How Do We Know It Is Us Without Our Past?
The women sat among the doomed things, turning them over and looking past them and
back. "This book, my father had it. He liked a
book Pilgrim's Progress. Used to read it. Golt his
name on it, right here. Why, here's his pipe—it still
smells rank ... Think we could get this China
dog in? Aunt Sadie brought it from the St. Louis
Fair. See— it says right on it. No, I guess we can't
take that. Here's a letter my brother wrote the day
before he died. Here's an old-time hat. These
teathers—I never got used to them. No, there
isn't room ... How can we live without our lives?
How do we know it is us without our past?"

John Steinbeck
The Grapes of Wrath
How Do We Know It Is Us Without Our Past?

Portland Historical Landmarks Commission
Portland, Oregon
1974
“Each new environment makes the old one visible. The psychic becomes explicit only after it becomes obsolete. The present environment is never seen. We respect its laws without being conscious of them. We are conscious only of the obsolete & we value it because it appears manageable, subject to conscious control. This makes it splendidly attractive.

The history of European art is a succession of schools & styles replacing one another as new technologies created new ways of perceiving & being, and new ways of perceiving & being created new technologies. Perceptual modes became visible as soon as they became obsolete. They served as the content of each new environment.

I doubt if the same principle operates nearly so clearly in tribal societies. Such societies are highly stable, at least in comparison to Western ones, and among them the dichotomy between the invisible present & the visible past seems far less clear.

‘The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible.’ Wilde”

Edmund Carpenter
They Became What They Beheld
A landmark is a mark in the landscape, readily recognizable, pointing the way. A bright orange sign forty feet tall, a fork in the road by an old apple tree, a smokestack. A landmark is a turning point, a high point in the development of something. A landmark court decision, landmark architecture, an historical landmark. “Where someone signed something, where someone is buried, a statue of a famous person . . .” said a citizen. Said another, “An ugly old building nobody wants.”
Ideally, an historical landmark in Portland is a building or site that everyone wants. Sentimentality plays a part. So does nostalgia. But so does tough judgment based on firm evaluation of significance—architectural, historical, and cultural. To qualify as a landmark, the building must be endowed with a special value to the community as well as have a contemporary function. That value may be an accident of history, elegance of style, unusualness in structure, materials or workmanship, attractiveness of setting or nostalgia.

Landmark designation in Portland originally was based on the collective judgment of the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission and City Council without the use of specific criteria. When the landmarks program began in 1968, the Commission evaluated several “criteria” but decided against adoption of any specific criteria until it had worked its way through specific landmark designations. At that time, virtually all the buildings on the initial inventory submitted for landmark designation were in effect “landmarks” by community consensus. However, adoption of formal criteria is imminent, since buildings now being proposed are often of lesser quality or less well known than the earlier designations.

The proposed criteria is generally based on that developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Many cities have already adopted that criteria in modified form. To be considered a landmark, a structure or site should have outstanding historical and cultural significance to the nation or to the state, region or community in which it exists. Such significance is found in:

- structures or sites that exemplify the broad cultural, political, economic or social history of the nation, state or community;
- structures or sites identified with historic personages, or with important events in national, state or local history;
- structures or sites that embody the distinctive characteristics of an architectural period or type, or construction method, and that retain substantial original workmanship;
- structures or sites having high aesthetic values;
- structures or sites designed by a notable architect or designer.

1. Bishop’s House
   Unique example of Victorian gothic style. Uses have ranged from a church office and library to a speakeasy. It is now being used for offices.
2. Vose Residence
3. Union Station
4. Calvary Presbyterian Church ("Old Church")
5. 233 S.W Front Avenue
Traditionally, those concerned with landmark preservation have looked toward saving single buildings for their own sake, pursuing patriotic rather than aesthetic aims. A building had to be one in which a great man had lived or great events transpired. The scale of preservation is expanding today—it aims now at the conservation and rehabilitation of historic districts as well. These districts may be composed of groups of perhaps individually undistinguished buildings but which reflect a sense of continuity of the historic fabric of the city. These districts enable people to touch base with a "total," a familiarity needed to offset the stresses arising from a rapidly changing society. And adapting older urban environments into areas of contemporary use has been demonstrated to have economic and social benefits to cities throughout the country. It's still preservation. But it's a more pragmatic approach with broader public service.

Presently, the Portland Historical Landmarks ordinance provides only for designation of specific historic buildings, sites and structures. A revision of the ordinance is being prepared which would provide for historic district designation as well.

Landmark preservation also concerns itself with some of the smaller artifacts of a city that add vitality and color to its streets and parks. An old tree planted by a first settler, a fountain donated by a prominent early citizen, cobblestones used to pave the early streets—these are considered worthy of care and attention.
A fifteen-room "Queen Anne" mansion, designated a Portland landmark in 1970, faced destruction because it blocked a new development. A massive six-month publicity campaign and fund-raising drive enabled the house, estimated to weigh 270 tons, to be moved inch by inch to a nearby location. The move took ten working days with the help of professional movers, volunteer local residents, civic associations and military reservists, and cost $25,000. The house was the Captain John A. Brown House. Built by Captain Brown in 1898 and occupied by his descendants until about 1910, it was placed in the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Captain Brown House Association, a citizens group of over 500 members spearheading the preservation drive, had plans for its use at the new location as a senior citizens center. Commitments had been received from income-producing uses on the upper floors: a counseling center and a county health care team. Coincidental to the time of the move, application was made to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for a preservation grant of $100,000 under its Open Space Land Program. The grant was approved by HUD many months later. Under its provisions, the money would be received upon completion of the restoration of the house, subject to final approval by HUD.

The City of Portland, in conjunction with the Captain Brown House Association, the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission and local architects, put out a call for bids to refurbish the house. It was badly in need of restoration, both inside and out. The lowest bidder submitted a total estimate far exceeding the money expected from the HUD grant. Restoration plans were revised and a second call for bids was let. Again, the lowest bid exceeded the grant amount by more than $50,000.

By this time, almost three years had elapsed from the time of the HUD grant application to the receipt of the second bid estimate. Costs of construction and materials had escalated drastically. The Board of Directors of the Captain Brown House Association regretfully informed the City of Portland and the Landmarks Commission that it was no longer feasible to proceed with the restoration.

The physical object to me is merely a stepping-stone to an inner world where the object with the help of subconscious drives and focused perceptions becomes transmitted into a symbol whose life is beyond the life of the objects we know and whose meaning is a truly human meaning."

Clarence John Laughlin, photographer
The house was razed in September of 1973. All that remains of the mansion are miscellaneous artifacts—a fireplace, leaded glass windows, hinges and a latch from the front door, Delft tiles and some wood trim.
15 July 1972

"Dear Sir:

So you are tearing down the First National Bank of Oregon's 1916 building in Portland, Oregon. I've never been in Portland. It is not my concern. But it is my concern!! Come look at the wonderful progress we have made in New York City. The buildings use all available ground space. They make money for the builder. But also, take a look at the dead faces of the people who work in these buildings.

God! Please stop destroying the beauty of our country. If our eyes see no beauty ... then our behaviour has no beauty ... and we all become criminals.

Please, somebody do something. Save at least this building!"

Letter... Brooklyn, New York

The Captain Brown House represents a depressing loss for Portland. An unfortunate combination of bad timing and economics destroyed it. Occasionally, the right combination of circumstances surfaces and instead of another parking lot, Portland keeps and uses a building like the First National Bank building.

In 1970, owners of the fifty-six year old First National Bank building placed it on the market for sale. The building was recognized nationally as an excellent example of Greek neo-classical architecture. Months passed: no buyers. Finally, bank spokesmen proposed demolition with the site to be used "in the interim" as a parking lot.

The Landmarks Commission sought a landmarks designation to block the demolition. A hearing by City Council produced a "gentlemen's agreement" to the effect that the bank would agree to the designation as long as it was rescinded in six months. This delay failed to produce any buyers, although many proposals for the building were made—downtown chapel, concert hall, contemporary art museum, arts and crafts center, downtown airlines terminal, international trade and travel center.

The Bank's dilemma was typical of other commercial older buildings throughout the country. They are expensive to heat and maintain. The land becomes far more valuable than the structure, and tax assessments become prohibitive.

In July of 1972, City Council rescinded the landmark designation and the bank was taken off the market.

Suddenly, a buyer appeared—Oregon Pioneer Savings and Loan Association. They were able to purchase the old building for one half the original asking price and asked that the structure again be designated a landmark. City Council complied. The structure now serves as headquarters for the savings and loan firm.

Congress in 1935 established the preservation of landmarks as a national policy. When reaffirming this policy in 1966, Congress declared: "... the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people."
“Instead of being linked with a single object over a relatively long period of time we are linked for brief periods with the succession of objects that supplant it. . . . The shift toward transience is even manifest in architecture—precisely that part of the physical environment that in the past contributed most heavily to man’s sense of permanence.”

Alvin Toffler,
Future Shock

The Portland Historical Landmarks Commission
The post-World War II years saw the steady destruction of old buildings as economic priorities shifted from war to domestic needs. One of the results was a construction boom. While there had always been a few individuals concerned with historic preservation, it was not until the mid-1960’s in Portland that preservation gained broad-based support. People began to recognize that those old buildings might have some value. A particular incident aroused that recognition.

The South Auditorium Urban Renewal Plan had a provision for the Ladd Building, owned by Boyd Coffee Company, to be preserved. Suddenly, one Saturday night, the wrecking ball, swung by Boyd Coffee, demolished the building. Too costly to maintain and restore, they said. This unilateral act raised the consciousness of a lot of people. They organized. A number of existing groups—the Historic Buildings Committee of the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the Portland Art Commission and the Portland Beautification Association began working together on an historic preservation ordinance for Portland. It was submitted to the City of Portland’s attorney and in 1968, the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission was created by the City Council.

Sensitive awareness to the historical and architectural heritage of Portland is the Commission’s main concern. It is composed of seven non-salaried members appointed by the Mayor and charged with the responsibility of overseeing many aspects of historical preservation in Portland. The landmarks ordinance provides for membership representing the American Institute of Architects, the Portland Art Commission, the Oregon Historical Society, the Portland Beautification Association, the Portland Planning Commission, the Mayor’s Office and citizens at large. Staff assistance is provided by the Bureau of Planning. The seven members elect their own chairperson and establish their own by-laws. Meetings are open to the public and average once a month, but may be called more frequently in response to special or urgent concerns which may arise.
The Historical Landmarks Commission serves in an advisory capacity to City Council, the Portland Planning Commission, the Portland Development Commission and other public or private agencies whenever questions of policy arise concerning preservation of historical buildings or sites.

- One of the Commission's major responsibilities has been to undertake an inventory of buildings, structures and sites in Portland as potential historical landmark designations. Sites and structures are researched for their historical significance, physical history, architectural style and present condition. Photographs are taken. The Commission, after an open hearing, submits to City Council the list of buildings and sites it is recommending as landmarks. After testimony by the Commission, owners and other interested citizens, Council members vote their approval or denial. In the past four years, over two hundred buildings and sites were considered by the Commission. Out of those, approximately one hundred and fifty were submitted to City Council in about ten separate sessions, and out of those, one hundred and twenty-five became official historical landmarks.

The inventory is an on-going process as potential landmarks are brought to the Commission's attention by owners, City Commissioners, and interested citizens, as well as individual Commission members or staff. The Commission gives its approval to the designation, but final approval must come from a vote by City Council.

- The Commission recommends removal from the list of designated historical buildings and sites any property it no longer finds worthy of such designation.

“Sometimes as through a dim haze, we see objects in their eternal relations; and they stand like Stonehenge and the Pyramids, and we wonder who set them up and what for.”

Thoreau

Dear mayor goldsmith, there is an old gas pump on the corner of SW. second and main, which I think should be made into a historicole monument. There aren't many around any more and I really like it.

From Rebecca Bottero
The Commission has authority to coordinate historical preservation programs of the city, county, state and federal governments as they relate to property within the City. It also works with local citizens’ groups which have historical preservation as their goal.

Portland Friends of Cast-Iron Architecture is a citizens group established in 1973 to encourage and promote a permanent historic district for Portland in what is commonly known as the Skidmore/Old Town Historic District. The district will be nominated as an Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places, making it eligible for federal funds and other assistance programs. The area is located near the heart of the first commercial district in the City and contains sixteen Historical Landmarks, many of which have cast-iron decoration. All in all, the collection of cast-iron facades in the district makes it one of the largest outside of New York’s Historic District, Soho.

The New York Landmarks Preservation Commission noted that the Soho district contains the largest number of cast-iron structures in the world, marking an innovative period in the history of structural technology. The use of cast-iron structures led to the development of steel and the skyscraper, which the New York Commission described as “this country’s outstanding contribution to world architecture.”

Concerned over the steady loss of Portland’s cast-iron either through demolition or purchase by other cities, the Portland Friends of Cast-Iron Architecture is a vehicle by which cast-iron fronts and pieces may be purchased. Already, many cast-iron parts, including the complete facade of the demolished Berkshire Hotel building, have been purchased or donated and are being stored by the City of Portland through liaison with
Cobblestones, quarried from the basalt outcappings in the Columbia Gorge, were shaped into manageable sizes and used to surface Portland’s early streets. Some of the original cobblestones had been used as ballast on European ships. These too were recycled into the streets, and many still lie buried underneath subsequent pavings. During excavations and street repair, they have been and continue to be removed and taken away, often for private use and enjoyment.

The Landmarks Commission has prepared an ordinance which requires, during any excavation, the setting aside of these cobblestones, to be stockpiled by the City of Portland. When a sufficient number is obtained, they could be used for appropriate projects, such as in the Skidmore/Old Town Historic District, to help restore its original atmosphere.
"When he thinks he has said something too hastily, or spoken a half-truth or generalized too much, then you can't stop him from attaching limitations to what he has said, from modifying it, adding to it and subtracting from it until at last nothing is left of the original idea!"

Goethe
The Sorrows of Young Werther

The Commission serves in a review capacity whenever exterior remodeling of a designated historical building or construction on a designated historical site is requested. When the applicant files for a permit with the Bureau of Buildings, she or he is first referred to the Commission for a hearing to be held within 30 days after application is made. In the hearing, the applicant shows plans, specifications, elevations, sketches, photographs, materials, colors, finishes and any other material necessary to the understanding of the proposal and its relationship to the environment. Other interested parties may also be heard at the hearing.

The Commission's responsibility is to determine that the proposal will not adversely affect the character of the building or the site or will, in fact, actually enhance the architectural and historical value. Staff of the Bureau of Planning visit the site, photograph existing conditions and the surrounding environment, review any related documentation and reports, consult with neighborhood groups and various agencies, and may meet informally with the applicant prior to the hearing. A written staff report with recommendations emerges from this process and is presented at the time of the hearing.

The Commission may approve the proposal. Sometimes the Commission will offer alternative suggestions for remodeling or construction if it feels the proposal to be inappropriate. Another hearing may be required before approval is granted. Or, the Commission may reject the application. The applicant then either revises plans or appeals directly to City Council. At the hearing, the Council will hear all interested parties, and will either grant the appeal, reject the appeal, or grant the appeal with conditions attached.

Application to replace or erect a sign on an historical building constitutes exterior remodeling. The Commission must review the sign proposal to determine that the sign will not unreasonably detract from the architectural and historical significance of the premises, taking into account size, location, construction and lighting of the sign.
The Commission holds hearings whenever an application for permission to demolish an historical landmark is received. Landmark designation, unfortunately, does not automatically protect a building from destruction as the vagaries and realities of economics have shown in the past. The Commission investigates alternatives to demolition, including public or private acquisition, the possibility of moving the structure elsewhere, or in the event all else fails, the negotiation of saving significant artifacts from the scrap heap. If the Commission denies the application for demolition in the interest of preservation of historical values, issuance of the permit is suspended for a period not exceeding 120 days from the date of the application. The Commission’s action may be appealed to the City Council. An extension of this period may be granted by City Council for an additional 180 days upon request of the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission, if it can be demonstrated that there is a program or project underway which could result in public or private acquisition with preservation or restoration of the historical building or site, and that there is reasonable ground to believe that such program or project will be successful. If the project is unsuccessful within that time period, the permit for demolition is then granted.

The Commission has had designed an historical landmark plaque to be purchased by landmark owners, at their option, for mounting on the exterior of the building. The plaque contains the name of the structure, architect and date of construction, as well as the words PORTLAND HISTORICAL LANDMARK. The plaque helps create public awareness of Portland’s landmarks and foster pride of ownership.

“There was a temple in Japan called the Golden Temple. A man loved it very much as it was and he couldn’t stand the thought of anything happening to it. He felt the only way he could stop anything from happening to it was to burn it down and he did. Now, the image of the temple was able to stay forever in his mind as a perfect form.”

Japanese legend
Where do we go from here?

Without people who care about our heritage, we will simply have no visual history to speak of, except in books on a library shelf or worse, in the layers of microfilm in a vault. For a vital and human city, we need to be able to appreciate the many cultures and styles that have formed the American heritage. Portland is fortunate in that its people do care. Some of our landmark buildings have been restored strictly because of owner pride and awareness. But in many cases, it takes more than pride, awareness and private capital.

Once historic preservation has been recognized as a priority and the commitment is made, mechanisms to achieve that goal are necessary. Some exist already and only need to be understood more clearly for effective utilization. However, there are others in the planning stages at city, state and federal levels. The current idea is to promote restoration and rehabilitation with the use of development incentives.

A dynamic program for the local level would be to establish a city-wide revolving fund. Financed out of revenue sharing funds and/or private donations, it would be a public/private organization that would buy, improve and sell old structures at a profit. The process would perpetuate the revolving fund which could also serve as a source for low interest loans for landmark building improvements.
Another feature of this program would be the use of the facade easement process. Rather than purchasing an entire building, an arrangement is made between the owner and the City to gain an easement on the building's facade. The money the owner would receive for this easement may be required to be used for the building's rehabilitation. The City would thus maintain control of the facade without the need to purchase the entire property.

One of the most dramatic and hopeful developments in urban America is the concept of development rights transfer. If it is found applicable to downtown Portland, the revolving fund could purchase a landmark's unused development potential (or full space allotment) and sell it (in the form of "development rights") to a developer who then could build a new building larger and more profitable than zoning regulations normally permit. Such a process would need to be carried out according to strict urban design controls. In effect it would shift preservation costs from the City and landmark owner to the downtown development process itself. It has been said that this plan "meets the hard question of how to be fair to the property owner and still satisfy tradition and pride. It literally, as does money in a bank, creates money to make saving landmarks financially feasible. The new proposal moves the issue from the handwringing and the tsk-tsking stage to the specifics."

In urban renewal areas, tax increment financing is a resource for funding several of the ideas just discussed. A project revolving fund for rehabilitation and historic preservation could be established. The Renewal Agency already has the ability to buy, improve and sell properties. However, this process does not always have to show a profit. Thus, renewal agencies may affect the rehabilitation of structures which could not otherwise be improved.

Renewal project funds provided through tax increment could be used to buy facade easements, and, under certain conditions, could improve them. Also, planning, design and architectural assistance for owners and tenants in historic structures and districts could be provided free by professionals retained through the project.

In renewal areas, public improvements such as sidewalks, landscaping, street lighting and furnishings can be installed to enhance an historic district without assessing building owners.

At the State level, significant tax incentives have been tentatively approved by the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation and will be submitted to the 1975 Legislature. One proposal is to allow an owner or tenant to deduct approved restoration costs from State income taxes with a ten-year carry-over period. As an option to this, an owner could instead deduct the costs from his or her property tax with a ten-year carry-over period. Any loss in tax revenue to local government would be reimbursed by the State.

Another notion is reduction of tax assessment which would permit tax assessors to appraise property at actual use rather than at market value. Many times a landmark is located within a zoning pattern that makes the land assessment greater than the building assessment. This of course encourages demolition and reconstruction in order to balance the economic stress. Related to this is another idea that would help curb demolition. It simply would be not to allow as a deduction from income tax the demolition costs for income producing properties.

Still another tax incentive for preservation would be the allowance of a tax deduction for donated properties. An owner would be entitled to deduct from income taxes the fair market value of the property or the interest in it, such as an easement she or he had donated to an authorized preservation organization or to the government for preservation purposes. Also, an owner could deduct the fair market value of unused development rights ("air rights") if donated. Such donation would also allow a reduced property tax assessment.

In order to facilitate the tax incentive programs, a State Preservation Agency, a State Advisory Council, and a State Register of Historic Places similar to the National Register will be submitted to the 1975 Legislature. Enrollment on the Oregon Register will be the eligibility criteria for the tax incentive programs. The State will require certain rights of public access as a condition for granting any tax relief.

The State Building Code is still another area that is being evaluated for preservation implications. Amendments will be proposed to provide for the allowance of special considerations for historic buildings and to insure that the code provisions are not unduly discriminatory.

These are some of the notions, plans and methods which indicate that the preservation movement is off dead-center and moving in a positive direction. The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 establishes historical preservation as a national environmental objective and momentum is gaining. Pending federal legislation of the Environmental Protection Tax Act of 1973 is an indication and is a significant step for preservation and rehabilitation.
1. Central Lutheran Church
   2104 N.E. Hancock
   1960
   Pietro Belluschi

2. Freiwald Residence
   4810 N.E. 55th
   1906

3. Yee Residence
   202 N.E. Graham
   1894

4. Union Pacific Smokestack
   U.P. Railroad Yards at N. Interstate
   1887

5. Town Hall
   3425 N. Montana
   1907

   4314 N.E. Mississippi
   c. 1898

7. Interstate Firehouse
   5340 N. Interstate
   1910
   MacNaughton, Raymond & Lawrence

8. Peninsula Park Bandstand
   6400 N. Albina & N. Portland
   1913
   Ellis Lawrence

   4411 N. McClellan
   c. 1885

10. Mock Res.
    4333 N. Willamette Blvd.
    1894

11. West Hall, Portland Univ.
    5000 N. Willamette Blvd.
    1891
    McCaw, Martin & White

12. St. Johns City Hall
    7214 N. Philadelphia
    1907

13. St. Johns Bridge
    N. Syracuse & Philadelphia
    1931
1. Buehner Residence
   5511 S.E. Hawthorne
   1905-6
   Whidden & Lewis

2. Kendall Homestead
   3908 S.E. Taggart
   1894
   Joseph Kendall

3. W. F. Burrell House
   2240 S.E. Hawthorne
   1902
   Whidden & Lewis

4. Third Church Christ Scientist
   1722 S.E. Madison
   1926
   William Grey Purcell

5. Judge W. D. Fenton Res.
   626 S.E. 16th
   1892

   3040 S.E. Grand
   1890

7. Portland Community Music Center
   3350 S.E. Francis
   1912
   E. Schacht & Son

8. (Reed College)
   Bald Hall
   Old Dorm Block
   3203 S.E. Woodstock
   1912
   Doyle, Patterson & Beach

9. St. Johns Episcopal Church
   8039 S.E. Grand
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Local

The Architect and Engineer, LVI, March, 1919, (entire issue devoted to Portland architecture and planning)

Brewster, Elizabeth, Portland Sketchbook, 1967, independently published


Croy, Herbert D., "Portland, Oregon, the Transformation of the City from an Architectural and Social Viewpoint," Architectural Record, June, 1912


Marlitt, Richard J., Nineteenth Street, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, Oregon, 1968

Residential Portland, Newspaper Syndicate, 1911


deWolfe, Fred, Impressions of Portland, Portland, Oregon, 1970

-----, Portland West, Portland, Oregon, 1973

Yearbook, Portland Architectural Club, 1908, 1909, 1940, 1943

General


Costonis, John J., Space A Drift—Landmark Preservation and the Market Place, University of Illinois Press, 1974


Preserving Historic America, Department of Housing and Urban Development, June, 1966

Pyke, John S., Landmark Preservation, Citizens Union Research Foundation, Inc. of the City of New York


ORGANIZATIONS

Federal

National Register of Historic Places

Under authority of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, a listing in the National Register gives proper legal protection from destruction or alteration by federally sponsored or assisted projects. It also makes the property eligible for federal grants.

National Trust for Historic Preservation

740-748 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006

West Coast Field Office: 802 Montgomery, San Francisco, California 94133 (415) 989-6448.

The only national private organization encouraging the public participation in the preservation of districts, structures, sites, buildings and objects in American history and culture. Created in 1949 by a charter from the U.S. Congress. Has list of publications available for sale.

Society of Architectural Historians, 1700 Walnut Street, Room 110, Philadelphia, Penn. 19103; Pacific Coast Chapter;

Holds meetings, lectures, tours; has North Pacific Coast chapter.

State

Oregon Historical Society, 1230 SW Park Avenue, Portland, Oregon (503) 222-1741.

Aids and encourages historic preservation and documentation. One staff person serves on the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission.

Operates historic properties throughout the state of Oregon. Operates a museum, and a library of photographs, books, maps, manuscripts, microfilm and miscellaneous materials pertaining to all phases of Oregon's history. Publishes books.

State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation, Highway Building, Salem, Oregon, 97310

Appointed by Governor, reviews nominations to the National Register and advises the State Preservation Officer. Approves restoration grants from the National Register program.
PORTLAND
HISTORICAL
LANDMARKS
ORDINANCE

State Preservation Officer, David Talbot, State
Parks Superintendent, Highway Building, Salem,
Oregon, 97310
Administers the National Register of Historic
Places for Oregon

Local
American Institute of Architects, Portland
Chapter, Inc., 519 SW 3rd, Portland, Oregon,
(503) 223-8757
Committee on Historic Resources—researches
buildings, promotes preservation
Audubon Society
Places markers on significant historic sites
National Society, Colonial Dames of America,
Resident in Oregon, c/o Mrs. Evelyn Beebe
Shirk, 4226 SW Clifton, Portland, Oregon, 97201,
(503) 223-7909
Complies historical data and funds worthy
historical projects
Daughters of the American Revolution,
Oregon Society, c/o Mrs. C. M. Sather
Operates historical property, publishes materials
Portland Friends of Cast-Iron Architecture,
4030 SW Second, Portland, Oregon, 97204
(503) 228-5154
Purchases cast-iron, promotes preservation,
publishes a newsletter
Portland Historical Landmarks Commission
424 SW Main, Portland, Oregon, 97204
(503) 248-4468
Sons and Daughters of Oregon Pioneers,
c/o Mrs. Frances C. Casek, Secretary, 4000 SW
Spring, Portland, Oregon, 97201, (503) 222-5044

PLANNING AND ZONING CODE
Chapter 33.120
HISTORICAL BUILDINGS AND SITES

33.120.010 Special purpose. Buildings and sites
in the city, having special historic associations
or significance or of special architectural merit
or significance, should be preserved as a part of
the heritage of the citizens of the city, and for the
education, enjoyment and pride of the citizens,
as well as the beautification of the city and
enhancement of the values of such property. To
that end, regulatory controls and administrative
procedures are necessary.

33.120.020 Portland Historical Landmarks
Commission. There hereby is created a Portland
Historical Landmarks Commission. This
commission shall consist of seven members,
each entitled to one vote as follows: one
member from the Portland Planning Commission;
one member from the Portland Art Commission;
one member from the curatorial staff of the
Oregon Historical Society; one member from the
Portland Beaux-Arts Association; one member
from the Portland Architectural Institute; one member
from the citizens at large; and the mayor or his designee
ex officio. All members of the commission shall
serve without compensation, and other than
the mayor, any member shall be appointed by the mayor
or designated by him. All members shall serve
for a term of four years except the first
appointments which shall be for the following
terms: one member shall be appointed initially
for two-year terms; two members shall be
appointed initially for three-year terms; and
two members shall be appointed initially for four-year
terms. Any vacancy occurring in a position for
any reason other than the expiration of the term,
shall be filled by appointment by the mayor for
the remainder of the term.

33.120.030 Officers, meetings, rules and
procedure. (a) Within thirty days from September
29, 1968, the mayor shall make such appointments
as are called for in this chapter and shall notify
each appointee of the first regular meeting to be
held within at least sixty days from September 29,
1968. The mayor shall designate one member of
the commission to be temporary chairman, and
the temporary chairman shall preside over the
first meeting and serve until permanent officers
have been elected by majority vote of the entire
membership of the commission, and the officers
so elected shall serve until the date of the first
annual meeting, or until their successors are
regularly elected and take office. The officers of
the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission
shall consist of a chairman, vice chairman and
secretary.
(b) The annual meeting of the Portland Historical
Landmarks Commission shall be held each year
during the month of January. In addition, the
commission shall meet at least once every two
months, and upon the call of the chairman. The
regular time, place and manner of notice for
meetings shall be fixed by rules of the commission.
(c) The commission shall establish and adopt its
own rules of procedure. The commission shall
submit an annual report to the mayor covering
its activities for the calendar year on or before
the following February 1st.
(d) Any clerical and staff assistance necessary
shall be provided by the planning director and
his staff.

33.120.40 Function and duties. (a) The Portland
Historical Landmarks Commission shall serve in an
advisory capacity and make recommendations
concerning historical buildings and sites to the
city council, the Portland Planning Commission,
the Portland Development Commission, and
other public or private agencies on matters
relating to the preservation of such buildings
and sites.
(b) The commission may adopt such rules and
regulations as it finds necessary or appropriate to
carry out the intent of this chapter.
(c) The commission shall receive requests by any
citizen, by owners of buildings or sites or may on
its own motion make recommendations
concerning the designation of particular
buildings and sites as historical buildings or
historical sites.
(d) The commission shall recommend removal
from any list of designated historical buildings
and sites such property as it finds no longer
worthy of such designation.
(e) The commission shall have authority to
inspect and investigate any building or site in
the city which it is requested to recommend
designation as or which it has reason to believe
is an architectural or historical landmark.
The commission shall review all information which it has and shall hold hearings as prescribed in this chapter and transmit the results thereof to the city council as provided in this chapter.

The commission shall have authority to coordinate historical preservation programs of the city, county, state and federal governments as they relate to property within the city.

The commission may recommend to the city council or to the legislature of the state any changes of law which it finds appropriate or needed.

The commission shall compile and maintain a current list of all historical buildings and sites which have been so designated pursuant to this chapter with a brief description of the building or site and the special reasons for its inclusion on the list.

The commission shall have authority to take such steps as it finds appropriate or necessary to make available to the public information concerning its activities and the various historical buildings and sites so designated pursuant to this chapter.

The commission shall perform such other duties relating to historic landmarks and historical buildings and sites as the city council or the mayor may request.

Designation of historical building or site. (a) Upon receipt of a request to designate a particular building or site as a historical building or site, or upon direction by the city council on its own motion, the city auditor shall advise the owner of such building or site, the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission, the Portland Planning Commission, and the bureau of buildings of the city, and shall fix a date and time for a public hearing before the city council thereon. The auditor shall notify abutting owners and shall transmit a copy of the request to the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission unless such request has come from the commission. The Portland Historical Landmarks Commission shall review all proposals for designation as historical building or site, unless the initial request has been made by the commission, and shall submit its recommendation to the city council prior to the public hearing.

At such hearing the owner of the property involved, the owners of all abutting property, a representative of the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission, a representative from the Portland Planning Commission and from the bureau of buildings of the city shall be entitled to be heard, and the council may hear all other interested parties.

(c) If the city council determines that a building proposed to be designated as a historical building has architectural significance or is of historical importance based upon past or present use, the council may designate such building as a historical building. If the council finds that a particular site had a prior use involving the establishment, growth or particular incidents relating to the history of the city, the council may designate the same as a historical site.

(d) If any historical building has been demolished or destroyed, the city council on its own motion or upon recommendation of the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission, may remove the historical building designation therefrom. If the designation is proposed to be removed from any historical building or site for any other reason than set forth in the preceding sentence, then similar notices, recommendations and hearings shall be held as upon the designation of a building or site as historical in the first instance.

Exterior remodeling or new structure. (a) When the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission receives from any person or from the bureau of buildings an application for permit from the bureau of buildings for exterior remodeling of any designated historical building, or receives an application for construction of a new structure on a designated historical site, the commission shall notify the applicant of the date, time and place of a hearing thereon. The hearing shall be held within thirty days after the filing of the application with the bureau of buildings, or within thirty days after filing of the application with the commission prior to filing with the bureau of buildings, and in that event, the commission shall transmit a copy of such application to the bureau of buildings. All applications shall be accompanied by plans and specifications, and the commission may require additional sketches of the proposed remodeling. The same procedures shall apply to an application to construct a new building on a designated historical site. This procedure shall not apply to a permit to restore the exterior of a designated historical building in its prior condition following damage to the exterior.

At the commission hearing the applicant shall be entitled to be heard and a representative of the bureau of buildings and the planning commission. The commission may also hear any other interested party. If the commission determines that the proposed exterior remodeling or new structure will not adversely affect the character of the building or site, and is in the public interest, or finds that the proposed exterior remodeling or new structure will enhance the historical value of the building or site, then the commission shall approve the issuance of a permit therefor by the bureau of buildings, and upon compliance with the building regulations and other regulations of the city, such permit may be issued. If the commission finds such action appropriate, it may approve the application for permit for exterior remodeling or for a new structure on an historical site, upon conditions which the commission imposes, to promote and preserve the historical or architectural integrity of the building or site.

Upon conditional approval, the building permit may be issued in accordance with such condition. However, if found necessary and appropriate, the commission may reject the application. In such event the building permit shall not be issued therefor unless the action of the commission is reversed on appeal as set forth below.

(c) If the commission has imposed conditions on its approval of an application or has disapproved an application as set forth in the preceding subsection, the applicant, the owner or occupant of the building or site involved may appeal from the decision of the commission to the city council by filing with the commission and filing a copy with the bureau of buildings of notice of appeal to the city council. If such notice is filed within ten days after such decision of the commission, the notice of appeal shall immediately be transmitted to the city council who shall fix a date and time for hearing on the appeal before the city council. At the council hearing on the appeal, all interested parties may be heard. The council may reject the appeal and affirm the decision of the commission, may modify the decision of the commission or may grant the appeal and direct a building permit to be issued. If the application for permit otherwise complies with the codes and ordinances of the city, the building permit shall be issued.

(d) If the historical building or site involved in the permit application as provided in this section is located within a D Design Zone, the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission and the design
committee of the planning commission shall meet jointly to consider the application at the commission hearing. For the hearing, the membership of the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission shall be deemed enlarged by the addition of the design committee.

33.120.70 Demolition permits—Building condemnation. (a) If any application is received from the bureau of buildings or is initially made to the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission for a permit for demolition of any historical building or the demolition of a structure on a designated historical site, the commission shall within thirty days after the application is initially filed, hold a hearing on the issuance of such permit. The applicant for permit, the owner of the property and any occupant of the property shall be entitled to be heard. The commission may hear all other interested parties. The commission shall consider the state of repair of the building, the reasonableness of the cost of restoration or repair, taking into account the purpose of preserving the designated historical buildings and sites, the character of the neighborhood and all other factors which it finds appropriate. The commission may approve the issuance of the permit, in which event the bureau of buildings may issue the permit in compliance with all codes and ordinances of the city. The commission may reject the application for permit if it determines that in the interest of preserving historical values the structure should not be demolished, and in that event issuance of the permit shall be suspended for a period fixed by the commission, but not exceeding one hundred twenty days from the date of application. Within the suspension period, the commission may request an extension of the suspension period by the city council. If the city council determines that there is a program or project under way which could result in public or private acquisition of the historical building or site and the preservation or restoration of such building or site, and that there is reasonable ground to believe that the program or project may be successful, then the council, in its discretion, may extend the suspension period for an additional period not exceeding one hundred eighty days. At a total of not more than three hundred days from the date of application for demolition permit. During the period of suspension of permit application, no permit shall be issued for such demolition nor shall any person demolish the building or structure, unless the council has granted an appeal and directed the issuance. The program or project is unsuccessful and the applicant has not withdrawn his application for demolition permit, the bureau of buildings shall issue the permit. If the application otherwise complies with the codes and ordinances of the city.

(b) Action by the commission suspending issuance of permit for demolition may be appealed by the applicant for permit, the owner or the occupant, by filing a notice of appeal in the manner as provided in this chapter for appeals from disapproval of remodeling permit. If the appeal is made, the procedure thereafter shall be the same as set forth in Section 33.120.060.

(c) Before taking any action to condemn a building or structure designated as a historical building or site the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission shall review the report of the bureau of buildings and any other city bureau relating to the condition of the building and premises and the extent of its danger, deterioration or decay. The commission shall report on its review and make its recommendation concerning city action to the commissioner in charge of the city council if official action of condemnation is instituted.

33.120.080 Record of demolished historical buildings—Artifacts. (a) If a designated historical building is to be demolished, insofar as practicable and as funds are available, the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission shall keep a pictorial and graphic history of the historical building or historical site with additional data as it may obtain.

(b) To the extent funds are available or the commission may obtain donations thereof, the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission shall obtain artifacts from the building or site which it deems worthy of preservation such as carvings, cast iron work, or other materials. It deems of artistic or historical importance.

33.120.090 Signs—Plaques. (a) Either before or after submission to the planning commission or a committee thereof, or to any other board or commission of the city, and before issuance of a permit or before issuance of a permit, the applicant shall include, on a designated historical building, on the property on which the designated historical building is located or on a designated historical site, and before issuance of a permit, a sign or plaque indicating the name of the building or site, the name of the building authority, the date of construction or the period of importance, and the significance of the building or site.

(b) The owner of a designated historical building or site or the occupant thereof with the consent of the owner may, at his own expense, install a historical plaque indicating the name, date, architect or other appropriate information upon the building, provided that the size, material, design, location and nature of such plaque is first approved by the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission.

33.120.100 Redevelopment and neighborhood improvement projects. In any redevelopment project or neighborhood improvement project administered or supervised by a department of the city or submitted to the city for its review and recommendations, proposed action relating to a designated historical building or site shall be submitted to the Portland Historical Landmarks Commission for their review and recommendation. A report therefore by the commission shall be filed with the city council and a copy shall be sent to the appropriate state department.
Portland Historical Landmarks Commission

John Bolan
George McMath, Chairperson
Andy Rocchia
John W. Russell
Arthur Spencer
Alan Webber

Portland Historical Landmarks Commission staff provided by
Portland Bureau of Planning, Ernest Bonner, Director;
Dale Cannady, Assistant Director

Brochure prepared by:
Wendy John, text, photography, graphics
Beverly Nelson, secretarial assistance
Don Snell, graphic design and production
Leo Dean Williams, Project Director

Additional Contributors:
Dennis Adler, line drawing, p. 18
Bill Bryan, photographs (3), (4), p. 9
Bill Grand, photograph (2), p. 9
Oregon Historical Society
photograph (1), p. 6 [Minor White]
photograph (1), p. 9
engraving (1), p. 16 [from Jan. 1888 issue of
West Shore Magazine]

printing: Durham & Downey, Inc.
typesetting: Schlegel Typesetting Co.