



*Dean's Barbershop, Listed to the National Register of Historic Places in 2022. Photo Credit: National Park Service*



*Albina Library Addition, Historic Landmarks Commission 2022 New Build Project of the Year. Rendering Credit: Lever Architects*

PORTLAND HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

## STATE OF THE CITY PRESERVATION REPORT 2022

March 15, 2023

# Portland Historic Landmarks Commission

The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission **provides leadership and expertise on maintaining and enhancing Portland’s architectural and cultural heritage.** The Commission reviews development proposals for alterations to historic buildings and new construction in historic districts. The Commission also provides advice on historic preservation matters and coordinates historic preservation programs in the City.

## 2022 Commission Members



**ANDREW SMITH, CHAIR** – Commissioner Smith is an historical architect with more than 20 years of experience working on preservation and rehabilitation projects, including many utilizing historic tax credits. He holds a Master of Architecture from Tulane University, and practiced in St. Louis, Chicago and New Orleans prior to living in Portland.



**KIMBERLY STOWERS MORELAND, VICE-CHAIR** – Commissioner Moreland is the owner of Moreland Resource Consulting and has over 25+ years of public sector urban, historic preservation, community development, and urban planning experience. She worked as an Urban Planner for Portland, Tacoma, and Salem. She is actively involved with several cultural, historic preservation, and heritage boards.



**KRISTEN MINOR** – Commissioner Minor has spent over 25 years studying and shaping the built environment. She practiced architecture for 10 years, then spent 10 as an urban planner, and now works exclusively with historic and older buildings.



**MAYA FOTY** – Commissioner Foty’s experience includes numerous preservation projects on both the east and west coasts. With over 20 years’ experience as a preservation architect working exclusively on landmarked properties, she specializes in projects with complex seismic and material conservation issues.



**MATTHEW ROMAN** – Commissioner Roman has 25 years of experience preserving Portland’s architectural heritage both as a designer and through involvement in nonprofit organizations like Restore Oregon, the Architectural Heritage Center, the Pittock Mansion, and the Preservation Artisans Guild.



**PEGGY MORETTI** – Commissioner Moretti is Executive Director Emeritus of Restore Oregon, a statewide nonprofit working to preserve, reuse and pass forward the places and spaces that reflect Oregon’s diverse cultural heritage and make our communities inclusive, vibrant, livable and sustainable. Prior to leading that organization for 12 years, her earlier career was in the fields of marketing communications and business development.

The Historic Landmarks Commission (PHLC) is supported by **HILLARY ADAM**, primary staff to the PHLC, an expert team from the Bureau of Development Services (BDS), and **KARA FIORAVANTI**, supervising manager of the Design and Historic Review team at BDS, as well as **BRANDON SPENCER-HARTLE**, our liaison from the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS).

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2022 STATS	<u>Commission Reviews</u>	1	Retreats with Staff and Commission	
	3	Type III Historic Resource Reviews	1	Trainings
	0	Type III Appeals to City Council	6	Work Sessions
	0	Type III for Landmark Designation	<u>Staff Reviews</u>	
	1	Type II Appeals	40	Type II Staff Level Reviews
	8	Design Advice Requests	11	Type IX Staff Level Reviews
	2	National Register Nominations	54	Type I Staff Level Review
	12	Briefings		

# 1.0 Message From the Chair

February 24, 2023

Dear Mayor Wheeler and City Council Members:

I am pleased to be writing to you as the new Chair of the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission. In January, I assumed the position from Commissioner Kristen Minor, who has served as Chair for the past 5 years. Please join me in thanking Commissioner Minor for her dedication and leadership over a very long tenure as Chair. She set an excellent example for Commissioner Kimberly Moreland, the newly elected Vice Chair, and me to follow.

As our city continues to emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic and recover from its wide-ranging impacts, this Commission is focused on how retention and reinvestment in our existing built resources in general, and historic preservation in particular, can be key to our success moving forward. We urge City Council to:

- take steps to lower economic barriers to restoration and reuse, especially to boost much-needed housing supply;
- support State legislation which would extend the Special Assessment program and study the creation of a state historic tax credit;
- step up efforts to inventory, repair and properly maintain City-owned historic resources to avoid demolition by neglect; and,
- establish a city-wide comprehensive cultural resources management plan to identify and protect additional cultural and historic resources.

In this report, we highlight programs in Portland helping Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) owners of older properties repair and maintain them so they can remain in place and preserve a sense of community. Two of the organizations that deserve recognition for their work are Taking Ownership PDX and the Rebuilding Center's Home Retention program.

We have updated our annual watch list to include not only perennial items such as public monuments and unreinforced masonry building (URMs) but also the Vista Bridge and Downtown Portland as a whole. We spotlight our 2022 Projects of the Year: Multnomah County's Albina Library rehabilitation and expansion; and, a new home for Portland's long-running and award-winning Street Roots newspaper. These two thoughtfully designed projects illustrate how historic buildings can be adapted and expanded – sometimes dramatically – while maintaining their important character-defining features.

Finally, the Historic Landmarks Commission recognizes and appreciates the difficulties you – Portland's elected officials – are experiencing in leading our city back from the ravages of the Covid pandemic and civil unrest of the past three years. We urge you to keep up this important work, to utilize the precious physical resources we already have, and to continue to lean on this Commission for advice and assistance when it comes to Portland's built environment.

Sincerely,



Andrew C. Smith, Chair

# 2.0 What We Do



The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission has a wide variety of tasks, goals, and collaborative partners. We are here as a resource for city officials and neighborhoods as well as applicants. We are professionals who believe in finding nuanced solutions that benefit all Portlanders, including future generations. Below is a list of some of the powers and duties afforded to the Commission by the Portland Zoning Code:

**Make Recommendations to City Council**

- Establishment, Amendment, or Removal of Historic Districts
- Adoption of New Design Guidelines for Historic Districts
- Type IV Demolition Reviews



**Decide Land Use Applications**

- Type III Reviews of New Construction in Historic Districts
- Type III Reviews to Establish or Remove Landmark Designations
- Type III Reviews of Alterations to Historic Resources
- Type II Appeals



**Provide Advice**

- Design Advice to Applicants for future Land Use Reviews
- Legislative Advice on Code Projects to the Planning and Sustainability Commission and City Council
- Policy and Design Advice to City Bureaus and Other Public Agencies on Capital Projects and Programs
- Collaborate with Portland Design Commission



**Advocate**

- Initiate and Coordinate Preservation and Outreach Programs within and outside of the City



**Commission Highlights**

- The Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) celebrated the adoption and implementation of the Historic Resources Code Project, wrapping up a 4.5-year process. The HLC worked extensively with Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and Development Services staff, and the Planning and Sustainability Commission to identify common goals and methods for reaching those goals to get to a final product that helps to balance preservation values with other City values, allowing for a more fair and equitable application of the City’s regulations related to historic resources.
- The Historic Landmarks Commission reviewed and provided comments on the South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines, prior to recommending their approval to City Council. These guidelines will help unify the approach to Historic Resource Review in this district, thus making the process more predictable.
- This Historic Landmarks Commission worked collaboratively with the Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) in the development of a Historic Resource Overlay Administrative Rule related to right-of-way dedications in historic areas. PBOT was sensitive to the HLC’s concerns about compromising the street walls in historic areas and worked with PBOT and Development Services staff to reach a compromise that would allow the historic street wall pattern to be maintained in historic areas.

# 3.0 Recommended Council Action Items

## 3.1 Lower Economic Barriers to Restoration and Reuse

Oregon lacks the economic tools that most other states use to incentivize and enable the private sector to save, repair, and repurpose existing homes and buildings. The enormous benefits of restoration and reuse to achieve the City’s goals of more housing, reduced carbon emissions, and retention of cultural heritage cannot be overstated. Truly, the most impactful thing the City could do is advocate for better financial incentives at the state legislature.

In the 2023 session, ***we ask the City to support HB 2079***, which charges the Legislative Revenue Office to study the implementation of a tax credit and direct grant program to incentivize restoration and reuse of historic properties.

***Further, we urge the City to actively participate in that study to develop effective incentives which prioritize:***

- 1) the retention and creation of housing, and;***
- 2) seismic retrofitting.***

Though resilience seems to have moved to the back burner, major progress in the City’s quest for earthquake resilience could be achieved with proper financial incentives.

While that study is being conducted, and the resulting tax credit and/or grant program passed at a future legislative session, it is very important to retain the only statewide incentive we currently have. ***We ask the City to support HB 149***, which extends the current Special Assessment program until 2031. Though Special Assessment is imperfect, it is very important to bridge the gap until a better program is in place.



*The Marshall Wells Lofts project in the Pearl District converted a 1910 warehouse into condos, taking advantage of the State Special Assessment Program that provided condo owners with a 10-year property tax freeze, making them more affordable.*

### 3.0 Recommended Council Action Items

#### 3.2 Leading by Example

The City is the owner of numerous historic buildings and structures, both designated and not designated, and is responsible for stewarding these taxpayer-funded assets. Many of these assets, such as City Hall and the Portland Building, have been maintained and improved over the years, though others have been neglected. On occasion this neglect has led to demolition, resulting in landfill waste and a loss of our cultural heritage.

Examples of this neglect include Engine No. 2, and multiple buildings on the Centennial Mills site. Centennial Mills was on the Commission's first Watch List in 2009 (and again in subsequent years) with the Commission noting the building's continued vacancy and need for stabilization to preclude further deterioration. Our advice was not heeded and the building has continued to sit vacant with no preventative action taken by the City. Now, the City intends to sell the property and abandon the promises made in the 2006 Centennial Mills Framework Plan. This is not how a City builds trust in the planning process.

Comprehensive Plan Policy 4.51 states "Maintain City-owned historic resources with necessary upkeep and repair." Proper stewardship begins with understanding what assets we have as well as their condition. The Commission strongly encourages City Council to direct all City bureaus to conduct an inventory and condition assessment on all assets so that we can begin to understand what we have and how we need to care for it. The Landmarks Commission also notes that we are available to provide guidance to City bureaus prior to removal or demolition of public assets, as are our liaisons in the Bureau of Development Services and the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability.

***Lastly, we strongly encourage the City to keep its commitments to preservation, particularly when promises have been made to stakeholders and members of the public who have used their time and energy to voice their preference for preservation.***



*Centennial Mills stands as an iconic beacon of the river's industrial past in this location now teeming with newer residential buildings. The City has not properly protected this building from decay. The City must act as a leader in protecting its heritage resources, by not allowing them to fall into disrepair, ultimately leading to demolition.*

### 3.0 Recommended Council Action Items

#### 3.3 City-Wide Comprehensive Cultural Resource Management Plan

Maintaining our City's historic and cultural resources cannot be a passive activity tackled every few years or when a threat is recognized. Long term preservation success begins with preservation planning as an ongoing activity. It must be integrated with other metrics and systems used to make long term planning decisions for a city. Historic and cultural resources, whether publicly- or privately- owned, require investment over time. Only the City of Portland is in a position to create a meaningful long-term preservation plan that takes a holistic approach to identifying and maintaining our city's culturally significant resources. In order to make our system more equitable so the entire community is represented, the plan must identify new historic resources that tell the stories we have previously overlooked. While designation is important, it is not enough to provide long term protection. ***A city-wide comprehensive cultural resources management plan is critical to accomplish this goal.***

Understanding the complex and diverse nature of our built environment will require ongoing research and investigation. We must acknowledge our City's diverse history is underrepresented on our historic resource survey maps. This is in large part due to the lack of historic resource inventory work in areas of the City which have never been surveyed, particularly for cultural heritage. Portland's collage of neighborhoods, each with its own identity, represents more than just architectural traditions from previous times. Embedded in the buildings and places are the stories that reflect the history and lives of generations of people who built this city. The importance of a building or place is not always obvious to the casual observer. Sometimes it takes time for those places to reveal themselves. Often it takes some funding for research and documentation too.

The PHLC acknowledges the positive work being done to correct the inequities built into our current inventory of historic properties. The City Council's budget support in 2022 for research, documentation, and listing of previously undesignated historic resources like the Dr. John D. Marshall Building provided an investment in the future of Portland where all our histories are reflected.

The Historic Resource Code, recently adopted by the City of Portland, provides greater local control over historic designations and what we want to hold up and acknowledge as important touchstones in our community. We have an ongoing obligation to make progress identifying, designating, and protecting important historic resources before they, along with the stories they tell us, are lost. City of Portland funding and dedicated staff support in 2023 are critically important to ensuring the buildings, places, and stories of all Portland's communities are recognized and preserved for future generations.



*Emmanuel Temple Full Gospel Pentecostal Church, formerly Evangelical Free Church, which was identified in Cornerstones of Community as significant to Portland's Black heritage. The building was demolished in 2017 and remains an empty lot. Identifying and mapping these resources is the first step toward ensuring the significance of our heritage resources can be evaluated and protected from erasure*



### 3.0 Recommended Council Action Items

#### 3.4 Boost Housing Supply Through Adaptive Reuse

Portland has good reason to be proud of our zoning code changes, yet building code reform has continued to lag. Over the last several years, City Council has approved regulatory changes that essentially eliminate single-family zoning as it was formerly known, allowing for the number of units and types of uses to increase in huge areas of the City. City Council's recent resolution about adapting downtown office buildings to residential use is another example of the nimble land use reform that is demanded of us in this era of very rapid climate change, inequity, and unaffordability.

***We continue to ask for policies that reward adaptive reuse and discourage demolition*** in order to minimize both the waste of construction materials and embodied carbon as well as the overall energy output for construction projects, recognizing that it could take 4 decades for a new “green” building to recoup its carbon output. ***OUR PLANET DOES NOT HAVE THIS TIME.***



*Building code updates could facilitate the interior conversion of large older homes into multiple units, adding housing and density without demolition. This avoids tons of CO2 emissions and retains a neighborhood's sense of place. Photo: Wikimedia commons*

While the PHLC believes that new construction is necessary and important, we cannot build our way to a greener and cooler planet. As a City, we need to get serious about policies which combat climate change and that means not just encouraging but requiring much more adaptive reuse. The impactful zoning code changes that have been enacted to date must now be matched by changes in the building code which should be driven far more by sustainability concerns.

- Re-examine the threshold for use of “commercial” vs “residential” code in projects that divide an existing building to create more units. It is time to allow more units without triggering the very expensive commercial code requirements.

- The 2022 Oregon Structural Specialty Code (OSSC) and 2021 Oregon Residential Specialty Code (ORSC) govern construction of buildings across the State of Oregon. In some cases, the code empowers local building officials who administer the code to allow alternatives if resulting construction is not a fire or life safety risk. The City of Portland has a long list of previously approved building code appeals which could be distilled into a BDS Code Guide for converting existing buildings into multi-dwelling structures.
- Consider using “breaks” in SDC fees, such as those proposed by City Council in the recent adaptive reuse resolution, both to reward developers for retaining an older dwelling unit or duplex on a site while adding a new ADU or duplex and to reward owners for doing some seismic upgrades to an existing structure while creating new units.
- Construction materials are important. Use of heavy-carbon-footprint concrete should trigger requirements for flexibility in design so that the building may be adapted to another use over its lifespan.
- Encourage more rehabilitation of existing materials including historic wood and metal windows, rather than using vinyl windows (made from inherently unsustainable petroleum products) to replace them.
- Study the use of historic wall assemblies such as lath and plaster in fire-rated separation walls. Existing walls may need little more than another layer of gypsum board in order to achieve a fire rating.

Zoning reform and building code reform can't stop climate change or undo past harms inflicted on entire communities. But we can continue to actively shape our City to discourage the "business as usual" approach that led to our current situation.

## Chapter Highlight

### DR. JOHN D. MARSHALL BUILDING NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION

The one-story, Modern Movement commercial building at 2337 N Williams Avenue was constructed for Dr. John D. Marshall in 1952, one of a small number of Black physicians working in Portland during the early postwar era. The building is significantly associated with Black-owned businesses, professional offices, and community programs. Early in its history, Dr. John D. Marshall used the building to serve African American families in the Lower Albina area as a dental clinic. The period of significance for the Dr. John D. Marshall Clinic at 2337 N Williams Avenue (historically 2337-2343 N Williams Avenue) spans 1952 to 1979, from its construction for Dr. John D. Marshall through the end of its association with the Portland chapter of the Black Panther Party (BPP).

Throughout this period, the building housed a series of healthcare resources, primarily serving the local Black community who were denied healthcare services from mainstream healthcare systems. Dr. Marshall, one of the few Black doctors practicing in Portland in the early postwar period, operated a medical clinic from the building's main office space (addressed 2337 N Williams Avenue) between 1952 and at least the early 1960s. He leased one of the building's two smaller commercial spaces (addressed 2341 N Williams Avenue) to Dr. Richard Neal, a Black pharmacist, between 1952 and 1955, and then to Dr. Samuel Brown, a Black dentist, between 1955 and at least the early 1960s. In 1970, Dr. Marshall leased the building to the local chapter of the BPP, who operated first the Malcolm X People's Dental Clinic and later the Fred Hampton People's Free Health Clinic from the space between 1970 and 1979. The period of significance ended in 1979 when the Fred Hampton People's Free Health Clinic closed, and the building ceased to be used for healthcare-related purposes.

The building was subsequently purchased by Bernie and Bobbie Foster of The Skanner News, which produced the Skanner newspaper from this location for more than two decades. Today, the building maintains its legacy within Portland's Black business community as the Terry Family Funeral Home.



Image of Dr. John D. Marshall Building

## 4.0 The Past is the Future: Meeting Equity, Housing, Economic Development, & Climate Goals

Some people think that historic preservation is all about saving beautiful old buildings from the wrecking ball. In fact, the goal of preservation today is to save places that really matter, tell the full American story, and build strong, equitable, livable communities. It is much less focused on the “beautiful,” and more ready to ask questions like “who is uplifted?” It acknowledges and protects cultural, historic, and meaningful places, strengthens community bonds, and plays an essential role in meeting City Comprehensive Plan goals in the areas of housing, equity, economic development, and reducing carbon emissions.

**HOUSING** is not just shelter, it is also a place to belong. Housing goals are advanced by retaining existing housing (which is typically more affordable), and increasing supply through the conversion of commercial buildings, the subdivision of large older residences, and the addition of new, compatible infill.



*[University of Oregon Library image, c. 1912. Now called Fountain Place, this 80-unit downtown building was renovated in 2020 by Home Forward using both Historic Tax Credits and Low Income Housing Tax Credits.]*

Historic designation unlocks the potential for Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits, reducing total costs to aid in the retrofitting or conversion of older buildings to dwelling units which we desperately need. Adding density without demolition limits displacement, keeping people in their neighborhoods as they age and keeping older and more affordable buildings in the mix. Statistics from Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) projects show that the average per unit cost was \$209,095 for new construction, as compared to \$153,394 for acquisition and rehabilitation. In other words, four units of affordable housing can be created using existing buildings for every three with new construction.

**CLIMATE CHANGE/EMISSIONS REDUCTION** goals are more and more obviously aligned with reuse, with every call from architects, environmentalists, and planners to stop perpetuating the “culture of clearance” policies that are terrible for our planet. When we adapt and reuse, rather than demolish and replace, we keep thousands of tons of materials out of landfills. And a recent analysis by EcoNORTHWEST commissioned by Restore Oregon provides dramatic data showing that building reuse has the same environmental impact as removing thousands of cars from the road.

**EQUITY** is advanced when cities engage underserved communities to identify what places are most meaningful to them, embody their history, and nurture cultural roots. Everyone’s history matters. Preservation and rehabilitation create greater social sustainability and community cohesion. Significant older places, businesses, and buildings, whether

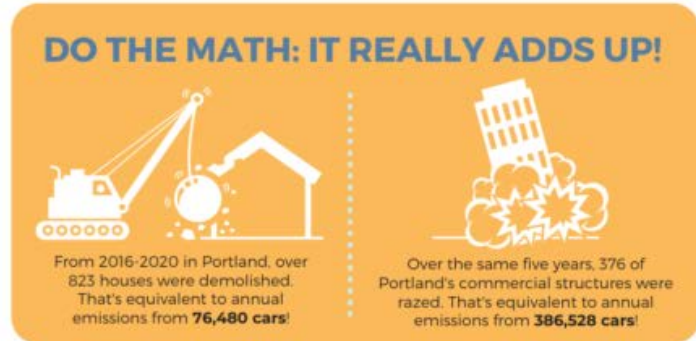
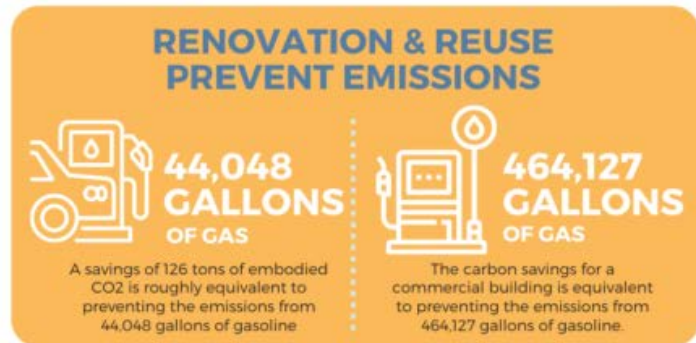
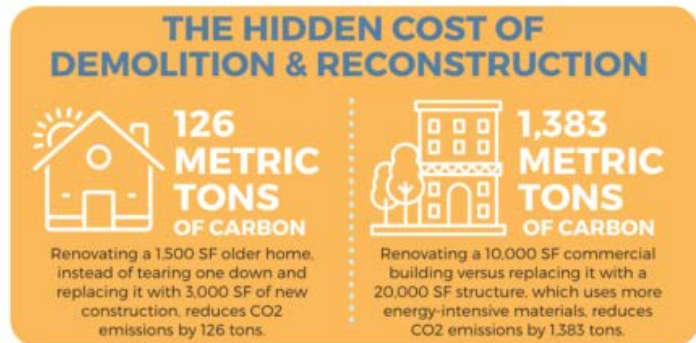


Image Courtesy of Restore Oregon

or not they are beautiful, provide a tangible measure of the continuum of our history and ensure that this history carries across generations in changing and growing communities. It helps us all to see and hear authentic and “everyday” stories from the past, not just examples from how wealthy people lived. And, because they are among the most vulnerable to demolition, protecting more of these “everyday” resources (which are, incidentally, the most affordable for renters) keeps them a part of the city’s fabric. Historic or Design Review conveys that people’s past and their values matter, and helps ensure that new buildings respect that context.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/REVITALIZING DOWNTOWN** is advanced as Portland looks to breathe new life into our downtown and our tourism industry. Adapting an older commercial building for residential use is the epitome of preservation and reuse - and emphasizes the need for better economic incentives through tax credits and other means. It is worth repeating that the most vibrant, interesting downtowns – those that attract both residents, businesses, and tourists – invest in retaining their historic and cultural character. Also, the rehabilitation of older buildings and their components (not just those designated officially as historic) creates more local jobs than a comparably-sized new construction project.

*PlaceEconomics, “Reinvesting in Older Housing—A Key Component of Post COVID-19 Resiliency,” May 2020, p4. <https://www.placeeconomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Reinvesting-in-Older-Housing-A-Key-Component-of-Post-COVID-19-Resiliency-1.pdf>*

*Donovan D. Rypkema, “Heritage Conservation and the Local Economy,” Global Urban Development Magazine, August 2008. <https://www.globalurban.org/GUDMag08Vol4Iss1/Rypkema.htm>*

*Katie Gerfen, “Renovation, Restoration, and Adaptive Reuse: The Understated Value of Existing Buildings,” Architect magazine, January 15, 2020. [https://www.architectmagazine.com/design/renovation-restoration-and-adaptive-reuse-the-understated-value-of-existing-buildings\\_o](https://www.architectmagazine.com/design/renovation-restoration-and-adaptive-reuse-the-understated-value-of-existing-buildings_o)*

## *Chapter Highlight*

### JIM PEPPER HOUSE NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION

The Jim Pepper House, located at 10809 NE Fremont Street in Portland's Parkrose neighborhood, is associated with Indigenous jazz artist Jim Pepper, of Kaw and Muscogee Creek heritage. He was an innovator of jazz-rock fusion and world music. Pepper is internationally renowned for his compositions melding popular jazz music with rock, folk, and mainly traditional Native American music. He was posthumously granted the Lifetime Musical Achievement Award by First Americans in the Arts (FAITA) in 1999 and was inducted into the Native American Music Awards Hall of Fame in 2000.

The period of significance for the Jim Pepper House spans 1949 to 1971, beginning with Pepper's move to the property as a young child and ending with the release of his influential, genre-defying album *Pepper's Pow Wow*. This twenty-two-year span encompasses Pepper's upbringing in the house, his early education in his own Kaw and Muscogee Creek heritage, his first forays into the performing arts, and his later development as a jazz musician and composer.

Jim Pepper composed several of the tracks on *Pepper's Pow Wow* with his father, Gilbert, while staying in the house, and he would regularly hold band practice and host notable musicians there when visiting Portland. The Jim Pepper House is



*Photograph of the Jim Pepper House, by Caity Ewers*

## 5.0 Adapting Commercial Buildings to Housing

As our city emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic, commercial office buildings in Portland’s downtown core continue to experience high vacancy rates and broad underutilization. At the same time, adequate housing supply remains a challenge, as it was prior to 2020. In response to this, the City has convened a focus group to study and evaluate ways in which the conversion of commercial buildings to residential use can be prioritized and incentivized.

The Landmarks Commission supports this effort, in large part because it seeks to adaptively reuse existing structures rather than relying heavily upon new construction alternatives to meet housing needs. Preserving and rehabilitating existing structures is not only far more sustainable than demolition and reconstruction, it retains the cultural memory of the existing building and provides for a more diverse visual character in downtown.

Older existing buildings are prime candidates for conversion because they tend to contain Class B and C office space which is not as desirable in the commercial marketplace. As a result, revitalization of older office buildings into new housing can have a dramatic increase on the value and, therefore, tax base of the property. Additionally, their smaller floorplates are closer to windows, providing natural light and ventilation.

Recent proforma modeling shows there is a financial gap that needs to be filled for these projects to be widely undertaken by building owners and developers. Among the strategies being considered by the City are:

- Reducing or eliminating system development charges (SDC) for buildings converted to affordable and workforce affordable housing;
- Easing land use requirements such as reducing or eliminating minimum required parking; and,
- Modifications to the building code to aid in reducing the construction cost of retrofits.



*The Mayer Building, located at 1130 SW Morrison, is an example of an older commercial building that may be suited to residential conversion. Photo credit: Loopnet*



In addition to the above strategies, qualifying buildings can also take advantage of existing incentives such as **Federal Historic Tax Credits** (which effectively provide a 20% tax rebate on most hard and soft costs), **Low Income Housing Tax Credits**, and other grant programs such as the Oregon Main Street Revitalization Grant offered through the State Historic Preservation Office. In addition to the existing Special Assessment program, which freezes property taxes on rehabilitated historic buildings for a period of 10 years, pending legislation would also look at **creating a State Rehabilitation Tax Credit** similar to the federal tax credit. **State Rehabilitation Tax Credits** have been proven highly effective in catalyzing redevelopment in other downtowns where a state tax credit exists. **The benefit of all of these incentives is that they can be combined and overlaid to fill the funding gap for residential conversions.**



*These buildings on NW 3rd Avenue in the New Chinatown-Japantown historic district are experiencing demolition-by-neglect. A state Rehabilitation Tax Credit could help close the financial gap needed for seismic retrofitting and adaptive reuse, preserving their cultural heritage and providing ground floor space for small business with residential units on the upper floors. Photo: Restore Oregon*

## 8.5 Federal and State Legislative Bills to Support

There are several interesting federal and state incentives tax credit legislative bills to watch that aligns with the strategies mentioned. Please see a summary of those bills below:

- **HR.2294- Historic Tax Credit (HTC) Growth and Opportunity Act of 2021** - Improve and enhance the HTC , including permanently increasing the credit to 30% for projects under 2.5 million and make it easier to use for smaller projects.
- **SB 149** - Extends the sunset for the current historic property Special Assessment program to 2031.
- **SB 154** - Requires LRO to study calculations of maximum assessed value when taxable property become new eligible for or disqualified from, exemption or special assessment program.
- **HB 2079** – Requires Legislative Revenue Officer to study potential of implementing a tax credit and direct grant program to encourage preservation of historic property.

## 6.0 Preservation Successes in the City of Portland

Historic Preservation has been practiced as “community preservation” by people in the Black community in Portland for many decades. When white people abandoned areas they considered to be Black neighborhoods, the ability of the homeowners and business owners of color to raise or borrow the funds to keep up building maintenance and improvements typically nosedived, due to racist lending practices. Sometimes Black owners did find other ways to keep ownership in the family and to keep up with expensive repairs and construction. Many others, however, either sold a deteriorated building to a gentrifying white developer or kept it, hoping that somehow they would find the money to deal with the deferred maintenance on the building. These buildings are old, and often need expensive energy retrofits, seismic, and even structural work, but also are typically attractive, close-in, constructed with very durable materials, and associated with a history of a resilient minority community.

A number of private sector programs or private-public partnerships are working to retain Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) ownership of older, un-maintained properties. One of these is Taking Ownership PDX; another is the Rebuilding Center’s Home Retention program. We highlight these because they are doing preservation work. The goals of Historic Preservation and “community preservation” are often the same: respect the history of a place; direct resources and attention to previously ignored or marginalized communities, places, and stories; and preserve and repair the things that were built to last.



*Photo Credit: takingownershippdx.com*

## 6.0 Preservation Successes in the City of Portland



*Photo Credit: takingownershippdx.com*

Taking Ownership PDX was started just a few years ago by Randal Wyatt, in response to the Black community having to move east and sell their homes and businesses. The organization takes volunteer labor and money and invests it in Black-owned properties that have become overwhelming for their owners to maintain on their own. The organization represents a “community mindset, as opposed to the individualistic mindset that capitalism breeds,” as Wyatt told Willamette Week. Taking Ownership allows Black Portlanders to age in place, generate wealth, and deflect the gentrification process.

The Home Retention Program began in early 2022 (and may be renamed), but as explained by the ReBuilding Center’s Jack Bouba, it is a program specifically aimed at BIPOC homeowners (maybe renters as well, ultimately). The inventory of materials the ReBuilding Center receives often comes from gentrification and displacement, so the program looks to give back to the population most affected. The program aims to fill material requests by BIPOC property owners if possible, and further to teach new BIPOC owners the skills to do minor home repairs. A Metro grant enabled the program to purchase an electric van, which will become a mobile education department.

## 6.0 Preservation Successes in the City of Portland

### 6.2 Legacy Building Business Program

Since the start of the pandemic, many legacy businesses in Portland have struggled or gone out of business. Since 2020, the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission has advocated for the City Council staff to study and financially support the implementation of a Legacy Business Program designed to support the City's vulnerable legacy businesses.

Today, we celebrate the notice of intent from the Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS), directed by the House Appropriations Committee, to award \$352,000 to the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability to support scoping and development of a Legacy Business Program in Portland.

The Legacy Business Program will provide relevant resources to businesses that meet specific criteria to remain economically viable and potentially protect their older buildings. The Program will support the on-going operation and preservation of institutions that have achieved historic significance. The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission commends Brandon Spencer-Hartle, BPS, Historic Resource Manager, who took initiative and successfully sought the CDS funds supported by Senators Merkley and Wyden. The Historic Landmarks Commission looks forward to working with Brandon and community members to develop the program logistics. Thank you, City Council, for your support!



## 7.0 Projects of the Year: 2022

7.1 Albina Library (HLC Type III Review)

7.2 Street Roots (Staff Type II Review)



## 7.0 Projects of the Year

### ALBINA LIBRARY

Architect: Lever Architects

Owner: Multnomah County



*Aerial of Proposed Albin Library looking SE*

### 7.1 Albina Library: Project of the Year

On December 12, 2022, the Historic Landmarks Commission unanimously approved substantial alterations to the historic Albina Library, located at 216 NE Knott Street. The proposed work includes seismic retrofit and rehabilitation of the interior of the historic library as well as demolition of the later additions to the south and construction of a new 32,000sf addition to accommodate library space, a community room, and district-wide library administrative offices, fronting on NE Russell Street.

The historic Carnegie-sponsored library was designed by Portland architect Ellis Lawrence and built in 1912. Following a robust community engagement effort, Lever Architects designed the bold new library addition to be responsive to the County's and community's needs and desires while also being respectful of the existing historic building and the surrounding Eliot Conservation District. The new addition strives to be a place that the community can be proud of, connecting them to both the past and the future.

The Commission acknowledged that the Albina district has a long history, notable both for its vibrant community and cultural roots and also many layers of painful, discriminatory policies that caused both physical destruction and large-scale community displacement. Therefore, as the Commission discussed the proposal's response to its surrounding context, it focused heavily on the responsibility for the new library building to be forward looking, and to create a joyful, welcoming, inclusive space for all Portlanders.

The project team conducted over fifty community outreach events, with specific focus on engaging non-dominant stakeholder groups. The community outreach determined many aspects of the design, including how the library intends to program the new addition. The Commission celebrated the breadth of this inclusive process as a model for future design outreach and is grateful for the participation of many historically underrepresented voices. One Commissioner noted, "I want to put on the record how excited how I am, and how grateful, for the wonderful quality of thought and - I want to say love - that went into the design of this, and the thoughtfulness and the engagement... I can only imagine the amount of effort and time to do this kind of thoughtful outreach in the community... and this community deserves something excellent, and this looks excellent. It has a sense of energy and presence that is deserved."

*7.0 Projects of the Year*



*Historic Albina Library on Knott Street*



*New Albina Library addition on Russell*

## 7.0 Projects of the Year

### STREET ROOTS

Architect: Holst Architects

Developer: Street Roots



Photo Credit: City of Portland

### 7.2 Street Roots

In March 2022, Portland’s long-running award-winning newspaper, Street Roots, purchased the historic building at 219-233 W Burnside to expand their office and service uses. The renovated historic building will feature a new fully accessible penthouse addition, rooftop garden, and solar array. The penthouse will serve as a classroom for job training while the lower floors will provide space for a beauty parlor, showers, laundry facilities and clothing storage, as well as opportunities for community members to pick up mail, vote, and check email, among other things. Street Roots’ expansion will increase the organization’s impact for people experiencing homelessness and the newspaper’s readers.

The 1926 building is a contributing resource in the Skidmore/Old Town Historic District, with significance related to former occupants which include a Japanese dentist, Chinese chiropractors and herbal medicine practitioner, and a Jewish second-hand clothing store. The proposed exterior alterations are limited to the addition of the 3rd floor penthouse and new signage. The penthouse is simple in its design and is smaller than the already diminutive footprint of the building. Outboard of the penthouse is a trellis structure intended to allow for the growth of climbing vines that will help create a rooftop garden oasis above the busy W Burnside Street below. Though they sit relatively close to edge of the building due to the narrow width of the existing structure, the penthouse and trellis are made of darker materials intended to ensure the structures will visually recede; they will also be hidden for many months of the year by the dense tree canopy along Burnside.

The review of the changes to this building was conducted by Bureau of Development Services staff but the Landmarks Commission wanted to highlight this project as it will bring greater visibility to this important journalistic institution in our city.



## 8.0 HLC 2023 Watch List/Losses

### 8.1 Monuments

The Landmarks Commission has been advocating for a public discussion about statues that were removed from their previous locations during the racial justice protests. The Harvey Scott statue that previously stood in Mt Tabor Park is identified as “contributing” to the Mount Tabor Park Historic District, while the Teddy Roosevelt and Abe Lincoln statues that were formerly in the South Park Blocks are listed in the City’s Historic Resources Inventory and now considered “Significant Resources” by the updated code. Other monuments within the city also have varying degrees of historic recognition. With all of these, Title 33 lays out a process for demolition review (or relocation). For instance, permanent removal of the Harvey Scott statue requires a Demolition Review, while the Roosevelt and Lincoln statues are subject to a 120-Day Demolition Delay.

The Landmarks Commission believes that the public deserves an open forum and opportunity to discuss alternatives for the future of these statues, and we seek the participation of not only Portland Parks & Recreation staff but also the Regional Arts & Culture Council, the City Arts Manager, and preservation groups such as the Architectural Heritage Center and/or Restore Oregon. We also are committed to participation in such a forum with a representative of the Landmarks Commission. ***We look to City Council to lead the effort in developing a public engagement process and for decision-making around the future of these statues.***



Photo Credit: Maya Foty

## 8.0 2023 Watch List

### 8.2 Vista Bridge

The Vista Avenue Viaduct was designed in 1926 by Fred Fowler, a 1912 graduate of the University of Oregon. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. The Vista Avenue Viaduct replaced the Ford Street Bridge, which had been designed to carry street cars and foot traffic. The Ford Street Bridge was dismantled and relocated to outer Southwest Portland where it is still in use as the Terwilliger overpass, straddling the Interstate Freeway 1-5. The total cost to erect Vista Bridge in 1926 was \$197,000.<sup>32</sup> In order to finance a bridge that met the aesthetic and architectural standards of the residents, the citizenry raised approximately half the money. The City paid one-quarter, and the Portland Electric Power Company (owner of the Ford bridge) paid the remaining quarter.

The bridge is a reinforced, poured in place, concrete structure, 489 feet between abutments with grand views of Mount Hood and downtown Portland. Unfortunately, the bridge became a destination for suicide, with the first incident possibly occurring shortly after its 1926 opening. From 2004 through 2011, 13 people died by suicide by jumping. In 2013, temporary 9-foot-high suicide fences were installed which have since prevented other tragedies. However, in addition to negatively impacting the visual integrity of the bridge, the temporary fences allow garbage and leaves to gather behind them, causing water to stand and further deteriorate the bridge through the buildup of organic matter. It is our understanding that the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) has sought funding from the Oregon Department of Transportation on multiple occasions to address the fences as well as other concerns but has yet to be successful. The Commission is happy to extend its advocacy and expertise to PBOT to aid in their efforts to secure funds and address maintenance issues in order to find a way to preserve both human life and the structural and visual integrity of the historic bridge. ***We look to City Council to support efforts to fund a condition assessment and design studies to find a permanent solution that makes the bridge safe, reverses the structural deterioration caused by the temporary fence, and is more compatible with the historic character of the bridge.***

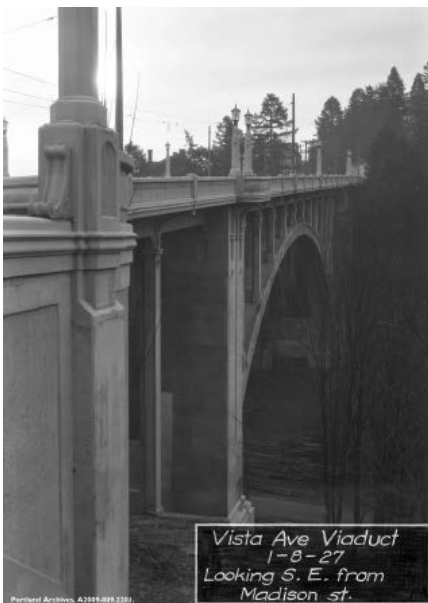


Photo Credit: National Register Nomination



Photo Credit: Peggy Moretti

## 8.0 2023 Watch List

### 8.3 Unreinforced Masonry (URM) Buildings

Portland has approximately 1,650 unreinforced masonry (URM) buildings, which use stone or brick masonry for structural walls. **These structures house more than 7,000 residential units in approximately 250 buildings** and many others have civic or educational uses. While some of these buildings are designated as historic resources and represent a valuable part of the City's cultural heritage, many are not designated. They are churches, schools, apartment buildings, storefront buildings and located in some of our most densely populated urban cores.

Because URM buildings are very fragile in a seismic event, the City has been exploring ways to ensure upgrades for URM. In 2019, the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management formed a URM work group comprised of representatives of URM building owners, URM building tenants, and other subject matter experts charged with further evaluating reasonable seismic retrofit requirements, and developing recommendations for standards, financing options, incentives, tax strategies, and timelines for a seismic retrofit program for Class 3 and Class 4 URM buildings. Two Landmarks Commissioners sat on this work group. The work group was dissolved in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis and the subsequent civil rights protests and has not been reconvened.

It is of paramount importance that the City continues its efforts to find ways to incentivize building owners to upgrade their URM Buildings and to help identify funding sources to defray the costs. As of January, 2023 the city of Seattle is moving ahead with plans to adopt a mandatory earthquake retrofit ordinance for the city's 1,100 URM. The ordinance would require building owners to retrofit URM properties that are prone to collapse in the event of an earthquake. In 2021 Seattle City Council passed Resolution 32033 which declared its intent to adopt the ordinance which will also include a resource program to support URM building owners and tenants with the required retrofits. **In the Fall of 2024, the HLC asks the City to renew its commitment to finding solutions, such as grants or passage of the Rehabilitation Tax Credits mentioned earlier, to aid in the retrofit of these buildings.**



Central City Concern's Medford Hotel, which comprises 61 SRO units. It is a URM building.

## 8.0 2023 Watch List

### 8.4 Downtown

With the end of the pandemic in sight, every effort should be made to make downtown welcoming both to the people that work there and to out of town visitors. This includes making the sidewalks safe for pedestrians, making sure trash is cleaned up and trash cans are available at all blocks. **Consider grants for business to help clean off graffiti** and keep their sidewalks near their businesses clean from trash. Ensure that public spaces such as parks are safe and clean.

***We would like to acknowledge efforts such as the Expediting Groups that are connecting stakeholders to come with ideas such as enhanced lighting in certain parts of town like Chinatown!***



Photo Credit: <https://www.viator.com/Portland-tourism/How-to-Spend-1-Day-in-Portland/d5065-t26665>