



# Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

## Parks and Recreation Department

State Historic Preservation Office

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**DATE:** January 9, 2012  
**TO:** State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation (SACHP)  
**FROM:** Ian Johnson, Historian, National Register Program  
**SUBJECT:** February 2012 SACHP Meeting

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Dear Committee Members:

Happy New Year! We look forward to seeing everyone at the SACHP meeting in Portland on February 9<sup>th</sup> and 10, 2012. For this meeting we will be at ODOT's Region 1 Headquarters. Please enter using the main entrance and sign in before proceeding to the conference room. Additional meeting details and nomination assignments are listed in the enclosed agenda. Also included are copies of proposed nominations, revision memos, evaluation sheets, minutes from the October 2011 meeting, and a recent National Register tracking sheet. A map of the meeting location and color copies of nominations are included on our website at [http://www.oregonheritage.org/OPRD/HCD/NATREG/nrhp\\_sachphome.shtml](http://www.oregonheritage.org/OPRD/HCD/NATREG/nrhp_sachphome.shtml).

The Committee will review eight nominations next month including the home of a former mayor of Lake Oswego, an IOOF Cemetery in Coos Bay, and an IOOF Hall in the ghost town of Hardman. We'll also review the Multiple Property Document (Willamette River Bridges of Portland, OR and the accompanying nominations for the Hawthorne, Broadway, Burnside, and Morrison Bridges. You may recall that consultant George Kramer spoke with us last February about this project, and we are excited to see it presented to the Committee.

In addition to reviewing nominations, the committee will host Jay Raskin of Ecola Architects and Brandon Spencer-Hartle from the Historic Preservation League of Oregon for short presentations on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Later that afternoon, Jessica Engman of Venerable Properties will lead the Committee on a tour of their property, the White Stag Block. The block includes three National Register-listed properties, the Bickel and Skidmore Blocks and the White Stag Building, and was recently rehabilitated using state and federal tax benefits.

On Friday morning, Bob Hadlow arranged a tour of the Burnside Bridge and an opportunity to observe it in operation. To participate in the tour, all committee members must sign a liability waiver. Staff will pass the waivers out and collect them on Thursday. Afterwards, the group will take a van tour of the other historic Willamette River Bridges, narrated by Bob Hadlow and George Kramer.

Feel free to contact Tracy Zeller in our office with any general questions about the meeting or nominations at (503) 986-0690 or [tracy.zeller@state.or.us](mailto:tracy.zeller@state.or.us). I will be out on parental leave for the birth of my second daughter on or around January 21<sup>st</sup>, and will, unfortunately, miss the meeting. On behalf of the rest of the staff, we look forward to seeing everyone in February and wish you all safe travels.

Sincerely,

Ian Johnson, Historian





December 8, 2010

John Goodenberger  
State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation  
725 Summer Street, NE, Suite C  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Cascadia Earthquake and Tsunami

Dear John,

Although the primary role of SACHP is to review nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, I am assuming that it also plays a role in helping set policy and advise SHPO on Oregon's Historic Preservation Plan. As such, I wanted to suggest that SHPO include planning for the Cascadia Earthquake/Tsunami and its potentially devastating impact on the historic buildings, structures, and heritage in Oregon from the north to south and as far inland as the Willamette Valley as a specific issue.

All of Oregon's historic buildings and structures were built before knowledge of size and severity of earthquakes (especially the Cascadia subduction zone earthquake) were known. Only a small number of these buildings have been seismically retrofitted. The current strategy is to upgrade buildings as they are being restored or have a change in use. This is a slow but steady process geared to the code standard for an event with a 2% chance of happening in the next 50 years. It should be noted that the USGS gives a 10-15% chance of a Cascadia event in the next 50 years. More ominously, Dr. Chris Goldfinger, a paleoseismologist from OSU has suggested that we shift away from using the USGS model and use failure analysis (based on the fact we now have a sufficient number of events and data to do so) which ups the probability to 27% for a full rupture and 85% chance of a southern rupture in the next 50 years. Thus we have gone from an unlikely event to one that is likely in our lifetimes. In 3-5 minutes of shaking (and a devastating tsunami that will arrive 20 minutes later for low lying coastal communities) we risk losing of what we have fought to preserve.

This means that we can no longer use the slow process to protect our historic buildings and must begin to fully understand the impacts of such a large and widespread event will have on Oregon's heritage and begin to address them in a pro-active manner.

Certainly we need to address the potential loss of life. In addition, we need look at what impact wholesale loss of historic downtowns in the western part of the state will have the economic vitality of the communities and the state as a whole. I believe that SACHP and SHPO must specially address preserving our historic heritage in light of Cascadia and that these efforts should be included in an amended Historic Preservation Plan or included in the next iteration.

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The Historic Preservation Plan does mention including historic preservation in emergency preparedness plans, but this in the context of addressing damaged historic buildings after an event. Local communities need help in understanding how this can be done effectively and in developing effective ordinances that guide building departments when faced with demolition and tagging of buildings. The communities also need to understand about the cost/benefits of mitigation efforts at a community level as well as for specific buildings.

Some guidance on evaluating the relative importance of the historic buildings, structures, and districts may need to be developed. If we do not have the money to save everything, should we have some way of identifying what we cannot imagine living without and direct efforts to preserve these before hand (instead of having the same discussion later about rebuilding them)?

There are many other measures and issues that can be discussed, and I know that this is being addressed at SHPO.

Both the Historic Preservation League of Oregon and the Architectural History Center are beginning to focus on these issues. We need leadership from the State as well. An advisory committee has the benefit of being able to step back to see the big picture, and I urge you to do so in this case. In addition, the Oregon Seismic Safety Advisory Committee has been tasked with developing an Oregon Resiliency Plan that looks at similar issues related to Cascadia for all state agencies to be presented to the Oregon legislature in 2013.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with the SACHP at one of your meetings.

Sincerely

By Email

Jay Raskin, AIA

cc: Christine Curran, Roger Roper, Joy Sears,