and served as a significant improvement to the neighboring residential district. *The Oregonian* contained an excerpt from the annual report of the city surveyor, D.W. Taylor, describing the park's condition in 1878:

One year ago the park blocks in the south end of the city consisted of a row of vacant blocks, unfenced and apparently uncared for, on which accumulated large quantities of tree trimmings, barrels, and other rubbish, presenting at all times a very unsightly appearance. To-day ten of the same blocks are enclosed with a neat, substantial fence, and otherwise improved by the setting out of over 500 shade trees of different varieties.¹⁷⁴

Residents from all parts of the city enjoyed the park blocks, which developed as a 'promenade ground' and, briefly, a racetrack¹⁷⁵: "The blocks were fenced, thickly planted groves of trees. People promenaded around the perimeter of the blocks on the plank sidewalks... Strolling or driving along the park blocks on a Sunday was also the perfect place to see and be seen. The streets on each side of the park blocks were used as a pleasure drive for horses and carriages."¹⁷⁶

Roadways had been defined along with the plank sidewalks for pedestrians, and street trees were planted in the neighborhood, which quickly established itself as a prestigious residential district lined by Italianate mansions owned by some of the city's leading families. Smaller houses and carriage houses were also built. Many immigrant families settled in the neighborhoods to the east and west of the SPB. "With the exception of a

¹⁷² Pfunder was captivated by Oregon's distinctive botanical environment, remaining in Portland and pursuing his work for the next fifty years. Hayes, "Louis Pfunder House" NRHP Nomination Form, 12; Junior League of Portland, *A Guide to Portland's Historic Parks and Gardens*.

¹⁷³ Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 5.

¹⁷⁴ "Surveyor's Report," *The Oregonian*, January 11, 1878.

¹⁷⁵ Unlike the SPB, the Plaza Blocks (now known as Lownsdale or Chapman Square) were restricted in terms of use. Chapman Square, planted in an all-female grove of ginkgo trees, was designated as a "women's" park, while Lownsdale Square was considered the "gentlemen's" park. For several decades, men could be escorted away by police from Chapman Square. Women, on the other hand, were not excluded from Lownsdale Square. Sexual segregation never was mandated or even suggested in the SPB. Robin Wilcox, *The Landscape's Guide to Portland, Oregon*, "The Plaza Blocks: Chapman & Lownsdale Squares," accessed July 30, 2020, <https://www.asla.org/Portland>; Portland Parks & Recreation, "Chapman and Lownsdale Squares," accessed July 30, 2020, <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks>.

¹⁷⁶ Mackenzie, "The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development," 19-20.

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carriage house and an adjacent paint shop, there were no buildings along the south park blocks that were not residential or institutional. The park blocks were still five or six blocks from the commercial heart of the city.”¹⁷⁷

In 1879 and 1880, four grand Italianate houses were built on the park’s west side between SW Harrison and SW Mill streets for Judge John W. Whalley, M.W. Ferchheimer, and Ralph and Isaac Jacobs. The first two are attributed to architect Albert H. Jordan, and the latter pair to Warren W. Williams, who was perhaps the city’s most notable architect of the era. “The two houses, along with their neighbors to the north, the Jacobs’ mansions, brought Portland to the highest design standards in the Italianate style, and had they survived would remain among the finest architectural achievements ever built on the Pacific Coast.”¹⁷⁸ An issue of *West Shore Magazine*, dated June 1882, includes an engraving of these grand Italianate mansions at SW Park Ave. and Montgomery St. (see Figure 10).¹⁷⁹

The SPB also was home to a number of educational institutions, including Lincoln High School (now Lincoln Performance Hall), Portland Academy, Park School, and the Shattuck Elementary School (now part of the PSU campus). The Portland Academy, which faced SW Broadway, established itself in 1851 and used the Park Blocks as its backyard until closing in 1878. The Park School opened in 1879 between Jefferson and Madison, serving as an elementary school and, later, used for high school students.¹⁸⁰

The First Congregational United Church of Christ was the first of four churches that ultimately would be erected facing the park blocks. Construction on the church edifice began in 1890 at 1126 SW Park Ave., but wasn’t completed until 1895. Designed by architect Henry J. Hefty, it featured a 185’ Italian Gothic tower that for many years was visible from almost anywhere in the city. “It is altogether a pleasant and varied addition to the South Park Blocks.”¹⁸¹ St. James Lutheran Church was also constructed to abut the park in this early period, with the congregation erecting its first building in 1891 on the western side. The early building was followed by a more substantial church in 1907 that remains today at 1315 SW Park Ave.



1890 Aerial Map

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress [G4294.P6A3 1890 .C6]

¹⁷⁷ Mackenzie, “The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development,” 12, 19.

¹⁷⁸ William J. Hawkins III and William Willingham, *Classic Houses of Portland, Oregon, 1850-1950* (Portland, OR: Timber Press, 1999), 121-22.

¹⁷⁹ Oregon Historical Society, Catalog Number OrHi 734.

¹⁸⁰ Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 6, 23.

¹⁸¹ Thomas Vaughan and George McMath, *A Century of Portland Architecture* (Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society, 1967), 68.

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By the 1890s, Portland was a prosperous trade port, rich in lumber and agriculture with trade links through the Willamette Valley. At the start of the decade, the city's population stood at 46,385; by the end, it had nearly doubled.¹⁸² In July 1892, the City of Portland consolidated with East Portland and Albina, two cities on the east side of the Willamette River, doubling the city's size. The west side remained the commercial and financial core of the city, while the residential middle class moved across the river. The population shift followed the growth of the streetcar lines and availability of buildable lots.¹⁸³

Yet, still any additions to Portland's park system "came chiefly by haphazard, private donations and remained largely undeveloped."¹⁸⁴ Early budgetary issues still plagued the city. Planning and spending for basic city services remained a priority, with park development furthest down the list.¹⁸⁵

During this period, the City of Portland inherited Holladay Park as part of the consolidation and bought a 40-acre site from Amos N. King, which became the nucleus of City Park (present-day Washington Park). This was the first property purchased specifically for park purposes by the city government. In 1894, the Pennoyer family donated Governor's Park to the city, becoming the first outright gift for park purposes. Other park acquisitions included the Ladd's Addition parks, Columbia Park, Macleay Park, which started a concerted park drive. Before 1900, the Park Blocks and City Park formed the core of the city's park system.¹⁸⁶

Progressive Era Planning and City Beautiful Movement 1900-1920

Portland underwent tremendous growth between 1870 and 1900, with the city's population increasing from 8,293 to 90,426 residents. Between 1900 and 1910, the population increased by 117,000 new residents.¹⁸⁷ During this period, transportation improvements enabled Portland to capture much of the Pacific Northwest trade and became a leading exporter of grain. The arrival of the transcontinental railroad in 1883 and the development of an improved ship canal were key to the city's economic expansion. Portland's downtown expanded as well: "Three- and four-story 19th century business blocks were being supplanted by twelve- and fourteen-story skyscrapers on 5th and 6th Avenue and by six-story blocks scattered between 3rd and Broadway."¹⁸⁸ Hotels prospered during this boom period, along with a rise of civic buildings including a new

¹⁸² Tess, "Historic Resources in Downtown Portland, 1906-1914, Historic Resources in Downtown Portland, 1915-1931," E3.

¹⁸³ Mackenzie, "The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development," 24; Portland Parks Commission, *Park Commission's Report 1901*, on file at the Portland Archives and Records Center.

¹⁸⁴ Portland Parks and Recreation, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Planning Framework and Implementation*, July 2007, accessed April 5, 2021, <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/article/165571>. 21.

¹⁸⁵ According to John Reps, "Western cities lighted streets, supplied water and gas, regulated the disposal of sewage, collected garbage, constructed and maintained streets and sidewalks, operated markets, fought crime, furnished mass transportation, cared for the sick, buried the dead, extinguished fires, controlled nuisances, educated their youth, and provided recreational facilities." John Reps, *The Forgotten Frontier: Urban Planning in the American West Before 1890* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1981), 3.

¹⁸⁶ Junior League of Portland, *A Guide to Portland's Historic Parks and Gardens*; "Explore Washington Park," accessed June 10, 2020, <http://explorewashingtonpark.org/about/history-of-the-park>; Mackenzie, "The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development," 24; Portland Parks and Recreation, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Planning Framework and Implementation*, 22.

¹⁸⁷ Many of these new residents arrived between 1905-1910, when the population experienced an 87% growth increase. Tess, "Historic Resources in Downtown Portland, 1906-1914, Historic Resources in Downtown Portland, 1915-1931," E5.

¹⁸⁸ Tess, "Historic Resources in Downtown Portland, 1906-1914, Historic Resources in Downtown Portland, 1915-1931," E6.

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central library, county courthouse, and police headquarters. In 1905, the city celebrated with the Lewis and Clark Exposition, which attracted substantial outside capital.¹⁸⁹

The Progressive Era, which coincided with the City Beautiful Movement, was characterized as filled with a “buoyancy of spirit” and had an important effect on Portland parks during the first two decades of the twentieth century.¹⁹⁰ The City Beautiful Movement can be traced to Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., who believed that public parks “not only add to the beauty of a city and to the pleasure of living in it, but are exceedingly important factors in developing the healthfulness, morality, intelligence, and business prosperity of its residents.”¹⁹¹ It promoted the planned city, recognizing cities as “physical entities that could be shaped to reflect beauty, harmony, system, and order.” For Portland, the two major outcomes from this national movement were the Olmsted Plan of 1903 and Edward Bennett’s Greater Portland Plan of 1912. These plans represented the City’s first attempts to create a comprehensive and integrated plan for its park system, transportation, and land uses.¹⁹² The SPB directly benefited from these early comprehensive plans and became a central component of the city’s larger vision of interconnected public open spaces.

Portland’s civic leaders embraced the tenets of the City Beautiful Movement in its park system, following the national trend of city planning that was transforming cities across the country. During this period, the city expanded and developed its public parks in earnest. Prior to the creation of the Olmsted Plan, Portland voters approved the creation of an independent city park commission that could levy an annual property tax for purchasing and improving parks property. At their first meeting on October 20, 1900, the Board of Park Commissioners transferred control over parklands from the Water Board to the new Park Board. The next month, they formed three subcommittees: Committee on the Judiciary, Finance, and Rules and Regulations; Committee on Engineering, Landscape Gardening, Zoology, Botany, and Forestry; and Committee on Equipment of Parks, Purchasing Supplies, and Employment of Men. Charles M. Myers was hired as the first Superintendent of Parks.¹⁹³ The 1901 Parks Commission’s Report recognized the importance of setting aside land for public open space for future generations:

The beautifying of the city as a whole, the increased healthfulness of the people, the higher values to all property, the opening of beautiful suburbs and the true expansion of the commonwealth itself are involved. For these reasons we urge the consideration of all our citizens to the subject. The annual tax for maintenance should be liberal...Whether the work is continued in the present form, or shall be undertaken as a more integral part of city government, its importance should be magnified and the type should be set which coming generations will be grateful to acknowledge and fulfill. A city like Portland, to which nature had been more prodigal in climate, diversity and grandeur of surroundings than any other country, should provide itself

¹⁸⁹ By 1907, the city had over 55 out-of-state companies worth over \$1 million. Tess, “Historic Resources in Downtown Portland, 1906-1914, Historic Resources in Downtown Portland, 1915-1931,” E7; Willingham, Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *City of Portland Civic Planning, Development, & Public Works, 1851-1965: A Historic Context*, 9, 11, 13, 15.

¹⁹⁰ As stated in the Section 8 Summary Paragraph, the NRHP MPD nomination for “The City Beautiful Movement and Civic Planning in Portland, Oregon 1897-1921” provides an appropriate historic context for the SPB’s early development and identifies the park as an important historic resource; however, this nomination does not rely on the MPD since the period of significance both precedes and extends well past the time period discussed in the MPD. Lutino, Merker, and Green, “The City Beautiful Movement and Civic Planning in Portland, Oregon 1897-1921” NRHP MPD.

¹⁹¹ Lutino, Merker, and Green, “The City Beautiful Movement and Park Planning in Portland, Oregon 1897-1928” NRHP MPD, 12-16.

¹⁹² Lutino, Merker, and Green, “The City Beautiful Movement and Park Planning in Portland, Oregon 1897-1921” NRHP MPD, 1.

¹⁹³ Portland Parks and Recreation, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Planning Framework and Implementation*, 21, 23.

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the name of having been worthy of its heritage. A park system embracing riverside, mountains and plains, and connected by wide boulevards, would go far to make the most beautiful city in the world.¹⁹⁴

Also highlighted in the 1901 report were the Commission's plans to "grade and crosswalk the Park Blocks as fast as means are provided; to make smooth lawns and judiciously cull inferior trees which can be replaced by others." It goes on to recommend that some of the blocks be planted in "flowering shrubs and central beds of flowers."¹⁹⁵

John C. Olmsted's 1903 Portland Park Plan and Parks Superintendent Emanuel T. Mische

In 1903, the city chartered a formal park board to replace the Park Commission and hired the renowned Olmsted Brothers landscape architecture firm to prepare a long-range park plan for Portland.¹⁹⁶ At the time, Portland owned less than 200 acres of parklands, with most of it undeveloped.¹⁹⁷ This was substantially less than the cities of Tacoma and Seattle in Washington State. That same year, John C. Olmsted visited Portland and Seattle to prepare parks and parkways plans for both cities, which represented his first public commissions in the Pacific Northwest. Published in the 1903 Park Board report, Olmsted's plan highlighted a system of parks and parkways on the city's west hillsides and east side river bluffs to take advantage of mountain and river views, along with a number of formal boulevards, playgrounds, city squares, and waterfront parks. The report also recommended several park acquisitions including Forest Park, Sellwood, Mt. Tabor Park, the Columbia Sloughs, Ross and Swan Islands, and Rocky Butte Park.¹⁹⁸ The Olmsted plan, which was very similar to those developed for other cities, was based on the concept that connected parks and parkways are more useful than isolated parks.¹⁹⁹

Recognizing the importance of Lownsdale's linear open space contributions, Olmsted incorporated both the Plaza Blocks and the Park Blocks as integral elements into his comprehensive vision. His 1903 report stated that, although it was probably too costly to acquire the blocks between SW Ankeny and SW Salmon streets, a "handsome terminus is needed as a matter of dignity and propriety" at the south end.²⁰⁰ By the time Olmsted arrived in Portland, the trees planted by Pfunder in 1877 had matured significantly and the narrow park blocks, plus buildings ringing its perimeter, limited opportunities for expansion. Olmsted's report is recognized as a key document in the history of the city's parks.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁴ Portland Parks Commission, *Park Commission's Report 1901*, 11-12.

¹⁹⁵ Portland Parks Commission, *Park Commission's Report 1901*, 8.

¹⁹⁶ Olmsted Brothers was established in 1898 by John Charles Olmsted and his younger half-brother, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., son of the eminent landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted. John C. was a senior partner until his death in 1920; the firm continued until 1950. "John Charles Olmsted," National Association for Olmsted Parks, accessed June 15, 2021, <https://www.olmsted.org/the-olmsted-legacy/john-charles-olmsted>; Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *Open Space & Park Development 1851-1965*, 9-10.

¹⁹⁷ Prior to 1900, The Park Blocks and City Park formed the core of the city's park system, with residential districts growing up around both parks. Willingham, Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *City of Portland Civic Planning, Development, & Public Works, 1851-1965: A Historic Context*, 2009, 30.

¹⁹⁸ The report included 18 guidelines, ranging from "#1 The Importance of Municipal Parks," to "#16 Park Systems Should be Governed by Qualified Individuals" and "#18 Parks Should be Managed Independently of City Governments. Anthony Monaco, "Portland's Great Plans," PDXPlanning, accessed June 15, 2021, <https://pdxplanning.weebly.com/portlands-great-plans.html>.

¹⁹⁹ No map was drawn as part of this plan. Mackenzie, *The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development*, 22.

²⁰⁰ Mackenzie, *The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development*, 23.

²⁰¹ Junior League of Portland, *A Guide to Portland's Historic Parks and Gardens*; Gordon Oliver, "Dueling Histories Vex Blocks," *The Oregonian*, June 9, 2002, C1.

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By 1904, the Park Blocks were shown as part of a larger, inter-connected park system under the Olmsted Plan.²⁰² By this period, many of the large mansions surrounding the SPB had been replaced by apartment houses. In 1907, voters approved allocation of \$1 million for park development under the Olmsted Plan. The following year, Emanuel T. Mische, a Harvard-educated, former employee of the Olmsted Brothers firm, was hired as Park Superintendent. Mische played an active role in every aspect of park administration and planning, namely translating “the Olmsted elements of landscape design to Portland’s setting.”²⁰³

Unfortunately, funds allocated for park development got tied up in legal wrangling. By the time money was available in 1909, there was only enough to fully implement the Olmsted Plan. As a result, the Terwilliger Parkway was the only element of the plan carried out on the west side. The Parks Board redirected its focus to the construction and development of previously designated parks and parkways, along with extending existing playgrounds and developing new ones.²⁰⁴

Mische directed his attention toward smaller neighborhood parks with recreational amenities such as tennis courts, baseball diamonds, and school playgrounds. These parks not only offered better investments of public funds than the large, semi-rural preserves such as Washington Park, but enhanced the quality of urban life and stabilized inner-city property values as Portland’s suburbs were growing. Following the Olmsted principle of facilitating diverse activities within a park, Mische sought to incorporate both passive and active recreation in these new parks.²⁰⁵ Portland’s first playgrounds were added in 1906, including the first installation of play equipment in the NPB between NW Couch and Davis and in the SPB near SW Jefferson. A ballfield was installed at Columbia Park in NE Portland.²⁰⁶

It was during this period that Mische carried out a major redesign of the SPB, including reseeding each block with turf and adding plants in alternating blocks.²⁰⁷ These changes transformed the park into a “showplace for shrubs and flowerbeds, planting colorful ornamentals and roses and improving the walkways and benches.”²⁰⁸ At the time, these planting upgrades were met with public criticism, but Mische justified such formality and color as appropriate for the sophisticated park surroundings that edged the city’s downtown core. He further

²⁰² The Portland Parks Commission’s plans for the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition progressed under Olmsted’s guidance with the planting of 200 miles of rose-bordered streets to draw attention to the Centennial Celebration, which was dubbed the “City of Roses.” Mackenzie, “The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development,” 23-24; Portland Parks and Recreation, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Planning Framework and Implementation*, 23; “South Park Blocks,” Portland Parks and Recreation, accessed July 29, 2020, <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/finder/index.cfm?action=ViewPark&PropertyID=674>.

²⁰³ Mische served as Portland’s Park Superintendent from 1908 to 1914. Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *Open Space & Park Development 1851-1965*, 13.

²⁰⁴ The 1909 Parks Board annual report encouraged people to donate land for parks, claiming it would increase land value. Mackenzie, “The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development,” 23-24; Portland Parks and Recreation, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Planning Framework and Implementation*, 23; Portland Parks and Recreation, “South Park Blocks.”

²⁰⁵ Orloff, “Portland Park Blocks”; Portland Parks and Recreation, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Planning Framework and Implementation*, 23; Portland Parks and Recreation, “South Park Blocks.”

²⁰⁶ By 1910, a number of new playgrounds were constructed at City, Sellwood, Peninsula and Columbia Parks. A new swimming tank was built in Sellwood to replace the public baths in the Willamette River. E.F. Lawrence, a prominent Oregon architect and dean of the University of Oregon School of Architecture, was hired to design an assembly building for Sellwood Park and its pool, as well as some comfort stations for Columbia Park. Portland Parks and Recreation, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Planning Framework and Implementation*, 23; Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *Open Space & Park Development 1851-1965*, 10; Portland Parks and Recreation, “South Park Blocks.”

²⁰⁷ Between 1885 and 1912, additional tree species were added to the park’s design, including maple, walnut, oak and flowering cherry. Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 5.

²⁰⁸ Orloff, “Portland Park Blocks.”

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noted that the “park blocks in their present state, though not exactly nondescript, fail to fulfill their highest office as an ornamental accent in the street system of the city or as a purely local park ornament.”²⁰⁹

In 1909, Mische shifted his attention to the Hillside Parkway proposed in Olmsted’s 1903 report. His plan differed slightly from Olmsted’s, siting it on higher ground, to be built on land given by the Terwilliger heirs and the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company. The 1912 preliminary plan shows the parkway beginning at the southernmost end of the park blocks, including the acquisition of 14.7 acres of the SPB. As Hilary Mackenzie states, “it is unclear if this was to be the ‘handsome terminus’ that John Olmsted had stated was needed at the end of the park blocks.” It was, however, an effort to provide a linkage between the park blocks and the new parkway, and “its presence initiated a system of parks and connecting parkways for the city.”²¹⁰

Also, in 1909, a Civic Improvement League was founded to create a comprehensive plan to build a Civic Center. The nationwide City Beautiful Movement “was in full bloom and Portland’s civic elite was hardly immune to its influence.”²¹¹ They hired architect Edward H. Bennett, a British-born classically trained architect, to develop the “Greater Portland Plan” of 1912.²¹² A quote by Chicago architect Daniel Burnham at the beginning of the plan sets the tone:

Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high and hope and work remembering that a noble logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing asserting itself with ever-growing consistency.²¹³

Bennett followed this credo, with the assumption that city’s population would grow to over 2,000,000 with industry concentrated near the river and railroad lines. His ideas were heavily influenced by European models, featuring diagonal boulevards extending through the city and terminating at various public centers. The proposed plan showed the Park Blocks as “Park Street Boulevard” with a huge traffic circle and monument at Park Avenue and Burnside and five boulevards radiating from this point. Bennett’s plan for the Park Blocks was never realized, due in part to increased demands for parks on the booming eastside.²¹⁴

In 1913, a new city charter established Portland’s commission form of government, in which the mayor and four council members all shared legislative authority and the commissioners assumed administrative duties as assigned by the mayor. The park board was abolished and parks fell under the Department of Public Affairs.²¹⁵

Several major parks were completed during this period including Laurelhurst Park (NR-listed) and Terwilliger Parkway (NR-listed). The International Rose Test Garden was also developed on a 5.12-acre garden within Washington Park (NR-listed;) in 1917. During Mische’s last year as superintendent, he spent a month touring cities in the U.S. and Canada to evaluate their park systems and “learn about new techniques, equipment, rules, and botanical features.”²¹⁶

²⁰⁹ Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *Open Space & Park Development 1851-1965*, 13.

²¹⁰ Mackenzie, “The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development,” 28.

²¹¹ Lutino, Merker, and Green, “The City Beautiful Movement and Park Planning in Portland, Oregon 1897-1928” NRHP MPD, 17.

²¹² Bennett received his architectural training under the École des Beaux-Arts and was a protégé of Chicago architect Daniel H. Burnham. Lutino, Merker, and Green, “The City Beautiful Movement and Park Planning in Portland, Oregon 1897-1928” NRHP MPD, 17.

²¹³ Mackenzie, “The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development,” 33.

²¹⁴ Mackenzie, “The Portland Park Blocks: Their Origin and Development,” 33-36; Oliver, “Dueling Histories Vex Blocks.”

²¹⁵ Willingham, Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *City of Portland Civic Planning, Development, & Public Works, 1851-1965: A Historic Context*, 2009, 32.

²¹⁶ Mische was succeeded by James O. Conville, followed by Charles Paul Keyser in 1917. Portland Parks and Recreation, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Planning Framework and Implementation*, 25.

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In 1919, the city passed a bond issue for land acquisition and park improvements that allowed them to begin efforts to procure eight new sites, including Rose City Golf Course, Wallace Park, Dawson Park, Belmont Park (Colonel Summers Park), and Montavilla Park. These parks eventually were developed with varying multiple uses, including playgrounds, ball fields, tennis courts, picnic areas and public restrooms.²¹⁷

Further changes were made to the SPB during this period of development, including the addition of diagonal walkways crossing at the center of several blocks.²¹⁸ These landscape improvements incorporated Olmsted's design principles and further reinforced Pfunder's formal design, while increasing opportunities for social interaction, commemoration, and repose.²¹⁹

Development abutting the park reflected the fast growth and increasing density of the city.²²⁰ The Arlington Club, a private association composed of many of the city's most prominent businessmen, built a new clubhouse at the north end of the park across SW Salmon Street. It was designed by Whidden and Lewis, the city's most prominent architectural firm in the early twentieth century. On the park's eastern edge, Portland Public Schools built Lincoln High School in 1912 designed by the firm of Whitehouse and Fouilhoux, on the full block between Market and Mill streets, and Shattuck School, an elementary school at 1914 SW Park Ave.²²¹

1920s Improvements to the SPB: Interior Circulation, Plazas, and Destinations for Public Art

The 1920s era is generally recognized as one of Portland's most active, with critical growth years between 1915 and 1931, following a brief five-year period surrounding World War I. In these years, the downtown added roughly 200 new buildings.²²² The area surrounding the park blocks had evolved into an ethnically diverse neighborhood, including "Italian, Russian, and Jewish communities, as well as some African-American families. The northern edge of the district, meanwhile, became a cluster of second-tier hotels that served itinerant workers."²²³ Many of the remaining single-family residences were converted into flats, boarding houses,

²¹⁷ Later acquisitions during the 1920s included Hoyt Arboretum (1922/1930), Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden (1923/1930), and Powell Butte Nature Park (1925). Portland Parks and Recreation, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Planning Framework and Implementation*, 22-26.

²¹⁸ In the following decade, the City introduced public monuments and other artwork to provide a focal point for the plazas. The diagonal paths are visible in historic photographs starting in 1912 (near Salmon and Main) and near Shattuck Elementary School (near College and Hall) and c. 1919 (near Jackson and Hall). See images in MIG, *South Park Blocks Master Plan*, Appendix A, 11.

²¹⁹ Photos taken in the 1920s indicate that the park was improved with additional planting beds. Portland Parks and Recreation, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Planning Framework and Implementation*, 22-26.

²²⁰ Starting in the 1910s, Rose Festival celebrations were held in the two blocks bounded by Salmon and Madison streets. For 70 years, between 1936 and 2007, the Portland Rose Festival took place in and around the park blocks with the parade's route traversing "Fourteenth to Jefferson to West Park, to Madison, to Tenth, to Main Street..." Events included exhibitions and band concerts at the "Victory Rose Festival Lane O'Laughter." See Figures 11 and 12. Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 5; Portland Parks and Recreation, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Planning Framework and Implementation*, 22-26.

²²¹ By the late 1960s, these buildings had become part of the PSU campus, which became the dominant tenant on both sides of the southern-most six blocks of the SPB. These schools and the university brought thousands of students to enjoy the park's greenery. Tong, *South Park Blocks Historical Study*, 38.

²²² Portland's economic conditions began to slide in 1913 as the war produced a recession as a result of the drop in trade, with foreign lumber exports declining by 63%. The unemployment rate doubled for unskilled and seasonal workers and finally, the U.S. entered the war in April 1917. This downturn led to a severe halt in construction activities. Tess, "Historic Resources in Downtown Portland, 1906-1914, Historic Resources in Downtown Portland, 1915-1931," E12, E14.

²²³ Val Ballestrom and Alexander Benjamin Craghead, "The Long Shadow of Urban Renewal" exhibit, Architectural Heritage Center, June 2021.

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apartments, and housekeeping rooms. Three synagogues and the Jewish Community Center served the area's large Jewish population.²²⁴

Developmental growth continued on the blocks facing the SPB, reinforcing the green spaces as valued areas of respite amidst the increasingly dense urban neighborhood.²²⁵ Construction of the eight-story Roosevelt Hotel in 1924 on the northeast corner of SW Salmon Street and Ninth Avenue signaled the introduction of larger, bulkier buildings along the park's perimeter. It was built with 107 rooms and later was remodeled into apartments for low-income residents. The First Christian Church, completed in 1925 on the east side of the SPB at SW Columbia Street, included a welcoming stairway that widened as it neared the corner. This was followed in 1927 by a larger structure, the Portland Publix Theater (later Paramount Theater, and later Portland Center for Performing Arts). The theater's main entrance fronted onto SW Broadway and featured a secondary marquee entry along the Park Avenue side, between SW Salmon and Main streets.

On the park's west side, the Portland Masonic Temple, an imposing brick edifice rising nearly five stories tall was completed in 1927 between Main and Madison streets. This building eventually would be acquired and united with the Portland Art Museum to help form what came to be called the Cultural District. The art museum, erected between 1932 and 1939, occupied a prominent location abutting the park blocks, between Madison and Jefferson streets. It was designed in a style called Pioneer Modern by Pietro Belluschi, an internationally renowned architect who worked for many years in Portland before heading the architecture school at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Further south along the park's western edge, three apartment buildings were completed in 1931, including the seven-story Jeanne Manor (1471 SW Park Ave.), four-story Parkway Manor (1609 SW Park Ave.), and the five-story Blackstone Apartments (1831 SW Park Ave.). The Sixth Church of Christ, Scientist, was completed the following year, adding another imposing brick façade facing the park at SW Ninth Ave. and Columbia St.²²⁶ These buildings not only added to the neighborhood's growing density, but served as framing architecture to the park's open green space in the heart of the city.

Major public expenditures during the 1920s and 1930s were dedicated to street improvements, but the City also implemented improvements at the SPB in 1921 as *The Sunday Oregonian* reported that the park was "improved extensively....the broad center walk treatment, used in the lower blocks, has been extended and four blocks have been seeded to grass. The extension of this plan of central walks in gradually converting the South Park Blocks into an attractive mall will serve Portland somewhat as the Capitol mall served Washington, DC."²²⁷

Soon after the 1921 improvements and perhaps as a response to the construction of larger apartment buildings, a new church, as well as public institutions along its fringes, the SPB became a "destination for civic adornment" in the form of public monuments. These monuments were installed at the nexus of the diagonal paths added in the previous decade, providing a focal point for the plazas. These included the Theodore Roosevelt *Rough Rider* statue (**non-contributing object**), the Shemanski Fountain and *Rebecca at the Well*

²²⁴ Portland State University, "Viking 1973," *The Viking (Yearbooks)*, Book 29. Portland City Archives, <https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1028&context=viking>.

²²⁵ Activities within the SPB continued to play an important role during this period of growth. "In 1923, in a display of air power, the army held a maneuver in which small paper sack flowers were dropped from their airplanes upon the South Park Blocks. Machine gunners also held placements on nearby buildings." In the mid-1930s, the Works Progress Administration held band concerts in the park block adjoining Antoinette Hatfield Hall. Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 4-5.

²²⁶ Tong, *South Park Blocks Historical Study*, 6.

²²⁷ *The Sunday Oregonian*, June 18, 1922.

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sculpture (**contributing object**), and the Abraham Lincoln statue (**non-contributing object**).²²⁸ These public monuments signaled the transition of the SPB from a park meant to be viewed from the street and sidewalks to one that provided an opportunity for public experiences and use within the park. Two of the statues that would become visual focal points at that time, Roosevelt *Rough Rider* and Abraham Lincoln, were given to the city by the same patron, Dr. Henry Waldo Coe, between 1922 and 1928. Coe, who was a friend of Roosevelt's, was possibly "catalyzed by general nationalist pride."²²⁹ The Roosevelt statue was designed by New York sculptor Alexander Phimister Proctor, who was known for his western art. The imposing 18-foot-tall bronze and granite statue was situated between SW Madison and Jefferson streets, across from the Portland Art Museum, and depicted the colonel "in his Spanish American War uniform, mounted upon his trusty steed." Calvin Coolidge broke ground for the statue in August 1922 and it was unveiled on November 11. The block was renamed "Roosevelt Square" by the city.²³⁰ A historic photograph from 1922 shows the square with walkways of packed earth. The Lincoln statue, installed in the park between SW Main and Madison streets in 1928, was designed by sculptor George Fite Waters depicting the Lincoln of the Civil War years: "He is standing in the familiar pose, with head bowed and shoulders drooped, a sad but kindly expression on his face." The block was designated "Lincoln Square" by the City in July 1928.²³¹ A 1949 photograph shows the statue placed along the centerline of a single central walkway lined with a continuous row of park benches. Both statues were removed by the Portland Parks Bureau in 2020; all that remains are the granite pedestal bases.²³²

In 1926, Joseph Shemanski donated a sandstone fountain to the city "in appreciation of his time in Portland (38 years), his many friendships and for the success he attained."²³³ Shemanski was a Polish immigrant who started out as a traveling salesman before founding the Eastern Outfitting Co. and became a successful businessman. Situated on the block between Salmon and Main streets, the Shemanski Fountain was designed by architect Carl Linde and sculptor Oliver Laurence Barrett, featuring a bronze statue of *Rebecca at the Well* and three water basins for dogs.²³⁴ The fountain is enclosed by a triangular, three-columned (Corinthian order) cupola built of cast Oregon sandstone with a red tile roof. It was originally set amidst trees, shrubs, and grass.²³⁵ A photograph from 1929 indicates that the gathering space around the fountain's base was packed earth. A later photo, dated 1967, shows the fountain surrounded by aggregate paving. As the changes to the park during this period demonstrate, the SPB took on a more inwardly focused purpose. The modifications facilitated interior public uses of the park by creating focal points around public statues and artwork, developing interior circulation networks, and creating opportunities for contemplation and repose through the addition of benches. These changes appeared to correspond to the urban changes around the park which included a

²²⁸ As stated in Section 7, both statues were removed as of 2020 and only the granite pedestal bases remain intact as of August 2021. As a result, they no longer possess integrity and are considered non-contributing.

²²⁹ Henry Waldo Coe donated these sculptures as "representatives of the grand narrative of American exceptionalism. He wanted to confirm Oregon's identity as part of that narrative, so that Portland too would have images of national heroes like other major cities." Laurel Reed Pavic, "Another One Bites the Dust," *Oregon Artswatch*, October 26, 2020, www.orartswatch.org/another-one-bites-the-dust.

²³⁰ Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 107.

²³¹ In the late 1930s a proposal was made by an individual, with the backing of several patriotic organizations, to place the statue on a higher base that would have made it four feet taller. Portland's Art Commission denied the request saying that completed works of art should not be altered. Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 106.

²³² The Lincoln and Roosevelt statues were toppled on October 11, 2020 during the "Indigenous Peoples Day of Rage." The Lincoln sculpture pedestal was spray painted with "Dakota 38" in reference to the execution of 38 Dakota men that Lincoln approved in 1862 in the aftermath of the Dakota War. Pavic, "Another One Bites the Dust"; Kavanaugh, "Portland Protesters Topple Statues of Theodore Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln in 'Day of Rage'; Police Declare Riot."

²³³ Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 105.

²³⁴ The original design by Linde depicted a bowl of flowers, which was later changed to include the urn-carrying maiden. Gleason and Orloff, *Portland's Public Art: A Guide and History*, 43.

²³⁵ City of Portland, Historic Resource Inventory; Gleason and Orloff, *Portland's Public Art: A Guide and History*, 43.

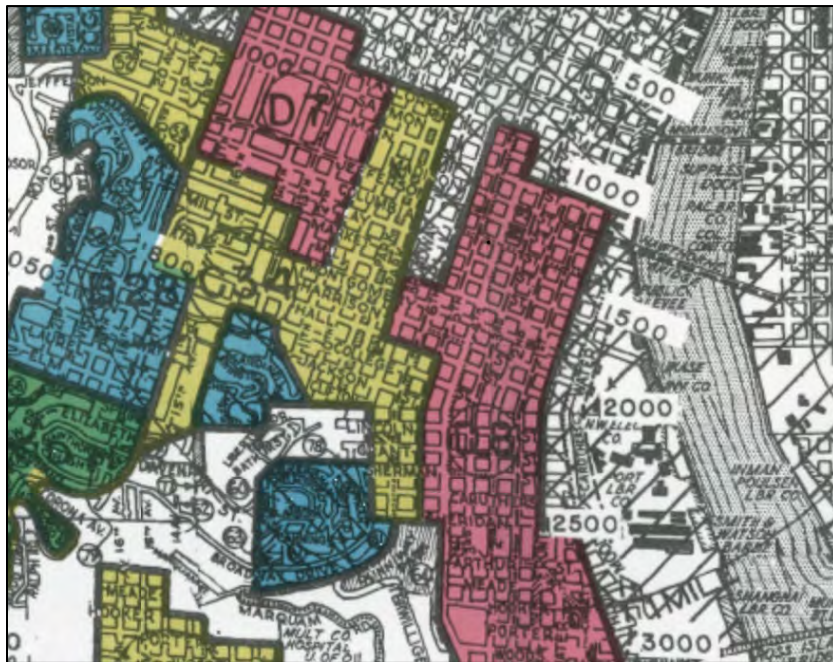
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greater density of residents within the area as well as the construction of cultural and religious institutions along its edges.

Portland State University and Portland's Urban Renewal Era (1930-1970s)

With the onset of the Great Depression, Portland's urban core experienced a general decline due to diminished economic and employment opportunities. Of the four largest West Coast cities, Portland had the worst employment record as of 1930.²³⁶ Towards the end of the 1930s, the housing stock of the city undoubtedly suffered for by the end of the 1930s, the area around the SPB was viewed as "Definitely Declining" by the Home Owners' Lending Corporation (HOLC), a federal agency notorious for their research products that justified "redlining" practices by banks and other financial institutions. Redlining led to the denial of mortgages based on the perceived financial risk of areas occupied by Blacks, Indigenous communities, and immigrant groups.²³⁷ According to Portland's HOLC map, the SPB were located immediately west of an area that was redlined by the HOLC. Called the "Southwest River District", this area was noted as containing 35% foreign-born families (mostly consisting of Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos) with an additional 30% of the population consisting of Black residents.²³⁸ Given the subsequent disinvestment in the areas around the South Park Blocks and in the "Southwest River District", the physical infrastructure and housing quality (and needless to say the residents) undoubtedly suffered thus making these areas prime candidates for urban renewal projects following World War II that led to the displacement of thousands of Portland residents.



Pittmon's Map of Portland, Oregon and Vicinity (1938). This "Residential Security Map" illustrated the results of research conducted by the federal Home Owners' Loan Corporation. The South Park Blocks were located in a yellow or "Definitely Declining" area.²³⁹

²³⁶ William H. Mullins, "I'll Wreck the Town If it Will Give Employment": Portland in the Hoover years of the Depression," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Vol. 79, No. 3 (July 1988), 109.

²³⁷ Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2017), 63-64.

²³⁸ "Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America", accessed August 4, 2021, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=12/45.513/-122.773&city=portland-or>

²³⁹ "Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America."

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Portland underwent further changes in the late 1940s, with new industries emerging that were spurred by cheap electricity and an abundant labor force. The city experienced a decade of economic stagnation in the 1950s. "The lack of sustained economic expansion stymied the effort of planning advocates and social reformers to mobilize city government on behalf of new commercial development and modernization of infrastructure."²⁴⁰

Throughout the 1930s and during World War II and its immediate aftermath, the SPB and its setting experienced very few changes. Only one building was added in the area in the 1940s, the Rose Marie Court Apartments on SW Market Street. After World War II, the State Board of Higher Education purchased the former Shattuck Elementary School building at the south end of the park to serve as the new home of Vanport College and Portland Extension Center.²⁴¹ This marked the starting point for the present-day Portland State University (PSU) campus. In 1952, the school acquired the former Lincoln High School, around the same time that it was reauthorized as the Portland State Extension Center.²⁴² On February 14, 1955, a bill was signed creating the four-year Portland State College.²⁴³

The attractiveness of the SPB as an urban residential area appeared to resume in the 1950s with the addition of two major buildings along the western edge; the eleven-story Park Plaza Apartments (1969 SW Park Ave.) and the fifteen-story Lone Plaza (1717 SW Park Ave.).²⁴⁴ These taller multi-family buildings created some of the densest residential areas in the city. Many of the older single-family residences had been demolished and replaced by commercial development and auto garage/service stations: "On Broadway the AAA and the car dealer have built their offices. The Lone Plaza has just been completed...Jennings house on the corner of Park and Montgomery has become the Registrar's office and Portland State begins to build and expand. By the end of the 50's State Hall (Cramer) is on its way and the two-story College Center/Library is building up to its present four floors."²⁴⁵

In 1952, the City took the first step in a long-range plan to modernize and relandscape the SPB. Landscape architect Edward L. Erickson prepared plans for the Portland Parks Bureau to remove roughly 157 trees, mostly elms along the edges, to be replaced with flowering cherry trees. The reasons cited for this change were that the original trees were planted too close together and their root systems extended under the street pavement.²⁴⁶ In an *Oregonian* article entitled "Removal of Old Park Block Elms Brings Protest by Irate

²⁴⁰ Willingham, Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *City of Portland Civic Planning, Development, & Public Works, 1851-1965: A Historic Context*, 2009, 52.

²⁴¹ The school started out as a temporary extension center after WWII and was located in the City of Vanport, north of Portland. Bryce Henry, "Portland State University," *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, accessed April 21, 2021, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/portland_state_university/#.YK09ei1h1p9.

²⁴² The Lincoln High School building, affectionately known as 'Old Main,' was used for a variety of classes. In November 1961, its auditorium "was filled to overflowing with students who heard the noted integration leader, The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr, assert, 'if democracy is to live, segregation must die.'" Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 6, 66.

²⁴³ The legislature, which envisioned Portland State as a "downtown city college...not of the campus type," established its boundaries as Market Street to the north, Hall to the south, Broadway to the east, and Park Avenue to the west. By 1961, the student body had grown to 4,500 students, and the campus included "two new classroom buildings, a library, a student union center, and another five pre-existing buildings repurposed as classrooms and offices." Henry, "Portland State University."

²⁴⁴ *The Oregonian*, January 14, 1950, 16.

²⁴⁵ Portland State University, "Viking 1973."

²⁴⁶ Don Nelson pointed out the ongoing problem of parking in Portland that gave rise to a plan in the 1950s proposing to elevate several park blocks, creating "a park above and a park below, which of course was turned down." The plan, however, was never executed. In 1958, the neighboring area bounded by SW Market, Front, Arthur, and Clay streets was approved for urban renewal, which resulted in the displacement of roughly 2,300 residents. Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 5.

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Woman,” Keith Hansen reported how park bureau workmen prematurely removed the “venerable elm trees” on the west side of the park block in front of the Portland Art Museum, between Jefferson and Madison streets.²⁴⁷ Nationally significant Portland architect John Yeon, in a letter dated December 1952, expressed his outrage to the city’s action:

Before this plan was publicly announced and before there was any opportunity for public discussion, nine elm trees were felled in this one block. Only four trees remain. Previous removal of trees in this block has caused previous controversy and protest. The Board of Trustees of the Portland Art Association wishes on this occasion to protest to responsible authority both the procedure and plan...for the full extent of the Park Blocks which pass the Museum and constitute a major civic asset of Portland’s west side...

The reasons stated in the press for this remodelling program do not seem to justify the cost, the damage, or the ultimate appearance of this project. The reasons are those which might be more logically expected from a bureau in charge of widening streets than from the bureau in custody of the city’s parks...

If this is a valid reasoning for removing these trees, then all the trees in parking strips should be removed, not only in Portland but in cities elsewhere...It is easy to imagine the mass indignation which would meet a proposal to remove the elms along the streets of Washington, D.C., or the chestnuts from the streets of Paris...

The destruction of a monumental avenue of elms to accommodate briefly blooming trees and bushes is an ill conceived project for an inappropriate situation. The year-round beauty of the stately aisle of mature trees could have no compensating substitute in fussy and trivial flower beds suitable for cottage gardens or informal parks. The maintenance costs would far exceed those required by the original simple plan. This money would be better spent in the feeding, spraying and trimming of the existing trees, which have been sadly neglected in the past...

The proposal, and the unannounced commencement of the project, instills lack of confidence in the counsel of the Park Bureau.²⁴⁸

Erickson’s plan also envisioned installing diagonal walkways (in the form of a St. Andrew’s Cross) on several blocks, now known as Block Nos. 3-7 and 11. His plan met a storm of protest and the Parks Bureau eventually abandoned much of it.²⁴⁹

Additional public artwork was added to the SPB including the bronze Simon Benson Memorial (**non-contributing**) designed by architect A.E. Doyle and dedicated in 1959.²⁵⁰ By the 1960s, several major civic institutions established a presence along the SPB including the Portland Art Museum (PAM) and Oregon

²⁴⁷ The article showed the proposed planting plan for this block, indicating that the elm trees along the outer perimeter would be removed and replaced with “flowering trees, set back at least eight feet from the street.” Keith Hansen, “Removal of Old Park Block Elms Brings Protest by Irate Woman,” *The Oregonian*, 1952.

²⁴⁸ John Yeon, Letter to City of Portland Parks Bureau, December 1952.

²⁴⁹ Similar walkways had existed on five blocks (now known as Block Nos. 5 through 9), which may have dated to the 1920s street improvements. Under Erickson’s plan, diagonal walkways were installed in Block Nos. 15 and 16, but were later removed). Erickson’s plan resulted in relatively little change in the SPB’s landscaping. Beals, “Park Blocks” NRHP Nomination Form, Draft, 13-14; Tong, *South Park Blocks Historical Study*, 6.

²⁵⁰ The memorial consisted of a four-head Benson Bubbler mounted on a single post. It was redesigned in 1987 when the original 3’ tall, freestanding arched brick wall was replaced with a curved concrete retaining wall. A round bronze plaque with a bas relief of Simon Benson installed on the wall is dedicated to his memory. The Benson Memorial no longer retains sufficient integrity to convey its period of significance and, therefore, is non-contributing. City of Portland, Historic Resource Inventory; Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 2008, 104.

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Historical Society (OHS).²⁵¹ Completed in 1964, the OHS museum and library fronted onto the park blocks along SW Jefferson Street and SW Park Avenue W.²⁵²

In 1964, the so-called "Foothills Loop Freeway" (now designated I-405) threatened the southern blocks of the SPB. The proposal was part of the Robert Moses plan to connect the Marquam Bridge by diverting I-5 traffic around the downtown core. In the end, the highway's route cut through the two most southerly blocks between SW Clifton and Jackson streets, and resulted in the demolition of hundreds of single-family homes and apartments in the area, including St. Helen's Hall, and the Jewish Community Center. The freeway excavation in 1964 bulldozed the elm trees on the park blocks between these streets (See Figure 17).²⁵³

During the late 1960s, the City of Portland undertook street lighting improvements to the SPB, largely to help curb a rising crime rate. An *Oregonian* article explained that the plans included the installation of "70 tapered 18-foot terrazzo poles with mercury vapor lamps enclosed in opal acrylic plastic globes." However, the city planning commission's design review committee objected to the proposal citing that "the location and design of the proposals are inappropriate to the character of the Park Blocks."²⁵⁴ Despite these objections, eighteen of these light fixtures were added to three of the northern blocks (then known as Blocks No 7, 8, and 9). At some subsequent time, the terrazzo poles and fixtures were removed and replaced with the traditional slender cast-iron poles with urn-shaped glass globes.²⁵⁵

The year 1972 also marked the completion of the Downtown Plan, which resulted from a multi-year effort by citizen groups in the downtown area.²⁵⁶ The plan was focused on public spaces and the downtown central business district, and "combined a desire to reinforce the dominant position of downtown Portland with quality of life issues such as urban design, historic preservation and mixed land use."²⁵⁷ The Downtown Plan gave special attention to the idea that PSU be treated as an "urban university," placing emphasis on its role as a "center for cultural and research activities which serve the entire community."²⁵⁸

During this period, the park was the site of numerous protests and marches.²⁵⁹ In May 1970, the park blocks near the PSU campus were at the center of a robust Vietnam War protest movement, in response to President

²⁵¹ That portion of the park blocks between Market and Salmon would become known as the Cultural District

²⁵² The building was designed by the prominent Portland firm of Wolff, Zimmer, Gunsul & Frasca with Pietro Belluschi acting as design consultant. The historical society later moved into the lower floors of the adjacent Sovereign Hotel that faces on SW Broadway, providing space behind it for an open plaza adjacent to the SPB.

²⁵³ On October 12, 1962, a major windstorm took down a substantial number of mature trees. As Beals pointed out, "the Park Blocks' distinctive arboreal grandeur seemed more threatened by nature than man, but over two decades later much of it has been recovered." Beals, "Park Blocks" NRHP Nomination Form, Draft, 14.

²⁵⁴ *The Oregonian*, July 1, 1969.

²⁵⁵ Beals, "Park Blocks" NPHP Nomination Form, Draft, 15.

²⁵⁶ An 18-member Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was formed to guide the goals and objectives of downtown redevelopment, known as the Downtown Plan. The CAC was responsible for generating community interest in the plan; solicit citizen recommendations; and advise in the setting of goals and priorities, and selection of alternatives. A notable specific goal was establishing a way to ensure that downtown residents had a voice in decisions affecting the downtown areas vitality. Portland League of Women Voters, "A Look at Downtown Portland," Portland City Archives, 1972, 1.

²⁵⁷ A major element of the Downtown Plan was the creation of a massive urban renewal project along the waterfront in April 1974, named after Governor Tom McCall. According to Bello, the Downtown Plan was both visionary and pro-growth, but failed to address housing and social problems north of Burnside Street, entice the middle-class back downtown, or improve the parking and air quality issues. Mark Richard Bello, "Urban Regimes and Downtown Planning in Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington, 1972-1992," (Portland: Portland State University, 1993), 32-34.

²⁵⁸ The plan, which was later adopted into the 1988 Central City Plan, represented the most comprehensive planning document for Portland's downtown. Portland League of Women Voters, "A Look at Downtown Portland," 7; Monaco, "Portland's Great Plans."

²⁵⁹ Throughout history, the SPB has served as an important gathering place. Starting in the 1910s, elaborate Rose Festival celebrations were held in the two blocks bounded by Salmon and Madison Streets. For 70 years, between 1936 and 2007, the Portland Rose Festival's parade route traversed the park blocks; according to *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, a

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Richard Nixon sending troops into Cambodia and the Kent State Shootings. Between 1969 and 1970, PSU students organized four large "Moratorium Marches Against the Vietnam War" with up to 12,000 participants and PSU was regarded as "the most active protest campus in the Pacific Northwest." On May 11, 1970, PSU students held a campus demonstration in the wake of Kent State riot, where students were confronted by hundreds of Portland police officers in what became known as the "Battle of the Park Blocks." Faculty members joined the strike and PSU's president, Dr. Gregory Wolfe, was forced to close the school from May 6 to 11. The area, known as the 'Liberated Zone,' was guarded around the clock by the students.²⁶⁰

Portland's Urban Renewal Redevelopment Plan

Like many inner cities, downtown Portland had fallen into decline in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The city's stagnant population stood at roughly 375,000 with many residents fleeing to the new suburbs. Portland's downtown core "was dissolving into surface parking lots and, like so many cities across the United States, decaying from disinvestment."²⁶¹ Lloyd Center, which opened in 1959, along with the completion of Memorial Coliseum on the city's eastside further shifted development away from downtown.²⁶²

By the end of the decade, change came in the form of urban renewal. Congress passed the Housing Act of 1949 as a remedy to the serious housing shortage, authorizing more than \$1.5 billion in federal grants and loans for urban redevelopment.²⁶³ Cities like Portland saw this as a bold solution to its problem. In 1955, a Mayor's Advisory Committee identified the blocks at the southeast end of downtown as suitable for a land clearance and redevelopment project.²⁶⁴ The Portland Development Commission (PDC), created in 1958, oversaw the city's urban renewal program.²⁶⁵

parade has taken place in all but three years (1918, 1926, and 1942) of the festival's history The first Earth Day was held at the park on April 22, 1970. In 1923, the army held a maneuver in which small paper sack flowers were dropped from their airplanes onto the SPB. In the mid 1930s, the Works Progress Administration held band concerts in the park block adjoining Antoinette Hatfield Hall. In 1975, the first city-sanctioned Gay Pride fair took place along the park blocks. Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 4-5; Weisensee, "Portland Rose Festival," *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, accessed June 26, 2020, https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/portland_rose_festival/#.XySQyS2ZNp8.

²⁶⁰ Doug Weiskopf, "PSU was an epicenter of war protests," *The Oregonian*, May 13, 2020; Douglas Perry, "Battle of the Park Blocks at 50: How a shocking burst of violence defined Portland -- and panicked Nixon's White House," *The Oregonian*, May 4, 2020.

²⁶¹ John Tess, "Halprin Open Space Sequence," NRHP Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, 2012), 17-18.

²⁶² Bello, "Urban Regimes and Downtown Planning in Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington, 1972-1992," 31.

²⁶³ The Housing Act provided targeted funds for infrastructure, public spaces, and the renovation or construction of buildings to meet the economic, housing, and social needs of the community. In 1954, the program was expanded to include FHA-backed mortgages and by the end of the decade, these funds were tied with funding through the Federal-Aid Highway Act that spurred interstate highway construction. Tess, "Halprin Open Space Sequence," NRHP Nomination Form, 18; Craig Wollner, John Provo, and Julie Schablisky, *Brief History of Urban Renewal in Portland, Oregon* (Portland, OR: Prosper Portland, 2019), 1; City Club of Portland, "Report on Urban Renewal in Portland," (Portland, OR: Portland State University, 1971), accessed June 15, 2021, https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1335&context=oscdl_cityclub.

²⁶⁴ Federal funds were only available for the redevelopment of slums and "blighted" areas, and few places in Portland qualified. Congress had provided no definition for "blight" and there was disagreement about its meaning. Portland planners came up with their own way to define blight. The committee's report cited decrepit structures, lack of code enforcement, and "apathy" by those living in the areas as reasons to raze the neighborhoods and spend federal funds to reinvent them. Ballestrom and Craghead, "The Long Shadow of Urban Renewal" exhibit; Carl Abbott, "South Portland/South Auditorium Urban Renewal Project," *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, accessed June 15, 2021, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/south_portland_south_auditorium_urban_renewal_project/#.YJ2OBy1h1p8

²⁶⁵ PDC board members were recruited from the city's business establishment and were given "freedom of action" with the expectation of "tangible results." John Kenward served as PDC Executive Director and Ira Keller was the first Commission chair. Bello, "Urban Regimes and Downtown Planning in Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington, 1972-1992," 27.

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The South Auditorium District, a 110-acre site located on the periphery of the city center, was selected as Portland's first major urban renewal project.²⁶⁶ City Council approved the South Auditorium project on June 18, 1958 over the objections of 85 residents, who expressed concerns over displacement.²⁶⁷ "To many that lived there, it was a neighborhood and a community. To city leaders, with their middle-class Anglo-Saxon perspective, it was 'a blighted and economically isolated neighborhood'."²⁶⁸

With \$12 million in federal funds, the PDC cleared the 54-block area and put the project out to bid. The State Highway Commission acquired land to the south end for construction of the "Foothills Loop Freeway" (present-day I-405); however, there were no takers for its "city within a city" concept. To assist with a new vision, the PDC hired the prominent Chicago-based architectural firm Skidmore Owings Merrill (SOM) to serve as the lead planning consultant. "SOM was responsible for the core elements of the redevelopment plan, including the architectural framework. It was SOM who largely created the underlying concepts for the project like soaring office and luxury apartment towers, generous green spaces and parks, and large 'superblocks' meant to speed up auto traffic while insulating pedestrians from cars."²⁶⁹

In 1962, SOM resigned its consultant role in order to enter competitive bids on specific redevelopment projects and ended up teaming with a consortium of local and California investors, known as the Portland Center Redevelopment Corporation (PCRC), in its bid to acquire three superblocks.²⁷⁰ The PDC brought on Water Gordon, retiring University of Oregon dean of architecture, as a replacement. In 1963, Gordon assembled the PDC's Design Advisory Committee, consisting of architects George Rockrise (San Francisco), Paul Hayden Kirk (Seattle), and Portland's own Pietro Belluschi.²⁷¹

What set it apart was PDC's decision to hire landscape architect Lawrence Halprin to design the public areas. His task was daunting: "To make the South Auditorium site 'a beautiful place in which to live' and one of the nation's 'outstanding' urban renewal projects."²⁷² Completed in phases, Halprin's open space sequence included the "north park" and "south park" situated in the middle of their respective superblocks and connected by pedestrian malls.²⁷³

²⁶⁶ The South Auditorium District encompassed 54 condemned blocks south of SW Columbia St., north of Lair Hill, west of the Willamette River, and east of PSU. One of the city's most vibrant ethnic neighborhoods, this South Portland neighborhood had changed significantly by the postwar era "where money for maintenance was hard to come by and where property values were low." "Portland Open Space Sequence," The Halprin Landscape Conservancy, accessed May 4, 2021, <https://www.halprinconservancy.org/history>; Ballestrom and Craghead, "The Long Shadow of Urban Renewal" exhibit.

²⁶⁷ "Despite sympathetic portrayals by the *Oregon Journal* and sporadic resistance, the 68 business firms and 470 families had no support from Council. The community came to associate urban renewal with government power and insensitivity." Bello, "Urban Regimes and Downtown Planning in Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington, 1972-1992," 28.

²⁶⁸ Tess, "Halprin Open Space Sequence," NRHP Nomination Form, 18.

²⁶⁹ Ballestrom and Craghead, "The Long Shadow of Urban Renewal" exhibit.

²⁷⁰ The PCRC coalition included four investment firms: William J. Moran Investment Company (New York), the Fluor Corporation (Wisconsin), Paul Murphy, and David B. Simpson. Tess, "Halprin Open Space Sequence," NPHP Nomination Form, 19.

²⁷¹ At the time, Belluschi was serving as dean of the School of Architecture and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Rockrise was an American architect and landscape architect of Japanese descent. Among his many honors, Rockrise was appointed by Robert Weaver, Secretary of the newly-formed HUD, to be the first Special Advisor for Design during President Johnson's Great Society initiative. Seattle architect Paul Hayden Kirk was known for adaptation of modern architecture into a Pacific Northwest regional style; he was elected into the National Academy of Design in 1976. The committee's role was to "vet proposals from developers to ensure that every addition to the South Auditorium area was of the highest aesthetic caliber. This was the first time in the city's history that private projects were subject to public design review." Ballestrom and Craghead, "The Long Shadow of Urban Renewal" exhibit.

²⁷² Tess, "Halprin Open Space Sequence," NPHP Nomination Form, 19.

²⁷³ Halprin conceived the south park of the Halprin Open Space Sequence to be "active" and "hard," while the north park was "quiet" and "soft." New York Times architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable described Halprin's Forecourt Fountain as

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At the time of its completion, the South Auditorium project was seen as the image of urban renewal in Portland, dominated by Portland Center apartments' three high-rise towers surrounded by shops, restaurants, office buildings and two small parks.²⁷⁴ William Roberts, a prominent business leader and downtown investor, argued that "South Auditorium – not the planning innovations of the 1970s – was responsible for saving the withering downtown."²⁷⁵ More importantly, South Auditorium "represented a strategic shift in urban planning in Portland. No longer was it the city's policy to passively respond to private development. In its place came a new and proactive approach to development."²⁷⁶

Yet, in practice, the results of the urban renewal effort were mixed. The South Portland project "destroyed small businesses, pushed people out of long-time family homes, and dislodged a large group of residents – mostly older, single men – who had been living in the cheap walk-up apartments that dotted the district."²⁷⁷ In 1966, the city extended the project boundaries north to include 26 acres between Market and Jefferson streets. The PDC justified the expansion, which displaced 392 residents, as a way to clear out "Portland's worst vice district."²⁷⁸

SPB Urban Renewal Development Project and the "Pedestrian Mall"

During the latter stages of the redevelopment of the South Auditorium District, the SPB, located on the district's periphery, underwent its last major redevelopment in the 1970s. This redevelopment project represented the culmination of planning efforts that began in the 1950s when Portland State formulated a plan to acquire all land within its present boundaries. It was not until the University collaborated with the PDC that the plan came to fruition.²⁷⁹ In 1965, following federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) approval, the college began acquiring land and clearing all non-academic structures to make way for new university buildings, including parking facilities.²⁸⁰ The federally approved grant allowed the University to move forward with the demolition of all non-academic structures, as well as provide for the "relocation of 117 families, 835 individuals (mostly single, elderly persons), 52 businesses and institutions, as well as the closure of streets, site improvements and relandscaping of the South Park Blocks."²⁸¹ Acquisition of land was completed in the fall of 1969.²⁸²

The State Board of Higher Education approved development of a pedestrian mall system in the SPB with the PSU campus, re-envisioning the southern portion of the park as its 'outdoor living room.' Photographs from the 1950s and 1960s show this area of the SPB being actively used by students to recreate, attend classes outdoors, study, and even attend concerts. The purpose of the pedestrian mall system was to acknowledge

"one of the most important open spaces since the Renaissance." The Halprin Open Space Sequence was listed on the NRHP in 2013. Tess, "Halprin Open Space Sequence," NRHP Nomination Form, 19; Halprin Landscape Conservancy, "Portland Open Space Sequence."

²⁷⁴ SOM's design was cited as outstanding by the Tenth World Congress of the International Union of Architects. City Club of Portland, "Report on Urban Renewal in Portland," accessed June 15, 2021,

https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1335&context=oscdl_cityclub.

²⁷⁵ Abbott, "South Portland/South Auditorium Urban Renewal Project."

²⁷⁶ Ballestrom and Craghead, "The Long Shadow of Urban Renewal" exhibit.

²⁷⁷ John Killen, "Throwback Thursday: 60 years ago, Portland began urban renewal plan for South Auditorium district," *Oregon Live*, January 9, 2019, accessed June 15, 2021,

https://www.oregonlive.com/history/2015/02/throwback_thursday_60_years_ag.html.

²⁷⁸ Abbott, "South Portland/South Auditorium Urban Renewal Project."

²⁷⁹ This encompassed nearly all of the property south along the Stadium Freeway (I-405), west to SW 13th Ave., and east to SW 6th Ave. as an Urban Renewal zone for Portland State redevelopment.

²⁸⁰ Henry, "Portland State University."

²⁸¹ City Club of Portland, "Report on Urban Renewal in Portland."

²⁸² The college became PSU in 1969. The lone Plaza and Park Plaza apartments, the Campus Christian Center (Koinonia House), and the Division of Continuing Education were the only non-PSU parcels not acquired within the project boundaries. City Club of Portland, "Report on Urban Renewal in Portland."

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these active uses and “to create a plan which relates to, and interacts with, the surrounding city in terms of vehicular traffic, pedestrian movement, use of the Park Blocks, utility systems, and planning considerations.”²⁸³ John Kenward, Chairman of the PDC, led the process and commissioned the Portland-based architectural firm of Campbell, Yost and Associates (CYA), to execute its plan.²⁸⁴ Founded in 1964, the firm’s partners—Roger Yost, Richard Campbell, and Joachim Grube—all spent time at SOM. CYA’s work included extensive collaborations with Northwest pioneer of modernism Pietro Belluschi, as well as inspired wood sculptor Leroy Setziol.²⁸⁵ The firm’s focus on creative ‘problem seeking’ led to significant projects for the State of Oregon and the Oregon Board of Education. Between 1970 and 1985, the firm developed three major campus plans for PSU, whose focus was “creating a unique, unified urban character for the University, and building a flexible campus ‘armature’ adaptable to changing academic needs.”²⁸⁶

As a part of the PSU Urban redevelopment project, CYA retained Hideo Sasaki, one of the country’s prominent landscape architects, as a consultant to help inform “the University’s future landscaping in relation to building and programming efforts.” At the time, Sasaki’s Boston-based firm was working on the Master Plan for the University at Buffalo.²⁸⁷

Hideo Sasaki was an internationally known landscape architect, planner, teacher, and mentor who pioneered the concept of interdisciplinary planning and design. He was born in 1919 in Reedley, California, just southeast of Fresno, in the San Joaquin Valley. As the son of a farmer, he acquired an interest in plants and natural sciences at an early age. Shortly after receiving an associate of arts degree from Reedley Junior College in 1939, he pursued further studies at the University of California, Berkeley and the University of Illinois, as well as at Harvard. At the beginning of World War II, he was sent to an internment camp in California, as a result of being of Japanese descent. Sasaki began teaching and practicing landscape architecture following the war, at the beginning of a boom in land development and urban renewal. He continued to teach and practice until the student uprisings of the late 1960s and the rise of the environmental movement.²⁸⁸

²⁸³ Michael Campbell, Yost Architects & Planners, *Portland State College Development Plan* (Portland, OR: Portland State College, October 1966), 9; Katja N. Irvin, “The University Campus & The Urban Fabric: Mending the University District,” Masters diss. (San Jose State University, May 2007).

²⁸⁴ David Waldron and Fred C. Gast, Jr. are identified as representatives from Campbell, Yost and Associates in a PSU memorandum. “PSU Park and Mall Development, Pre-Construction and EEO Conference,” August 17, 1971, Portland State University Library Special Collections and University Archives; Andy Rocchia, “‘Urban Spring’ Project Revived,” *The Oregonian*, June 20, 1969, 15.

²⁸⁵ The firm worked with Belluschi on his last seven churches following the legendary architect’s return from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Yost Grube Hall website, <https://www.ygh.com/history>; Brian Libby, “Penn Station to PDX: Tracing One Continuous Line of Portland Architects,” accessed June 13, 2021, <https://chatterbox.typepad.com/portlandarchitecture/history/>.

²⁸⁶ The firm was previously known as Campbell, Michael and Yost and renamed Campbell Yost & Associates, Campbell Yost & Partners, and Campbell Yost Grube Architecture. Yost Grube Hall (YGH) Architecture became the successor firm. They maintained their headquarters in Portland, OR. In 1995, YGH occupied the Suite 2700 at 1211 SW 5th Avenue. Alan Michaelson, Portland Coast Architecture Database (PCAD), “Yost Grube Hall Architecture (Partnership),” <http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/firm/5352/>; Yost Grube Hall website, 50 Years of YGH Booklet, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5cbe25a7fb182017d6a18c78/t/5d56f030112fe5000150630b/1565978687491/YGH+50th+Anniversary+Exhibit+Booklet.pdf>.

²⁸⁷ Portland State University, “University Reappraises Long-term Building Plans,” *Portland State Perspective*; January 1970, Vol. 2, No. 1.

²⁸⁸ Sasaki started at UC Berkeley in their city planning program, but transferred to the landscape architecture department, which was more appealing. In 1940-41, the war intervened and “the internment of Japanese-Americans abruptly ended his studies in California.” He spent two years at the University of Illinois from 1944 to 1946, where “Beaux arts methods of design were competently taught, unchallenged by modernist design ideas.” After receiving his M.L.A. degree from Harvard in 1948, he spent that summer in the site planning division of SOM in New York. Peter Walker and Melanie Simo,

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In 1953, he founded his Boston-based landscape architecture firm. That same year, he joined the faculty of the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where he served as chairman of the landscape architecture department from 1958 until 1968. In 1957, the firm was renamed Sasaki, Walker and Associates when he made one of his former students, Peter Walker, a partner. During this time, the office assumed a greater role in urban renewal, mixed-use developments, and campus planning and design. According to Peter Walker and Melanie Simo in their book, *Invisible Gardens: The Search for Modernism in the American Landscape*, the firm's ideological roots can be traced to the Bauhaus, which had been set up to demonstrate "how a multitude of individuals, willing to work concertedly but without losing their identity, could evolve a kinship of expression in their response to the challenges of the day."²⁸⁹

Sasaki was strongly influenced by the Olmstedian pastoral tradition, as well as a concern for the cultural and spiritual aspects of the landscape. He worked to create "landscapes that did not call attention to themselves but rather served as quiet, dignified settings for modern buildings and sculpture." The ultimate goal was a "harmonious, integrated environment in which building and landscape were complementary yet distinct, each element fulfilling its own functions and expressing its own purposes."²⁹⁰

Despite Sasaki's national reputation, the results of his work on the project received criticism soon after the initial plans were considered by the PDC. In a confidential letter dated December 24, 1969 to the PSU campus planner Malcolm McMinn, PSU's president Gregory B. Wolfe related:

I gathered from a conversation I have had with Ira Keller that the Sasaki plan for the Park blocks will not receive sympathetic consideration by PDC. Under these conditions it seems to me unwise and probably unfeasible to lend more than token support of the institution.

As a matter of fact, I strongly urge that we explore some alternatives that suggest simplicity with modernization, of the Park blocks, and get on with the renovation and redesign of our general architectural plan.²⁹¹

In a letter dated December 26, 1969, PDC's resident design consultant Walter Gordon (and former dean of the University of Oregon's School of Architecture and Allied Arts provided some additional detail to these initial criticisms by explaining:

...I have specific reservations about these early studies. I had the first impression, seeing some of the studies, that the spaces were over-designed—that there were too many ideas, too much 'interesting' detail. And I felt some doubt that the elm trees in the proposed paved open space for student gatherings in the student union, would ever be happy with their bases entirely surrounded by brick paving. Some of the details of public seating, along with some aspects of the handling of the proposed waterway, etc., seemed to me too busy and self-consciously designed. There is always a danger in overly elaborate design, of failure to achieve unity and tranquillity[sic] in the total form.²⁹²

Invisible Gardens: The Search for Modernism in the American Landscape (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994), 210-211.

²⁸⁹ Walker and Simo, *Invisible Gardens: The Search for Modernism in the American Landscape*, 202-203, 210-211, 227-228.

²⁹⁰ Walker and Simo, *Invisible Gardens: The Search for Modernism in the American Landscape*, 202.

²⁹¹ Memorandum from Gregory B. Wolfe (President of PSU) to Malcolm McMinn (PSU Building and Planning Manager), December 24, 1969, Portland State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.

²⁹² Memorandum from Walter Gordon (Resident Design Consultant) to John Kenward, Chairman of the PDC, December 26, 1969, Portland State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.

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Like Portland's other urban renewal projects, the large-scale planning that involved the SPB sought to introduce a modernist aesthetic. The initial Mall plan concept proposed new college buildings on each side of the park with massive 30-foot wide concrete pedestrian overpasses, along with significant new infrastructure and dramatically reducing the amount of lawn and trees.²⁹³ The public policy implications of these design decisions were not lost upon the PDC or PSU for as the PDC's resident design consultant Walter Gordon expressed some alarm when he explained that there is a "great danger of violently adverse public reaction to such a 'free' manipulation of the public Park Blocks—which have special historic and sentimental importance in Portland."²⁹⁴

Following these criticisms and several months of additional design reviews, which included a review by the PDCs design review team of Rockrise, Kirk, and Belluschi, design critiques and cost constraints gradually led to a more restrained design. PSU President Gregory B. Wolfe wrote to the PDC, stating the university's position in support of the design:

In several reviews over the last several months we have seen the plan evolve from the extremes of an exciting atmosphere and the generous use of water, through four changes to a design concept employing the natural beauty of the existing trees, rejuvenating the grade-level to be very much in character with that which was intended in the original Park Blocks...

The Park Blocks, in relation to the present and future campus will become the single unifying element in this dense urban setting, functionally, visually, and aesthetically. I cannot overstate the value of this completed work in terms of success of the University as a whole, not only architecturally, but in the improvement of learning skills and in the enhancement of human relations within the campus community...

It is necessary to the City to restore to the public that which has become impossible to maintain. It is also necessary as an important visual link with the business community of which we are a part. For the University, it is mandatory that we separate the human from the machines which now dominate the Park Blocks and that we offer the student a reasonable open space sanctuary from the 18,000-car-per-day traffic that binds us on each of Portland State's three sides.²⁹⁵

In a letter to Kenward (dated July 22, 1970), PSU Acting President Robert J. Low laid out five "essential elements" of the proposal under review:

1. The preservation – including the protection from disease – of the magnificent Elm trees which do so much for the character of the Blocks.
2. Planting to lawn of as much of the total available space as is practicable.
3. Use of the Park Blocks area primarily by pedestrians, as originally intended.
4. The integration of the surrounding University property into the proposed expanded "green belt" of the Blocks.

²⁹³ PSU President Gregory Wolfe criticized the plan, saying that he "does not think the 'university city' approach is the one to take." Rocchia, "'Urban Spring' Project Revived," *The Oregonian*, June 20, 1969, 15.

²⁹⁴ Memorandum from Walter Gordon (resident design consultant) to John Kenward, December 26, 1969, Portland State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.

²⁹⁵ Letter from Gregory B. Wolfe, PSU President, to John Kenward, Chairman of the PDC, March 12, 1970.

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5. In all these ways, and through other appropriate design solutions, the development of the Blocks as a pleasant haven in the heart of the metropolis, which appeals to and is used by so many publics.²⁹⁶

A December 15, 1970 memorandum from PSU Building and Planning Manager, Malcolm McMinn, describes the main features of the plan, including preserving the park's grass and tree areas, in addition to restoring the adjacent streets to pedestrian use "as was originally intended when the Park Blocks were dedicated"; expansion of the park area; and keeping 100% of the large elms intact. He further articulates that "there will be no changes at grade level or any other physical change to impair the root system."²⁹⁷

Between 1970 and 1972, the streets between SW Market and College streets were vacated to establish 22'-wide pedestrian malls. Four cross-streets—including SW Montgomery, SW Mill, SW Hall, and SW Harrison – were also closed to vehicular traffic between Broadway and W Park Avenue. An August 23, 1971 article in *The Oregonian* reported on the project's progress:

Entire streets of asphalt were whacked up as neatly as giant pans of fudge near Portland State University Monday, signaling the beginning of the \$678,000 South Park Blocks redevelopment...streets formerly open to automobile traffic and parking are being converted into "landscaped pedestrian malls complete with benches, new lighting standards, more grass and 107 additional trees...

Pedestrian traffic which formerly criss-crossed the center park blocks will be rerouted to east and west pedestrian ways, allowing "grass to grow and be maintained...to be enjoyed for sitting or relaxing." All hard surfaces will be of "seeded colored concrete bordered with brick."

The new park is expected to cause less friction between motorist and pedestrian, rather than more, officials say.²⁹⁸

Interior circulation was also introduced to improve pedestrian cross-flow.²⁹⁹ The resulting plan included redesigning walkway systems with earth-tone bricks and exposed aggregate concrete; installing new streetlights; and constructing a plaza meeting place adjacent to the PSU college center.³⁰⁰ The pedestrian mall increased the park area from 2.9 to 7.2 acres and all existing trees were preserved, along with the planting of additional trees.³⁰¹

A focus of the redevelopment was the addition of the Smith Plaza Amphitheater, which transformed Block No. 4 into an open plaza with an elevated brick stage and low, angled rows of backless bench seating. Another integral element was the *Farewell to Orpheus* sculpture (**contributing object**), installed in 1972-1973 at the

²⁹⁶ Low's letter further notes that further simplification may be needed due to the substantially higher project cost. Letter from Robert J. Low, PSU Acting President, to John Kenward, Chairman of the PDC, July 22, 1970.

²⁹⁷ Memorandum from Malcolm McMinn, PSU Building and Planning Manager, to Mark Howard, December 15, 1970.

²⁹⁸ The article mentions Campbell, Yost, Grube & Partners as architect and Donald M. Drake Co. as general contractor. Walli Schneider, "City Streets Yield to Park Blocks Plan," *The Oregonian*, August 23, 1971, 7.

²⁹⁹ Beals, "Park Blocks" NRHP Nomination Form, Draft, 15.

³⁰⁰ Since the completion of PSU's redevelopment plan, there has been some resentment in the community. This was partially based on the fact that many did not see the PSU campus "as a community facility, but rather as a separate entity, an intruder which contributes only to the traffic and parking congestion downtown and the squeeze on low-cost housing in the area." Portland League of Women Voters, "A Look at Downtown Portland," Portland City Archives, 1972, 7; Monaco, "Portland's Great Plans."

³⁰¹ Schneider, "City Streets Yield to Park Blocks Plan," *The Oregonian*, August 23, 1971, 7; Tom Ferschweiler, "Mall Plan for PSU Approved," *The Oregonian*, March 10, 1971, 4.

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south end of Block No. 5 (SW Park Avenue and SW Montgomery Street).³⁰² The cast bronze artwork was sculpted in 1968 by Frederic Littman, who was a PSU Professor Emeritus of Fine Art. Featuring a female nude on a floating mount above a reflecting pool and fountain, it depicts Eurydice, wife of the mythical Greek prophet Orpheus, who was forced to return to the underworld.³⁰³ The water feature was added in the early 1990s as one of four fountains on PSU campus' "Walk of Heroines."³⁰⁴

Following the completion of the SPB Urban Renewal Development Project, the new design was recognized by several professional groups. In 1973, the Oregon Architectural Barriers Council, for instance, gave the project a recognition certificate "for providing accessibility to physically disabled persons and those in wheelchairs."³⁰⁵ That same year, the Oregon Association of Nurserymen gave a landscape award to landscape architect Michael Parker for his efforts on the project.³⁰⁶

As this period of development illustrates, the coordination between the PDC and PSU for the redevelopment of the SPB, as informed by strong public opinions and a nationally recognized group of design professionals and reviewers, created a design that integrated the southern portion of the SPB into the PSU campus while retaining the individual blocks, grassy ground plane, and linear arrangement of trees within the park. This period also illustrates the important role that federally-sponsored urban renewal programs played in Portland's development and the planning processes that those programs spawned in the 1960s and early 1970s.

The selection of the pedestrian mall concept, implemented through the vacating and closure of roads to accommodate pedestrians between University buildings, became an increasingly important urban landscape component in American cities and college campuses starting in the 1960s.³⁰⁷ Over the next three decades, American planners embraced the urban pedestrian mall concept with great enthusiasm as part of the center city revival movement.³⁰⁸ These downtown pedestrian-oriented commercial landscapes were somewhat unique to the period and thought to be the panacea for downtown areas. Introduced from European cities in the post-war period, they were envisioned as a way to revitalize downtowns and "stem the tide of white flight, urban

³⁰² In a 1971 correspondence to PSU President Robert J. Low, Malcom McMinn suggests the options of adding a clock, sculpture, or fountain: "If a fountain is now desired, let's ask Fred Littman or another artist to submit sketches, then go about a series of informal reviews, etc." Memorandum from Malcom McMinn, PSU Building and Planning Manager, to Robert J. Low, PSU President, October 4, 1971.

³⁰³ Littman was a European-trained sculptor who fled Nazi oppression with his wife, sculptor Marianne Gold, and settled in Portland in 1941. During the 1940s and 1950s, he collaborated with architects on major commissions. One of his commissions included the doors for Portland's Zion Lutheran Church in 1960. Over the next four decades until his death in 1979, he established an impressive artistic legacy in Oregon. "Frederic Littman (1907-1979)," *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, accessed November 25, 2020, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/littman_frederic_1907_1979_/#.X768ni1h1p9.

³⁰⁴ Portland State University, "Walk of the Heroines."

³⁰⁵ *The Oregonian*, June 20, 1973.

³⁰⁶ *The Oregonian*, December 14, 1973.

³⁰⁷ Pogani, "Downtown Pedestrian Malls Including a Case Study of Santa Monica's Third Street Promenade", 35-39. See also Matuke, Schmidt, and Li, "The Rise and Fall of the American Pedestrian Mall."

³⁰⁸ Pedestrian malls sprang up in places like Cumberland, Maryland; New Brunswick, New Jersey; Chester, Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Vermont. They gained popularity because they directly addressed the problem of declining retail sales in downtown; could be implemented quickly and easily; and there was money available to fund their construction. Dorina Pojani, "Downtown Pedestrian Malls Including a Case Study of Santa Monica's Third Street Promenade," Masters of Community Planning thesis, University of Cincinnati, May 2005; Dave Amos, "Understanding the Legacy of Pedestrian Mall," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 86:1, 2019, 13.

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decline and depopulation, and the fleeing of business and commercial activity to the suburbs.”³⁰⁹ They often had a specific economic development focus and rarely referenced European counterparts.³¹⁰

Governmental support followed in the form of tax laws, zoning ordinances, funding opportunities, and legislation. One source of funding came from the federal government in the form of urban renewal. Although the most visible federal-funded projects were in big cities, most urban renewal funds went to smaller cities. In 1960, California adopted the Pedestrian Mall Law, which authorized cities to restrict and improve main streets for pedestrian use.³¹¹

By the 1970s pedestrian malls became social and communal centers incorporating transportation, housing, and open space. These traffic-free zones helped “change the American attitude towards city life as people were feeling a new sense of spatial freedom and participation” and were seen as “instruments for a more humane and responsive environment.”³¹²

Planners in the 1970s not only had a “genuine and fervent confidence in pedestrianization, but also the support of the public and merchants, who were willing to pay higher taxes in order to accommodate downtown pedestrian malls.”³¹³

For these urban pedestrian malls, a number of locational and contextual factors accounted for their ultimate success or failure. Most successful malls tended to be located in small to medium-sized cities, due to a more suitable scale and less congested traffic patterns. Another commonly cited factor is proximity to a college campus.³¹⁴ Site-specific factors included “creating a sense of enclosure or containment by ensuring that building heights along the mall are at least three stories tall, with taller buildings at the corner to increase visibility...requiring awnings or tree cover along the mall to provide some protection from the elements, providing a variety of seating options along the mall, increasing visual stimulation through the use of planters, vegetation, and paving material to create contrast with the surrounding sidewalk, and finally to install adequate lighting to illuminate the mall at night.”³¹⁵

Urban renewal ended in 1974 and pedestrian malls fell out of favor by the 1980s, being portrayed as “the urban planner’s failed attempt to revitalize Main Streets.” Very few of these mid-century pedestrian malls remain.³¹⁶ For many, the expected benefits had not materialized and, instead, had the opposite effect of downtown revitalization. With the rise of suburban malls and shopping plazas, these center city areas were outcompeted and essentially died. These suburban counterparts offered ample free parking and a climate-

³⁰⁹ Matuke, Schmidt, and Li, “The Rise and Fall of the American Pedestrian Mall.”

³¹⁰ Early examples were exclusively commercial with no residential uses, essentially replicating suburban shopping centers. For this reason, the typical term used to describe downtown pedestrian zones in the U.S. is ‘downtown pedestrian malls.’ Pojani, “American Downtown Pedestrian ‘Malls’: Rise, Fall, and Rebirth,” 173.

³¹¹ Matuke, Schmidt, and Li, “The Rise and Fall of the American Pedestrian Mall.”

³¹² Pojani, “Downtown Pedestrian Malls Including a Case Study of Santa Monica’s Third Street Promenade.”

³¹³ Pojani, “American Downtown Pedestrian ‘Malls’: Rise, Fall, and Rebirth,” 175.

³¹⁴ The continuing presence of pedestrian malls in college towns such as Boulder, Colorado; Burlington, Vermont; Charlottesville, Virginia; and Ithaca, New York are often cited as evidence. Pojani, “American Downtown Pedestrian ‘Malls’: Rise, Fall, and Rebirth,” 178.

³¹⁵ By the mid 1990s, over one hundred cities had removed their pedestrian malls. Several cities, including upstate New York, Chicago, Minneapolis, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, reverted back to an integrated traffic grid to allow car access. Pedestrian malls witnessed a revival of sorts in the early 2000s, as public attitudes toward urban living shifted and population growth increased in cities, along with a decline in crime rates. Matuke, Schmidt, and Li, “The Rise and Fall of the American Pedestrian Mall.”

³¹⁶ Between 1959 and 1985, 140 pedestrian malls were built in cities. Of those, only 32% remain. Amos, “Understanding the Legacy of Pedestrian Mall,” 11, 22.

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controlled environment. In addition, declining residential and office populations in the central cities meant there were insufficient shoppers and pedestrians to utilize the malls.³¹⁷

Comparative Analysis

The significance of the SPB is directly tied to Portland's patterns of growth and parks planning throughout the mid-nineteenth and twentieth centuries—from its initial development as a promenade park through the redevelopment of the southern portion as a pedestrian mall. There are few direct comparisons, other than the North Park Blocks (NPB), that span the same historic context (1852-1973) and makes the SPB a unique resource that is illustrative of the city's transformation from its founding to present day. There are, however, other comparative examples that intersect with the timeline and share comparisons in terms of the "promenade" and "pedestrian mall" concept.

The Linear "Promenade Park"

This distinctive park type and/or parkway was popularized in the mid-nineteenth century. Boston's Commonwealth Avenue Mall (NR-listed 1990, 2003) is perhaps one of the better known promenades and shares many similarities to the SPB, namely the axial arrangement of elms along a linear series of park blocks. Both parks were developed around the same time—and the fact that Louis Pfunder, the horticulturist for the SPB's initial landscape plan, had connections with Olmsted likely influenced the planting regime.³¹⁸ It was during its initial development that the park was largely fenced off with perimeter paths along the edges of the block with few if any discernable interior paths. Designed in the French Boulevard style, Commonwealth Avenue featured an overall width of approximately 200' (from building face to building face) with a 100'-wide pedestrian mall for strolling and sitting, and a 17'-wide central pathway. Bordering the Avenue's mall are three-to five-story mostly brick façade residential buildings. This linear promenade park, totals 32 acres in size "with the original idea to have it lined along its length with matching deciduous trees that were spaced at set intervals." Also known for its iconic American elms, Boston's Mall features a mix of tree species including Sweetgum, green ash, maple, linden, Zelkova, and Japanese pagoda. Like the modifications made to the SPB in the 1920s, public monuments and memorials have been added to its expansive central promenade.³¹⁹

At the local level, Portland's NPB bears the most direct comparison to the SPB. In terms of Criterion A, both were part of the same dedication of a row of narrow blocks creating a continuous greenspace through the city. Yet, they evolved as separate physical entities. This was largely due to the removal of the central blocks in 1865, essentially subdividing it into "two islands of green to be engulfed by the rapidly-growing city."³²⁰ Almost from the beginning, the NPB and SPB developed as separate physical entities. Both parks were further distinguished by their socio-economic development patterns. Unlike the SPB, city ownership of the NPB was a more straightforward transaction with the five northern park blocks deeded to the city in 1865 and officially

³¹⁷ Often these urban pedestrian malls were designed "without reference to an appropriate scale, resulting in streets which were too wide, buildings too tall, and spaces which made pedestrians feel uncomfortable" and were characterized as 'long, redundant pedestrian streets with no visual or physical barriers to break up the space.'" Matuke, Schmidt, and Li, "The Rise and Fall of the American Pedestrian Mall."

³¹⁸ Commonwealth Avenue Mall was designed in 1856 as part of Arthur D. Gillman's plan for the Back Bay neighborhood. Today, the greenspace serves as the crucial green link between the Public Garden and Charlesgate connecting to Olmsted's 'Emerald Necklace' Park System. "The Landscape Architect's Guide to Boston: Commonwealth Avenue Mall," American Society of Landscape Architecture (ASLA), accessed May 14, 2021, https://www.asla.org/uploadedFiles/Guide/Boston/Neighborhoods/Emerald_Necklace/Commonwealth_Avenue_Mall.pdf.

³¹⁹ Nine monuments have been added to Boston's Commonwealth Mall since the first sculpture, William Rimmer's Alexander Hamilton, was installed in 1865. ASLA, "The Landscape Architect's Guide to Boston: Commonwealth Avenue Mall."

³²⁰ Portland Parks and Recreation, "South Park Blocks: Benefits of Trees" brochure.

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platted as a municipal park in 1869. Title to Lownsdale's SPB blocks was legally challenged and it was not until 1876 that the city had clear title to the property.³²¹

Early on, the SPB was established as a prestigious residential district located on a gradually sloping hillside, while the NPB became home to more modest, working-class residential development due to its proximity to the waterfront, main commercial area, and railroad station. By the 1880s, some of the city's leading families built Italianate mansions facing onto the SPB, along with a number of educational and religious institutions who established a presence along the park. Portland's immigrant population settled in the surrounding neighborhoods to the east and west.³²² Improvements in the early twentieth century under the Olmsted Plan, carried out by parks superintendent Mische, incorporated both parks as integral elements of a larger, connected park system despite the intervening development. Influenced by the national park playground movement, Mische also worked to introduce children's playgrounds into Portland's parks with the city's first play equipment installed in the NPB (between NW Couch and Davis) in 1906 and in the SPB (near SW Jefferson) two years later. By this period, the SPB's residential character shifted to higher-density apartment houses, while the NPB was supplanted with adjacent commercial and light industrial uses, along with the railroad at the northern end. As the NPB's use transitioned towards commercial/industrial development and away from its earlier residential character, it experienced less usage as a place for public gatherings.³²³

As a designed historic landscape (Criterion C), both Park Blocks survive as cohesive, intact examples of urban promenade parks that retains its formal allée layout and components of subsequent City Beautiful design principles.³²⁴ As described in the City Beautiful MPD, the SPB and NPB, along with the Plaza Blocks, survive as the "best and earliest examples" of the city square. As a property typology, they are characterized by their urban context, linkage to a street system, three-dimensionality, and centrality of location.³²⁵ Shared attributes include the expansive ground plane, pedestrian walkways, and axial rows of deciduous tree canopy with uninterrupted vistas. One distinction between the two parks is their scale, with the NPB property covering less than half the acreage of its counterpart to the south. The 3.11-acre greenspace consists of a five-block linear sequence between SW Ankeny and NW Glisan streets, just north of the downtown core. The SPB, on the other hand, encompasses 8.76 acres along a twelve-block stretch at the south side of downtown.

While the NPB and Plaza Blocks retain the closest historical relationship to the SPB, no other City park reflects a similar multi-block linear arrangement, internal circulation pattern, and/or evolution of formal design. During Portland's growth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, several developers created more modest, linear, tree-lined medians/parkways into their developments including Eastmoreland (SE Reed College Place,

³²¹ Orloff, "Portland Park Blocks"; Booth, "Portland's Park Blocks: A Chronology."

³²² Booth, "Portland's Park Blocks: A Chronology"; Nelson, *The South Park Blocks...A Neighborhood History*, 5; Scott, *History of Portland, Oregon*.

³²³ Orloff, "Portland Park Blocks"; Portland Parks and Recreation, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Planning Framework and Implementation*, 23; Portland Parks and Recreation, "South Park Blocks"; Willingham, Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *City of Portland Civic Planning, Development, & Public Works, 1851-1965: A Historic Context*, 2009, 30; Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *Open Space & Park Development 1851-1965*, 7.

³²⁴ As espoused by Frederick Law Olmsted, design principles included unified composition, orchestration of movement and use, sustainable design and environmental conservation, and comprehensive approach. Willingham, Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *City of Portland Civic Planning, Development, & Public Works, 1851-1965: A Historic Context*, 30; Kunowski, Starin, Mickle, Engeman, and Orloff, *Open Space & Park Development 1851-1965*, 13.

³²⁵ Unlike the NPB and SPB, the nearby Plaza Blocks are diminutive in scale (less than one acre) and do not offer a similar promenade experience. Lutino, Merker, and Green, "The City Beautiful Movement and Civic Planning in Portland, Oregon 1897-1921" NRHP MPD Form, 26-27.

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1910s, NRHP-eligible), Firland Subdivision/ Firland Parkway (1903), N Omaha Avenue (c. 1890s), and Roseway Parkway (early twentieth century).³²⁶

Eastmoreland, established as an early-twentieth century planned suburban subdivision, is characterized by its “grid-and-meander” street plan consisting of a series of east-west meandering streets; axial north-south avenues; and a slightly offset, north-south tree-lined boulevard.³²⁷

The mile-long SE Reed College Place within Eastmoreland is a designed boulevard that features a 90’ right-of-way and 30’-wide planting strip, serving as a “central park flanked by narrow drives.” The boulevard was planted with an allée of linden trees, while the east-west streets were historically planted with elms and maples established on the north-south avenues. Further distinguishing it from the SPB, Reed College Place is set amidst a residential neighborhood with Reed College at its northern terminus. While Reed College Place was slated for integration into Edward Herbert Bennet’s plan for Portland’s park and boulevard system, the comparably slender central planting strip was never substantially improved beyond the installation of the linearly arranged Linden trees and still lacks formal pedestrian walkways and/or planting beds.³²⁸

The Pedestrian Mall

The SPB is also illustrative of the pedestrian mall concept which became a popular urban redevelopment scheme in the United States starting in the 1950s and through the 1970s. One local example of the pedestrian mall is the Halprin Open Space Sequence (NR-listed 2013), whose design by renowned landscape architect Lawrence Halprin created an entirely new urban park setting within the newly-established superblocks of the South Auditorium District redevelopment. While Halprin’s design did not necessarily have to work around legacy landscape design features and consisted of uniquely expressive Modernist urban designs, the SPB Urban Renewal Development Project involved redeveloping portions of an existing park into a “pedestrian mall” concept, integrating PSU’s campus pedestrian circulation, while adding modest Modernist landscape design elements to facilitate its use by PSU’s students as well as the general public.³²⁹

Both parks offer a number of similarities, including a unified design scheme; restrained material expression (including exposed-aggregate concrete and earth-tone brick hardscape); low bench seating; and plaza meeting places. The SPB’s Urban Renewal Development Project was based on five “essential elements” (articulated in a July 22, 1970 letter by PSU Acting President Robert J. Low), resulting in a design that introduced a modernist aesthetic in keeping with the park’s historic character. Halprin’s Open Space Sequence was designed as four public parks connected by a system of pedestrian malls. Each park featured a fountain or pool. The series of promenades, which provide access from the public streets into the interior, follow a similar

³²⁶ Ainsworth Parkway (also known as the Ainsworth Linear Arboretum) is an unusually long, narrow series of blocks between NE Grand Avenue and NE 37th streets created in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century when the area was developed with single-family residential dwellings. NE Ainsworth consists of a linear series of grassy blocks, or wide median, featuring a single, centrally planted alignment of trees flanked by narrow one-way roads. While it shares some similarities to the SPB, the comparably slender central planting medians were never developed into more formal parks with gardens probably due to their diminutive widths. Robert W. Hadlow, Foster Streetscapes Project: ODOT Region 1 Geo-Environmental Unit Historic Resources Baseline Report, June 19, 2017, accessed June 30, 2021, <https://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/GeoEnvironmental/Docs/CulturalResource/BaselineExample.docx>.

³²⁷ The neighborhood was surveyed by Robert S. Greenleaf, the same survey engineer who laid out Ladd’s Addition and Laurelhurst. “Eastmoreland Historic District” NRHP nomination, accessed June 20, 2021, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f99bc414eddf3607bc85b85/t/5faf0e82844f9e409e6b37ed/1605308035373/Eastmoreland_Historical_Context_Section_NPSnom.pdf.

³²⁸ The boulevard’s north terminus was aligned with the main entrance of the newly-established Reed College. “Eastmoreland Historic District” NRHP nomination.

³²⁹ Tess, “Halprin Open Space Sequence,” NRHP Nomination Form, 19; The Halprin Landscape Conservancy, “Portland Open Space Sequence.”

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fundamental design with specific variations to accommodate geographic conditions. The building setback is consistent with the line of trees and plantings to balance view with enclosure, and to control the vista at the point of entries. Pathways throughout the open space sequence are scored concrete with a slightly raised concrete curb. Wood-slat and metal benches are positioned along the pathways, set back from the path on concrete or Belgian block paving.³³⁰

The distinctions between the two parks provide a juxtaposition in landscape design approaches for the period; between a distinctively Modernist design context and a context that required sensitivity to a pre-existing historic park design. As examples of Portland's urban renewal efforts, the Halprin Open Space Sequence is representative of a "city within a city" while the SPB is illustrative of a more nuanced design approach that integrated a pedestrian mall concept into an existing park design. Despite the differences between the Halprin and SPB landscape designs, the 1970s improvements of the SPB utilized similar exposed aggregate walks and similar lighting schemes to aesthetically link the two compositions.

³³⁰ The Halprin Open Space Sequence was praised by New York Times architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable, who described Halprin's Forecourt Fountain as "one of the most important open spaces since the Renaissance." The Halprin Landscape Conservancy, "Portland Open Space Sequence."

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ 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 # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☒ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 8.76 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: N/A

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

| | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|---|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | <u>45.517723°</u> | <u>-122.682182°</u> | 3 | <u>45.509625°</u> | <u>-122.686034°</u> |
| | Latitude | Longitude | | Latitude | Longitude |
| 2 | <u>45.517597°</u> | <u>-122.681718°</u> | 4 | <u>45.509582°</u> | <u>-122.686350°</u> |
| | Latitude | Longitude | | Latitude | Longitude |

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

The 8.76-acre park encompasses a linear sequence of twelve blocks (referenced herein as Blocks No. 1-12) in downtown Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, on land variously described as Blocks 7 to 18, Portland Park Blocks, in Section 4, Township 1 South, Range 1 East WM. Officially addressed as 1003 SW Park Avenue, the park extends approximately 3,150 feet from SW Salmon Street (N) to SW Jackson Street (S), along an NNE-SSW axis. For the purposes of consistency, the width of the park is approximately 124 feet which is the width of the park from inside curb to curb as measured at Block No. 12. This width is carried the full distance for each individual block from SW Salmon to SW Jackson streets. While the concrete curbing physically delineates the park's boundaries on the northern park blocks, the curbs in several of the southern park blocks have been removed as a part of the 1970s SPB Urban Renewal Development Project. In these areas, the width of the park boundary remains 124 feet as projected from the curbs present in the northern blocks. The lone exception is Block No. 1 which features a curved shape on its southern edge. For Block No. 1, the boundary is marked by the perimeter curbline. The SPB includes the east-west crossing rights-of-way (SW Salmon, SW Main, SW Madison, SW Jefferson, SW Columbia, SW Clay, SW Market, SW Montgomery, SW Harrison, SW Hall, SW College and SW Jackson Streets). The boundary does not include SW Park Avenue (E or W).

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the SPB were selected because they represent the boundaries of the park within its period of significance (1852-1973) and includes all of the contributing resources that relate to that period. The park area has been consistently defined since its original platting in 1852. With the exception of minor curb line alignment for on-street parking on SW Park Avenue West in 1963 and the rounding of the south end of Block No. 1, there have been few changes to the park's historic boundaries. While the SPB Urban Renewal Development Project removed many of the curbs on the southern portion of the park, the width of the district boundary remains 124 feet to remain consistent with the lower blocks. While the boundary excludes portions of the larger Urban Renewal Development Project associated with the University in the 1970s that included additional buildings and other pedestrian improvements, the district boundary only includes the urban renewal project's 1970s modifications to the SPB that lie within the original extent of the park. Additionally, the Verbal Boundary Description describes the park as a contiguous district encompassing the east-west crossing rights-

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of-way; these roadways create a spatial rhythm for each park block, contribute to its form, and convey how the park was integrated into the City's street grid system. While SW Park East and West serve a similar function, for the purposes of this nomination, they are not included within the boundary of the SPB historic district.

11. Form Prepared By

Brooke Best, Kirk Ranzetta, Story Swett, Roberta Cation, Leslie

name/title Hutchinson, and Fred Leeson date 12/23/2021

organization Downtown Neighborhood Association telephone _____

street & number _____ email _____

city or town Portland state OR zip code 97205

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Regional Location Map**
- **Local Location Map**
- **Tax Lot Map**
- **Site Plan**
- **Floor Plans (As Applicable)**
- **Photo Location Map** (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures).

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Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: South Park Blocks

City or Vicinity: Portland

County: Multnomah **State:** OR

Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, Ronald Cooper

Date Photographed: February 2020, March 2020, June 2020

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- Photo 1 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0001*
"Rebecca at the Well", 1926 Sculptor: Oliver L. Barrett; Shemanski Fountain by Carl L. Linde, Block 12, View SW, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, February 20, 2020
- Photo 2 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0002*
Detail: Benson Bubblers, Linde, Block 12, View S, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, February 20, 2020
- Photo 3 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0003*
Lincoln Square, Abraham Lincoln Sculpture Granite Pedestal, Block 11, View SE, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, May 19, 2021
- Photo 4 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0004*
Traditional Park Benches, Block 11, View S, South Park Blocks,
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, May 19, 2021
- Photo 5 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0005*
Roosevelt Square, "Rough Rider" Sculpture Granite Pedestal, Block 10, View W, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, May 19, 2021
- Photo 6 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0006*
Axial View with Street Car, Block 6, View S, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, February 20, 2020
- Photo 7 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0007*
Axial View, Block 7, View N, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, February 17, 2020
- Photo 8 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0008*
Axial View, Block 8, View S, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, February 20, 2020

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- Photo 9 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0009*
Axial View, Block 10, View N, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, May 19, 2021
- Photo 10 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0010*
Axial View, Block 10, View SE, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, May 19, 2021
- Photo 11 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0011*
Axial View, Block 6, View S, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, February 27, 2020
- Photo 12 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0012*
Public Market, Block 5, View S, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, February 27, 2020
- Photo 13 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0013*
"Holon" Sculpture, Block 3, View S, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, February 27, 2020
- Photo 14 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0014*
Axial View, Block 3, View S, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, February 27, 2020
- Photo 15 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0015*
Children's Play Structure, Block 1, View N, South Park Blocks,
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, February 27, 2020
- Photo 16 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0016*
Evening View, Block 12, View S, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, March 5, 2020
- Photo 17 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0017*
Roosevelt Square, Block 10, View E, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, May 19, 2021
- Photo 18 of 20:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0018*
Lincoln Square, Block 11, View W, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, May 19, 2021
- Photo 19 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0019*
Aerial Panoramic, View N, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Ronald Cooper, June 30, 2020
- Photo 20 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0020*
Aerial Panoramic, Block 6, View N, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Ronald Cooper, June 30, 2020
- Photo 21 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0021*
Smith Center Amphitheater, Block 4, View SW, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, May 19, 2021

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- Photo 22 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0022*
Farewell to Orpheus Statue, Block 5, View NW, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, May 19, 2021
- Photo 23 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0023*
PSU Benches and Game Tables, Block 3, View S, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, May 19, 2021
- Photo 24 of 24:** *OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks_0024*
PSU Diagonal Walkway and Bench Seating, Block 2, View SE, South Park Blocks
Photographer: Richard (Dick) Kaiser, May 19, 2021

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

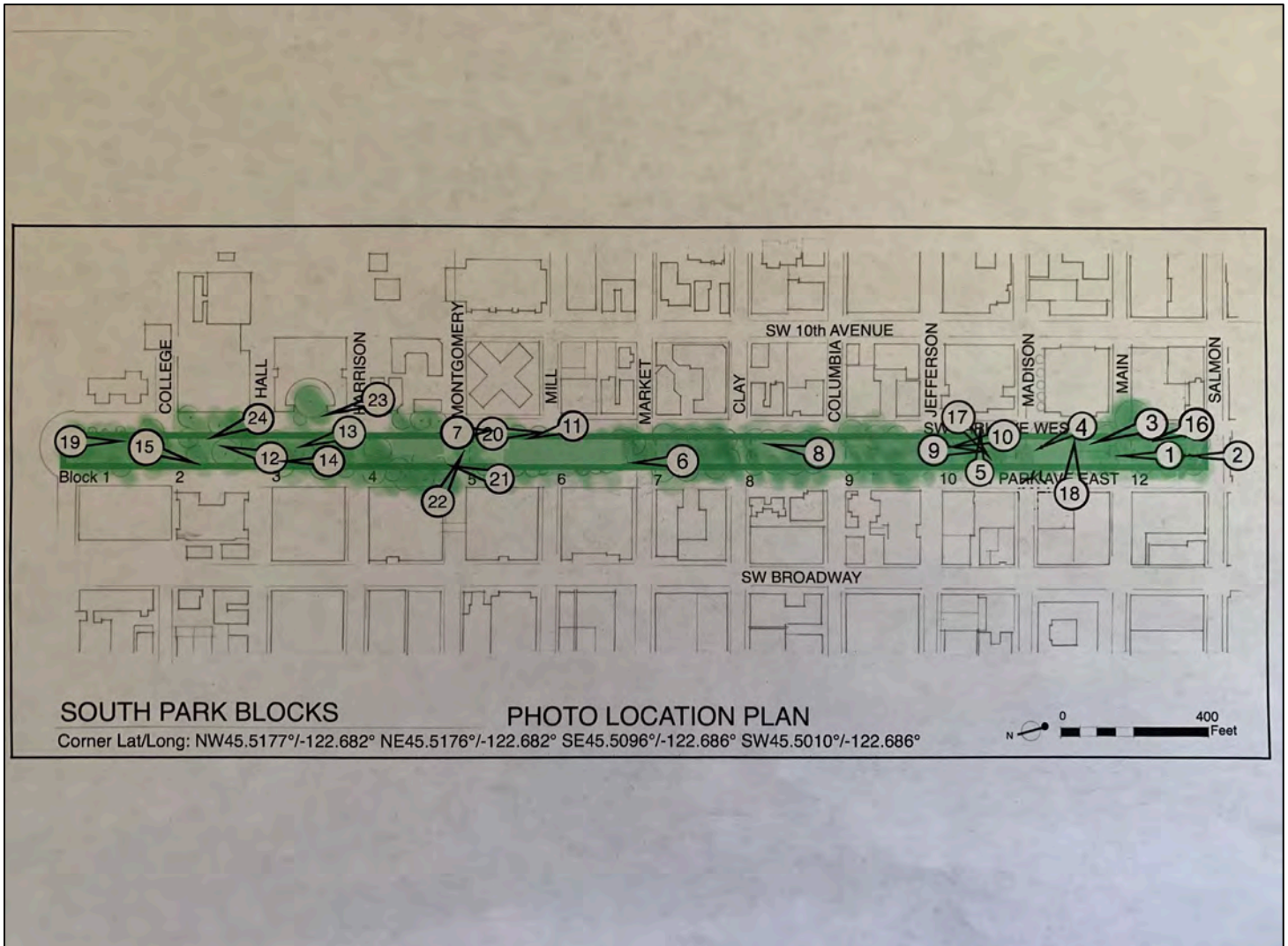
South Park Blocks

Name of Property

Multnomah Co., OR

County and State

Photo Location Map



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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List of Figures

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all document should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page.)

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- Figure 2:** Local Location Map/Site Plan
- Figure 3:** Tax Lot Map - Multnomah County Assessor MTL 1SE3BB-06100
- Figure 4:** Tax Lot Map - Multnomah County Assessor MTL 1SE3BB-06500
- Figure 5:** Tax Lot Map - Multnomah County Assessor MTL 1SE3BB-04100
- Figure 6:** Lownsdale Map, 1852
- Figure 7:** HISTORIC PHOTO: Early Portland Panoramic Photograph, near South Park Blocks, nd
- Figure 8:** HISTORIC PHOTO: Aerial Photograph of South Park Blocks, view northeast, showing initial planting of Elms and Lombardy poplars between Salmon and Hall St, 1878
- Figure 9:** HISTORIC PHOTO: South Park Blocks, 1880s photograph.
- Figure 10:** Engraving from *West Shore Magazine*, of South Park Blocks, corner of SW Park and Montgomery, June 1882.
- Figure 11:** HISTORIC PHOTO: South Park Blocks Rose Festival, June 1925
- Figure 12:** HISTORIC PHOTO: South Park Blocks Rose Festival, June 1925
- Figure 13:** Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps that illustrate the evolution of the built environment around the South Park Blocks, 1889-1950 (Compare with Figure 10).
- Figure 14:** HISTORIC PHOTO: Photo of PSU Students, South Park Blocks, Facing south, 1976
- Figure 15:** HISTORIC PHOTO: Photo of new amphitheater in South Park Blocks near PSU in 1972.
- Figure 16:** HISTORIC PHOTO: Photo of Shemanski Fountain, November 15, 1967
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- Figure 30:** Additional Historical Documentation

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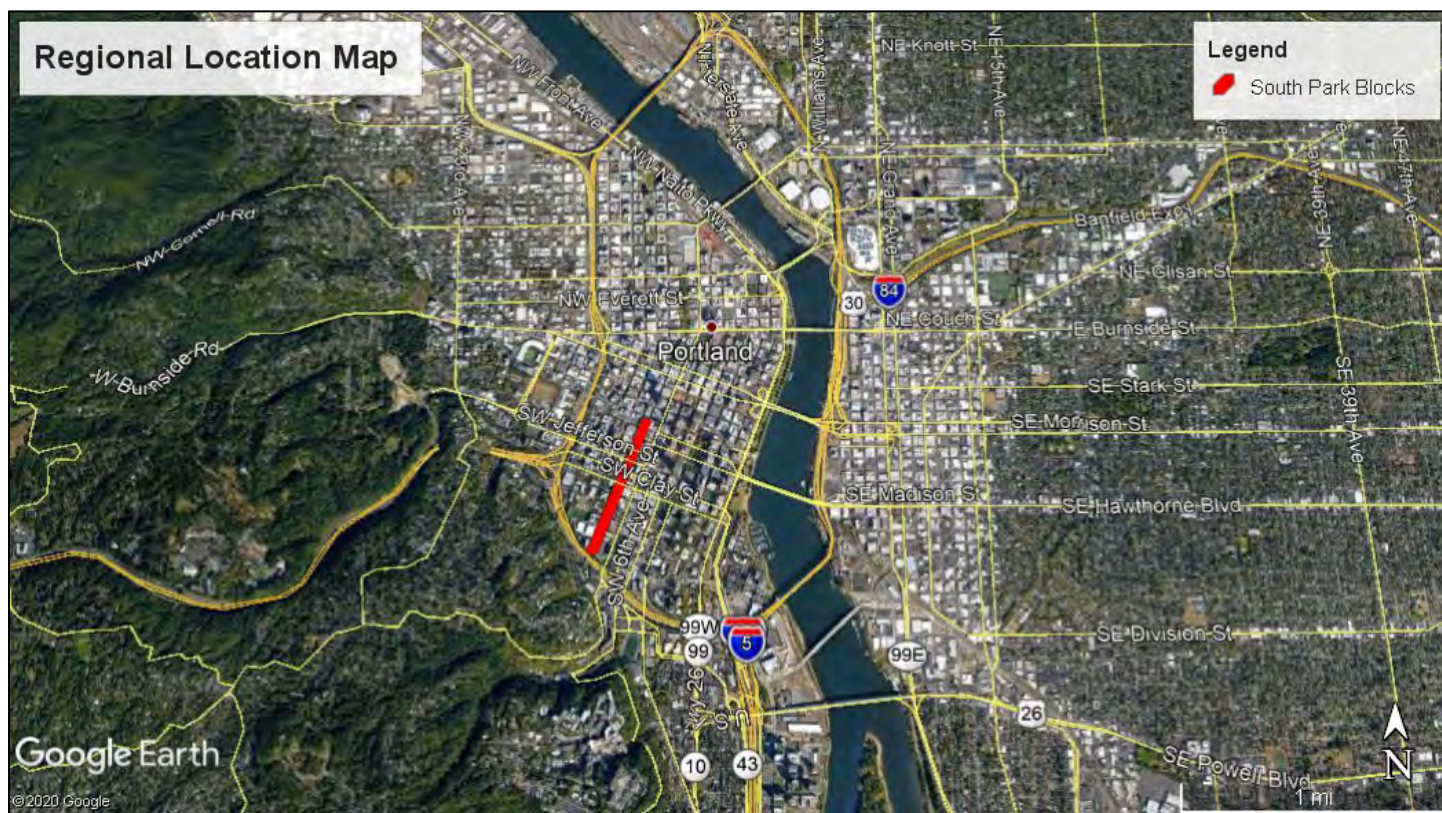
N/A

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Figure 1: Regional Location Map



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Figure 2: Local Location Map/Site Plan



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Figure 3: Tax Lot Map



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Figure 4: Tax Lot Map



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Figure 5: Tax Lot Map



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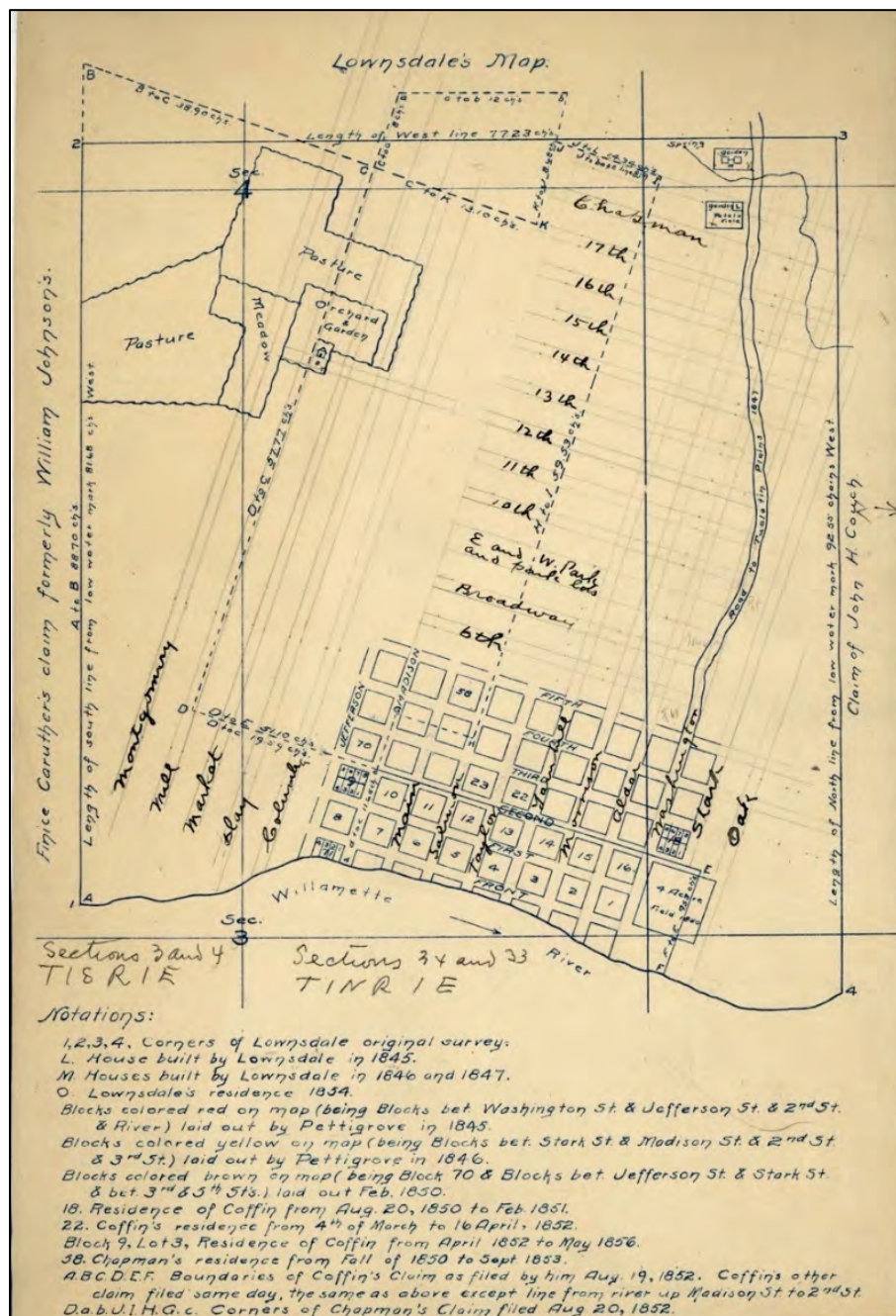
County and State
N/A

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Figure 6: 1852 Lownsdale's Map

Image courtesy Oregon Historical Society [G494.P6G46.1852.T619.G2]



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Figure 7: Undated Early Portland panoramic photograph near South Park Blocks
Image courtesy of Oregon Historical Society [019143]



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Figure 8: 1878 aerial photograph of South Park Blocks, looking northeast, showing initial planting of elms and Lombardy poplars between Salmon and Hall St

Image courtesy of Oregon Historical Society [23454]



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Figure 9: South Park Blocks, 1880s photograph.
Image Courtesy of Library of Congress.



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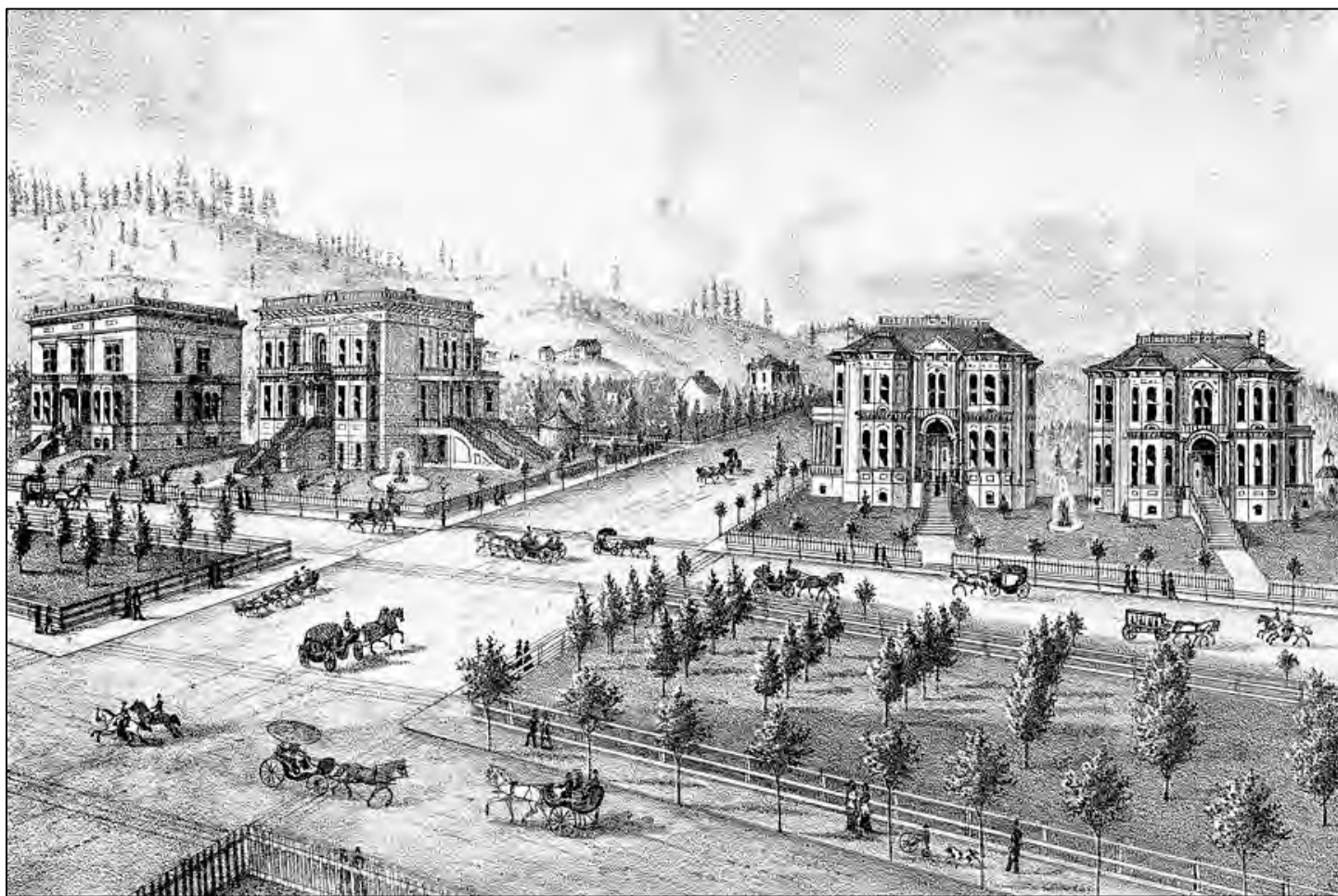
County and State
N/A

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Figure 10: Engraving from *West Shore Magazine* of South Park Blocks, corner of SW Park and Montgomery, June 1882.

Image Courtesy of Oregon Historical Society, Catalog Number OrHi 734.



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Figure 11: South Park Blocks Rose Festival, June 1925

Image courtesy of Portland Archives



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Figure 12: South Park Blocks Rose Festival, June 1925

Image courtesy of Portland Archives



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N/A

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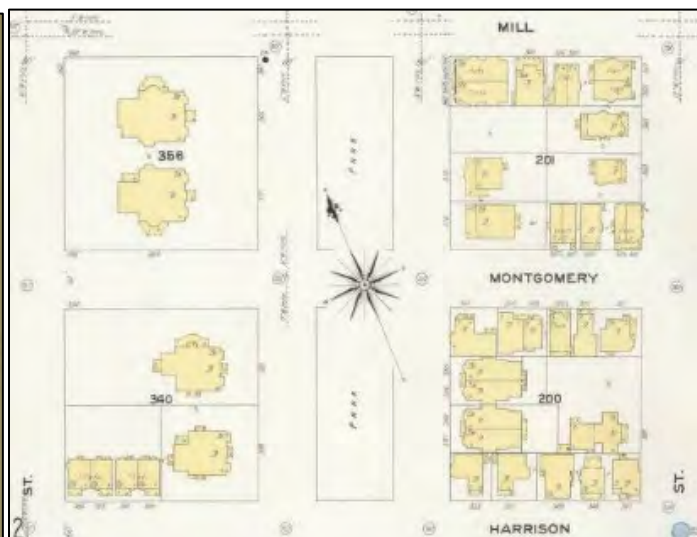
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Figure 13: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps that illustrate the evolution of the built environment around the South Park Blocks, 1889-1950 (Compare with Figure 10).

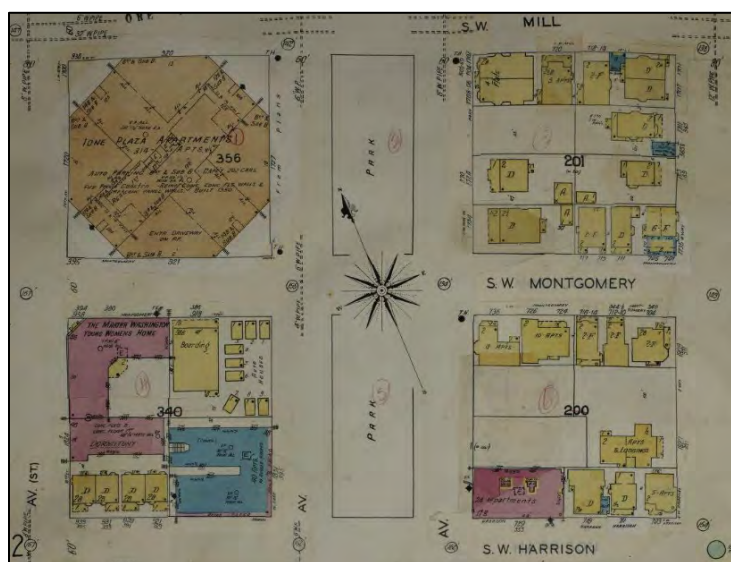
Images courtesy of the Library of Congress



1889 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, p.25.



1909 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 2, p.143.



1909-1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 2, Map 143.

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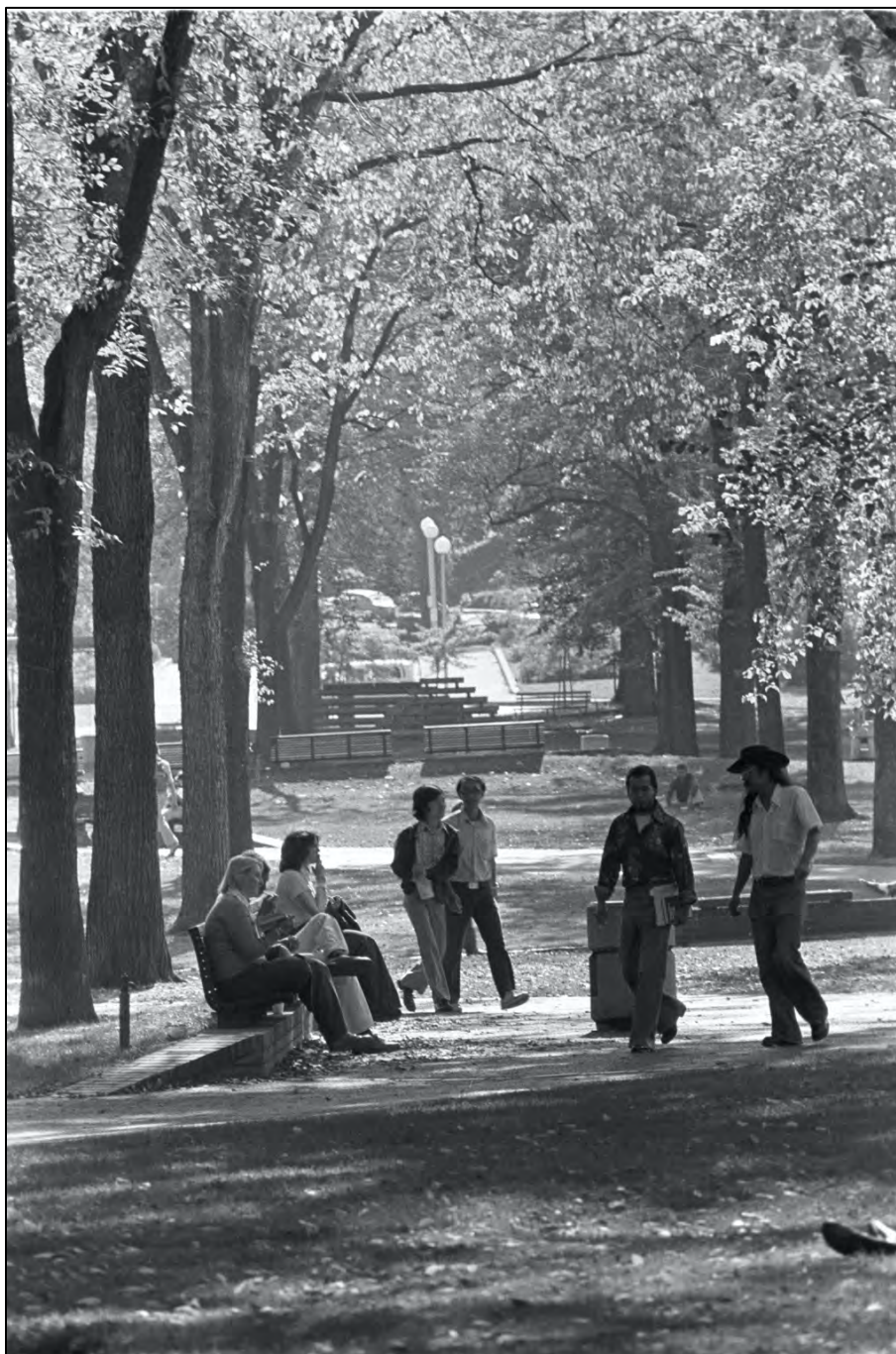
N/A

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Figure 14: 1976 photo of students in the South Park Blocks, facing south
Image courtesy of PSU Library University Archives [RS7911]



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Figure 15: Photo of new amphitheater in South Park Blocks near PSU in 1972.

Image courtesy of Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Oregonian, photo file 1857.



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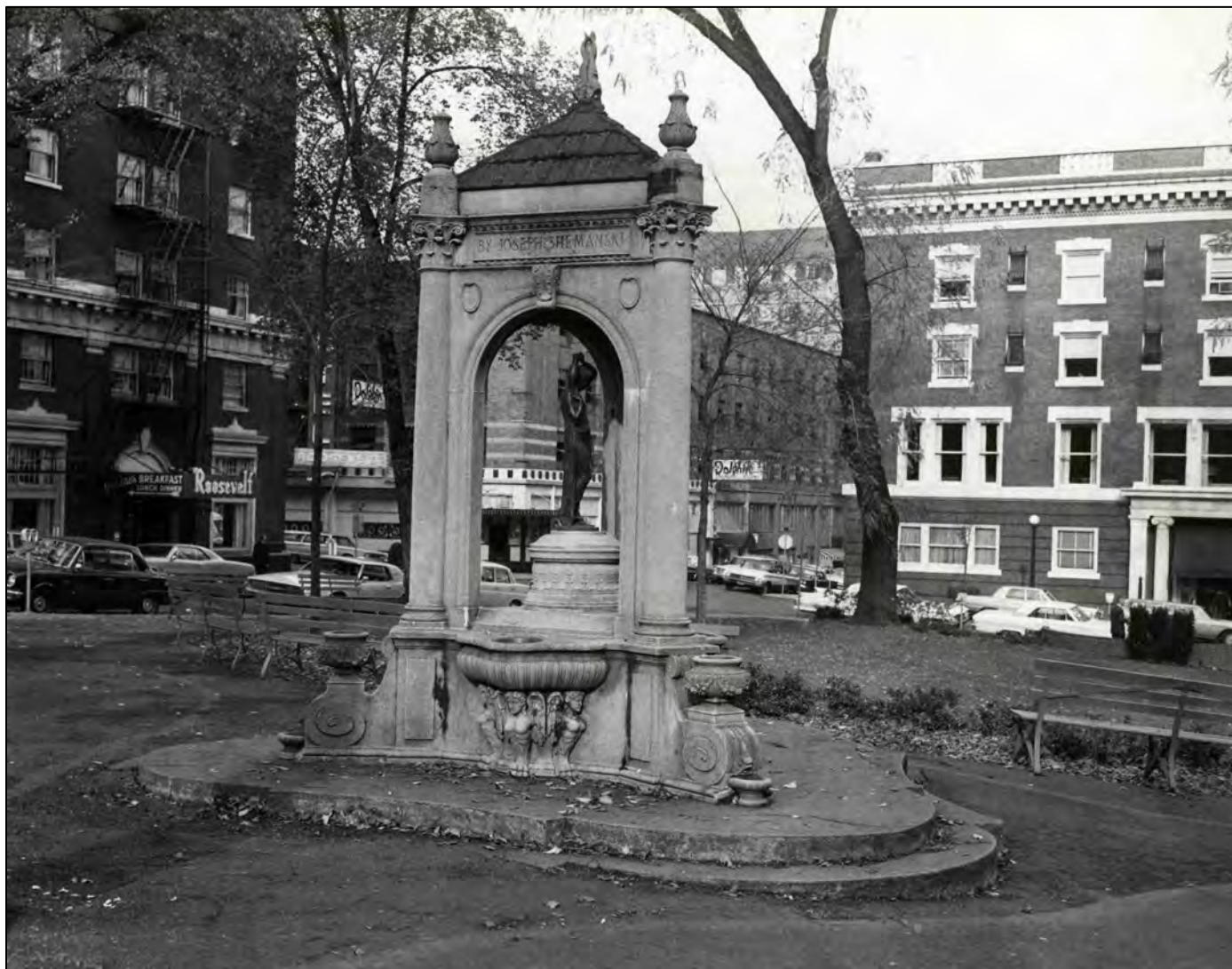
Name of Property
Multnomah Co., OR

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N/A

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Figure 16: Photo of Shemanski Fountain, November 15, 1967
Image courtesy of Portland Archives [A2001-066.219]



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Figure 17: Aerial photo of proposed Foothill Freeway R.O.W. ca 1938
Image courtesy of Portland Archives [a2010-001.92]



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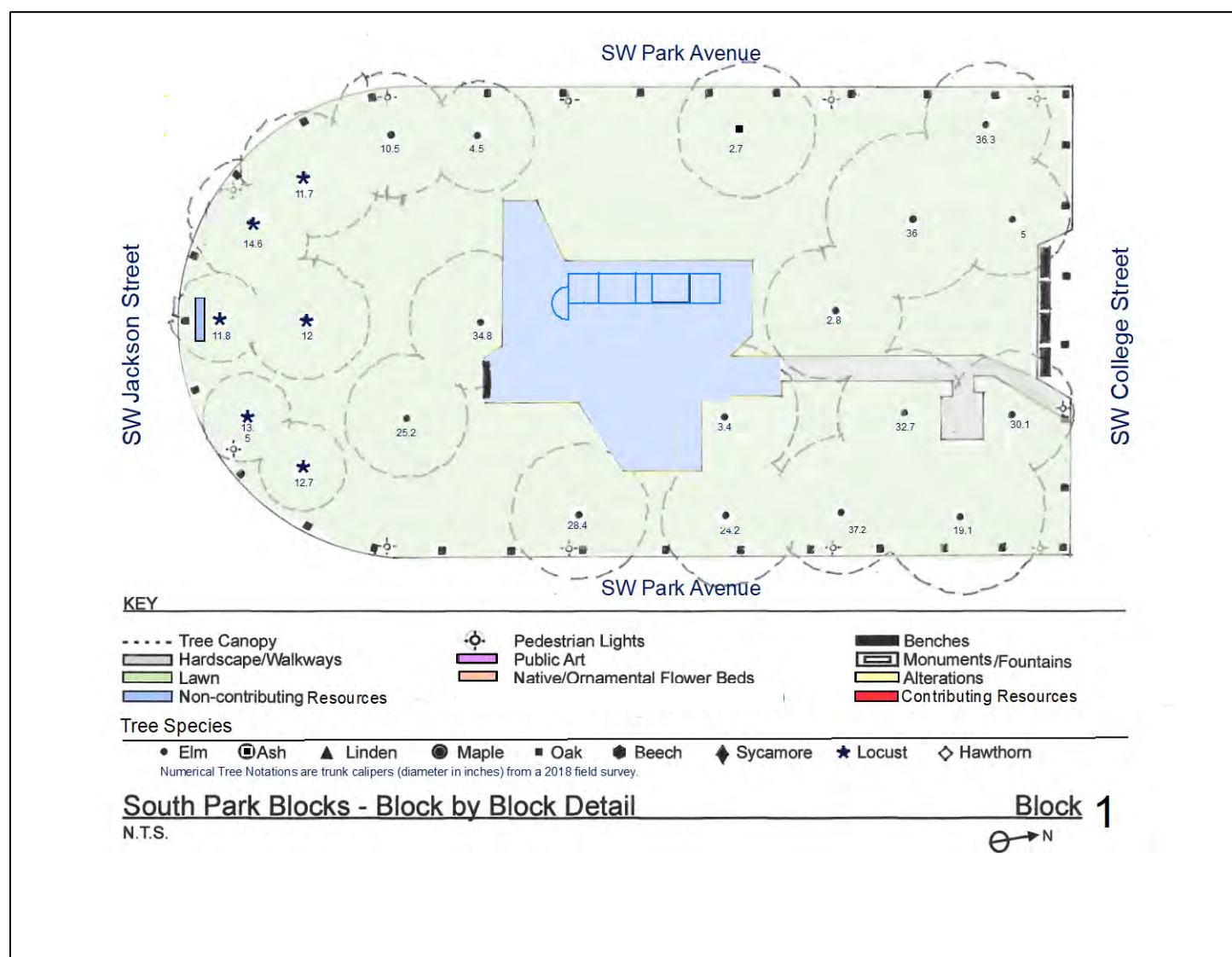
County and State

N/A

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Figure 18: South Park Blocks, Block 1 Detail Plan



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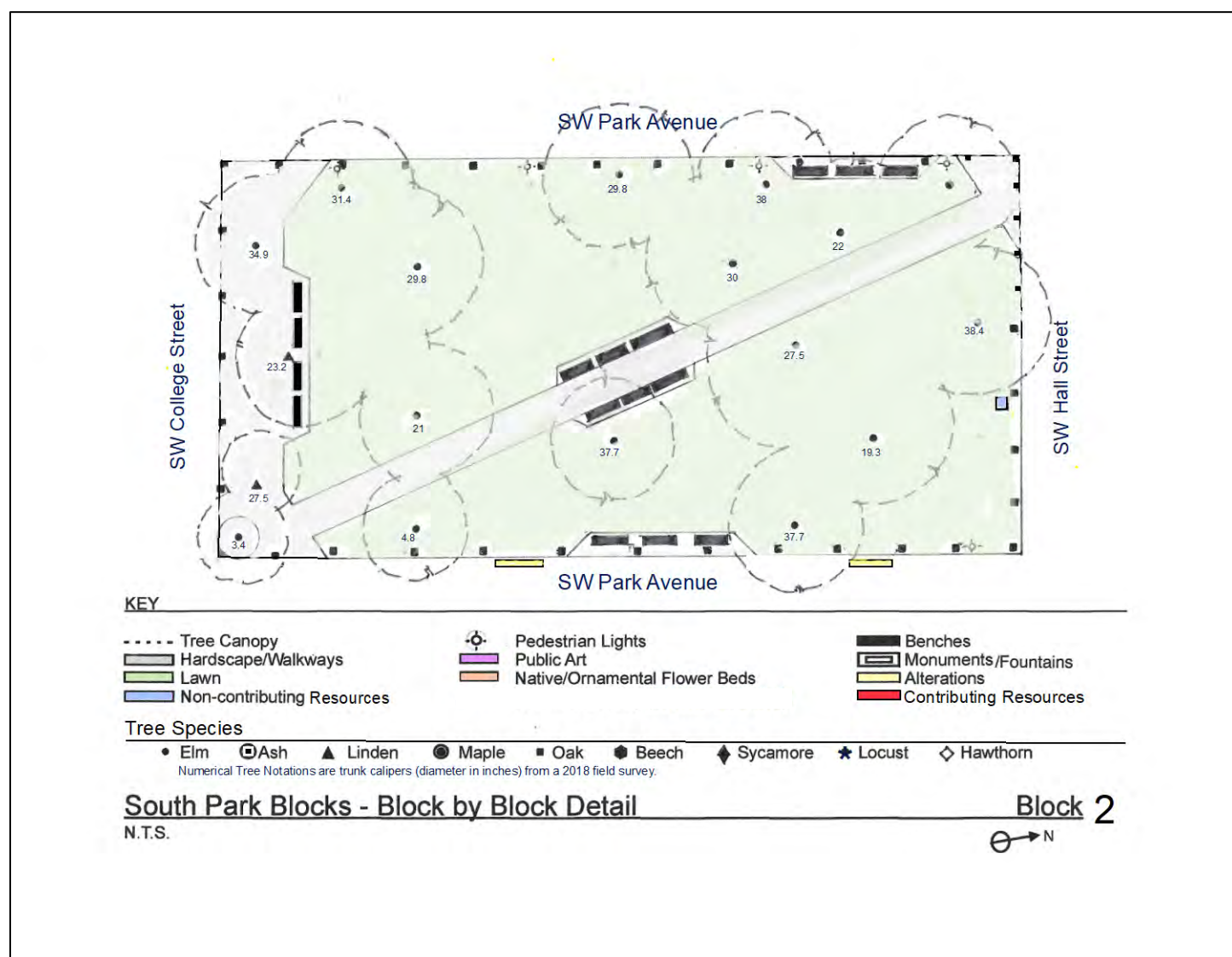
County and State

N/A

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Figure 19: South Park Blocks, Block 2 Detail Plan



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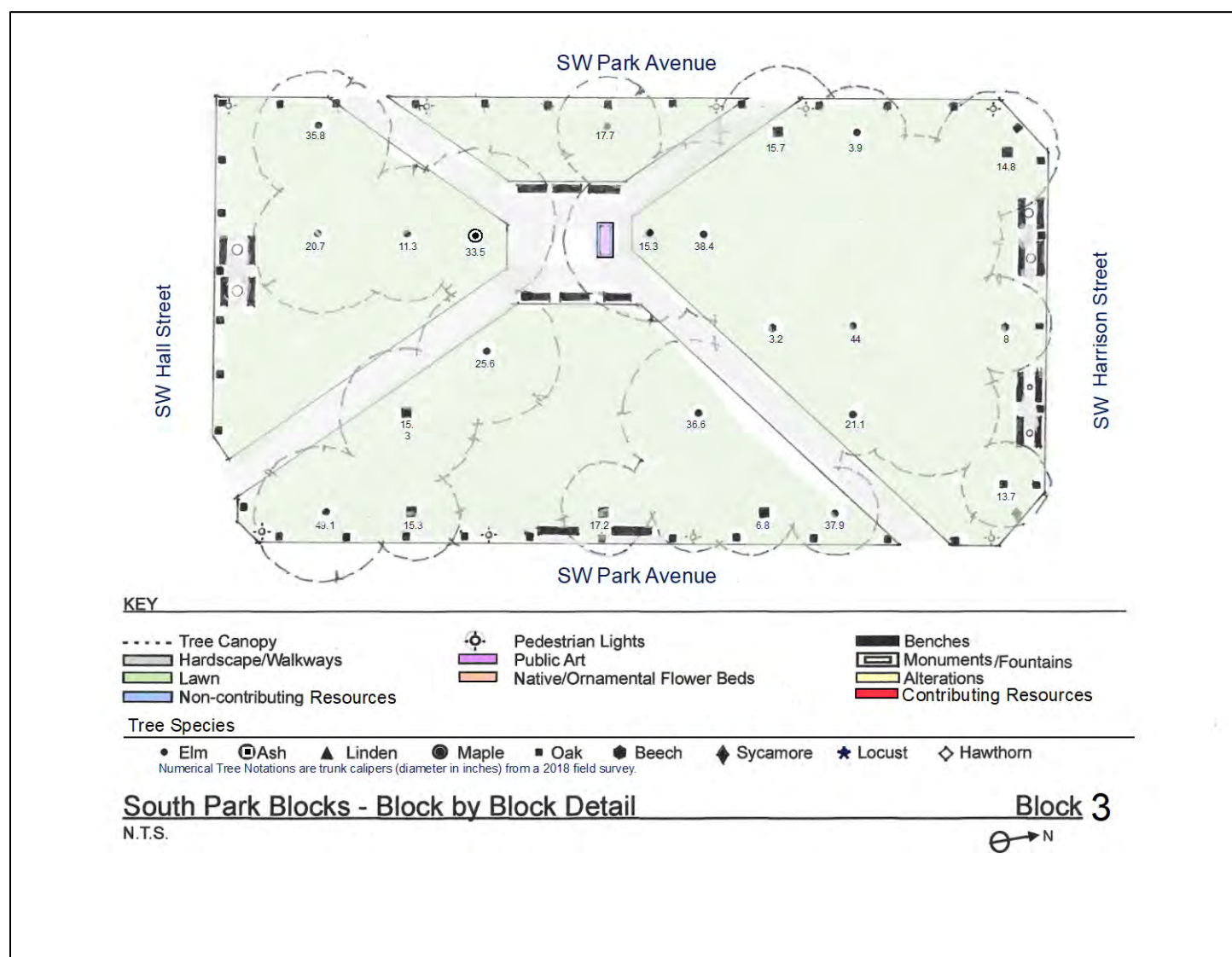
County and State

N/A

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Figure 20: South Park Blocks, Block 3 Detail Plan



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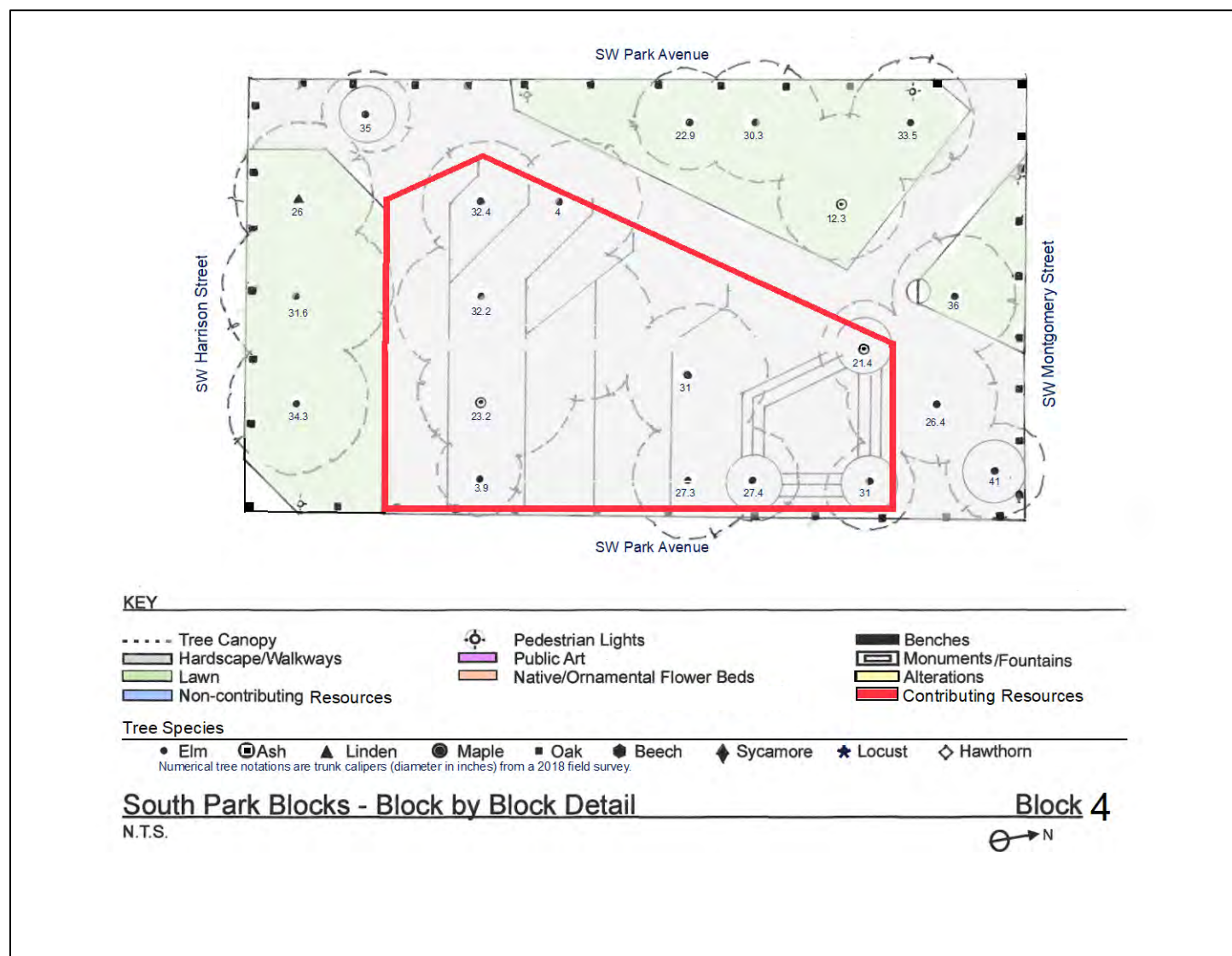
County and State

N/A

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Figure 21: South Park Blocks, Block 4 Detail Plan



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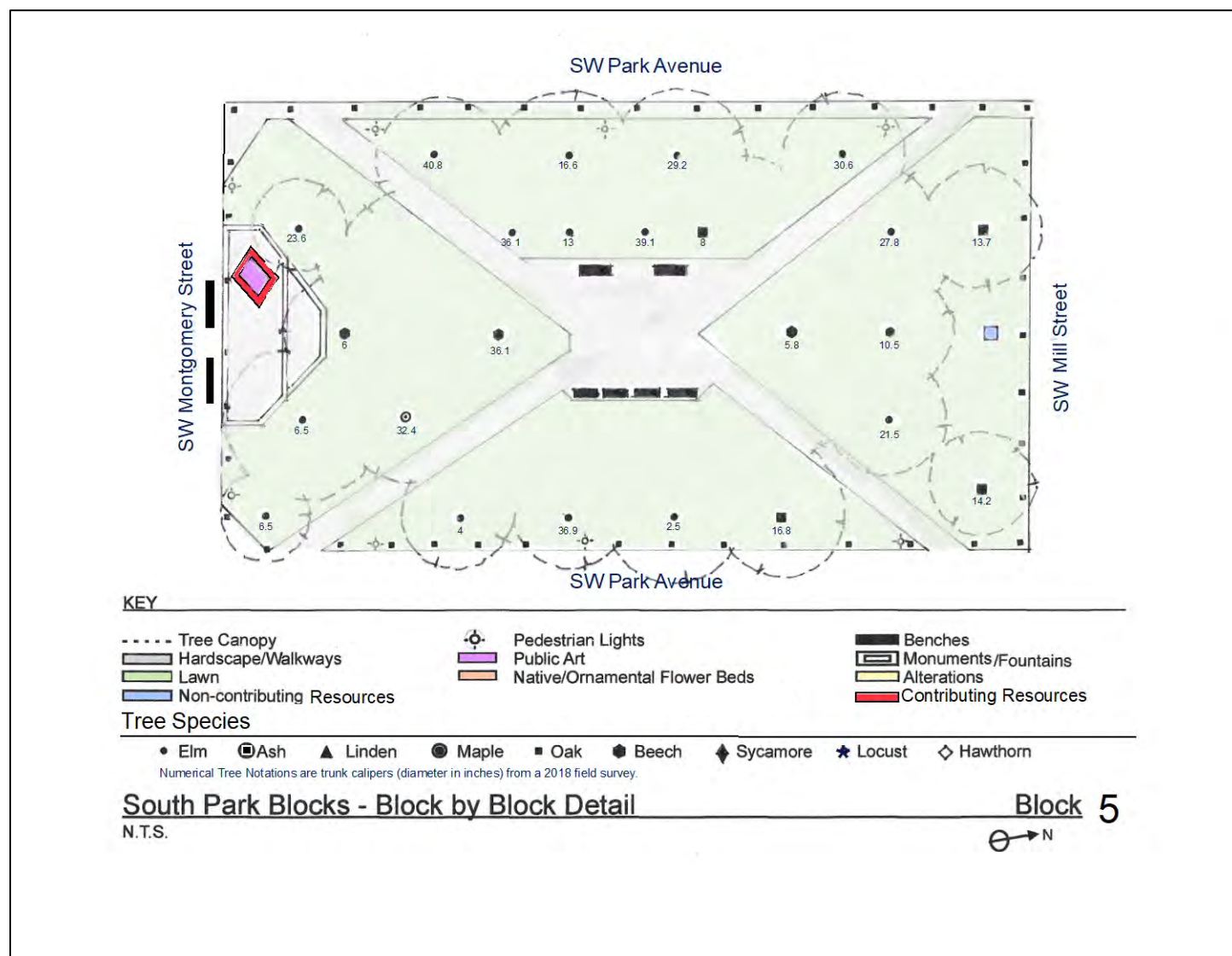
County and State

N/A

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Figure 22: South Park Blocks, Block 5 Detail Plan



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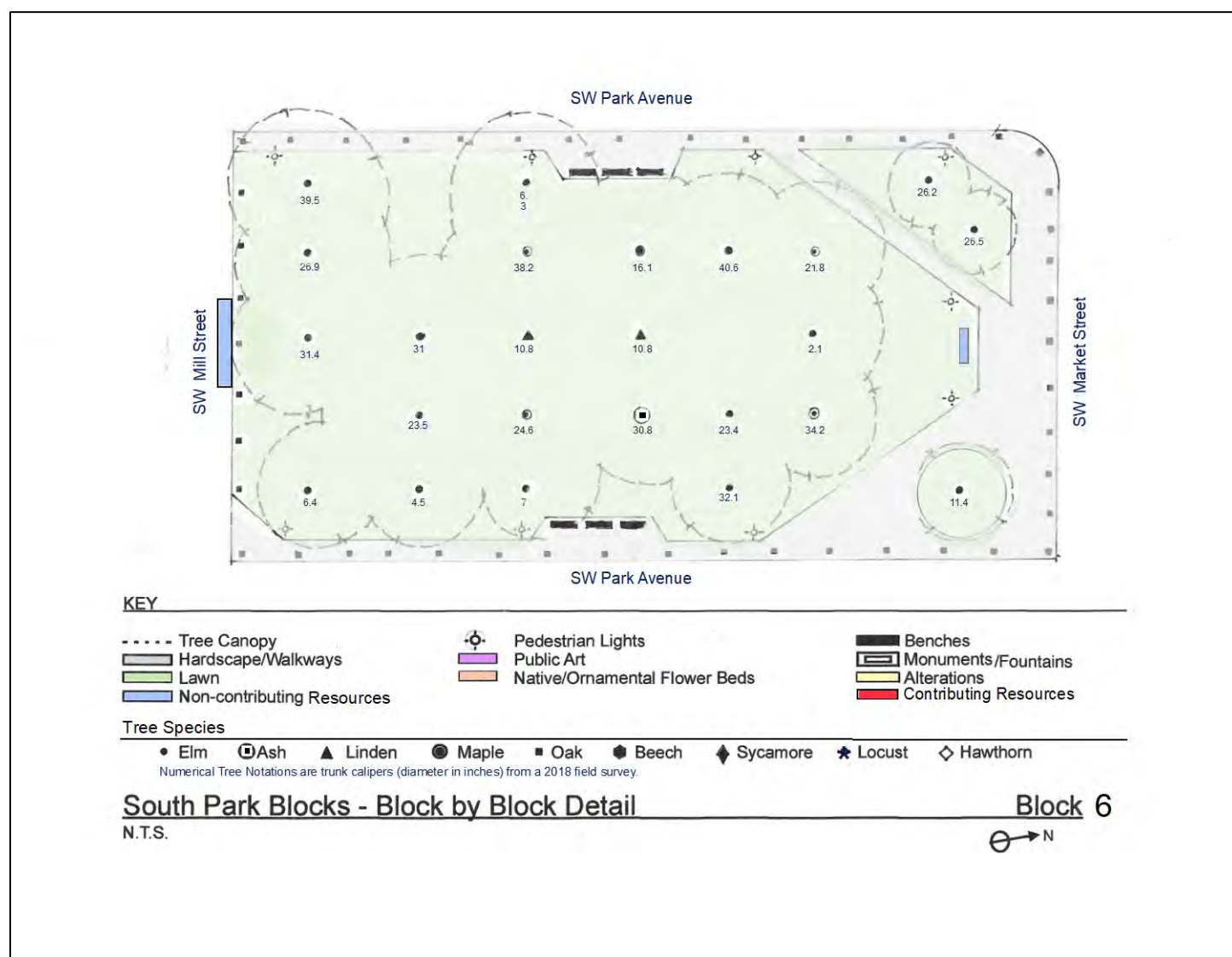
County and State

N/A

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Figure 23: South Park Blocks, Block 6 Detail Plan



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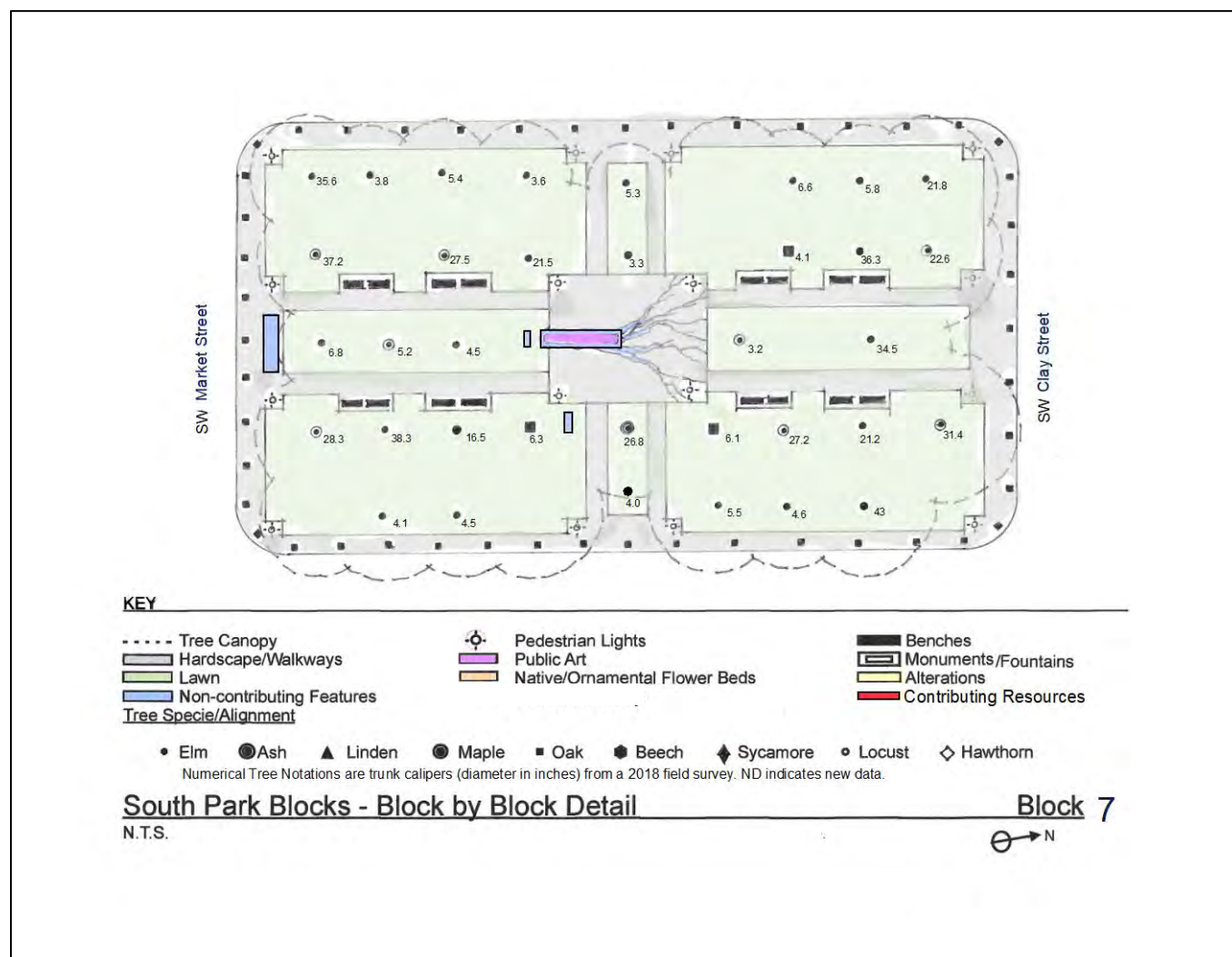
County and State

N/A

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Figure 24: South Park Blocks, Block 7 Detail Plan



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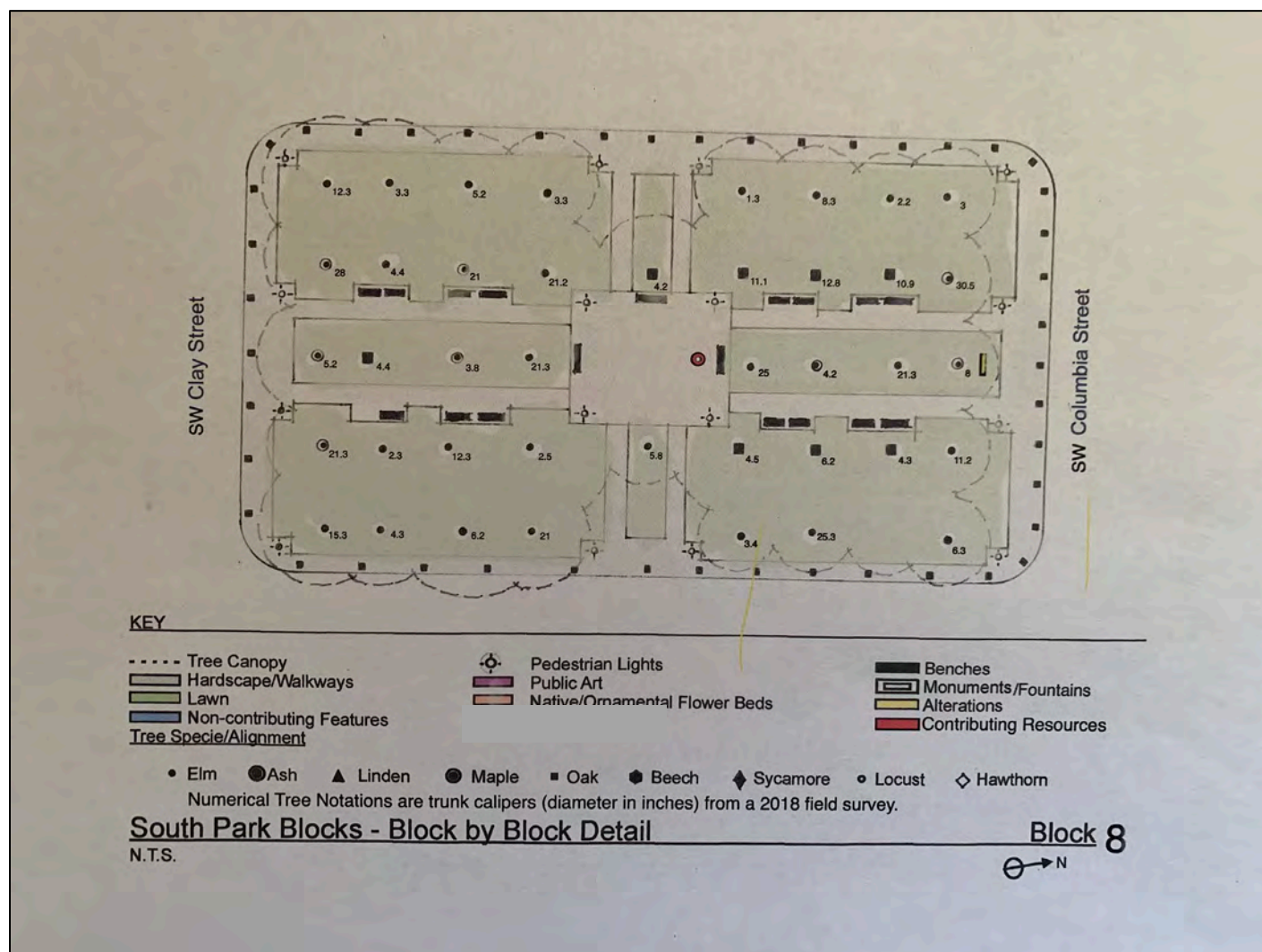
County and State

N/A

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Figure 25: South Park Blocks, Block 8 Detail Plan



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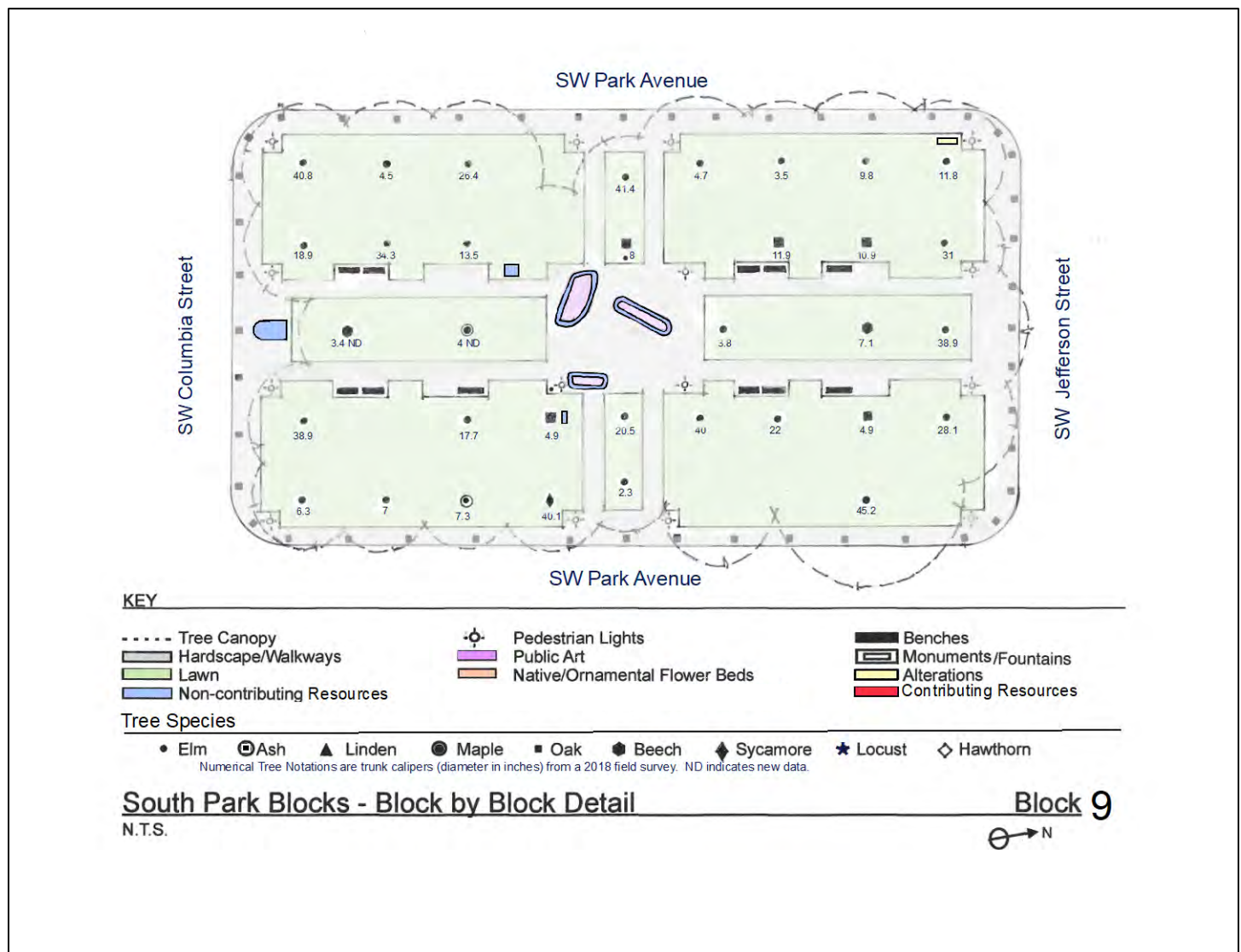
County and State

N/A

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Figure 26: South Park Blocks, Block 9 Detail Plan



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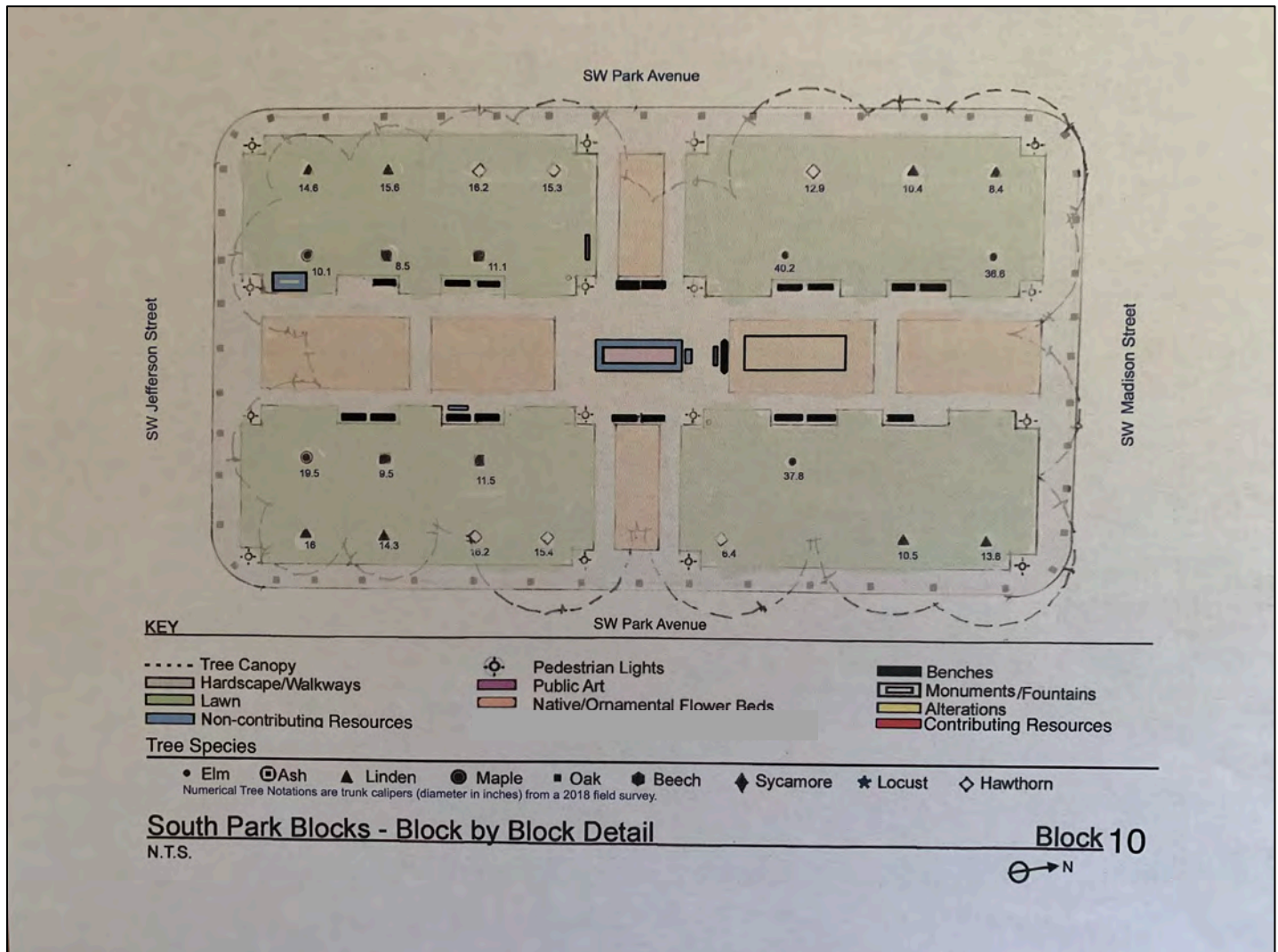
County and State

N/A

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Figure 27: South Park Blocks, Block 10 Detail Plan



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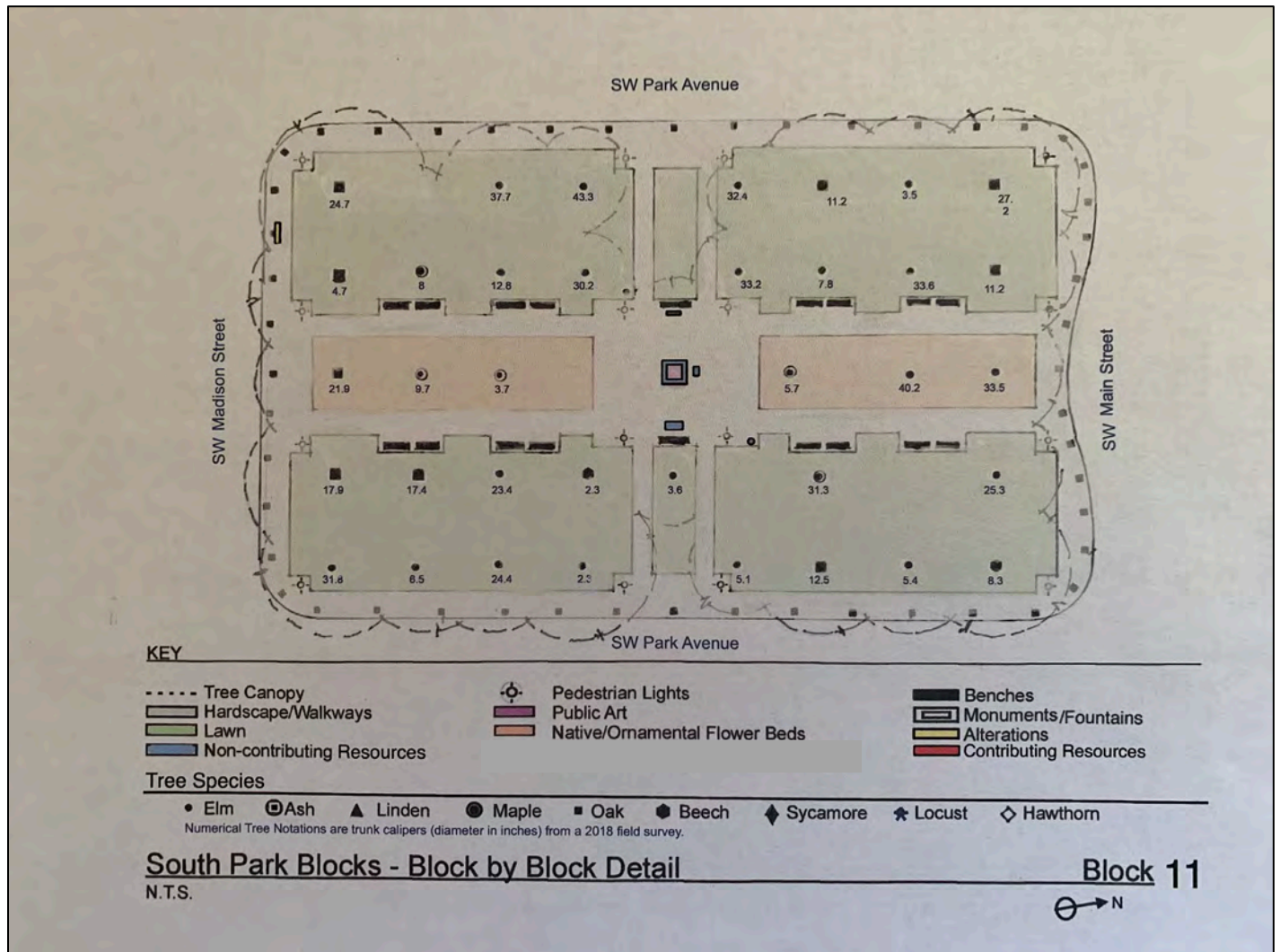
County and State

N/A

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Figure 28: South Park Blocks, Block 11 Detail Plan



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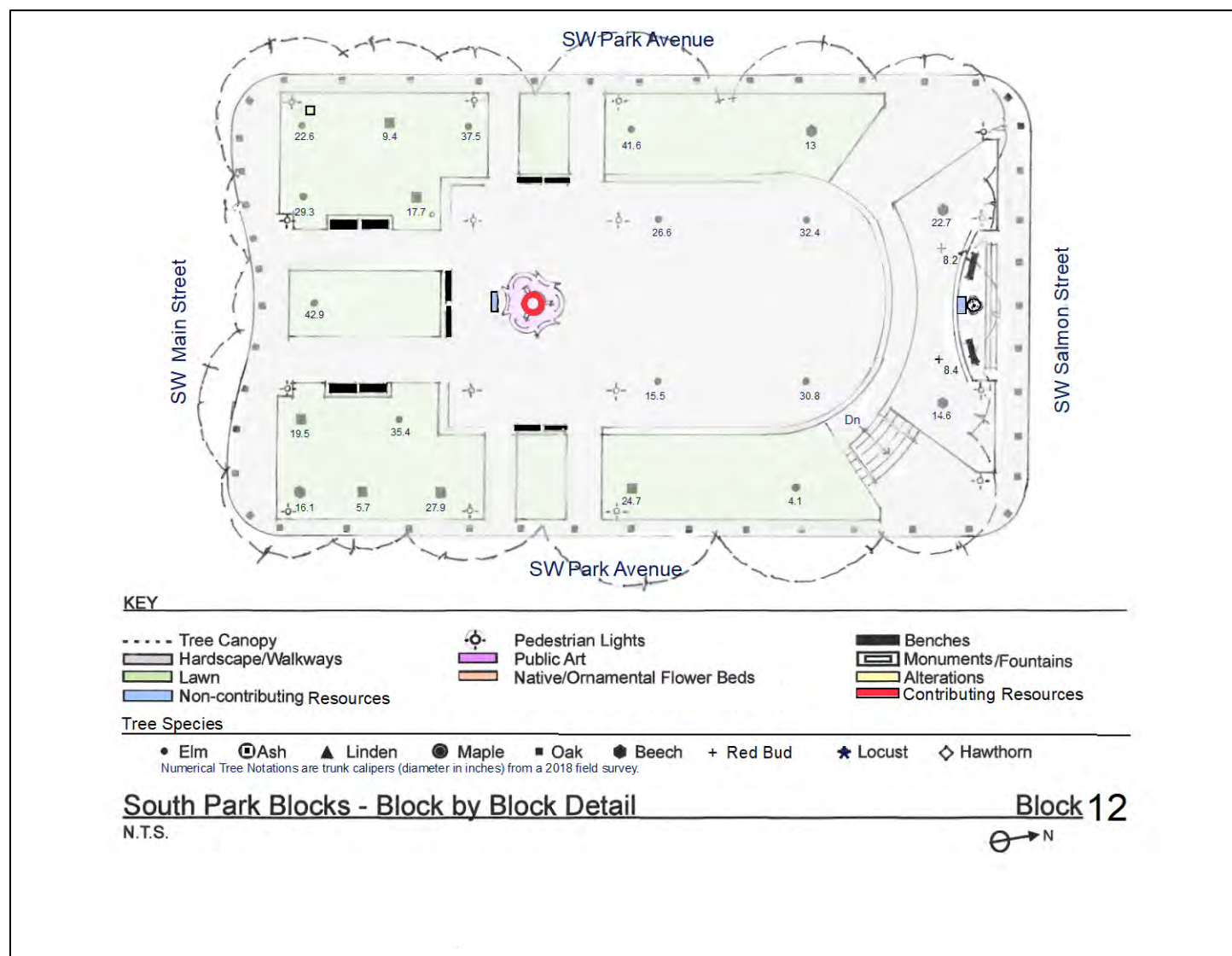
County and State

N/A

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Figure 29: South Park Blocks, Block 12 Detail Plan



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Figure 30: Additional Historical Documentation

Several local repositories contain an extensive collection of historic photographs and graphic documentation related to the South Park Blocks, including the Oregon Historical Society Digital Archives, City of Portland Archives and Record Management, and Portland State University Special Collections & University Archives.

Due to our volunteer citizens group effort with no budget and during the Covid crisis, we were limited in acquiring these digital images for the purposes of this National Register nomination. While there is a lot of archival material that could be referenced for future research, any additional information revealed in these resources would not radically change the significance and/or integrity argument for this nomination. Further, the following images identified during our research efforts that assisted the preparation of this nomination included:

- Plan of Portland, ca 1845 [OHS No 82329]
- Plan of Portland showing the Park Blocks and Plaza Blocks, ca 1846 [OHS No 82328]
- 1848 Plat Map showing the dedicated row of park blocks [OHS]
- Panoramic view of Portland showing the vacant land of the South Park Blocks in the distance, 1867 [OHS No. 21590]
- 1873 Engraving of the west side of Portland with the South Park Blocks depicted along the upper edge [OHS]
- Photo of South Park Blocks with diagonal walkways, benches, and closely planted trees, ca 1910 [OHS No. 72437]
- Photo of South Park Blocks, ca 1910 [OHS No. 68009]
- Preliminary plan of Hillside Parkway by E.T. Mische, showing South Park Blocks at far right, 1912 [OHS Map Collection, Dr. 64, F2]
- Greater Portland Plan of 1912 by Edward Bennett [OHS No. 44334]
- Toddler with miniature baby carriage on walk in the South Park Blocks, with First Congregational Church in background [OHS No. 015793]
- 1965 photo of college students basking in spring sun in the South Park Blocks [OHS No. 007594]
- Photo of PSU students in campus blocks [PSU Library University Archives]
- Photo of PSU students in South Park Blocks [PSU Library University Archives]
- Photo of South Park Blocks decorated for Rose Festival with special lighting and bedding plants, ca 1918 [OHS, Stout, No. 253]
- 1925 photo of military men standing at ease with crowd beyond during "Oregon Invites the World Celebration" [OHS No. 0323G061]

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- 1925 photo of "Oregon Invites the World Celebration" platform set-up on Madison St in the South Park Blocks [OHS No. 0323G053]
- First Annual Art Show in South Park Blocks, July 1949 [OHS No. 51945]
- 1949 photo of crowd watching Panthers in action at Oregon Society of Artists Annual
- 1970 Portland riot police on the PSU campus during solidarity demonstrations in the wake of students killed at Kent State University [OHS]
- 1970 photo of Portland police preparing to dismantle a tent in the South Park Blocks while students and anti-war protestors block their path
- 1970 photo of PSU students protecting a "medical tent" that stood in the South Park Blocks between SW Harrison and Montgomery St where "young people make their last stand after barricades toppled"
- 1922 photo of Roosevelt groundbreaking ceremony with President Calvin Coolidge
- 1974 photo of Theodore Roosevelt "Rough Rider" statue from lawn between SW Madison and Jefferson [City of Portland Archives and Record Management, AP/6301]
- 1949 photo of Abraham Lincoln statue between SW Main and Madison, looking southeast [City of Portland Archives and Record Management, A2005-005.35.1-35.3]
- 1975 photo of Abraham Lincoln statue between SW Main and Madison, looking northwest [City of Portland Archives and Record Management, AP/6302]
- c. 1929 photo of Shemanski Square looking toward Masonic Temple [City of Portland Archives and Record Management]
- 1967 photo of Shemanski Fountain looking north [City of Portland Archives and Record Management, A2001-066.219]
- Photo of 1975 dedication of Farewell to Orpheus fountain [OHS]









LOVERULES

USE
Your privilege
to fight for
JUSTICE



Makhia Zhihuana
PROTESTANT

5/24/21-1/20/21

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National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| Requested Action: | Nomination | |
| Property Name: | South Park Blocks | |
| Multiple Name: | | |
| State & County: | OREGON, Multnomah | |

Date Received: 2/7/2022 Date of Pending List: 2/24/2022 Date of 16th Day: 3/11/2022 Date of 45th Day: 3/24/2022 Date of Weekly List:

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Reference number: | SG100007518 |
| Nominator: | Other Agency, SHPO |
| Reason For Review: | |

 X Accept Return Reject 3/23/2022 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The South Park Blocks represent a historic district locally significant under National Register Criteria A and C in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Architecture. Period of Significance 1852-1973. The 8.76-acre city park runs along a narrow strip of continuous greenspace for 12 blocks within the densely urban environment of downtown Portland. The linear park effectively represents a heavily landscaped median between SW Park Avenue East and SW Park Park Avenue West, portions of which are now closed to automobile traffic. A significant urban amenity developed from 1852 to 1973, the park reflects the ever-evolving patterns of local historic landscape planning, design and public recreation. Park elements convey aspects of a nineteenth century fenced promenade, early twentieth century City Beautiful parkscapes with designed plazas and public art, and late-century pedestrian mall development under urban renewal programs. The overlapping layers also reflect the work of notable designers, park planners, and horticulturalists working in the city including Louis Gustav Pfunder, Emanuel Mische, and Hideo Sasaki.

Recommendation/ Criteria

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------------|------------|-------------------|
| Reviewer | <u>Paul Lusignan</u> | Discipline | <u>Historian</u> |
| Telephone | <u>(202)354-2229</u> | Date | <u>03/23/2022</u> |

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

**Parks and Recreation Department
State Historic Preservation Office**

725 Summer St. NE, Suite C

Salem, OR 97301-1271

(503) 986-0685

www.oregonheritage.org



February 4, 2022

Joy Beasley, Keeper
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C St. NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: National Register Nomination

Dear Ms. Beasley:

At the recommendation of the Oregon State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation, I hereby nominate the following National Register Nomination Form:

SOUTH PARK BLOCKS
1003 SW PARK AVE
PORTLAND, MULTNOMAH COUNTY

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination listed above to the National Register of Historic Places.

We appreciate your consideration of this nomination. If questions arise, please contact Robert Olguin, National Register Coordinator, at (503) 602-2468.

Sincerely,

Ian P. Johnson
Ian P. Johnson (Feb 4, 2022 11:34 PST)

Ian Johnson
Associate Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Encl.



City of Portland Historic Landmarks Commission

1900 SW Fourth Ave., Suite 5000 / 16
Portland, Oregon 97201
Telephone: (503) 823-7300
TDD: (503) 823-6868
FAX: (503) 823-5630
www.portlandonline.com/bds

October 5, 2021

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer St. NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301

Re: South Park Blocks National Register Nomination

Dear Chair Beckham,

The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission (PHLC) reviewed the National Register nomination for the above property on Monday September 27, 2021. At this review, the PHLC heard from staff and from several of the preparers of the nomination, as well as from City agencies, individuals, and groups. The nomination is opposed by Portland State University, who oversees the blocks at the southern end of the park. The PHLC believes the nomination meets the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. We offer the following broad comments:

- This nomination represents a very high level of scholarship and attention to context. It will be a welcome addition to Portland's historic context documents and likely referred to in future documents.
- The nomination treats the changes to the PSU blocks (1-6) of the South Park Blocks as fairly minor. These changes occurred during its urban renewal period, late 1960s to 1973. This more modernist phase deliberately interrupted the formal and symmetrical layout of the trees and walkways. This difference is important. In the excellent block by block descriptions, the nomination points out that many trees did survive the park redevelopment and replanting. Yes, that is true. But trees were planted that did not follow the axial relationship of the earlier park layout. Pointing out that there are still "historic trees" as the nomination defines as those existing during the period of significance (footnote p14) is misleading; trees were planted in the urban renewal period, if the period of significance extends to 1973. We also strongly suggest some additional language in the block-by-block section, and also under the section "vegetation" on p. 11, where the formal and symmetrical layout is described well but not the existing PSU blocks. The nomination needs to better acknowledge the strong and intentional differences in the PSU blocks, not only to tree planting but to pedestrian movement as well.
- The PHLC deeply appreciates the section on the aspects of integrity and also on achieving a more focused list of character-defining features. In neither of these two sections, though, is some discussion of the role the architecture of the buildings on either side plays in the overall feeling, perceived dimension, and sheltered quality of the park. It is touched on briefly on p52, third para, noting the buildings "served as framing architecture." There is more to it than that, and part of it is a HISTORICAL change (from single-family mansions to full-site multistory apartment buildings with a true street wall). The spatial experience of the park does not stop at the curblin, it stops at the building wall along both edges of the cross-section. The nomination explained the uses and the changes in uses over time, but the role the building wall plays in the experience of the park is inadequately addressed.

- Related to the above topic of the experiential edge of the park is the formal boundary of the South Park Blocks. The PHLC is not advocating for a boundary that is literally building front to building front. However, the “curbline” decision makes little sense in the PSU section of the South Park Blocks, since in the PSU section the curbline is gone and the park literally encompasses all of (what used to be) the perimeter roadway. These blocks do have a different relationship to the outer “roadway,” now vacated, because foot traffic is now largely moved to these vacated streets and the “central” uses include a much wider variety of gathering places. The boundary of the South Park Blocks 1-6 should be re-examined.
- Even in the Cultural District area of the South Park Blocks, it may make more sense to extend the perimeter boundary to the center of the roadway, encompassing the public streets and rights of way that are internal to the district. Examples of this strategy include Mount Tabor. If the boundary does change in the PSU section of the South Park Blocks, then perhaps (following the “simplicity” of the existing nomination) the boundary should also change in the northerly section.
- PHLC finds that the nomination could be better in its description of more current history, in the era since the close of the period of significance. The nomination also does not fully describe the “true purpose” of urban renewal with regards to African Americans, immigrants, and any other minority group perceived to be undesirable at that time. While the park blocks themselves (in the PSU area) were not razed or people displaced as a direct result of their development, the surrounding apartments that were demolished mattered, because the park was not always truly “everyone’s park.” This story is part of the story of the South Park Blocks.
- The Smith Center Amphitheater is noted in the nomination as a contributing feature of the park, due to its strong and central place in the modernist design of the PSU blocks. It does have sufficient integrity to be listed as a contributing element. Though outside the purview of the role the PHLC plays in recommending a nomination to the SACHP (using purely the criteria of the NRHP) we are sympathetic to the stated desires of Portland State University, the Parks Bureau, and the Portland Farmers Market to see ADA-related upgrades to the amphitheater. We understand that the scope of the changes would likely constitute a demolition of the existing amphitheater.

A very minor specific editing comment is also offered:

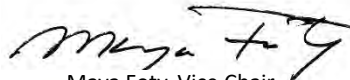
- On p. 64 the nomination cites that the vacation of the Park Avenue roadways in the PSU blocks led to a dramatically increased area of the nomination for that section, from 2.9 acres to 7.2 acres. This is confusing; didn’t the boundary stay the same in that section?

Based on the above factors, the PHLC voted unanimously to support the nomination.

Sincerely,



Kristen Minor, Chair



Maya Foty, Vice Chair

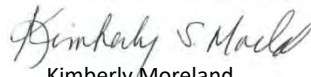
Matthew Roman
Matthew Roman



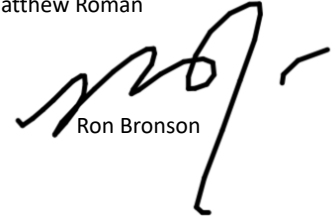
Ernestina Fuenmayor



Andrew Smith



Kimberly Moreland



Ron Bronson

CC: Brandon Spencer-Hartle, Portland Bureau of Planning & Sustainability
Robert Olguin, Oregon State Historic Preservation Office



October 19, 2021

To: Oregon State Historic Preservation Office

From: Adena Long, Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) Director

RE: South Park Blocks National Register of Historic Places Nomination

Dear Chair Beckham and Committee Members :

Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) appreciates the work the Downtown Neighborhood Association and preparers have performed to produce a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination for the South Park Blocks. The revised nomination before you today shows improvement in acknowledging how the park has changed over time, using cultural landscape principles. The nomination has been further improved by integrating requested revisions from the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, including categorizing the Roosevelt and Lincoln statues as non-contributing resources.

PP&R supports historic designations of our properties that are consistent with plans for those properties, and that do not unduly prohibit the City from meeting other important parks and recreation goals in the design and renovation of parks, including PP&R goals related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, antiracism, and dismantling White supremacy. NRHP nomination documentation should be complete, accurate, and inclusive.

Accordingly, PP&R staff have the following comments:

- A. Inclusion of the Smith Center Amphitheater and stage as a contributing resource could create undue barriers to making this space more inclusive and accessible to people of all abilities. Because Oregon Land Use Goal 5 requires cities to apply demolition review to contributing resources, both PP&R and Portland State University will incur cost and delay in making the amphitheater a more accessible space as envisioned by the South Park Blocks Master Plan.
- B. While the addition of a few paragraphs on the pre-European settlement historical context is appreciated, the nomination could benefit from additional research, stories, and more nuanced narrative representative of more diverse cultural histories and identities relevant to the outlined period of significance from 1852 to 1973.

Administration

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503-823-PLAY (7529) | Fax 503-823-6007


PORTLANDPARKS.ORG
Commissioner Carmen Rubio
Director Adena Long



C. PP&R engaged Indigenous cultures consultant Renea Perry, Tlingit citizen, to review the nomination and provide comments. These comments merit extra consideration and are included in the attached letter. As described in Renea Perry's letter, the nomination would benefit from an expanded narrative that intentionally contextualizes the district's pre-European native landscape, the impact of European settlers on the Indigenous Peoples and the landscape, and an expanded footnote that describes the harm done to Indigenous communities by Dr. Henry Waldo Coe.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the many perspectives that must be considered when making decisions that impact our shared public spaces.

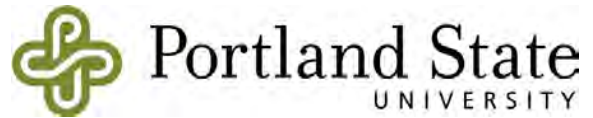
Sincerely,



Adena Long, Director

Attachment: Response to SPB Historic Nomination letter from Renea Perry, Tlingit citizen

CC: Brandon Spencer-Hartle, Portland Bureau of Planning & Sustainability
Robert Olguin, Oregon State Historic Preservation Office



October 21, 2021

State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation
Parks and Recreation Department
725 Summer St NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301-1271

Dear Chair Beckham and Members of the Committee:

Portland State University (PSU) opposes the nomination of the South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places based on the content of the nomination and the exclusion of critical community engagement in the development of the petition.

The designation inappropriately includes historic designation for blocks 1 through 6, which bisect the PSU campus from Jackson Street to Market Street.

Since 1953, PSU students, faculty and staff have called the South Park Blocks home. They are an essential component of the academic environment and contribute to the student learning experience. Periodic changes to the space have always been made collaboratively and balanced the dynamic needs of PSU students, the values of the community, and the idyllic vitality of the park. Decisions affecting the space will affect the learning environment.

The South Park Blocks are a hallmark of PSU's vibrant urban campus. For students, faculty, staff and visitors to the campus, the Blocks are more than just a place to gather, they are part of a dynamic academic experience. They are a classroom, a laboratory, an office, and of course, a place for needed reflection and recreation. Since relocating to the location in 1953, the university has celebrated and sustained the character of this unique urban corridor.

The university's commitment to protecting the integrity of the park is demonstrated through restrained modifications that respond to the specific needs of our community. At the heart of all we do at PSU is ensuring we do all we can to promote student learning and student success. It is ever-changing work that is informed by the past while looking toward the future. In that spirit, in 1973, much of blocks 1 through 6 were renovated to retain the character of the park, yet to responsibly respond to the then emerging needs of our students and community.

Those needs continue to change and campus master planning undergoes commensurate updates. Today's students are different from those of 48 years ago. PSU is now 50% students of color. The university serves more students with disabilities than at any time in our history. It is critical to constantly collaborate with students, staff, faculty and community to eliminate physical, emotional and academic barriers to student access and equity. Spacemaking is a critical component of this engagement.

These needed consultations are notably absent from the nomination, despite the University District representing 50% of the blocks. It offers no indication of input from any students, faculty or other experts in the academic success of a diverse community of engaged learners.

A specific example is the nomination of the Smith Center Amphitheater as a contributing resource. This structure, built in 1973, is inaccessible to a variety of users and is in need of substantial improvements. The nomination would trigger additional and unnecessary design review depending on the improvements needed. Consultation with the PSU Disability Resource Center would have informed petitioners of these needs.

Further, the nomination uses recognition of the Urban Renewal movement in its attempt to connect the renovated University District to the other blocks, which pre-date it by over 100 years. Modern urban planners now recognize the problematic and racist narrative that drove much of this movement, creating displacement, gentrification, and erasure of the stories of marginalized populations. Any effort to include this architectural era must be done only after extensive engagement with affected members of the campus and larger community. The nomination reflects no such conversations.

The process for this nomination stands in stark contrast to the work done by Portland Parks and Recreation in the development of the now-adopted South Park Blocks Master Plan. That planning process engaged a diverse and representative group of community stakeholders and PSU students, laying out a vision for a South Park Blocks that meets the changing needs of our evolving downtown community while maintaining the long-standing character of the park.

The plan includes long-overlooked Indigenous perspectives, not only on the history of the space but on strategies for adapting and maintaining the space in a resilient way. This historic nomination was developed in direct opposition to many of the recommendations and strategies of that plan. While the nomination includes an acknowledgement of the pre-colonization and Indigenous history of the land where the South Park Blocks is now located, it fails to translate that narrative into any tangible contributions to its list of historic assets. Further, any determination of the park's significant resources should have been an open and inclusive process, centering the stories and perspectives of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Again, this step was not taken during the current nomination.

Thank you for your time and consideration. PSU urges the commission to oppose this nomination of The South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places. Until this nomination is done with the full engagement of our diverse campus and downtown community, we cannot support it. Further, we do not approve of the context under which the University District has been included in this nomination and ask that at a minimum, this district be removed from the nomination as it stands.

Sincerely,

Kevin Neely
Vice President for University Relations



City of Portland
Historic Landmarks Commission

1900 SW Fourth Ave., Suite 5000 / 16
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www.portlandonline.com/bds

February 12, 2021

Robert Olguin
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer St. NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301

Re: South Park Blocks National Register District Nomination

Dear Robert,

The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission (PHLC) considered the nomination of the South Park Blocks National Register District at our regularly scheduled meeting on Monday February 8, 2021. The PHLC considered expert testimony from a variety of interests, including from persons with lived experiences, professional expertise, and intergenerational associations absent from the proposed iteration of the South Park Blocks National Register District nomination. The PHLC finds that the proposed nomination provides a wealth of historical information regarding the South Park Blocks, but that substantive revisions are necessary to ensure the nomination is accurate, complete, and inclusive. A letter detailing the recommended revisions will be provided under separate cover.

At this time, the PHLC recommends against nominating the South Park Blocks to the National Register and requests the State Historic Preservation Officer take no further action on this nomination. The members of the Portland City Council concur with the PHLC's recommendation.

The PHLC looks forward to considering a substantively revised nomination for the South Park Blocks in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristen Minor".

Kristen Minor, PHLC Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maya Foty".

Maya Foty, PHLC Vice Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Roman".

Matthew Roman, PHLC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ernestina Fuenmayor".

Ernestina Fuenmayor, PHLC

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew Smith".

Andrew Smith, PHLC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rubio".

Commissioner Rubio

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wheeler".

Mayor Wheeler

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hardesty".

Commissioner Hardesty

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan".

Commissioner Ryan

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mapps".

Commissioner Mapps

CC: Chrissy Curran, Oregon State Historic Preservation Office



City of Portland Historic Landmarks Commission

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February 17, 2021

Robert Olguin
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer St. NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301

Re: South Park Blocks National Register District Nomination

Dear Robert,

This letter supplements the letter submitted on February 12, 2021. As you know, in our advisory capacity the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission (PHLC) considered the nomination of the South Park Blocks National Register District at our regularly scheduled meeting on Monday February 8, 2021. The PHLC commends Story Swett, Brooke Best, Roberta Cation, Leslie Hutchison, and Fred Leeson for their volunteer efforts in preparing the nomination that was presented to the PHLC. Similarly, the PHLC deeply appreciates the testimony provided in writing and verbally at the meeting by individuals, communities, and organizations who have deep connections to the South Park Blocks and the land on which they are located. Such a public place deserves serious consideration of issues raised from all sides. Most (though not all) of the testimony supported the ultimate listing of the South Park Blocks on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The PHLC concurs with this majority opinion and hopes that substantive revisions to the nomination will ultimately result in National Park Service designation.

The issues raised are timely, resonant, and important. With every understanding of what a nomination document is (and what it is not) we currently recommend against nominating the South Park Blocks to the National Register until such time that substantive revisions to the nomination can be made and subsequently reconsidered by the PHLC. We acknowledge the unusual nature of this request. Much excellent scholarship, writing, and work has been already done by the team of volunteers and the vast majority of this work can and should be included in a revised document. The City of Portland, especially the Bureau of Parks and Recreation, has an opportunity—and the PHLC believes an obligation—to step in and help with the burden of supplementing the draft nomination as simply adding a few paragraphs regarding the history of this place prior to 1852 will not be sufficient. With thanks to the preparers and testifiers for raising numerous issues, the PHLC offers the following detailed advice.

Historic Context and Inclusive Language

- Unfortunately, there is a sense of one-sidedness in the overall draft narrative. While the narrative is common in Oregon histories and related to the dominant white “pioneer” culture, it does not sufficiently reflect the complicated, sad, and authentic history of events about who was here prior to white settlers and what happened once the settlers began to claim and use land that had already been lived on, managed, and cared for by Native Americans for thousands of years. The decisions of how to treat the land by early (and later) Portlanders and who “owned” it must be told in a more complete way, not only in the pre-1850s time period but as part of Lownsdale’s acquisition of it and

continuing into the period of significance. Some considerations of who used the park over time (and who did not) and whose contributions to its current features, form, and operations were considered important and valued (and whose were not) might be helpful.

- Overall, there is a troubling emphasis on how “sedate” or “quiet” activities are good, have historic integrity, and are valued, while more active uses are not. An example of this is the section discussing why the North Park Blocks are ineligible due to a loss of integrity, mostly due to the playground and basketball courts in that section of the park. Yet those uses were tied to the historic park playground movement (cited in the document as being 1906/1908). It is puzzling why the document includes one end of the park (PSU blocks 1-6) with more varied and active uses such as the Farmer’s Market, gathering spaces, and performance areas; and excludes the North Park Blocks based mostly on its active uses.
- In terms of who used the park historically, again there is some evidence for changes over time. The nomination needs to discuss and expand on this starting with change in single-family homes to a higher density along the park (p.36, WWI & depression era)- why was this happening in terms of a larger US context? Did the park ever change in terms of its public perception as a safe place or a welcoming place for all?

Cultural Landscape Approach

- A Cultural Landscape approach to the nomination would allow for a more flexible and more appropriate understanding of the myriad changes that have occurred within this public space and how the landscape might still change in the future, while retaining its essential qualities. Change over time in a cultural landscape is a feature and a process, as pointed out in the letter received by Robert Melnick, University of Oregon.
- It is important to clarify that changes are an integral part of a cultural landscape process. Since this nomination is written from the architectural point of view and not the cultural landscape point of view, the acceptance of the evolution of the park is missing from the narrative. As written, the narrative diminishes change and does not accurately convey the integrity of the blocks. Note: If the cultural landscape perspective is used, the North Park Blocks would almost certainly qualify as part of the nomination. If they are to be excluded, consider what the rationale is.
- Define the character-defining qualities of the park using a Cultural Landscape lens. For instance, the nomination refers to the linear promenade as being one of the critical attributes of the overall park design, evidenced throughout various iterations. Yet the diagonal layout of the PSU blocks (1-6) seem inconsistent with that description. In addition to circulation (of various types, not limited to pedestrian), defined qualities or attributes might include spatial organization, topography, views, axial and hierarchical relationships, uses, vegetation, and clusters of features. Please refer to National Park Service bulletins and published information about documenting and analyzing cultural landscapes.
- Tree species planted by early white Portlanders were quite often trees that originated in Europe or at least the east coast of the U.S.- is there a source for statement on p.7 that the choice of species represents “Portland’s only park planted primarily with broadleaf deciduous tree species”? Many street trees in Portland’s older neighborhoods are these same east coast-based species.
- Ecology and landscape species choice is an issue that is not raised in the nomination, except to say that the allees of mature, deciduous trees were chosen and planted to provide a “European-inspired” character to the linear park blocks. Elm trees, though, are an introduced species, not native to our ecology in the pacific northwest. As urban forestry improves as a science, we understand more about the reasons to plant a more diverse mix. This is not to say that the PHLC advocates for a significant change in the tree species represented in the park, but it is important to recognize the problem, listen

to experts, and then to define the characteristics that are the most critical to the experience and character in the park. The PHLC suspects that some flexibility would not undermine the historic experience while improving the health of the park overall. Grass under the trees is another species question: on what model is this based on? Plenty of European examples of allees do not have grass. The shade makes grass a difficult choice for maintenance; perhaps a low ground cover would allow for flexibility and better ecology.

Boundary

- As presented by the preparers, it is evident that there is some confusion and intent to clarify the boundaries of the nominated area. The PHLC appreciates Bill Hawkins' testimony regarding the historic size of the Park Blocks and the various iterations of sidewalk, roadway, and curbline over time. The PHLC supports the stated intent to clarify the boundaries. The current roadway widths on both sides of the planted park blocks are not historic, nor are they necessarily important to the character or function of the park. In fact, defining the park too narrowly may have the result of locking in "car only" zones on the outside of the park, rather than considering the park functions as a whole including multi-modal transportation. The idea of a "well-defined boundary" seems less about where roadways are currently and more about the spatial boundaries defined by the architecture on either side of the park.
- Whether or not the boundaries extend to the fronts of buildings on either side, the relationship between these buildings and the park should be better described as place-defining. Many of the buildings themselves are historic and have a relationship to the park. This could be an entire district including the buildings, theoretically.
- Strong re-consideration of the two "ends" of the park and whether they belong in the nominated area is warranted. The current nomination has the PSU blocks included and not the North Park Blocks. This may be supportable, but the current arguments are weak for both decisions.
- Mention of the Arlington Club on p.18 might include a bit more on this building as the 'terminus' of the South Park Blocks and how it came to be constructed at that location.

Period of Significance and Nomination Criteria

- The proposed period of significance is quite long. If it is appropriate to include the more recent decades, more history on events from the 1940s through the 1970s should be added. Several PHLC commissioners were comfortable with the period of significance as proposed, but several others had some concern that such an extensive time period results in an unfocused discussion of the criteria. It is not clear how changes made in the 1970s might be included as "contributing," but changes made in the 1980s would not be (perimeter walkways being the clearest example).
- In terms of the Criteria A arguments for the park falling under the "City Beautiful" movement, it is possible that the Parks MPD could be used as an umbrella for this nomination but that the changes to the park in the later periods would be excluded. However, this approach would also have major challenges to managing the landscape and accounting for changes, and the PHLC instead recommends a Cultural Landscape approach to Criteria A (See "cultural landscape" category of discussion above). As it stands, the arguments for which aspects of the park are "character-defining" and which are not, over time, are not adequately tied back to the criteria & themes discussion overall.

Character-Defining Features and Contributing Resources

- As defined in the nomination, the boundary, period of significance, character-defining features, and contributing resources should reinforce each other and tell a coherent story under the appropriate

themes of the nomination criteria. It is important to take a deeper look at the character-defining features of the park, especially the added 1920s-era Roosevelt and Lincoln statues which have now been removed.

- Are these statues appropriate as character-defining features, especially since they are not in the park, and also given the testimony regarding the intent of the donor of the statues? If so, the document must at least address the fact that the statues are gone (and why they are gone) and discuss why and by whom they were placed. Indeed, testimony received makes it clear that the statues are literally traumatic for some. It may be that there are locations in the park for public sculpture defined, but that the statues themselves do not necessarily have to occupy these places.
- Review the list of character defining features and omit items without more evidence. Make sure major defining features are defined, but perhaps omit the more granular items like material palette lists. Raised planting beds, walkways and their materials, much has changed over time. Perhaps better approached as a cultural landscape that has changed over time, with those essential features defined more broadly. For instance, a break in the ubiquitous 200 x 200 Portland grid is truly a character-defining feature of the park blocks. However, having “well-defined boundaries” seems less clear as (see boundary discussion) these boundaries have indeed changed relative to curblines.
- More rigor in how the character-defining elements are defined relative to the National Register criteria and period of significance is warranted. For instance, in terms of trees, what defines “historic trees”? Are they individually listed on heritage tree list, or in Phyllis Reynolds’ “Trees of Greater Portland”? Are the backless benches described in Block #4 truly character-defining? Some additional evidence could make the case, perhaps, but we recommend a study of seating and how it has changed over time to define what the essential qualities of seating were and are in the park.
- Was there lighting designed and installed in the park that is no longer present? Some description of this, if so, should be included.

Other Technical Details and Edits

- Page 5: Indicate that the park is a linear north-south contiguous open green space.
- Page 6: Under Character-Defining features the first bullet point has “Material Palette;” under this category there is “grass” which is a plant species, not a material. Grass probably does not belong here.
- Page 11- Paragraph 6: Explain ADA.
- Page 12, (top of page): when was the clock installed in the park?
- Page 13 (and other locations), “Victorian style” is not a style but an era.
- Page 18, Shemanski fountain- what is original date?
- Page 19: Alterations. The list of alterations includes in the first paragraph planting beds. Since these are also a character-defining feature, be specific about their location, type, etc.
- Page 20- Park Integrity: Incorporate language regarding cultural landscape here. There needs to be an analysis as explained above that indicates how integrity evolves as is understood in cultural landscapes.
- Page 25, eliminate question marks or rephrase
- Page 27: Footnote 77 and 81 is missing the publication year. Please add this.
- Page 28: After the first paragraph until the end of the page, the storyline is confusing. Please consider revising for clarity.
- Page 30: First line. We suggest indicating which European country Pfunder came from. This is explained later in the narrative, but it should be clear from the first mention.

- Page 31: Clarify why Holladay is the “first property purchased specifically for park purposes by the city government”, the narrative is leading the reader to understand that the park blocks were the first ones, clarify the difference.
- Page 36- third paragraph: the last sentence indicate that the authors assumptions need to be based in something, it is not clear what indicates that the axial and diagonal walkways were from this period. Is this evidence photographic? Please add notation or explanation.
- Page 42 – Fourth paragraph: for consistency refer to Louis Gustav Pfunder as Pfunder since that is how he has been referred to throughout the document. (Should read “Pfunder returned to Germany”).
- Page 49 – fourth paragraph: this information is repeated. No need to repeat citation and references.
- Page 46, elk statue needs to be discussed in terms of current condition/location
- Page 55: indicate that there is a National Register Nomination, since it is referred to in the bibliography.
- The Block by Block Detail figures are great; however, it does not credit the author of the drawings. And the boundary line is not graphically clear, not easy to read. Need to find a better way to represent such boundary.

The PHLC offers our support and help to the ongoing process and looks forward to considering a substantively revised nomination for the South Park Blocks that addresses the issues identified above.

Sincerely,



Kristen Minor, PHLC Chair



Maya Foty, PHLC Vice Chair



Matthew Roman, PHLC



Ernestina Fuenmayor, PHLC



Andrew Smith, PHLC

NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION EVALUATION SHEET

SACHP Meeting Date: 11/30-12/1/2021

PROPERTY NAME: **SOUTH PARK BLOCKS**
 ADDRESS: **1003 SW PARK AVE**
PORTLAND, MULTNOMAH COUNTY

EVALUATOR: JACQUELINE CHEUNG

DATE: 11/30-12/1/2021

OK _____ **INTEGRITY:** Major alterations or additions? New materials? Altered setting? Moved? etc.

OK _____ **DESCRIPTION:** Is the property adequately described? Too general? Too specific? Have contrib. and non-contrib. features been clearly identified?

PHLC has concerns about using the term “historic tree” for any tree present within the SPB period of significance, which includes tree replacement or planting during the PSU development. This term may be too general and should not replace more specific details about when particular trees were planted or which trees remain of the initial planting—if known. Perhaps also specify the term “replacement tree” if it refers to any tree planted after 1973, or trees planted much more recently.

OK _____ **SIGNIFICANCE and CONTEXT:** Has the appropriate Criterion been used? Has it been justified? Is the context sufficient in breadth and depth to support the claims of significance? Is the narrative history complete and of the appropriate detail?

P.22 footnote--Take into account the issues raised by Renea Perry, particularly her warning about “not lightening the language” and her comment about Henry Waldo Coe and “assimilation.”

The added context about the 2020 protests and statue removal was important to include.

P34, Paragraph 2—the phrase “...thus **freeing** the land for American pioneer settlement...” seems to give the act of placing tribes in reservations a positive spin, perhaps replace **freeing** with a different word, such as **opening**.

P51—Footnote 202 mentions the introduction of monuments and public art to the plazas. This should be included in the main text, not in the footnote, especially since it is later discussed in more detail.

P67. In the comparison to the North Park Blocks, it states that the SPB was established as a prestigious residential district—this is implied in narratives of early park history but not stated directly. This does lead to questions of whether the park was open to anyone, or whether some people were banned or discouraged. P44 mentions that in the 19th C immigrants and families lived nearby and mansions lined the park blocks, so wondering if these groups mingled in the public park.

There are mentions of Vietnam protests and Rose Festival but other types of events could also be mentioned. Was the SPB used for other protests before the 1970s?

OK _____ **FACTS AND SOURCES:** Are the appropriate and best sources used? Are key dates and facts accurate and supported with references?

OK _____ **TECHNICAL:** Typos, grammar, organization and flow of the narrative, etc.

Check acronym of SPB, at times it is mistyped as SBP.

P. 44 Par 2 Figure 7 is cross referenced, but it should be Figure 8

P64 last paragraph: "Greek profit" should be Greek **prophet**.

OK _____ **SUPPORTING MATERIALS:** Adequate photos, maps, drawings, etc.?

Some of the in text images are too small, and hard to see the relevant details described or pointed out in the narrative. Please include larger images.

- P37: Brady map and 1852 map are too small and hard to read
- P45: 1890 aerial is too small and hard to see relevant details
- The block maps are clear and detailed but it would be helpful to label the monuments or art pieces.

OTHER ISSUES AND COMMENTS:

The Portland Parks & Recreation do not want the Smith Amphitheater to be included as a contributing part of the nomination so it can be replaced. However, the amphitheater is a key part of the PSU development phase that is included within the period of significance and still retains integrity

I hope there will be a place in the park where additional viewpoints and stories can be presented to the public.

I recognize that this is a public space that has undergone change over time because of maintenance issues, and evolving ideas of urban planning, but I think the nomination criteria works for the South Park Blocks, because it shows that while it changed, people continued to value and preserve key characteristics of the park blocks.

NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION EVALUATION SHEET

SACHP Meeting Date: 10/21/2021

PROPERTY NAME: **SOUTH PARK BLOCKS**
ADDRESS: **1003 SW PARK AVE**
PORTLAND, MULTNOMAH COUNTY

EVALUATOR: Heidi Slaybaugh

DATE: 10/21/2021 & 11/30/21



OK

Concerns

INTEGRITY: Major alterations or additions? New materials? Altered setting? Moved? etc.

- minor alterations do not dramatically affect integrity



OK

Concerns

DESCRIPTION: Is the property adequately described? Too general? Too specific? Have contrib. and non-contrib. features been clearly identified?

- boundary is clear, although I suggest it extends to centerline of streets
- initial description is a bit unclear with second sentence that starts with "The twelve-block historic district..." - does this mean the SPB is already a historic district, or located within a historic district, or are they proposing the SPB to be the historic district?



OK

Concerns

SIGNIFICANCE and CONTEXT: Has the appropriate Criterion been used? Has it been justified? Is the context sufficient in breadth and depth to support the claims of significance? Is the narrative history complete and of the appropriate detail?

Criteria A: Urban Development (local)

- criteria is appropriately used and well described

Criteria C: Designed Historic Landscape (local)

- criteria is appropriately used and well described

Criteria G: due to end of period of significance date - OK

FACTS AND Are the appropriate and best sources used? Are key dates and facts accurate and supported with references?

- block by block detail drawings are great!



OK

Concerns

TECHNICAL: Typos, grammar, organization and flow of the narrative, etc.

- no comments



OK

Concerns

SUPPORTING

MATERIALS: Adequate photos, maps, drawings, etc.?

- Figures 2 & 6 are duplicates - remove one or the other

- put historic photos in chronological order

- put current photos in block # order

- image on page 37 (1852 map) needs to be lightened for better reproduction

OTHER ISSUES AND COMMENTS:

Presenters:
- Kirk Ranzetta
- Brooke Best

I suggest approval of this nomination!

PP&R - Tate White (proponent)
PSU - Kevin Neely (opponent)

Testimony in support of South Park Blocks historic nomination

The South Park Blocks remains one of Portland's distinctive, valued, precious and significant historic open spaces.

My name is LaJune Thorson. As a resident of downtown there are many features of the South Park Block that I love. It is my calming walking path to all parts of downtown. It provides me with a connection, eye contact, with other people who are enjoying the same experience. And it provides me with a connection to Portland's past. When I take my time to saunter there are little surprises, little insights, that present themselves. Let me tell you about some of those treasures starting from the south.

Between Hall and Harrison is a sculpture recognizing the establishment of the Portland State University School of Social Work. Dr. Hearn, the school's founder and first dean, must have had some wealthy and influential friends, probably not social workers. It is a unique and beautiful sculpture.

One of my favorites features is the sculpture inlaid into the pavement in Block 7 called In the Shadow of the Elm. It depicts a tree, but, when I look at from the north, I see a woman with up-stretched arms.

Between Clay and Columbia is a single-bowl Benson Bubbler designed by A.E. Doyle. This drinking fountain can be found all over downtown, usually in the four-bowl design, and is unique to downtown Portland. Supposedly Simon Benson had them installed to reduce the consumption of alcohol but I'm not sure that worked. The Bubblers are, however, refreshing to look at and to drink from.

Near Jefferson and Clay you learn about the Great Plank Road and how it transformed Portland's agricultural economy.

Most of these treasures I love are consistent with the City Beautiful Movement and there are many more interesting surprises I could name. But you should conduct your own treasure hunt with interpretations of what you discover. Have fun! And please honor the South Blocks by supporting this nomination.

From: [James Heuer](#)
To: [HAVEL Chris](#) * OPRD
Subject: Testimony below:
Date: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 11:37:41 AM

Members of the Committee, I present this testimony on my own behalf, although I have been affiliated with various historic preservation organizations for over 20 years.

When I moved to Portland 30 years ago one part of Portland that struck me powerfully was the Park Blocks – especially the South Park Blocks. Unlike urban parks like Pershing Square in Los Angeles and Union Square in San Francisco, the Park Blocks didn't feel hemmed in by huge buildings grimly begrudging the park space in their midst. The South Park Blocks conveyed an expansiveness and a natural serenity long ago lost by those other urban squares that have been "programmed" to death and now are more concrete and stone than a refuge in nature.

The Park Blocks unique impact on visitors and residents alike stems from the decades-long influences of Frederick Law Olmsted and his vision and philosophy that "scenery" as he called it could have a powerful influence on people, even when they were not really aware of it. As the nomination makes clear, that influence started with the gifted horticulturist Louis Pfunder, who, trained in horticulture in Germany and Switzerland, then refined his skills in the art of landscaping working for Frederick Law Olmsted on the famous Central Park project in New York City. It was Pfunder who, in 1877, created the basic planting plan for axial rows of towering trees in this early "promenade" park. Olmsted's influence carried on with the engagement of the successor firm of Olmstead Brothers who created the "Olmsted Plan". Additional developments in the park were the work of Emanuel T. Mische, who himself had worked for the Olmsted firm. Subsequent enhancements by Campbell Yost and Associates and others took into account the existing "character of the area...in terms of visual continuity, mass, and scale "--thus retaining the visual power of Pfunder's original concept.

Today the South Park Blocks exemplify the senior Olmsted's notion that the chief purpose of a park is "an effect on the human organism by an action by what it presents to view... is a kind that goes back of thought and cannot be fully given the form of words..."

Recently my partner and I experienced just this "action" when strolling through the Park Blocks on a sunny Sunday afternoon. The tunnel of trees beckoned us onward. Around us were Portlanders, some of whom obviously were suffering deeply from economic and mental challenges, but all of whom were relaxing, snoozing, chatting quietly, and otherwise being calmed by the powerful emotive effect of Louis Pfunder's creation from 150 years ago... finding escape from the harsh cityscape we now find in our downtown.

I urge you to support this Nomination of the South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places.

Thank you for your time.

About the Writer

My name is Jim Heuer. The home that my husband Robert Mercer and I own is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places and a contributing property in the Irvington National Register Historic District. In 2001 we applied for the State of Oregon Special

Assessment, which gave us a 15-year tax break in return for an expenditure of many tens of thousands of dollars for rehabilitation and restoration. Then in 2017, in part to help pay for our much higher property taxes after the end of the Special Assessment break, we constructed a 750 square foot Accessory Dwelling Unit in our basement – during which we applied for a Type II Historic Resource Review.

In addition to “hands-on” preservation activities, my involvement with the historic preservation community includes:

- Lecturer on Portland architectural history for the Architectural Heritage Center (AHC)
- Past membership on the Board of Directors of the AHC
- Membership on the Irvington Community Association Land Use Committee during which time we reviewed approximately 600 historic resource review applications and assisted hundreds our neighbors navigate the process
- Twenty year member of the Irvington Community Association’s Historic Home Tour Committee
- Past Chairperson of the Portland Coalition for Historic Resources
- Member of the Regulatory Advisory Committee for the re-write of the Goal 5 rules
- Member of Senator Dembrow’s 2019 legislative task force on historic preservation
- Member of the Architectural History Center’s Education and Advocacy Committees
- Docent with Robert Mercer for history and architecture walking tours of Irvington, Ladd’s Addition, Portland Heights, Willamette Heights, and other historic Portland neighborhoods

--

James S. Heuer

1903 NE Hancock Street

Portland, OR 97212

(503) 284-8481 (Home)

(503) 335-8380 (Work/Cell)

(503) 348-8694 (Text)

From: [Denyse MCGRIFF](#)
To: [HAVEL Chris * OPRD](#)
Subject: Testimony in support of the South Park Blocks Nomination
Date: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 11:37:33 AM

Good morning Advisory Board members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the National Register nomination for the South Park Blocks in Portland. My name is Denyse McGriff, I am a member of the Board of Advisors for the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Board President of the Bosco-Milligan Foundation- we own and operate the Architectural Heritage Center also in Portland.

The entire series of Park Blocks in Downtown Portland are a legacy of foresight and a gift to the community. The South Park blocks are one of the pearls in the necklace of the cultural landscape. The pearls exist as the entire necklace. This pearl is worthy of being on the National Register. It is eligible under criterion A, C and D.

The South Park Blocks are a place of contemplation devoid of distracting visual clutter. Less is more. It is the only park designed to provide urban rest and long promenades. It is a resistant space that has maintained its restrained character until the present day. Defining characteristics include:

Open space- flexible and adaptive- for a variety of uses restful and active
Deciduous trees in five axial rows
Restrained simply
Defined boundaries

The South Park Blocks remain one of Portland's most distinctive, valued, precious and significant open spaces. It has survived as the centerpiece of city's education and cultural institutions and continues to tell the story of its associations with significant recreational, cultural, political and landscape areas in Portland's history.

Thank you, sincerely, Denyse McGriff

NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER

My name is Bill Hawkins. I am here to support the Nomination of the South Park Blocks to the National Register.

One of the main tenants of the nomination are the historic dimensions/boundaries of the Park. At the beginning, the 1850 plat showed a 200 ft. wide strip of land (from Burnside Street to Jackson Street) to be donated for a both public park and two side streets (widths undetermined). For years, both the widths of the streets and the land for the park were contested by commercial interests. However, and most importantly, by 1876 the City had attained “clear title” to the land and immediately planned as wide a park as possible, spanning both the Block and into the right of ways. They determined the curb to curb width of the park to align with the then existing sidewalks to the north of Salmon (or 124 ft.). It was this width that was planted with five rows of deciduous trees by Louis G. Pfunder in 1877. A 1878 photo of the park, with its outer rows of trees and unfinished borders, verifies that the original borders are essentially those in the nomination.

In the nomination the historic width is observed as much as possible. For the seven blocks between Salmon and Montgomery Streets, it follows existing and historic curb lines. For the University Blocks, between Montgomery and Mill Streets, it follows the 124-foot historical width which includes a portion of the pedestrian areas to each side of the park. These boundaries are justified as they provide a sense of continuity and include the character-defining features of the South Park Blocks.



Date: September 23, 2021
To: Portland Historic Landmark Commission
Brandon Spencer-Hartle, PP&S (brandon.spencer@portlandoregon.gov)
Hillary Adam, BDS (hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov)
Copy To: Robert Olguin, SHPO for SACHP (Robert.olguin@oregon.gov)
From: Portland Downtown Neighborhood Association
Subject: South Park Blocks Historic Nomination to the National Register

The Portland Downtown Neighborhood Association (DNA), sponsor of the substantially revised National Register nomination for the South Park Blocks, is proud to support this re-submission by the DNA's Land Use Transportation committee's (LUT) task force. This revised nomination responds to SHPO's written comments (dated March 15th) and addresses the written objections by the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission and City Council (acting as the chief elected official), filed with the SHPO on February 17th pursuant to 54 USC 302504(b) and (c). Because of a dip in the COVID numbers, the preparers were able to add important research to the document which served to strengthen the evidence supporting this nomination.

We all recognize that the South Park Blocks qualifies as one of Portland's earliest public spaces which has maintained much of its character for 150 years despite changes over time. These changes have all honored the early design features: the 5 rows of deciduous trees in axial alignment creating long viewsheds, 200' x 124' boundary from curb to curb, and an open space with a simple ground plane. It is clearly eligible for a place on the National Register. This nomination is long overdue.

Responding to HLC comments, the revised nomination eliminated the argument for its Cultural and Social significance (Criterion A) but recognizes that this will be an important story that needs to be told and that the story must include the perspectives of all groups that have used the park, including those groups previously neglected in the earlier presentation. There is sufficient evidence in this nomination to support it using Criteria A and C, and only one criterion is required for a successful nomination.

The 12-block park today is unified by the 5 rows of deciduous trees, the boundary dimensions, and the view sheds, all retained to this day despite many changes over the decades. Under Criterion A, the park has seen changes in park planning and urban development in the surrounding downtown (Community Development). The Park is clearly seen in the 1852 Brady map, marking the beginning date for the period of significance, and ends with the Modernist aesthetic incorporated by 1973 as part of the 1969-1973 South Park Blocks Urban Renewal Development Project, which marks the end of the period of significance, when that project was completed.

In between those dates, deciduous trees in axial alignment were planted, public monuments have been added and removed, bedding designs have come and gone, exterior border promenades gave way to internal promenades, grass grew, a "pedestrian mall" was incorporated into the 6 southern blocks with the closure of streets to non-pedestrian traffic, and the addition of the *Farewell to Orpheus* sculpture and Modernist Smith Amphitheater hugging the natural slope of the land. All these changes actively respected the public viewsheds and the original axial, formal design and linear tree alignment. It is these design features, still extant today, that convey its significance under Criterion C.



As important, the document acknowledges inhabitants of the land outside this nomination's period of significance with the inclusion of four additional pages of text in Section 8 that addresses the area's precontact period. DNA representatives reached out to tribal cultural resource specialists including those from the Confederated Tribe of the Grand Ronde (CTGR), Siletz and Warm Springs, as well as the Klamath Tribes. The CTGR did engage with the DNA and provided some helpful perspective on issues of sovereignty and to be open to telling other facets to a place's historical story. Those stories could be further incorporated, with more research and appropriate representation, as part of a follow-on nomination, as suggested above.

We want to acknowledge the extraordinary volunteers who worked on this project, put in untold months of research and writing, and have created a solid, easily defended nomination that was guided by National Register Guidelines. The DNA urges the HLC in its advisory capacity to advance the nomination to the State Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (SACHP) for review and approval to the Keeper of the Register.

Thank you for your dedicated service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Walter E. Weyler".

Walter Weyler
Chair, DNA Board

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy Rahm".

Wendy Rahm
Vice Chair, DNA Board/LUT Chair

Cc: Robert Olguin, SHPO (for the SACHP) (Robert.olguin@oregon.gov)

From: [Alice Lloyd](#)
To: [Spencer-Hartle, Brandon](#); hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov; [OLGUIN Robert * OPRD](#)
Subject: South Park Blocks Historic Nomination
Date: Sunday, September 26, 2021 7:49:58 PM

Dear Commission members,

I wholeheartedly support the historic designation for the South Park Blocks in Portland. These connecting blocks are an incredible landmark of architectural design in the city. And an amazing feat with their historic width (124 feet) and five rows of deciduous trees, the intentional open space and walkways, and the PSU amphitheater. This design provides significant aesthetic, sensory and experiential appeal for both residents and visitors. All aspects of the mid-century urban renewal, and the preservation of the original cathedral design, make it a major attraction.

As a resident, I have lived on both sides of the South Park Blocks. It's where I always wanted to live in Portland - because of the attractiveness and immersive qualities of this design. It's where we gather and walk and utilize outdoor benches. It's where children play. It's where we can appreciate visual and performance art, and learn and worship. It integrates all the cultural buildings situated along these blocks. It is an important, and singular, refuge in the downtown hardscape.

The South Park Blocks are pillars of the cultural character they define. This design is an attraction to be treasured, in the same way other cities promote the care of their historic deciduous trees and landmark spaces. It would reflect poorly on our stewardship to let such a spectacular space be replaced by suburban-like expediencies. This design is what gives these blocks, and this neighborhood, its soul! And is a defining gem for the benefit of the entire city.

Thank you.

Alice Lloyd
1221 SW 10th Ave.
Portland, OR 97205

October 13, 2021

To: State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation

From: Renea Perry, Tlingit citizen residing in what is now Portland, Oregon

Dear Chair Beckham and Committee Members,

I write to you today to speak about a reckoning of truth now that Indigenous, Black, and communities of color are catching your ears.

Indigenous relationship to land is part of the lineage of our cultural identity that sets the framework for our kinship systems and ways of being in the world.

Contextual understanding of how EuroAmericans each came to be in the position of power and place that are held, and the on-going attempts at erasure and annihilation of Indigenous People must be named for what they were and are- genocide, forced removal, and forced assimilation.

We must not lighten the language to appease people's comfort. The truth must be told and acknowledgement must happen for healing to begin. Naming settler colonialism as a detrimental impact on Indigenous People and the land, water, and beings we all share space with.

Agencies, institutions, and EuroAmerican community members must reflect on the legacy that caused deep wounds that would deny our dignity and quality of life, and consider their future legacy toward stopping violence in all its forms against Indigenous and communities of color around the globe.

The Doctrine of Discovery, a 15th century papal decree set the directives of global imperialism to acquire lands and bodies as resources in the name of the Catholic Church in perpetuity. This directive also set the tone for Manifest Destiny which validated settler colonial claims to land no matter the cost as a directive from God himself as their divine right. European values of land use were imposed on Indigenous People in the Americas that denied the reciprocal relationships between Indigenous People, the land, waters, and beings (what is known as an interdependent ecosystem in the English language) that laid waste to everyone in the settler path to great fortunes, onward to what we now know as the global climate crises.

While I recognize that the South Park Blocks' (SPB) National Register historic nomination application has undergone some revisions, there are still many gaping holes in facts through the softening of language to protect white settlers and their descendants from accountability, thereby minimizing the settler and proceeding policy impact on Indigenous people then and now.

Some narrative description has been added to Section 8 that gives light background history to Native American tribes that lived in the area of what is now Portland and the SPB area, but fails to give value to the true "Indigenous cultural landscape" that acknowledges our enduring relationship to land, waters, and beings as part of our cultural and spiritual ways of being human in reciprocity with the environment.

Left out of the revised narrative are the Oregon settler relationships to removal of Alaska Natives from their families and homelands between 1880 and 1963; held as inmates of the Oregon Hospital for the Insane and Morningside Mental Hospital; now buried in Metro Heritage Cemeteries having been inherited from Multnomah County in the 1990s--not here to be "assimilated by Dr. Henry Waldo Coe" as noted on

page 22, but as an act of genocide to make way for settlers in Alaska to extract mineral and timber from the lands.

Dr. Coe, friend to racist and anti-Indigenous Presidents Lincoln and Roosevelt, and respected doctor of 19th century psychiatry of the time, donated several statues to the City of Portland, held Alaska Natives captive in the Morningside Hospital and buried them away from their families and ceremonies here in Portland *while* the South Park Blocks were being developed and Portland continued to grow as a city--an important point that cannot be ignored, even if the statues are removed.

It is noted on page 38 that Portland's rapid growth in the 1840s "partly fueled by the demand for food and lumber in the California goldfields" and yet, there is no mention of the long term impact of extracting resources from lands and ecosystems in Portland to support settler miners in California, who in turn were extracting land and minerals, and bodies through extermination from local tribes and communities in California.

Nor was mentioned the viscerally extracted removal of thousands of Pine, Fir, and White Oak trees in the Portland area and the SPB who would be witness to Indigenous lives precontact and to atrocities committed to make way for European homes, plants, and trees that are invasive in nature, choking out native species or lacking climate adaptation over the long term. Hence, giving Portland one of its nicknames, "Stumptown" which adorns t-shirt, postcards, and beer and coffee brands today.

Many mentions were made about the settler's dubious land claims and legal title to land allotments in Portland and the SPB, and yet this behavior is lauded as "Historical Integrity of the South Park Blocks". Do we not see the denial of Indigenous connection to land that goes beyond a mere presence at the time of settlement; we having been here thousands of years and our care for the land remarked in settler journals and newspapers, yet storied European founding settler's "ownership" of land cannot be validated by official papers held so dear and yet still their word taken as fact?

Recognizing that the State Historical Advisory Committee (SACHP) will likely submit this nomination to the National Register for Historic Places, moving forward, I would like to know how the SACHP, other historical commissions, and conservation organizations will be requiring nominations for historic status to include true community engagement with the Tribes and urban Indigenous communities whose home is Oregon, through consultation for however long the process takes and accepting of our stories as a valid Truth ("storywork" as Indigenous research methodology, Joann Archibald, 2008). Our stories, told by us and owned by us.

With the public recognition of the government to government relationships that the state of Oregon and the City of Portland acknowledges; the Tribal History Shared History K-12 curriculum having been developed by Oregon tribes that are rolling out in Oregon public schools as directed by the Oregon Department of Education; the Portland Urban Native community who are from over 380 nations; the recent appointment of US Representative Deb Haaland, Laguna Pueblo, as Secretary of the Department of the Interior, and quite possibly another Oregon tribal member to the Director of the National Parks Service position, it is time for the agencies, institutions, and communities in Oregon to deeply reflect on their legacy of violence and harm that created the positions of power they hold over how knowledge is produced, validated, and owned.

Precedent examples already exist within the National Park Service and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to protect Native American traditional cultural landscapes. Listening sessions through

authentic community engagement, holistic research methodologies that ground multiple standpoints, and inclusion of Indigenous values assessment tools are a good place to start.

This important process would create narratives to include the “Indigenous cultural landscape” in the application development, naming the multiple perspectives/experiences of those related to the site. An example of this is the Sand Creek Massacre designated as a National Historic Site and listed on the National Park Service website, that includes the oral stories of the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho descendents and admits to the planned atrocity to kill Native peoples there documented in military journals and newspaper accounts. Included in this designation are the cottonwood “witness trees” that were saplings at the time of the massacre and the protection of lands as sacred sites now in care of the tribes.

Indigenous resilience must be allowed to shine as we carry our traditions forward for our own healing and the thrivance of all our future generations. Youth and young adults want to know the truth because they want a future that reduces harm and creates harmony. It is our responsibility to work together to help them create a life affirming world for all people and our planet.

I encourage SACHP and conservation organizations to provide compensation to Indigenous facilitators to reflect on these legacies to form paths to accountability and the necessary healing between our communities.

What will be your next steps toward Indigenous equity?

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing how change will be implemented.

Thank you and
Gunalchéesh.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Renee Perry".

Sources

Archibald, J.-A. (2008). *Indigenous storywork: Educating the heart, mind, body, and spirit*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

National Park Service

<https://www.nps.gov/places/sand-creek-massacre-national-historic-site.htm>

<http://npshistory.com/publications/foundation-documents/sand-fd-overview.pdf>

Indigenous Cultural Landscapes

<https://www.nps.gov/cajo/learn/indigenous-cultural-landscapes.htm>

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation protecting Native American traditional cultural landscapes

<https://www.achp.gov/indian-tribes-and-native-hawaiians/traditional-cultural-landscapes>

Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association

Date: January 22, 2021

Subject: **Nomination of South Park Blocks, Portland Oregon to the National Register of Historic Places**

To: Chair and Members of the Oregon State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation

Via: Robert Olguin, SACHP Coordinator & National Register Program Director Oregon SHPO

From: Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association

Rod Merrick, AIA, Board President

The Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association has voted to join others endorsing the nomination of the South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places. These blocks are among the most historic in Portland and set an important precedent for the many similar green boulevards envisioned in the Olmstead Plan that add to the distinction of Portland as a city of great parks and neighborhoods. For over 150 years, and despite many changes around these blocks, they have offered a well preserved axis of calm and greenery and are among the most memorable in the city. The Nomination provides thorough documentation of the land donation, the development with axial rows of deciduous trees, the placement of public art, and the significant events that have occurred in the blocks over the decades.

The South Park Blocks are iconic and among the most well-loved places in Portland. They form a pedestrian mall that defines the north-south axis of the city, link the educational, cultural and commercial centers, provide respite from traffic, and include an extraordinary collection of a variety large deciduous trees that provide shade in the summer, color in the fall and spring, and sun in the winter. Their paver walkways, predominant green lawns and collection of sculptures make them an outstanding setting for walking, picnics, quiet contemplation and for any number of celebrations and events.

Our own neighborhood is defined by a comparable boulevard lined with a parallel arcade of linden trees that echo at a smaller scale the dignity, calm, color, environmentally beneficial, and place making characteristics of the Park Blocks.

We are concerned about the future of the Park Blocks. A master plan proposed for the South Park Blocks threatens to irreplaceably damage the historical character by transforming the blocks into a bicycle transportation corridor. This would be achieved by removing all trees along the western side of the park on most of the blocks, inserting evergreen trees here and there, and “activation” with the insertion of a two lane bike trail (redundant with the slow narrow streets flanking the blocks).

It is significant that this Nomination has been submitted by a coalition of citizen volunteers who, under the auspices of the Downtown Neighborhood Association, initiated and participated in the documentation process; yet another example of the essential nature of citizen participation in preserving Oregon history.

Recognition for these 12 blocks in the heart of a great Pacific Northwest city is long overdue. We appreciate the importance of your role in protecting Oregon History. Thank you.

C: Historic Landmark Commission, Kminor.phlc@gmail.com , Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov,
Brandon Spencer-Hartle <brandon.spencer@portlandoregon.gov>

From: [Christine Meadows](#)
To: [OLGUIN Robert * OPRD](#)
Subject: Nomination for history landmark
Date: Saturday, September 11, 2021 3:42:51 PM

September 10, 2021

To the Historic Landmark Commission,

I am writing to encourage you to consider making Portland's South Park Blocks an historic landmark. The expansive, open green space with a canopy of 5 rows of majestic elms has been visited and enjoyed by residents and tourists for over a century. As a native Portlander, this is one of the places I love most and where I take visitors to our city. As a former PSU student and now faculty member of Portland State University, my fondest memories of the downtown area begin with the beauty of this green space with the elms and their seasonal changing. The amphitheater near PSU that was added mid century is incredibly useful and loved by the community.

I was horrified and dismayed to hear about the Portland Park Bureau's plan to renovate this Portland landmark. It would be a tragedy and a great loss to Portland's history.

Please give this the nomination to make the South Park Blocks an historic landmark your full consideration.

Sincerely,

Christine Meadows
Emeritus Faculty
Portland State University

--

Christine Meadows
Professor of Voice
Portland State University
503-349-0835

From: rgrahm@aol.com
To: Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov; [Spencer-Hartle, Brandon](#); [OLGUIN Robert * OPRD](#)
Subject: Portland South Park Blocks Historic Nomination
Date: Thursday, September 16, 2021 10:02:11 PM

I write in support of this important historic nomination. Indeed, when I heard of this initiative I was amazed the park did not already have this status. As a downtown Portland resident I enjoy the beauty of this Portland treasure every day.

This urban oasis still has all its feature from it 1870s design and layout largely intact, most importantly the boundaries of all its twelve blocks, and the imposing alignment of its five columns of magnificent trees, a classic green pedestrian allee popular in Europe and America at the time. A few, modest mid-20th century alterations have deliberately respected and not altered its historic character. The park today very much reflects what Portland envisioned and created in the latter half of the 18th century, and definitely merits historic status.

Richard Rahm
1221 SW 10th Avenue, #1001
Portland, OR 97205

From: [Philip Gilbertson](#)
To: [Spencer-Hartle, Brandon](#); Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov; [OLGUIN Robert * OPRD](#)
Subject: Portland's South Park Blocks Preservation
Date: Wednesday, September 22, 2021 4:02:19 PM

Historic Landmark Commission and SHPO representatives,

I support the Portland South Park Blocks Historic Register nomination for many reasons, but foremost is its uniqueness among all of Portland's treasured parks: the only park that preserves the European style of formally aligned deciduous trees.

Honoring Portland's diverse heritage through its parks is wholly appropriate; open public spaces are fitting settings to honor our civic and cultural diversity. For many US cities, parks like South Park would populate many older neighborhoods. Remarkably, this is not the case for Portland. We have a singular example of this European style. Why would Portlanders wish to forfeit this uniqueness?

Let many of our city parks honor other cultural traditions—as does North Park with its delightful Asian elephant—to ensure recognition of our richly varied past and vibrant present. We must create new ways to celebrate different heritages for parks in Old Town, Stumptown, Albina, Jade town, etc. But why would we choose to lose our oldest park dedicated to a distinctive cultural legacy?

Philip Gilbertson
2221 SW First Ave, #1024
Portland, OR 97201
Member, Portland Downtown Neighborhood Association

Sent from my iPad

South Park Blocks Testimony for the Historic Landmark Commission
Monday, September 27, 2021 @ 2:45 – 4:45 PM
Agenda Item #3 | South Park Blocks National Register Nomination Review
Thomas Ray | 2211 SW 1st Ave., Unit 802 | Portland Oregon 97201
thomas-ray@comcast.net

I am Thomas Ray. I live downtown at 2211 SW 1st Avenue & Lincoln Street. The South Park Blocks have been “my park” to 6 generations of family. My great-grandfather lived at SW 10th and Hall. My grandmother schooled here. My parents retired by this park, as did I. My daughter lived at the south end of the park, and now I play with my grandchildren in “our park”. The continuity of the South Park Blocks is a family touchstone for spiritual and nostalgic reunion, and for multi-generational congregation.

I wish to address Criteria C, the landscape architecture, - and specifically the 5 rows of deciduous trees, axially aligned, over the length of 12 contiguous blocks, that unify the park. William Hawkins, FAIA aptly described the park as a “simple cathedral of deciduous trees with a carpet of grass below”. The restrained, elegant canopy of limbs and leaves, over each aisle or arcade, mirror a sanctuary nave, drawing visitors into the park’s spiritual aura of nature.

Each tree, like a church column, not only supports the leafy canopy, but raises our spirit upward. As each column is essential to a temple, each tree is essential to this canopy, and the viewsheds they frame along the park’s full length.

Deciduous broadleaf trees create a seasonal palette of patterns, filtering spectrums of colored light that dazzle our eyes, and the grass below. The canopy leaves are the ‘stained glass windows’ of this sanctuary, suffusing the park in its subtle calming atmosphere. Welcome shade in summer, joyous color in autumn, warming sun in winter, and rejuvenating greens in spring, the design brings nature’s promises throughout the year. This is a true sanctuary, a place “set aside from the rest”, to be kept free from the intrusive cacophony and turmoil of the city.

Like a cathedral, the park provides refuge from city hardscapes. This urban oasis restores our mental and physical health. Each person brings their own spiritual and physical activation to the park, and each finds it personally fulfilled. It does not require prescribed activation by others. The multitude of promenades offer individual choices, each drawing you into the embracing ambiance.

Louis Pfunder’s inspired vision reached farther than 5 rows of trees and grass. Like the master builders of medieval cathedrals, the vision was not to be realized fully in his lifetime, but was for the many generations yet to come (like those in my family). That vision, and the timeless, restorative experience it provides, is what we seek to preserve.

From: [Stephen Kafoury](#)
To: [Spencer-Hartle, Brandon](#); hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov; [OLGUIN Robert * OPRD](#)
Subject: South Park Blocks Historical Designation
Date: Friday, September 17, 2021 8:37:08 AM

I have had my office at the corner of SW Madison and 6th since 1985. Being close to the South Park Blocks has been a blessing for me. I have walked beneath the magnificent trees, sat at the benches, and bathed in the splendor and quiet. How fortunate we Portlanders are to have had forefathers with the vision long ago to set aside these blocks for future generations, knowing that the city was destined to grow around them.

Now we have the challenge of designating this park as historical so that the designs Portland's early leaders envisioned can be preserved. It is imperative that the historical features that define this wondrous area can be spelled out in specific detail, and preserved for generations to come.

There will always be those who think they can improve on this legacy, attempting to alter the characteristics to fit the fashions and fads of particular times. To "update" and "activate" the park. Granting historical designation will help fend off these folks who, while well-meaning, would over the years destroy the values that have kept this unique treasure so artfully designed over a hundred years ago, but which still enrich our lives today.

Thank you for assisting the effort to obtain this designation. Our children and grandchildren will thank you,
Stephen

Stephen Kafoury
1025 NW Couch, Unit 610
Portland, OR 97209
(503)709-2850 (cell)
Preferred pronoun: Sir

From: [Lisa Marsh](#)
To: [OLGUIN Robert * OPRD](#)
Subject: South Park Blocks Plea
Date: Monday, September 13, 2021 12:04:37 PM

To the Historic Landmark Commission:

I am writing to urge you to consider making Portland's South Park Blocks an historic landmark. As a former PSU student and now faculty member of Portland State University, I have so many vibrant memories of relaxing in this green space and feeling the peace and quiet of these majestic trees. The amphitheater near PSU serves as a meeting place and music space for PSU students and the broader community. Please don't let the Portland Park Bureau ruin this beautiful space by paving it over and removing the trees. That would be an irreversible tragedy.

Please consider my strong plea to save our South Park Blocks by making this an historic landmark!

Sincerely,

Lisa Marsh
Director Coordinate Movement Program
Portland State University

From: [Karen Fletcher](#)
To: [Spencer-Hartle, Brandon](#); Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov; [OLGUIN Robert * OPRD](#)
Subject: South Park Blocks Testimony
Date: Saturday, September 18, 2021 12:39:08 PM

Hello friends,

I moved to Portland in 2016 and love the city. The Park Blocks are a huge part of why Portland is such a special place, with its majestic trees and spaces for citizens to gather.

It is my understanding that this park was first created for public use in 1877, and has seen many changes throughout the years. Fortunately for all of us, these changes considered the public views the park affords, and respect the original formal and linear design. The park is a designed historic landscape and has the distinctive characteristics of its type, period of construction, and method of construction.

The new, improved nomination of the South Park Blocks is being presented to the Historic Landmark Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office and I sure do hope that it receives designation as an important historic landmark and living space for our city. Thank you for your consideration.

Karen Fletcher
5040 SE Henry Street
Portland OR 97206

From: [Tom Neilsen](#)
To: [OLGUIN Robert * OPRD](#)
Subject: Support of South Park Blocks Historic Nomination
Date: Saturday, September 18, 2021 2:24:21 PM

September 20, 2021

To: The Historic Landmarks Commission

I am writing in support of the South Park Blocks Historic Nomination.

From Portland's earliest history the South Park blocks have provided residents an urban oasis and opportunity to enjoy the beauties of nature through all four seasons. As the city has grown and urban intensity increased the South Park Blocks have become even more critically important. The original design and layout of the South Park Blocks are just as beautiful today as they were first envisioned by Daniel Lowndale in 1852. The character defining features of the park including its continuous overarching canopy of mature deciduous trees creates a calming balance to the surrounding urban intensity.

Personally, I walk in the South Park Blocks every day and am thankful that the original vision, planning and design of this urban treasure has been maintained and reinforced. By approving the South Park Blocks Historic Nomination the commission will assure future generations continue to have use of this critical civic asset.

Tom Neilsen

1221 SW 10th Ave #1604, PDX 97205

TESTIMONY; FOR THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

Good Afternoon, my name is Shirley Rackner and I have lived in Portland for 55 years and have seen the South Park Blocks as Portland's miniature Central Park. Both an oasis in the middle of a busy city, both beautiful, both historic and iconic. One entered on the National Register of Historic Places and one waiting for its deserved place on the registry.

What is History if not the telling a story of times past whether it is a person or a Park

I have 87 years of personal history, I have experienced years filled with civil unrest, political upheaval, and decisions that destroyed the past, I have seen ever changing values and changing life styles but basic values remain integrity truthfulness, honesty, inclusiveness, and acknowledging past mistakes and correcting the situation.

And so too it is with the South Park Blocks, its story begin even before my story began.

In 1877 the spb recieved a stylish prominode designed for the popular leisurely strolls of that era . Within its layers of history there have been changes to

accommodate this ever growing City. The Park has its own social history marches, sit-ins and protests . And sweet moments when Portlanders comes together for weddings, picnics and graduations. As the layers are peeled away mistakes may be revealed and acknowledged and can be corrected. Through all of this the basic values of the South Park Blocks remain. I note, it maintains the integrity of its original design, its remains true to its purpose..... To be an active, multi purpose park, a welcoming park, and an oasis of green in the middle of downtown. And its primary truth Is its beauty

This a park that defies time and its history is part of my story andthe people of Portland. The acceptance of this nomination will preserve and protect this historic designed landscape that we call the South Park Blocks and its story will continue to be told..

Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association

Date: January 22, 2021

Subject: **Nomination of South Park Blocks, Portland Oregon to the National Register of Historic Places**

To: Chair and Members of the Oregon State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation

Via: Robert Olguin, Robert.olguin@oregon.gov

SACHP Coordinator & National Register Program Director Oregon SHPO

From: Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association

Rod Merrick, AIA, Board President

The Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association has voted to join others endorsing the nomination of the South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places. These blocks are among the most historic in Portland and set an important precedent for the many similar green boulevards envisioned in the Olmstead Plan that add to the distinction of Portland as a city of great parks and neighborhoods. For over 150 years, and despite many changes around these blocks, they have offered a well preserved axis of calm and greenery and are among the most memorable in the city. The Nomination provides thorough documentation of the land donation, the development with axial rows of deciduous trees, the placement of public art, and the significant events that have occurred in the blocks over the decades.

The South Park Blocks are iconic and among the most well-loved places in Portland. They form a pedestrian mall that defines the north-south axis of the city, link the educational, cultural and commercial centers, provide respite from traffic, and include an extraordinary collection of a variety large deciduous trees that provide shade in the summer, color in the fall and spring, and sun in the winter. Their paver walkways, predominant green lawns and collection of sculptures make them an outstanding setting for walking, picnics, quiet contemplation and for any number of celebrations and events.

Our own neighborhood is defined by a comparable boulevard lined with a parallel arcade of linden trees that echo at a smaller scale the dignity, calm, color, environmentally beneficial, and place making characteristics of the Park Blocks.

We are concerned about the future of the Park Blocks. A master plan proposed for the South Park Blocks threatens to irreplaceably damage the historical character by transforming the blocks into a bicycle transportation corridor. This would be achieved by removing all trees along the western side of the park on most of the blocks, inserting evergreen trees here and there, and "activation" with the insertion of a two lane bike trail (redundant with the slow narrow streets flanking the blocks).

It is significant that this Nomination has been submitted by a coalition of citizen volunteers who, under the auspices of the Downtown Neighborhood Association, initiated and participated in the documentation process; yet another example of the essential nature of citizen participation in preserving Oregon history.

Recognition for these 12 blocks in the heart of a great Pacific Northwest city is long overdue. We appreciate the importance of your role in protecting Oregon History. Thank you.

C: Historic Landmark Commission, kminor.phlc@gmail.com , Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov,
Brandon Spencer-Hartle <brandon.spencer@portlandoregon.gov>



Mr. Gary S. Hartshorn
2211 SW 1st Ave Unit G30
Portland, OR 97201-5044

garyshartshorn@
gmail.com

503-224-5172

Mr. Robert Olguin
National Register Program Director
125 Summer St. NE Suite C
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I am a forest ecologist and appreciate natural forest as well as city parks that are appreciated for their environmental aesthetic as well as services. The Portland South Parks Blocks should be preserved because of their value as a respite in the downtown of Portland.

Please see that this special area is protected in perpetuity (there may be an element of protection that includes Native Americans, for).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gary S. Hartshorn

JAN. 11, 2021

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE NOMINATION OF THE SOUTH
PARK BLOCKS FOR PLACEMENT ON THE NATIONAL
REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES.

DEAR MR. OLAVIN,

I WRITE YOU TO SUPPORT THE NOMINATION OF
THE SOUTH PARK BLOCKS, MULTNOMAH COUNTY,
PORTLAND, OREGON FOR PLACEMENT ON THE NATIONAL
REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES. THE SOUTH PARK BLOCKS
REMAINS ONE OF PORTLAND'S MOST DISTINCTIVE, VALUED,
AND SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC OPEN SPACES. IT HAS
ENDURED AS THE CENTERPIECE FOR THE CITY'S
EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS.

' OVER THE YEARS WE HAVE ENJOYED
THE BEAUTY OF THE SOUTH PARK BLOCKS WITH
OUR CHILDREN AND NOW OUR GRAND CHILDREN.
WE ENJOY THE FARMER'S MARKETS AND
THE WONDERFUL ART SHOWS. WE MEET
FRIENDS THERE FREQUENTLY BEFORE DINING
OUT OR ATTEND THE "POPS" NEARBY. IT'S
A WONDERFUL PLACE FOR AN AFTERNOON
STROLL—EVEN ON A "GREY DAY"!

PLEASE—FOLLOW THROUGH WITH THIS
NOMINATION FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF
HISTORIC PLACES—!

SINCERELY—

GERALD F. KELLY

2309 S.W. 1ST AVE #2144

PORTLAND, OR 97201

503-248-6901 gerrykellyrx@hotmail.com

January 12, 2021

Robert Olguin
National Register Program Director
State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer Street NE, Suite C
Salem, Or 97301

Subject: Letter of support for the nomination of the South Park Blocks,
Multnomah County, Portland, OR to the National Register of Historic Places.

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I write to you to support the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The South Park Blocks remain one of Portland's most valued and significant historic open spaces.

I know it has endured as the centerpiece for the city's educational and cultural institutions as I, a native Portlander, attended *Portland State Extension School* when it received its 4 year accreditation and as a majorette in the band we marched around the South Park Blocks to let the city know they now had a 4 year college downtown. At that time I attended my art classes at the Portland Art Museum and also enjoyed utilizing the beautiful space.

Now as a resident of a condo in town and a short walk to the Park Blocks, my husband and I truly enjoy the varied venues that are able to occur in the beautiful space that our 1852 pioneers/forefathers provided for us, The South Park Blocks are a true treasure that must be protected!

Yours truly,



Joyce Kelly

2309 SW 1st Avenue, Suite 2144
Portland, Or 97201
joygerry@comcast.net

cc: Portland Historic Landmark Commission

January 9, 2021

Greetings:

It has come to my attention that a dedicated and forward-thinking group is working hard to have Portland's South Park Blocks listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

To that end, The Downtown Neighborhood Association has prepared a one hundred page nomination. It is the culmination of ten month's intense research and writing.

This letter is in support of their nomination. I urge both the State Advisory Committee and the Portland Landmark Commission to do likewise.

Through out my adult life, downtown Portland has been a consistent recreational lure. In recent years, I have been smitten with the colors, textures, sounds, aromas and variety at the PSU Farmer's Market. I have always relished productions at the Schnitz and appreciated its nearby restaurants. My consistent preference is to shop at the downtown Nordstrom. I can only wish that I prioritized more visits to the Art Museum.

Whether lingering or rushing, I have always taken the lovely Park Blocks for granted — until now.

I realize how much I value the Park Blocks' pleasing composition of outdoor space. Certainly their creators were trained and talented artists whose work has had lasting significance. I also realize that it is the trees that are of special importance to me.

The Tall Elegant Trees.

Aside from beauty, their canopy imparts a sense of enclosure and emotional security. As a practical matter, they create visual interest, assist in soil stabilization, improve air quality, provide shade, reduce noise levels, improve air quality and supply habitats.

I want this very important part of my city to be preserved and protected. The Portland Park Blocks are truly worthy of being designated as a national historic treasure!

With thanks for your consideration and with my sincerity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen Blitz", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Karen Blitz . 7580 SW Cedar Street . Portland, OR 97225 karenblitz@gmail.com



lynnhartshorn@hotmail.com

National Register Program Director
715 Summer St. NE Suite C
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Mr. Olguin,

This is a letter in support of the
Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Portland,
Multnomah Co. OR to the National Register
of Historic Places.

Please place my name among those who
want to preserve & protect this downtown Port-
land area, especially as this area has
a history beyond the N-S. Parks area - and
probably Native American Heritage.

Let's preserve the trees, the open spaces
and future opportunities.

Sincerely,

Lynne Hartshorn
retired



1221 SW 10th Avenue
Unit 505
Portland, Oregon 97205

January 11, 2021

Robert Olguin
Director, National Register Program
State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer Street NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I strongly support nominating Portland's South Park Blocks for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Public parks enable much needed rest and respite in our dense urban environment. The South Park Blocks most certainly provides that essential oasis, and must continue to do so. These blocks are also a major part of the birthright of Portland. Like a grand historic building, it has a very special design envisioned by Louis Gustav Pfunder, a world-renowned horticulturalist and landscape architect of public spaces in Europe and of the famous parks of New York City and San Francisco. He made Portland his home; his legacy is imbued in the park. With its overarching deciduous-tree canopies and long graceful lanes, the South Park Blocks is a veritable cathedral in the very heart of Portland. Those magnificent aligned trees, as intended by Louis Pfunder, provide welcome shade during the summer and let in light during the darkness of winter.

With a growing population, open spaces will come under increasing pressure to be repurposed, losing sight of their histories. The South Park Blocks must be identified on the National Register for its protection as a historic resource, and for the protection of its trees, for the people of Portland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Wright". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" and last name "Wright" clearly distinguishable.

Robert Wright
(503) 222-6874
wright-stuff@comcast.net

cc: Portland Historic Landmarks Commission

January 11, 2021

Mr. Robert Olguin
National Register Program Director
State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer Street NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Nomination of the Portland South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places


Dear Mr. Olguin:

I am writing to you at the request of a friend who brought this issue to my attention. With him, I support the nomination of the South Park Blocks in Portland (Multnomah County) to the National Register of Historic Places.

This soothing island in the center of our city has long existed as the centerpiece for Portland's educational (Portland State University) and cultural (Art Museum, Historical Museum, musical and theater venues) institutions. It is a place of gathering for every sector of our varied society, hosting a thriving Saturday market, soup kitchens, political discourse, graduations, respite and simple walks through lovely, tree-shaded walkways that go on for block after block.

The thought that this iconic landscape could be destroyed in the future without adequate protection by all of us today is distressing. Please protect this space, the true heart of our city.

Thank you for listening,



Roberta Ruimy
2309 SW 1st Ave.
Apt. 1843
Portland, OR 97201

From: [Will Bruder](#)
To: [ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD](#)
Subject: Portland South Park Blocks and the National Register of Historic Places
Date: Wednesday, January 27, 2021 2:33:07 PM
Attachments: [PastedGraphic-1.png](#)

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I write to support the nomination of the South Park Blocks placement on the National Register of Historic Places.

The most beloved aspects of South Park Blocks are the facts that these blocks are deeply rooted in the history of Portland, an early example of Portlander's love of and support for parks throughout our 'city in a park'. Over time cultural, religious, and civic institutions as well as commemorative elements have gathered at its edges and on its grounds. All who pass by, walk through or take pause in the South Park Blocks have enjoyed the glorious canopy of mature trees and plantings in their seasonal cycles over many years.

Indeed, this unique and historic urban park offers lessons that seemingly come straight out of a 'best practices' textbook for urban planners and elected officials. The South Park Blocks honor the pedestrian user by slowing traffic and offering crosswalks and streetcar access. They provide 'a breath of fresh air' in a dense city.

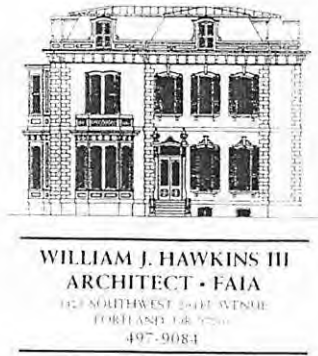
Anchored to the north by the Arlington Club and to the south by a highly regarded urban university, PSU, and the world-famous Portland Farmers' Market, the South Park Blocks are both historic and contemporary points of pride.

Elevation to the National Register of Historic Places is clearly warranted. I look forward to celebrating with you, your colleagues, and fellow Portlanders this designation.

Sincerely,

Will Bruder, FAIA
President / Lead Design Architect
Will Bruder Architects
111 SW Harrison St. 19D, Portland, OR 97201
will.bruder@willbruderarchitects.com
602.312.7399





Robert Olguin
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
State Historic Preservation Officer
725 Summer Street, N.E. Suite C,
Salem, Oregon 97301-1002

January 8, 2021

Dear Mr. Olguin,

This letter is in hearty support of the nomination of one of Portland's most historic parks, The South Park Blocks, for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It is one of three parks which go back to the year Portland was first named (1845) and when Daniel Lownsdale first arrived in the City. By 1848, Lownsdale had purchased his claim, and by 1850 the famous "Lownsdale" map was drawn, showing his intention of donating three public parks (Lownsdale, Chapman and the South Park Blocks) for the new City. The South Park Blocks remain a giant salute to the foresight of Daniel Lownsdale, and has proved to be one of its most beautiful, being now over one-hundred seventy years old and still boasting many of its original and magnificent trees.

Great landscapes make Portland a City which treasures its parks. The City has received awards for its park system, all begun when this park was donated "for the pleasure of all its citizens."

Sincerely Yours,

William J. Hawkins, III FAIA

From: [Marji Newman](#)
To: [ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram](#) * [OPRD](#); [OLGUIN Robert](#) * [OPRD](#)
Subject: South Park Blocks, Portland OR, Multnomah County
Date: Monday, January 18, 2021 11:13:17 AM

18 January 2021

RE: Opposition to nomination of South Park Blocks, Multnomah County, Portland OR to National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I write in opposition to the nomination to place South Park Blocks (SPB) on the National Register of Historic Places

Through the last 15 years of living near, volunteering in gardening activities, dog walking, and simply being in the park, I am grateful and humbled by its presence. Like all the well intentioned people who write to you on this matter, I want the park preserved and well care for now and for the future.

A Master Plan for the South Park Blocks was initiated 2019 by Portland Parks and Recreation and due to be completed soon. This process addresses the concerns expressed by the group urgently seeking historic designation before the Master Plan completion. The better pathway is that historical designation be in conjunction with the Master Plan for the South Park Blocks, not in competition.

The Portland riots in the summer of 2020 left behind destruction and defacing of historical elements of the park. The 1928 Lincoln statue and the 1922 Roosevelt 'Rough Rider' statue were pulled down by a mob with chains and damaged, as well as bench destruction and continuous graffiti. I have not heard if the statues will be repaired or returned. The park is now an ongoing site for homeless feeds, additional garbage, cigarette butts, dog waste, and requires increased city services. The stately elms are elderly and falling on a regular basis. In other words, political, economic, and cultural events impact the park in a way unimagined in 1877. historical designation alone cannot address all the impending needs. Completing the master plan process is the way forward. The beauty and historical character of the SPB basic design will endure best and meet the needs of a changing population through thoughtful and resourceful professional planners along with community representatives.

Historical designation before completion of the Master Plan process is surely not an emergency. To pre-empt the master plan in this way could possibly impact the Central City 2035 plans for a "Green Loop" that would pass along the SPB and connect downtown's West End with the middle of the Central Eastside. Therefore, with all due respect, I ask you to pause this historical designation of the South Park Blocks for now.

Sincerely,
Marjorie Newman
1221 SW 10th Ave unit 1806
Portland, OR 97205
marjid447@gmail.com

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Aaron Choate <aaronnchoate@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 3, 2021 12:00 PM
To: Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov; ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: We support the Portland South Park Blocks historic place designation

To Whom It May Concern:

My family and I support the Portland South Park Blocks historic place designation! With this we also advocate for further removal of private automobile parking along those streets and closure of private car traffic along the park blocks in favor of more walking and active transit-oriented uses. This would be both in keeping with the original 1877 design of the park blocks, as well as allow for future-focused solutions to downtown / university district issues exacerbated by climate change and a growing city. Thank you.

Aaron, Kirsten, Sierra, and Anton Choate
4723 SE Haig Street
Portland, Oregon 97206

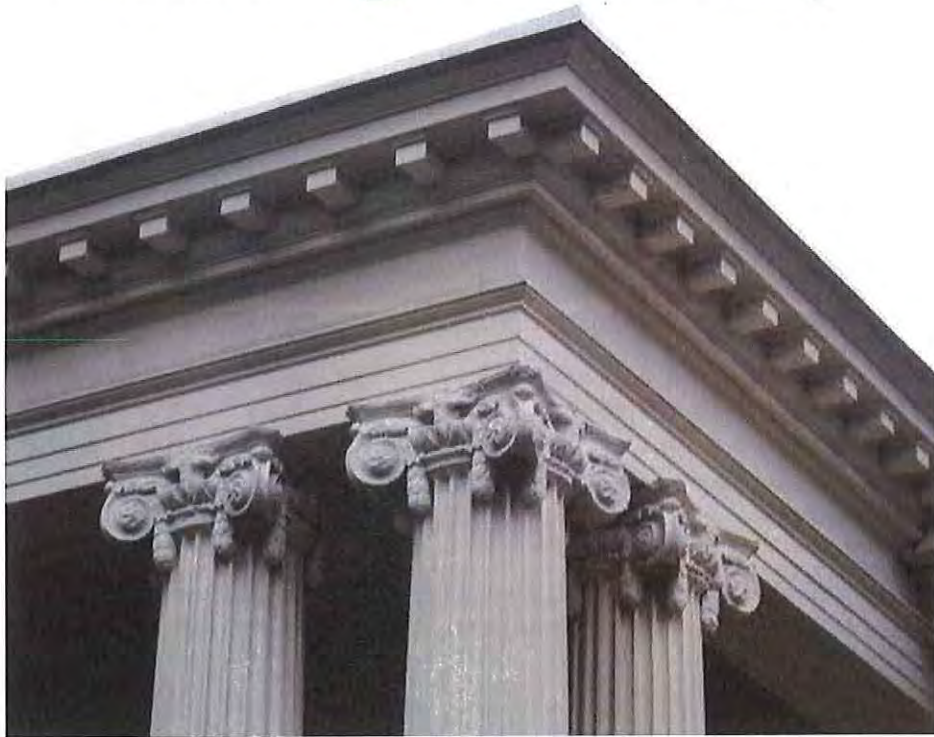
<https://buildingonhistory.blogspot.com/2021/01/help-honor-south-park-blocks.html>

https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/OH/Documents/OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks.pdf

More

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Building on History



Great cities respect their architectural history as they build their futures. In Portland, Oregon, we need to renovate, restore and preserve our vintage buildings and public spaces to be a great city.

Submit

Saturday, January 2, 2021

Help Honor the South Park Blocks



(National Register Nomination Form, South Park Blocks)

After 10 months of intense research and writing by a small cadre of volunteers, a nomination aimed at listing the South Park Blocks on the National Register of Historic Places has achieved its first major milestone.

Robert Olguin, Oregon's state historic preservation officer, has accepted the 100-page nomination from the Downtown Neighborhood Association for consideration by the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation in February.

If supported by the state committee and by the Portland Landmarks Commission, the nomination would be sent to the U.S. Department of Interior for final consideration and probable listing on the National Register.

"This park is such an obvious landmark for Portland, it is long overdue to correct an obvious oversight," said Story Swett, a Portland architect who played a major role in preparing the nomination form. "A formal designation may help motivate retention of this valuable public space."

Given its lengthy history and beloved green space in Portland's dense urban heart, one would think that approval would be both a slam dunk and a major victory for the preservation community. Comments from citizens who love the blocks, using addresses listed below, could prove helpful.

The 12 blocks, extending from S.W. Salmon to Jackson Streets between S.W. Park East and S.W. Park Avenue West are among the oldest public spaces in Portland. They were donated by pioneer entrepreneur Daniel Lowndale in 1852, and were landscaped in 1877 under the direction of horticulturalist Louis Pfunder. Pfunder's basic design, still clearly evident on many of the blocks today, included five parallel rows of deciduous trees - mostly elms - above a carpet of grass and flower beds.

Although the Portland Bureau of Parks had recommended a national listing for the South Parks Blocks on a few occasions in the past, the bureau for whatever reasons never followed through. The Downtown Neighborhood Association over a year ago began discussions that led to the nomination effort.

The detailed nomination form includes extensive discussion about the history of Portland parks, the role of the South Park Blocks in civic life, and the significance of Pfunder's landscape design. Swett and Brooke Best, a historic resources consultant, were the primary writers, with research assistance from Roberta Cation and Leslie Hutchinson. Research was hampered at times by the closure of libraries during the pandemic.

Citizens have until Jan. 15 to submit comments in advance of the State Advisory Committee's hearing. Comments can be submitted by mail to:

Robert Olguin

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

State Historic Preservation Office

725 Summer Street NE, Suite C

Salem, OR 97301

or by email at:

ORSHPO.NationalRegisterProgram@oregon.gov

Comments to the Portland Landmarks Commission can be sent to:

Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov



(National Register Nomination Form, South Park Blocks)

Over its many decades, the South Park Blocks have attracted Portland State University, several cultural institutions, churches and high-rise apartments as surrounding neighbors. One of the park's primary functions has been to provide quiet green space for contemplation, walking, picnics and small gatherings.

"The South Park Blocks (as a single park) is defined by its restrained simplicity and simple, direct material palette," the nomination states. "Pfunder's original design intent is visible in the promenade plan and axial planting layout, featuring a unifying canopy of mature, deciduous trees."

"Another defining characteristic of the park blocks is the paved plaza areas that provide a place for communal gathering and private contemplation. Public monuments, artwork, plaques and memorials, and bench seating have been added over the years."

Several cross streets toward the southern end of the park have been closed to vehicles, making that end of the park a public open space for the PSU campus. Blocks at both ends of the park are used from time to time for farmers' markets.

The nomination notes that many small changes have occurred over the years. Regardless, "Overall, the South Park Blocks retains its original shape, much of its historic pedestrian circulation pattern, significant public monuments and sculptures, as well as its major character-defining features. The park's integrity of materials and workmanship have been slightly diminished, due to the addition of non-historic features (including tight standards, cruciform walkways, park furniture and public art) on some blocks."

Here are several reasons why Portlanders love the South Park Blocks. If you support the National Register Nomination, select some that are important to you to include in your comments.

- Beauty of the towering arches of mature trees
- Green spaces for quiet in the midst of the big city
- Shade in the summer; more sunlight in the winter; vivid colors in the fall
- A place for meeting friends
- Farmers markets
- Seasonal gardens and flowers
- Appreciation of public art
- Students studying in the grass
- Graduation ceremonies
- Young children playing

- Long promenade walks on separated paths with long views,
- Quiet mid-day lunch spots

You can read the entire nomination form here:

https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/OH/Documents/OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks.pdf

at January 02, 2021

2 comments:



JackinPort January 2, 2021 at 10:06 PM

Back in June we learned through this blog that the City's Dept of Parks was considering making changes to the Park Blocks to "enhance it", which would result in the removal of up to 20% of the existing tree cover and the creation of paved plazas and roofed structures (which somehow were not "buildings"). I commented here and also to the City that I thought these "improvements" were a terrible idea: "This is a solution in search of a problem. This plan will look dated in 5-10 years. Keep the Park Blocks as they are now. They will always be classic". I'm wondering where the City is now with these Park Block changes? I am thinking that if the proposed historic listing here shows broad citizen support, then the City will back off their proposed changes. Or am I being naive to expect the City to do the sensible thing?

[Reply](#)



buildingonhistory January 3, 2021 at 9:48 AM

The gossip I've heard -- and it is purely gossip -- is that Parks Commissioner Amanda Fritz did not like the plan. She has left the council and parks now goes to Carmen Rubio. The citizens' advisory committee has been "dark" for some time now. I am curious to learn the results of the internet poll they did about the plan. I suspect that public comment was heavily against making the proposed changes. It might take Rubio awhile to figure things out. Given the trauma the city has been going through, I can't believe that the proposed plan carries much weight as a priority.

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What's next for Lloyd Center?

What traditionally is the busiest season of the year for retailers likely will be the death rattle for the Lloyd Center, the huge shopping...

Albertina Kerr Nursery

The sadness here is not about the loss of a fine old building. The building will survive. The sadness is about loss of its pleasant and me...

From: [Amie Fennah](#)
To: [ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram](#) * OPRD; hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov; Kminor.phlc@gmail.com
Subject: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County, Portland OR to the National Register of Historic Places
Date: Saturday, January 16, 2021 12:45:51 PM
Importance: High

Hi Mr. Olguin~

I write to you in an effort to vehemently support the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places.

While the South Park Blocks remains one of Portland's most distinctive, valued, and significant historic open spaces, it has endured as the centerpiece for the city's educational and cultural institutions. As a Portland born resident of this city, it is my hope that a designation of this magnitude comes to fruition. It is places like the South Park Blocks that make Portland a special place to live.

After attending PSU, I moved out of my parent's house into a beautiful vintage apartment building on the park blocks, Jeanne Manor. Located on the corner of SW Park & Clay St. and built in 1931, it was a unique and charming place to be. The apartment I shared with my sister overlooked the park blocks and I eventually moved to a 1 bedroom on the 7th floor with my fiancé (now husband of 25+ years). I loved that apartment for several reasons but most of all, it was the view out the windows. The green canopy of foliage offered me much serenity in an otherwise busy city. Also, my kitty loved spending many hours in the windows watching the varied birds and wildlife. It was especially gorgeous during the autumn season and snowfalls in winter.

The park has always provided an endless parade of people and pet watching opportunities as well as community entertainment year round. Spring and Summer would bring the Art Walk and Farmers Market, and the Oregon Ballet open air performances. Fall would bring the students, photographers and the crisp crunch of leaves and vibrant fall colors. And of course, winter...specialty coffee drinks and with the leaves off all the trees, a great view of the city lights at night!

These South Park Blocks are the truest heart of our city one could find and should easily be designated to become one of Oregon's next places to join the illustrious list of landmarks on the National Register of Historic Places.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope to hear of the outcome soon!

Kindest regards,

Amie

Valuing people, not just homes!

Amie Fennah, Realtor
Keller Williams Realty Portland Premiere
7504 SW Bridgeport Road
Portland, OR 97224

Cell 503.706.1278
Office 503.597.2444

Fax 503.336.7431

amiefennah@gmail.com

Licensed Broker in the State of Oregon

Architectural HERITAGE CENTER

June 25, 2020

Dear Keeper,

The Architectural Heritage Center/Bosco-Milligan Foundation urges you to include the South Park Blocks in Portland Oregon on the National Register of Historic Places. The mission of the AHC is to “inspire people to conserve the art, craft, and context of historic buildings and places to promote our cultural heritage as a vital element of livable, sustainable, communities.” The South Park Blocks certainly qualifies as one of Portland’s earliest public places that has maintained much of its character for 150 years. It is therefore clearly eligible for a place on the National Register.

We believe that the South Park Blocks should be eligible for inclusion on the National Register under two of the criteria for listing:

1. Criterion A: Community Planning and Development + Recreation and Culture
2. Criterion C: Distinctive Landscape Entity/Landscape Architecture

Additionally, the South Park Blocks may be eligible under Criterion D for its potential to yield information important to pre-contact history.

The South Park Blocks appear in very early mid-1800 Portland maps. In the mid-1800s, the evergreens were cleared from the Portland townsite. In the 1870s, the park blocks were planted with a simple palate of *deciduous* trees (predominantly Lombardy poplars and American elms) in five axially aligned rows. The park’s design and planting scheme was the work of Louis Pfunder, a European-born and trained horticulturalist and master gardener who worked briefly on two large American parks, New York’s Central Park and San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park. This is the only Portland park originally designed to provide an urban rest and long promenades. It is distinctly derivative of the formal, axial European design principles that Pfunder brought with him and has been described as “a simple cathedral of deciduous trees with a carpet of grass below.”

As an entity, it is a resilient space that has maintained this restrained character until the present day. Some changes have occurred, but miraculously very few and none that have altered the original design. Defining characteristics include:

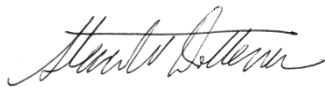
- Open Space – Flexible & Adaptive – For a variety of both restful and active uses
- Deciduous Trees in five axial rows
- Restrained Simplicity
- Defined Boundaries

Bosco-Milligan Foundation/Architectural Heritage Center
701 SE Grand Ave. Portland, OR 97214 Tel. 503-231-7264
info@visitahc.org www.visitahc.org

The significant additions over the years have included commemorative statuary, the creation of a “campus” for Portland State University by closing the adjacent park streets, and weekly public farmer’s markets, among other events. All of these changes have maintained and reinforced the primary design characteristics of the park space listed above. Inclusion on the National Register will help to insure that the South Park Blocks and their defining historical characteristics are recognized and maintained in that larger scheme.

The South Park Blocks remain one of Portland's most distinctive, valued, precious and significant historic open spaces. It has endured as the centerpiece for the city's educational and cultural institutions and continues to tell the story of its association with significant recreational, cultural, political, and landscape trends in Portland’s history.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Steve Dotterer".

Steve Dotterer
President

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Stephanie Whitlock".

Stephanie Whitlock
Executive Director

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: B Brady <auntibar1@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 8, 2021 9:04 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: The South Park Blocks in Portland

I learned that the South Park Blocks have been suggested for inclusion in the National Registry. The importance of this should not be underestimated. With so much of the city of Portland torn up and in tatters, full of plywood, chain link fences and graffiti, it would be somewhat reassuring to know that in the future, there will be one area that will be left in preservation of its history, despite its current destruction.

For me, it's the trees in particular that need to be preserved. Fortunately, the renegades and rioters haven't attacked the trees yet, as the value is great, and they are irreplaceable in one lifetime. Please do the right thing, and add the South Park Blocks to the National Registry. The location, and the many assets including roses, statues, walking paths, benches, grass, is one of the best and most appreciated that the city has to offer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Brady
Downtown Resident

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Bob Clay <bclayplanner@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 2, 2021 4:39 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Cc: Leslie & Tim Hutchinson; Val Ballestrem, AHC; Steve Dotterer
Subject: Support for Portland South Park Blocks Proposed NRHP Designation

To Robert Olguin, Director of Oregon SHPO:

I am writing to urge the approval the NRHP Nomination of the Portland South Park Blocks.
There is no question that the Park Blocks are worthy of nomination for all the reasons provided in the nomination.

I am very familiar with the Park Blocks and its many benefits to the City of Portland and downtown neighborhood. As a 27-year former City of Portland Chief Planner/Supervising Planner I participated in the designation of the Park Blocks as an urban renewal district and directed housing programs to create a residential neighborhood that solidified the character of the blocks.

Upon retirement in 2010 I began leading tours of the Park Blocks as a volunteer docent for the Architectural Heritage Center. Both experiences convince me and the many people I have led and worked with that the South Park Blocks is meritorious of NRHP Designation.

I urge your favorable action.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Clay, AICP

2623 NW Savier Street
Portland, Oregon 97210

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: rmgelpke <rmgelpke@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, January 10, 2021 6:11 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County, Portland, OR to the National Registry of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I write to support the Nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The South Park Blocks remains one of Portland's most distinctive, valued, and historic open spaces. It has endured as the centerpiece for the city's educational and cultural institutions.

During periods of pandemic, domestic discord, and political upset, we are vividly reminded that we need to aggressively support and protect the very core values, institutions, landmarks, and fabric of our definitional basis. We simply can't afford to cast aside the touch points and references that give merit and boundary to our sense of normality, order, and historical connectivity.

South Park Blocks in its original beautifully structured layout with row upon row of stately trees provides a key element of our City base. It must be protected and not 'updated', 'functionalized', or 'repurposed' in any manner. It really defines our City.

It is simply 'not broke', so no need to 'fix it'. Merely respect, protect, and nourish it!

It's really that simple.

Thank you for your support and diligence protecting this wonderful place.

Bob Gelpke
2221 SW 1st Avenue Apt 1322
Portland, OR 97201
rmgelpke@comcast.net

Sent from my Galaxy Tab® A

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Charles Landis <chasland@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 8, 2021 10:18 AM
To: hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov; ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD

January 8, 2021

Robert Olguin
ORSHPO.NationalRegisterProgram@oregon.gov
National Register Program Director
State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer Street NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County,
Portland OR to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I write you to support the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The South Park Blocks remains one of Portland's most distinctive, valued, and significant historic open spaces. It has endured as the centerpiece for the city's educational and cultural institutions.

The Park Blocks are among Portland's best downtown amenities. In the 15 years I have lived in the downtown area, I have enjoyed many, many park-centric activities, from the Portland Farmers Market to the Shamanski Market to the annual art fair in the South Parks Blocks. Please preserve these treasures for me, for my children and for my grandchildren, all Portland residents who use and enjoy these facilities.

Sincerely,
Charles Landis
2211 SW 1st Ave., Unit 504
Portland, OR 97201
503-31309395

cc: Portland Historic Landmark Commission

If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else.
- Yogi Berra

From: [Neilsen Chris](#)
To: [ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD](#)
Subject: South Park Blocks, Portland OR, Multnomah County
Date: Friday, January 15, 2021 1:26:57 PM

To whom it may concern:

I write to express my view that the South Park Blocks are currently magnificent and important, and are historically important.

They are worthy of nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

I am a resident of downtown Portland, living just 2 blocks from the Park Blocks, using the park blocks for respite from the hard surfaced inner city.

I'm also a former student of Portland State University who spent much time in the park blocks to de-stress from the demands of student life 40 years ago.

Clearly the park blocks perform an important function now and in the immediate past.

But I think they are to be recognized for the historical thread they provide - from the large old trees that provide shelter now and have for over a century; for the flexible historic design that has been largely unaltered; for the location of Portland culture adjacent to these park blocks, recognizing that they are the people's place.

I hope you will look favorably on this nomination.

With best regards,

Christine Neilsen
1221 SW 10th Avenue #1604
Portland OR 97205

From: [David Newman](#)
To: [ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD](#)
Subject: South Park Blocks, Portland, Multnomah County, National Register of Historic Places
Date: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 5:21:15 PM

Mr. Olguin,

I oppose historic nomination at this time for South Park Blocks based on the following:

— I would like to see South Park Blocks improved and developed to provide more activities, sculptures, plantings for neighborhood residents. I would like the South Park Blocks to provide more biking and walking routes connected to other parts of the City.

— I live in an apartment one block from the South Park Blocks. South Park Blocks is my 'yard' and the 'yard' for thousands of West End apartment and condo residents. I use the Park every day for relaxation, events, dog walking, exercise, the Farmers Market, rose beds and volunteer activities. I am the founder and a volunteer with Friends of South Park Blocks, an organization that contributes hundreds of hours each year to maintenance, gardening and cleaning of the Park.

— City of Portland Parks & Recreation, owner of South Park Blocks, has determined that a Master Plan be completed before a historic nomination. I support a continuation and completion of the Master Plan process.

— A Master Plan process for South Park Blocks was started by Portland Parks & Recreation in 2019 and supported at the time by the Portland Downtown Neighborhood Association. The Master Plan process began over a year before the Downtown Neighborhood Association changed course opposing the master plan and then submitting the nomination for historic designation.

— Two historic aspects of the South Park Blocks have been removed recently by vandalism: the historic Lincoln and Roosevelt statues.

— A majority of trees in South Park Blocks, especially the elms, are past their life expectancy. The old elms are failing on a daily basis and subject to Dutch elm disease. Once the old elms fail and die, even if new trees are planted, there will not be a "unifying canopy of mature, deciduous trees". This historic designation cannot be based on the "canopy of trees" since these mature trees will soon be gone.

— Many 'historic' aspects of the South Park Blocks were added or changed in the 1970's and 1980's. The walkway pattern, most sculptures, benches, Shemanski plaza, rose gardens, plantings were all added to the Park since the 1970's.

— The Master Plan contains a Tree Succession Plan for the South Park Blocks. The Master Plan will provide a blueprint for future Park development.

David Newman
1221 SW 10th #1806
Portland, OR 97205

503-853-1536

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Dell Smith <dasmith@lclark.edu>
Sent: Sunday, January 10, 2021 8:04 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD; kminor.phic@gmail.com; hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov
Subject: South Park Blocks Nomination for the National Register of Historic Places

To: Robert Olguin
ORSHPO.NationalRegisterProgram@oregon.gov
National Register Program Director
State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer Street NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301

To: Portland Historic Landmark Commission
Kristen Minor: kminor.phlc@gmail.com
Hillary Adam: hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County, Portland OR to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Olguin, Ms. Minor and Ms. Adam:

I write you to support the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. Although the South Park Blocks are an important part of historical Portland and contributed to the quality of life of Portlanders starting in the mid-19th Century, these same qualities continue to be essential to the integrity of contemporary Portland.

This green-space breaks up the asphalt and concrete layers of the City and significantly add to the lives of Portlanders and visitors to Portland. The South Park Blocks are multiple enjoyment spaces that provide paths for citizens to enjoy tree filled walks; they provide spaces for students to study and take breaks from the rigor of their classrooms; they provide spaces to enhance the economy for local farmers as they offer their fresh products to Portlanders; this space serves as a welcome mat to several cultural institutions in central Portland; and, in general, the South Park Blocks add to the beauty and livability of our city.

South Park Blocks needs to be designated as a Historic Landmark and be saved as a green space island for future generation to enjoy as much as past and present generations.

Respectfully,

Dell Smith
2221 SW 1st Ave. #624
Portland, OR 97201
dasmith@lclark.edu

From: DennisHarper@protonmail.com
To: [ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD](#)
Subject: South Park Blocks
Date: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 12:31:34 PM

State Historic Preservation Office,

I strongly support the nomination of the South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places. I want Portland Parks and Recreation to initiate a master plan for the South Park Blocks only AFTER they are officially on the National Register.

Regards,
Dennis Harper

Sent from ProtonMail mobile

From: [Denyse MCGRIFE](#)
To: [OLGUIN Robert * OPRD](#)
Subject: Nomination of the South Park Blocks, City of Portland, Multnomah County
Date: Monday, January 18, 2021 9:21:54 PM
Importance: Low

Dear Robert,

The nomination of the South Park Blocks in Portland, Oregon an opportunity to correct an oversight. The South Park Bocks remains one of Portland's most iconic , valued and significantly historic open spaces in Multnomah County. The South Park Blocks have endured as one of the centerpieces in Portland.

The South Park Blocks hold a special place for me not only because of its beauty in the variety of vegetation, international design but also that it was a place of gathering for the First nations. Today, it continue to be a gathering place.

The nomination speaks for itself and I urge the State Advisory Committee to recommend approval of this unique resource.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Denyse C. McGriff
Advisor, National Trust for Historic Preservation

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: ERIKA WHITE <erikaaaron@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2021 11:32 AM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD; Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov; Kminor.phlc@gmail.com
Subject: Nomination of the South Park Blocks

To Whom It May Concern,

I write you to support the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The South Park Blocks remains one of Portland's most distinctive, valued, and significant historic open spaces. It has endured as the centerpiece for the city's educational and cultural institutions.

My husband and I live within a few blocks of this area and we truly cherish and are humbled by the serenity of walking among the beautiful trees that have lived in the park for so many years. We also enjoy the other activities that the park provides including the Farmer's Market which supports our abundant local agriculture. The South Park Blocks are such a vital and integral aspect of all the art, theater and academic institutions in the area, it deserves to always be protected.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Erika and Aaron White
255 SW Harrison Street #23D
Portland, OR 97201
erikaaaron@comcast.net

From: [Frances Johnston](#)
To: [ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD](#)
Cc: Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov; Kminor.phlc@gmail.com
Subject: South Park Blocks historic preservation
Date: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 12:48:26 PM

Greetings:

I am a Portland resident of the area near the South Park Blocks. I wholeheartedly support the historic designation for this area. The South Park Blocks are a unique part of the cityscape that is Portland. You have heard all of the reasons why they need to be preserved. I would like to focus on the oasis of green space that they provide. The PSU area of Portland continues to be encircled by large buildings, including hotels and apartment buildings that slowly but surely are changing the beautiful, green and leafy character of this part of Portland. We need the South Park Blocks preserved for future generations to enjoy a respite from the crowded and commercial center of the city. Please do this for the benefit of Portland and its residents.

Frances Johnston
2211 SW 1st Ave, Unit 102
Portland, OR 97201

From: [Frank Evans](#)
To: [ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD](#)
Cc: kminor.phlc@gmail.com; hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov
Subject: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County, Portland OR to the National Register of Historic Places
Date: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 3:41:41 PM

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I am writing to you in support of the nomination of the Portland South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The South Park Blocks has been and remains one of Portland's most distinctive, valued, and significant historic open spaces. It has endured through the years as the centerpiece for the city. When I first arrived in Portland many decades ago I was struck by the beauty of the parks in downtown Portland with their inviting majestic trees, well designed walkways, benches, fountains and sculptures. Years later when my now late father visited me and spent a day strolling the Portland downtown he was equally impressed with the foresight, planning, design and many years of loving maintenance that created and maintained what we know as the South Park Blocks. Over the coming years he often spoke about that impressive experience to friends and family far and wide.

Residents and visitors alike have long enjoyed and continue to enjoy the many benefits the lovely South Park Blocks provide. The beautiful tall elm trees as well as the other species of trees, shrubbery, flowers and lawns give us humans and wildlife in the forms of birds and squirrels a place to relax, enjoy the open space and changes of the seasons in the center of a large city. Many times I have taken my lunch to the South Park Blocks and had a pleasant time eating on a bench or stone wall, then wandering the walkways through the center axis of the blocks as well as those on each block's boundaries. In more recent years the Farmers Market has added another unique and pleasant element to the blocks. We often walk to the area, purchase some fresh produce or flowers and have a lunch from one of the food vendors. Who knew that the South Park Blocks would someday help expand my culinary experiences with dishes from cultures near and far? Recently during this time of severely reduced human contact due to the coronavirus pandemic I have strolled through the South Park Blocks and enjoyed the winter openness, buds forming on trees and shrubbery, birds flitting from plant to plant as well as seeing families with young children playing on the paved areas. Many other cities in the U.S. have parks but few have what we have in the South Park Blocks; well designed linear spaces punctuated with trees, walkways and artworks in the center of the city. How lucky we are.

I believe achieving National Historic Places status for the South Park Blocks would be a fitting designation for this wonderful, historic place in our city and state.

Sincerely,

Franklin L. Evans
Architect (retired)

2455 SW Montgomery Dr.
Portland, OR 97201

E: frankevans09@gmail.com

cc: Portland Historic Landmark Commission

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Fred Leeson <fredleeson@hotmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 3, 2021 11:19 AM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: South Park Blocks nomination

Greetings. My name is Fred Leeson. I live in Portland.

Great cities respect their historic public places and architecture. The South Park Blocks are among the most historic in Portland and are eminently worthy of placement on the National Register. They deserve reverence for their original donation, for the simple yet elegant planting scheme that remains largely intact today, and for their long use as places for respite, exercise and public events.

This committee should have no easier chore than to approve this nomination.

For 35 years I worked for an employer located just one block east of the Park Blocks. I traversed them several times a week, either running errands, eating sandwiches, walking for exercise or visiting the farmers market. The deciduous trees gave me shade in the summer, light in the winter, gorgeous colors in the fall and shimmering new greenery in the spring.

The beauty of these blocks is that they allow for a seemingly infinite number of public and private occurrences without elaborate infrastructure. We should respect and honor these spaces for their historic role in the central city and for the great opportunities they offer for respite and beauty and contemplation for as long as this city remains.

I encourage your affirmative action on this nomination. Thank you.

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: GERARD GARZON <garzons@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Sunday, January 10, 2021 6:41 AM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Cc: Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov; Kminor.phlc@gmail.com
Subject: South Park Blocks Nomination Letter of Support
Attachments: South Park Blocks.pdf

GARZÓN
8025 SW INTERMARK ST, APT A
PORTLAND, OR 97225
510.384.9571
Garzons@sbcglobal.net

January 10, 2021

Mr. Robert Olguin
State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer Street NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County,
Portland OR to the National Register of Historic Places**

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I write you in support of the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. You will note from our address that we do not live close by the South Park Blocks. However, we own an apartment in the American Plaza Towers (2211 SW 1st Ave, #1301 Portland OR 97201), which we visit and allows us to take advantage of the South Park Blocks.

Within Portland, and we would say the State, South Park Blocks remains one of the most distinctive, valued, and significant historic, open spaces. It has endured as the centerpiece of the city's educational and cultural institutions.

For us, the park has been valuable in providing green space - a quiet respite from the city's sounds. Its towering arches of trees have been a delight for us and provide summer relief and wonderful fall colors. The plaza areas and closed streets allow us to safely walk and enjoy the days. How important that has been during this difficult period.

Once again, we support the nomination of the South Park Blocks and strongly encourage the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation and the Portland Historic Landmark Commission to support it as well. Thank you.

Sincerely,


Adison & Gerard Garzón



cc: Portland Historic Landmark Commission

January 20, 2021

Robert Olguin
National Register Program Coordinator
Oregon Heritage/State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer Street NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Proposed South Park Blocks National Register of Historic Places Nomination

Dear Mr. Olguin:

I am writing to express my support for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) listing of the South Park Blocks in Portland, Multnomah County. Oregon slated for recommendation by the State Advisory Committee on Historic Places (SACHP) on Friday, February 19, 2021. While my support for this nomination and approval by the SACHP is critical, there are a few points of clarification and correction in the nomination that I believe are needed to better protect this unique property.

As currently written, the nomination cites various park property boundaries over its 12-block north to south length. As written it is unclear as to what the east/west boundary is and this has resulted in three different declinations; 80-feet, 100-feet and, 124-feet. There is also a statement that the Public Right-of-Way is not included in the east/west boundary. If this remains the case, the full perception of what is actually perceived as the South Park Blocks (SPB) will be significantly diminished by over 40-feet for a 12-block length. Another factor to **consider is that many of the nomination's figures also need reconciliation to justify the actual boundaries; Figures 3 through 5 - Tax Lots and Figures 15 through 26 – Block Details Plan.**

Various historic and current city documents including 2021 Portland Tax Assessors Maps confirm that as is, the SPB are 80-feet wide. However, historically, the SPB were plotted to be 124-feet. The historic 124-feet, curb to curb, is noted by Bill Hawkins, FAIA and former SACHP member: *“Portland was platted in 1845, when Daniel H. Lownsdale purchased land south and west of the original platting. He drew a plat in 1848 showing the narrow park blocks at the western edge of his purchase. When the park trees were planted in 1877 and its borders defined, its E/W dimension, curb to curb, was 124 ft., which basically remains today.”*

Further, the NRHP nom is inconsistent in its boundary declination which adds to the confusion: page 6, paragraph 2

“The current landscape of the South Park Blocks is simply expressed by a ground plane of grass with minimal hardscape, framed by a continuous canopy of mature, deciduous trees. A unique characteristic is its siting within the active city street grid, with open vehicular road traffic extending around and through the park blocks. Another unique attribute that physically distinguishes the South Park Blocks from its surrounding cityscape is that each block is based on a 100' x 200' rectangular module, in contrast to the city's standardized 200' square block grid”⁴

South Park Blocks Character-Defining Features (pg 6)

***“Open Space Sequence and Well-Defined Boundaries – The park features a cohesive, intact linear open space sequence in the heart of downtown within well-defined boundaries. The boundaries are reinforced by its unifying tree canopy; narrow, rectangular block grid; perimeter pedestrian circulation; and street right of ways. Further, each block is framed by continuous perimeter concrete curbing (Block Nos. 7–12) or brick pavers (Block Nos. 1–6), which clearly and consistently delineates the park's physical boundaries.*⁵**

The park's open space, along with its restrained design and material palette, create a unique green oasis within a dense urban setting."

4 *For the purposes of this nomination, the citation of 100' x 200' and 200' x 200' block dimensions are nominal dimensions. These are referenced as the historic basis for the City of Portland planning grid. This sequence nomination cites actual physical markers (interior curb line to interior curb line) of each block in the park's twelve-block sequence to define district boundaries.*

5 *The South Park Blocks boundaries are defined as the inside edge of brick pavers in the southern portion (Block Nos. 1-6) and inside edge of concrete curbing in the northern portion (Block Nos. 7-12).*

Further; NRHP Section 10 - Geographic Data, page 56

Verbal Boundary Description

".....Each block measures 100' wide by 200' long, which is unique in a city platted in a standardized 200-foot square block grid."

Boundary Justification

"The South Park Blocks nomination boundary is confined to the park's original footprint. The South Park Blocks is a twelve-block sequence of open space extending 1,560' along an NNE-SSW axis. The park district boundary is defined by [the] interior northern curb line of SW Jackson Street on the South; the interior southern curb line of SW Salmon Street on the North; the interior western curb line of SW Park Avenue on the east, and the interior eastern curb line of SW Park Avenue on the west [124-feet]. Just as the SW Park Avenue E and W right-of-ways are excluded from the district, the crossing, East/West street right of ways are not included in this district nomination. District boundaries along these streets occur at each of the streets respective north and south curb line. The park area has been consistently defined since its original platting in 1852. With the exception of minor curb line alignment for on-street parking on SW Park Avenue West in 1963, there have been few changes to the park's historic boundaries." (Nota Bene: As the extant flanking N/S roadways, SW Park Avenues, contain a 60-foot ROW that encompasses 20-feet +/- of the SPB, this exclusion from the SPB boundaries creates an 80-foot wide SPB in the east/west axis and not the 124-foot width of the original platting).

I request that the SACHP consider the NRHP District boundaries of the South Park Blocks in the east/west direction be 124-feet regardless of the right-of-way declination as this reflects the original historic width of the SPB and reflects the curb-to-curb perception of what constitutes the South Park Blocks in the public's **experience of** this cherished place in our community.

Respectfully Submitted



Henry C. Kunowski
2036 SE Spruce Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97214
onri.henri@gmail.com
503-680-8596

cc: Ian Johnson, Associate Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Bill Hawkins, FAIA

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Hollie lindauer <hollielindauer@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 10, 2021 3:31 PM
To: Kminor.phlc@gmail.com; ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD;
hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov
Subject: Support for the South Park Blocks National Historic Register

To: Robert Olguin
ORSHPO.NationalRegisterProgram@oregon.gov

January 9, 2021

National Register Program Director
State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer Street NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301

Regarding: Portland Historic Landmark Commission
Letter of **Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks**, Multnomah County, Portland
OR to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I was so excited to hear that Portland's beautiful and beloved South Park Blocks are being considered for the Historic National Registry. Please do it! That is fantastic! I am privileged to live near this park and every time I walk through I marvel at the classic design pattern of the garden and walkways, the spectacular canopy of Elms, (how lucky is Portland to have retained it's Elms!) the beautiful statuary and monuments.

This park is the most iconic and lovely in the city. You have not been to Portland without a photo of this park. It gives such pleasure year round. In fall the leaves provide an amazingly colorful carpet, winter's snow on the contemplative Abe Lincoln is a wonderful reminder of his connection to Oregon, in spring the budding elms are bright and summer offers a cool majestic enclosure of green to the sweet fountain for dogs and humans at the lovely Shemanski fountain. While this park is in the dense heart of the city, with the University at one end and downtown at the other, the elegant multi-block scale is a perfect relief, offering space for events and so much enjoyment.

Sincerely,
Hollie Lindauer
cc: Portland Historic Landmark Commission

--
Hollie Lindauer
1221 SW 10th Avenue #1505
Portland, Oregon 97205
c. 503.702.8743



Support for the National Register Nomination for the South Park Blocks



Ladd's Cathedral of Trees

To: Robert Olguin - Oregon State Historic Preservation Office

As a neighborhood with the Ladd's Addition National Historic District, the Hosford Abernethy Neighborhood District (HAND) would like to extend our support for the National Register Nomination of the South Park Blocks that is being shepherded by the Downtown Neighborhood Association. HAND voted to support the nomination at our June 16th, 2020 meeting.

The South Park Blocks are a defining feature of the downtown core and provide a respite to the bustle of the urban environment as well as providing public spaces to gather. The civic, religious and educational institutions that circle the blocks complement and enhance the simple design of the space.

Support for Landscape Design:

The design of the park blocks compliments the landscape design of Ladd's Addition juxtaposed on the opposite side of town. Both were designed in a similar time period with similar design influences, such as the work of Fredrick Law Olmstead and the City Beautiful Movement. The Ladd family that developed Ladd's Addition had a home near the South Parks Blocks and the restored Ladd Carriage House is still nearby. The South Park Blocks concept of a '*cathedral of trees with a simple floor of grass*' could also describe the original design for the major boulevards in Ladd's Addition on Elliott and Ladd Avenue as well as the secondary streets at a

smaller scale. The planting of deciduous trees in an ordered rhythm punctuated with gardens/gathering space is another similarity both places have in common.

We feel adding the South Park Blocks to the National Historic Register will strengthen the City's portfolio of historic places and in turn provide for a better understanding of the design of the Ladd's Addition Historic District. Having a complementary park will allow for cross pollination of stewardship and design discussions.

Support for the Preservation of Open Space in the City:

In the broader context of equity and access to green space we would like to lend support for the protection of a public park that is a defining feature of downtown Portland.

- While we would like to believe that open space and public property will always be protected and preserved for future generations, we have seen in the past that city property can be sold. At Mt. Tabor, a public reservoir at 60th and Division was sold to private developers. The adjacent greenhouse/nursery area was *almost* sold to Warner Pacific University for development. Many of Portland's parks, especially in HAND, are at PPS schools and are zoned residential and not open space. This makes them vulnerable to development. Having a historic designation for the South Park Blocks will relieve future pressure to develop or sell it.
- Recently with the Black Lives Matter protests we are seeing how critical open spaces are for gathering that allows for physical distancing. Having locations diversified across the city is important. These spaces are also important for physically distanced recreation.
- A historic designation for the South Park Blocks will allow for public input and discussion about how the space can be used and modified over time. An open and public discussion can bring many voices to the table for input and serves to document how the decisions are made and why. These discussions could help inform the management of the Ladd's Addition Street Tree Plan.

As the inner city is becomes more dense with people and buildings, protecting open space and spaces for large trees to grow is critical to a healthy future.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Joanne Stainbrook

HAND Historic Resources Subcommittee Member



Irvington Community Association Resolution

The Downtown Neighborhood Association (DNA) land use task group will submit a National Register Nomination of the South Park Blocks (SPB) to the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office on or about July 1, 2020.

DNA has requested from the Irvington Community Association (ICA) a letter of support be sent to Story Swett and Wendy Rahm.

DNA's task group is comprised of five volunteers who have been working on the nomination for about a year conducting interviews and serious and impressive research. They are now engaged in writing the actual nomination.

The South Park Blocks appear in very early mid 1800 Portland maps. After clearing the land of all evergreens in the mid 1800's, the park was later designed and planted with *deciduous* trees in five rows in alignment, a classic design, by Pfunder, a German immigrant who was European trained and worked at one point with the Olmsteads. The park is the only Portland park originally designed without evergreens. It is a simple cathedral of deciduous trees with a carpet of grass below. Over time, some changes have occurred, but miraculously very few and none that have altered the original design.

Defining characteristics are:

- Open Space
- Deciduous Trees in Ordered Ranks and Axial Alignment
- Restrained Simplicity
- Defined Boundaries

Like development pressure of other historic places, a threat of overdevelopment of the South Park Blocks has spurred the DNA task force into seeking more review of proposed alterations through the historic nomination process. Portland Parks & Recreation has recently supported the nomination by DNA and is working with the DNA on the nomination. Support from the Irvington Community Association will be valuable to the nomination process and, as importantly, demonstrate to Portland Parks that there is broad community appreciation in the variety and uniqueness of each park in the City.

THEREFORE, after due consideration at a special meeting on Thursday, June 25, 2020, the Board of Directors of the ICA voted to support the SPB nomination by DNA, and to encourage continued collaboration between DNA and Portland Parks.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Dobrich

Robert Dobrich
President
Irvington Community Association

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Janet Krochina <jkrochina@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 7, 2021 9:42 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: Letter of Support to Nomination the South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I am writing to support the nomination of Portland's South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places. They are a treasure to the city and to me.

When I located housing in downtown Portland to live part-time near family and in respite from Alaskan winters, my first impulse was to become familiar with Portland's history. I took many tours offered by the Architectural Heritage Center and the South Park blocks tour was one I remember best. I could picture lives shared along this park strip over the decades and centuries. It remains a favorite territory for me in the city. I walk it most days I am in Portland - for pleasure or errands, as a destination or as a route to one.

The colors and the sounds of the open space. The soft landscape offering to a hard-edged city. The old growth trees, their cooling shade, their draw for birds. The statuary and art. The rose garden. The PSU Farmer's Market. The presence of GREEN available year-round for a color-starved woman escaping a black-and-white Alaskan winter. These elements are a jewel in the heart of a dense urban center. Honoring and preserving them are a sacred duty.

Sincerely-

Janet Krochina
255 Harrison St. #20H
Portland, OR 97201

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Jeffrey Scherer <jeffghost@me.com>
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 9:08 AM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Cc: Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov; Kminor.phlc@gmail.com;
parksbureaudirector@portlandoregon.gov
Subject: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks
Attachments: 2020.01.11_SHPO Parks Block_Signed.pdf

Mr Olguin

Please find attached my letter of support for the nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County, Portland OR to the National Register of Historic Places.

Thank you for your consideration

Jeffrey Scherer, FAIA

+1.612.819.1947

www.schererworks.com

Home

1221 SW 10th Avenue Unit 1305
Portland OR 97205-2479

Jeffrey A Scherer, FAIA
1221 SW 10th Avenue | Unit 1305 | Portland | OR | 97205-2479
jeffghost@me.com

January 11, 2021

Robert Olguin
National Register Program Director
State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer Street NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County, Portland OR
to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I am writing to you to offer my enthusiastic support for the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. I moved to Portland a few years ago from Minneapolis, MN—a city also known for its historic park system. My choice to live downtown was, in part, predicated on proximity to these historically significant, simple and elegant South Park Blocks.

These blocks are, for me, one of Portland's most unique, important, valued, and significantly historic open spaces. For a long time they have endured as the centerpiece for the city's educational and cultural institutions. This symbiotic relationship is crucial.

As a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, I have had the honor to travel the world. I have lived and worked in Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom. I have seen first hand the role of historic and enlightened park systems. My reason, therefore, for supporting this nomination is simple: the park is a pedestrian friendly, flexible and elegant arbor that I use everyday to refresh, calm down and exercise. It has stood the test of time and needs to remain as an historical binder and "green lung" between the city's past, present and future. Speaking personally, these park blocks must remain as designed. Designation will affirm this.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey A Scherer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeffrey" being more prominent and stylized than the last name "Scherer".

Jeffrey A Scherer, FAIA

cc: Portland Historic Landmark Commission
Adena Long, Portland Parks Director

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: JOAN JOHNSON <joancj78@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, January 10, 2021 1:36 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: Support of South Park Block for National Register Program

Attention: Robert Olguin

Dear Sir:

At 91, I am a long-time Portlander who now resides on SW First and Lincoln in downtown. In these days of covid, I have a special affection for the South Park Blocks since I can walk there to meet friends where wearing masks, we can socially distance and enjoy the pleasure of a visit.

But my association with the South Park Blocks began when I was in my forties and entered Portland State as a first year student. It took me six years to graduate but during that time this area was a place to rest between classes and a place to study. I can't tell you how much I appreciated having this park to enjoy during this very busy time.

Later, when I was active in the Portland State Alumni Association, I was on the committee that worked very hard to save the historic Portland Benson House which looks out over the South Park Blocks.

The Benson House is an important part of Portland's History. It is only fitting that it's neighbor, the South Park Blocks, be recognized by the National Register Program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joan C. Johnson
2211 SW First Avenue, Unit 604
Portland OR 97201
Telephone: 503[248-6312

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: John Liu <johnyaoliu@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 5, 2021 11:10 AM
To: OLGUIN Robert * OPRD
Subject: South Park Blocks Nomination - PCHR Letter
Attachments: Ltr 1-5-2021 to SACHP Re SPB.pdf

Robert, I attach a letter from the Portland Coalition for Historic Resources (PCHR) to the State Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation (SACHP) supporting the National Register nomination for the South Park Blocks in Portland, Oregon.

Would you please convey this letter of support to the Chair and Members of the SACHP? Thank you.

John Liu
Chair, PCHR

P C H R

Portland Coalition for Historic Resources

January 5, 2021

To: Chair and Members of the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation

Cc: Robert Olguin, SACHP Coordinator

Via email to Robert.olguin@oregon.gov

The Portland Coalition for Historic Resources strongly encourages approval of the nomination of the South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places. These blocks are among the most historic in Portland, and for over 150 years have offered greenery and natural respite for an increasingly large and busy city. Recognition for these 12 blocks in the heart of a great Pacific Northwest city is long overdue.

Our coalition is composed of advocates for preservation of Portland's important architecture, historic neighborhoods and public spaces. We include members of the Architectural Heritage Center, Restore Oregon, Portland's historic districts, neighborhood land-use advocates and professional consultants involved in architecture, planning and historical research. We testify frequently before the Portland City Council and the Oregon Legislature on issues that affect preservation.

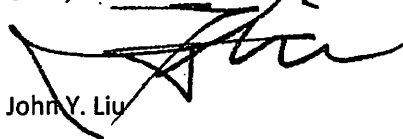
The South Park Blocks nomination document describes in great detail the donation of these acres to the city, their development in axial rows of deciduous trees, the placement of public art and the multitudinous activities that have occurred in the park during the many decades.

We believe that these blocks are among the best-known and most well-loved in Portland. Their shade in the summer, clear access to the sky in winter and the blanket of grass make them an outstanding venue for walking, picnics, quiet contemplation and for an infinite number of planned and unplanned festivities in the past and in the future.

We note with pride that this nomination has been submitted by unpaid citizen volunteers who, under the auspices of the Downtown Neighborhood Association, took it upon themselves to undertake this extensive project. The closure of public libraries because of the pandemic was an added burden that had to be overcome. This project is an outstanding example of citizen participation in Oregon. The nomination's authors also appreciate the suggestions offered by Robert Olguin of the State Historic Preservation Office as the work unfolded.

In short, we firmly believe approval of this nomination should rank as one of the easiest decisions faced by the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation. Thank you for your attention.

Chair, PCHR



John Y. Liu

Johnyaoliu@gmail.com

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Jon Wood <jonxwood@earthlink.net>
Sent: Saturday, January 2, 2021 1:30 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: South Park Blocks

Dear Robert Olguin, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, State Historic Preservation Office,

I support the nomination aimed at listing the South Park Blocks on the National Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

Jon Wood
503.309.0732

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Jonathan Thalberg <shubbaland@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 2, 2021 2:01 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: Portland's Historic Park blocks

Dear Sir/Madam:

We would like to extend our support for designating the multi-block stretch of the Park Blocks in Portland Oregon as protected landmark. Thank you.

Best,

Dean Backus and Jonathan Thalberg
191 SE 50th Ave
Hillsboro OR 97123
Shubbaland@gmail.com

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Judy Bell](#)
To: [ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD](#)
Cc: [Kminor.phic@gmail.com](#); [hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov](#)
Subject: Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places
Date: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 3:43:08 PM

To: Robert Olguin

I write to support the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. These blocks are one of Portland's most valued and cherished historic open spaces. It has endured as the nucleus for the city's educational and cultural institutions. As a downtown resident, I think of it as Portland's Central Park, offering green space in the city, beauty all year round, farmers markets, a place to walk, visit, enjoy public art. It is essential to the character of Portland, as our founding citizens were aware.

Thank you for your consideration,

Judith A. Bell
1221 SW 10th Avenue #1005
Portland, Oregon 97205
jbell1125@comcast.net



JUNIOR LEAGUE OF PORTLAND, OR

June 29, 2020

Wendy Rahm
Downtown Neighborhood Association
Land Use Transportation Committee
SPB National Register Nomination Task Group
1221 SW 10th Avenue, #1001
Portland, OR 97205

Dear Ms. Rahm:

Our organization, the Junior League of Portland, Oregon, is writing this letter in support of the Downtown Neighborhood Association's National Register for Historic Places nomination for the South Park Blocks. We highly endorse the preservation of the historic treasures contained within the unique and elegant South Park Blocks.

In commemoration of our 75th anniversary, the Junior League of Portland donated fifty-two wood benches to the City of Portland for the South Park Blocks in 1985. The Victorian-style benches were placed in three park blocks as part of the park renovation taking place at that time. In donating the benches, we saw the opportunity for our gift to be enjoyed by park visitors of all ages as well as those visiting the Portland Centers for the Arts and the Portland Art Museum, all located in close proximity to the South Park Blocks.

Our organization has taken an active interest in historic preservation as well as Portland's community arts and culture scene over the years. League members have led historic walking tours through downtown Portland, of which the beautiful Park Blocks are a central feature. Our members have also served as docents at the Portland Art Museum and volunteered at the various centers for the arts. The South Park Blocks are significant not only as a beautiful, historic park but also as a central part of Portland's thriving arts and cultural scene.

For the last 110 years, the Junior League of Portland, Inc. has been committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women and improving communities. We are proud to have served as advocates for the welfare of Portland. The benches in the South Park Blocks are a testament to our belief that access to the arts and preserving history to educate future generations are both important parts of a healthy community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Abbey Hipple Margaret Leonard".

Abbey Hipple & Margaret Leonard
Junior League of Portland Legacy Preservation Committee

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Karen Blitz <karenblitz@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 8, 2021 2:17 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: Support For Portland Park Blocks' National Historic Registry
Attachments: Park Blocks support.pdf

January 9, 2021

Greetings:

It has come to my attention that a dedicated and forward-thinking group is working hard to have Portland's South Park Blocks listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

To that end, The Downtown Neighborhood Association has prepared a one hundred page nomination. It is the culmination of ten month's intense research and writing.

This letter is in support of their nomination. I urge both the State Advisory Committee and the Portland Landmark Commission to do likewise.

Through out my adult life, downtown Portland has been a consistent recreational lure. In recent years, I have been smitten with the colors, textures, sounds, aromas and variety at the PSU Farmer's Market. I have always relished productions at the Schnitz and appreciated its nearby restaurants. My consistent preference is to shop at the downtown Nordstrom. I can only wish that I prioritized more visits to the Art Museum.

Whether lingering or rushing, I have always taken the lovely Park Blocks for granted – until now.

I realize how much I value the Park Blocks' pleasing composition of outdoor space. Certainly their creators were trained and talented artists whose work has had lasting significance. I also realize that it is the trees that are of special importance to me.

The Tall Elegant Trees.

Aside from beauty, their canopy imparts a sense of enclosure and emotional security. As a practical matter, they create visual interest, assist in soil stabilization, improve air quality, provide shade, reduce noise levels, improve air quality and supply habitats.

I want this very important part of my city to be preserved and protected. The Portland Park Blocks are truly worthy of being designated as a national historic treasure!

With thanks for your consideration and with my sincerity,

Karen Blitz . 7580 SW Cedar Street . Portland, OR 97225 karenblitz@gmail.com

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Karen Mirande <ksvm@me.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 10, 2021 11:06 AM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: south parks block nomination

I fully support and encourage the nomination of Portland's South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places.

Karen Mirande
Landscape Architect
Dufur OR

From: [Kate Dickson](#)
To: [ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD](#)
Cc: hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov; Kminor.phlc@gmail.com
Subject: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County, Portland OR to the National Register of Historic Places
Date: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 12:53:34 PM

January 19, 2021

Robert Olguin

ORSHPO.NationalRegisterProgram@oregon.gov

National Register Program Director

State Historic Preservation Office 725 Summer Street NE, Suite C Salem, OR 97301

CC: Portland Historic Landmark Commission Kminor.phlc@gmail.com,
hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County, Portland OR to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Olguin,

We are writing to you in strong support of the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The South Park Blocks remain one of Portland's most distinctive, valued, and significant historic open spaces.

As downtown residents, we enjoy daily the lovely green space and the beautiful canopy of trees of the South Park Blocks. As a family, we love walking with our grandchildren through the park blocks, exploring the richness of nature -- trees, flowers, birds. The South Park Blocks provide a true park for relaxing in nature in the middle of our busy city. They are a true treasure and need to be preserved for today and for generations to come.

Historically, the series of 12 consecutive park blocks is one of Portland's three oldest parks, having been donated to the city in the 1850's for the *public's use*. That significant purpose has been enjoyed for the last 150 years. Historic uses have included events of the Rose Festival, demonstrations ranging from gay rights to anti-Vietnam War protests, graduation ceremonies, music concerts etc. Today as the people's park, it is often a venue for weddings, farmer's markets, meditation groups, AA meetings, arts events, student demonstrations, civic protests. In addition to organized activities, the blocks always serve as a haven for informal socializing, long walks down one of the many paths, providing rest and respite on the benches from the busy surrounding hardscape of downtown. This wide range of uses is made possible by the *intentional* 150-year-old, *simple design* of 5 rows of (approximately 9) tall, deciduous trees in axial alignment on each block.

This intentional design is unique to Portland's parks. We believe that it is imperative that this design, the tall tree varieties including many American elms, and the original boundaries as seen in early maps (of approximately 124 feet wide) will be approved as defining characteristics of a National Register listing.

COVID/19 has put a spotlight on the park's importance as an equitable land use priority. The park is located in one of Portland's densest neighborhoods of affordable housing. Many of the low-income residents do not have cars. This is their *only non-activated greenspace*. The park's simple design ensures its flexibility for many uses. There are two other nearby parks that are hardscape and activated.

We want to thank the Downtown Neighborhood Association volunteers who took nearly 2 years to create this nomination document for you to consider, even as research became ever more challenging with COVID/19.

We also greatly appreciate your and the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation's role in protecting this important "Peoples' Park."

We urge you to approve sending this nomination to the National Registry with a strong recommendation for the South Park Blocks' approval to the National Register.

Thank you,

Kate Dickson, PhD and David Dickson

1221 SW 10th Avenue Unit 601 Portland, OR 97205 – Dickson501@comcast.net

cc: Portland Historic Landmark Commission

<!--[if !supportLineBreakNewLine]-->

<!--[endif]-->

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: kathryn.schwartz@comcast.net
Sent: Saturday, January 2, 2021 2:11 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: Supporting the South Park Blocks Historical designation

Supporting whatever it takes to keep the South Park Blocks permanently in place. Every new building, even every new story of an existing building, added to the city makes even more important that we have this space of nature, trees, and shade. Usually I see it as a quiet contemplative place, but I remember art festivals and farmer's markets. I can't imagine a more perfect space in front of either the Art Museum or the Historical Society Museum. It would be a loss for the entire city if any one of these blocks was allowed to be replaced with a building or a parking lot.

Kathryn Schwartz
Portland, OR
503-708-9010

From: [Kathy Fritts](#)
To: [ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD](#)
Subject: Support for the South Park Blocks listing
Date: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 2:05:11 PM

Robert Olguin,

I would like to add my voice in support of this nomination. I'm a volunteer docent with the AHC (Architectural Heritage Center) and have done several South Park Blocks tours. This peaceful and historic swath of green in the heart of the city is priceless and I'm actually surprised it had not already been placed on the Register. I hope this well-researched nomination is successful.

Sincerely,
Kathy Fritts
2775 NE Wiberg Ln
Portland, OR 97213

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Kathy Johnson <kwj@iinet.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 5, 2021 1:41 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: South Park Blocks Nomination for Historical Register

I am writing as a Portland native to support the nomination of the South Park Blocks for the National Register. My love affair with the South Park Blocks began as a young child walking with my family almost weekly through the twelve block area. As I grew older, I relished the quiet of the green space, the canopy of trees and long promenades; often I would just sit on one of the benches and watch other families, bench sitters, kids playing frisbee, individuals reading alone or talking to each other. As a young mother, I brought my children regularly to the Park Blocks to play, to attend music and art events, to walk through the city, to grab a bite to eat at a farmer's market. I still visit regularly as part of my city walk.

Most significantly, the South Park Blocks represented for me the nexus of a vibrant and robust city with the surrounding art and historical museums, government buildings and Portland State University. And the statues, especially Teddy the RoughRider, Lincoln and other significant Portland plaques and memorials. The area says brightly and forcefully-'take a look at this rich and bustling city, and the mix of people of all ages and backgrounds who embrace what Portland represents. This is the heart of our city.'

The South Park Blocks is Portland's gem; its architecture, landscape and history is only enhanced by the area's reverence for nature and its citizens. Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Kathy Whittemore Johnson

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: LaJune Thorson <lajune.thorson@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 10, 2021 9:24 AM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: Letter of support for Portland South Park Blocks nomination

January 10, 2021

Robert Olguin
National Register Program Director
State Historic Preservation Office
725 Sumner Street NE, Suite C
Salem, Oregon 97301

Subject: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County, Portland, Oregon, to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Olguin,

As a resident of downtown Portland, I walk frequently through the South Park Blocks, either as a destination for my walk or as a route to another part of downtown.

There are many things I appreciate about the park:

- The long view through the tree alignment feels so spacious even in this dense part of downtown.
- The width separating me, the pedestrian, from the traffic on either side provides a feeling of safety and calm.
- The quietness of the park provides a space for contemplation.
- The deciduous trees mark the passage of time as they change with the seasons, providing shade in the summer, adding color in the fall, and providing light in the winter.
- Landmarks such as the Plank Road plaque, the rose garden, and the fountain in Shemanski Park provide places to pause and reflect.
- The Farmers' Markets are convenient for downtown residents and workers.
- The grass and trees provide a respite from the hardscape of the city.

We are so fortunate to have this amazing, distinctive park downtown for everyone's enjoyment, including people who may not have easy access to parks in other parts of the city. We must not take this park for granted. Historic designation is long overdue.

LaJune Thorson
255 SW Harrison #26D
Portland, Oregon 97201
lajune.thorson@gmail.com

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Membership PSC <membership@portlandsocietyforcalligraphy.org>
Sent: Saturday, January 9, 2021 2:56 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Cc: Leslie B. Hutchinson
Subject: South Park Blocks National Register Nomination

Dear Mr Olguin,

I strongly support efforts made by the DNA Committee for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks on the National Register of Historic Places and I will tell you why.

Ever since I was a little girl growing up in Portland I was reminded that my great great grandfather Sylvester Q. and his wife Honor Farrell lived there. Honor planted the Farrell Sycamore at SW Park and Main. I have a framed mirror from that house in my home how and maybe the deep sofa in my living room accommodated those large bustle dresses. Sylvester gave the eulogy at Thomas Lamb Eliot's funeral. They lived next door to one another.

I moved away for some years and when I came back in 2012 I immediately got involved with the Architectural Heritage Center. The first walking tour to add to our collection had to be one on the South Park Blocks, so I wrote it. I have led innumerable people down one side and up the other of this timeless space. In the summer it's a cool spot on the hottest day. Even in the winter we can lead walking tours, protected by the canopy and able to view extra details not visible when the leaves are full.

The whole 12 blocks is beautifully planned and executed with its long axial views, splendid deciduous trees and ample promenading opportunities. It is always a source of reflection and rejuvenation just as it was planned 140 years ago. It is a legacy this City of Portland deserves to keep now more than ever before.

I urge you to approve this nomination.

Sincerely,

Leslie H. Hutchinson

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: M Burger <msburger24@att.net>
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 11:58 AM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Cc: Kminor.phlc@gmail.com; hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov
Subject: Letter supporting nominating South Park Blocks in Portland, OR to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Olguin,

The South Park Blocks are just a short walk for my home in Portland Oregon, and one of the reasons we moved "downtown" a few years ago. We walk through the blocks at least five days a week, year round. They are an oasis of nature, providing walkways, seating and a large area green expanse to enjoy all seasons of the year. Shady in summer and light filled in winter.

Whether sitting on the benches watching little school children playing hide and seek, or happening upon a summer time performance of taiko drumming, or just walking down the center walkway from the PSU campus to the "Snitzer" and the Wednesday farmers market, I just marvel that all this is right there, in the city.

Preserving these Park Blocks as places for all sorts of public uses is essential. They are such a part of Portland and enjoyed by all.

Please protect them by including them in the National Registry of Historic Places.

Thank you,

M Burger

2221 SW 1st Av, Portland OR 97201

msburger24@att.net

From: [Margaret Davis](#)
To: [ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram](#) * OPRD; Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov
Subject: I support landmark status and full protection for Portland's South Park Blocks
Date: Thursday, January 14, 2021 10:58:43 AM

Greetings! I hope you are all doing well and staying healthy.

I write to ask that you support landmark status and full protection for Portland's South Park Blocks.

As one of the city's earliest parks, the South Park Blocks connect Portlanders to history, needed open space, and opportunities for reflection, exercise, and fresh air. When I moved to Portland more than 25 years ago, the South Park Blocks—whether buzzing with farmers market activity or a quiet place full of mature tree canopy and greenery—struck me as a fine civic asset along the lines of other great parks in bigger cities, say, Central Park in NYC or Grant Park in Chicago.

These spaces deserve our full protection and respect. Please preserve the South Park Blocks for the enjoyment of future generations.

Thank you! Margaret Davis

PO Box 12383
Portland, OR 97212

--

Margaret Davis
Ma Nao Books

manaobooks.com

From: [Mark Fromm](#)
To: [ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD](#)
Cc: Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov; Kminor.phlc@gmail.com
Subject: South Park Blocks, Portland OR, Multnomah County
Date: Monday, January 18, 2021 11:44:03 AM

To: Robert Olguin
ORSHPO.NationalRegisterProgram@oregon.gov
National Register Program Director
State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer Street NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301
Dear Mr. Olguin,

I write you to **support the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places.**

We live a short walk from the park, and visit often. This park is presently used for many purposes and has proven that its design is a tremendous asset to our city. The classic design makes it both an active place (Saturday Farmer's Market, music events, etc.), while at the same time being a meditative spot in downtown Portland. While there is room to improve tree health through professional arborist management, there is no reason to change the design or nature of our park. Other cities, such as New York's Manhattan and its Riverside Park, have maintained the classical design and reaped tremendous benefit in both neighborhood livability and property values.

Please add Portland, Oregon's South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places as soon as possible.

Regards,

Mark Fromm
2211 SW First Ave., Unit 1002
Portland, OR 97201
mark.fromm@outlook.com

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: MARTHA K. SHARP <kathy-sharp@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, January 10, 2021 4:07 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Cc: kminor.phlc@gmail.com; Hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov;
Walter_weyler@sequenceusa.com; Wwrahm@aol.com
Subject: Letter of Support for Nomination

Dear Mr. Robert Olguin,

Please take into consideration the following reasons why I am in favor of the nomination of the South Park Blocks for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Why the South Park Blocks represent a notable place in Portland's history:

- * Startling impact of acres of majestic giants resting on green velvet
- * An elegant design instilling pleasurable comfort
- * As a tree flourishes so does young life
- * Waves of silence among the bustle of city energy
- * Shaded light rays infusing cool softness
- * Fallen leaf imprints create artful patterns
- * Solace of hope in the swaying branches of new spring foliage
- * Sparkling diamonds of sunlight filter through branches dance in the season of winter
- * Gentle sounds of a child's exuberance echo along the park
- * It's dominant soul of Portland support waves of activity
- * A place of restful reflection and visual impact afford creativity for all
- * This pathway of escape clarifies direction, affords a sense of well-being

There is no need to change that which is already providing its intended benefit!

Thank you for your time.

Martha Kathleen Sharp
2211 SW 1st Ave. #802
Portland, OR 97201
319-383-8653

[Kathy-sharp@comcast.net](mailto:kathy-sharp@comcast.net)

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Mary Lou Laybourn <maryloulaybourn@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 9, 2021 4:01 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: South Park Blocks endorsement
Attachments: South Park Blocks.pdf

Please find attached an endorsement for the pending nomination mentioned above.

Regards,

Mary Lou Laybourn

January 9, 2021

Robert Olguin
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer Street NE, Suite C
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: South Park Blocks
National Register of Historic Places Nomination

Dear Mr. Olguin,

It is my pleasure to heartily endorse the nomination of Portland's South Park Blocks for the National Register of Historic Places. Since I arrived in Portland in 1974, these park blocks have been an integral part of what I think of as Portland. To maintain them in the manner historic preservation experts recommend seems the exact right thing to do.

I was enchanted by the rows and rows of beautiful trees when first exploring downtown Portland as part of the neighborhood of my first job. I arrived in the early fall and watching the changing leaves was especially magical for me, a native not of the northwest, but of Tucson, Arizona. As fall turned to winter, I then appreciated the peek-a-boo view that the bare trees offered to the lovely facades of the surrounding historic buildings. While I no longer work downtown, the South Park Blocks are still a seasonal destination for walks, for the very same experience this setting afforded me "way back when."

Travel is my passion and, post-Covid, I intend to make up time! What I most enjoy about visiting cities around the U.S. and the world is their outdoors - historic buildings, squares, and parks intermingled with contemporary counterparts. Each era gives context and spice and texture to the other, I think. Portland is not that old, we have to admit, so it's even more important to preserve our earliest history. These park blocks also tie together the major cultural institutions of Portland, destinations for residents and tourists alike, adding importance to their preservation.

Please add my support for the nomination in question. It will be a great day when this gem of Portland's downtown is preserved for our future.

Sincerely,



Mary Lou Laybourn
maryloulaybourn@gmail.com

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Mary McMurray <artfirstcolors@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 2, 2021 12:00 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: South Park Blocks in Portland, Oregon

Dear People,

Please grant National Registry protection to the South Blocks in Portland, OR.
These park spaces are a valuable oasis and a tribute to the generosity and foresight of City forebears.

Thank you,
Mary

Mary McMurray
Art First Colors for Architecture
artfirstcolors@gmail.com

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: HERITAGE Oregon * OPRD
Sent: Thursday, January 7, 2021 11:31 AM
To: OLGUIN Robert * OPRD
Subject: FW: Portland's South Park Blocks and the National Register of Historic Places

-----Original Message-----

From: Mike Snyder <mmms1@frontier.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 2, 2021 9:12 PM
To: HERITAGE Oregon * OPRD <Oregon.Heritage@oregon.gov>
Subject: Portland's South Park Blocks and the National Register of Historic Places

I am writing this in support of listing the Portland's South Park Blocks on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Park Blocks first came to be important to me when I was getting my bachelors and masters degrees at Portland State College between the years of 1960 and 1968.

Between classes in good weather I loved unwinding in the Blocks or studying outside on the benches, sometimes by the Art Museum watched over by Teddy Roosevelt, sometimes by the back entrance of the Paramount Theater, or sometimes just outside next to the college if I needed to get to class quickly. Watching pigeons was also fun!

And during lunch time, PSC's baroque players often set themselves up in the balcony overlooking the blocks and played. It was magical.

If the listing will maintain the blocks as a beautiful setting for students like me, for strollers, or for the old lady who lured the pigeons with food until they got close enough for her to catch one for her dinner, I am all for it. It was important to me and for thousands of other PSC (and, now, PSU) students who have great memories.

Mike Snyder

2985 SW 122nd Ave.

Beaverton, OR 97005

503-505-3613

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: HERITAGE Oregon * OPRD
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 2:08 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: RE: Portland's South Park Blocks and the National Register of Historic Places

Hi Robert,

This came back to the general Oregon Heritage email, did it also go to the person we sent in the comments?

Thanks, Kuri

-----Original Message-----

From: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Sent: Friday, January 8, 2021 8:18 AM
To: HERITAGE Oregon * OPRD <Oregon.Heritage@oregon.gov>
Subject: RE: Portland's South Park Blocks and the National Register of Historic Places

The National Register Email Account for the Oregon SHPO has received an email from you.

The submitted information will be processed and added to the public record for the indicated project. If this email includes public comments for a National Register nomination, the comments will also be provided to the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation (SACHP) and the National Park Service for their consideration. If there are questions or concerns about the submitted materials, the SHPO staff reviewer will be contacting you directly over the next few weeks.

-----Original Message-----

From: HERITAGE Oregon * OPRD
Sent: Thursday, January 7, 2021 11:31 AM
To: OLGUIN Robert * OPRD <Robert.Olguin@oregon.gov>
Subject: FW: Portland's South Park Blocks and the National Register of Historic Places

-----Original Message-----

From: Mike Snyder <mmms1@frontier.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 2, 2021 9:12 PM
To: HERITAGE Oregon * OPRD <Oregon.Heritage@oregon.gov>
Subject: Portland's South Park Blocks and the National Register of Historic Places

I am writing this in support of listing the Portland's South Park Blocks on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Park Blocks first came to be important to me when I was getting my bachelors and masters degrees at Portland State College between the years of 1960 and 1968.

Between classes in good weather I loved unwinding in the Blocks or studying outside on the benches, sometimes by the Art Museum watched over by Teddy Roosevelt, sometimes by the back entrance of the Paramount Theater, or sometimes just outside next to the college if I needed to get to class quickly. Watching pigeons was also fun!

And during lunch time, PSC's baroque players often set themselves up in the balcony overlooking the blocks and played. It was magical.

If the listing will maintain the blocks as a beautiful setting for students like me, for strollers, or for the old lady who lured the pigeons with food until they got close enough for her to catch one for her dinner, I am all for it. It was important to me and for thousands of other PSC (and, now, PSU) students who have great memories.

Mike Snyder

2985 SW 122nd Ave.

Beaverton, OR 97005

503-505-3613

January 6, 2021

To: Robert Olguin

ORSHPO.NationalRegisterProgram@oregon.gov

National Register Program Director

State Historic Preservation Office

725 Summer Street NE, Suite C

Salem, OR 97301

Info:

Portland Historic Landmark Commission

kminor.phlc@gmail.com, hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County, Portland OR to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I write you to support the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The South Park Blocks remains one of Portland's most distinctive, valued, and significant historic open spaces. It has endured as the centerpiece for the city's educational and cultural institutions.

The area has had daily significance for me since moving here five years ago. As an auditing student of PSU every term in that time, my life has been profoundly impacted by continued learning in the university classroom during senior citizen years, while having the South Park Blocks to walk through and ponder the learning. Without the South Park Blocks' beauty and opportunity for reflection just before and just after classes, the life-altering experiences in learning might not have happened. The Blocks deserve our utmost attention now for restoration, preservation, and conservation.

Sincerely,

Nancy L. Otte

1221 SW 10th Ave., #102

Portland, OR 97205

ottenancy@gmail.com (email preferred vs. telephone)

480.250.0022 (text preferred)

cc: Portland Historic Landmark Commission

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: NORMA REICH <reichn@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 3:46 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: South Park Blocks

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I write you to support the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The South Park Blocks remains one of Portland's most distinctive, valued, and significant historic open spaces. It has endured as the centerpiece for the city's educational and cultural institutions.

For those of us who live in the downtown area, the South Park Blocks has become for many of us during the Covid shutdown, a sanctuary, a safe place to spend time among the much loved canopy of the Park Blocks. Everything possible should be done to protect this much valued, much loved space.

Norma Reich
1221 SW 10th Ave. #1107
Portland, Oregon 97205
reichn@comcast.net



Northwest District Association

June 22, 2020

Oregon Heritage/State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer Street NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301

Attn.: Robert Olguin, National Register Program Coordinator

RE: South Park Blocks, Portland Oregon, NRHP Nomination

Dear Robert:

The Northwest District Association strongly supports the application by the Downtown Neighborhood Association to the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, nominating the South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places. This nomination seeks to preserve the unique characteristics of this important park in the center of our city. We believe that this nomination is consistent with the goals and policies of preserving historic resources and green spaces articulated in Portland's 2035 Comprehensive Plan.

Best Regards,
Northwest District Association

Greg Theisen
Chair, NWDA Planning Committee

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Ona Golonka <golonka.ona@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 1:03 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: Supporting the Nomination for South Park Blocks

Hello Mr. Olguin,

I support the nomination of the South Park Blocks in Portland onto the National Register of Historic Places. Not only do the South Park blocks, with their immense trees, provide respite throughout all the seasons of Portland, they also reflect Portland's history. It provides shade in the summer, sunlight in the winter, and beautiful colors in the fall. As more and more trees are being destroyed across the state and in the city for new development, these historic trees and the grounds they live on should be preserved.

I've enjoyed relaxing in the parks during PSU Farmer's Markets, before going to see a performance at the Schnitz or just going on a Saturday stroll through town.

I hope these blocks are preserved for decades to come. I hope this nomination also sets a precedent for more city parks across Oregon and the U.S. to be brought onto the list. Parks are important to us all.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
Ona Golonka

--

Ona Golonka

Robert Olguin
National Register Program Director
State Historic Preservation Office
775 Summer Street NE STE C
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Mr.. Olguin,

I am very pleased that the South Park Blocks in Portland is being considered for the National Register of Historical Places. The contribution of the South Park Blocks to the livability of our city of Portland and the enjoyment of its citizens is very noteworthy. The area is rooted in the history of our downtown, beginning in the 1850"s. For all these years we have been able to use the area for quiet pleasure walks, a farmer's market, picnics under the trees and many other activities. I personally have done all of these. I love gazing at the trees but their contribution to our air quality is even more important. As I ride the street car, I am able to appreciate its beauty weekly. I see children playing and students studying. It is in constant use.

Although some of the value of the South Park Blocks is aesthetic, the historical importance as the first city park and its long lasting importance deserves the recognition for its historical significance and needs to be protected and preserved for future generations. I look forward to hearing that is is so recognized.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pam Hellings". The signature is fluid and written in dark ink.

Pam Hellings
1920 S. River Drive #706
Portland, OR 97201
pjhellings@hotmail.com

From: [Pam and Larry Levy](#)
To: [Dean P. Gisvold](#); [OLGUIN Robert * OPRD](#)
Cc: [Adam Hillary](#); [Steven Cole](#); [Jim Heuer](#); [fredleeson@hotmail.com](#); [board@irvingtonpdx.com](#); [WENDY RAHM](#); [Barb Christopher](#); [Barbara Nagel](#); [Bob Dobrich](#); [Dean P. Gisvold](#); [Eli Green](#); [Evan Carmi](#); [Jeff Jones](#); [Jim Barta](#); [Jonathan Konkol](#); [Nathan Corser](#); [Nikki Johnston](#); [Peter O'Neil](#); [Sean](#); [Thomas Moran](#); [Tiffanie Shakespeare](#); [Tony Greiner](#)
Subject: Re: Irvington Community Association Support for the South Park Blocks nomination
Date: Friday, January 15, 2021 8:05:26 PM

Thanks for this, Dean and the ICA board. In normal life I have enjoyed the South Blocks around PSU as a senior auditor student, an attendee at many arts and other programs there, and as a small financial supporter of the school. I completely agree with this letter to the city and state Historic Preservation Committees and Historic Landmarks Commission.

Keep up the good fight.

I miss living in Irvington.

Pam Lindholm-Levy

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

On Friday, January 15, 2021, 10:00 AM, Dean P. Gisvold <deang@mcewengisvold.com> wrote:

To the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation and the
Portland Historic Landmarks Commission

Last night, January 14th, at its regularly scheduled January, 2021, meeting, the Board of Directors of the Irvington Community Association (ICA) voted to support the nomination of the South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places, and urges the Advisory Committee and the Commission to do the same.

Although Portland has many lovely parks, the South Park Blocks area is one of the few parks in the dense downtown area of Portland. For decades, it has served those who live or work downtown, PSU students, patrons of cultural organizations, members of nearby churches, residents from condo and apartment buildings fronting the blocks, and those who are exploring downtown as visitors or tourists. For all who come, the South Park Blocks provide quiet green spaces for contemplation, walking, picnics and small gatherings. And it is available year around, for free.

The South Park Blocks, comprised of 12 linear blocks, extending

from SW Salmon to Jackson Mill Streets between SW Park East and SW Park Avenue West, were donated by pioneer entrepreneur Daniel Lowndale in 1852, and were landscaped in 1877 under the direction of horticulturalist Louis Pfunder. Pfunder's basic design included five parallel rows of deciduous trees – mostly elms – above a carpet of grass and flower beds.

Portlanders love the South Park Blocks. As one who has had the pleasure of watching (my office windows give me a view of the blocks between SW Main and SW Jefferson) and using the blocks for five decades, let me tell you what impresses me about the South Park Blocks: the towering arches of mature trees, a place for meeting friends and family, the farmers markets, students studying in the grass, young children playing, quiet mid-day lunch spots, and a stroll on separated paths with long views of mature trees, especially a summer walk to Lincoln Hall at PSU to hear a concert by students or by a local chamber music group.

The ICA Board urges you to support this important nomination.
Thank you. Please place this email notification of support in the public record

Dean Gisvold,

ICA Board member, and land use committee chair

Dean P. Gisvold | Attorney at Law | Senior Partner

McEWEN GISVOLD LLP - EST. 1886

1600 Standard Plaza, 1100 SW Sixth Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204

Direct: 503-412-3548 | Office: 503-226-7321 | Fax: 503-243-2687

Email: deang@mcewengisvold.com

Website: <http://www.mcewengisvold.com>

This message may contain confidential communications and/or privileged information.

If you have received it in error, please delete it and notify the sender.

From: [PATRICIA FERRELL](#)
To: [ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD](#)
Cc: Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov; kminor.phlc@gmail.com
Subject: South Park Blocks, Portland Or, Multnomah County
Date: Friday, January 15, 2021 4:40:14 PM

January 15, 2021

To: Robert Olguin

ORSHPO National Register Program

Re: South Park Blocks, Portland OR, Multnomah County

Dear Mr. Olguin, I write you to support the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The South Park Blocks remains one of Portland's most distinctive, valued, and significant historic open spaces. The open space the Park Blocks represent in Portland's downtown urban core is a unique gem which must be preserved to enhance the livability of the city for future generations. The park represents a multi-use environment which adds to the livability of Portland.

As a graduate of the Historic Preservation Master's program at the University of Oregon, I studied landscape preservation in classes taught by Robert Melnick. These classes gave me an appreciation for the often-undervalued sense of place that landscaping contributes to an urban environment. Oregon and the City of Portland are recognized nationwide for their visionary planning goals, which include the preservation of cultural resources. The South Park Blocks is one of the cultural resources worthy of a place on The National Register.

I am a current resident of the South University District. The South Park Blocks has become one of my favorite places to walk in the area. Many of my Saturdays are spent at the PSU Farmer's Market. While exploring the neighborhood, I have enjoyed walking down the South Park Blocks thankful for the shade of the many beautiful deciduous trees which line the pathways. During these walks I have noticed children playing, students lounging in the grass while studying, people walking their dogs, wedding parties taking pictures. This open space hosts a myriad of activities which add to the character of the city as a whole.

During my time as a Historic Preservation Consultant, I worked on several nominations for buildings and districts around the state of Oregon. The South Park Blocks are deserving of a place on The National Register of Historic Places both for its' historic significance and as an early example of urban planning. As a resident of the neighborhood, it would be a joy to see the blocks listed as a city and national landmark.

Sincerely,

Patricia Ferrell

2211 SW 1st Ave. Unit 1704
Portland, OR 97201
pferrell910@msn.com

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Patricia Fromm <fromm_pat@outlook.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 10, 2021 3:11 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Cc: Kminor.phlc@gmail.com, hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov;
hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov
Subject: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County, Portland OR to the National Register of Historic

To: Robert Olguin National Register Program Director
State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer Street NE,
Suite C
Salem, OR 97301

Info: Portland Historic Landmark Commission

Dear Mr. Olguin, I write you to support the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The South Park Blocks remains one of Portland's most distinctive, valued, and significant historic open spaces. It has endured as the centerpiece for the city's educational and cultural institutions. The Park is my pathway to downtown where I'm determined to continue to support local business, especially at this time of unrest and destruction in our city. Please do not let the heritage trees be destroyed but preserved by professional arborists to increase the longevity and significance of our park.

In the heat of summer, the giant deciduous trees provide cooling shade and respite from my city apartment. Walks in the autumn warm residents with the glowing colors and as the leaves fall and the sun warms the benches and walkways. Children play, fathers read from blankets safely spread on the lawn, and elders on walkers can safely enjoy the out of doors. The PSU Market is a benefit to our city as visitors and travelers from around the world spend long hours on Saturdays enjoying both the respite of the park and the local goods, providing income year-round for many Oregon businesses.

This avenue was once home to Portland elite and formal Italianate mansions along with some of the most historic churches and some of the oldest public spaces in Portland. Please preserve this beautiful park area with placement on the National Register of Historic Places

Sincerely,

Pat Fromm

+1(304)951-1678
Portland, OR 97201

fromm_pat@outlook.com (preferred)
fromm_pat@yahoo.com

cc: Portland Historic Landmark Commission

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Patricia Fromm <fromm_pat@outlook.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 10, 2021 2:36 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: Historic Preservation Status for South Parks Blocks

Importance: High

As a home owner and resident in American Plaza Towers, I request you preserve this historic and important part of our city and my 'back yard'. The Park is my pathway to downtown where I'm determined to continue to support local business, especially at this time of unrest and destruction in our city. Please do not let the heritage trees be destroyed but preserved by professional arborists to increase the longevity and significance of our park.

In the heat of summer, the giant deciduous trees provide cooling shade and respite from my city apartment. Walks in the autumn warm residents with the glowing colors and as the leaves fall and the sun warms the benches and walkways. Children play, fathers read from blankets safely spread on the lawn, and elders on walkers can safely enjoy the out of doors. The PSU Market is a benefit to our city as visitors and travelers from around the world spend long hours on Saturdays enjoying both the respite of the park and the local goods, providing income year-round for many Oregon businesses.

This avenue was once home to Portland elite and formal Italianate mansions along with some of the most historic churches and some of the oldest public spaces in Portland. Please preserve this beautiful park area with placement on the National Register of Historic Places

Regards,

Pat Fromm

Portland, OR 97201

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Paula Pumphrey <paula.pumphrey@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2021 1:35 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: Letter of support for Nomination of the South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places

January 6, 2021

I write to you to support the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The South Park Blocks are one of Portland's oldest and most historic public places.

As a resident of Park Avenue, the South Park Blocks are my front yard. Once a week I volunteer to work in the park and help out the city's Parks and Recreation department. It's a place of never ending beauty with the leaves turning color in the fall and roses blooming in the summer. The South Park Blocks also make a beautiful backdrop for the Portland Art Museum, the Oregon Historical Society and the Schnitzer Concert Hall.

Sincerely,

Paula Pumphrey
1500 SW Park Ave #412
Portland, OR 97201
Paula.pumphrey@gmail.com

From: [Phil Gilbertson](#)
To: [ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD](#)
Cc: [Philip Gilbertson](#); [Carole Gilbertson](#)
Subject: Letter of Support for Portland South Park Blocks for National Register
Date: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 6:46:54 PM

Robert Olguin, National Register Program Director
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer Street NE Suite C
Salem, OR 97301
ORSHPO.NationalRegisterProgram@oregon.gov

January 13, 2021

Dear Mr. Olguin:

Portland has a rare opportunity to set aside the most historic park in our city to maintain its character of 150 years, the South Park Blocks of 12 contiguous southern blocks in downtown. We support the nomination of the Park for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Park is the only major green space in central downtown.

The Park is under threat to alter its core identity by (1) removing many signature deciduous trees, replaced by some coniferous trees that populate nearly all other city parks; (2) replacing portions of the park with contemporary designs and functions that are duplicated across many city parks, forfeiting the uniqueness of the South Park Blocks; and (3) the City Parks and Recreation Department ignoring its expressed intent to seek national historic designation in prior years.

We live a five-minute walk from the South Park Blocks. A week does not go by when we don't stroll through the tall shady umbrella of summer or the sunny serene cheer of winter to find quiet, renewal, contemplative space to lift our spirits, or convey us to central cultural venues of the city or to local businesses through safe walkways that uplift our lives.

The landscape of downtown Portland is undergoing massive change with construction cranes populating the skyline. The City has forfeited too many of its historic places in recent decades. Please support our collective effort to preserve the special downtown place named the South Park Blocks.

Sincerely,

Philip and Carole Gilbertson
2221 SW First Avenue, #1024
Portland, OR 97201

philgilbertson1@gmail.com
carolegilbertson42@gmail.com

c: hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov
kminor.phlc@gmail.com
Portland Historic Landmark Commission



July 1, 2020

Robert Olguin
National Register Program Coordinator
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer Street NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301-1271

Mr. Olguin,

The Downtown Neighborhood Association (DNA), a 501(c)3 organization based in Portland, Oregon, is pleased to submit herewith for your consideration an application to nominate Portland's South Park Blocks for the Department of Interior's historic designation.

A DNA committee of five dedicated, talented people have been conducting interviews and doing extensive research for the last year.

We look forward to hearing suggestions for strengthening the nomination from your office and panels so that the application can move to the next level in the process towards historic designation.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Walter Weyler
Downtown Neighborhood Association, Chair

Enc. Application for South Park Blocks

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Rebecca Nielsen <beccanielsen@earthlink.net>
Sent: Thursday, January 7, 2021 2:54 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD; hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov; kminor.phlc@gmail.com
Subject: support South Park Blocks National Register nomination

To: Robert Olguin, National Register Program Director
Portland Historic Landmark Commission

Dear Mr. Olguin and HLC members:

I am writing to support the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. One of things that makes Portland distinctive is its greenspaces, and the South Park Blocks go hand in hand with Forest Park to create that reputation. It is this connection of citizens with their environment that helps make the city what it is. This is a valued landscape and needs to remain so.

As a preservation professional working the Pacific Northwest I know how important it is to document and recognize our iconic spaces. As a person who calls Portland her hometown I know how much it means to residents, be it a shady place to have lunch in the summer to an event space or an accessible farmer's market. The rapid development happening in West Coast cities in the past decades puts open spaces at risk, particularly those in downtown areas.

Please support this well researched effort to honor and protect this city centerpiece that has fulfilled its intent to be an urban oasis.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Nielsen
5648 45th Ave SW
Seattle, WA 98136
beccanielsen@earthlink.net



June 25, 2020

Robert Olguin
National Register Program Coordinator
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
Oregon Heritage/State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer Street NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Nomination of the South Park Blocks in Portland to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Robert,

Restore Oregon strongly supports the application by the Downtown Neighborhood Association to the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, nominating the South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places. This nomination seeks to preserve the unique characteristics of this important park in the center of our city. We believe that this nomination is consistent with the goals and policies of preserving historic resources and green spaces articulated in Portland's 2035 Comprehensive Plan.

Restore Oregon is a statewide historic preservation non-profit representing thousands of local supporters working to protect and restore the historic places that make our state like no place else. For some time, we have worked to draw attention to the rapid loss of historic fabric throughout the state. Acceleration in the growth of the Portland-metro region's population has spurred a spike in the demolition of historic homes, structures, and green space and resulted in the loss of historically significant resources and an irrevocably diminished historical record.

The South Park Blocks certainly qualifies as one of Portland's earliest public places that has maintained much of its character for 150 years. It is therefore clearly eligible for a place on the National Register. We believe that the South Park Blocks should be eligible for inclusion on the National Register under the following criteria:

1. Criterion A: Community Planning and Development + Recreation and Culture
2. Criterion C: Distinctive Landscape Entity/Landscape Architecture

Additionally, the South Park Blocks may be eligible under Criterion D for its potential to yield information important to pre-contact history.

As an entity, it is a resilient space that has maintained its historic integrity until the present day. Some changes have occurred, but miraculously very few and none that have altered the original design. Defining characteristics include:

- Open Space – Flexible & Adaptive – For a variety of both restful and active uses
- Deciduous Trees in five axial rows

-
- Restrained Simplicity
 - Defined Boundaries

Inclusion on the National Register will help to ensure that the South Park Blocks and their defining historical characteristics are recognized and maintained during future planning. The South Park Blocks remain the centerpiece for the city's educational and cultural institutions and continues to tell the story of its association with significant recreational, cultural, political, and landscape trends in Portland's history.

Restore Oregon and its partners and members appreciate your consideration of our comments in support of the application by the Downtown Neighborhood Association to the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, nominating the South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Katelyn Weber
Program Director

From: rgrahm@aol.com
To: [ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD](#)
Cc: kminor.phlc@gmail.com; hillary.adams@portland.gov
Subject: Portland South Park Blocks Historic Register Nomination
Date: Thursday, January 14, 2021 12:14:03 PM

Robert Olguin
National Register Program Director
State Historic Preservation Office

Dear Mr. Olguin,

As a downtown Portland resident I support the nomination of Portland's South Park Blocks for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Donated to the city by early pioneers in 1852, laid out in 1877, the design of this marvelous greenscape has proven its enduring beauty and versatility as the city's urban core has grown up around it.

Over these 14 decades this now downtown 12 block park has preserved its five towering columns of magnificent deciduous trees in its historic design. As well as rare natural beauty and respite in the city center it has though the years afforded versatile space for many community activities, weddings, graduations, and farmers' markets. Since Portland's earliest years it has served, and continues to serve, the city well. It must be preserved.

Modifications to the Park Blocks' historical design would result in loss of trees, shrinkage of green space, and destruction of historic beauty and character. In short, civic vandalism. The South Park Blocks merit the protection afforded by inclusion in the Nation Register of Historic Places.

Richard Rahm
1221 SW 10th Avenue, #1001
Portland, OR 97205

From: [Robert Bell](#)
To: [ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD](#)
Cc: hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov; Kminor.phlc@gmail.com
Subject: Preservation of South Park Blocks Portland Oregon
Date: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 3:57:55 PM

I write to you in support of placement of the South Park Blocks in Portland OR on the National Historic Preservation Register. It does not need development. It is doing very well after 150 years, serving as a campus for Portland State University, an urban forest and gathering place for the community, and multiple other historic and artistic events, both now and for those in the future.

Please use your influence to keep it as it is.

Sincerely yours,

Robert F. Bell

1005 SW 10th Ave. #1005
Portland OR 97205

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Rod Merrick <merrick_map@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 10, 2021 8:45 PM
To: OLGUIN Robert * OPRD
Subject: South Park Blocks Nomination
Attachments: JRM South Park Blocks nomination endorsement.pdf

Robert, please forward the attached to the SACHP. Our neighborhood association (Eastmoreland NA) will likely add an endorsement but won't meet until 1/21 so I hope you will allow that to be included in the record as well. Thanks! Rod

Rod Merrick, AIA NCARB

Merrick Architecture Planning

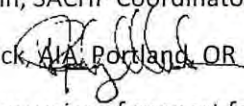
Portland, OR 503.771.7762

Date: January 12, 2021

Subject: **Nomination of South Park Blocks, Portland Oregon to the National Register of Historic Places**

To: Chair and Members of the Oregon State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation

Via: Robert Olguin, SACHP Coordinator, Robert.olguin@oregon.gov

From: Rod Merrick,  ~~VIA: Portland, OR~~

Please consider my voice of support for the nomination of the South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places. These blocks are among the most historic in Portland and set an important precedent for the many similar green boulevards envisioned in the Olmstead Plan that add to the distinction of Portland as a city of great parks and neighborhoods.

For over 150 years, and despite many changes around these blocks, they have offered a well preserved axis of calm and greenery and are among the most memorable in the city. The Nomination provides thorough documentation of the land donation, the development with axial rows of deciduous trees, placement of public art, and the significant events that have occurred in the park over the decades.

The South Park Blocks are iconic and among the most well-loved places in Portland. They form a pedestrian mall that defines the north-south axis of the city, links the educational, cultural and commercial centers, provides respite from traffic, and includes an extraordinary collection of deciduous elm trees that provide shade in the summer, color in the fall and spring, and sun in the winter. Their cobble paved walkways, predominant green lawns and collection of sculptures make them an outstanding setting for walking, picnics, quiet contemplation and for any number of celebrations and events.

Our own neighborhood is defined by a comparable boulevard lined with a parallel arcade of linden trees that echo at a smaller scale the dignity, calm, color, environmentally beneficial, and place making characteristics of the Park Blocks.

I am concerned about the future of the Park Blocks. A master plan proposed for the South Park Blocks threatens to irreplaceably damage the historical character by transforming the blocks into a bicycle transportation corridor. This involves removing all trees along the western side of the park, inserting evergreen trees here and there, and "activation" with the insertion of a two lane bike trail (redundant with the slow narrow streets flanking the blocks).

It is significant that this nomination has been submitted by a coalition of citizen volunteers who, under the auspices of the Downtown Neighborhood Association, initiated and participated in the documentation process; yet another example of the essential nature of citizen participation in preservation of Oregon history.

Recognition for these 12 blocks in the heart of a great Pacific Northwest city is long overdue. I appreciate the importance of your role in protecting Oregon History. Thank you.

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Roger M. Ellingson <rogere@rmegen.net>
Sent: Saturday, January 2, 2021 2:43 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: South Park Blocks nomination

Greetings,

I support the nomination of the South Park Blocks to the National Registry of Historic Places recently put forth. What a wonderful example of balanced urban planning done more than 1.5 centuries ago. I would think inclusion on the list would be of benefit for Portland, Ore.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the proposal.

Roger M. Ellingson
8515 SW Barnes Road
Portland, OR 97225

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Sue Collins-Larson <larson456@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 2:16 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks to the National Register of Historic Places

January 11, 2021

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I write you to support the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The South Park Blocks remains one of Portland's most distinctive, valued, and significant historic open spaces. It has endured as the centerpiece for the city's educational and cultural institutions.

I live in the downtown area and I enjoy the South Park Blocks very much. I love being able to walk to so many places and I always choose to walk through the South Park Blocks because it makes me feel wholesome and happy. I enjoy the mature trees, people sitting and visiting on benches and the farmer's markets. It feels like an oasis from the rest of our busy, hurried city. I am reminded of Europe and the many green spaces in urban areas for pedestrians. The South Park Blocks adds so much livability and enrichment to my experiences as a resident of downtown.

Sincerely,
Sue Collins-Larson
2309 SW 1st Ave. #1541
Portland, Ore. 97201
larson456@gmail.com

cc: Portland Historic Landmark Commission

From: [Susan Bliss](#)
To: [ORSHPO.NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD](#)
Subject: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County, Portland OR to the National Register of Historic Places
Date: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 3:22:30 AM

January 18, 2021

To: Robert Olguin
ORSHPO.NationalRegisterProgram@oregon.gov
National Register Program Director
State Historic Preservation Office
725 Sumer Street NE, Suite C
Salem, Oregon 97301

Subject: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Portland, Oregon, to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I am writing in support of the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County, Portland Oregon, to the National Register of Historic Places. Besides conferring a long-overdue honor, placement on the register would enhance public recognition of the history and value of Portland's 150-year-old park.

When my husband and I moved to Portland in 2006, it may well have been the South Park Blocks that convinced us to pick up our cats in Washington D.C., and move out to Portland. For us, and many others, the beautiful Park Blocks are one of this city's major selling points.

The park was designed, and remains, a *deciduous* downtown forest, much loved for its seasonal display, from the deepening greens of spring and summer, to the reds and golds of autumn, and winter's silhouetted trees against an open sky. We treasure the park as a place to enjoy the outdoors and explore the cultural institutions that form its border.

The park is a magnet for a diversity of human activity, from kindergarten classes and university graduations, to farmers markets, outdoor classes, and concerts of many musics. Perhaps its most popular function is providing many a comfortable spot for conversation or solo contemplation.

Just outside its border, the park is ringed by the city's preeminent cultural centers—the Portland Art Museum; the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, home to the Oregon Symphony; The Oregon Historical Society, and Portland State, "one of the nation's most innovative universities," according to U.S. News.

For its distinctive combination of natural, cultural and historic significance, of inestimable value to the citizens of Portland, the South Park Blocks meet and surpass requirements for listing by the National Park Service on its National Register of Historic Places.

Yours truly,

Susan D. Bliss
1221 SW 10th Avenue, #705
Portland, Oregon 97205

sdbliss@me.com
503-501-7258

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Teresa Arthur <teresa.arthur@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 5:18 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Cc: Kminor.phlc@gmail.com; hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov
Subject: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County, Portland OR to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I write you to support the nomination of the South Park Blocks of Portland, OR for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The South Park Blocks remains one of Portland's most distinctive, valued, and significant historic open spaces. It has endured as the centerpiece for the city's educational and cultural institutions.

I have lived across from the South Park Blocks for the past four years and it was the natural beauty and established canopy that attracted my husband and me to deciding to live where we do. I regularly walk my dog in the blocks and admire the plantings and serenity it brings to our city.

I do believe it is a very important landmark in our city and should be preserved and cared for. Thank you for the consideration.

Sincerely,

Teresa Arthur

1300 SW Park Ave. #1815
Portland, OR 97201
503.929.0010

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: TERESA MCGRATH <bone1953@msn.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 3, 2021 6:38 AM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD; Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov
Subject: south park blocks

"Over its many decades, the South Park Blocks have attracted Portland State University, several cultural institutions, churches and high-rise apartments as surrounding neighbors. One of the park's primary functions has been to provide quiet green space for contemplation, walking, picnics and small gatherings.

"The South Park Blocks (as a single park) is defined by its restrained simplicity and simple, direct material palette," the nomination states. "Pfunder's original design intent is visible in the promenade plan and axial planting layout, featuring a unifying canopy of mature, deciduous trees."

"Another defining characteristic of the park blocks is the paved plaza areas that provide a place for communal gathering and private contemplation. Public monuments, artwork, plaques and memorials, and bench seating have been added over the years."

Several cross streets toward the southern end of the park have been closed to vehicles, making that end of the park a public open space for the PSU campus. Blocks at both ends of the park are used from time to time for farmers' markets.

The nomination notes that many small changes have occurred over the years. Regardless, "Overall, the South Park Blocks retains its original shape, much of its historic pedestrian circulation pattern, significant public monuments and sculptures, as well as its major character-defining features. The park's integrity of materials and workmanship have been slightly diminished, due to the addition of non-historic features (including light standards, cruciform walkways, park furniture and public art) on some blocks."

Here are several reasons why Portlanders love the South Park Blocks. If you support the National Register Nomination, select some that are important to you to include in your comments.

- Beauty of the towering arches of mature trees
- Green spaces for quiet in the midst of the big city
- Shade in the summer, more sunlight in the winter; vivid colors in the fall
- A place for meeting friends
- Farmers markets
- Seasonal gardens and flowers
- Appreciation of public art
- Students studying in the grass
- Graduation ceremonies
- Young children playing
- Long promenade walks on separated paths with long views,
- Quiet mid-day lunch spots"

https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/OH/Documents/OR_MultnomahCounty_SouthParkBlocks.pdf

we agree with these sentiments....

i have lived in portland since 1977, and biked over to the south park blocks dozens of times over the yrs...

it's gorgeous, peaceful, and full of people who appreciate it..

some wise words here from my friend...

" Although the Portland Bureau of Parks had recommended a national listing for the South Parks Blocks on a few occasions in the past, the bureau for whatever reasons never followed through. The Downtown Neighborhood Association over a year ago began discussions that led to the nomination effort."

-

thx,

teresa mcgrath and nat kim

3344 ne 15th portland or 97212 and 442 ne sumner portland or. 97211

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: THOMAS RAY <thomas-ray@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, January 10, 2021 3:14 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Cc: Kminor.phlc@gmail.com; hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov; Walter Weyler; Wendy Rahm
Subject: South Park Blocks Nomination for Nat'l Register
Attachments: SouthParkBlocksNominationSupport-letter.docx; SouthParkBlocksNominationSupport-letter.pdf

Mr. Robert Olguin
National Register Program Director
ORSHPO State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer St. NE, Suite C
Salem, Oregon 97301
ORSHPO.NationalRegisterProgram@oregon.gov

January 10, 2021

Subject: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County. Portland, Oregon to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I live in downtown Portland. I write in strong support of the nomination of the South Park Blocks nomination for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The foresight of our city's founders, and the stewardship of their successors, has become the centerpiece of Portland's cultural, educational and inspirational institutions and life. This enduring refuge from the expanse of concrete, steel, glass, asphalt and bustle remains fragile and susceptible to the whims of every generation.

That the remaining (surviving) 12 south contiguous park blocks of these iconic spaces have not been protected by listing on the National Register may be an oversight, but after 150 years, it is negligence to not do so immediately.

The simplicity of a towering cathedral of arching deciduous trees above a carpet of soft grass as provided adaptability and flexibility for a dozen decades to meet ever changing uses – while preserving its intrinsic design of unified linear arcades and promenades. Preservation is needed to maintain the integrity of the whole before it is further eroded. Activities have flourished here (farmers' markets, graduations, weddings, AA meetings, public art exhibitions, meditations, and more) within this open space, without need for disrupting it. It provides and endures, if protected.

The 5 aligned rows of deciduous trees are the lungs of this city, providing shade in summer and open sky in winter, cleaning the air, sequestering carbon (10 x greater than evergreens), while leaving open space beneath their boughs. Their longevity remains ahead of them, not behind, if maintained. The grandeur of all four seasons is provided each year in this public "backyard" for every citizen. Piecemeal erosion of the spaces, once lost, cannot be reconstituted. The unity of design and the vision of the founders, will be lost.

I urge that you, and the State Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation, enthusiastically endorse, recommend, and forward this nomination to the federal Department of Interior.

Respectfully yours,

Thomas L. Ray, M.D.
2211 SW 1st Ave., Unit 802
Portland, Oregon 97201-5013
thomas-ray@comcast.net

cc Portland Historic Landmark Commission (PHLC)
Downtown Neighborhood Association (DNA)
DNA - Land Use / Transportation Committee

Attachments: SouthParkBlocksNominationSupport-letter.docx
SouthParkBlocksNominationSupport-letter.pdf

Mr. Robert Olguin
National Register Program Director
ORSHPO State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer St. NE, Suite C
Salem, Oregon 97301
ORSHPO.NationalRegisterProgram@oregon.gov

January 10, 2021

Subject: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks,
Multnomah County. Portland, Oregon to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I live in downtown Portland. I write in strong support of the nomination of the South Park Blocks nomination for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The foresight of our city's founders, and the stewardship of their successors, has become the centerpiece of Portland's cultural, educational and inspirational institutions and life. This enduring refuge from the expanse of concrete, steel, glass, asphalt and bustle remains fragile and susceptible to the whims of every generation.

That the remaining (surviving) 12 south contiguous park blocks of these iconic spaces have not been protected by listing on the National Register may be an oversight, but after 150 years, it is negligence to not do so immediately.

The simplicity of a towering cathedral of arching deciduous trees above a carpet of soft grass as provided adaptability and flexibility for a dozen decades to meet ever changing uses – while preserving its intrinsic design of unified linear arcades and promenades. Preservation is needed to maintain the integrity of the whole before it is further eroded. Activities have flourished here (farmers' markets, graduations, weddings, AA meetings, public art exhibitions, meditations, and more) within this open space, without need for disrupting it. It provides and endures, if protected.

The 5 aligned rows of deciduous trees are the lungs of this city, providing shade in summer and open sky in winter, cleaning the air, sequestering carbon (10 x greater than evergreens), while leaving open space beneath their boughs. Their longevity remains ahead, not behind, their lives if maintained. The grandeur of all four seasons is provided each year in this public “backyard” for every citizen. Piecemeal erosion of the spaces, once lost, cannot be reconstituted. The unity of design, the vision of the founders, will be lost.

I urge that you, and the State Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation, enthusiastically endorse, recommend, and forward this nomination to the federal Department of Interior.

Respectfully yours,

Thomas L. Ray, M.D.
2211 SW 1st Ave., Unit 802
Portland, Oregon 97201-5013
thomas-ray@comcast.net

cc Portland Historic Landmark Commission (PHLC)
Downtown Neighborhood Association (DNA)
DNA - Land Use / Transportation Committee

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Tim Hutchinson <timhutch2010@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 10:12 AM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: South Park Blocks National Register Listing

January 11, 2021.

Dear Gentlepersons,

The South Park Blocks is a Portland historical and aesthetic treasure. It's history dates to before the City of Portland was incorporated as a city.

Daniel Lownsdale's vision in 1848 was a green strip extending from Portland's West Hills all the way to the Willamette River. He almost achieved it. Today, as in Portland's early days the park is a respite of fresh air and quiet from the commotion of the city.

Much of what we experience today dates to Emanuel Mische, a protege of the great John Olsted(NY's Central Park and others) who became Parks Superintendent in 1907. He worked to transform the park into a garden showplace. The park is steeped in lore, but the vision of a green strip lined by cultural institutions like churches, museums and schools has not changed in more than 100 years!

As a Portland resident, it is a delight to experience the Park Blocks and the majesty our predecessors made possible. This urban delight should be acknowledged as a landmark and preserved for generations to come.

I wholeheartedly support the nomination of the South Park Block for a National Register listing.

Respectfully,

Timothy Hutchinson
Portland, Oregon

Date: January 15, 2021

To: Robert Olguin

ORSHPO.NationalRegisterProgram@oregon.gov

National Register Program Director

State Historic Preservation Office

725 Summer Street NE, Suite C

Salem, OR 97301

Info: Portland Historic Landmark Commission

Kminor.phlc@gmail.com, hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County, Portland OR to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Olguin,

I write you to support the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The South Park Blocks remains one of Portland's most distinctive, valued, and significant historic open spaces. It has endured as the centerpiece for the city's educational and cultural institutions.

I live in the West End neighborhood and the South Park Blocks serves as our playground and community green space. No matter what season the South Park Blocks are a magnet for folks of all ages from day-care children, to PSU students, to seniors. The South Park Blocks create the connection to the twice weekly farmers market, the cultural organizations including the Portland Art Museum, Oregon Historical Society, and Schnitzer Portland 5 venues. Since becoming a city the South Park Blocks has been an iconic feature in Portland. That is just as true and perhaps even more important today.

Sincerely,

Tom Neilsen

1221 SW 10th Ave. #1604

tomneilsen@mac.com

cc: Portland Historic Landmark Commission

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Walter Weyler <walter_weyler@sequenceusa.com>
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 1:02 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: South Park Blocks

Mr. Robert Olguin
National Register Program Director
ORSHPO State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer St. NE, Suite C
Salem, Oregon 97301
ORSHPO.NationalRegisterProgram@oregon.gov

January 10, 2021

Subject: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Portland, Oregon to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Olguin,

As a resident of downtown Portland. I support the nomination of the South Park Blocks for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. These blocks are the centerpiece of Portland's cultural, educational and inspirational institutions and life. They are an essential and welcome refuge from the concrete, steel, glass, asphalt and bustle of Portland's downtown.

After 150 years of unprotected status, it is time to protect these 12 contiguous iconic park blocks.

The towering deciduous trees above soft grass provide adaptability and flexibility – while preserving their intrinsic design. Preservation is needed to maintain the integrity of the whole before it is eroded. Farmers' markets, graduations, weddings, AA meetings, public art exhibitions, meditations, and more flourish within this open space. It will continue to provide space and respite, if protected.

The 5 rows of deciduous trees are the lungs of the city, cleaning the air, sequestering carbon (10 x greater than evergreens), providing shade in summer and open sky in winter, while leaving open space. They are healthy and, if maintained properly, will remain so. The enjoyment of four seasons is provided each year in this public "backyard" for every citizen.

I urge you to endorse, recommend, and forward this nomination to the Federal Department of Interior.

Thank you, and all the best,

Walter Weyler
1221 SW Tenth Avenue, unit 805
Portland, OR 97205
Walter_weyler@sequenceusa.com
503-490-3907

January 15, 2021

Robert Olguin

ORSHPO.NationalRegisterProgram@oregon.gov

National Register Program Director

State Historic Preservation Office

725 Summer Street NE, Suite C

Salem, OR 97301

CC: Portland Historic Landmark Commission

Kminor.phlc@gmail.com, hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for the Nomination of the South Park Blocks, Multnomah County, Portland OR to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Mr. Olguin,

As a downtown Portland resident who lives one block from this park, I write you to strongly support the nomination of the South Park Blocks for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The South Park Blocks remains one of Portland's most distinctive, valued, and significant historic open spaces. It has endured as the centerpiece for the city's educational and cultural institutions. This nomination and designation are long overdue.

This series of 12 consecutive blocks is one of Portland's three oldest parks, having been donated in the 1850's for the *public's use*. That lofty purpose has been enjoyed for the last 150 years despite development and institutional pressures over the years. Historic uses have included events of the Rose Festival, demonstrations ranging from gay rights to anti-Vietnam War protests, graduation ceremonies, etc. Today as the people's park it sees ethnic weddings, farmer's markets, meditation groups, AA meetings, arts events, student demonstrations, civic protests, informal socializing, people taking long walks down one of the many paths, and people seeking rest and respite on the benches from the busy surrounding hardscape of downtown. This wide range of uses is made possible by the *intentional* 150-year-old *simple design* of 5 rows of (approximately 9) tall, deciduous trees in axial alignment on each block.

This intentional design is unique to Portland's parks and it is hoped that both this design, the tall tree varieties including many American elms, and the original boundaries as seen in early maps (of approximately 124 feet wide) will be approved as defining characteristics of a National Register listing.

COVID/19 has put a spotlight on the park's importance as an equity issue. The park is located in one of Portland's densest neighborhoods of affordable housing, many of whose residents do not have cars. This is their *only non-activated greenspace* and the park's simple design ensures its flexibility for many uses. There are two other nearby parks that are hardscape and activated.

I want to thank especially the group of Downtown Neighborhood Association volunteers who took nearly 2 years to create this documentation for you to consider, even as research became

ever more challenging with COVID/19. I greatly appreciate your and the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation's role in protecting this important part of Oregon's history. I urge you to approve sending this nomination to the National Registry with a strong recommendation for the South Park Blocks' approval to the National Register.

Sincerely,

Wendy Rahm
1221 SW 10th Avenue
Portland, OR 97205
wwrahm@aol.com

cc: Portland Historic Landmark Commission
Downtown Neighborhood Association
Brandon Spencer-Hartle, Portland Planning and Sustainability

Collis Tracy * OPRD

From: Deanna <deannamc1013@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 8, 2021 2:53 PM
To: ORSHPO NationalRegisterProgram * OPRD
Subject: Support for South Park Blocks listing on National Register of Historic Places

We enthusiastically support listing of the Portland South Park Blocks on the National Register of Historic Places. We live in a high-rise close to the Park Blocks, and love and use them the way they are.

This park is unique in Portland, and pretty much in the entire United States. It is historic – as you know, it was set aside very early in Portland’s history. Its line-up of deciduous trees creates a feeling of stability, but allows all kinds of activity to go on under them. (Shade in the summer, sun in the winter.) Very important is that they are user-friendly. Little pre-school kids walk, hand-in-hand, through the park in the mornings. Many people use the benches for reading or having lunch. Others just meet to chat or rest and watch the world go by.

The section with the roses (which neighbors, including us, enjoy pruning occasionally, under the direction of Portland Parks) gives us high-rise living folks a chance to do a bit of gardening. We love to watch the native plant beds blooming in one part, and the flowering bulbs (daffodils, etc.) in other parts. We make sure to “soak in” the wonderful fall colors (and love scuffing through the fallen leaves) – makes you almost forget you’re in the middle of a big city.

We walk through the Park Blocks nearly every day in normal, non-Covid, times, when we spend more time outdoors. We love walking through the Park’s center path to go to concerts at Lincoln Hall (at Portland State) – which is especially wonderful on those few winter nights when there’s snow.

We love to go to the Farmers Market which is set up in front of the Mark Building (also in non-Covid times!) – it’s a perfect setting with the farmers’ booths on cement, and trees shading the participants and shoppers.

The South Park Blocks create a feeling of stability and comfort (and a link to the past) in a city that is changing rapidly...older buildings being torn down and replaced by non-human scale skyscrapers. The Park Blocks are user-friendly on a human scale.

A historic listing will help the South Park Blocks remain as user-friendly (and lovely) as they have been for so many years.

Thank you for your consideration.

Wilfried and Deanna Mueller-Crispin
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