

Advocacy Update
October 19, 2007

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Historic Seattle presents *Historic Preservation and the Imagined West*

A free lecture and book signing

Wednesday, November 14, 2007, 6:30 pm

Klondike Gold Rush Historic Park auditorium in the Cadillac Hotel Building

2nd Avenue South and South Jackson Street

Historic Seattle is pleased to present Judy Mattivi Morley, the author of *Historic Preservation and the Imagined West* (University Press of Kansas, 2006), a fascinating study that compares the historic districts of Seattle, Albuquerque, and Denver. It focuses on the competing interests of architectural preservationists, city planners, chambers of commerce, and boosters and how developers have often taken artistic license to refashion the western past into shopping and tourist centers in ways that present an imagined heritage over a more complex history. A large section of her book is devoted to the Pioneer Square and Pike Place Market historic districts. Proceeds of book sales benefit Historic Seattle.

Morley is founder of the popular Denver History Tours. An independent consultant who serves as member of that city's Lower Downtown Design Review Board, her writing has appeared in *Western Historical Quarterly*, *New Mexico Historical Review*, and elsewhere. She holds a Ph.D. in Western and Urban History from the University of New Mexico and is the owner of Grasshopper Communications, which does marketing for historic districts, museums, and downtown organizations. Judy's knowledge, wit, enthusiasm, and wonderful presentation skills assure an informative and enjoyable presentation.

Absentee ballots

Absentee ballots for the November 6 general election were mailed October 17 and should be arriving at your home shortly. Please don't forget to check Historic Seattle's candidate survey to examine local awareness and sensitivity to historic preservation before casting your votes. You can view candidates' responses at:

<http://www.historicseattle.org/advocacy/2007primary/2007primary.aspx>.

Virginia Mason Medical Center demolition of Northcliffe Apartment Building

Virginia Mason Medical Center (VM) is preparing to construct a building on Boren Avenue between Seneca and Spring streets, which will be an addition to its main hospital on Seneca. During the week of October 15, general contractor Skanska disconnected utilities, conducted salvage work and other preparations inside the Northcliffe Apartment Building on the corner of Boren and Seneca in advance of the building's demolition. In 2004, the

Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board found this building lacked sufficient historic significance to be provided the protection of a City landmark designation.

During the week of October 22, fencing will go up around the property line of the site along Seneca, Boren and Spring. Sidewalks around the site will remain open to pedestrians at this time. Between October 22 and November 16, VM will be contracting asbestos removal activities at the Northcliffe. VM's contractor guarantees proper handling, transport and disposal of asbestos in accordance with Washington State Labor and Industries' regulations. During this period, VM will also contract rodent extermination work prior to demolition.

Beginning the week of November 19, fencing will be moved out to the street in preparation of a traditional tear-down demolition (not an implosion and not a wrecking ball demolition). At that time, pedestrians will be directed to sidewalks across the street from the site and the right southbound lane of Boren Avenue will be closed to traffic intermittently during the one-month demolition period, from November 19 through December 17.

For more information about the demolition and construction of the addition, please visit:

<https://www.VirginiaMason.org/construction>. If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the construction activities, please contact: Mike Sprouse, Virginia Mason Communications, (206) 583-6541, michael.sprouse@vmmc.org

Preservation Alert from Historic Tacoma

There is a strong possibility the Luzon Building, an 1890 Burnham and Root design at 1302 Pacific Avenue, listed on the national, state, and city registers of historic places, will soon be rehabilitated. Critical to this effort is the City of Tacoma issuing a no interest loan for \$1.65 million. This will be a difficult endeavor—due to significant deterioration, the building is at a crossroads.



This item will be on the agenda of the Economic Development Committee of City Council on October 23, 3:00 pm, City Hall, in the 9th floor Visibility Center, and before City Council for action on October 30, 5:00 pm, in Council Chambers. Even if you are not a resident of Tacoma, please consider attending a meeting or contact Tacoma City Council members; it will be important to have a strong show of support for this action. See following article for background information. You can express your concern about the Luzon Building to Tacoma City Council members at the following e-mail addresses:

Mayor Bill Baarsma - bbaarsma@cityoftacoma.org

Deputy Mayor Rick Talbert - rtalbert@cityoftacoma.org

Julie Anderson - Julie.Anderson@cityoftacoma.org

Bill Evans - bevans2@cityoftacoma.org

Jake Fey - jfey@cityoftacoma.org

Connie Ladenburg - cladenbu@cityoftacoma.org

Mike Lonergan - mlonerga@cityoftacoma.org

Spiro Manthou - Spiro.Manthou@cityoftacoma.org

Tom Stenger - Thomas.Stenger@cityoftacoma.org

Tacoma News Tribune

October 12, 2007

Hammer begins to fall on leaning tower of Tacoma

By Dan Voelpel

“Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men’s blood ... Make big plans; aim high in hope and work ...” Daniel Burnham, architect and urban planner (1864-1912)

Try this: stand at the corner of South 13th and A streets in downtown Tacoma. Look back toward Pacific Avenue. Try to align the north wall of the Luzon Building with the building behind it. Tacoma, like Pisa, has its own leaning tower. The vacant Luzon – arguably downtown’s most wretched eyesore and most significant treasure – has deteriorated so much that its owner may part with it for \$75,000 and throw in a 14-foot-wide strip of the parking lot next door as a buyer bonus.

Why so cheap? Because over at City Hall, the hammer has started to come down on Horizon Partners so that its building, hopefully, won’t. Building inspectors fear the vaulted sidewalks on two sides of the Luzon could crumble and take the building with it. At least two interior floors have collapsed. Horizon Partners missed a summer deadline to file a structure stabilization plan with City Hall and start repairs. So, a City Building and Land Use Services inspector has classified the Luzon as derelict and issued two citations, one in August and another in September.

Rumors and hopes for restoration of the 1891 structure have come and gone like the seasons ever since Golden Chopsticks, a Chinese food restaurant, shut down in 1986. The latest concept to rehab the building into office and retail space appears as shaky as the building itself. It hinges on multiple uncertainties: First, the willingness of Mike Bartlett, president of Horizon Partners, to not only sell the building but a strip of the parking lot next to it to accommodate an elevator, staircases and steel superstructure to anchor the building.

Second, the Tacoma City Council must vote this fall to lend the buyers \$1.65 million at no interest during the 15-month construction period. Third, the city also must agree to create a Local Improvement District just for the Luzon, which allows the new owners to repay the cost of vaulted sidewalk repairs over 30 years rather than up front. Finally, a bank would have to agree to a loan for the balance of the \$6.2 million project.

If all that happens, Gintz Group, a Tacoma development company currently restoring the former Mecca Theater building on Broadway, would shoulder the Luzon’s salvation. And still lose \$46,800 doing it, according to a draft financial pro forma provided by Gintz Group Chief Operating Officer Ron Gintz. “The biggest issue with this thing,” said David Gintz, CEO of the family-owned firm, “is every major contractor in town has looked at this over the last years. And it costs more to fix it up than it’s worth at the end of the day. That being said, the only way to make it work is to sell the floors as commercial condos, so we can pay down the debt where we’re close to break even.”

Gintz Group would occupy the top floor, hold the Pacific Avenue level for retail space and sell the four 4,000-square-foot floors in between. If anyone can do it, Gintz Group can, said Jim Merritt, principal of his own architecture firm, Merritt Arch. “They’ve got great vision,” Merritt said. “They’re great for our community. They’ve got the willingness to get these things done and the tenacity to see it through.” But can it all fall together before the Luzon falls altogether?

I hope so. Because the Luzon, originally known as the Pacific National Bank Building, has national significance. Its Chicago-based architects, Daniel Burnham and John Root, headed one of the 19th century’s preeminent architectural firms that pioneered commercial high-rises. Root died from pneumonia just before the building opened. Their Tacoma bank building sold in 1892 to George W. Vanderbilt (son of shipping and railroad magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt), who invested \$1 million in Tacoma properties, according to a 1996 master’s thesis on Burnham and Root’s work in Tacoma.

Banks of various names took space in it through 1920. Over the years, it housed a military surplus store, an adult theater, a furniture store, Golden Chopsticks Chinese food restaurant and an arcade known as the Fun Circus. The Luzon made it onto the Tacoma, state and national registers of historic places. Pierce County owned the Luzon block from 1992 to 2003 with plans to develop it as a new government administration complex. Instead, Rainier Pacific Bank bought part of the block for its headquarters. And Horizon Partners bought the Luzon and vacant lots next to it for slightly more than \$1 million.

For Horizon Partners to consider selling the Luzon for \$75,000 shows that, in monetary terms alone, it’s worth more dead than alive. The city’s inspection sheet reads like a hypochondriac’s complaint list: mold and mildew; pigeons and rodents; structural hazards which constitute a danger to life and limb; collapsed floors; cracked and

crumbling concrete walls; rotting wood; inadequate wiring and plumbing; broken windows and other holes; shrubs growing out of the walls. "It's a nightmare to rehab," Ron Gintz said. "Selfishly, we see it as kind of our trophy building for the Gintz Group. It's kind of an ego-driven thing for us. Beyond that, that's not something you launch forward on as a profit center or other people would have done it already."

Historic Barns in nationwide census

The National Barn Alliance has succeeded in getting the USDA-National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS) to have a question about the existence of a barn on the farm in the 2007 Census of Agriculture that releases late in December 2007. This is a major historic milestone for the USDA and our nation. The census has been conducted since 1790 and never has it asked about the presence of a historic architectural resource on a farm. The census data will become available by February 2009 and the number of barns on farms data will be available down to the county level."

The Census of Agriculture is a complete count, taken every five years, of America's farms and ranches and the people who operate them. The Census is the most complete agricultural information resource available, providing the only source of uniform, comprehensive data for every county in the nation. The Census looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures, and many other important topics. Like much of America's past, old barns cannot be preserved if we have no data on where they are. A "yes/no" question on the 2007 Census of Agriculture will provide both a county and general location (state, county and zipcode) of our nation's old (pre-1960) barns. Hopefully, a second count in the 2012 Census will help further preservation efforts by not only showing us where these structures are, but by helping to determine how quickly they are disappearing.

The National Barn Alliance is encouraging state preservation organizations to work with their state USDA offices to make use of this data. The Alliance also hopes to work with state organizations and the USDA at a later date to develop and mail out a follow-up brochure asking for building description details and condition information for barns recorded by the census, possibly using funding from the Historic Barn Preservation Act now being reauthorized in the 2007 Farm Bill.

For more information on the Census of Agriculture, please visit www.agcensus.usda.gov. For more information on the National Barn Alliance's efforts, please contact Rod Scott, member of the Board of Directors, at 704 Fremont St., Iowa Falls, IA 50126, rod.scott@mchsi.com, cell phone 641.373.1171.

Northwest Digital Archives available free to researchers

The Northwest Digital Archives (NWDA), a program that provides enhanced access to archival collections and facilitates collaboration among archives, libraries, and museums in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska, has completed its grant-funded programs with the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), and reached a major milestone in its quest for long-term stability. The NWDA, which began in 2002 with support from the NEH and NHPRC, is now a program of the Orbis Cascade Alliance, an academic library consortium with 34 member institutions in Washington and Oregon.

The NWDA website is located at <http://nwda.wsulibs.wsu.edu/> and is free to all researchers. Researchers can find information about more than 4500 archival collections located in the Northwestern United States through keyword, subject, repository, and genre searches. The database offers researchers the ability to find detailed information about collections across institutions, at a greater level of detail than is available through any other tool. Collection information is also exposed to search engines.

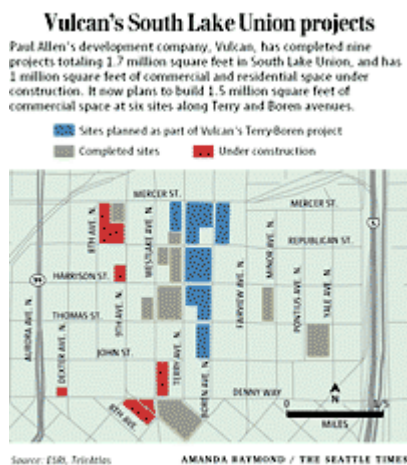
As an Alliance program, NWDA will continue to pursue its goals of creating great information services through collaboration. The merger will allow the NWDA to create a robust future that will include both sustaining its current database, building a digital content program, and continuing active involvement with national-level conversations on the present and future of access to archival materials across diverse institutions.

Participating institutions have agreed to pay member fees to sustain the program beyond grant funding and continue open and free access for researchers. Member institutions are the Eastern Washington State Historical Society, Gonzaga University, Idaho State Historical Society, Seattle Museum of History and Industry, Whitman College, Montana Historical Society, University of Montana, Oregon Historical Society, Oregon State University, University of Oregon, the Center for Pacific Northwest Studies at Western Washington University, Pacific Lutheran University, University of Washington, Washington State University, Lane Community College, University of Alaska Fairbanks, the Alaska State Library's Historical Collections, Whitworth University, Lewis & Clark College, the University of Idaho, Portland State University, the Washington State Historical Society, the Seattle Municipal Archives, Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, Willamette University, Western Oregon University, Portland Community College, Oregon Health and Sciences University, Central Oregon Community College, and Oregon Institute of Technology.

For more information, please contact: Jodi Allison-Bunnell, Northwest Digital Archives Program Manager, Orbis Cascade Alliance, 418 Woodford, Missoula MT 59801, jodiab@uoregon.edu, 406.829.6528.

Seattle Times
October 13, 2007
1.5 million square feet, one big mystery tenant
By Bob Young

Vulcan, Paul Allen's development firm, has announced a twist in its plans to make over South Lake Union: roughly 1.5 million square feet of new office buildings for a single tenant, a large employer who remains unnamed. The tenant would occupy new buildings — some as tall as 160 feet if Vulcan has its way — covering six blocks in the neighborhood. Vulcan executives wouldn't disclose the identity of the tenant. "We're not ready to announce the tenant at this point," said Sharon Coleman, Vulcan's development manager. Amazon.com is rumored to be the tenant, joining Microsoft and Group Health as the latest employers coming to the area. But officials at Amazon, Vulcan and City Hall won't confirm that.



Vulcan's newest project would be built in three phases and completed in 2011. It would stretch from Mercer Street, near Lake Union, to John Street, a block from Denny Way. It would not be a "sterile campus," Coleman said. Instead, its character would be "scrappy, funky and cool" and Vulcan would use three different architects to give the buildings a diverse look, she said. The first four buildings, which would be closer to the lake, would be five-story structures about 80 feet tall. The last two would be 12-story buildings up to 160 feet. Current height limits range from 65 to 85 feet in the area.

Mayor Greg Nickels plans to propose sweeping zoning changes for the South Lake Union area. Nickels wants developers to pay for public benefits, such as affordable housing, in exchange for permission to build taller. But Coleman said Vulcan couldn't wait for that larger zoning proposal because of the needs of its potential tenant. "We need to move. We don't have time to wait for the upzone. We need a guarantee we can get the height by the

end of the year" for the two 12-story buildings, Coleman said.

Amazon employees in Seattle are mostly spread among three office buildings near downtown: the Columbia Center tower, the Union Station development and the historic Pacific Medical Center on Beacon Hill. The company's leases at the PacMed building and Columbia Center expire in 2010. If Vulcan isn't allowed to build taller buildings, the project would "sprawl" to the west side of Westlake Avenue North, Coleman said. Nickels will send legislation to the City Council in the next week seeking the height change, said Deputy Mayor Tim Ceis.

In return for the extra height on two blocks, Vulcan would contribute approximately \$5 million for affordable housing, said Ceis and Lyn Tangen, Vulcan's director of government and community relations. The amount

would be determined by a formula similar to what the city uses for downtown office buildings that exceed height limits. Vulcan would also agree to develop energy-efficient buildings and implement an aggressive transportation plan that would require that most of the employees in the new buildings not bring their cars to work.

The new buildings would be next to the South Lake Union streetcar line scheduled to open in December. Vulcan hopes its new tenant's employees will live in new apartment and condo buildings the company is developing in the area. "This potential tenant does a lot of biking and walking," Coleman said. Lloyd Douglas, president of the Cascade Neighborhood Council, said his group learned of the new Vulcan projects at a Thursday night meeting. "This is the first we've seen of it," Douglas said. The Cascade neighborhood is part of the larger South Lake Union area. Douglas said he hopes the required affordable housing is built in his neighborhood. "If we're going to live with all the height and stuff, we might as well enjoy all that's being generated by it," he said.

Vulcan announced the new projects at the Thursday meeting held to promote a community "vision" for Lower Queen Anne and South Lake Union. That vision — of more dense development, housing for a range of incomes, and improved transit — has been endorsed by 37 community, business and advocacy groups. Endorsers include Sharon Lee, executive director of the Low Income Housing Institute; Dick Wagner, founding director of the Center for Wooden Boats; and Martin Kaplan, a member of the Seattle Planning Commission. "There's going to be a lot more interaction with the community. This is just a start," Vulcan's Coleman said.

Seattle Condo Blog
Midtown Seattle Developments
Oct 16, 2007
by Ben_Kakimoto

Over the next few years Seattle's "Midtown" district may experience a spate of new construction activity from several new high-rise developments under proposal. Midtown is roughly the area where Denny Triangle, Belltown and the Retail District converge. One of the projects in particular will provide a refreshing change to Seattle's skyline.



1. Escala: 30-story upscale condominium. Developer: Lexus Companies.
2. 5th & Virginia: 45-story hotel/condo with 200 hotel rooms, 200 condos, part of a 1/2 block \$900 million development. Developer: Multi Capital / Hummingbird Advisors.
3. Heron Tower (5th & Stewart): 46-story 5-star hotel/condo with 190 hotel rooms and 175 condos, part of a 1/2 block \$900 million development. Construction is slated to start either 2nd Qtr of 2008 or 2009. Developer: Multi Capital/Hummingbird Advisors. Architect: Ismael Leyva Architects of New York.
4. 2105 6th Ave: Two 24-story apartment towers with 600 units. Construction is expected to start in early 2009 with a late 2010 completion date. Developer:

Pine Street Group. Architect: GGLO.

An Early Design Review meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, October 30th at 5:30 PM at Seattle City Hall in the Bertha Landes Room.

5. 7th at Westlake: 45-story office/condo tower with 365 units on the upper floors. Developer: Clise Properties.

6. The Martin: 23-story condo tower with 172 units. On hold. Developer: Vulcan.

There's another project proposed at the corner of 3rd & Virginia (where the directional arrow points to in the above map) for a 43-story apartment/hotel tower with 430 apt units and 40 hotel rooms. Originally expected to

be completed in 2009, it may be delayed as there was a recent land use application for one of the parcels to be used as parking for up to two-years.

Time will tell if there will be sufficient buyer demand for over a 1,000 upper-end units in the Midtown district, especially considering the 1000s more being developed or proposed in the Retail, Denny Triangle, 2nd Ave/Market , Denny Way and SLU districts.

King County Archives Open House

King County Archives, the agency responsible for making thousands of government records available to researchers, historians and genealogists, will hold an open house from noon to 3 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 25. In coordination with Washington State Archives month, this event will serve to raise public awareness of the value of historical records.

For new visitors, the open house will be an opportunity to go behind the scenes to tour the vault and view some of King County's archival assets. Samples of the Archives' historical collection, including original film footage, early hand-colored maps, and photographs will be available for viewing. Archivists will also be on hand to answer questions about preserving personal papers and photographs.

"Archives Month highlights King County's diverse historical collection," commented Tony Adams, manager of King County Archives and Records Management. "Since 1989, the King County Archives has maintained a repository for King County records of historical importance."

King County Archives is located at 1215 East Fir Street in Seattle. For more information and an online exhibit of the Waters of King County, visit the Archives' Web site at <http://www.metrokc.gov/recelec/archives/archives.htm>.

Moore Theater Centennial Open House

Monday, December 10, 5:00pm - 8:00pm

Free to the Public

Seattle's historic Moore Theatre turns 100. The Moore 100 Open House brings together artists, community leaders and centennial partners in an evening long celebration of 100 years of performing arts in Seattle. Program includes dance tributes, theatrical selections and music from across the eras. Light refreshments, theatre tours, program and poster exhibitions as well as performances by local artists round out the evening's festivities. Moore 100 Open House is made possible in part by the Mayor's Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs.

Tacoma History Lecture

In 2006, local historian Michael Sullivan presented part one of his fascinating commentary on the history of Tacoma and its built environment. He promised to entertain us with more, and we remembered. Please join us for an entertaining evening about Tacoma from the 1920s until the present.

Knights of Pythias Hall,

926 1/2 Broadway

7:00 pm

FREE

Call 253-591-2026 for more information.

Seattle Times

October 19, 2007 -

Recital introduces historic organ to Seattle church

By Melinda Bargreen

It's not really a debut — but more of a reawakening. A historic Aeolian-Skinner pipe organ, rescued from the Tacoma First Methodist Church before the church's demolition, has been installed in Seattle First Baptist Church and will be heard there in a dedication recital on Sunday evening. The recitalist will be Douglas

Cleveland, organist and choir director of Plymouth Congregational Church. "This is the only Skinner in Seattle," Cleveland says of the transplanted organ, which will be highlighted in the Organ Historical Society's 2008 national convention in Seattle in July. "It almost went to a church in Orange County," Cleveland adds, audibly shuddering. He calls the Aeolian-Skinner, which was built in the early 1950s by G. Donald Harrison, "the Rolls-Royce of organs from the turn of the century to the 1970s." The organ, which was designed to play baroque, romantic and 20th-century music, has what Cleveland calls "orchestral-sounding stops, including English horn, woodwinds and beautiful strings."

Cleveland, who studied with his Plymouth Congregational predecessor — the late, great organist Ed Hansen — is following in his mentor's footsteps by passing on Hansen's teachings to the next generation of aspiring players. For his dedicatory recital on Sunday, Cleveland will play a wide array of works, from a Bach transcription of a Vivaldi Concerto in D Minor to more contemporary works of Joseph Jongen, Jean Langlais, Olivier Messiaen, Leo Sowerby and David Briggs (the "Four Concert Etudes for Organ," which Cleveland commissioned). This will be the first of several events planned by Seattle First Baptist Church and the Seattle Chapter of the American Guild of Organists to showcase the instrument.

Details: 5 p.m. Sunday, Seattle First Baptist Church, 1111 Harvard Ave., Seattle; free (206-325-6051 or www.seattlefirstbaptist.org). Check out the church's Web site for details about the three-manual (or three-keyboard) organ, plus information about how to hear and see live streaming audio/visual of the dedication recital.

Capitol Hill Times

October 17, 2007

Friends group maintains GAR park's dignity

By Doug Schwartz

The park is almost like a secret garden. Located just north of Lakeview Cemetery in a quiet stretch of Capitol Hill, the Grand Army of the Republic Cemetery Park has no play structures, no planned activities, no restrooms and limited parking. What the park does offer is a pronounced sense of tranquility and a fitting ambiance for the final resting place for more than 500 Civil War veterans and their wives. That the park's serenity can be enjoyed by those willing to seek it out is due in no small measure to efforts undertaken by the Friends of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) Cemetery Park, a small volunteer group that has provided stewardship over the park for nearly 10 years. Such efforts included drafting a master plan for park improvements and shep-herding those projects to completion.

According to Friends member Tom Easthope, the list of projects is getting close to being finished. "Our goals were not to redevelop the park but to restore it," he said. "This is a cemetery, and this space needed to be respected and preserved." One such project from the master plan was Barrett Dickey's Eagle Scout project. Last weekend, Dickey, 17, and members of Eagle Scout Troop 15, set about creating an 8-foot diameter of cobblestones around the park's new flag pole. Notably, the cobblestones are from some of the city's earliest streets. And the flagpole, replaced three years ago, is itself from the 1962 Seattle World's Fair. Neighbor Tim Kerr raises and lowers the flag each day. Dickey's project marks the third time an Eagle Scout project has taken place in the park.

The Grand Army of the Republic cemetery was established in 1895 as a final resting place for Civil War veterans and their wives who had relocated to the Pacific Northwest in the years following the war. There are 526 graves in all, and individuals from 25 states are represented. Money to maintain the cemetery decreased as the number of living war veterans dwindled, and the cemetery slowly fell into disarray. Years ago, an arrangement was made with the Seattle City Council to take over the park while leaving the gravesites to the G.A.R. Stevens Post No. 1; the city relocated scattered gravestones to a central grouping and agreed to maintain both the park and the gravestones. But care of the park devolved over the years, particularly after burials ceased in the early 1950s.

The Friends of the Grand Army of the Republic Cemetery Park formed in 1997 in response to the idea that an off-leash area be created in the small park. There was strong neighborhood sentiment that such use would

ultimately be damaging to the park as well as be inappropriate for a cemetery. Forming around the issue, the group continued its park oversight after the parks department dropped the idea for a dog run. The Friends created a master plan for the park in 2002, and projects from that plan have been under way since.

Such projects included creating a new flagpole, removing hard-to-maintain laurel hedges and replacing worn gravestones (more than 80 have been replaced). Replacing the park's irrigation system, the most costly project Friends has taken on, is roughly 70 percent complete. But the money has been raised to finish the work.

Volunteer work is essential to the park's continued upkeep and improvement, said Easthope. The Seattle park's department doesn't have funding for capital projects at the GAR park. In kind support is often provided - for instance, the city has donated native plants to the park after the Friends ripped out the laurel hedges that proved too difficult to prune. And the Friends have received matching funds from the city as well. "Our relationship reflects a good collaboration between the parks department and the Friends group," he said. "In those early public meetings, people felt that we should bring the park back to a good state instead of trying to renovate the past. The city has supported these efforts.

By not redeveloping the park, the list of projects was modest in scale and, importantly, achievable. Easthope pointed out that the Friends group is quite small- roughly 10 people are actively involved. "We wanted to get the park to a level where it's in good shape and easy to maintain," he said. "And we're very close to being there." While off the beaten track, Easthope said that many more people have visited the park since efforts at improving it were under way. Lacking a playground, for instance, or regular parks department programming, the larger crowds found at most city parks are not likely. Additionally, too many people at one time could prove damaging to the small park and certainly the cemetery. But just watering the ground and having the grass cut makes a great deal of difference, Easthope said.

"Our goal has been to maintain the dignity of the park, which is the final resting place for more than 500 people," he said. "I think given the context of the way the park was created it's important to honor the memory of those who are buried here." The Grand Army of the Republic Cemetery Park is located at 1200 E. Howe St. More information about the park is available at www.fgar.org.

West Seattle Herald
October 19, 2007
Me-Kwa-Mooks Park history revealed
By Steve Shay

German immigrants Ferdinand and Emma Schmitz completed their 40-acre, 17-room West Seattle estate in 1904. Although they named it "Sans-Souci," French for "without care," it proved too much for their children to care for. In 1967 they tore it down, and established Me-Kwa-Mooks Park in its place. On Oct. 7 a commemorative sign was unveiled to celebrate the park's history, both geological and manmade. The sign stands on the far end of the open field east of the Beach Drive entrance, just north of Southwest Oregon Street. Eleven acres of the original 40-acre estate comprise the Emma Schmitz Memorial Overlook across the street and along the shore. That left 29 acres for Me-Kwa-Mooks. Over five additional acres were added through the years, including the hard-fought Nelson Addition, a battle that began in 1999.

That land was finally rescued from a housing project in 2001 by a corps of neighborhood activists including the late Susie King. Her gang of preservationists raised money for legal fees. After she passed away, they raised additional funds for the Seattle Parks Foundation to install a bench across the park in King's honor. With \$2,000 left over they decided to build the commemorative sign. Former landowners Jim and Patsy Nelson joined the Alki Community Council, Seattle Parks and Recreation, and the Southwest Historical Society to facilitate the Nelson Addition.

Chris King said that the Nelson Addition had been annexed and was slated for development. "Susie held several garage sales and went door-to-door to pay the lawyers to fight the development," recalled Chris of his late wife. "Today feels great. She would have been very pleased." Southwest Seattle Historical Society's Judy Bentley, an area resident, helped organize the effort. In her speech at the sign's unveiling she said, "This is much more than a

sign to enhance the park. It shows you the mysteries, pleasures and surprises here. The sign honors five layers of history."

The sign includes five sepia toned black and white photos that guide us through the history of the park, from the area's 700 Lashootseed-speaking Native Americans to the Nelson Addition along Southwest Jacobsen Road, 150 years later. Bentley pointed out that the vulnerable terrain, soil, and springs makes the scenic land best used as a park. She and other West Seattle historians reject the popular story behind the park's unusual name. Officially, on city websites, Me-Kwa-Mooks means "shaped like a bears head" in the Nisqually dialect. "We believe the name actually means 'prairie point' and comes from the Lashootseed-speaking people," she said.

Alix Pye continued Susie King's work when she died. Pye said she felt like Alice in Wonderland. "I'm always stepping in a hole because I'm so curious. I've lived here 40 years, and step in so many holes I wonder how am I going to get out of this mess. Luckily, here, many people have helped. It is like a jigsaw puzzle and we all do a little part," she said. Alex Schmitz, grandson of Ferdinand and Emma, and son of Dietrich, gave the sign presentation a personal touch. "One hundred years ago this January my grandparents gave Schmitz Park. Then Emma gave the waterfront park. Later, my father gave this."

Dietrich became the chairman of Washington Mutual Savings Bank, and served 31 years as a member of the Seattle School Board, and as its president eight times. "My grandfather chose to move here because it had a big stream used for drinking water and to raise crops." The stream is now mostly underground. Ferdinand owned the Butler Hotel downtown, which Schmitz described as "the finest hotel in Seattle at the turn of the century. It was full every night due to the Alaska gold rush."

Schmitz said he "grew up" in the mansion, and enjoyed playing pool on the second floor. To be precise, he grew up in another house on the estate, as did his father's three siblings, including his uncle Henry, who was president of the University of Washington from 1952-1958. Schmitz recalled his father trying to persuade him and his friends to move into Sans-Souci in 1967 to rescue the house." He wanted me to pay some rent," Alex recalled, adding that he had his own ideas and rejected the offer. "In hindsight I wish I had stayed."

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