

PIONEER COURTHOUSE SQUARE: A STATUS REPORT

CITY OF
PORTLAND
DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION

SEPTEMBER
1981

Pioneer Courthouse Square occupies the City's central block and is a project of great importance to our downtown. The design for the Square is the result of a national competition conducted by the Portland Development Commission in early 1980. A Jury of Award, appointed by the City Council, selected the concept submitted by the design team of Willard K. Martin, FAIA, J. Douglas Macy, Lee Kelly, Terence O'Donnell, Spencer Gill and Robert Reynolds.

On July 30, 1980, the Portland City Council accepted the Jury's recommendation. However, the adoption of a design concept left a number of issues remaining to be addressed prior to start of construction.

First, the Jury's recommendation called for design refinements. City Council asked the Development Commission to work with the designers, Jury and the community in developing these refinements. This work is being completed.

Second, because of the Square's open design and the importance of programmed activities on the Square, questions of management arose. The Development Commission appointed an advisory committee whose recommendations have been adopted.

Finally, there remains the need to raise funds to finance the Square's construction. In September 1980, the Friends of Pioneer Square were organized to conduct a \$1.6 million private fund raising campaign. The \$1.7 million of local public funds to build the project have been secured.

Construction of the square is scheduled to begin in early 1981. Because of the high level of interest in the project, this status report has been prepared to outline the design refinements and management approach recently adopted by the Portland City Council.

Design Refinements

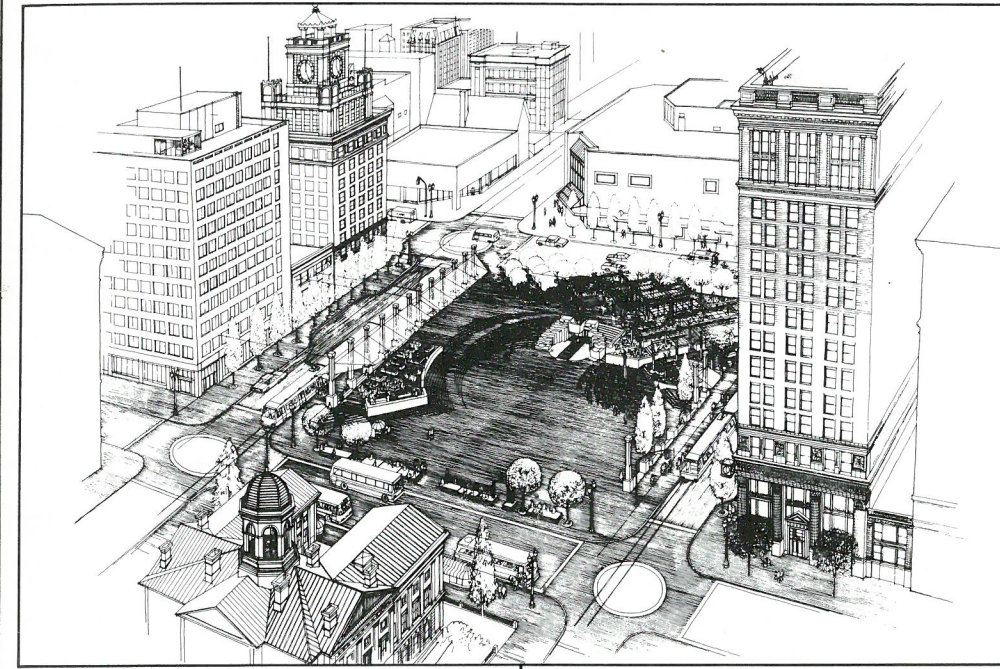
When the design for Pioneer Square was selected by the City Council on July 30, 1980, it was recognized that more design work was needed. The Jury of Award, in its recommendation to the Portland Development Commission and the City Council, suggested "a consolidation of structures into a more symbolic crystalline element providing greater usable spaces." The Jury further encouraged the design team "to seek opportunities for the inclusion of more vegetation and water, elements characteristic of Portland."

A series of meetings followed between the designers, Jury, representatives of the downtown community, the Association for Portland Progress, the Friends of Pioneer Square, other public bodies and civic groups, and eventually the City Design Review Committee.

Design revisions to the Square were adopted by the Development Commission on August 11 and by City Council on August 12.

One of the most significant refinements eliminated one of the small glass pavilions and enlargement of the remaining pavilion. This pavilion structure has been consolidated with the covered purgola to better accommodate food service functions. The pavilion is intended to contain counters and equipment for dispensing food and a limited number of tables for inside seating, in addition to a stairway leading to restrooms, storage and food preparation areas on the lower level. The covered portion of the purgola is intended as a covered outdoor area large enough to provide table seating for approximately 200.

Expansion of the main water feature has resulted in the design of a



large waterfall which cascades into a pool on the lower level. A bridge across the pools leads to the lower level main entrance in the arched fountain recess.

Additional trees have been added to the Square, grouped to act as a natural canopy over seating benches on the Sixth and Yamhill corner.

A design refinement made to better integrate light rail stations at this location also benefitted the square. A slight increase in the street grade along Morrison and Yamhill made possible the enlargement of the lower level. In turn, this provided for expanded use. Approximately 15,000 square feet of lower level space is now available to locate activities supportive to the square.

While requiring additional funding to be fully developed, this space could be used to produce revenue and to draw people to the Square during inclement weather or during times when special activities are not taking place in the main open space.

Potential uses include an information center, exhibit space, meeting room or theater space and other supportive commercial uses. Currently, the budget permits construction of only storage space and restrooms below grade with the remainder of the space unfinished.

The Management Approach

The Martin design concept for Pioneer Square envisions active programming of events and wide community use as a primary ingredient which will make the square a major downtown attractor. The scheme provides physical elements which support this concept — the diversity of large and small spaces for events, facilities for food service capable of serving up to 1,000 people daily; an adjacent covered outdoor eating area, a market area, transit shelter and seating walls. Tri-Met estimates that 52,000 people per day will use the Square to board or wait for the light rail, making it the most active station in the entire 15-mile system. Because of the importance of activities on the Square, there was a need to provide programming and to develop a sound management and operation plan.

In March, the Development Commission appointed the Pioneer Square Management Advisory Committee to review the approved program concept, and

recommended a structure for carrying out management responsibilities and financing for the Square's operation. The seven-member committee, chaired by Bob Wallace, included Phil Bogue, Paul Hunter, Sandra Jernstedt, Don Magnusen, Bill Naito, and John Ryan.

After an extensive study of all the issues involved, evaluation of approaches being used in other cities, and discussion with City bureaus and individuals in the community, the Committee, on July 9, 1981, adopted a final report outlining their recommendations. This report was subsequently approved by the Portland Development Commission on August 11 and by the Portland City Council on August 12.

A major conclusion of the Committee was that the Square should be intensively managed with respect to programming of events and entertainment, care in cleaning, maintenance and security.

The report recommended that the Commissioner in charge of the Parks Bureau should have overall responsibility for the Square on behalf of the City, but that a non-profit corporation be formed to assume Square management. This corporation would have the lead responsibility because of the ability to attract private contributions and to provide an extraordinary level of management without the Park Bureau's city-wide obligations.

The non-profit corporation would be organized with a five to seven member board of directors. Members would include the City Commissioner in charge of the Park Bureau or his designee, and representatives of the downtown business community and city at-large to be appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council.

The annual cost of operation of the Square was estimated at \$233,000, including maintenance;

cleaning and repairs by the Park Bureau; a square manager, secretarial and custodial assistance; office overhead; programming, promoting and producing events and security. Approximately two-thirds of the money will be devoted to the programming functions, with the other third applied to the basic Square maintenance. This level of funding will assure that the Square receives a level of attention that is consistent with its unparalleled location in the community.

The goal is to have these costs covered by revenues generated by the Square and from private funds. Revenue sources selected include leasing the restaurant, permit fees, leasing the lower level subject to federal concurrence, and a proportional share of the City general funds.

Construction Schedule

City Council and the Portland Development Commission have adopted the major design refinements and work on construction documents is beginning. It is expected that the bidding process will begin in December, and construction in early 1982. Construction will require 12 to 14 months to complete the Square.

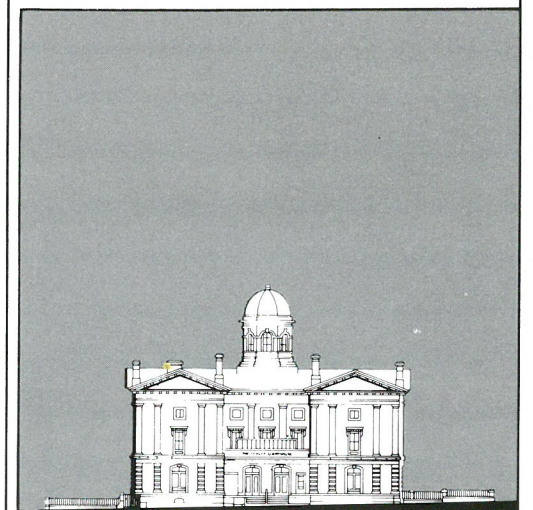
Whether the Square can include all of the design features is dependent upon successful completion of private fund raising efforts.

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