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A publication of the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation

GET INVOLVED

#HOPESPRINGSHISTORIC
Right now, the Washington Trust is showcasing messages of hope and humor from historic buildings and structures across the state with the tag #hopespringshistoric. See an inspiring message on a historic structure in your community? Snap a pic and tag us @preservewa on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and use #hopespringshistoric for a chance to be featured!

RESILIENCE ON MAIN
Through unprecedented challenges, Main Street businesses are showing tremendous innovation, determination, and generosity. Each month, Main Street organizations from across the state are invited to nominate one of their small businesses that is brightening their community and persevering despite numerous challenges. We’ll be sharing these bright spots online in our new Washington Main Street series, Resilience on Main! preservewa.org/resilience

BEER SAVES BUILDINGS
The Washington Trust is taking Pints for Preservation online! While we can’t be with you in person, we’ll be highlighting breweries in historic buildings across the state through casual virtual hangouts that feature a brewery tour. Want to nominate your favorite local brewery in a historic building to be featured? Submit your suggestions at: preservewa.org/beer

MAIN STREET 101
Have you always wanted to learn more about Washington Main Street? Now’s a great time to enjoy our recently recorded webinar which provides an orientation to the Main Street Approach ® for new board and staff, committee volunteers, and anyone looking to support their downtown with this proven revitalization strategy. preservewa.org/mainstreet

For more information about Washington Trust events or programs, please visit preservewa.org or call our office at 206-624-9449.

Cover photo: Artist and activist Earl Debnam, outside Colman School in Seattle’s Central District in 1990. Debnam, along with three other activists, occupied the school in 1985 to prevent its demolition and claim the site for an African American heritage museum and cultural center. Eight years later, known today as the longest act of civil disobedience in the U.S., a nonprofit formed in 1993 to move the museum forward. Photo from the Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI). Read more from the Black Heritage Society of Washington State on page 16!
Public Policy

PRESERVATION OF, BY, AND FOR THE PEOPLE

By Chris Moore, Executive Director

Public policy is one of the cornerstones of our work at the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation. Year in and year out, we provide a voice for preservation at local, state, and federal levels of government. But the Washington Trust is just one voice. Like everything we do, we rely on our partners, stakeholders, and you–our members and constituents—to join us in supporting policies and programs that advance the cause of preservation and, most importantly, enhance the neighborhoods and communities in which we live. Economic development and revitalization are key elements of historic preservation, but just as important are the benefits to our collective memory, shared experience, and sense of place. Whether it is part of our daily consciousness or not, historic resources ground us, nurture us, and often comfort us. They are essential. Places matter, and together, our voices and our advocacy can help save places that matter.

Washington State Advocacy

During state legislative sessions, which begin annually on the second Monday in January, the Washington Trust closely tracks bills related to historic preservation topics and attends the weekly Heritage Caucus in Olympia to confer with other cultural organizations and meet with legislators. This year’s session wrapped up on March 12, and here are a few bills we helped get passed that impact historic preservation work:

HB 2837: Expanding powers granted to state historical societies

This bill authorizes both the Washington State Historical Society and the Eastern Washington State Historical Society to provide grants at their discretion to cultural and historical organizations for the following purposes: organizational capacity building, public programming, educational programming, outreach, collections management, and exhibitions.

HB 2406: C-PACER Program for financing resiliency in buildings

Known as the “C-PACER” bill (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy & Resiliency Financing is a bit of a mouthful), this legislation created a program enabling owners of commercial buildings to make resiliency improvements such as energy efficiency and seismic retrofits using property tax-based financing. It authorizes lenders to provide financing for qualifying capital improvements that can be repaid through assessments on the property. This method of financing means that debt for improvements stays with the property, rather than with the owner as it would if financed through more traditional means. This incentivizes property owners to implement important but sometimes costly resiliency improvements which generally have a long-term return period. Governor Inslee signed this bill into law on March 18.

preservewa.org/public-policy
HB 2601: Authorization for State Parks to enter into long-term leases

This bill makes it easier for the State Parks Commission to create public-private partnerships through long-term leases on Park lands by reducing the number of commission members required for a positive vote and allowing leases of up to 80 years. At both Fort Worden and Saint Edward State Park, we’ve seen the Parks Commission enter into public-private partnerships resulting in millions of dollars in capital investments to historic resources. This legislation enables the Parks Commission to more readily engage in similar partnerships at other parks and thus take advantage of future opportunities to address deferred maintenance issues. The Washington Trust has been advocating for creative solutions for resources in state parks since their designation. The Washington Trust has been advocating for creative solutions for resources in state parks since their designation. The Washington Trust has been advocating for creative solutions for resources in state parks since their designation. The Washington Trust has been advocating for creative solutions for resources in state parks since their designation. The Washington Trust has been advocating for creative solutions for resources in state parks since their designation.

Funding for the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area

The legislature allocated $150,000 in funds from the Washington State budget to the Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation to support the development of a management plan for the recently designated Maritime Washington National Heritage Area (MW-NHA), for which the Washington Trust has been designated the local managing entity. These State funds will be matched with federal dollars already allocated for the same purpose. With state funds in place, we are excited to officially launch the management planning process this summer with experts and stakeholders from throughout the region. The plan will establish guidelines and strategies for operation of the National Heritage Area.

HB 2868 - Allowing for extensions of the special valuation of historic property for certain properties

Special valuation is a longstanding Washington State-specific incentive for owners of historic properties—in fact, Washington Trust advocacy efforts helped establish this program back in the 1980s! The program allows owners who rehabilitate locally designated historic resources to deduct those rehabilitation costs from the overall assessment of their property. The effect is that the assessed value of the property is reduced by the dollar value of the rehabilitation work completed, which reduces the amount of property taxes owed. The special valuation is in place for 10 years following completion of the work. With this new bill, property owners can apply for two, seven-year extensions of the special valuation beyond the initial 10-year period. This is limited to historic properties located in cities of less than 20,000 in population and that are within counties designated by the state as distressed areas. Governor Inslee signed this bill into law on March 25.

National Advocacy

In addition to working at the state level, the Washington Trust is actively involved in policy at the federal level, advocating for federal funding for preservation and closely tracking preservation-related bills. Each year, we take a cohort of citizen advocates to Washington, DC, to participate in National Preservation Advocacy Week and visit the offices of every member of Washington State’s Congressional delegation on Capitol Hill. On Wednesday, March 11, our group of 11 conveyed our requests to Congress, advocating strongly for many issues, but with particular emphasis on increased funding to the Historic Preservation Fund.

Historic Preservation Fund

The Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) helps support preservation across the country. Amongst other initiatives, it provides grants for our State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, the entities that are tasked with implementing many elements of the National Historic Preservation Act. The HPF is funded through federal offshore oil leases in the Gulf of Mexico, rather than taxpayer dollars. While in DC, we requested full funding of the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) at $150 million, broken down as follows:
- $61 million for State Historic Preservation Offices
- $32 million for Tribal Historic Preservation Offices
- $28 million for Civil Rights Initiative
- $10 million for Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- $18 million for the Save America’s Treasures Program
- $10 million for Paul Revere Historic Revitalization Grants (for historic properties in rural communities)
- $1 million for Underrepresented Communities Grants

In addition to the HPF funding request, there are a few federal bills and issues we have been tracking and advocating for:

HR 2823/ S 2615: Historic Tax Credit Growth and Opportunity Act of 2019

This bill would enhance the existing historic tax credit program by increasing the rate of the federal historic tax credit from 20% to 30% for smaller projects (rehabilitation expenditures not exceeding $750,000 for all taxable years). This bill makes more buildings eligible for tax credits by lowering the threshold of required rehabilitation costs. It also makes it easier for non-profits to partner with developers for the purpose of participating in the program. Overall, these enhancements would make it easier for ‘Main Street’ projects—smaller projects located in our historic downtowns across the state—to engage in rehabilitation work.

HB 2602: Authorization for State Parks to enter into long-term leases

This bill makes it easier for the State Parks Commission to create public-private partnerships through long-term leases on Park lands by reducing the number of commission members required for a positive vote and allowing leases of up to 80 years. At both Fort Worden and Saint Edward State Park, we’ve seen the Parks Commission enter into public-private partnerships resulting in millions of dollars in capital investments to historic resources. This legislation enables the Parks Commission to more readily engage in similar partnerships at other parks and thus take advantage of future opportunities to address deferred maintenance issues. The Washington Trust has been advocating for creative solutions for resources in state parks since their designation.
HR 1049/S 3217: National Heritage Area Act of 2019

This bill would codify the National Heritage Areas program within the National Park Service, rather than relying on individual acts of Congress to carry out the program. It would also allow for the reauthorization of several National Heritage Areas slated to sunset in the next few years.

HR 4351/S 1919: Yes In My Backyard

The bill requires certain grantees under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 to track discriminatory land use policies in order to continue receiving funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. It is well-intended legislation aimed at reducing challenges that hinder the development of affordable housing. The bill recognizes historic preservation as an important tool in creating affordable housing. We thank Representative Denny Heck (WA-10), prime sponsor of the bill in the House of Representatives, for his work to ensure preservation is acknowledged.

National Archives Records Administration - Seattle

In January, the Federal Office of Management and Budget announced plans to close the National Archives Records Administration (NARA) building in Seattle. The facility is home to thousands of records vital to the history of the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. Public access to these records became a source of major concern, especially for Northwest tribes, when the public learned they would be relocated to archive facilities in California and Missouri. In response, both of our state’s Senators and eight of the 10 Washington members of the House of Representatives signed a letter opposing the move. While in Washington, DC, we specifically asked members of Congress to champion a plan to retain the records at a location in the Puget Sound region. We will be sure to keep everyone up to date as this issue progresses.

First-Time Delegates

Each year, the Washington Trust offers financial support for citizen delegates to join us at National Preservation Advocacy Week in Washington, DC. As the only statewide non-profit organization dedicated to historic preservation, we are uniquely positioned to advocate at the national level on behalf of Washington State, but this would not be possible without the enthusiastic participation of our grassroots citizen advocates who take time out of their busy professional lives to join us and make their voices heard. We asked each of our first-time delegates to write a little bit about their experience being at Advocacy Week this year.

Nick Vann, Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to attend Advocacy Week in Washington, DC, for the first time this year. Amidst anxiety associated with the emerging coronavirus outbreak, it was important to educate our Congressional delegation that historic preservation plays a pivotal role in economic recovery and that we should not lose sight of the strength of wildly successful programs such as Main Street and the historic tax credits. While the focus was obviously on dealing with the pandemic, it was important to emphasize the resiliency of Main Street and historic preservation. We also educated our Congressional offices on the linkage between affordable housing and historic preservation, the latter of which is responsible for creating low- and moderate-income housing all over the nation every day through the historic tax credit program. Staying in constant contact with our Congressional leaders will ensure that we’re delivering the message that historic preservation builds community, creates affordable housing, and is a key program in the success of thousands of small businesses across the state and nation. The experience was rewarding and humbling, and it was great to have focused conversations directly with many of our elected officials and their staff leadership.

Lynn Hyde, Historic Whidbey and Coupeville Historic Waterfront Association

I wanted to go to DC because I wanted to better understand how the federal government supports historic preservation and to get a taste for preservation culture in other regions in the country. Imagine my surprise to find that Washington State is considered a major force in historic preservation nationwide, thanks in large part to the powerhouse that is Dr. Allyson Brooks, our State Historic Preservation Officer! Because Congress was so focused on the coronavirus threat, our visits were understandably a lower priority than they normally would have been, but I learned so much about the value of Main Street programs because of the unusual situation. Dr. Brooks’ brainstorm to offer our pass-through capacity for small business assistance during the current crisis got their attention. Though I am on the board of a Main Street program, the Coupeville Historic Waterfront Association, I did not realize how truly valuable the Main Street program is to our statewide community until this experience. I have a lot to learn in this political arena, but I am inspired by the commitment and talents of my fellow Washingtonian preservationists. It was a revelation!
you'll find yourself among your peers. Advocacy work anytime. If you step into advocacy,worthy and welcomed at Advocacy Week and in Now I'll testify young preservationists should feel in front of legislators, reporters, and the public. Apache people at a congressional hearing, speaking on its sacred importance to her and all San Carlos Traditional Cultural Place. Pike gave testimony was at Advocacy Week advocating for the protection of the Mount Vernon Downtown Association was able to get Economic Injury Disaster Worksheets out to our businesses right away, and talked our county into moving ahead with collecting them—they had originally planned to wait until the following week to begin collecting them. I bighthaled it home a day early, and felt like I went into overdrive right away. As a result, I am sure that the long term value of attending Preservation Advocacy Week has not yet fully been realized, but I can attest that the experience has already provided benefit to Mount Vernon and further empowered my voice of advocacy for my community.

This was my first Advocacy Week and I’m so excited for Advocacy Week that I forgot to be intimidated. But on Wednesday morning when we arrived on Capitol Hill, my bubbly excitement dissipated and was quickly replaced with anxiety and anticipation. There is something about the Capitol Dome, the Grant Memorial, and the Reflecting Pool that makes even the biggest humans feel small. My nerves relaxed some once we got through security and settled into the Longworth Building cafeteria. I pulled out my notes and reviewed our meetings for the day, paying particular attention to the meeting that I was scheduled to lead. I thought to myself, “I’m supposed to ask for how much money again? $150 million? No big deal.” I have asked my elected officials for lots of things. I have asked for more bike lanes, to ensure transparent government, and to support a maritime heritage area, but I have never asked for cold hard cash, and now it was my job to ask for $150 million for historic preservation. Fortunately, the meeting I was scheduled to lead was in the afternoon giving me time to watch the advocacy veterans lead the way. They walked into representatives’ offices with their heads high and full of confidence, with body language that said, “I know the value of historic preservation, and I am here to remind you that what we do matters.” In the first meeting I stammered and snail-walked, asking for everything we wanted, without fear or intimidation. It did not take long for that confidence to rub off on me. When it was my turn to lead a meeting, I channeled the confidence of our veterans and made the ask. What is the worst that can happen?!

By the end of the day, with five meetings in the books, my anxiety and intimidation had subsided and my excitement returned. I found myself asking, “What are the dates for Preservation Advocacy Week 2021?”

Thank you to all our citizen advocates who joined us in Washington, DC, but also to all our partners and friends who reach out to their elected officials on behalf of a preservation related issue. Your advocacy encourages our leaders to prioritize cultural resources, which positively impacts the preservation of our collective history.

Special thanks to our Preservation Advocacy Week sponsor Daniels Real Estate and Washington Trust board member Ginny Butler for providing funding for travel scholarships this year, allowing us to have a delegation 11 strong!

As always, we will keep you posted about ongoing issues and of course will be back in Olympia and Washington, DC, again soon advocating for historic preservation.
WHY PRESERVATION NEEDS SMALL BUSINESS

And why the preservation movement should use its voice during COVID-19

By Breanne Durham, Washington Main Street Director

Urbanist Jane Jacobs is famously (and frequently) quoted as saying, “New ideas must use old buildings.” We see the reality of this every day in our Main Streets across the state—our historic commercial districts were built with entrepreneurship and community in mind, and they continue to foster those values more than a century later. You can’t synthetically create the small and diverse spaces, the social capital, and the inviting environment that occur organically in a downtown. When paired with community organizing (à la a local Main Street program) to spur investment and energy, there is no better place to open up shop than in a historic downtown district.

But let’s flip the coin and consider why preservation needs entrepreneurial energy just as much, if not more.

Building Vitality

What we know to be true from a quick glance down your nearest historic commercial district is confirmed by data in the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s 2014 study Older, Smaller, Better*—there is a statistical relationship between small businesses and historic character. The dynamics created by human-scale buildings are more conducive to business start-ups and entrepreneurship.

“From a real estate perspective, the connection goes both ways,” said Mike Powe, Director of Research for the National Main Street Center. “These old, often locally-owned buildings need tenants who can build out their vision for their business in unique buildings and spaces, and smaller, entrepreneurial businesses need property owners who are willing to be flexible in structuring a lease agreement and can work with their often more limited lines of credit. The connection is just much more centered on the relationship between the property owner and business owner.”

Owners of historic buildings rely upon this trend just as much as small business owners rely upon the opportunity to locate in one of these unique spaces. To keep historic buildings economically viable, they need activity. Reliable tenants support the ongoing maintenance and preservation needs of an older building.

The economic benefits of tenanting small businesses include more than monthly rent checks. Take, for example, a typical mixed-use building in a downtown district. The ground floor will have one or more shops, ideally restaurants or retail, and, in a district that has invested strategically in its small business mix, the upper floors will be filled with offices or residents. Strong local economies like this create the atmosphere of quality and confidence that incentivizes property owners to preserve and restore their buildings.
“Small businesses are the economic engine that makes these older buildings relevant,” said Mary Thompson, Washington Trust board member. “Without a use, buildings are inconsequential at best and public nuisances at worst.”

Uses change over time and it takes innovation and entrepreneurial spirit to reimagine existing, unique spaces. If I had a dime for every former department store that, for a time at the advent of malls, left a gaping hole in its downtown district—well, I’d invest all of that money into the breweries, tech start-ups, and small business incubators that have given those anchor buildings new life.

The economy is never stagnant, and to maintain its relevancy, our field must not be either. Former museum director and current executive director of the Historic Downtown Kennewick Partnership Stephanie Button understands that the preservation field must embrace small business as the pioneers for change we need. “There can be a tension between maintaining authenticity of original historic use with what it takes to maintain and operate the building,” said Stephanie. “Small businesses have the entrepreneurial spirit and vision to repurpose historic buildings that allow them to continue to be loved by the community.”

Building A Movement

If the above section seems to be slanted heavily toward preservation in a Main Street context, that’s not just my personal bias showing; that’s also my next point.

Most people don’t know that they care about preservation. The word itself—“preservation”—doesn’t resonate with broad audiences, and we, as a field, have barely begun the important work of better opening our doors to allow more people in to help us redefine it. If people don’t know that they care about preservation, we need to be meeting them where they are and talking about what they do care about. “People seek character—they appreciate originality, and they want to create memories and unforgettable experiences,” said Mari Mullen, executive director of the Port Townsend Main Street Program. “The unique environments that our Main Street programs support bring out the best of what our communities have to offer.”

Since its inception four decades ago, the Main Street movement has been attracting people. Local Main Street programs, like the ones in Kennewick and Port Townsend, rely heavily on community engagement and volunteer leadership to accomplish their objectives of creating strong local economies rooted in historic preservation. People come out of the woodwork to volunteer for their local Main Street programs because they have personal connections to small businesses or general feelings of connectedness to the district.

Last year alone, Washington Main Street Communities reported 4,048 volunteers—an average of 122 people volunteering for each local Main Street program in the state. Not only does this showcase a tremendous amount of energy and enthusiasm for the work of Main Street, which is largely focused on small business vitality, but it presents a huge audience of potential preservationists. I know I am in excellent company as a preservationist who was first a Main Street volunteer and advocate for my local business community.
Small Businesses Need You Now

There has never been a more poignant time to reflect on the value small businesses have in our lives and in our work. The onslaught of COVID-19 has taken our local economies by storm. While we are continually inspired by their innovation and resiliency, there is reason to be concerned about our small businesses.

The median small business only has a 27-day cash buffer to draw upon in the event of economic shock. Many have already closed their doors permanently, and with the uncertainty surrounding this current public health crisis, millions more may follow suit in the months ahead. Where will our historic buildings be without the lifeblood of small business activity pumping through them every day?

Washington Main Street, a program of the Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation managed by the Washington Trust, is working closely with our network of local programs to keep their business communities informed and in touch with federal and state resources, as available. There is unprecedented need for small business assistance, especially in the form of grants.

Stacy Mitchell, co-director of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, wrote in The American Prospect: “Giving small businesses the funds to keep their staff employed and their location viable will be vastly less costly in the long run than allowing an avalanche of unemployment and lost productive infrastructure. It will also make it much easier to restart the economy once our lives begin to return to normal.”

Small businesses collectively employ about half of the private workforce in the United States. And without them, our historic commercial districts lack the activity and commerce that creates healthy, socially cohesive, and economically viable communities. If the preservation field is looking for its place within the COVID-19 crisis, here it is.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1. Learn more about the crisis facing Main Street and join the Washington Trust in asking Washington State and the federal government to prioritize small businesses and localized economic development during the recovery. www.preservewa.org/covid-19

2. Stay connected to small businesses in your community and support them by buying gift cards, utilizing their e-commerce options, placing pick-up orders, and writing positive reviews online.

3. Your community may have a local investment network that is pooling resources for small businesses, to which you can contribute. www.preservewa.org/mainstreet

4. Contribute financially or through volunteer service to your local Main Street program. These nonprofits are crucial to long-term recovery. Visit our website to see a list of designated Washington Main Street Communities. www.preservewa.org/mainstreet

* For links to documents and data referenced, please visit the digital version of this article on the Washington Trust’s website at: www.preservewa.org/and-business

Left: Wenatchee’s new coworking space, The Mercantile, houses 31 unique businesses and nonprofits and also features event space available for public rentals.

Above: Small business owners, like Michelle Bradshaw from Pearl Street Books in Ellensburg, take pride in their storefront. Pearl Street Books enhances the presentation of the historic 1888 building and drives consistent foot traffic downtown.

Port Townsend is an arts-loving community with an appreciation for historic preservation. The Starlight Room offers in-depth cinema programming and delicious food and drink on the top floor of the Miller-Burkett Building. The Starlight adds to the foot traffic and lively atmosphere downtown and makes film-going an even more social experience. Customers often come early to have a cocktail and admire the amazing view from 130-year-old windows of this historic building.
History shapes our lives, informs our values, and grounds our community. With our mission in mind, to preserve the past to inform our future, the Black Heritage Society of Washington State (BHS) responds to a quote that is often iterated: “If not us, then who?”

Organized in 1977, the BHS collects, preserves, and shares the legacies of Northwest African Americans who are vital to the larger history of the region. The BHS archive is a collection of memorabilia, photographs, ephemera, and oral history that are held in public trust as an important resource and asset. The Washington Trust for Historic Preservation, which is committed to expanding access to historic and cultural narratives, has afforded BHS and its partners the opportunity to develop an African American cultural history page on their Revisiting Washington website and interactive app to highlight waypoints of historic interest within King County.

For the project, BHS assembled a passionate dream team with varied expertise to create an online guided tour that will heighten interest and expand awareness of the historic African American footprint that has made such an impact on King County. BHS partnered with educator and independent museum professional Jacquelyne Peterson to support tour content, Africatown Media to provide field images and technical support, and documentary filmmaker and editor Jill Freidberg who brought a library of oral histories to the project through the Shelf Life Community Story Project.

The history of African Americans in Washington State is rich. The African American tour begins with an introductory statement that describes the pushes and pulls for African Americans as they migrated north seeking to breathe free air. From there, the 15 waypoints are portals of insight. Each location has a sense of place that, for many African Americans with strong roots in Washington State, illuminates and brings to bear the tenacity and significant milestones of generations before them. The stories of these places impart knowledge to all people who will follow after us—the future lies in preserving the past.

Our project partners embraced the challenge to narrow our rich history to a representative selection of King County cultural anchors that tell a compelling story of community building, influential leaders, and individual contributions that make up the themed tour: Rooted in History. The waypoints fall within the geographic boundary of Seattle’s historic Central District that is comprised of what was traditionally the African American neighborhoods known as the Central Area. The boundary has also been referred to as the Red Line.

Redlining was a practice used as early as the turn of the 20th century to discriminate against African Americans and other people of color who were relegated to live within the Red Line while systematically being denied loans for mortgages, which affected their ability over generations to accumulate wealth through ownership. At the same time, there were restrictions and racial covenants outside the Red Line boundary to discourage and limit the purchase of real property.

Left: Juanita Carter Lewis, pictured in 1928. Juanita was active in the arts and in the community—she was also the manager of the Africa Pavilion at the 1962 Seattle World’s Fair. Photo from the Black Heritage Society of Washington State.

Below: ROOTS Family Picnic founders in 1952. The ROOTS Family Picnic, which celebrates the region’s early Black pioneers and their descendants, is now in its 46th year. Hosted every year in Seattle on the first Sunday in September, the event is still going strong with more than 3,300 in attendance for the all-day event last year at Jimi Hendrix Park. Photo from the Black Heritage Society of Washington State.

Bottom: Opened in 2008, the Northwest African American Museum is now housed at the historic 1909 Colman School building. Photo from Africatown Media.
For this article, we’ve included a map of Seattle’s Central District; the heritage sites are within or near the perimeter of the neighborhood’s geographic boundary as defined by Seattle’s Design Review Character & Cultural Placemaker Map. When translated to the Revisiting Washington website, all 15 waypoints will be pinpointed on the tour map and linked to the corresponding interpretive content. The beauty of the online format of the tour is in its flexibility for use in the field, at home, or in the classroom.

When historical and cultural experiences are shared, as with the case of redlining in the Central District, personal connections to events and places can be more effectively received, more clearly understood, and more easily relatable, especially when told in connection to tangible spaces or descriptive and emotional content of important intangible spaces. The African American heritage sites tour asserts an appreciation for sense of place and serves to ignite curiosity to dig deeper into Washington State Black history which is, without a doubt, everyone’s history.

Washington State African American history is much more than what can be shared through these 15 Seattle waypoints on Revisiting Washington. We created this project that focuses on the Central District with a vision that it will be one in a series of African American tours on Revisiting Washington. We look forward to adding more stories from more places from the significant history and culture of African Americans in the State of Washington.

All the pieces are coming together for a formal introduction to and celebration of this project at a time when BHS and our partners can join the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation to present the new online content at a public event. Until then, we look forward to a soft unveiling of the project online in June.

A special thank you to 4Culture, King County’s Cultural Development Authority, along with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, for their financial support of this project.

Revisiting Washington is an online, interactive guide to Washington State, an update to the 1941 guidebook, Washington, A Guide to the Evergreen State, published through the Federal Writers Project American Guide Series. In 2018, the Washington Trust began adding Cultural History Pages to the site to layer more stories on the framework of the original guidebook. We look forward to highlighting the stories from the Black Heritage Society of Washington State in June, and you can see several other cultural history projects by visiting revisitwa.org.
I initially applied for the Beyond Integrity Equity in Historic Preservation internship not knowing quite what to expect. I didn’t hear of Beyond Integrity in particular, but knew of 4Culture and was excited to find out more. During my internship, I learned about the work Beyond Integrity does and the state of historic preservation at the city and county levels. I love research and learning, so the internship was a great fit for me. I am currently a Ph.D. student at the University of Washington studying equitable revitalization for traditionally underserved/marginalized communities. Within my frame of study, historic preservation is a very large component of revitalizing a neighborhood equitably. Being able to analyze the way historic preservation policy and tools are currently being implemented and make suggestions to make the process more equitable was thrilling and a huge advantage to my research outside of the internship.

The research process always connects me with my own childlike sense of wonder. Something about chasing down criminals (you’re welcome, Mom). For my internship, my investigation process began with creating a case study protocol based on the goals for the internship. The goal this year was to analyze the impact of survey and inventory methodologies in the determination of what was or wasn’t of high cultural significance. After establishing what I was trying to figure out, I conducted interviews with support from the 4Culture team, revisited previous surveys done in Seattle and King County, selected a cultural resource from each to research more in depth, and tracked down further information about them.

The two surveys that I looked into for my case study followed very different protocols. The downtown Seattle area survey was a windshield survey that looked primarily at architectural significance. Many resources were deemed ineligible for designation based on the survey without taking their cultural significance into account. From the survey, I chose to focus on the Vogue/Vain Building, a counterculture hub for much of its history and the venue of Nirvana’s first Seattle show. The second survey was a King County survey looking specifically at Japanese cultural resources in the White River Valley of Auburn. As such, the types of resources missed with the downtown Seattle area survey were picked up here. I focused on the Yasumuras’ Packing Shed from the White River Valley survey because it marked the departure point of the Japanese community from White River Valley. The packing shed was used as an informal train station to send Japanese Americans to internment camps during World War II. The two cases illustrated different ways that cultural resources important to communities in the margins can be excluded through survey and inventory.

As far as inventory and survey methodology were concerned, I learned the importance of using the context statement to guide the survey process, public input on potentially significant cultural resources, and transparency in the historic preservation process. The form used for the survey itself should be set up to look at cultural significance with the same value used in looking at architectural significance. On a base level, I learned the importance of something as simple as vocabulary in preservation outcomes. While integrity is not defined on a local level, on a national level it is defined as integrity of meaning. Surveys both local and national have overlooked cultural resources that lacked architectural integrity while retaining integrity of meaning, and the difference is elementary.

I learned a lot about the historic preservation process in the Puget Sound area through my internship work. My main takeaway was that the field is significantly more adaptable than I initially assumed. Historic preservation from an outside perspective often feels like it is just about rules, but my internship taught me that it is still an evolving field with its own nuances and shortcomings, rather than simply policy.

To read Tera’s full report that analyzes both the Seattle and King County surveys and dives into the two case studies of the Vogue/Vain Building and the Yasumura Shed, please visit 4culture.org/beyond-integrity and find the link to the report titled, “Starting with Cultural Significance.”
My aunt chaired efforts to save the church in the 1970s, and now it was my turn.

By Annette Spadoni Bannon

The first European settlers of Gig Harbor were Croatian-born fishermen, who were predominantly Catholic. Construction of a Roman Catholic church was an early and important goal of the community. The money to build the church was raised through donations from fishermen, the canneries, and fishermen's supply houses. The newly built church celebrated its first Mass on Easter in 1914. Situated on the hillside overlooking the harbor, the old church building has a prominent architectural presence. It is the only intact historic church left in the city, and it has had a strong association with area residents.

In 1958, the parish added a new church building to accommodate the growing community. The historic church was threatened with demolition to add parking space in the 1970s and again in 2012 when it was closed abruptly due to mold found in a closet beneath the front cement stairs. In the absence of clear communication about the fate of the historic church, there was fear that demolition was being considered as a possible course of action.

A nomination was made to the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation's list of Most Endangered Places with the help of the Historic Preservation Officer for the City of Gig Harbor, and the church was listed in 2013. With the growth of Gig Harbor and the parish over the few years, it became clear that the parish needed to rebuild, restore, and reunite. New parish administration was supportive and wanted to reopen the church for parish use, youth groups, classes, and other community meetings.

Window boards were removed, the building's exterior was professionally painted, and interior work began. Mold abatement and addressing water intrusion was accomplished. A new furnace and water heater were installed. Fresh paint and new flooring prepared for reopening on January 26, 2020, with a public open house and blessing by Father Mark Guzman. Youth group education in the main hall began that very evening, and the parish St. Vincent DePaul food bank ministry has moved into a basement room. St. Nicholas School has started using the building as well.

The project continues—we are expecting a new roof to be installed in June and we are working to restore historic elements to the church building, including the original metal bell tower cross now on display in a glassed case and photos of original fishermen who first donated funds to make the church a reality.
Main Street Matters

COLVILLE TOGETHER

By Rosemary Shaw, Executive Director, Colville Together

Colville Together is a Main Street program over 20 years in the making. In the 1990s and early 2000s, there was an effort, called Colville 2000, made by the community to revitalize downtown. Included with the plan was a desire to establish a Main Street program, as the revitalization and physical improvement to the downtown happening at that time were successful and very progressive. (Roundabouts, oh my!) But the Main Street effort was not sustainable due to lack of funding and waning community support. It subsequently died after only a few years.

In 2016, a group of individuals, urged on by the new Colville city planner, organized a steering committee to once again attempt to establish a Main Street program. Members of the steering committee attended conferences, reached out to community members for input and expertise, and began the process of joining the Washington State Main Street Program. Two years later, these efforts were enhanced by the City’s update to the downtown master plan. Under the guidance of Brian Scott of BDS Planning, the Main Street steering committee worked with existing community organizations toward the ultimate goal of creating a long-term, coordinated effort to maintain and manage downtown Colville. There were many community members and established organizations passionate about downtown, but the challenge was to overcome a history of singularity and forge a new future where all the groups communicate openly and together discover a shared vision and mission for downtown. The City of Colville, the Colville Chamber of Commerce, and the Tri-County Economic Development District formalized their partnership with the steering committee to create Colville Together, a nonprofit organization and Washington’s newest designated Main Street Community.

Colville is the heart of northeast Washington and the hub of recreation in the region, with downtown at its center. The downtown district of Colville is a collage of the community’s history. Many of the buildings were built at the turn of the 20th century, some were built in the 1920s, and there are a few token modern designs in the bunch as well. This patchwork of buildings reveals the times of prosperity in the community and are celebrations of the good times for Colville.

As with many small-town communities, the arrival of a big box store on the outskirts of town in 1993 had a substantial impact on the downtown with several of the small business owners closing their stores. Thankfully, there were numerous owners who managed to stay open through that difficult time and are still successful today.

Downtown Colville remains vibrant and beautiful, full of historic buildings and locally-owned businesses. Colville Together is excited to build on the efforts of those who worked so hard before us and contribute to the long-standing efforts to care for our downtown and ensure that it remains the heart of the community. Our mission, “Partnering to enrich our community through planning and preserving Historic Downtown Colville, while cultivating our local economy,” is only possible because of our collaborative efforts with our partners and the groundwork that was laid out before us.

colvilletegether.org
Since Legacy Renovation opened in 2002, we’ve been fortunate enough to contribute to hundreds of historic projects both large and small, from schoolhouses and courthouses to community centers and homes. Last year, we completed what was a labor of love for everyone involved: the renovation of the historic Elks Lodge in Tacoma into the newest McMenamins destination hotel and restaurant.

Our first site walk of the building was in 2007, long before the McMenamins team took it over, and that was our first chance to get a glimpse of the vision for the building as it now stands. It had been derelict and abandoned for decades. It was covered in graffiti, and most windows and doors were broken out. The plaster details and interior features were deteriorated horribly. Throughout the project, what started as a window restoration and manufacturing project for Legacy developed into much more. By the time the project was complete, we were involved in not just the windows but the entry doors, many interior stained glass pieces and modifications, and re-installations of historic steel balcony handrails to meet code height.

All of the exterior windows that were intact were restored, and all missing windows were manufactured to match the existing details so as to have a seamless appearance on the facades. The entry doors were copied from historic photos that the owner discovered through research. The railings on the balconies were increased in height at their bases, and all ornamental details were restored or recreated where they were missing. Most of the interior window features that had stained glass were replicated as they were broken or lost to time. Ultimately, much of the grandeur of the original building was recreated or restored, but with a vibrant new purpose and life in mind.

All the partners on the project worked tirelessly to make the owners’ vision a reality, which turned out to be one of the most spectacular projects Legacy has ever been involved with. While most of the details were intended to match what was original, many new interior features were created with the building’s original designs and aesthetics in mind. Legacy worked in partnership with the owners to create some original stained glass pieces at either end of the main bar. The pieces were designed to both keep on theme with other McMenamins locations and still feel appropriate with the interior features of this building.

Those of us in the historic renovation trades are lucky to be part of reinvigorating parts of our world and giving new life to pieces of our communities and shared past. While we have moved on from this project, it will always be a powerful statement of what this industry is capable of and can accomplish.

legacyrenovation.com
WHERE IN THE WA

By Cathy Wickwire, Operations Manager

We’re not the only ones who noticed the distinctive but dilapidated building featured in the Winter 2020 issue of This Moor. Brian Westmoreland of Authentic Restoration Services, Inc., and Washington Trust member Ralph Fishburn, both in Spokane, correctly identified the building as being located in Mica. Brian also mentioned it was near the large brick factory of Mutual Materials but didn’t know if it was on their property. He further noted it as being fairly intact and made of a terra cotta hollow block parged with stucco but had no idea of its original usage despite always being interested in it. Thanks to a 2017 “Then and Now” feature in The Spokesman Review, we can confirm that the building is associated with the adjacent brick factory and originally served as a hotel for the company that operated it.

Most recognized brick manufacturing companies in the Northwest, and many significant buildings, industries, and roads in Spokane were constructed with products from the Mica brickyard.

The brickyard was also responsible for the development of the Mica community, located some 15 miles southeast of Spokane. While most of the workmen lived in Mica or on nearby farms, single men without families were housed in a company hotel or boarding house near the plant. The original wood frame building was replaced in 1921 by the current structure built with Dennison’s interlocking blocks produced at the brick plant. After World War II, the building emptied out and was used for storage. At the height of the Cold War in the 1950s, the old hotel was used as a radio communications center for civil defense. While the structure is now empty and no longer in use, the adjacent plant has been modernized with equipment for mass production and continues to function as a key economic contributor in the area under the ownership of Mutual Materials, a company founded in Seattle in 1900.

Although not featured in our Revisiting Washington guide, this site could be visited as your own side trip on the Idaho Line to Collins House Tour. This tour follows a route known locally as the Pend Oreille-Palouse Highway, which roughly parallels the Idaho-Washington border. Be sure to check out the great barns in the area, especially those east of Mica on Belmont and Jackson Roads.

Where in the WA? Spring 2020

For your next challenge, can you identify the house in the image? If so, email us at info@preservewa.org or call us at 206-624-9449 with the answer!

Also, you can send us pictures of yourself in your favorite places around our state, and we might be able to feature them as a “Where in the WA” in the future!
Operated by the City of Walla Walla Parks and Recreation Office, Mountain View Cemetery has been undergoing an extensive restoration of veteran graves that have fallen into disrepair. Due to ground settling and the repeated effects of water seeping into the bases of gravestones and then freezing, many of the veteran markers stand askew in their rows, leading to an off-kilter appearance. In addition, many gravestones have become illegible due to staining and dirt which is difficult to remove without causing damage.

Two grants from the Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation’s Historic Cemetery Grant Program have gone toward creating new bases for upright gravestones and special biological solutions to clean these historic markers. According to Wes Walker, Park Maintenance Supervisor, without the grant program, there would not have been enough funding to make a significant impact on restoring gravestones. “Every year, we might be able to do rehab on a few monuments or headstones, but how do we prioritize all of the meaningful plots that we have?” he noted, citing the vast number of veteran graves in need of repair. Walker explained that volunteers such as the Reserve Officers Association (ROA) and Girl Scout troops have largely been responsible for tending to veteran graves over the years, since many of those buried there do not have descendants living nearby to care for them.

Most veterans at Mountain View Cemetery are buried in sections according to the war in which they fought, including areas for Civil War, World War I, World War II, and Vietnam War veterans. They have recently discovered, however, that many veterans are also buried in civilian plots throughout the cemetery. ROA volunteers continue to discover veterans by investigating insignias that they find on grave markers. According to Walker, ROA investigative work has uncovered nearly 1,000 additional veteran graves within the cemetery, bringing the total number to around 4,000.

Mountain View Cemetery holds a prominent place in the community and had its first burial in 1850. It is the resting place of many prominent city founders and politicians and was originally a collection of four smaller cemeteries—the Catholic Cemetery, Masonic Cemetery, International Order of Odd Fellows Cemetery, and Mountain View City Cemetery. In addition to those sections, which are now a part of the greater cemetery, there are Jewish, Chinese, Elks, infant, and veteran sections of the cemetery. Interesting features include a brick structure known as a “Chinese Bank” used to burn possessions during traditional Chinese services, as well as a prominent statue of a firefighter in uniform overlooking a section devoted to the firemen of Walla Walla. In their research for the grant program, Walker and others discovered that the firefighter...
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The Historic Cemetery Grants are a program of the Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP) and managed under contract by the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation. For more information, please visit the DAHP website at: dahp.wa.gov/cemeterygrants

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A statue was given by Josephine Wolf, a prominent member of Walla Walla in the late 1800s who ran a profitable female-run business in the town catering to ‘gentleman visitors.’

“Once you learn the history of a cemetery, you pay more attention to it—each grave has its own story,” says Walker, who worked for the Parks and Recreation Office for many years before becoming the supervisor of the cemetery and a cemetery enthusiast. Walker reports that there has been a resurgence in interest in Mountain View Cemetery since its involvement with the grant program, and that in recent years, the cemetery has seen an increased number of visitors and volunteers. As a result of the grant program, people like cemetery employee Joanna Lanning and ROA member Sherilyn Jacobson have been inspired to research more about the cemetery’s interesting history and have even started offering walking tours. A recent walking tour sold out in just a few hours, and rotating self-guided tours are being offered throughout the year to school groups and other visitors.

Autumn is a lovely time to visit Mountain View, with its host of deciduous trees casting the cemetery in lovely orange hues. Stop by the information kiosk, pick up a self-guided tour, and enjoy the scenery. Walker, who is just as enthusiastic about his city as he is about the cemetery, recommends timing your visit during one of the 40-plus special community events that happen each year in Walla Walla.

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