

PORTLAND HISTORICAL LANDMARKS COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

PROPOSED HISTORIC DISTRICTS

February, 24, 1975

SKIDMORE /OLD TOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

YAMHILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

MEMORANDUM

PROPOSED HISTORIC DISTRICTS

A. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING HISTORIC LANDMARK STRUCTURES, SITES AND DISTRICTS

1. Historic Landmarks and Sites

To be considered a landmark a structure or site should have outstanding historical, architectural, or cultural significance to the nation or to the state, region, or community in which it exists. Such significance is found in:

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

2. Historic Districts

To be considered a historic district an area should have outstanding historical, architectural, or cultural significance to the nation or to the state, region, or community in which it exists. Such significance is found in:

- a. Areas which consist of a linkage of buildings, sites, objects and spaces, a majority of which exist in original or restorable condition, and which form a recognizable entity.
- b. Areas which have a sense of cohesiveness expressed through a similarity and/or dissimilarity of architectural or other detail based on the abstracts of aesthetic quality: scale, height, proportion, material, colors, siting, etc.
- c. Areas which are readily definable by man-made and/or natural boundaries and/or which have a major focal point or points within the given area.
- d. Areas which relate to historic personages or with important events in national, state or local history.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. Designated Landmark

A building or site that has been designated a historical landmark by the Portland City Council under the provisions of Chapter 33.120 of the Planning and Zoning Code. The preservation and restoration of these buildings is essential to the future of the historic district. (See Appendix A: List of Designated Landmarks.)

2. Potential Landmark

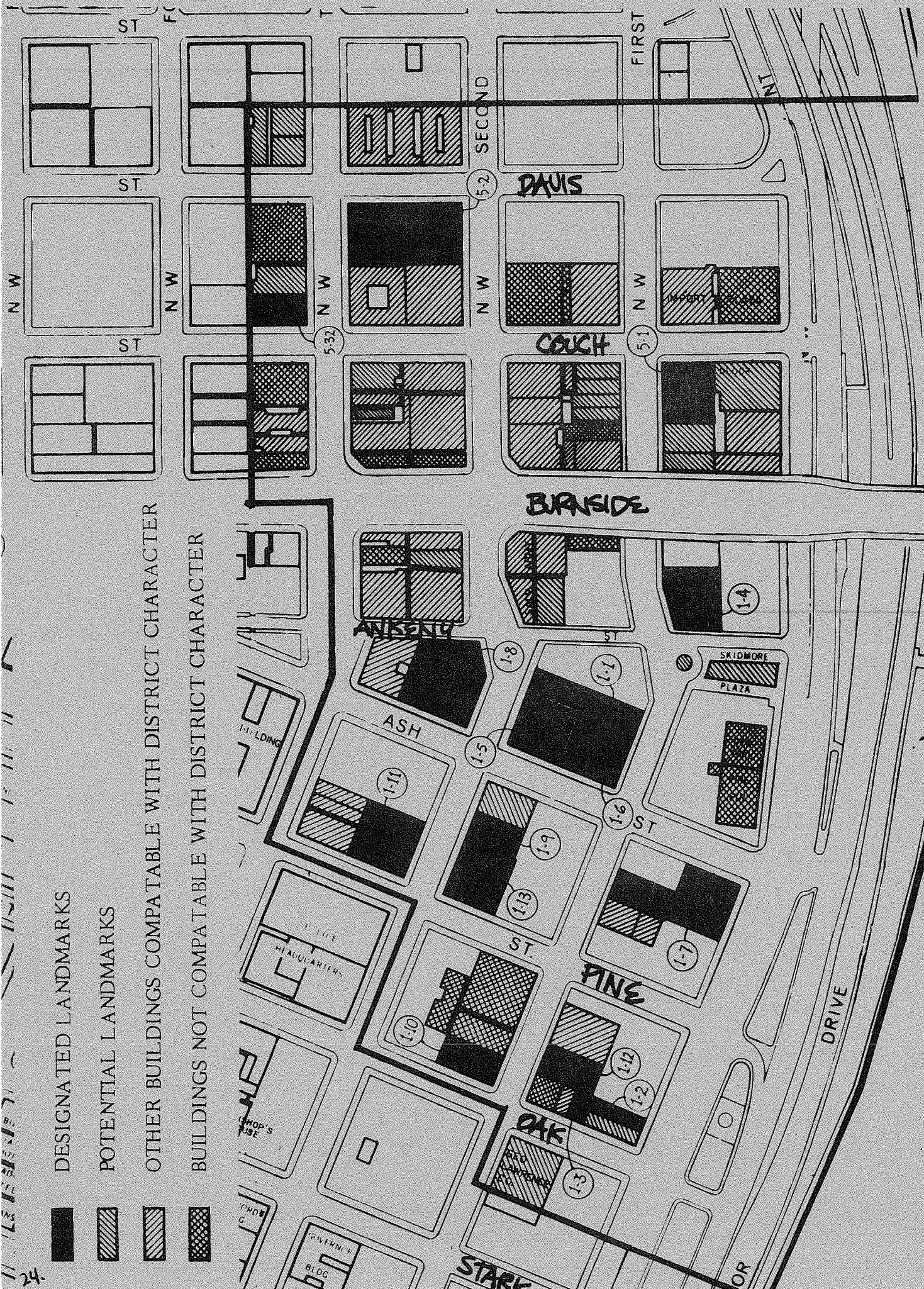
A building or site that meets the criteria for a landmark, or a building which if restored would meet the criteria for a landmark. These buildings are of great importance to the district and should be preserved and restored.

3. Other buildings compatible with district character.

Buildings within historic districts which do not meet landmark criteria, but by virtue of their style, scale, materials, etc. are compatible with the dominant architectural character of the district. These buildings, while of little architectural significance on their own, contribute to the overall character of the district and should be retained unless other development is of greater benefit to the district.

4. Buildings not compatible with district character.

Buildings within historic districts which by virtue of their style, scale, materials, etc. are not compatible with the architectural character of the district. These buildings have a negative impact on the district and should be considered expendable.



- DESIGNATED LANDMARKS
- POTENTIAL LANDMARKS
- OTHER BUILDINGS COMPATIBLE WITH DISTRICT CHARACTER
- BUILDINGS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH DISTRICT CHARACTER

PROPOSED SKIDMORE/OLD TOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

C. SKIDMORE/OLD TOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

1. District Statistics

	<u>No. of Bldgs.</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
a. Designated Landmarks	16	3.23	19%
b. Potential landmark buildings & sites	15	1.54	9%
c. Other buildings compatible with district character	28	4.09	25%
d. Buildings not compatible with district character	16	2.10	13%
e. Open land (streets & parks not included)	--	5.59	34%
f. Total	75	16.55	100%

2. Historical Significance

The proposed district, once the center of commerce and entertainment, contains Portland's largest remaining collection of mid to late 19th century business buildings. It also includes the City's oldest standing structure, the 1857 Hallock & McMillan Building located at the northwest corner of Front and Oak. Though the building has suffered extensive alteration, the basic structure is sound, and there are sufficient early drawings and photographs available to provide the basis for an accurate restoration.

Foremost among the Skidmore/Old Town District's historical structures is the New Market Block built by pioneer seaman and merchant Alexander P. Ankeny in 1872. The ground floor was occupied by a market arcade while the second floor contained the City's grandest theatre once attended by President and Mrs. U. S. Grant.

Another structure of notable historical importance is the Bickel Building which housed the Portland City Council from 1892 until they moved to the new (present) City Hall in 1895.

In addition to Ankeny and Bickel several other prominent 19th century business and community leaders built or owned structures still standing in the district, among them former mayors Henry Failing and D. P. Thompson, and M. S. Burrell, Simeon G. Reed, Henry Weinhard, and W. S. Ladd.

Focal point and source of the name for the proposed district is the Skidmore Fountain built in 1888 and donated to the City by pioneer druggist Stephen G. Skidmore. The design was conceived and executed by Olin J. Warner, a sculptor of national reputation.

3. Architectural Significance

The architectural character of the historic buildings in the proposed Skidmore/Old Town District is a nearly equal mixture of Italianate mercantile buildings with cast iron fronts dating from the 1870s and early 80s, and the more massive brick and stone Richardsonian Romanesque structures of the late 80s and early 90s. Most significant are the New Market Block and the adjacent New Market Annex located in Block 33 bound by S. W. 1st, Ash, 2nd and Pine. These two structures are the best remaining examples in the City of their respective architectural styles. The New Market Block was the only Portland building of its type identified by the National Park Service as being of exceptional importance in the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings.

The development of cast-iron building fronts and structural elements was a significant achievement in American architecture and technology. It was also the genesis of the modern steel skyscraper. During the years 1850-1890 entire structures composed of modular cast-iron elements were prefabricated in foundries and shipped to building sites throughout the country.

Portland's early growth coincided with the cast-iron era and at one time the City enjoyed block after block of elegant Italianate facades unified by columns, arches, and decoration. Though most of the cast-iron buildings have been lost, Portland still has one of the largest remaining collections of such buildings in the country. The greatest concentration of Portland's remaining cast-iron buildings is situated in the proposed Skidmore/Old Town District.

In addition to the New Market Block another outstanding cast-iron example is the 1888 Blagen Block which was used to illustrate the High Victorian Italianate style in Professor Marcus Whiffen's definitive book on American architectural styles.

The proposed Skidmore/Old Town District also contains significant examples of the work of three of Oregon's most distinguished 19th century architects: W. W. Piper (New Market Block), Warren H. Williams (Oregon Marine Supply Building), and Whidden & Lewis (Packer Scott Building).

4. Development since 1960

Since 1960 two structures of landmark quality have been lost:

- a. The building at the S. W. corner of 2nd and Ash, razed for a parking lot in the early 1960s.
- b. The Helm Building at Front and Burnside, destroyed by an explosion of unknown origin in 1968.

Of the 16 designated landmarks within the proposed district, 9 have been partially or completely restored, all by private investment.

Street lights and street trees have been installed under a program sponsored jointly by the City and the Skidmore Fountain Village Association.

In 1962 Skidmore Fountain Plaza was completed in the area of vacated Vine Street. The work was done by volunteers under the direction of the Portland Junior Chamber of Commerce.

5. District Boundaries

The boundaries of the proposed Skidmore/Old Town Historic District (see map) have been drawn tightly around the concentration of 19th century buildings in order to meet the criteria that there be, ... "a linkage of buildings, sites, objects, and spaces, a majority of which exist in original or restorable condition, and which form a recognizable entity," and that there be, "a sense of cohesiveness..." Within the proposed boundaries designated landmarks, potential landmarks, and other compatible buildings comprise 53% of the ground area - streets excluded.

The proposed boundaries differ in several respects from the present Design Zone boundaries established in 1959. On the east the D-Zone extends to the harbor line. This was done to insure that any new development along the river front would be compatible with the historic character of the Skidmore area. Since there will continue to be design review in the area it is not considered necessary to extend the historic district boundaries east of the buildings along Front Street.

The proposed historic district excludes the old Multnomah Hotel and the Police Station which are now within the D-Zone. During the early planning for the D-Zone these two buildings were not included, but were added later at the specific request of the Multnomah Hotel owners. The Multnomah, built in 1911, is of a style and bulk that is not compatible with the architectural character of the proposed district.

The original 1/4 block Police Station was built in 1912, while the remainder of the block was completed in the 1950s. The later addition is obviously not compatible with the character of the Skidmore district. Though the original building could be considered marginally compatible, it makes little if any contribution to the district character and has, therefore, been left out of the proposed district. Other development of this block in the future could be more supportive to the historic district.

The proposed district includes an area north of Burnside that is outside of the present D-Zone. This extension contains the Blagen Block, the Merchants Hotel, and six other cast-iron front structures.

It is recognized that the integrity and cohesiveness of the proposed district is somewhat diminished by the inclusion of Burnside Street, which by virtue of its width and heavy traffic substantially alters the scale and tempo of the streetscape, and is a visual barrier separating the areas to the north and south. However, 1st Avenue which passes under the Burnside Bridge provides a consistent link between the areas north and south of Burnside. This linkage could be enhanced by appropriate architectural treatment of the area under the bridge, and by implementing the proposed vintage streetcar line along 1st Avenue.

D. YAMHILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

1. District Statistics

	<u>No. of Bldgs.</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
a. Designated Landmarks	11	1.03	30%
b. Potential landmark buildings & sites	6	.68	19%
c. Other buildings compatible with district character	3	.53	15%
d. Buildings not compatible with district character	2	.47	13%
e. Open land (streets not included)	--	.82	23%
f. Total	22	3.53	100%



DESIGNATED LANDMARKS



POTENTIAL LANDMARKS



OTHER BUILDINGS COMPATABLE WITH DISTRICT CHARACTER



BUILDINGS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH DISTRICT CHARACTER



2. Historical Significance

The proposed Yamhill Historic District along with the Skidmore District are the only areas in the City that retain a significant concentration of 19th century business structures. The proposed district is located at the north end of the 22 block area that was devastated by fire in 1873 and contains one of the few buildings to survive the fire and several buildings that were built soon after.

The surviving structure is the 3-story Northrop & Blossom-Fitch Building, (now Frankenstein's Restaurant) built in 1858. It is the City's oldest standing structure that still retains its original architectural character. The blocks to the south and east were completely razed by the fire.

Another structure of notable historic significance is the recently restored Mikado Block which once housed the Olds & King store and the meeting hall of the G. A. R.

3. Architectural Significance

Except for the 1858 Northrop & Blossom-Fitch Building, an outstanding example of pioneer masonry construction, all of the 17 designated and potential landmarks are in the Italianate style many of which have cast-iron fronts. Most were built between the years 1875 and 1885 which has resulted in a remarkable degree of architectural unity.

4. Development since 1960

Since 1960 one structure of landmark quality has been lost: the vacant 2-story building at the southeast corner of 2nd and Yamhill was razed in 1970 after partial collapse caused by lack of roof maintenance.

Of the 11 designated landmarks within the proposed district, 8 have been partially or completely restored, all by private investment.

5. District Boundaries

As with the proposed Skidmore/Old Town District the proposed boundaries for the Yamhill District have been tightly drawn around the concentration of the 19th century buildings. Unlike the Skidmore/Old Town District the proposed Yamhill District boundaries are quite obvious as vacant land, new development (P. G. E.), or relatively new construction (Riverside West, Lindsay Building) exist on all sides.

Within the proposed boundaries, designated landmarks, potential landmarks, and other compatible buildings comprise 64% of the ground area - streets excluded.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF DESIGNATED LANDMARKS

DOWNTOWN PLAN AREA

September 5, 1974

A. DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT URBAN RENEWAL AREA

	<u>P.H.L.C. INV. NO.</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE BUILT</u>
1.	1-1	New Market Theatre	1872
2.	1-2	233 Front	1883-84
3.	1-3	71 Oak	c. 1859
4.	1-4	Packer-Scott	1890
5.	1-5	New Market Annex	1889
6.	1-6	Poppleton Building	c. 1873
7.	1-7	Smith's Block	1872
8.	1-8	Bickel Building	1892
9.	1-9	Chown Electric	1889
10.	1-10	Oregon Marine Supply	1886
11.	1-11	Haseltine Building	1893
12.	1-12	224 1st Avenue	1889
13.	1-13	Spaghetti Factory	1886
14.	2-1	Bishop's House	1879
15.	2-2	Concord Building	1891
16.	2-3	415 S. W. 2nd	1886
17.	2-4	The Leland	1886
18.	2-6	Hamilton Building	1893

19.	2-7	Dekum Building	1892
20.	2-8	Willamette Block	1880
21.	2-9	Strowbridge Building	1878
22.	2-10	728 S. W. 1st Avenue	1878
23.	2-11	730 S. W. 1st Avenue	1878
24.	2-12	Northrup & Blossom-Fitch Building	1858
25.	2-13	71-73 S. W. Yamhill	1878
26.	2-14	124 S. W. Yamhill	1885
27.	2-16	Mikado Block	1880
28.	2-17	Scharff's Furniture	c. 1875
29.	2-18	Flynn's Office Supply	c. 1875
30.	2-19	Auditorium Building	1895
31.	2-20	Harker Building	1878
32.	3-5	Chapman & Lownsdale Squares and Thompson Fountain	1852 1900
33.	3-6	Portland City Hall	1895
34.	3-7	Multnomah County Courthouse	1909-14
35.	3-12	Visotir's Information Center (old)	1949
36.	3-16	Sherlock Building	1894
37.	5-1	Blagen Block	1888
38.	5-2	Merchant's Hotel	1885
39.	5-4	U. S. Custom House	1901
40.	5-7	Union Station	1890
41.	5-32	105 N. W. 3rd	1883

B. OUTSIDE URBAN RENEWAL AREA

	<u>P. H. L. C.</u> <u>INV. NO.</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE BUILT</u>
42.	3-1	Pioneer Courthouse	1869-75
43.	3-2	1st Presbyterian Church	1886-90
44.	3-3	1st Congregational Church	1889-90
45.	3-4	The Old Church	1882
46.	3-8	University Club	1913
47.	3-9	Fruit & Flower Nursery (old)	1928
48.	3-10	Equitable Building (old)	1948
49.	3-13	1st Baptist Church	1894
50.	3-14	Central Library	1913
51.	3-15	Portland Art Museum	1932, 1939
52.	3-17	U. S. National Bank	1917, 1925
53.	3-18	Bank of California (old)	1924
54.	3-19	Ladd Carriage House	c. 1883
55.	3-20	Elks Temple (old)	1920
56.	3-22	Masonic Temple	1924
57.	3-24	First National Bank (old)	1916
58.	3-25	Olds & King Store (old)	1903
59.	3-26	Benson Hotel	1913
60.	3-27	St. Michael the Archangel Church	1901
61.	3-28	Paramount Theatre	1927
62.	3-29	1st Unitarian Church	1924

63.	3-31	"Farrell's Sycamore" (tree)	1880
64.	3-35	Howard Residence	1893
65.	5-2	Gann Building	1885
66.	5-8	Blitz-Weinhard Brewery	1907, 1908



DESIGNATED LANDMARKS

POTENTIAL LANDMARKS

10