

STATE OF THE CITY PRESERVATION REPORT 2013
PORTLAND HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
MAY 8, 2013

Responsibilities of the Historic Landmarks Commission

Portland is blessed with a rich and distinctive heritage. Buildings, public spaces and unique neighborhoods are the fabric which links our magnificent natural setting, cultural diversity and complex history together. These elements are foundational to keeping Portland unique and livable, but maintaining these aspects of our city is a difficult task.

The Portland City Council has charged the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) with this responsibility. We are citizen volunteers appointed by the Mayor to promote the protection and preservation of Portland's historic and architectural heritage and to provide leadership and expertise on maintaining and enhancing Portland's architectural and cultural resources. The HLC identifies and protects buildings and other properties that have historic or cultural significance or special architectural merit. We provide advice on historic preservation matters, coordinate historic preservation programs in the City and are actively involved in the development of design guidelines for historic design districts.

We take seriously these responsibilities and, as part of our mission, we submit this report as the fourth annual installment of direct accountability of the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission to the Portland City Council.

Landmark Commission 2012 – Year in Review

The Commission met 16 times during 2012 and conducted retreats on February 24, 2012 and February 25, 2013. Additionally, the Commission Chair meets quarterly with the Design Commission and Planning and Sustainability Commission Chairs to share and coordinate overlapping interests.

Bureau of Development Services staff issued 120 Type I or II decisions in 2012 and four of these decisions were appealed to HLC for consideration. This is 30 more reviews than in 2011 suggesting that restoration and rehabilitation within Historic and Conservation Districts continues to increase. Thirty six percent of the total Type I or II decision related to activities occurring within the Irvington Historic District and three of the four appeals were in Irvington.

We sincerely thank BDS staff for not only its diligence in providing timely review but also for its efforts in completing the Historic Resource Code Improvement Project discussed in greater detail below.

There were four Type III Historic Design Review decisions including two new apartment buildings within the Alphabet Historic District, Memorial Coliseum and a series of townhomes in Kin's Hill. HLC heard one Design Advice Request proposal.

Finally, eight National Register nominations were reviewed and forwarded to the State with recommendations for approval including recommending the creation of the Buckman Historic District. The Commission received a number of briefings that addressed a broad spectrum of topics including Gateway Markers for Terwilliger Parkway, The "Greenest Building," understanding the intersection of historic preservation and sustainability, and the Central City N/NE Quadrant I-5 Corridor Broadway-Weidler Plan.

2012 Landmarks / Historic Preservation Successes

- Adoption of the Historic Resource Improvement Code Project (HRCIP)
- Reducing the application processing fee for minor modifications of historic resources to \$250 as a means of incentivizing preservation.
- Submittal of the Buckman Historic District for listing on the National Register
- Creation of the Portland Coalition for Historic Resources
- Infill Development approvals in the Kings Hill + Alphabet Districts
- Positive Enforcement of Illegal Alterations in the Irvington District

Historic Preservation Priorities for 2013

I. Involvement in Ongoing City-Wide Planning Activities

The HLC has remained actively engaged in long-term planning activities pursued by the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability including the HRCIP, the Comprehensive Plan and the 2035 Central City Plan. As such, the HLC is in the process of formulating its first series of comments to the draft Plan. HLC membership has committed to participate in the West Quadrant Plan Stakeholder Committee for the Central City 2035 Plan. This participation will continue the themes identified in the Portland Plan, including preservation as a means of furthering social equity and of combating climate change. The issues that we expect will reoccur as the various plans get adopted include:

- Incentivizing and encouraging rehabilitation and adaptive reuse over new construction. This needs to be a key priority and recognized as an important part of our City's Sustainability strategy. A recent national study by Green Building Services shows that if **only Portland** were to reuse the buildings likely to be torn down over the next 10 years, we would meet **15% of the Nation's goals in Carbon reduction** over that same period.

Preservation is an economic job creator resulting in more labor and local investment than any other construction type, while enhancing our regions livability.

- Acknowledge that many of the city and neighborhood centers subject to the greatest development pressure are likely to be places with older buildings or even intact historic centers or corridors that we risk losing if we do not identify specific protection strategies in advance of allowing development. With the economy on the rebound and increasing pressure on urban density, the risk of losing historic resources is going to intensify over the next several years.
- Identify strategies that encourage the preservation of resources that may not yet be designated significant. We desperately need an updated citywide historic resource inventory. Much has changed since the last was done in 1984, and with the 2035 Plan in full swing, its unclear what might be risked without understanding what we have. Mid-Century Modern architecture did not even exist as a genre the last time the survey was done. The Memorial Coliseum debate that unfolded in recent years here is a notable example of what is at risk when relying on an incomplete inventory.
- Require compatibility for new construction in historic and conservation districts that is not stylistically literal but instead focuses on design such as massing, height, materiality and setbacks.
- Acknowledge the significant role that historic preservation, rehabilitation and heritage tourism play as a job creator within Portland and encourage the adoption of plan policies and regulations that further this goal. No where is this opportunity more visible than in Skidmore / Old Town where all of the elements are there to create a thriving Landmark District but vacant lots continue to prevent critical mass and thwart development energy.

II. Make Preservation Easier

During the HRCIP adoption process it became clear that the City, and HLC in particular, could do more to educate residents about the benefits and obligations associated with owning a historic structure. As such, the HLC has appointed a number of sub-committees to work with our preservation colleagues to create a series of matrices or how-to guides that may include:

- A Historic District How-To Guide
- Windows and Doors Guide
- Porches and Awnings Guide

A core element of encouraging preservation is providing updated documentation about resources within the city and again, highlights the need for an updated Historic Resource Inventory (HRI). For the past two years, the HLC has come before you asking that funds be dedicated to update the City's Historic Resource Inventory from 1987 that is woefully out of date.

The City received a Certified Local Government grant to conduct further survey work of unreinforced masonry buildings that have not been seismically upgraded, and are highly susceptible to damage by earthquake. As part of doing this work, HLC is working with the historic consultant (a former HLC chair) to create a template that could be used for conducting historic inventory work city-wide. HLC believes that if we can come up with a platform for retaining inventory information, it could call on students, interns, and neighborhoods to collect the necessary data on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood, house-by-house basis.

The HLC is committed to continually chipping away at the HRI—something that we feel is so essential to setting priorities for preservation in planning and making informed decisions about future growth of the City. The HLC would welcome a greater commitment of funds from the City Council to further this much-needed effort.

III. Continued Need for Enforcement

The other side of encouraging preservation is a commitment from the City that it will pursue enforcement were necessary to protect historic resources.

One area that the Landmarks Commission has been pushing for increased efforts on the civic side is when it comes to loss of historic signage in our central city historic districts. While new signage is subject to strict review guidelines, old signage is ‘grandfathered’ in as ‘an existing non-conforming use’. Many of these signs are nearly a century old and were hand painted on masonry,



and lend a wonderful authenticity to the districts they grace. The City has taken a very liberal position in our opinion in allowing modern media ‘supergraphic’ signs to be plastered over these emblems, replete with billboard lighting. This seems to be a clear expansion of the nonconforming use rights and threatens to change the face of the districts given the amazing revenue these new signs can generate. We ask that any new signage installations in these locations match the original medium in which the sign was made, which is consistent with how the code is enforced in other areas.



IV. Public Commission Cooperation to Prohibit Publicly Funded Demolition or Neglect

In August 2012, HLC leadership met again with representatives of PDC and the Mayor's office to continue dialoguing about upcoming PDC objectives and projects that could affect historic resources. During that meeting, PDC emphasized its shift in focus from conducting urban renewal as the "building developer" to incentivizing entirely private development in key markets and based on principles of equity. Therefore, it is unlikely that PDC will acquire additional historic resources. HLC encouraged PDC to prioritize historic preservation and adaptive reuse as a sustainability policy and to educate developers on the incentives available. PDC noted that the overall increased popularity of restoration for private developers may have resolved this issue but PDC will take the recommendation under advisement. The meeting was productive and all parties agreed that improved communication between the two commissions that could result in the earliest possible discussion of potential conflict could only be beneficial to both organizations. On that front, we would like to continue holding an annual meeting with PDC and would ask that the Mayor support this request by asking his staff to help coordinate to bring this meeting to fruition.

The HLC continues to seek City Council support of a policy that restricts the use of urban renewal money, or any public money, for the demolition of National Register properties, either intentionally or by neglect. The Council should consider adoption of a new policy obligating all City-managed entities to: "Prioritize the investment of public dollars in projects that enhance stewardship of City-owned resources and that encourage maintenance and rehabilitation of existing building over demolition to clear land for new construction." This policy is consistent with the statutory mandate in ORS 358.653, which stipulates that cities must assure that historically significant properties within its control shall not be "demolished, substantially altered or allowed to deteriorate." HLC is especially sensitive to this issue given that development plans for Centennial Mills, the old Blanchet House, and Portland Fire Department Engine House #2 at 543 NW 3rd have not been identified. A City that embraces sustainability, preservation and stewardship must not expend public funds in efforts that so blatantly hamper these objectives.

V. The Adoption of the Skidmore / Old Town Historic Guidelines

It has now been five years since we forwarded to Council our proposed Design Guidelines and Cast Iron Resolution for approval. The controversy blockading the adoption of the Design Guidelines and the Cast Iron Resolution centered around a proposal to allow for inappropriate height and scale on five sites selected within our only National Landmark District, which Landmarks, the preservation community, and even the National Park Service opposed. Last year, our esteemed Chair Art DeMuro met with the Mayor's office, offering a compromise that would have allowed the additional height to go forward on approximately half of the properties

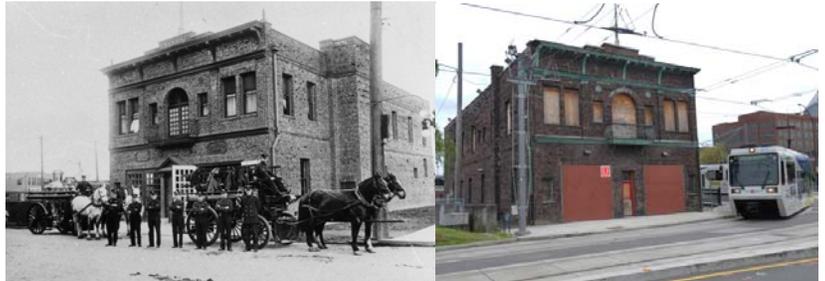
identified to receive it. This offer was summarily rejected. Again, it is regretful that this prior investment of public time and resources generated documents that are the paradigm for all historic design review guidelines in this city, yet they sit on a shelf unadopted. We would welcome the new Council to once again bring this issue to the table and see if a solution to the impasse can be found. The HLC stands ready to assist.

Threatened and Endangered Resources

1. *Centennial Mills* – PDC has recently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a developer to complete due diligence and develop schematic designs for the project. Unfortunately, the MOU makes no recommendations and sets no requirements for the preservation and adaptive reuse of any of the existing buildings.



2. *Portland Fire Department Engine House #2* – Another building owned by PDC and a classic case of demolition by neglect. When asked, PDC cited the fire station’s very poor condition and significant access challenges as reasons it has not been restored and renovated.



3. *Memorial Coliseum* – Even though it is listed on the National Register, the lack of progress in pursuing minor improvement to enhance the likelihood of greater use gives the HLC reason for concern.



4. *Multnomah County Courthouse* – Concerns about code deficiencies and evolving needs have led to discussions as to whether this building should be renovated or a new building



should be built elsewhere leaving the future of this building uncertain.

5. *The original Blanchet House and New Chinatown / Japantown Historic District* – The loss of the Kiernan Block, aka the ‘Dirty Duck’, demolished in 2011 to make way for the new Blanchet House, PDC traded away an existing turn-of-the-century contributing building in the Historic Chinatown District for a tear down and new development deal. The result of this deal is to leave the original Blanchet House, which PDC now controls, vacant and seriously endangered. Despite the fact that PDC created the historic district, it is plagued with vacant parking lots and is fast losing its cultural significance for which it was created.



6. *Skidmore/Old Town* — Proposed Zoning Code Amendments that remain under consideration by Council threaten the loss of National Landmark designation for our city’s most important historic commercial district.

7. *Northwest Cultural Center* — The Northwest Children’s Theater, Waterleaf Architecture and Schommer Construction have teamed and are exploring a rehabilitation plan for this Alphabet District landmark.

8. *511 Building* — We understand that PNCA has selected a project manager and begun its planning process for the rehabilitation of this historic post office on the North Park Blocks but have not seen anything. HLC will reach out to PNCA requesting an update.

9. *Portland Public Schools* — The bond levy passed but future bonds are anticipated. All future bond language should be scrutinized to keep these treasures off our list.

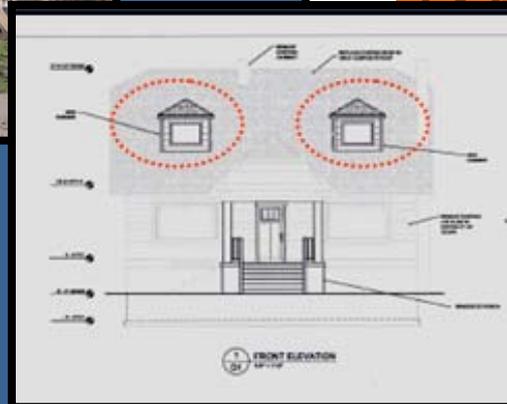
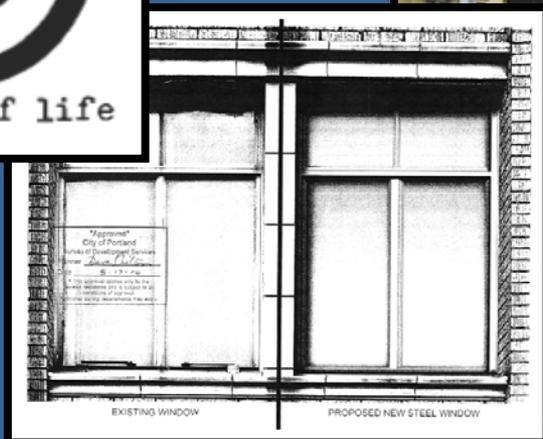
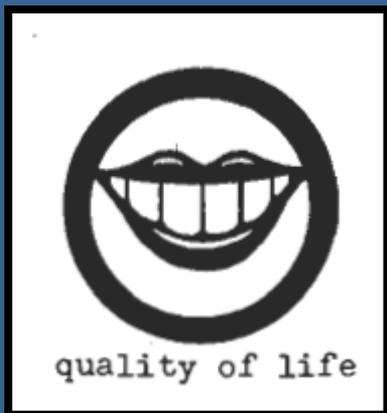
10. *Morris Marks House/Dori Court Apartments* — 1134 SW 12th Avenue—Low scale buildings in an area zoned for high rises. Discussions of possible relocation have begun.



11. *Portland Gas and Coke Building - 7900 NW St. Helens Rd* – Located within the Portland Harbor Superfund area, this building would be difficult to save but it certainly deserves preservation.



Portland Historic Landmarks Commission



February 25, 2013 Retreat



Type 3 HLC Projects Reviewed 2007 – 2009: 24*

*Does not include Appeals or DARs

2007 [10] 111 Type 1+2s	2008 [10] 120 Type 1+2s	2009 [4] 123 Type 1+2s
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Irving Street Lofts• Ladd's Garage APPEAL• Lyndon Musolf Building• Mississippi Rising - APPEAL• NW Glisan ABC, new addition – APPEAL• Washington Park Reservoirs• Mt Tabor Park Security and Maintenance Project• Rocky Butte Bollard Review• NW 23rd Ave NOT Apple• Mercy Corps Addition• Ladd's Addition, 4-story on SE Division• Waterfront Park remodel• N Williams HL designation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Honeyman Hardware• ABC 6-story Couch Park• Meier & Frank Building Renovation• Alder Park Hotel remodel• SW Gibbs St mixed-use, multi-dwelling project• ABC parking garage• Ladd Carriage House move• Rocky Butte Bollard review• 1510 NE Hancock 5-story – APPEAL• 1920 NW Johnson – 6-story mixed-use–WITHDRAWN• Irvington Garage/ADU – APPEAL• Ankeny Restrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ankeny Sq Restrooms• 5 NW Front Ave - Made in Oregon• 88 NW Davis/Globe Hotel Rehabilitation• 1624 NE Hancock/ Westminster Presbyterian Church



Type 3 HLC Projects Reviewed 2010 – 2012: 10*

*Does not include Appeals or DARs

2010 [3] 65 Type 1+2s	2011 [3] 91# Type 1+2s	2012 [4] 120# Type 1+2s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic Kiernan Building [T-4] • 1860 SE Ladd Ave - APPEAL • 1569 SE Elliott Ave - APPEAL • 2211 Park Pl, Washington Park Condo windows • 5 NW Front Ave - Made in Oregon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blanchet House of Hospitality • Globe Hotel –APPEAL • Globe Hotel • Olds, Wortman & King Department Store <p><i>47 Type 1+2s in Irvington HD alone ~ 52%</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New 3-story in ABC • Memorial Coliseum • 2 New 5-stories in ABC • King’s Hill Townhomes • Solar Awnings – APPEAL • IHD Rear Add – APPEAL • IHD Exterior Violation – APPEAL • IHD Exterior Bldg Lights – APPEAL • NE 17th & Schuyler DAR <p><i>43 Type 1+2s in Irvington HD alone ~ 36%</i></p> <p><i>*3 appeals were in Irvington</i></p>



2012 Projects Overview

Topics:

1. Infill
2. The Irvington Factor
3. Rear Additions and Visibility
4. Erosion vs. Compatibility vs. Preservation
5. Historic Districts & Design Guidelines
6. HRCIP

**HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
2012 HEARING INFORMATION**

The Commission met "16" times during 2012 with a Retreat on February 24, 2012
Election of Officers on January 23, 2012

<u># OF TYPE 1/2 CASES REVIEWED BY STAFF:</u>	"120"
<u># OF TYPE 2 CASES REVIEWED BY HLC (APPEALS)</u>	"4"
LU 11-192818 HDZ - Solar Photovoltaic Awning	(2/27/12, 3/12/12)
LU 12-137634 HDZ - New Two Story Rear Addition, Irvington	(8/27/12, 9/24/12)
LU 12-139918 HDZ - Exterior Alterations, Irvington Violation	(10/22/12, 11/26/12)
LU 12-117519 HDZ - Exterior Building Lights, St. Mary Magdalene School	(11/26/12, 1/14/13)
<u># OF TYPE 3 CASES REVIEWED BY HLC:</u>	"4"
LU 11-197793 HDZM - New 3-story Apartment Building, Alhabet	(1/23/12, 2/13/12)
LU 12-108761 HDZ - Memorial Coliseum	(4/9/12, 5/14/12)
LU 12-106944 HDZM - Two New 5-story Apartment Buildings, Alhabet	(4/23/12, 5/14/12)
LU 12-161670 HDZ - King's Hill Townhomes	(10/22/12)
<u># OF TYPE 4 CASES REVIEWED BY HLC:</u>	"0"
<u># OF DAR'S REVIEWED BY HLC:</u>	"1"
EA 12-175067 DA - NE 17 th and Schuyler	(9/24/12)
<u># OF BRIEFINGS:</u>	"8"
Gateway Identification Markers for Terwilliger Parkway	(1/9/12)
Discussion of Ideas for SHPO Grant Funding in 2012-2013	(1/9/12)
Buckman Neighborhood, Historic District	(2/13/12)
The Greenest Building	(2/27/12)
Review Revisions of the MPD Portland Oregon's Eastside Historic Architectural Resources	(6/11/12)
Updates to the Comp Plan Historic Resources Policies	(7/23/12)
Central City N/NE Quadrant I-5 Corr. Broadway-Weidler Plan	(7/23/12)
Historic Resources Code Improvement	(7/23/12, 12/10/12)
<u>NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION REVIEWS:</u>	"8"
National Register Nomination for Burnside, Hawthorne, Morrison and Broadway Bridges	(1/23/12)
Streetcar Realignment at SW 5 th , 4 th , Montgomery & Harrison	(5/17/12)
Rose City Golf Club House	(6/11/12)
Sengstake Building (Everett Hotel)	(6/11/12)
Halprin open Space Sequence	(10/8/12)
Willamette National Cemetery	(10/8/12)
Bennes, John Virginius & Anice, House	(10/8/12)
Waverly Country Club Clubhouse	(9/24/12)