

From: Carol Otis [mailto:dr.otis@sportsdoctor.com]
Sent: Saturday, August 06, 2016 5:18 AM
To: Planning and Sustainability Commission <psc@portlandoregon.gov>
Subject: CC2035 Testimony

Dear Esteemed members of the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission,

I am writing to request that adequate view corridors be added to the Central City Scenic Resources Inventory of protected views so that these view corridors restore the Portland Japanese Garden's 1963 panoramic view that is essential to its design, function, and use. The Garden is designed specifically around an expansive panoramic view encompassing the rose gardens in the foreground, the downtown skyline in the middle-ground and the Cascades in the far-ground and Mt Hood and also Mt St. Helens. This view is critical to the healing experience of beauty and tranquility that is at the heart of the Garden's value to our community. It is the basis for one of the major design principles of Japanese Gardens, that of Borrowed View or Shakkei

To add the panoramic view and also add a view corridor to Mt St. Helens might require that more than one view corridor be established. The Portland Japanese Garden has only one view corridor on the inventory and it is a very limited one, whereas the Rose Garden has 6. You, as the Commission, are urged to request more view corridors be established for the Japanese Garden, along the lines of the 6 view corridors proposed for the Rose Garden, and encompassing the entire panoramic view and the view to Mt. St. Helens

I have been a guide at the Portland Japanese Garden for 10 years, a guide for the Haiku Alive program for school children for 5 years and an exhibition and events docent. I can specifically attest to the importance of the whole panoramic view to the experience of visitors and the importance of the view not only to the Garden but also to the entire City of Portland. There are many view spots but none so integral to the meaning of the site (the Japanese nature of using a borrowed view) nor to the breadth of view of the most important landmarks to the City of Portland and a way to have visitors "see" the City. (see below for a photo replicating the original view that was a major part of the design and function of the Portland Japanese Garden and a great asset to the City of Portland).

**1971 View from Portland Japanese Garden:
30,000 visitors**



**2016 view from Portland Japanese Garden:
400,000 visitors**



The Garden was sited very specifically to overlook the Rose Garden and downtown Portland and encompass a panoramic view of the Cascade foothills, Mt. St. Helens and Mt. Hood. This

expansive view is a critical component of the entire design of the garden, employing one of the most important design principles of Japanese gardens - *shakkei* (borrowed scenery). The 'borrowed' view from the Garden's central point – the Pavilion building and Overlook plaza – is what makes sense of the entire orientation of the Garden and its buildings. Japanese garden experts recognize the Portland garden's view as one of the best representations of *shakkei* in the world.

Japanese garden design has evolved over more than 1,000 years to intentionally transport people from their worries and preoccupations to ineffable experiences of peace, balance, harmony and tranquility. This is achieved through a precise layering of experience that has three basic levels:

- First, the garden must create a sense of safety and protection through virtual or physical enclosure. The surrounding hillside and native forest around Portland's garden provides this function.
- Then, the garden must create an intimate experience with nature. This is done through the design which places humans in immediate proximity with trees, plants, stone and water and daily pruning and endless attention to detail that keeps every tree and plant at a human scale and proportional to the whole. Portland's garden is world-renowned both for the excellence of its design and the highest standard of maintenance of a Japanese garden outside of Japan.
- Finally, a Japanese garden restores perspective through views that connect the individual to the infinite beauty and possibilities of the world beyond the garden. The original panoramic view of the Rose Garden in the foreground, downtown Portland in the middle-ground, and the Cascades in the far-ground served this purpose.

The famous gardens of Japan each have this tripartite identity – enclosure, intimacy, and view. Sadly, with modern development, some of Japan's greatest gardens have lost their views, losing a key component of their capacity to heal and refresh the human mind, body and spirit. **Portland's garden is in danger of losing this key component unless its original views are protected.** As you can see in the second photo above, vegetation growth on the Garden's hillside and in Washington Park has obscured the once expansive view that was the critical third step in the transformative experience intended for each person who visits Portland's Japanese garden. **We seek protection of this original view and the establishment of adequate view corridors to achieve this along with the view to Mt. St. Helenes.** The view should be framed by trees and vegetation but vegetation should be prohibited from encroaching upon the panoramic view.

Applying the EESE criteria, protecting this view has major social and economic benefits to our community. The mission of the Portland Japanese Garden is to connect people with the power and beauty of nature and the culture, art and people of Japan, through a world-class Japanese garden and cultural center. This translates into recreation for the mind, body and spirit of each of the millions of people the Garden has served over its 53-year history. In 2016, the Garden expects to serve 400,000 people with 40% coming from the local community. For those 160,000

community members, the Garden is a place where nature, beauty, tranquility and culture are seamlessly woven together. 8,300 households are members because they value these experiences in the Garden throughout the year. In addition, the community comes to the Garden for seasonal Japanese cultural festivals such as the family activities on *Kodomo-no-Hi* (Children's Day) or the mystical lantern-lit evenings as the harvest moon rises, *O-Tsukimi* (Moonviewing). Over the years, thousands of community members have treasured the view of the September moon rising dramatically over downtown – this is only possible because of the Garden's panoramic view.

Many community members participate in the varied educational programs the Garden offers – from our lecture series (600 people recently attended a free lecture on Zen Buddhism) or classes to learn Japanese pruning and stonework practices for their own gardens. Elementary school teachers use the free K-8 *Living in Harmony with Nature* curriculum which can be combined with a field trip to the Garden or adapted to any nature experience. The curriculum is designed to meet Oregon Common Curriculum Goals. Free training seminars help teachers adapt the curriculum to their specific needs. An intensive outreach program for Title I schools, *Haiku Alive*, sends a teacher into the classroom, underwrites the field trip to the Garden, provides cameras and art materials for the children to capture their experiences, publishes a book of their haiku and art, and then provides free admission for the students to return to the Garden with their families. Periodic free days and *Arts for All* discounted tickets seek to ensure that the Garden is accessible to the entire community.

Please protect the view that is so essential to its beauty and tranquility and meaning and also to the City of Portland

Sincerely,

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