Living on the Edge

Most Endangered Historic Properties List – 2008

WASHINGTON TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Every year historic properties across Washington are threatened by deterioration, demolition, development pressure, or neglect.

Collectively, these properties contribute to the quality of life we enjoy in our beautiful state. They shape our daily experiences living in small towns, large cities and rural communities. All are endangered historic treasures that contribute to and define Washington's heritage. All are irreplaceable and all are in jeopardy.

Since 1992, the Washington Trust has spotlighted Washington's Most Endangered Historic Properties with an annual list. Focusing attention on imperiled historic buildings and sites in our state has helped rally support for their preservation, resulting in many success stories. But much remains to be done.

The Washington Trust urgently calls your attention to the following properties, nominated by concerned citizens and organizations throughout Washington, which form the Most Endangered Historic Properties List for 2008. The Washington Trust will assist those involved with each property in developing support to remove the threat. For more information on the Most Endangered Historic Properties List or for help in saving a threatened landmark in your community, contact the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation, 1204 Minor Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101, (206) 624-9449, or visit our website, www.wa-trust.org. Your help is needed to save these special

Bettinger House Edmonds, Snohomish County William and Ina Bettinger built this Queen Anne-style house in 1917. One of the older houses in Edmonds' downtown core, the structure is notable for its typical Queen Anne details such as multiple gables, a wraparound porch, fish-scale shingles and decorative woodwork. The house is considered eligible for the local register and is highlighted as part of the downtown Edmonds Historic Sites Walking Tour.

The Challenge: The Bettinger House sits within the commercially zoned core of downtown Edmonds and is subject to the intense real estate pressures that many cities are experiencing throughout the Puget Sound area. The building recently changed hands; while the new owners appreciate the historic value of the house, they purchased the site for its prominent downtown location and have plans to erect a structure for business purposes. The owners are actively working with the city and other preservation advocates to identify a suitable relocation site for the house, ideally within Edmonds.

Greyhound Bus Station Olympia, Thurston County In 1937, North Coast Lines, a consolidated bus company, built what company representatives described as the "newest, most modern bus depot in the entire Northwest." Designed by architect L.B. Barthomew, the distinctive Art Moderne depot set the standard for other buildings in the area employing the same popular style. In addition to the streamlined features characteristic of Art Moderne, the bus depot featured a rooftop structure resembling a radio tower that supported a neon "bus depot" sign, which served as a beacon to travelers. In 1949, North Coast Lines changed its name to The North Coast Greyhound Lines, becoming simply Greyhound Lines by 1950. The depot continues to provide service to Portland and Seattle and stands today as a contributing building within the Downtown Olympia National Register Historic District.

The Challenge: For several years, the specter of redevelopment has threatened the Greyhound Bus Depot. In 2002, the company initiated plans to relocate its operations adjacent to a proposed expansion of Olympia's Intercity Transit station five blocks away. If Greyhound were to move to the proposed new facility, the 1937 bus depot would be vacated and likely sold. The company has already received offers from a local developer interested in erecting a mixed-use development on the site in anticipation of the company relocating their operations. The proposed development would require demolishing the depot. Local zoning allows a more intense use of the parcel, and while demolition and redevelopment of the site would be reviewed by the Olympia Preservation Commission, there are no demolition controls.

Old Granary Building Bellingham, Whatcom County Responding to competition from imported products, in the fall of 1915 a group of farmers formed an association that ultimately led to the organization of the Washington Cooperative Egg and Poultry Association. By 1920, Whatcom County's chicken population exceeded that of every other county in the West except one in California. Constructed for the Co-op, the three-story concrete Granary Building and an associated wood-framed silo tower create a distinct silhouette in downtown Bellingham's skyline. The ensemble is architecturally notable as agricultural building forms co-existing within an urban/industrial working waterfront setting. At present, the Granary Building continues to stand as a monument to Whatcom County's early chicken and egg cooperative movement.

The Challenge: The Port of Bellingham currently owns the Granary Building, along with more than 200 acres of property along Bellingham's waterfront. The property contains numerous additional structures that, until recently, served as an operating site of the Georgia-Pacific Corp. The Port released a Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) in January of 2008, intending to redevelop the entire site. Each of the three redevelopment schemes presented in the DEIS assumes removal of the Granary Building. The DEIS assumes that of the 13 buildings at the site identified as potentially eligible for historic designation, all but one would be removed, in anticipation of major redevelopment activity. The Granary is individually eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, while the collection of historic buildings located within the proposed redevelopment zone

Murray Morgan Bridge Tacoma, Pierce County Dominating the Tacoma skyline when it was built in 1913, the Murray Morgan Bridge, known then as the 11th Street Bridge, played a key role in the city's urban development by linking downtown to the waterfront and the industrial tide flats. Designed by renowned bridge engineers Waddell and Harrington, the bridge is remarkable for the height of the deck, the overhead span designed to accomodate a water pipe, and its construction on a grade. In addition, the bridge plays a prominent role in Tacoma's social history, serving as the setting for gatherings and labor disputes, including a violent strike in 1916, just three years after completion. In 1997, the bridge was renamed after Murray Morgan, a noted Washington historian.

The Challenge: The Murray Morgan Bridge became part of the state's highway system in 1937. But with new transportation corridors constructed in the 1990s, the 11th Street route was seen as less critical and WSDOT entered into negotiations with the City of Tacoma to return the bridge to municipal ownership. Failure to agree on the terms of transfer has led to a stalemate and concerns surrounding deferred maintenance prompted WSDOT to close the bridge to vehicular traffic in fall 2007 and to categorize the span as "structurally deficient." Additionally, as a measure to reduce tension on the bridge's deteriorated cables, WSDOT is considering leaving the center span in the raised position, a move that would end pedestrian access.

While a portion of the estimated $80 million needed to rehabilitate the National Register-listed bridge have been identified, significant additional dollars will need to surface if the Murray Morgan Bridge is to be returned to use once again.

Historic Commercial Fishing Net Sheds Gig Harbor, Pierce County Next to the fishing vessels themselves, net sheds represent the most important architectural byproduct of the commercial fishing industry for Gig Harbor. Croatian immigrants began to settle in the area around 1900, establishing one of the harbor's first towns, Millville, along the western shore. With commercial fishing as the predominant industry, easy access to land for loading and unloading gear was essential. Modest docks built on wood piles developed along the waterfront and in many cases the family home was constructed behind these net sheds. In addition to workplaces, these simple wood piers and covered structures served as gathering places for skippers, crews and their families.

The Challenge: As land values climb and property taxes increase, these simple architectural treasures are being demolished and replaced by condos and marinas. Bringing recognition to this endangered cultural resource make more substantial incentives to preserve them possible. The City of Gig Harbor has taken steps to provide incentives for property owners who retain historic net sheds and recently conducted a survey of the remaining structures lining the harbor's waterfront. In addition, the city recently secured grant funds to document the net sheds for the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), the results of which will be archived with the Library of Congress. Such proactive measures will work toward preserving these emblems of Gig Harbor's heritage.

Nuclear Reactor Building University of Washington, Seattle, King County Understanding that a research reactor was essential to a competitive Nuclear Engineering program, the University of Washington completed construction of its Nuclear Reactor Building in 1961. Known today as the More Hall Annex, the Nuclear Reactor Building derives significance as a rare example of a Nuclear Age structure that embraced transparency. Rather than sequestering the building to a remote corner of campus, university officials opted for a site in a prominent university plaza. The expressive concrete structure featured walls of glass allowing observers to essentially participate in the faculty and student work occurring within.

As a structure, the Nuclear Reactor Building itself is a fine example of modernism. Noted architects Wendell Lovett, Gene Zema and Daniel Streissguth collaborated with a structural engineer and an artist on the design. Collectively, the group was known as The Architect Artist Group, or TAAG, and the Nuclear Reactor represents their only construct-