



PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATIONSM

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

South Park Blocks Master Plan Process and Historic Preservation

June 2, 2020 CAC Meeting



1878 View of South Park Blocks looking northeast one year after initial tree planting



1975 Students in the South Park Blocks, hot dog stand, and Millar Library (University Archives, PSU Library)



Recognizing the South Park Block's historical importance, PP&R:

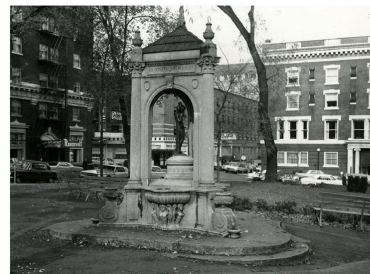
- Has been working with the City's Historic Program Manager, Brandon Spencer-Hartle, and other staff across City Bureaus.
- Hired a consultant team with expertise in historic cultural landscapes and preservation planning.
- Met with a Review and Compliance Specialist and the National Register Coordinator for the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in the fall of 2019 and again in the spring of 2020.



1949



2019



1967



2019



Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

- Remains supportive of PP&R's South Park Blocks Master Plan approach and have shared information about the **ORS 358.653 compliance process**, which they request to be engaged when a project goes through more detailed design and construction.
- **ORS 358.653** is a state-required compliance process for National Register eligible **or** listed properties.





Potentially significant historic features of the park design:

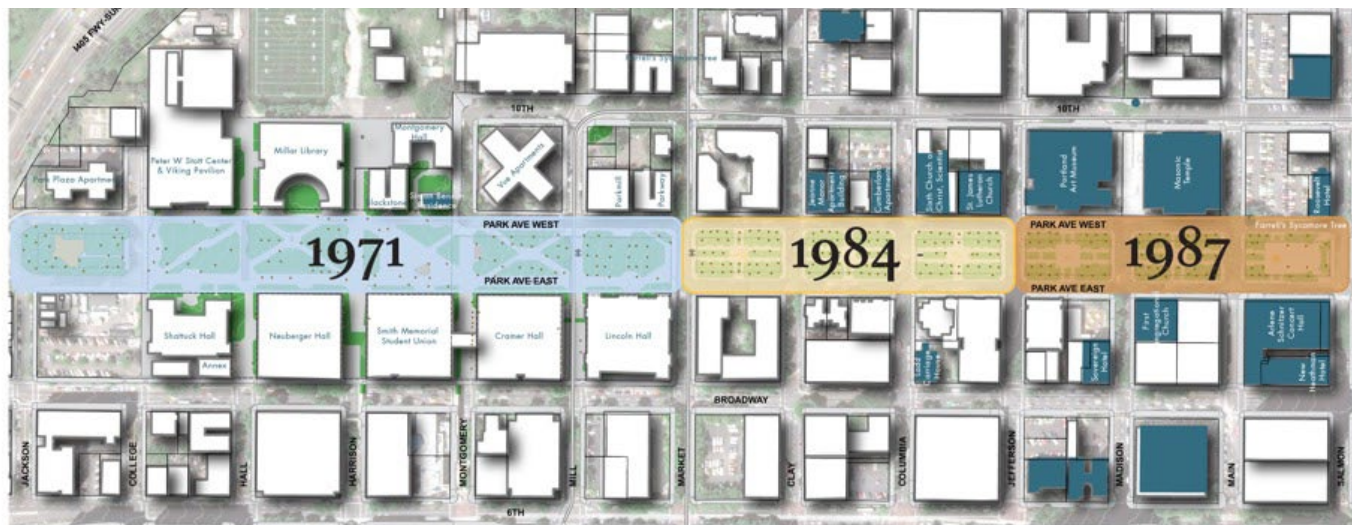
- Spatial organization of linked gathering spaces with focal points.
- Linear arrangement of deciduous shade trees that provide enclosure, shade, verticality, and seasonal color.
- Promenade-style circulation features that facilitate movement through the park.
- Use of planting beds and turf areas to reinforce linear movement through the space and highlight focal points.





There are opportunities to protect and highlight these resources in the Master Plan Update, and guide new development to be compatible, yet distinct from what is historic. The purpose of this approach is to preserve the historic character of the South Park Blocks, to not present a false sense of history by blurring the lines between new and old, and to ensure aesthetic and functional compatibility in the park. The original design intent of the South Park Blocks should be a recognizable characteristic as the future park is planned and designed.

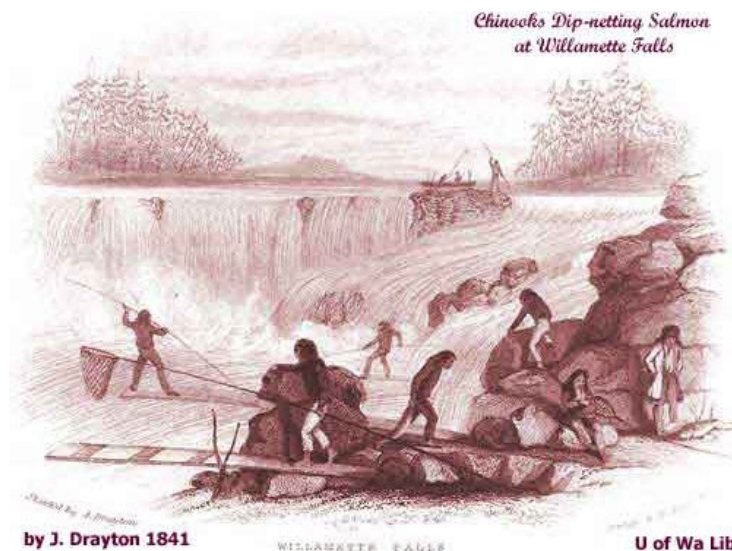
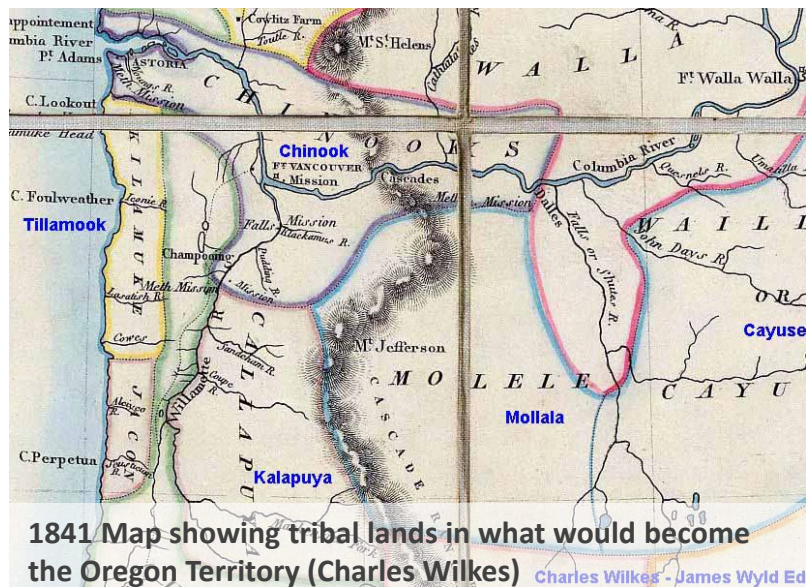
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The history of the South Park Blocks should be understood within a wider historical context that includes settlement of the Lower Willamette River, expulsion of resident tribes from the area today known as the City of Portland, and discriminatory practices that followed... It is important to acknowledge that this context is relevant to the entire Portland parks system and should be understood as an overlay rather than a site-specific aspect to be remedied through future design and planning.

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Chinook dip netting depicted by J. Drayton (UW Library)



Carved Animal Head (1960's Oregonian article)

- Appears to be an isolated artifact given the significant amount of disturbance in the area.
- PP&R will follow SHPO requirements to follow the proper protocols when we start a design and construction process and have more clarity on the scope of ground disturbance.
- For a potential National Register nomination, the artifact would need to be placed in its own significant historical context which would likely be separate from the developed park period of significance (approximately 1852 to 1970) and nomination.



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Questions and Discussion





Protection for National Register Resources

- Cities in Oregon are required to protect National Register Resources, regardless of whether the resources are designated in the local plan or land use regulations, by review of demolition or relocation that includes, at minimum, a public hearing process that results in approval, approval with conditions, or denial and considers the following factors: condition, historic integrity, age, historic significance, value to the community, economic consequences, design or construction rarity, and consistency with and consideration of other policy objectives in the acknowledged comprehensive plan.
- Additional protections, such as Historic Resource Review, require an additional local designation.