

Members

Ken House, *Chair*
 Edward Echtle, *Vice Chair*
 Katie Chase
 JD Elquist
 Jonah Jensen
 Megan Luce
 Daniel Rahe
 James Steel
 Duke York

Ross Buffington, *Wedge Neighborhood Ex-Officio*
 Marshall McClintock, *North Slope Ex-Officio*

Staff

Reuben McKnight, *Historic Preservation Officer*
 Tonie Cook, *Landmarks Coordinator*



Agenda

Landmarks Preservation Commission Planning and Development Services Department

Date: June 12, 2013
 Location: 747 Market , Tacoma Municipal Bldg, Room 248
 Time: 5:30 p.m.

**Meeting Time Change:
 5:30 p.m.**

LPC 49 /13

Please note assigned times are approximate. The Chair reserves the right to alter the order of the agenda.

1. ROLL CALL

2. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Excusal of Absences
- B. Meeting Minutes: 05/08/13
- C. Summary of Administrative Approvals: (May 2013 – June 6, 2013)
 - i. 517 N I Street, North Slope, fence, Type I, (05/22/13)
 - ii. 401 N Cushman, porch reconstruction, Type II, (06/04/13)

3. DESIGN REVIEW

- A. 1003 N Grant (North Slope) Rich Mundell, Owner's representative 5 m
Retroactive window removal and replacement

4. CHAIR COMMENTS

5. BOARD BRIEFING

- A. Totem Pole 5 m
- B. Live Work Building Code update Sue Coffman, PDS, & Ryan Erickson, TFD 15 m
- C. Demolition by neglect ordinance 5 m

6. BOARD BUSINESS/PRESERVATION PLANNING

- A. Letter of support: Frank Herbert Park 5 m

Reuben McKnight
 Historic Preservation Officer

Next Regular Meeting: June 26, 2013, 747 Market Street, Tacoma Municipal Bldg., Rm. 248 5:30 p.m.

This agenda is for public notice purposes only. Complete applications are included in the Landmarks Preservation Commission records available to the public BY APPOINTMENT at 747 Market Street, Floor 3, or online at <http://tacomaculture.org/historic/resources.asp>. All meetings of the Landmarks Preservation Commission are open to the public. Oral and/or written comments are welcome.



The City of Tacoma does not discriminate on the basis of disability in any of its programs, activities, or services. To request this information in an alternative format or to request a reasonable accommodation, please call the Community and Economic Development Department at 591-5200 (voice). TTY or speech to speech users please dial 711 to connect to Washington Relay Services, or email landmarks@cityoftacoma.org.

Members

Ken House, *Chair*
Edward Echte, *Vice Chair*
Katie Chase
JD Elquist
Jonah Jensen
Megan Luce
Daniel Rahe
James Steel
Duke York

Ross Buffington, *Wedge Neighborhood Ex-Officio*
Marshall McClintock, *North Slope Ex-Officio*

Staff

Reuben McKnight, *Historic Preservation Officer*
Tonie Cook, *Landmarks Coordinator*

draft



MINUTES

Landmarks Preservation Commission Planning and Development Services Department

Date: May 8, 2013

LPC /13

Location: 747 Market Street, Tacoma Municipal Building, Room 248

Commission Members in Attendance:

Ken House *Chair*
Edward Echte, *Vice Chair*
Ross Buffington
Katie Chase
JD Elquist
Jonah Jensen
Megan Luce
Marshall McClintock
Daniel Rahe
James Steel
Duke York

Staff Present:

Reuben McKnight
Tonie Cook

Others Present:

David Bonewitz, Bekah and Dustin Osterhaus

Commission Members Absent:

Chair Ken House called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

1. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes of January 9 and 23, March 13 and 27, and April 10 and 24,, 2013 were approved.

2. NOMINATIONS – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Nominations to the Register of Historic Places

i. Cobblestone and Brick Streets (700-1000 Blocks of N 9th, 10th and 11th Streets)

Mr. Reuben McKnight presented a summary of the Cobblestone and Brick Streets nomination, noting the previous meeting records on the background, previous meeting discussions, Tacoma Register Criteria, effects of the designation, summary of public comments including the public hearing conducted on April 10, 2013, and reviewed the several options to recommend designation, denial or deferral of the designation.

There was a motion:

*"I move that we, the Landmarks Preservation Commission recommend to City Council that the **700-1000 Blocks of N 9th, 10th and 11th Streets** be included on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, finding that they meet Criteria A, C, E and F of TMC 13.07.040."*

MOTION: Chase
SECOND: Luce
MOTION: Carried

ii. Kellogg-Sicker and H.C. Pochert Buildings (1110-12 and 1114-16 Martiin Luther King, Jr. Way)

Mr. Reuben McKnight presented a summary of the Kellogg-Sicker and H.C. Pochert Buildings nomination, noting the previous meeting records on the background, previous meeting discussions, Tacoma Register Criteria, effects of the designation, summary of public comments including the public hearing conducted on April 10, 2013, and reviewed the several options to recommend designation, denial or deferral of the designation.

There was a motion:

"I move that the Landmarks Preservation Commission recommend to City Council that the Kellogg-Sicker and H.C. Pochert Buildings (1110-12 and 1114-16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way), be included on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, finding that they meet Criteria A, B and C of TMC 13.07.040."

MOTION: York
SECOND: Luce
MOTION: Carried

B. BOUNDARY CHANGE – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

i. 1239 E 54th Street (J.M. Hendrickson Homestead)

Mr. Reuben McKnight presented a summary of the J.M. Hendrickson Homestead request for boundary change on the original designation, noting the background, previous meeting discussions, effects of the boundary change, summary of public comments including the public hearing conducted on April 10, 2013, and reviewed the several options to recommend approval, denial or deferral of the boundary change.

There was a motion:

*"I move that the Landmarks Preservation Commission recommend to City County that **1239 East 54th St / J.M. Hendrickson Homestead landmark boundary change** be approved; the modification would retain the buildings onto one parcel as the landmark property and segregate the remaining parcel outside the landmarks designation boundary."*

MOTION: Rahe
SECOND: York

MOTION: Carried

C. National Register Nominations

i. **5801 Trolley Lane (Point Defiance Streetcar Station or Pagoda)**

Mr. Reuben McKnight presented the staff report on the Pagoda's nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, including the Commission's responsibility as a Certified Local Government to comment on the listing prior to consideration by the State Historic Preservation Office. He explained the Commission may (1) recommend to the SHPO listing on the National Register of Historic Places, (2) may recommend against listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or (3) may decline to make any recommendation. If the Commission and City Council recommend against listing on the National Register, the nomination process is halted. However, if either the Commission or Council vote to support the nomination, it will proceed.

Mr. Reuben McKnight described the seven standards met for national Register listing, including: Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling and Association. He noted the criteria under which the Point Defiance Streetcar Station is nominated:

A: Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

C: Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

Point Defiance Streetcar Station is being nominated for its association with broad patterns of history, specifically, in the development of transportation, and as a good local example of both Asian and Arts & Crafts style of architecture.

Mr. Reuben McKnight explained the effects of the designation, as follows: Listing on the National Register of Historic Preservation provides recognition of a property's significance in history, architecture, engineering or archaeology. It does not place restrictions on the use, maintenance or alterations to a property; nor does it obligate a government entity to maintain or restore a property. However, it does provide some protection for the property if a future project affecting the property using Federal funds or with Federal oversight is undertaken under the National Historic Preservation Act.

Staff recommended the Commission, representing the CLG of Tacoma, recommend designation to the Washington Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

Ms. Melissa McGinnis, Metro Parks' Historic and Cultural Resource Manager, presented the Point Defiance Streetcar Station or Pagoda completed in 1914, including its contribution to the development of the transportation network of Tacoma, its Asian-inspired and Arts and Crafts designs representing the work of Tacoma architect Luther Twitchell, and retaining its integrity despite the damage caused by a 2011 arson fire; changes occurred in secondary spaces in the basement.

There was a motion:

"I move that we, the Landmarks Preservation Commission, adopt the analysis as findings and recommend designation to the Washington Advisory Council on Historic Preservation."

MOTION: York

SECOND: Jensen
MOTION: Carried

3. DESIGN REVIEW

A. 1701 Pacific Avenue (Tacoma Art Museum)

Mr. Reuben McKnight read the staff report into the record, as follows:

Built in 2003, Tacoma Art Museum is located in the Union Station Conservation District, and is adjacent to the Union-Depot Warehouse Historic Special Review District, which is listed on the Tacoma, Washington and National Registers of Historic Places. Although the Tacoma Art Museum building is a contemporary building, because it is located within the Union Station Conservation District, the proposed addition must be approved by the Commission prior to permits being issued. The original 2003 construction was reviewed by the Commission (**minutes attached**). The authority of the Commission is limited to the exterior appearance of new construction and additions to existing buildings in the Conservation District.

On April 24, 2013, the Commission was briefed on the proposed project to construct an addition on the south elevation of the existing Tacoma Art Museum building. The purpose of the addition is for new gallery, lobby, service and mechanical spaces. In addition, the east elevation elevator will be replaced with a new elevator and entrance. At that meeting, the Tacoma Art Museum team demonstrated, through renderings and slide show, how the screens, selected materials and colors, glazing, new entrances, and exterior sculptures will function in an effort to open the Tacoma Art Museum to the street.

April 24 meeting comments from Commissioners included:

1. The massing of the existing building is significantly improved; the color, materials and scale appear to provide symbiotic relationship.
2. Concern was expressed with the rear parking lot: it lacks architectural screening elements, and also presents safety and security in that area
3. The Commission requested the submittal of a greater level of plan detail and size of openings along the Pacific storefront. The Commission noted that the new clear glazing provides transparency on Pacific and that the screening is movable according to lighting conditions, which was not readily discernible from the rendered drawings.
4. The Commission requested a rendering of the proposal at night.
5. The proposed planters along Pacific may appear to be a barrier; however, the intention is to buffer the street and the building.
6. The Commission noted that the color of the building in the renderings appears darker than the bronze color sample circulated at the meeting.
7. The close proximity of the addition to the iconic Union Station building was noted.

The Commission requested the following additional information for their final review:

1. Submit a rendering at night;
2. Submit greater level of plan detail including the size openings on the Pacific storefront and the east elevation.

Mr. Reuben McKnight explained that the application was ready for final review pending the submittals requested by the Commission at this meeting and, the next meeting is scheduled for May 8, 2013.

Action requested of the Commission: Approval of application for a proposed south elevation 18,000 square foot addition to the existing building, including the removal of the Plaza and features, and replacement with new plantings and seating; construction of a screened main entrance on the existing building on Pacific Avenue and, replacement of the existing east elevation elevator with a larger elevator and entrance.

Standards to be considered:

The Design Guidelines for the Union Depot-Warehouse Historic District/Union Station Conservation District apply, as does "Section 3: Historic District Rules and Policies" of the Commission Bylaws, regarding the application of the guidelines for exterior materials (p. 13). Both documents are included in the packet.

Analysis to be considered:

1. The existing building and proposed location of the addition is within the Union Station Conservation District, and therefore, new construction and additions to existing buildings requires the review and approval of the Landmarks Preservation Commission per TMC 13.05.047, prior to any permits being issued or construction activity occurring.
2. Guidelines for consideration of the proposal include *Union-Depot-Warehouse Historic District/Union Station Conservation District* and Section 3, *Historic District Rules and Policies*, Commission Bylaws.
3. The original 2003 construction was reviewed and approved by the Commission. Because this is an addition to a contemporary building within the Conservation District, the design guidelines do not necessarily apply in all categories. The Union Station Guidelines provide for the Commission to use discretion on a case by case basis when applying the guidelines.
4. Height: The maximum height proposed on the new building addition is 75'8" from the east (lower parking lot elevation) and approximately 20' high from the Pacific elevation, which is well within guidance on height found in the *Union Depot Design Guideline #1*, Height, specifically, for, "...No new buildings constructed in the districts shall exceed 85 feet in height..." The intent of the guideline is to prevent buildings from blocking views to the Union Station dome and diminishing its visual prominence. The application meets this guideline.
5. Scale: The design guidelines define scale as the overall comparative relationship between a building and the neighboring construction, as well as the relationship between individual elements within the façade. The design guidelines refer to "basic blocks" as being 50 feet wide, 100' deep and four stories tall. Because this is an addition to an existing contemporary building, which has been designed to be subservient to both the existing building at the surrounding buildings, this guideline is not applicable. In addition, historically there was not a structure along this slope, and thus, it is not a typical infill construction.
6. Materials/color. The guidelines state that the predominant material in the district is masonry, such as brick, granite and terra cotta. The predominant materials proposed on the existing building's modifications include aluminum and metal; painted steel and Richlite are proposed for the addition; the palette color is simple and limited, including clear glazing, aluminum, and bronze. The proposal for the exterior building materials and colors appears to meet the *Historic District/Union Station Conservation District* and Section 3, *Historic District Rules and Policies*, and Commission Bylaws on contemporary buildings. 2. "*Exterior Materials: Contemporary building materials for new construction, such as glass, steel, concrete and masonry have been determined to be acceptable for the district*". The bronze colored Richlite material has the tone and texture of a traditional material.
7. Storefronts. The design guidelines encourage street level retail and storefronts that are consistent in scale between buildings. The proposal includes a mix of clear wall glazing, metal and clear glazing storefront wall panels and composite panels. Because the addition is designed to focus pedestrian traffic to the main entry of the existing building, and because it is a gallery space, this guideline is not applicable. There are no storefronts or retail entrances on either side of the proposed addition.
8. A painted steel canopy and supports, and aluminum grill screen are proposed along the Pacific Avenue elevation. Metal entry canopies in the District have been approved by the Commission; the proposed canopy structures appear to be suitable for the contemporary existing building and new addition.
9. Massing: the addition's massing is low, linear and horizontal, which emphasizes both the existing museum and Union Station.

10. Views. The guidelines state, "All new construction in the Union Station District should be designed to preserve existing views and vistas. Of particular importance are views of Commencement Bay, Mount Rainier, and Union Station" The proposed design preserves views of the Union Station Dome, the primary architectural element in the district.

Staff recommended adoption of the above analysis as findings and approval of the proposal by the Commission, pending the review of the plan details, including the size openings, on the Pacific Avenue storefront and details on the east elevation and night rendering of the proposal, which will be presented at this meeting.

4. DESIGN REVIEW

A. 1419 North 8th Street (North Slope)

Mr. Reuben McKnight read the Staff Report into the record as follows:

Built in 1922, this bungalow is a contributing property located in the North Slope Special Review District. The current proposal is to modify the existing garage to accommodate the addition of a deck onto the roof of the flat garage which is located on the side yard of the corner lot; a deck railing, upper posts and pergola, and stairs are part of the proposal.

In 2010, the property was approved to enclose the rear porch with recommendation to waive the 3-foot setback requirement due to site constraints. No permits or a setback variance were ever issued. The current scope of work does not include this work which the property owner confirmed that this side-rear porch will not be enclosed.

The owner will present photos of sample baluster system and the garage door, which is also proposed for replacement; the owner also confirmed the decking will most likely be cedar.

Action Requested: Approval of the proposed side elevation rooftop deck, railing and pergola; and repair to the existing and new new stairs for access to the deck.

Standards to be considered follows:

Guidelines for the North Slope and Wedge Neighborhood Historic Districts

Guidelines for Porches

Replace missing porches with designs and details that reflect the original design, if known. Avoid adding conjectural elements. Photographic or other documentary evidence should guide the design of replacement porches. Where this is unavailable, a new design should be based on existing original porches from houses of similar type and age.

Guidelines for Additions

Additions should be sensitively located in a manner that minimizes visibility from primary rights of way. Where this is not possible, the design should respect the style, scale, massing, rhythm, and materials of the original building.

Analysis to be considered.

1. The home on the property is historically significant as a contributing structure in the North Slope Historic District; it was constructed in 1922. As part of the North Slope it is listed on the Tacoma, Washington and National Registers of Historic Places.
2. The Landmarks Preservation Commission has jurisdiction to review and approve, or not approve, changes to this building including new construction per TMC 13.07.095, prior to those changes being made, by virtue of its status as a City Landmark.
3. The 2010 approval by the Commission to enclose the rear porch is not part of the current proposal.
2. The proposed change will be visible from the primary right of way; however, because the house is on a corner lot that is small, it is not possible to locate the deck on a non-visible elevation. The new deck is proposed for the side of the house, which is a secondary elevation, and the materials proposed are consistent with existing conditions and a traditional material palette; therefore the deck appears to meet guideline # 8, which reads in part *"Additions should be sensitively located in a manner that minimizes visibility from primary rights of way. Where this is not possible, the design should respect the style, scale, massing, rhythm, and materials or the original building."*
3. The existing garage is leaking with evidence of deterioration; it will be removed and rebuilt in the existing footprint and dimensions and existing vinyl siding. The proposed wood material for the decking, railing, posts, pergola system, gate, landing and all stairs and handrails appears to be compatible with the overall style and material of traditional railing systems, thus meeting Guidelines for Additions #3.
4. Sample photos of the proposed railing and garage door will be provided at the Commission meeting.
5. The location of the addition to the deck is not highly visible, thus meeting Guidelines for Additions #3.

Staff recommended approval of the analysis as findings and recommended approval of the proposal by the Commission.

6. BOARD BRIEFING

A, Tacoma Totem Pole

Staff presented the current status of the Totem Pole discussions.

7. BOARD BUSINESS / PRESERVATION PLANNING

A. Historic Preservation Month

Commissioners discussed the Historic Preservation Month activities scheduled for May.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Submitted as True and Correct:

Reuben McKnight
Historic Preservation Officer



STAFF REPORT

LPC 48 /13
June 12, 2013

DESIGN REVIEW

AGENDA ITEM 3A: 1003 North Grant Ave (North Slope)

Rich Mundell, Owner's representative

BACKGROUND

Built in 1923 this bungalow is a contributing structure located in the North Slope Historic Special Review District. The current proposal is a retroactive application for the removal of three double hung wood windows and replacement with two vinyl insert windows; the third vinyl window is not installed at this time. A stop work order was issued because of working without a permit.

The application also includes the replacement of one non-historic opaque louver vent-type window with a vinyl single hung insert window, which would typically be an administrative review.

Tonie Cook met onsite with Mr. Mundell who reported the original windows were thrown away and described the condition of those windows:

- 1) the right double-hung window had missing glass in the lower sash due to the location of an air conditioner and the upper sash was missing with a board covering that space.
- 2) The condition of the lower sashes on the other two windows were both in a deteriorated to a point of falling apart in his hands and beyond repair and, the two upper sashes were about 50% gone.

Tonie Cook recommended Mr. Mundell obtain an estimate to install replacement wood windows.

ACTION REQUESTED

Retroactive approval of removal of three double-hung wood windows and replacement with vinyl insert windows, retaining the wood trim; removal and replacement of one opaque vent bathroom window

STANDARDS

Guidelines for the North Slope and Wedge Neighborhood Historic Districts

General Preservation Principles

2. **Retain original materials.** The historic materials present on historic buildings should be retained wherever feasible.
3. **Repair before replacement.** Historic materials should be maintained and repaired when needed, including maintaining proper weather protection. Where repair is needed, it is desirable to remove as small an amount of material as possible.
4. **Replacement in kind.** If replacement of a historic feature or material is unavoidable, they should be replaced in kind with a visual and material match whenever possible.

Windows

Windows are a character defining feature of a historic home, reflecting both the time period of construction, the materials and craftsmanship of an era, and the architectural style of a building.

1. **Preserve Existing Historic Windows.** Existing historic windows in good working order should be maintained on historic homes in the district. The existing wood windows exhibit craftsmanship and carpentry methods in use at the time that the neighborhood was developed. New manufactured windows, even those made of wood, generally do not exhibit these characteristics.

2. **Repair Original Windows Where Possible.** Original wood windows that are in disrepair should be repaired if feasible. The feasibility of different approaches depends on the condition, estimated cost, and total project scope. Examples of substandard conditions that do not necessarily warrant replacement include: failed glazing compound, broken glass panes, windows, painted shut, deteriorated paint surface (interior or exterior) and loose joinery. These conditions alone do not justify window replacement.

Repair of loose or cracked glazing, loose joinery or stuck sashes may be suitable for a carpenter or handyperson. Significant rot, deterioration, or reconstruction of failed joints may require the services of a window restoration company. If information is needed regarding vendors that provide these services, please contact the Historic Preservation Office.

3. **Replace windows with a close visual and material match.** When repairing original windows is not feasible, replacement may be considered.
- Where replacement is desired, the new windows should match the old windows in design and other details, and, where possible, materials.
 - Certain windows products, such as composite clad windows, closely replicate original appearance and therefore may be appropriate. This should be demonstrated to the Commission with material samples and product specification sheets.
 - Changing the configuration, style or pattern of original windows is not encouraged, generally (for example, adding a highly styled divided light window (where non existed before or adding an architecturally incompatible pattern, such as a Prairie style gridded window to an English cottage house).
 - Vinyl windows are not an acceptable replacement for existing historic windows.

Depending on specific project needs, replacement windows may include:

- Sash replacement kits. These utilize the existing window frame (opening) and trim, but replace the existing sashes and substitute a vinyl or plastic track for the rope and pulley system. Sash replacement kits require that the existing window opening be plumb and square to work properly, but unlike insert windows, do not reduce the size of the glazed area of the window or require shimming and additional trim.
- An insert window is a fully contained window system (frame and sashes) that is “inserted” into an existing opening. Because insert windows must accommodate a new window frame within the existing opening, the sashes and glazed area of an insert window will be slightly smaller than the original window sashes. Additional trim must be added to cover the seams between the insert frame and the original window. However, for window openings that are no longer plumb, the insert frame allows the new sashes to operate smoothly.

ANALYSIS

1. This 1923 house is a contributing structure in the North Slope Historic District. As part of the North Slope it is listed on the Tacoma, Washington and National Registers of Historic Places.
2. The Landmarks Preservation Commission has jurisdiction to review and approve, or not approve, changes to this building per TMC 13.05.047, prior to those changes being made, by virtue of its status as a City Landmark.
3. The removal and replacement of the side elevation opaque louver vent type window with a vinyl single hung window meets the recommended guidelines per the administrative review procedures, Section 2, 1. 2. b) Windows, whereby, non-historic window replacement with like kind or a suitable upgrade.
4. The removal of three original double hung windows was completed without review by the Landmarks Preservation Commission as required by TMC 13.05.047. Since the installation of two of the three windows with vinyl inserts, the owner has applied for the building permit and the current design review.

5. On June 5, staff Tonie Cook visited the property with Mr. Rich Mundell who reported the removed windows were in the disposal and he described each of the window's condition, including one lower sash replaced with an air conditioning unit with a missing upper sash; two lower sashes that were visibly rotten; two upper sashes were rotten about 50% through.
6. The three windows are on the front elevation and quite visible from the right of way because of the corner lot location of the house. Nearly all of the remaining windows on the house appear to be original.
7. A retroactive proposal to remove three existing wood double hung windows and install three vinyl single hung windows does not meet NSHD Guideline #3, which follows: *Replace windows with a close visual and material match; specifically, Vinyl windows are not an acceptable replacement for existing historic windows.* The replacement is a single hung style and the trim was retained.
8. The proposal to remove the three double hung window does not meet NSHD Guideline #1, **Preserve Existing Historic Windows**, specifically, for, "*The existing wood windows exhibit craftsmanship and carpentry methods in use at the time that the neighborhood was developed*" and NSHD Guideline #2, **Repair Original Windows Where Possible.** *Original wood windows that are in disrepair should be repaired if feasible. The feasibility of different approaches depends on the condition, estimated cost, and total project scope. Examples of substandard conditions that do not necessarily warrant replacement include: failed glazing compound, broken glass panes, windows, painted shut, deteriorated paint surface (interior or exterior) and loose joinery. These conditions alone do not justify window replacement.*

Repair of loose or cracked glazing, loose joinery or stuck sashes may be suitable for a carpenter or handy person. Significant rot, deterioration, or reconstruction of failed joints may require the services of a window restoration company. If information is needed regarding vendors that provide these services, please contact the Historic Preservation Office.
9. Staff Tonie Cook recommended an estimate for three double hung wood windows be obtained.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adopting the above analysis as findings and the application be deferred to the Commission.

BOARD BRIEFINGS

AGENDA ITEM 5A: Tacoma Totem Pole

BACKGROUND

The Tacoma Totem Pole was commissioned by Tacoma civic boosters and curio shop owners Chester Thorne and William Sheard in 1903, and installed at a location near its present location the day before President Theodore Roosevelt arrived in Tacoma. Reported to have been carved at a cost of \$3000, the pole was intended to rival Seattle's infamous Pioneer Square Totem Pole and is symbolic of a broader historical narrative surrounding the role of the Puget Sound in the Alaskan Gold Rush and the internationally significant Alaska Yukon Exposition that was being planned for 1909. The symbols and carvings on the pole are of unknown origin but are suggestive of Haida style of northwestern British Columbia. The pole is not of Coast Salish origin or design.

The pole has been undergoing a structural and condition analysis by the City this year. On April 12, 2013, during this analysis, structural engineers under contract with the City determined that there was a significant risk of structural failure due to rot and deterioration. The Public Works Director ordered the immediate temporary bracing of the pole, while city engineers began working on a strategy for long term external bracing.

PRIOR MEETINGS

On April 24, 2013, staff briefed the Commission on the status of the pole and tentative plans to stabilize the pole. During this briefing, several Commissioners questioned the cultural appropriateness of the plan, due several cultural factors, and requested that staff further research traditional practices related to declining totem poles, the history and meaning of the Tacoma Totem Pole (including the significance of the symbolism), and whether the pole was legitimately carved.

On May 7, staff convened a working group to discuss and further research these questions, consisting of city engineering staff, the Arts Administrator, Historic Preservation Officer, Commissioner Elquist, and Shaun Peterson, a woodcarver and Puyallup Tribal member acting in a consulting capacity for the City. During this meeting it was affirmed that the traditional treatment of declining poles was to allow them to fall, or removal and allowing them to decompose. The outcome of this discussion was that most appropriate course of action for cultural and safety reasons was that the pole should be removed and relocated to a place where it could decompose, and that every interpretive opportunity to educate the public about the history and context of the pole, and totem poles generally, be explored.

On May 8, 2013, this discussion was reported to the Commission. The Commission responded that if this course of action was to be taken, that additional information would be needed regarding the actual safety issues and costs associated with stabilization, and additional analysis should be done regarding the history of the pole.

On June 4, 2013, the Tacoma Arts Commission convened a De-Accession Review Panel to consider the removal of the Totem Pole from the Municipal Art Collection, per the Municipal Art Collection De-Accession Policy. This panel consisted of Commissioners Elquist and Echtle, Dr. Robin Wright, curator of American Indian art for the University of Washington's Burke Museum, Lynette Miller, Head of Collections at the Washington State History Museum, and Jack Curtwright, owner of the Curtwright Gallery, which specializes in Native American Art. Among other items, the panel concluded that:

- The pole is not clearly Haida or Tlingit, but exhibits a mixture of traits, many of which appear strangely proportioned compared with examples known to have been carved by Native carvers.
- The execution quality of the pole is not high.
- It is possible that the pole was not carved by Native carvers but rather by others based on drawings or photographs.
- Its primary historical significance is related to the history of Tacoma, and not as a totem pole.

The panel voted unanimously to retain the pole in the Municipal Art Collection. The panel did not arrive at a consensus regarding the best approach to deal with the pole, other than to conclude that it should be preserved either standing, or stored protected in an indoor location.

NEXT STEPS

Three options for abating the structural risk of the pole have been identified with preliminary cost estimates.

- A. Install a single 65' new pole with shaft footing to support the totem pole: \$44,000
This option would retain in place the pole with exterior bracing by erecting a new metal pole behind it. This cost estimate assumes the City would have to fabricate a new pole.
- B. Install two 65' support poles with shaft footing: \$64,000
- C. Remove and store indoors: \$24,000
This estimate only includes only costs associated with removing the pole and transporting it. It does not include any interpretive signs, curation, analysis, or site preparation work for final location.

Staff will provide further discussion of the Totem Pole and address any questions the Commission may have.

ACTION REQUESTED

Guidance and direction.

AGENDA ITEM 5B: Live Work Building Code Update

*Sue Coffman, Planning and Development Services
Ryan Erickson, Tacoma Fire Department*

BACKGROUND

This is an update for the commission on PDS's progress on developing changes to the building code to encourage adaptive re-use of existing buildings and the creation of work-live units. PDS has been working closely with the Tacoma Fire Department and Tacoma Water to develop code provisions that ensure the occupants of such units are safe while occupying the unit, and are able to get out of the building safely in a fire.

ACTION REQUESTED

This is an informational briefing.

AGENDA ITEM 5C: Demolition By Neglect Ordinance

BACKGROUND

The City of Tacoma has many distressed properties, some of which are listed on the National and Tacoma Registers of Historic Places, either individually or as contributing structures within listed historic districts. Long term neglect of a historic building becomes very costly to abate, and can lead to the loss of the building. Ideally, intervention early in the cycle of decline is less costly.

However, under the existing enforcement codes, including Public Nuisances (Tacoma Municipal Code 8.30) and Minimum Buildings and Structures Code (TMC 2.01), the options for proactively abating substandard building conditions before they threaten the safety and longevity of a building are limited.

To address these issues, the City of Tacoma is going to explore the development of an ordinance to prevent "demolition by neglect," along with the creation of an "emergency preservation fund" that could be used to help prevent the deterioration of the City's iconic historic structures.

ACTION REQUESTED

This is an informational briefing.

BOARD BUSINESS

AGENDA ITEM 6A: Letter of Support: Frank Herbert Park

On May 22, 2013, Commissioner Daniel Rahe introduced a proposal to change the name of Peninsula Park to Frank Herbert Park. He distributed information on the author Frank Herbert and asked for consideration of support at a future Commission meeting.

PENDING AGENDA ITEMS

June 26, 2013
Ft. Nisqually Granary structural improvements
Demolition by Neglect Briefing

July 24, 2013
CANCELLED* (tentative)

July 31, 2013
SPECIAL MEETING (if needed)

Landmarks Preservation Commission
Planning and Development Services Department

JUN 3 2013



747 Market Street ♦ Room 1036 ♦ Tacoma WA 98402-3793 ♦ 253.591.5220

**APPLICATION FOR DESIGN REVIEW
FOR SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES**

Please include ALL of the following information with your application. Insufficient application materials will result in a delay in processing of your application. If you have any question regarding application requirements, or regulations and standards for historic homes and neighborhoods, please call the Historic Preservation Officer at 253.591.5220.

PART 1: APPLICANT INFORMATION

House Address 1003 N. Grant Ave Landmark/Conservation District (if applicable) _____

OWNER INFORMATION

Name (printed) Peggy BUCHANAN Email _____

Address (if different than above) 1003 N. Grant Ave Phone 253-208-2241

Homeowner's Signature [Signature] Rich Mundell (BRO)

*Application must be signed by the property owner to be processed.

CONTRACTOR INFORMATION

If application will be presented by a representative or contractor, please fill in the following:

Representative's Name _____ Company _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

PRELIMINARY PLAN CHECK

CHECKED FOR BUILDING CODE:* _____

LAND USE/ZONING:
VARIANCE REQUIRED? _____ CUP REQUIRED? _____

*PRELIMINARY PLAN CHECK IS NOT AN APPROVAL OF A PROJECT. A SEPARATE PERMIT APPLICATION MAY BE REQUIRED.

OK subject to egress flashing & .30 U-Value

APPLICATION FEE (please see page 2)

Estimated Project Cost, rounded to nearest \$1000 _____

Application Fee Enclosed _____

PART 3: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please describe below the overall scope of work, including all proposed new construction, changes to existing buildings, and any elements to be removed and replaced. (For complex remodeling projects, it may be beneficial to divide the description into different areas [north façade, west façade] or by type of work [windows, doors, siding]).

Attach additional pages if needed.

Replace 4 windows, see ATTACHED

RESIDENTIAL APPLICATION CHECKLIST A

(For Garages, Porches, Decks, Additions, Foundations and other Major Projects)

CHECKLIST to include the following:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Accurate Measured Site Plan (which shows ridgelines and dormers of <u>existing</u> and <u>new</u> buildings)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accurate Measured Elevation Drawings (all sides, with dimensions, siding materials, windows, and doors indicated)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Photograph(s) of Site and surrounding area
<input type="checkbox"/>	Detail illustrations of trim, casing, balusters, posts and railings (if applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Material samples (ie. stained glass, or if proposing uncommon material)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Paint samples (from hardware store)

In addition to the above, please provide the following information:

Size of new construction (footprint, i.e. 22 X 30'):	_____
Overall height and pitch of roof (for new buildings):	_____
Exterior cladding material(s):	<u>Milgard Styleline white vinyl</u>
Window types and materials:	_____
Door types and materials:	_____
Window trim (attach drawings, catalog sheets, etc. if necessary):	<u>SAME AS EXISTING</u>
Roof Material:	_____

*ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Drawings required for building permits can often be used for Landmarks Review, as long as information regarding finish detail, exterior materials, and windows and doors are indicated.
- For information about drawing site plans, please refer to BLUS Publication B1, Site Plan
- Elevations should be scale drawings and should include dimensions, heights, window and door locations, eave overhangs, trim details, and the locations of materials and other elements.
- Please include a photograph of existing house (for new garages if the new garage is to match any existing features of the house)
- For structures within the North Slope Historic District, refer to the North Slope Design Guidelines for more information about design. Contact the Historic Preservation Officer for more information.

RESIDENTIAL APPLICATION SUPPLEMENT CHECKLIST C
(for Window and Door Replacement and Restoration)

CHECKLIST include the following:*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Photograph(s) of work area(s) with locations of work indicated (i.e. in pen)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Detail illustrations of trim and casing and window profiles <i>NO CHANGE / existing TRIM</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Catalog cut sheets or product samples

In addition to the above, please provide the following information:

Narrative list of window and door types and locations:

***ADDITIONAL TIPS**

- Drawings required for building permits can often be used for Landmarks Review, as long as information regarding finish detail, exterior materials, and windows and doors are indicated..
- Please include a photograph of example elements (if new windows or doors are to match any existing features of the house)
- For structures within the North Slope Historic District, refer to the North Slope Design Guidelines for more information about design. Contact the Historic Preservation Officer for more information.

PLAN CORRECTION SHEET

Peggy Buchanan

NAME

1003 N Grant

ADDRESS

ARCHITECT/ENGINEER/CONTRACTOR

ZONE

New Building
Alteration
Addition
Moving

Purpose

Type

Group

Story

Valuation

Replace 3 double hung wood windows in front Dormer with Milguard vinyl white Double hung, double glazed. Model: Styleline (Office)

Replace existing louvered window 2nd story East side closest to roof overhang with Milguard white vinyl, styleline. (Bathroom)

BASEMENTS AND SLEEPING ROOMS SHALL HAVE AT LEAST ONE WINDOW WHICH OPENS A MINIMUM OF 5.7 SQUARE FEET, HAS A MINIMUM CLEAR OPENING WIDTH OF 20 INCHES, AND A MINIMUM CLEAR OPENING HEIGHT OF 24 INCHES. MAXIMUM SILL HEIGHT SHALL NOT EXCEED 44 INCHES

flash over/around - seal trim & Finish
Use .30 U-Value or lower.

Corrections as above indicated will be complied with.

(Sign here)

SIGNATURE OF OWNER OR APPLICANT

Checked by

Date

Google

Address 1663 North 10th Street

Address is approximate



SIDE



NOTICE OF VIOLATION/ STOP WORK ORDER

DATE: 6/3/13
ADDRESS: 1003 N. GRANT AVE.
OWNER: PEGGY BUCHANAN
CONTRACTOR: OWNER

- Permits have not been obtained for work being performed and/or work already completed. TMC Title 2
- Work does not conform to the approved plans. TMC Title 2
- Land Use Regulatory Code Violation. TMC Title 13
- Erosion Control/Grading Violation. TMC Title 2
- Critical Areas Preservation Ordinance Violation. TMC 13.11
- Expired or cancelled permits. TMC Title 2
- Other N. Slope Hist. Dist.

Specific conditions that exist: NEW WINDOWS
INSTALLED IN SINGLE FAMILY
DWELLING W/O PERMIT.

Submit plans and obtain all required permits. This may include Building, Land Use, Plumbing, Mechanical, Electrical, Construction Division, and other applicable permits not listed.

Failure to respond and correct the above noted conditions will result in a civil penalty being issued in an amount of \$250.00 for the first violation and \$250.00 per violation for the second and subsequent violations. Every day or portion thereof that the violation remains shall be considered a separate violation subject to a civil penalty.

By J. KENDALL

City of Tacoma, Community and Economic Development
Building and Land Use Services
747 Market Street, Room 345
Tacoma, WA 98402-3769
253-591-5005



FRONT FAÇADE, DORMER WINDOWS





((side elevation, nonhistoric window))



From 1998



1003
Address ~~1014~~ North Grant Avenue
Address is approximate



(2012 google map)



TO: Landmarks Commission
FROM: Sue Coffman, Planning and Development Services
SUBJECT: Live/Work Code Amendments
DATE: June 6, 2013

SUMMARY:

Since 2012, Planning and Development Services (PDS) has been actively developing code amendments to further expand and promote the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and the creation of “work-live” units. Currently, PDS is developing building code amendments that would allow a portion of an existing commercial building to be converted into a single dwelling unit without triggering full “change of occupancy” requirements in the building codes. The code provision being explored would incorporate a fire sprinkler requirement for the dwelling unit that utilizes the domestic water line instead of a separate, dedicated water service for the fire meter. Fire/smoke protection of walls/floors would be required around the dwelling unit separating it from the commercial use, and a fire alarm would be required for the entire building.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Seattle adopted an “add a unit” code amendment to their building code with the adoption of the 2003 International Building Code in July 2004. Their code allows any building (commercial or residential) to add a single dwelling unit without triggering a requirement for a fire sprinkler system to be installed.

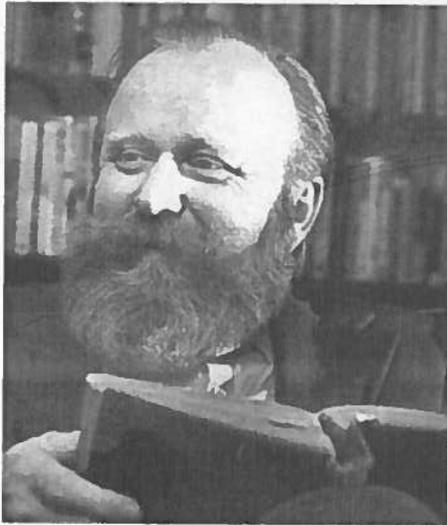
In 2012, PDS explored options for eliminating or modifying code requirements for these work-live types of uses. The first phase of amendments, which was largely focused on the Land Use Code, was adopted by the Council in October 2012. Under those amendments, parking requirements and offsite improvement requirements for work-live uses were reduced or eliminated. Following adoption of those code amendments, PDS staff has continued to work on other changes that could be considered, such as the “add a unit” provision in the City of Seattle.

ISSUE:

This is an informational briefing to update the commission on PDS’s progress on developing changes to the building code to encourage adaptive re-use of existing buildings and the creation of work-live units. PDS has been working closely with the Tacoma Fire Department and Tacoma Water to develop code provisions that ensure the occupants of such units are safe while occupying the unit, and are able to get out of the building safely in a fire.

Son of Tacoma, Father of Dune

By Erik Hanberg, January 16, 2013



He wrote one of the bestselling science fiction novels ever. He won both the Nebula and the Hugo Awards – the two most prestigious awards in science fiction. NASA has officially approved the naming of geographic features on Saturn’s moon Titan after words coined by him.

He’s from Tacoma, but no one here seems to know it.

The man is Frank Herbert, and he is the author of the science fiction classic *Dune*, as well as five sequels set in the world that book imagined.

Frank Herbert was born in Tacoma on October 8, 1920 – his mother’s 19th birthday. His binge-drinking father rarely held a steady job. At the time of Frank’s birth, his father operated a bus line between Tacoma and

Aberdeen. Among other jobs, he later sold cars, managed a dance hall, and worked for the Washington State Patrol.

Frank Herbert had the kind of childhood that would cause statewide news alerts today, filled with tales that sound more like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* rather than anyone's actual experiences.

At the age of nine he rowed from Burley on the Kitsap Peninsula to the San Juan Islands alone, often hitching rides with tugboats by holding on to their hulls.

In his youth, he went hunting (alone) and brought back game for his family to eat.

At 14, he swam across the Tacoma Narrows (there was no bridge until 1940).

Shortly thereafter, he and a friend sailed nearly 2,000 miles round-trip to the fjords of British Columbia.

In Brian Herbert's biography of his father, *Dreamer of Dune* (which provided many of the details in this article) he writes that on the Puget Sound, "Frank Herbert developed a deep respect for the natural rhythms of nature. The ecology message, so prevalent in much of his writing, is one of his most important legacies."

Frank Herbert loved the Puget Sound, and anytime he traveled or moved away for a job, he always returned, calling the Sound his "Tara," a reference to Scarlett's refuge in *Gone With the Wind*.

Herbert's feats weren't all in the natural world, however. At 12, he read the complete works of Shakespeare, and gobbled up Marcel Proust and Herman Melville. Like many avid readers, he tried his own hand at writing, and at 14 he was given his first typewriter.

"One day my father went for advice to a writer living in Tacoma who had sold a couple novels and several short stories," writes Brian Herbert. "The response: 'Work like hell, kid.'"

Herbert took this counsel to heart. His writing career included work as a journalist, a political speechwriter for a US Senator from Oregon, and as a short story writer before he was finally able to devote himself to writing his novels full time.

When reviewing the life of Frank Herbert, one gets the impression that he was trying to live in every part of Tacoma and do all things quintessentially Tacoman. At various points, he lived on Day Island, in Dash Point, Browns Point, and on the Eastside. He attended Stewart Middle School and Lincoln High School. He wrote for the Tacoma Ledger and the Tacoma Times. At age 21, he and his sweetheart fell in love in Salem, Oregon, where they were then living. On a whim, they drove to Tacoma to get married, because he thought it would be meaningful to have the ceremony in his hometown.

In 1955, Herbert had a budding family in Tacoma and needed a car for them. Being short on funds, as writers often are, he found a sweet deal on a used car: \$300 for a funeral home hearse. He enjoyed wearing his darkest suit, impersonating a funeral director, and pulling his hearse up next to carloads of teenagers. Herbert would leave them sobered, giving them a

dark scowl and intoning a significant “Drive carefully,” and then peel rubber as he drove away.



The origins of the novel *Dune* came to Herbert while visiting the sand dunes of Florence, Oregon. But the idea of a world destroyed by environmental catastrophe and the environmental theme at the heart of *Dune*, draw directly from Herbert's life in Tacoma.

Brian Herbert reveals the connection to Tacoma in *Dreamer of Dune*:

In a conversation with Dad, [his lifetime friend] Howie told me he said angrily, "They're gonna turn this whole planet into a wasteland, just like North Africa."

"Yeah," Frank Herbert responded. "Like a big dune."

By the time Dad said this, the elements of his story were coming together. He had in mind a messianic leader in a world covered entirely with sand.

Ecology would be a central theme of the story, emphasizing the delicate balance of nature ...

*Dad was a daily witness to conditions in Tacoma, which in the 1950s was known as one of the nation's most polluted cities, largely due to a huge smelter whose stack was visible from all over the city, a stack that belched filth into the sky. The air was "so thick you could chew it," my father liked to quip. **The increasing pollution he saw all around him, in the city of his birth, contributed to his resolve that something had to be done to save the Earth. This became, perhaps, the most important message of Dune**[emphasis added].*

In other words, Tacoma's pollution was so bad, primarily due to the ASARCO smelter, that it inspired Herbert's message of conservation. It may not be a legacy that Tacomans want, but it is a legacy nonetheless.

The growing environmental awareness of the 1960s, of which *Dune* was very much a part, led to environmental reforms and regulations to put a stop to the most egregious assaults on the environment. ASARCO shut down its smelter, and on January 17, 1993 – exactly 20 years ago this week – its stack was demolished.



Just as the iconic stack is gone without a trace (save for remnants of its toxic plume), it seems all memory of Frank Herbert has disappeared from Tacoma as well. How could a Tacoma artist with his fame, literary significance, and quirks of character have so little recognition in his hometown?

Thea Foss has a waterway. Murray Morgan and Dale Chihuly both have bridges. Where is the Frank Herbert Bridge or Frank Herbert Park? Dune Boulevard? The Frank Herbert Center for the Literary Arts?

The tourism slogan we currently use to promote Tacoma is “Where Art and Nature Meet.” That describes Frank Herbert to a T.

It’s time to embrace the boy who swam the Narrows, who fished on Tacoma’s beaches, and who grew up to be one of the most influential science fiction authors of all time

Waterfront Master Plan



City of Tacoma

Property

- Address
- Parcels (Vacant)
- Parcel

Street

- Abc Street Name
- PW Off Street Line
- Street Centerline
- Highway

- Puget Sound
- Pierce County
- King County
- Thurston County

Aerial Photo 2012

- 4 foot pixel

City Backgrounds

- Tacoma
- Federal Way
- Fife
- Fircrest
- Lakewood
- Ruston
- University Place



SCALE 1 : 5,257



Law Office of Erik Bjornson

711 Court A, Suite 114

Tacoma, WA 98402

(253) 272 -1434

FAX (253) 573-1209

June 3, 2013

Tacoma Totem Pole De-Accession Review Panel

Landmarks Preservation Commission
Planning and Development Services
747 Market Street, 3rd Floor
Tacoma, WA 98402-3793

Tacoma Arts Commission
Community and Economic Development Department
747 Market Street Room 900
Tacoma, WA 98402-3793

RE: Restoration and Maintenance of Historical Totem Pole in
Fireman's Park

Dear Landmark Commissioners, Tacoma Art Commission and the Tacoma
Totem Pole De-Accession Review Panel,

Please maintain and protect and take whatever steps
necessary to protect, restore and maintain Tacoma's Historical
Totem pole in Fireman's Park. As many Tacoma historians have
concluded, the totem pole is both a piece of art and a Tacoma
"historical artifact."

**Please decline to "de-access" the totem pole as such a move
would do nothing more than inappropriately take the totem pole
out Tacoma's Art Collection to have it moved and/or destroyed.**

The totem pole is clearly a historical artistic piece, one
of the city's most important, and deserves the dignity and
protect of the being in the Tacoma Art Collection so that it can
be maintained.

I have been an attorney in downtown Tacoma for 18 years.

The last 5 of those years have been located directly on and overseeing Fireman's Park. I have literally walked by the totem pole in Fireman's park 1000 times and can assure you it adds a great deal of character to an otherwise nondescript modernist cement poured park build right over the entrance to 705.

Having significant and unique art in Fireman's Park will improve the attractiveness of the park and use and hence graffiti and vandalism, issues all Tacoma City parks deal with. Because Fireman's Park is located downtown, it has had far more of it's share of such issues.

As you know, Fireman's Park is located right next to the Russell Building where State Farm is scheduled to move to. The totem pole is so close to the Russell Building, that many pictures of the pole have the building in the background.

As many people, and local Tacoma historians have pointed out, having the totem pole taken down to decay (rot) in the woods would be misguided and a waste of one of Tacoma's few remaining historical landmarks. Former Washington History Museum Nicandri discussed the issue with News Tribune columnist Peter Callaghan

"It is an artifact of the city's cultural and commercial history," said David Nicandri, the former director of the Washington State Historical Society. "It is an example of the city's outlook on itself and its rivalry with another city at a time when the outcome of that rivalry was still in doubt."

When I first told Nicandri about the notion of laying it somewhere to decompose, he was skeptical but scholarly.

"That's kind of noble but overly sentimental given the commercial origins of the piece." But later, when he got warmed up, he was more blunt.

See the complete enclosed article.

Many other Tacoma historians have come to a similar conclusion.

Also, please see the Alaska totem pole experts quoted in yesterday's Tribune including Ellen Carrlee, "the conservator of the Alaska State Museums and an expert on the maintenance and restoration of totem poles":

The apparent belief by some in Tacoma that there is only one way to deal with a pole in need of restoration is incorrect, she said.

"It's ignoring that there are more than 100 poles being preserved in Alaska," Carrlee said. "I can't think of any organized situations of putting a pole into the woods to decompose." And while Tacoma's pole is not an authentic Haida or Tlingit pole, "there are a ton of totems that are murky in their cultural authenticity, but there is still a desire to preserve them.

"The National Park Service is preserving poles, as are many Alaska Native communities and various municipalities. What you are doing flies in the face of that."

Jo Antonson, the Alaska state historian and assistant state historic preservation officer, said the practice there is to "preserve as long as it has useful life."

Even poles that can't stand on their own are frequently displayed horizontally in cradles. Said Mary Kowalczyk, the ranger assigned to Totem Bight State Historical Park: "You won't believe how much people enjoy looking at poles that are lying down."

"People really love totemic art," Antonson said.

What about Tacoma's pole? From pictures and a description of its story, Antonson said: "It sounds like a pretty neat reflection of the history of Tacoma and a pretty significant structure.

See the enclosure for the complete article.

Finally, enclosed is an article detailing many types of repair and restoration techniques for totem poles.

In summary, please use your commissions to quickly, efficiently restore and maintain the totem pole in Fireman's Park. Yes, it may cost a few dollars to fix the pole. However, in comparison to the cost to renovate a building or perform street construction, the cost is very low.

Given the fact that the pole is 110 years old, the allocated cost per year required will no doubt be very small.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

I may be reached at (253) 272-1434.

Sincerely,



Erik Bjornson

cc: Marilyn Strickland and Tacoma City Council

TheNewsTribune.com

Section: Peter Callaghan

« [Back to Regular Story Page](#)

Letting totem rot is not the only Native way

PETER CALLAGHAN

Let's call it the Great Tacoma Totem Pole Controversy ... that wasn't.

On Tuesday, Tacoma's arts commission will begin a process that could lead to the loss of a pole that has been displayed for 110 years. A de-accession committee could decide whether to remove the pole from the city's art collection. Later, the city Landmarks Commission could decide whether to remove the pole from the protection of the register of historic places.

Both of those actions would further a recommendation of a Landmarks Commission subcommittee that the culturally sensitive response to troubling decay of the pole is to take it down, lay it in some wooded area and let it decompose.

It is not that the pole couldn't be restored, the commissioners were told; it is that it shouldn't be restored.

"I personally spoke with the Sealaska Heritage Institute in Juneau ... and it seemed to be kind of the case that totem poles do have a natural life span," said JD Elquist, a member of both the Arts Commission and the Landmarks Commission. "And what happens when a totem pole basically decays is that they go back to the earth."

His recommendation to both groups has led them to consider that the pole should be taken down. Our coverage of the issue, however, has revealed a lot of affection for the 80-foot pole that has been mostly hidden away in Fireman's Park on the edge of downtown.

And now I've found that the Haida and Tlingit traditions described to the commission are not as strict as portrayed. While Alaska Native tribes in the past would not have tried to restore their totems — for practical reasons more than sacred — they have more recently been influenced by conservation and restoration standards of Euro-American historians. Alaska tribes themselves restore poles, as does the National Park Service, as does the state of Alaska.

Of the experts I interviewed, not one said the Tacoma pole was beyond saving or that it should be returned "to the earth" regardless of its condition.

"It is true that old, decaying poles for which there is no hope of repairing should be put to rest to die," wrote Rosita Kaahani Worl, the president of the Sealaska Heritage Institute. "However, if it can be repaired, it should be."

And it can be repaired. As city historic preservation officer Reuben McKnight said, "nobody thinks it can't be done."

Neither is the cost prohibitive, likely in the \$10,000 range. Compared with what Sealaska Heritage Institute charges for new poles produced by its Native carving program — \$4,000 a foot — that's a

bargain. And if local businesses and volunteers are enlisted — something that happened several times over the last century when this pole needed repairs or was relocated — the cost would be even less.

Ellen Carrlee is the conservator of the Alaska State Museums and an expert on the maintenance and restoration of totem poles. She said a beloved pole in the Juneau area was cleaned by volunteers under the direction of conservation experts.

Carrlee said many methods are used to repair the decay that seems to have affected our pole, including using epoxies to replace damaged wood and attaching weakened poles to new cedar logs or steel supports. While poles don't last forever, they can have longer lives if regular maintenance is done, including removal of moss, application of sodium borate solutions as a fungicide, and the use of water-repellent metal caps to protect poles from the rain.

Carrlee said there has been debate and discussion over the years as to the proper response to decaying poles. While once old poles were taken down and replicated, that has changed. She noted that the Ketchikan Totem Heritage Center, which in the mid-1970s relocated 19th century totems from unoccupied villages, was created by Haida and Tlingit members.

The apparent belief by some in Tacoma that there is only one way to deal with a pole in need of restoration is incorrect, she said

"It's ignoring that there are more than 100 poles being preserved in Alaska," Carrlee said. "I can't think of any organized situations of putting a pole into the woods to decompose." And while Tacoma's pole is not an authentic Haida or Tlingit pole, "there are a ton of totems that are murky in their cultural authenticity, but there is still a desire to preserve them.

"The National Park Service is preserving poles, as are many Alaska Native communities and various municipalities. What you are doing flies in the face of that."

Jo Antonson, the Alaska state historian and assistant state historic preservation officer, said the practice there is to "preserve as long as it has useful life."

Even poles that can't stand on their own are frequently displayed horizontally in cradles. Said Mary Kowalczyk, the ranger assigned to Totem Bight State Historical Park: "You won't believe how much people enjoy looking at poles that are lying down."

"People really love totemic art," Antonson said.

What about Tacoma's pole? From pictures and a description of its story, Antonson said: "It sounds like a pretty neat reflection of the history of Tacoma and a pretty significant structure.

"It sounds like it is clearly worthy of preservation."

Once the two city commissions realize that as well, we can move toward repairing and then relocating to a more prominent location — perhaps along the Prairie Line Trail — Tacoma's iconic totem pole.

Peter Callaghan: 253-597-8657 peter.callaghan@thenewstribune.com
[@CallaghanPeter](http://blog.thenewstribune.com/politics)

Totem Pole Maintenance



Conservators Ellen Carrlee and Ron Sheetz at the Governor's Totem Pole, Juneau, Alaska in May 2010

Southeast Alaska is the land of totem poles. These iconic outdoor sculptures are powerful, valuable, and remarkably vulnerable. The Tongass National Forest, covering 80% of Southeast Alaska, is a temperate (cool) rainforest, with precipitation between 80 and 100 inches per year in most places where totem poles are made and displayed. (In comparison, Seattle's annual precipitation is usually under 40".) Imagine placing a wooden pole in the ground and exposing it to the weather for decades. Utility poles, which are heavily impregnated with preservative chemicals, typically last 25-50 years in much less aggressive conditions. Most totem poles are not treated with preservatives when they are erected.



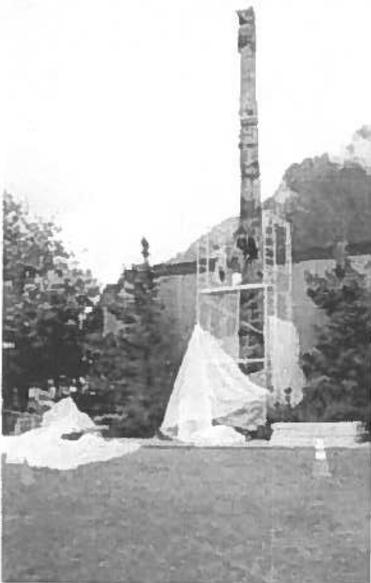


Ron Sheetz applies water repellent

I've been involved in the maintenance of several totem poles, and in May 2010 had the great pleasure of working with Ron Sheetz, retired National Parks Service conservator who specializes in furniture and wooden objects. Ron has treated well over 50 totem poles in the past 20+ years, and is a wealth of useful information and experience. We agreed it might be useful to have basic totem pole maintenance instructions on the internet. Ron also wrote a Conserve-O-Gram for the National Parks Service a few years back called "Protecting Wood with Preservative and Water Repellents" available at <http://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/conservoogram/07-03.pdf>

SUMMARY: If you are responsible for the care of a totem pole in an outdoor environment, a maintenance/inspection schedule should be developed and carried out. Inspections should check for loose parts, damage, and signs of decay or insect infestation. Borates and water repellent should be periodically applied. Borates help protect against rot and insects, but are water soluble. Water repellent protects the pole and prevents the borates from washing out with the rain. The application of borates and water repellent should occur every 3 – 5 years, depending on when the water repellents have worn off (water no longer beads up on the surface of the wood.) If the totem will be moved it is recommended to contact the Native community to allow them the opportunity to comment and to be involved with the preservation process. Moisture management is key to preservation. Proper drainage around the base of the pole and lead or copper caps at the top help preserve the wood. Typically, if you set aside a week to do the work, that's plenty of time and allows for vagrancies of weather.

INSPECTION: Every time a pole is taken down, there is a risk of damage. Better to leave it vertical if possible. This is fine for inspection and cleaning, but perhaps not convenient for the detail work painting and re-carving may require.



Scaffolding used for maintenance of the Auke Pole at Centennial Hall, 81.01.033 in the Juneau Douglas City Museum collection

Sometimes scaffolding is used. Rental of an electric or diesel boom lift is very helpful for maintenance purposes. A lift can usually hold two people if the total is under 500lbs.



Diesel boom lift for treatment of Governor's Totem

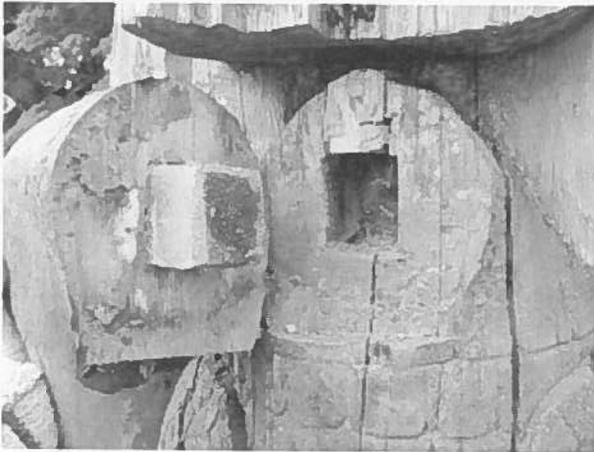
Note the importance of wearing a safety harness while on lift. In addition to the obvious safety issue, nothing brings out the local newspaper photographer like work on a totem pole, and a front page photo of you on a lift with no harness is an easy way to get a fine from OSHA. A few hours may be spent photographing, taking condition notes, measuring cracks, and probing the wood with an ice pick. When wood is damp, the hole from the ice pick swells back shut right away, leaving no mark. Plants near the base should be removed to promote air circulation and drying at the base of the pole.



Base kept clear of foliage to allow air circulation

base kept clear of roilage to allow air circulation

I prefer to document a totem pole from the top down, referring to the highest figure as "Figure One" and describing each figure separately. The figure's own right side is called "Proper Right" or PR and likewise the left is "Proper Left" or PL. I refrain from identifying the figures as specific animals unless a record has been left by the carver. It can be difficult to know, for example, if a bird-like creature was meant to be an eagle, hawk, mosquito, thunderbird, kadjuk or some other real or mythological creature. Best to keep the description simple, just enough to make clear which figure you are talking about. From the ground, I note the following:



Detached head with broken mortise and tenon join. Four Story Totem Pole, Juneau Douglas City Museum collection 84.19.001

Missing, loose, or detached elements. Inspect any lead or copper caps as well to see if they are loose or have missing or rusting nails.



Paint loss on top figure of Governor's Totem

Degree of paint loss, usually as an estimated percentage (ie "20% of the paint is lost from the 3rd figure")



Moderate green biological growth on figure four of Governor's Totem

Color and degree of soiling and biological growth (ie "localized green patches of biological growth" or "overall black biological growth" or "moss and lichens forming on the upper surfaces of the arms") Look, too, for evidence of insect infestation.



Carpenter ant infestation in a rotting totem pole

Some insects, like carpenter ants, will make their home in rotted wood.





Ron Sheetz measures a large crack near top of Governor's Totem

Large Cracks. Totem poles always have cracks. I just keep an eye on the largest ones, and perhaps take a measurement or two of crack width. Photographs are a better way to keep track of overall cracks than written notes.



Sound wood will not allow deep penetration of an icepick

Rotten areas. Using an icepick or a sharp steel awl, push the point into the wood and see how deep it goes. It is best to do this when the wood is damp anyway, as the hole will swell shut quickly. Sound wood will not easily allow penetration of the awl, while rotting wood will allow the tip to go in without much resistance. If the pole is directly in the ground or in concrete, the base may have rot. Sometimes the base is solid on the outer layer, but underneath there can be soft areas and loss. It is not uncommon for there to be rot beginning at ground level and extending down down 18-20" until the wood is more sound again, deep underground. Upper areas of the pole often have more rot than lower figures, and there is usually one side of the pole that suffers more intense weathering. If available, a Resist-o-graph is very helpful, especially around the base of a totem pole. The tool is a drill that measures resistance of the wood, indicating location and depth of decay. The drawback is the cost of the equipment, perhaps around \$12,000. However, sometimes one can be found or contracted though specialist

indicating location and depth of decay. The drawback is the cost of the equipment, perhaps around \$12,000. However, sometimes one can be found or contracted through specialist companies or government agencies. I have heard of this tool being used on various Alaska projects by the National Parks Service and by the private company Extreme Access, an Oregon-based inspection and testing company.



PR wing has more cracking



PL wing has more biological growth

News From Terre Haute, Indiana

August 26, 2010

72-year-old totem pole gets makeover

~~20-foot totem pole stands in front of~~ Vigo County Historical Society

Arthur Foulkes

The Tribune-Star

TERRE HAUTE — Terre Haute's mystic Tootooch, or "Thunderbird," is getting a much-needed makeover.

The 20-foot totem pole that faces South Sixth and Washington streets is getting a fresh paint job and being restored from the inside out.

"It's part of our history," said Tracy Pruitt, owner of Pruitt Properties, which is donating the restoration work on the 72-year-old piece of art. "This is a historic landmark."

It has been at least 10 years since the totem pole, which stands on the front lawn of the Vigo County Historical Society building at 1411 S. Sixth St., was last restored, Pruitt estimated. He and a crew of several of his employees are all donating their time to restore the longtime Terre Haute treasure.

"It's in pretty bad shape," Pruitt said while looking at the totem pole on Wednesday afternoon.

He hopes the restoration work will be completed today – well ahead of the Farrington's Grove neighborhood block party, which is scheduled for Sunday afternoon on the Historical Society lawn.

Several employees of Pruitt Properties, which does restoration work, were pulling rotted wood from inside the totem pole Wednesday. They plan to use a leaf blower to dry the inside of the pole and then fill the hollow sections with foam and chalk, Pruitt said.

"The wood's rotting inside," Pruitt said. A hole in the top of the totem pole has been allowing rain to enter the pole, he said. That will now be closed, Pruitt added.

The exterior of the totem pole will also get a fresh coat of paint, Pruitt said. There are seven different colors and they will all be matched to the original colors, he said.

Tootooch is the name of the winged "thunderbird" at the top of the totem pole. According to Sacred-Texts.com, an online archive of books about religion, mythology and folklore, Tootooch is a "powerful, mystic emblem having its origin among the native tribes of British Columbia" in Canada.

"Keep this emblem always and you will be under the protection of the Thunder Bird wherever you may be. It will bring you the best that life has to offer. Your business dealings will prosper, the course of your

love will run smooth and goodwill toward your fellow creatures will fill your heart and will be returned a hundredfold," the website states.

Totem poles were never known to be a part of the culture of native tribes in this part of North America. Rather, they were – and continue to be – part of the culture of American Indian tribes from the Northwest.

The Vigo County Historical Society's totem pole came to the area thanks to Mrs. Chapman J. Root, who ordered the pole produced for the family's Allendale estate in the 1930s. According to past editions of Terre Haute newspapers, the pole was made from a pine tree that had grown in southern California and was transported here aboard a railroad flatcar.

Pine is a soft wood, which has contributed to the deterioration of the totem pole, Pruitt noted.

The totem pole was carved by C. Huston Isaacs, an industrial arts and science teacher at Sarah Scott Junior High School, and his friend, Charles Eggleston. The totem pole was placed in a wooded and floral area of the Root estate in Allendale and stayed there until 1963, when it was moved to the Historical Society property as gift from the Root family.

At the base of the pole, Isaacs and Eggleston carved a bear, a symbol of strength. Above the bear is the figure of a "tribal ancestor" holding a box containing the sun, moon and stars. Atop them both – and several smaller figures – is Tootooch, the powerful thunderbird god.

"People kind of associate the totem pole with the [Historical Society] building," said Barbara Carney, assistant director of the Historical Society museum.

Pruitt, a life member of the Historical Society, said he recalls seeing the totem pole when his mother would bring him to the historical museum years ago. He still has a postcard produced locally showing the totem pole decades ago, he said. An image of the card can be seen online at www.cardcow.com.

"It's not every day you restore a totem pole," Pruitt said. "I think it's important. It's history."

Arthur Foulkes can be reached at (812) 231-4232 or arthur.foulkes@tribstar.com.

Tacoma's totem: Sometimes a pole is just a pole

PETER CALLAGHAN

LAST UPDATED: MAY 19TH, 2013 12:30 AM (PDT)

We might be overthinking this whole thing about what to do with Tacoma's 110-year-old totem pole.

It's good, of course, that the city's volunteer landmarks and arts commissions are analyzing how to respond to news that the eight-story pole suffers from rot and insect infestation. They have dual jurisdiction because it is both a protected landmark and part of the city's art collection.

But they so far seem to be approaching it from an overly self-conscious viewpoint that is equal parts political correctness and cultural correctness. Based on stories written by our city government reporter, Lewis Kamb, the current sentiment is leaning toward removing the pole from Fireman's Park on the edge of downtown and laying it to rest in some park where it can decompose in peace.

"I think there's something very beautiful about the idea of the pole laying in the ground decaying and becoming part of the earth again," said Landmarks Commissioner JD Elquist.

That might be appropriate, even beautiful, for something that is a sacred object, something that is legitimately a Native American artifact. That reportedly is what tribes in Alaska and southwestern Canada would do with similar poles.

But we'd be better off, and likely make better decisions, if we stopped seeing the pole for what it isn't and understood it for what it is. This isn't art or a Native American artifact. It's kitsch. It's a fabulous illustration of turn-of-the-century Western American boosterism.

"It is an artifact of the city's cultural and commercial history," said David Nicandri, the former director of the Washington State Historical Society. "It is an example of the city's outlook on itself and its rivalry with another city at a time when the outcome of that rivalry was still in doubt."

It started in 1899 when Seattle stole a 60-foot totem from an Alaskan native village and placed it in its commercial core. Tacoma boosters — led by the biggest of big-businessmen, Chester Thorne — hoping to one-up the city's rival, decided to act. A cedar tree donated by the St. Paul & Tacoma Lumber Co. was sent to Quartermaster Harbor where two Native American carvers created sections based on Haida and Tlingit iconography.

It was then erected in front of the jewel of downtown, The Tacoma Hotel, just in time for the visit of then-President Teddy Roosevelt.

Was it meant to be a sacred place for tribal ceremonies? Of course not. It was meant to be a proclamation that Tacoma was, in fact, the City of Destiny. And locals were proud of it. Photos in the Tacoma Library's Northwest Room collection show Daffodil Festival princesses, traveling troubadours and Shriners in their parade cars all posing beneath the pole. In 1948, Tacoma steelworkers put up a scaffold so the Painters Union could repaint the pole one Sunday to the accompaniment of a band of union musicians.

Does its commercial and pedestrian nature make it unworthy of landmark status? Of course not. It is exactly the kind of item that helps tell a story about the town's early aspirations. It might not belong in the city's art collection, but it certainly must remain on its historic register.

Come on, have some fun. Don't be embarrassed to advocate spending a few thousand dollars to shore it up and keep it where it is (especially since taking it down, securing a place for it to "return to the earth" and installing interpretive displays will probably cost as much if not more).

If it can't be kept standing, then move it indoors where it can be anchored to a wall or other structure. Seattle's history museum is fine with displaying pop culture items like Chief Skookum, the cigar store Indian that spent much of its life in front of a Tacoma tobacco store, and a stuffed gorilla named Bobo because both help tell a story.

But if Tacoma officials can't be comfortable with their own piece of kitschy vernacular folk art, give it to someone who gets it. Maybe McMenamins. Maybe the new Bass Pro Shops store.

When I first told Nicandri about the notion of laying it somewhere to decompose, he was skeptical but scholarly.

"That's kind of noble but overly sentimental given the commercial origins of the piece." But later, when he got warmed up, he was more blunt.

"Laying it in the woods somewhere, quite honestly, I consider that stupid. And you can quote me."

So I did.

Peter Callaghan: 253-597-8657 peter.callaghan@thenewstribune.com
(<http://thenewstribune.com>) blog thenewstribune.com/politics@CallaghanPeter

© Copyright 2013 Tacoma News, Inc.

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

October 22, 2010

Riverfront Park totem pole gets a makeover

City employee used materials on hand, donated lift to complete repairs

Chelsea Bannach

The Spokesman-Review

Tags: American Indian Community Center Canada Island Dave Randolph Inland Northwest Wildlife Council Larry Carey Riverfront Park Scott Brunell Spokane Parks and Recreation totem pole



Scott Brunell, a city parks employee, stands in front of the totem pole he refurbished in Riverfront Park on Thursday.

After decades of exposure to the elements, the tattered totem pole in Riverfront Park needed some serious work.

The eagle at the top of the totem was missing its head and one of eight feathers on its wing. Another feather, barely clinging to the wing, blew precariously in the wind. The once-vivid paint was faded and chipped.

In short, the weathered totem pole was more of an eyesore than an attraction, said Scott Brunell, craft specialist with Spokane Parks and Recreation.

"I just couldn't stand looking at that thing," he said. "In some places, the paint was completely worn off. People couldn't tell what it was."

So Brunell got his boss, Dave Randolph, the Parks and Recreation labor foreman, to approve the project. Then Brunell got to sanding and single-handedly refurbished the entire pole, which is located on Canada Island.

"It was just a labor of love," he said. "It just needed to be done."

Brunell had to mix whatever paint he had on hand to match the original colors. That required some imagination, he said, because the original paint was worn off in places.

"We had to do some guessing, but we tried to keep the colors looking the way they originally did," he said "I'm pretty happy with the way it came out."

He had completed the bottom third of the pole when he hit a road block; he could not

reach the top. He needed a lift, which would have cost Parks and Recreation about \$500.

So the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council, which paid a Canadian Indian and an American Indian to construct the pole in 1978 for its annual Bighorn Outdoor Adventure Show, donated a truck lift for a week so the project could be completed.

Even though the pole looks better, no one is really sure what it means, said Larry Carey, an Inland Northwest Wildlife Council member. He is working with the American Indian Community Center to get more information on its significance.

"Typically when they carve a pole it signifies an event or means something," he said.

The council is also trying to get the city to approve a plaque to let people know who built the pole, when and why, he said.

A second totem pole in the park, constructed for Expo '74, is half-carved and also in a state of disrepair. Brunell said he hopes the carving will someday be completed and that he can be the one to revamp the "derelict" pole.

For now, though, he is happy to have completed the first one.

"It's great," he said. "Now I think it's something worth looking at."

Get more news and information at Spokesman.com

Exit133 is about Tacoma

[Home](#) (<http://www.exit133.com/>) > [Articles](/articles/) (/articles/)

110-Year-Old Tacoma Totem Pole At Risk

 Exit133 

 April 23, 2013 at 9:15 am  8 Comments



While we're poking around in the Landmarks Preservation Commission packet (http://cms.cityoftacoma.org/cedd/TacomaCulture/Historic/2013/documents/LPC_Packet_042413.pdf) for this week's meeting, here's another potential item of interest: the 110-year-old Tacoma Totem Pole that stands in Fireman's Park at 9th and A Street has been found to have issues with structural integrity.

A recent inspection of the pole found "very soft wet deteriorated wood" at the base, which significantly compromises the wind load capacity and seismic stability of the pole. On April 12, the Public Works Director ordered the totem pole to be stabilized, and the surrounding park area to be fenced off.

The pole, originally carved and installed in 1903, was designated a landmark in 1975. A briefing at this week's Landmarks Preservation Commission meeting will provide the Commission with a status update and discuss the future plans for the pole.

UPDATE: The Daily Index (<http://www.tacomadailyindex.com/blog/repairs-needed-for-downtown-tacomas-historic-totem-pole/2204108/>) has some more details on the history of the totem pole, which was apparently originally commissioned by a couple of Tacoma businessmen annoyed by the press Seattle was getting for its totem pole.

Comments

SpED

I'm wondering: Does the pole have any tribal ties, i.e. designed by, constructed by, etc.?

April 23, 2013 at 11:35 am / Reply / Quote and reply

mcdomaa

Nothing local, tribally... it was carved by Alaskan Indians.

April 23, 2013 at 1:36 pm / Reply / Quote and reply

Jenny Jenkins

Even if it wasn't a local tribe, I hope they're able to save it. I had no idea it was that old. Maybe they can preserve it indoors somewhere like the History Museum or the Convention Center.

April 23, 2013 at 2:01 pm / Reply / Quote and reply

fred davie

I recommend a new totem pole be carved. But this one should be more reflective of contemporary Native American interests. It should include carvings of firecrackers, poker chips, and cigarettes.

April 23, 2013 at 6:46 pm / Reply / Quote and reply

Art Brown Sr

I believe it came from the Tlingits of South East Alaska (around Sitka or Juneau.) their totems have been up for hundreds of years! I would suggest Tacoma contact them for restoration and preservation!

April 24, 2013 at 12:13 am / Reply / Quote and reply

Len Adams

I think this is the nature of poles, the Queen Charlotte islands are the resting place of many old poles that have fallen and been covered by overgrowth. The only place you see really old poles are in museums.

Just a guess, but if there were a new pole carved reflecting Native interests I think it might include family rather than poker chips.

April 26, 2013 at 11:22 am / Reply / Quote and reply

Erik B. (<http://i.feedtacoma.com/Erik/>)

The city may want to expedite fixing the totem pole as it is right next to the Russell building where State Farm is planning to move into. All of the plastic fencing and cement blocks ruin the view and use of Fireman's Park.







April 26, 2013 at 11:51 am / Reply / Quote and reply

SpED

And the consensus is: somehow, someway, somewhere preserve the pole.

April 26, 2013 at 3:12 pm / Reply / Quote and reply

Post A New Comment

Subscribe to comment notification for this entry. (http://www.exit133.com/?ACT=3&entry_id=2435&ret=articles/view/110-year-old-tacoma-totem-pole-at-risk)

Now enrolling!

DAY SCHOOL:
Boys and Girls,
Preschool - 5th grade

UPPER SCHOOL:
All Girls, IB
Grades 9-12

{ Now offering Mandarin! }



ANNIE WRIGHT
SCHOOLS | BOYS & GIRLS, PRESCHOOL - 8
GIRLS ONLY, GRADES 9-12



(http://www.exit133.com/?ACT=25&ad_id=2)

Events

Peoples Park Reopening and Public Art Dedication

May 22, 2013 at 4:30 pm

(<http://www.exit133.com/events/details/peoples-park-reopening-and-public-art-dedication>)



Bike to a Better Tacoma

May 22, 2013 at 5:00 pm

(<http://www.exit133.com/events/details/bike-to-a-better-tacoma>)



Caring to a Tee Golf Tournament

May 23, 2013 at 12:00 am

(<http://www.exit133.com/events/details/caring-to-a-tee-golf-tournament>)



Tacoma Runners - Guadelajara en Mayo

May 23, 2013 at 6:30 pm



(<http://www.exit133.com/events/details/tacoma-runners-guadelajara-en-mayo>)



2013 © Exit133 LLC



What to do with rotten, 110-year-old Tacoma Totem Pole?

LEWIS KAMB

LAST UPDATED: MAY 2ND, 2013 06:49 AM (PDT)

It has towered over the bluffs of downtown Tacoma for more than a century, but now a prominent piece of Northwest Indian art is showing severe signs of decay and faces an uncertain future.

Age, rot and insects have combined to weaken the carved cedar log known simply as the “Tacoma Totem Pole” – a city-owned attraction some 8½ stories tall that adorns Fireman’s Park at 9th and A streets.

Commissioned by civic boosters in 1903 and subjectively hailed as the “largest totem pole in the world,” the artwork was meant as a finger in the eye of the city’s bigger rival to the north.

But with its physical decline in recent years, the designated historic landmark now poses safety hazards to the public, city officials say.

“The pole itself is 110 years old, so it’s got issues,” said Reuben McKnight, Tacoma’s historic preservation officer. “But recently we discovered that there’s a bigger concern with stability than previously thought.”

Last month, after inspectors probed the base of the old pole and found it rotting, public works officials scrambled to shore it up.

“We found a contractor with a 15-foot pole holder to brace it in time for the Daffodil Parade,” said Darius Thompson, an associate city engineer. “That was a short-term fix.”

A more thorough inspection by PCS Structural Solutions determined a cross section of the pole “has been compromised by at least 50 percent” in some spots, an April 15 memo to the city says. The engineers also found the pole falls well below city wind load standards, appears seismically unstable and generally is wet, soft and deteriorating.

“(T)he pole should be considered unreliable or unstable and a falling hazard,” the memo concluded. “We recommend that the pole be lowered to the ground or shored as a precaution.”

The city has since further buttressed the roughly 83-foot pole by collaring it about 15 feet up and bracing it with steel rods anchored in concrete. The pole is also fenced off to keep the public at bay. In all, the work has cost about \$10,000, city officials said.

With it temporarily stabilized, public works officials are now searching for a permanent solution.

“We want to install a brace system to keep it up for 20-plus more years,” Thompson told the city’s Landmarks Preservation Commission last week.

But some commissioners questioned whether removing the pole might be a better answer – if not for safety and preservation reasons, out of cultural sensitivity.

Edward Echte, a historian who serves as the commission’s vice chair, noted that based on the city’s historic records, the pole was commissioned but secretly carved – potentially a sign that its carvers used taboo iconography.

Noting specific totem images “belong” to certain Native American families, Echte said Tacoma’s pole actually could be displaying stolen symbolism.

“Some people might see it as the city of Tacoma owns the log,” he said, “but the tribe owns the images.”

He suggested the city consult with the University of Washington’s Burke Museum or the University of British Columbia’s Museum of Anthropology to try to determine which tribe might be tied to the artwork.

“Then we can find out what they want us to do with it,” Echte added.

And that’s what the city now intends to do, McKnight said. Among other consultation, city officials last week requested Shaun Peterson, a Puyallup Indian who carved the city’s “welcome figure” in Tollefson Plaza, to help research the pole’s origins.

“The commission gave us some direction to do some further cultural research,” McKnight said. “We really don’t know much about the carvings at all.”

What is known about the pole largely comes from a 1975 narrative written by Washington State Historical Society archivist Caroline Gallacci, who prepared its application for city landmark status, granted later that year.

By Gallacci’s account, Tacoma booster Chester Thorne and explorer William Sheard commissioned the artwork for \$3,000, hiring natives either from British Columbia or Alaska (records conflict on this point) to carve a massive cedar pole prepared by the St. Paul & Tacoma Lumber Company.

Four years earlier, Seattle civic leaders erected in Pioneer Square a 60-foot-tall totem pole stolen from a tribal village in Alaska. Tacoma’s boosters, who’d “become irritated by articles describing Seattle’s Totem Pole,” sought to out-do their Seattle counterparts by commissioning a taller, legally obtained pole.

According to Gallacci, the Indian carvers sculpted the pole at Quartermaster Harbor on Vashon Island before Thorne and Sheard raised it publicly — a day before President Theodore Roosevelt visited town in May 1903. With a wolf at its foot and an eagle at its crown — and six animal or half-human icons carved in between — the pole stood initially at 10th and A Streets, near Sheard’s curio shop and the storied Tacoma Hotel.

“The pole immediately became one of the major tourist attractions to the city,” Gallacci wrote.

Fifty years later, the pole was moved a block north on A Street to Fireman’s Park, where it has since undergone several repaintings and restorations. A plaque at its foot heralds it as the world’s largest, though at least a half dozen taller poles can be quickly found through a basic Internet search.

“Sometimes, there was hyperbole in the descriptions of old tourist attractions,” McKnight said.

But what’s unquestionable is the pole’s worsening condition. In recent months, carpenter ants infested it, and dry rot now runs at least 15 feet up its base, if not higher, Thompson said.

Peterson, the Puyallup carver, noted such poles aren’t endemic of Washington’s Coast Salish tribes, but traditional of Alaska and British Columbia natives. His research so far leads him to believe Tacoma’s pole was the work of Alaskan-based carvers, possibly Tlingits using general Haida motifs.

“In those territories, it’s sort of understood that poles have a lifespan,” Peterson added. “They’re left to return to the earth and the idea is to replace them.”

In 2010, after conservators made a similarly grim structural assessment of the famed 70-year-old pole on the Washington State Capitol grounds carved by the late Snohomish Chief William Shelton, officials decided its time had come. The pole was removed, cut into six sections and is stored in the now-defunct Capitol greenhouse.

“We’re not sure what its future is,” said Marygrace Jennings, cultural resources manager of the state Capitol campus. “The current task is to get it stored in a climate-controlled facility to prevent any further deterioration, if possible.”

As for Tacoma’s pole, once all of the consultation and research has concluded, the Landmarks Commission will decide its fate.

“For now, it’s safe, and the city is working on finding a permanent solution for stabilizing it,” McKnight said. “But stabilizing the pole might not be the appropriate action.”

Lewis Kamb: 253-597-8542

lewis.kamb@thenewstribune.com (mailto:lewis.kamb@thenewstribune.com)

blog.thenewstribune.com/politics (http://blog.thenewstribune.com/politics)

[@lewiskamb](http://twitter.com/lewiskamb) (http://twitter.com/lewiskamb)

post defiance

(<http://postdefiance.com/>)

FOR TACOMA, ABOUT TACOMA, AND BY TACOMANS

How the Mighty Have (Almost) Fallen

By Dan Rahe (<http://postdefiance.com/author/dan-rahe/>), May 10, 2013



(<http://postdefiance.com/how-the-mighty-have-almost-fallen/attachment/16164/>)

The eagle at the top of the totem pole, as it appeared in 1948.

The giant totem pole in Fireman's Park near Old City Hall is fatally deteriorated, and no longer structurally stable. Any dead tree, no matter how intricately carved or fancifully painted, would rot and topple after 110 years of exposure to Tacoma weather. It should not come as a surprise that this particular 83-foot-tall log is crawling with carpenter ants and mushy to the core.

As a failing structure, the pole poses a threat to public safety in the park, and has been secured in place with cables.

The historic totem pole has been a landmark in Tacoma since 1903, when it was carved by anonymous tribal artists under contract to blustering civic boosters. As the story goes, Seattle had a very tall totem pole. Tacoma, of course, needed to have a taller one. From its towering vantage over Pacific Avenue, this pole became a tremendously popular tourist attraction.

These days, it's almost easy to overlook it. The paint on the carved figures is very faded, and drivers speeding past on Schuster Parkway and I-705 could be forgiven if they mistook it for a retired power line pole. It looks lonely up there, as if it was left stranded above channels carved by the torrent of asphalt below.

The giant totem pole in Fireman's Park is a relic, and city officials are struggling to find a way to deal with its decayed state. The wood is likely in no condition to bear any kind of force, whether it be its own weight, seismic activity, or wind. Even the guy cables currently secured to a collar near the pole's base provide only temporary mitigation.

There are methods of preserving totem poles in place. Specialists in Alaska have carved out the unadorned backsides of some poles and inserted new logs of a smaller diameter into the groove to shore up the weakened original. But this is usually done on much

shorter monuments, with less advanced stages of rot. The carvings could still crumble and fall.

A more permanent version of the current guy-cable stabilization could be installed as well. This method has been used on poles in Canada. But the diagonal cables take up significant space and would probably need to be fenced off. The park would shrink, and the public would lose access to the landmark.

The totem pole could also be cut into several structurally sound segments. This would eliminate toppling hazards and keep the carvings accessible to the public. This method has also been used in Canada on at least one unmanageably tall totem pole.

In any event, to be preserved, the pole would probably need to be removed from the ground and treated for rot and vermin. I'd wager that no public official in their right mind would see fit to re-install it in the park after such treatment. The wood will still be very unstable, and would likely need to be kept horizontal indoors.

These practical factors lead us to the obvious question: is this hunk of soggy timber worth the effort and expense?



(<http://postdefiance.com/how-the-mighty-have-almost-fallen/attachment/16160/>)

Workers in 1948 restore the totem pole during a Clean Up Tacoma campaign.

The preservationist impulse compels us to rescue fading remnants of history. When a part of our shared past is endangered, we often regard pragmatic approaches as deeply heartless, or evil. We cling to sentiment and give poetry the weight of policy. Sometimes, the emotions that stir and rally us serve to strengthen understanding of heritage as we recall the tragic disappearance of beautiful buildings or public treasures.

Other times, we're just getting worked up about old stuff.

There's a difference between an antique and an artifact. Some are worth saving for their effect on numerous lives, and some aren't. Sure, thousands of people have fond memories of this big old totem pole, but does that mean we should spare no expense to save it?

What values would the City of Tacoma be compromising if it were to simply take the thing down? Would that be a cultural failure and an abdication of our obligation to honor our city's past?

The first thing we must consider when dealing with any totem pole is the tribal significance of the carvings. Officials are contacting researchers all over the Northwest to uncover what meanings and clan connections, if any, linger in the iconography. Any persons with connection to those symbols will be contacted for consultation. Since it was considered impolite, at best, to sell sacred clan symbology to foreigners such as Tacoma civic boosters, it's possible that the carvings on our totem pole have no definitive anthropological ties, and are an indistinguishable mash-up of symbolism. It is possible, but not proven.

[Note: Library archives have this to say about the origins of the totem pole's carvings: "Tacoma's totem pole in Fireman's Park was commissioned by W.F. Sheard and Chester Thorne. It was carved by Native Americans from Sitka, Alaska in the Haida tribal style. Then it was presented to the city in 1903, it stood 103 feet tall. This totem pole represents the history of the Eagle Tribe of Alaska. The top most figure of a totem pole would be the special animal god (eagle, seal, salmon or bear or even the sun) from which the tribe claimed descent and a particular protection. The eagle on top of Tacomas pole is "Skanskwin", the crest of the Nexa'da people. (Tacoma Ledger, 12/14/1924; TNT, Page R. Hosmer, 3/16/1946; TNT, 12/6/1953)]

Even if the carvings on the totem pole have a meaning, that meaning takes on a greasy sheen when we imagine greedy, insensitive, empire-minded civic leaders appropriating Native American tradition for marketing purposes. Totem poles aren't even part of local tradition (Sound area tribes erected welcome figures, like the one in Tollefson Plaza while totem poles were associated with groups further north), and this one is a relic of a time when Native American culture was usually treated with all the respect of a carnival sideshow. As such, it is a painful reminder of the dead-eyed glee with which Westerners trampled the lives and culture of America's more original inhabitants. It's hard to say whether it is better or worse that this pole wasn't carved by white men.

As our society makes strides toward greater cultural appreciation and diversity, it could seem fitting that this possibly out-of-place totem pole should break and rot with the ignorance that inspired it.

Some folks at City Hall think it should be allowed to fall, as totem poles traditionally are, and left to decompose. The tribes that carve them believe they have a life cycle that includes return to the soil. Perhaps it could live out the rest of its days as a disintegrating feature of one of Tacoma's several wooded parks, crumbling to the earth it came from slowly enough to remind us of the consequences of our past – close, fading, irretrievable – its beauty wasted on cheap and unworthy purposes.

The relationship the Fireman's Park totem pole has to indigenous culture is not the only context through which Tacomans perceive it, though. It's been a part of the downtown landscape for decades, a witness to its boom, decay, and rebirth. Sentimental attachment to it is understandable, especially when so many elements of that history have been lost to the wrecking ball.



(<http://postdefiance.com/how-the-mighty-have-almost-fallen/attachment/16162/>)

But the loss of historic buildings is only tragic because those buildings could have been preserved. They were destroyed by short-sightedness, lack of maintenance, and poor judgment. The totem pole is different. We'd have to suspend nature and tribal tradition in order to keep it with us – and for what purposes? Is it really anything more than a curiosity?

It is extremely important to note that much of this discussion is conjecture and supposition. There is no final analysis or decision, as of yet, regarding the totem pole's condition and fate. We'll have to wait for further comment from Tacoma's public works officials and preservation officer. But I hope we'll take some time to temper our preservation reflexes and make room for objective contemplation of value. Sometimes, we can't save everything that is old. Sometimes, we shouldn't.

(images courtesy of Tacoma Public Library archive)

Help us grow. Spread the word. Share this Post Defiance article with your friends.

(<http://www.facebook.com/postdefiance>)

Tweet 2 Like 35 1

How the mighty have almost fallen

the mighty have almost

fallen

ONE RESPONSE TO "HOW THE MIGHTY HAVE (ALMOST) FALLEN"

tall log is crawling with carpenter ants and mushy to the core.)

C@TRH - May 10, 2013 (http://postdefiance.com/how-the-mighty-have-almost-fallen/#comment-14402)

I think a recarving of the top, say, 6 feet of the pole, to replace the current deteriorating pole would be enough to satiate everyone. I would think most would agree public space is more important than the current pole supports. Maybe even bury the remainder of the pole on-site.

Reply (/how-the-mighty-have-almost-fallen/?replytocom=14402#respond)

Copyright © Post Defiance, 2013. Post Defiance is an Associated Program of Shunpike. Shunpike is a 501(c)(3) non-profit agency that fuels innovation in the arts by building productive partnerships, cultivating leadership, and providing direct services to arts groups of all kinds. Learn more at Shunpike.com

Let Tacoma Totem Pole decay publicly, committee says

LEWIS KAMB

LAST UPDATED: MAY 17TH, 2013 10:38 AM (PDT)

If a makeshift committee has its way, a historic but increasingly unstable totem pole that has stood in downtown Tacoma for more than a century would be taken down and left to decay publicly as a piece of the city's "living history."

No formal decision has been made about the pole, but an ad hoc working group assigned to examine what to do with the rotting artifact has tentatively recommended it be removed from Fireman's Park at 9th and A streets and "laid to rest" elsewhere.

"I think there's something very beautiful about the idea of this pole laying in the ground, decaying and becoming part of the earth again," JD Elquist, a member of the group, recently told the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission.

The idea, Elquist said, is to find a space for the pole — possibly in a local park — for a public exhibit with interpretive signs that would tell "the whole complete history of this pole as it's basically laid to rest."

ART AND A LANDMARK

The group's unofficial recommendation — made after consultation with an Alaskan Native cultural institution and a local Puyallup Indian woodcarver — has set into motion a formal process for both the city's landmarks commission and arts commission, each of which holds some authority over the pole.

Designated as a city landmark in 1975, the 110-year-old totem pole also has long been a part of the city's municipal art collection, putting it under an unusual dual jurisdiction of both commissions.

Reuben McKnight, Tacoma's historic preservation officer, said he is now working on a staff report to present to the landmarks commission for its June 12 meeting. The report will include historical and cultural context about the pole, as well as cost estimates for bracing it to keep it in place and for removing it for a public exhibit elsewhere. It also likely will relay the working group's recommendation, he said.

Meantime, the arts commission this week approved convening a "de-accession committee" to consider whether to remove the pole from Tacoma's art collection — a formal step that might need to be taken to eventually transfer the pole's ownership and allow it to be displayed in a public park, city arts administrator Amy McBride said. A meeting date has yet to be set but likely will occur before June 10, McBride said.

'NOT THE END'

Both McKnight and McBride stressed that a final decision on the pole's future has not been made and won't be without public input.

"It's not the end of the discussion at all," McKnight said.

The dilemma of what to do with the aging 83-foot tall totem pole intensified last month, after structural engineers probed a cross-section and found it "compromised by at least 50 percent," according to an engineer's report to the city.

PCS Structural Solutions also concluded the pole should be considered "a falling hazard" and recommended it be "lowered to the ground or shored as a precaution."

City engineers have since fenced off the pole and temporarily braced it with a steel collar and rods anchored to concrete blocks. In all, the pole's assessment and shoring so far has cost the city about \$10,000, officials have said.

Last month, when a city engineer reported to the landmarks commission that his team was seeking to find a more permanent bracing solution to keep the pole up another 20 years or longer, several commissioners questioned whether that was the appropriate action. The panel directed McKnight to conduct further cultural research on the pole.

A WORKING GROUP

McKnight and McBride formed the working group, which included landmarks commission vice chair Ed Echtle and Elquist, who sits on both the landmarks and arts commission. The members — except for Echtle — held what Elquist described as an “impromptu” meeting last week, apparently without public notice.

Members also consulted with city public works staff and Shaun Peterson, a Puyallup tribal member who carved the Welcome Figure that now stands near Tollefson Plaza.

Peterson, who has noted totem poles aren’t endemic of Washington’s Coast Salish tribes, recently told The News Tribune that he believes the pole is the work of Alaska’s Tlingit carvers who borrowed iconic motifs from the British Columbia-based Haida tribe.

“In those territories, it’s sort of understood that poles have a lifespan,” Peterson added. “They’re left to return to the earth and the idea is to replace them.”

‘LET IT GO’

That point was reiterated to Elquist, who consulted with the Sealaska Heritage Institute, a nonprofit Native organization in Juneau charged with perpetuating Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian tribal cultures.

“In an Alaskan village what will happen is that a pole will just fall to pieces there, or if it becomes a hazard, they will take it down, take it to the hillside, lay it down in the ground and let it go,” Elquist said.

According to city historical records, Tacoma boosters Chester Thorne and William Sheard commissioned the pole for \$3,000, hiring two Alaskan or British Columbian Natives to carve it from a massive cedar log donated by the St. Paul & Tacoma Lumber Company.

Initially erected in May 1903 near the Tacoma Hotel at 10th and A streets, the eight-story artwork was subjectively hailed as “the largest totem pole in the world” — a direct jab at Seattle and its 60-foot tall totem pole stolen from an Alaskan village and erected in Pioneer Square in 1899.

The Tacoma Totem Pole, as its known, immediately became an attraction that drew tourists and helped establish the city as a gateway for the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in 1909.

‘A STRONG ARGUMENT’

“It’s all part of a pretty big story,” McKnight said. “...(There’s) really an opportunity here to sort of heighten the awareness of Tacoma citizens about this story and how it fits in, so it’s not just a totem pole sitting in a park.”

Before coming up with its recommendation, the working group discussed other options, including moving the pole to a museum. But group members concluded the pole’s carving “wasn’t of museum quality,” Elquist said.

McBride added that, because the pole has been infested with carpenter ants, it likely would need to be frozen for several months before it could be placed indoors.

Landmarks commissioner Daniel Rahe, who works for an engineering firm, noted that from a structural perspective, “there are ways to preserve the thing in place.

“So I think we have to have a strong argument ... to pursue the more culturally respectful approach,” he said.

Lewis Kamb: 253-597-8542

lewis.kamb@thenewstribune.com (mailto:lewis.kamb@thenewstribune.com)

blog.thenewstribune.com/politics (http://blog.thenewstribune.com/politics)

[@lewiskamb](http://twitter.com/lewiskamb) (http://twitter.com/lewiskamb)

Old Tacoma totem pole 'should be laid to rest'

LAST UPDATED: MAY 17TH, 2013 09:06 AM (PDT)

A group of people helping decide what to do with a failing totem pole in Tacoma says the century-old landmark should be taken down and left to decay in a public place as part of the city's living history.

A member of the advisory group, J.D. Elquist, recently told the city Landmarks Preservation Commission the pole should be "laid to rest," possible in a park with signs telling its history.

The News Tribune reports (<http://bit.ly/109fyCZ>) the 83-foot pole at Fireman's Park has been braced because of rot. Consultants say it's a falling hazard.

The commission will consider what to do with the pole at its June 12 meeting.

© Copyright 2013 Tacoma News, Inc.

Tacoma's totem: Sometimes a pole is just a pole

PETER CALLAGHAN

LAST UPDATED: MAY 19TH, 2013 12:30 AM (PDT)

We might be overthinking this whole thing about what to do with Tacoma's 110-year-old totem pole.

It's good, of course, that the city's volunteer landmarks and arts commissions are analyzing how to respond to news that the eight-story pole suffers from rot and insect infestation. They have dual jurisdiction because it is both a protected landmark and part of the city's art collection.

But they so far seem to be approaching it from an overly self-conscious viewpoint that is equal parts political correctness and cultural correctness. Based on stories written by our city government reporter, Lewis Kamb, the current sentiment is leaning toward removing the pole from Fireman's Park on the edge of downtown and laying it to rest in some park where it can decompose in peace.

"I think there's something very beautiful about the idea of the pole laying in the ground decaying and becoming part of the earth again," said Landmarks Commissioner JD Elquist.

That might be appropriate, even beautiful, for something that is a sacred object, something that is legitimately a Native American artifact. That reportedly is what tribes in Alaska and southwestern Canada would do with similar poles.

But we'd be better off, and likely make better decisions, if we stopped seeing the pole for what it isn't and understood it for what it is. This isn't art or a Native American artifact. It's kitsch. It's a fabulous illustration of turn-of-the-century Western American boosterism.

“It is an artifact of the city’s cultural and commercial history,” said David Nicandri, the former director of the Washington State Historical Society. “It is an example of the city’s outlook on itself and its rivalry with another city at a time when the outcome of that rivalry was still in doubt.”

It started in 1899 when Seattle stole a 60-foot totem from an Alaskan native village and placed it in its commercial core. Tacoma boosters — led by the biggest of big-businessmen, Chester Thorne — hoping to one-up the city’s rival, decided to act. A cedar tree donated by the St. Paul & Tacoma Lumber Co. was sent to Quartermaster Harbor where two Native American carvers created sections based on Haida and Tlingit iconography.

It was then erected in front of the jewel of downtown, The Tacoma Hotel, just in time for the visit of then-President Teddy Roosevelt.

Was it meant to be a sacred place for tribal ceremonies? Of course not. It was meant to be a proclamation that Tacoma was, in fact, the City of Destiny. And locals were proud of it. Photos in the Tacoma Library’s Northwest Room collection show Daffodil Festival princesses, traveling troubadours and Shriners in their parade cars all posing beneath the pole. In 1948, Tacoma steelworkers put up a scaffold so the Painters Union could repaint the pole one Sunday to the accompaniment of a band of union musicians.

Does its commercial and pedestrian nature make it unworthy of landmark status? Of course not. It is exactly the kind of item that helps tell a story about the town’s early aspirations. It might not belong in the city’s art collection, but it certainly must remain on its historic register.

Come on, have some fun. Don’t be embarrassed to advocate spending a few thousand dollars to shore it up and keep it where it is (especially since taking it down, securing a place for it to “return to the earth” and installing interpretive displays will probably cost as much if not more).

If it can’t be kept standing, then move it indoors where it can be anchored to a wall or other structure. Seattle’s history museum is fine with displaying pop culture items like Chief Skookum, the cigar store Indian that spent much of its life in front of a Tacoma tobacco store, and a stuffed gorilla named Bobo because both help tell a story.

But if Tacoma officials can't be comfortable with their own piece of kitschy vernacular folk art, give it to someone who gets it. Maybe McMenamins. Maybe the new Bass Pro Shops store.

When I first told Nicandri about the notion of laying it somewhere to decompose, he was skeptical but scholarly.

"That's kind of noble but overly sentimental given the commercial origins of the piece." But later, when he got warmed up, he was more blunt.

"Laying it in the woods somewhere, quite honestly, I consider that stupid. And you can quote me."

So I did.

Peter Callaghan: 253-597-8657 peter.callaghan@thenewstribune.com

<http://thenewstribune.com>) blog.thenewstribune.com/ politics@CallaghanPeter

© Copyright 2013 Tacoma News, Inc.

[Share](#)

0

[More](#)[Next Blog»](#)[Create Blog](#) [Sign In](#)

Good Life Northwest

Welcome! This blog celebrates life in the Pacific Northwest, a place filled with natural beauty, a rich history, fascinating people, and so much to do, explore, discover, and enjoy. Even if you don't live here, you will feel at home, so come on in and look around.

Custom Search

TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2013

TO LET IT ROT, OR NOT — TACOMA TOTEM POLE CONTOVERSY NEARLY IGNORES PRESIDENTIAL HISTORY



SUBSCRIBE TO GOOD LIFE NORTHWEST

[Posts](#) ▼

[Comments](#) ▼

SHARE IT

[Share this on Facebook](#)

[Tweet this](#)

[View stats](#)

[\(NEW\) Appointment gadget >>](#)

BLOG ARCHIVE

▼ [2013 \(24\)](#)

▼ [May \(4\)](#)

[TO LET IT ROT, OR NOT — TACOMA TOTEM POLE CONTOVE...](#)

[NORTHWEST REPERTORY SINGERS OFFER "SONGS OF](#)



postcard image loaned by Reed Fitzpatrick

One hundred and ten years ago today, citizens of Tacoma stood around and gawked at a spectacle—the raising of the totem pole whose fate the city now ponders. But the city does so without a full appreciation of the circumstances surrounding that event, thereby ignoring some very significant local history. Sensitivity to native cultures, political correctness, and practicality combine to create a controversy here, because the pole is rotting and no one seems to know what to do with it. But, to my amazement, the most important part of the story is the part getting the least attention, and that is the pole's relationship to the visit of former President Theodore Roosevelt.

See News Tribune articles:

[Let Tacoma Totem Pole decay publicly, committee says](#)

[Old Tacoma Totem Pole 'should be laid to rest'](#)

[Tacoma's Totem: Sometimes a pole is just a pole](#)

LOVE, ...

TENOR GUITAR GATHERING IN OREGON BUILDS A FOLLOWIN...

A PHOTO TOUR OF THE HULDA KLAGER LILAC GARDENS

- ▶ April (8)
- ▶ March (4)
- ▶ February (4)
- ▶ January (4)

- ▶ 2012 (53)
- ▶ 2011 (43)
- ▶ 2010 (34)
- ▶ 2009 (37)
- ▶ 2008 (38)

0



AdChoices

[▶ Tacoma WA](#)

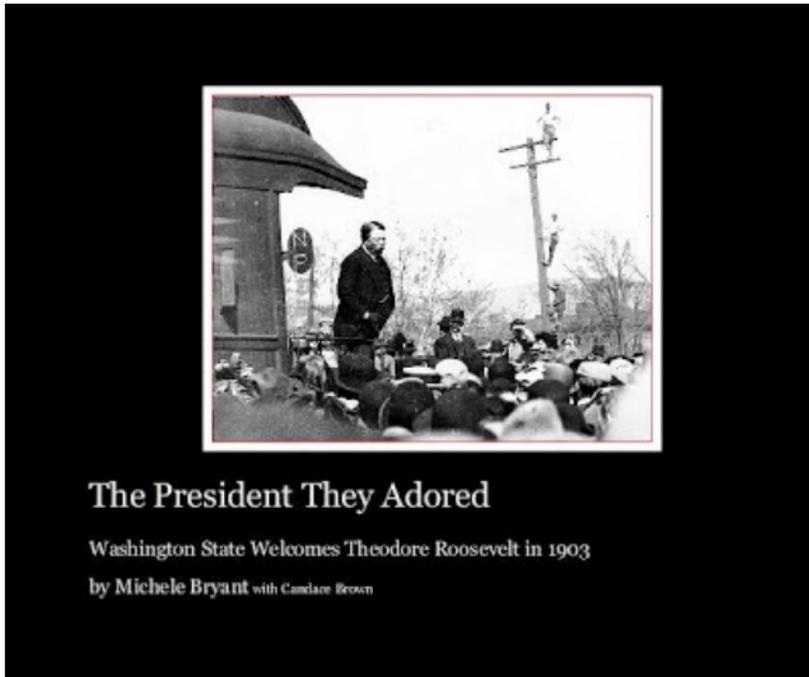
[▶ Totem Pole](#)

[▶ Tacoma Washington](#)

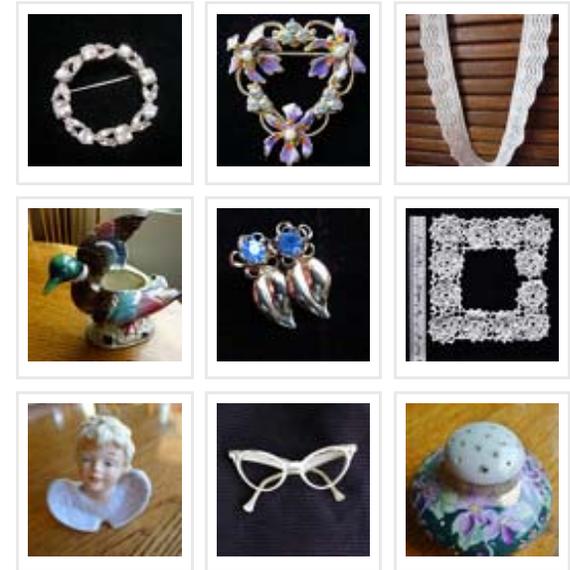
FOLLOW BY EMAIL

Email address...

Submit



RAINY DAY JOYS VINTAGE SHOP ON ETSY



Etsy
rainydayjoys



Subscribe in a reader

RECOMMENDED LINKS

[Candace Brown - Writer and Musician](#)

[Rainy Day Joys](#)

[Jazz Lives](#)

[Neighborhood Life](#)

[Bex Bernard](#)

[Northwest Images by Keith Graham](#)

[The Pacific Northwest Shop](#)

[Greater Tacoma Peach Prize](#)

[Fyddeye](#)

In 2010, skilled researcher and writer Michele Bryant and I coauthored a book titled "The President They Adored—Washington State Welcomes Theodore Roosevelt in 1903." (It is out of print but will soon be available again as an e-book.) While working on the book, the fanfare surrounding the president's tour of 17 cities and towns in Washington, and the extravagant preparations made, astounded us. Coming up with a totem pole taller than Seattle's 60-foot model was typical of the many, sometimes outlandish, ways jurisdictions vied for the president's attention. And this totem pole, carved on the shores of Vashon Island, *did* get his attention during a visit that included a parade, a lavish banquet, the laying of the cornerstone of the Masonic Temple and two 21-gun salutes. But before I get into all that, let's return to the almost frantic totem pole scene the day before.

By the afternoon of May 21, 1903, the crowd at the base of 10th Street in Tacoma had grown to several thousand. Tense anticipation charged the atmosphere as a crew of twenty men attempted to raise the approximately

100-foot, 15,936-lb. totem pole—claimed to be the largest in the world—to stand in front of the Tacoma Hotel. At any moment it could fall and splinter into pieces. Already, just as the pole began to lift, a hook had broken off and done some damage.

[Evergreen Fleet](#)

[Foss Waterway Seaport and Working Waterfront Museum](#)

100% Home Financing

www.RANLife.com

Get a Low Interest Home Loan with No Required Down Payment or Equity.



AdChoices

ALL ABOUT BIRDS



I feed tacoma

ABOUT ME



Candace Brown

Tacoma, WA, United States

I love life in the Pacific Northwest. As the sixth generation of my family in Washington State, I was born in the Puget Sound area and have always lived here with appreciation for my surroundings. I thrive on the salt air and sounds of the gulls. Fresh snow on the mountains, my own muffled footsteps on a forest path, bird songs, and wildflowers all bring me



Daily Ledger newspaper clipping from 1903

joy. I even love the rain. This is a region filled with unsurpassed natural beauty and fascinating people whose stories still wait to be told. Good Life Northwest is about quality of life. I like to picture you smiling when you read it and going away feeling better when you're done.

[View my complete profile](#)

Told "No" On HARP 2 Refi?

paramountequity.co...



We Have No LTV/CLTV Requirements. Credit Score 620+ OK! Call Us Now.

AdChoices

SHARE IT

- [Share this on Facebook](#)
- [Tweet this](#)

[View stats](#)

[\(NEW\) Appointment](#)

BLOGS I FOLLOW

[JAZZ LIVES](#)

[Northwest Ramblings](#)

[Frittering...](#)

[LORNA SASS: REFLECTIONS OF A LIFE COACH](#)

[Ezekiel's](#)

The Tacoma Daily Leger reported:

"The descending block made a dent in the figure of the bear man at the base of the pole, but nothing but can be readily repaired. Had the pole been a foot higher at the breaking of the gear, it must necessarily have broken in two over the supporting false work about midway of the length. A second start and the strain on the five-sheave tackle was seen to be too great, and hoisting was stopped and the pole backed while the lower block was made fast to a point higher up the pole, giving a greater purchase with less strain.

The inch-and-a-quarter hoisting rope was run taut by twenty men with a smaller five-sheave tackle, making the purchase require for twenty meant to hoist the pole equal to ten bocks. The strain drew the main rope small, but the higher the pole went the less grew the strain until when erect and towering to nearly the height of the Tacoma hotel alongside, it took back-ropes to prevent the pole coming forward of its own weight."

[Table Blog](#)

www.Evergreenfleet.com

BLOGCATALOG



ght well be
achieve the
e Portland
massacres
the Turks
arians con-
s may be
e to place
Bros. is a
posed to
of Call-
owers.
ld be any
s for men
ing could
the style
ald spies
at is the
out Rus-
nda has
of Hons
ask must
made the
c.
of two
found
them to
arly re-

with distance from the height of the
hulls.

The only serious accident was on the first start off, when the hook of the upper block broke square off, letting the pole back the foot it had been raised.

Haw Halo of Light.

The descending block made a dent in the figure of the bear man at the base of the pole, but nothing but can be readily repaired. Had the pole been a foot higher at the breaking of the gear, it must necessarily have broken in two over the supporting false work about midway of the length. A second start and the strain on the five-sheave tackle was seen to be too great, and hoisting was stopped and the pole backed while the lower block was made fast to a point higher up the pole, giving a greater purchase with less strain.

The inch-and-a-quarter hoisting rope was run taut by twenty men with a smaller five-sheave tackle, making the purchase required for twenty men to hoist the pole equal to ten blocks. The strain drew the main rope small, but the higher the pole went the less grew the strain until when erect and towering to nearly the height of the Tacoma hotel alongside, it took back-ropes to prevent the pole coming forward of its own weight.

The ring of eighteen electric lights, looking like a halo over the head of the eagle at the top, will be kept lighted at night by the Snoqualmie company free of expense to the city. Two of the regular pole-climbing employes of the city and two firemen are down as al-

four acres
feeling am
board that
for the un
able camp
Each si
points to
will be
board bef

Docket

The n
ty Cler
ments
day is

DEPA

Milton
corpora
pltf.: I
Walt
et al.;
Fletch
Wm.
son et
terver
Easte
Edw
Wood
pltf.:
Ann
coma
John
DEP.
Sta
ty t
pltf.

Daily Ledger newspaper clipping 1903

And that was only the beginning of the excitement that gripped the city for two days. Here are some excerpts from "The President They Adored" concerning Roosevelt's stop in Tacoma:

~All of Tacoma waited for the president's train that afternoon of May 22, 1903, with citizens crowded into all possible vantage points, "... above the housetops, or dipping from every window," according to the Daily Ledger, a copy of which cost a nickel at that time. Men swung their hats and women and children waved their flags. A twenty-one gun salute fired from Puget Sound as the Commander in Chief stepped from this train.

Soon a procession rolled toward Wright Park with the president in his carriage, sometimes standing, sometimes sitting, talking, laughing, smiling, and showing his teeth. He stepped onto an elevated platform to address a sea of thirty thousand upturned faces.

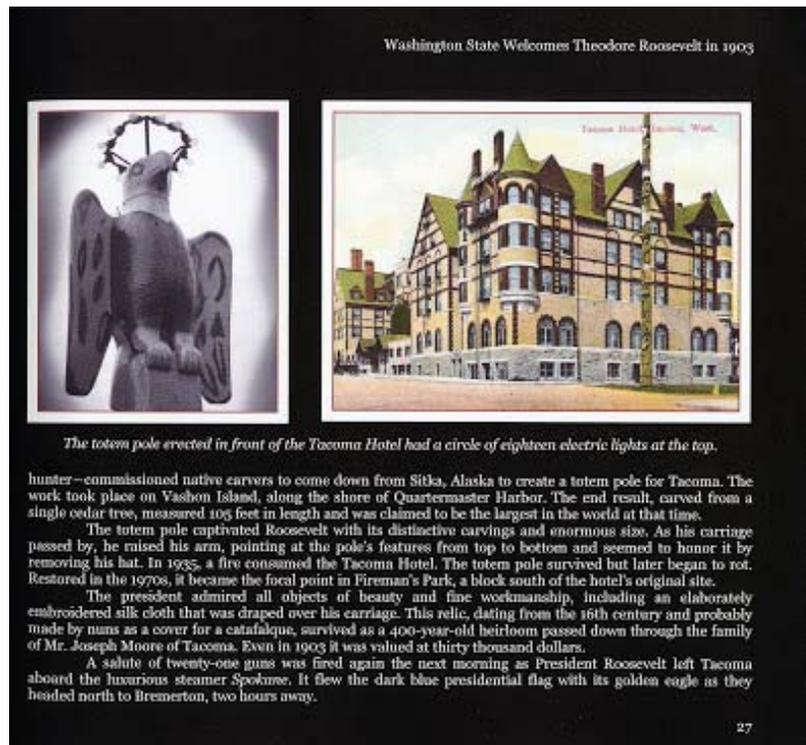
~From Wright Park, the procession approached the Masonic Temple building site, so the president could lay its cornerstone. The stand was decorated with bunting, and a large American flag stretched over the president's chair. Hundreds of Mason, wearing their traditional white aprons, watched as Brother Roosevelt stepped from the platform to the stone, picking up the trowel and placing some mortar on its underside, his inexperience causing laughter and words of encouragement. After a short speech and the traditional scattering of corn, win, and oil—emblems of plenty, joy, and peace—the Tenino sandstone cornerstone was swung into place.

~The masses cheered as the president's carriage approached the Tacoma Hotel with many following the procession along the guard ropes. The banquet reception boasted Northwest floral beauty at its finest, with decoration of pink roses, Solomon's seals, asparagus fern, huckleberry, Oregon grape, white lilacs, kinnickinnick, tall palms, and rhododendrons—the Washington State flower. Outside the hotel, dogwood and Scotch broom framed a large American flag draped over the doorway.

~The totem pole captivated Roosevelt with its distinctive carvings and enormous size. As his carriage passed by, he raised his arm, pointing at the pole's features from top to bottom and seemed to honor it by removing his hat.

~The president admired all objects of beauty and fine workmanship, including an elaborately embroidered silk cloth that was draped over his carriage. This relic, dating from the 16th century and probably made by nuns as a cover for a catafalque, survived as a 400-year-old heirloom passed down through the family of Mr. Joseph Moore of Tacoma. Even in 1903 it was valued at thirty thousand dollars.

~A salute of twenty-one guns was fired again the next morning as President Roosevelt left Tacoma aboard the luxurious steamer *Spokane*. It flew the dark blue presidential flag with its golden eagle as they headed north to Bremerton, two hours away.

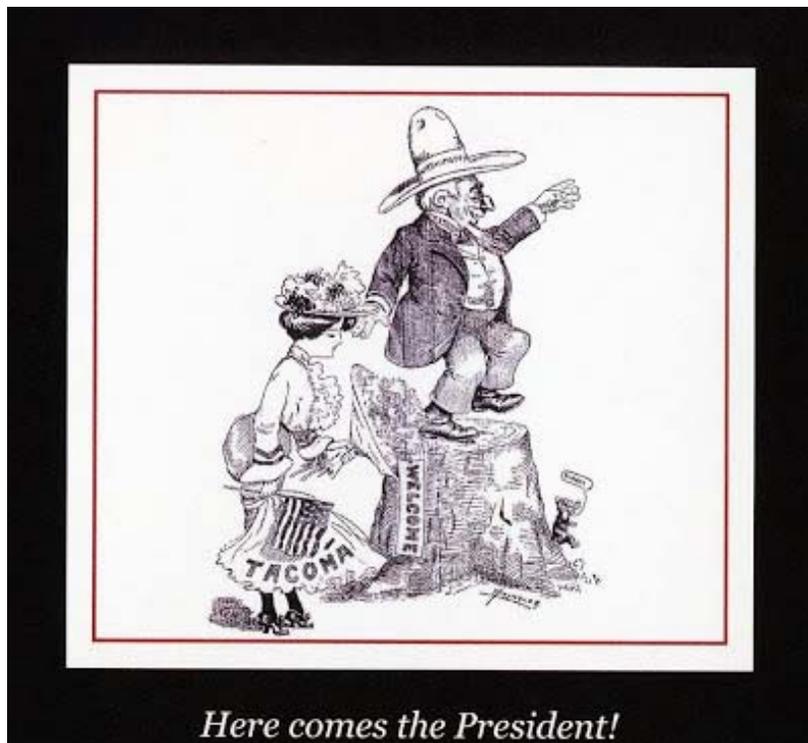


page from "The President They Adored"

Considering that a century and ten years is a mere blink of an eye in terms of history, how quickly events are forgotten. Whether or not you are a fan of Theodore Roosevelt, his tour through the state would have amounted to an unforgettable day for the tens of thousands of impassioned people who

came to see him along the route, often climbing trees, even telephone poles, leaning out window, covering rooftops and crowding train stations just for a look. When he visited Spokane a few days later, as our book describes, "... it was said that never before had so many people assembled in the vast region between the two mountain ranges of the Rockies and the Cascades, and no one there ever expected to see anything like it again."

I hope this background information will influence the city to preserve the totem pole, not letting it rot, but finding an indoor location where it can safely be displayed. It represents more than a rivalry with Seattle. It represents a time when Tacoma's citizens felt a sense of unity, excitement, pride, and joy as history was made before them. We could use a reminder of how that feels.



cartoon from Tacoma's newspaper, The Daily Ledger, in 1903

Posted by Candace Brown at 1:03 PM 

Recommend this on Google

Labels: [FeedTacoma.com](#), [Tacoma history](#), [Tacoma News Tribune](#), [Tacoma Totem Pole](#), [Theodore Roosevelt](#), [totem pole controversy](#), [totem poles](#), [Vashon Island](#)

No comments:

Post a Comment

Your comments, ideas and suggestions are welcome.

Enter your comment...

Comment as: Google Account ▾

Publish

Preview

Links to this post

[Create a Link](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)



Picture Window template. Powered by [Blogger](#).

When Tacoma's totem pole welcomed a president

PETER CALLAGHAN

LAST UPDATED: MAY 23RD, 2013 12:30 AM (PDT)

Unlike some bigger cities, Tacoma isn't so jaded — or hyperpolitical — that it's afraid to treat a visit by a president of the United States as a big deal.

Partly, of course, because they're relatively rare. Starting in 1880 with Rutherford Hayes, only 14 incumbent presidents have come to town. The most recent was Bill Clinton in 1996.

And partly because, being relatively poor, we know they come to Tacoma for our love and not our money. (Take that Medina!)

In that context, it is easier to see why the visit by President Teddy Roosevelt on May 22, 1903, was important enough that the city would want to install what it claimed was the world's largest totem pole.

Yeah, I'm back to the Tacoma totem pole again. On Sunday, I asked the city Landmarks Commission to stop taking itself — and its pending decision on what to do now with that pole — so seriously.

Rather than analyze the troubled pole as some sacred tribal artifact, which the members seem to acknowledge it is not, they need to view it as a quirky piece of city history.

Rather than lay it to rest in some city park as some Alaskan tribes might have done with authentic poles that had begun to deteriorate, they need to figure a way to preserve it and display it, inside or out.

Rather than hold meetings of ad hoc subcommittees in secret — at least without required public notice — they need to have a very open (and legal) process that doesn't start with a “consensus” reached by that subcommittee, but instead is open to all options.

And frankly, rather than become the first landmarks commission in city history to delist a protected landmark, rather than being an entity that doesn't just allow the item's demolition by neglect but presides over it — the current commissioners should champion the treasures under their protection.

That's a better way to celebrate Historic Preservation Month, as declared by the City Council on Tuesday.

The Tacoma totem pole was commissioned by local businessmen as an act of civic boosterism. While triggered by competition with Seattle (you know, our pole is bigger than your pole), the timing was set by Roosevelt's visit.

“The President They Adored – Washington State Welcomes President Roosevelt in 1903” by Michele Bryant and Tacoma “Good Life Northwest” blogger Candace Brown captures the excitement that Roosevelt engendered and the legitimacy his presence gave the region.

“All of Tacoma waited for the president's train that afternoon of May 22, 1903, with citizens crowded into all possible vantage points, ‘... above the housetops, or dipping from every window,’ according to the Daily Ledger,” they wrote. The agenda included a speech in Wright Park, a ceremony to lay the cornerstone of the Masonic Temple and a carriage ride to the Tacoma Hotel, where he would spend the night after a massive banquet.

“The totem pole captivated Roosevelt with its distinctive carvings and enormous size,” Brown and Bryant wrote. “As the carriage passed by, he raised his arm, pointing at the pole's features from top to bottom and seemed to honor it by removing his hat.”

Over the years, the pole was loved by generations of Tacomans. That it is now out of mind is partly due to the fact that it is out of site, hidden in Fireman's Park, where few dare tread. It was even placed with its unpainted side facing into the city, appearing at a quick glance to be nothing but a utility pole.

Part of the beauty of historic preservation, however, is that we don't require buildings and artifacts to appeal to current tastes only. We understand that what is hip now might be considered distasteful later and hip again later still.

It will cost more to take the thing down, check it for lead paint and invasives, truck it to the woods, fence it to protect it from both adventurers and vandals and put up interpretive markers to mitigate the loss of the once-protected artifact.

And since surplus property laws may require it be put up for sale anyway, the best path is the simple one — keep it around for a few generations more.

Peter Callaghan: 253-597-8657 peter.callaghan@thenewstribune.com
(<http://thenewstribune.com>)

© Copyright 2013 Tacoma News, Inc.

Exit133 is about Tacoma

[Home](#) (<http://www.exit133.com/>) > [Articles](/articles/) (/articles/)

How Do We Honor the History of the Tacoma Totem Pole?



👤 Exit133

📁 City Government (/articles/city-government) Committees, Boards, & Commissions (/articles/committees-boards-commissions)

📖 History (/articles/history) Tacoma (/articles/tacoma)

📅 May 23, 2013 at 9:48 am 💬 Comments

The Tacoma Totem Pole (<http://www.exit133.com/articles/view/110-year-old-tacoma-totem-pole-at-risk>) that stands in Fireman's Park has decayed to the point that it is no longer structurally sound. After 110 years exposed to the elements, the pole is showing its age with rotted wood that could give way in an earthquake or a strong wind. While the City explores different options for dealing with the pole, it has been fenced off so it doesn't fall on anyone's head.

There are several options being discussed.

The City could invest in structural reinforcements to brace and strengthen the pole. There's no cost estimate on that yet, but we've seen reports that \$10,000 has already been spent on short-term stabilization and inspection. Engineers are exploring more permanent bracing solutions that would keep the pole upright for another 20 years or more.

The pole could be cut up and displayed in several smaller pieces, which would address the danger of the taller structure falling, but would not halt its decay. It also would not preserve the pole's 100-foot height that beat out Seattle's 60-foot totem pole.

The pole could be lowered and moved indoors to a museum or other location for display. The totem pole is unusual in that it is both a historic landmark and a piece in Tacoma's municipal art collection. We read in the TNT (http://www.thenewstribune.com/2013/05/16/2600667/let-tacoma-totem-pole-decay-committee.html#disqus_thread) that the artwork has been determined not to be of "museum quality," but it might still be of historic interest.

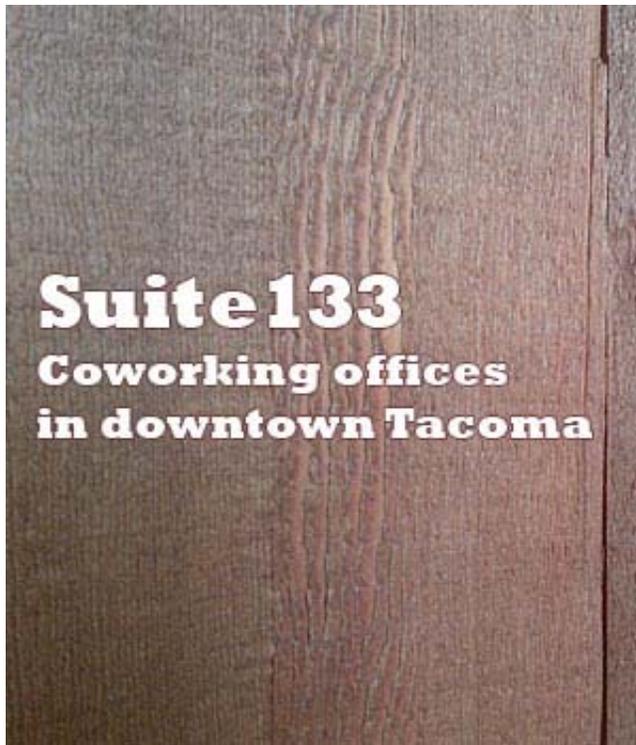
Or the totem pole could be laid to rest. Literally. One option is to take the pole down from where it stands in Fireman's Park, and place it somewhere on its side where it would be allowed to continue the natural process of decay. All explained for passersby on a nice interpretive plaque. This would be similar to what many tribes that carve totem poles traditionally do: they let the pole fall where it stands, and return to nature.

For a piece of Tacoma that's been relatively ignored for at least the recent decades of the last century, the Tacoma Totem Pole seems to be stirring quite the conversation. We've seen its history dug up, including connections to Teddy Roosevelt's visit to Tacoma (<http://goodlifew.blogspot.com/2013/05/to-let-it-rot-or-not-tacoma-totem.html>) 110 years ago yesterday. Our friends over at Post Defiance (<http://postdefiance.com/how-the-mighty-have-almost-fallen/>) shared their insights into the pole's history and current predicament, along with some pretty cool historic pictures. And if that's not enough for you, Peter Callaghan (<http://www.thenewstribune.com/2013/05/23/2608263/when-tacomas-totem-pole-welcomed.html>) over at The News Tribune has weighed in, putting his thumb on the scale on the side of preservation.

Interestingly the debate over the Tacoma Totem Pole has turned out to be less about the Native American carvers (it's not a local tradition), and more about Tacoma's identity over the past century and more. If that's the question, what's the best way to honor the chapter of our past embodied in the totem pole?

Comments

[Post A New Comment](#)



(http://www.exit133.com/?ACT=25&ad_id=3)

Events

Caring to a Tee Golf Tournament

May 23, 2013 at 12:00 am

(<http://www.exit133.com/events/details/caring-to-a-tee-golf-tournament>)



Tacoma Runners - Guadelajara en Mayo

May 23, 2013 at 6:30 pm

(<http://www.exit133.com/events/details/tacoma-runners-guadelajara-en-mayo>)



Tacoma Runners Saturday 5k

May 25, 2013 at 8:00 am

(<http://www.exit133.com/events/details/tacoma-runners-saturday-5k3>)



Proctor Farmers Market Young at Heart Celebration

May 25, 2013 at 9:00 am

(<http://www.exit133.com/events/details/proctor-farmers-market-young-at-heart-celebration>)



Fire Sense Rectangle
Pagoda Patio Fireplace
~~\$169.99~~ **\$117.52**



POLITICAL BUZZ

Thursday, May 23, 2013 - Tacoma, WA

Web Search powered by **YAHOO! SEARCH**

[HOME](#) [NEWS](#) [SPORTS](#) [BUSINESS](#) [OPINION](#) [SOUNDLIFE](#) [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [OBITS](#) [CLASSIFIEDS](#) [JOBS](#) [CARS](#) [HOMES](#) [RENTALS](#) [FINDNSAVE](#)

Political Buzz

Talking WA politics.

Tacoma Landmarks Commission skates on edge of state Open Public Meetings Act with totem pole task force

Post by [Peter Callaghan](#) / The News Tribune on **May 22, 2013 at 1:48 pm** | [View 1 comment](#)

An ad hoc committee created to research options for Tacoma's 110-year-old totem pole should have been treated as an open meeting – including advance public notice – based on a pair of state court decisions.

The committee, formed by Tacoma historic preservation officer **Reuben McKnight** and arts administrator **Amy McBride**, included two of the 11 members of the city Landmarks Commission. It also included city staffers from public works and planning as well as a consultant, Native American carver Sean Peterson.

The group recommended that the historic pole be taken down rather than restored and laid to decompose in a park or woods. Interpretive displays telling its history would be included, the group proposed. But the discussion and conclusion was done in a meeting that was not announced to the public.

CONTACT US



Kim Bradford, editor, 253-597-8631. [E-mail Kim.](#)



Peter Callaghan, columnist, 253-597-8657. [E-mail Pete.](#)

Whether such subcommittees or ad hoc groups are covered by the OPMA has been interpreted by two recent court decisions. In 1999, the state Supreme Court created a four-part test for deciding whether a particular entity is the functional equivalent of a public agency under the law. The so-called Telford Test (the case is Telford v. Thurston County Board of Commissioners) asks 1) whether the entity performs a governmental function, 2) the extent of government funding, 3) the extent of government involvement or regulation, and 4) whether the entity was created by government.

That court ruled that membership organizations of counties and county officials passed the test and are covered by the public disclosure act and were prohibited from using their resources for political purposes.

A second case applied the Telford Test to the open meetings law. That case, *West v. Washington Association of County Officials*, said entities that meet the test must also abide by open meeting rules such as advance notice of meetings and public access. The court of appeals, Division II, made that decision in 2011.

The totem pole work group seems to meet all four tests in that it was created by city officers, used tax dollars to compensate staff who attended and used government facilities and performed a government function. The state OPMA applies to an entity that “acts on behalf of the governing body, conducts hearings or takes testimony.

McKnight said the group wasn’t subject to open meetings rules because it was “not tasked with making a recommendation.” But nothing in the law or the court rulings require that it do so, only that it perform a government function by acting on behalf of the government body.

McKnight’s comments indicate that it indeed was acting on the Landmark Commission’s behalf.



Richards Studio Collection : On March 11, 1958, Miss Tacoma Home Show of 1958, Marilyn Ganes, was photographed leaning out of the front door of a BMW Isetta 300 parked near the Tacoma Totem Pole.



Lewis Kamb, City of Tacoma reporter, 253-597-8542.

[E-mail Lewis.](#)



Steve Maynard, Pierce County, 253-597-8647.

[Email Steve.](#)



Jordan Schrader, state government reporter, 360-786-1826.

[E-mail Jordan.](#)

BLOG SEARCH

ABOUT THE BLOG

Our team of experienced journalists has the inside scoop on Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington State and federal government and politics.

TAGS

Adam Smith Barack Obama Cheney Stadium
Chris Gregoire City Budget
Clint Didier County Council Dale Washam Dave Reichert Denny Heck Derek Kilmer Dick Muri
Dino Rossi Don Benton Ed Murray gay marriage
Hans Zeiger Health care Jay Inslee jeannie

“We were trying to follow up on the questions that were asked by the Landmarks Commission and generate answers for them,” he said.

“... the idea really was trying to figure out what we needed to know so we could report back to the Landmarks Commission and to the Arts Commission about the pole and what some of the potential things to consider and what next steps might be.”

Even if making recommendations was a test for whether it was subject to the law, the group definitely arrived at only one conclusion – that the pole should be taken down and laid on the ground somewhere to decompose. That, concluded the group, is what Alaskan tribes would do with similar poles once they had begun to deteriorate

“So sort of the recommendation was to find a more permanent location for this pole, to take it down and to find a home for it,” said **JD Elquist**, an arts commissioner who serves as an ex-officio member of landmarks and was part of the ad hoc committee. “... I think it would be nice if it found a resting ground somewhere in Tacoma, so it’s still part of our history.”

McKnight himself called the work of the ad hoc committee a consensus and a recommendation. While the Arts Commission will have a process to take the pole out of the city’s art collection, he told commissioners on May 8 that they too have jurisdiction.

“And so you’ll receive written materials on this, sort of summarizing the research that’s been done, and the recommendations or the results from the group of people working on this,” he told commissioners.

McKnight later said the report is just part of a process and that the decision will be made by the full commission. But the discussion at the group’s May 8 meeting indicated that most had made up their minds based on the report of the ad hoc group.

“Then I believe there’s probably some sort of hearing from our standpoint, for the Landmarks Preservation Commission, we’ve got to get public comment and that sort of thing, so these are the next steps that I know of right now,” Elquist said. “And then obviously it’s about finding the next location and having a conversation with Metro Parks about where it can end up.”

Commissioners directed McKnight to write a report on what to do, but most of the direction surrounded explaining the decision to the public, to head off – as one arts commissioner put it – a backlash from the public.

It seems that the real work was done by the ad hoc group, that a plan of action was arrived at and other options such as saving the pole were discarded. All that was done in private without public

darneille Jim Kastama Jim Merritt Judge Hecht Julie Anderson Lakewood shootings Larry Seaquist Laurie Jenkins Maria Cantwell Marilyn Strickland Medical Marijuana Mike Carrell **Morning update** Norm Dicks Pam Roach Pat McCarthy **Patty Murray** Pierce County budget Political Smell Test **Rob McKenna** Rodney Tom Ross Hunter State budget Steve Kirby Suzan DelBene T.C. Broadnax **Tacoma City Council** Tacoma Narrow s Bridge Tim Eyman Tracey Eide Troy Kelley

CATEGORIES

[Attorney General](#)

[Auditor](#)

[Campaign finance](#)

[Campaign News](#)

[Census](#)

[Congress](#)

[Congress & Federal Government](#)

[Education](#)

[Environment](#)

[Federal Government](#)

[Federal Way](#)

[Funnystuff](#)

[General Politics](#)

[Governor](#)

[Health care](#)

[Inauguration](#)

[Initiatives and Referenda](#)

[Journalism](#)

participation and outside the strictures of the open meetings law.

CATEGORIES: [General Politics](#), [Open Government](#), [Tacoma](#)

2

© Copyright 2013 The News Tribune. All rights reserved.



The News Tribune now uses Facebook commenting on selected blogs. [See editor's column](#) for more details. Commenters are expected to abide by terms of service for Facebook as well as [commenting rules](#) for thenewstribune.com. Report violators to webmaster@thenewstribune.com.

Like

4 people like this. Be the first of your friends.



Add a comment...

Post to Facebook

Posting as Reuben McKnight ([Change](#))

[Comment](#)



Daniel Lucas Rahe · Following

whoa... this seems like it is seriously jumping the gun, Peter. I was at all of these meetings, with the exception of the Ad Hoc group. It was clear to me that there are multiple lines of inquiry that have still to be resolved, and the recommendations of the Ad Hoc group were just ONE of those many inquiries. For instance, we still have no final word from Public Works regarding the safety issue, etc. We still have no final word on whether any interested tribal or clan entities may be interested in participating in the decision process. Those are all KEY issues, and no one on LPC dreamed or even HINTED of moving forward without waiting for that information. It may have been that some of the statements regarding the discussion in the Ad Hoc group sounded a little bit more final than intended, but it was very very very evident to me that this was a preliminary, casual, information-gathering effort - an attempt to bring in as many points of context as possible.

[Reply](#) · 1 · [Like](#) · [Follow Post](#) · about an hour ago



RR Anderson · Top Commenter · Staff Cartoonist at Holistic Forge Works

first big government metro parks robs us of our never never land figure heritage, now they're trying to rob us of our tiki-totem pole !

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · about an hour ago

Facebook social plugin

[King County](#)
[Lakewood](#)
[Lands Commissioner](#)
[Legislature](#)
[Lobbying](#)
[Lt. Governor](#)
[Metro Parks](#)
[Milton](#)
[Open Government](#)
[Pierce County](#)
[polling](#)
[President](#)
[Public Safety](#)
[Redistricting](#)
[Schools Superintendent](#)
[Seattle](#)
[Secretary of State](#)
[State budget](#)
[State Government](#)
[Stimulus](#)
[Suburbs](#)
[Supreme Court](#)
[Tacoma](#)
[Tacoma Dome](#)
[Taxes](#)
[Transportation](#)
[Treasurer](#)
[University Place](#)
[Voting](#)
[Voting & Elections](#)
[Washington State Patrol](#)

OTHER POSTS

« PREVIOUS

Marijuana rules yield Web clicks and some objections; here's what's next

NEXT »

PDC rules Tacoma PAC that sent attack mailers against Connelly violated campaign finance law

ARCHIVES

[May 2013](#)
[April 2013](#)
[March 2013](#)
[Rest of 2013 »](#)
[2012 »](#)
[2011 »](#)
[2010 »](#)
[2009 »](#)
[2008 »](#)
[2007 »](#)

FEEDS

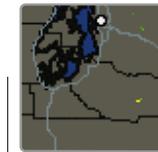
 [All Entries](#)
 [All Comments](#)
 [This Post's Comments](#)

[Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [About Our Ads](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Site Map](#) | [RSS](#) | [Archives and Reprints](#)

1950 South State Street, Tacoma, Washington 98405 253-597-8742

© Copyright 2013 Tacoma News, Inc. A subsidiary of The McClatchy Company

Partners: [The News Tribune](#) | [The Olympian](#) | [The Peninsula Gateway](#) | [The Puyallup Herald](#) | [Northwest Guardian](#) | [KIRO7](#)



54°



PETER CALLAGHAN

Monday, June 3, 2013 - Tacoma, WA

Web Search powered by **YAHOO! SEARCH**

- [NEWS](#)
- [SPORTS](#)
- [BUSINESS](#)
- [OPINION](#)
- [SOUNDLIFE](#)
- [ENTERTAINMENT](#)
- [OBITS](#)
- [CLASSIFIEDS](#)
- [JOBS](#)
- [CARS](#)
- [HOMES](#)
- [RENTALS](#)
- [FINDNSAVE](#)
- [dealsaver](#)

[Bigger text](#)
 [Smaller text](#)
 [E-mail](#)
 [Print](#)
 [Text](#)
 [Reprints](#)
 3

Letting totem rot is not the only Native way

Let's call it the Great Tacoma Totem Pole Controversy ... that wasn't.

PETER CALLAGHAN; STAFF WRITER

Published: June 2, 2013 at 12:05 a.m. PDT — Updated: June 2, 2013 at 2:16 a.m. PDT

10 Comments

Tweet 4

Like 17

Let's call it the Great Tacoma Totem Pole Controversy ... that wasn't.

On Tuesday, Tacoma's arts commission will begin a process that could lead to the loss of a pole that has been displayed for 110 years. A de-accession committee could decide whether to remove the pole from the city's art collection. Later, the city Landmarks Commission could decide whether to remove the pole from the protection of the register of historic places.

Both of those actions would further a recommendation of a Landmarks Commission subcommittee that the culturally sensitive response to troubling decay of the pole is to take it down, lay it in some wooded area and let it decompose.

It is not that the pole couldn't be restored, the commissioners were told; it is that it shouldn't be restored.

"I personally spoke with the Sealaska Heritage Institute in Juneau ... and it seemed to be kind of the case that totem poles do have a natural life span," said JD Elquist, a member of both the Arts Commission and the Landmarks Commission. "And what happens when a totem pole basically decays is that they go back to the earth."

His recommendation to both groups has led them to consider that the pole should be taken down. Our coverage of the issue, however, has revealed a lot of affection for the 80-foot pole that has been mostly hidden away in Fireman's Park on the edge of downtown.

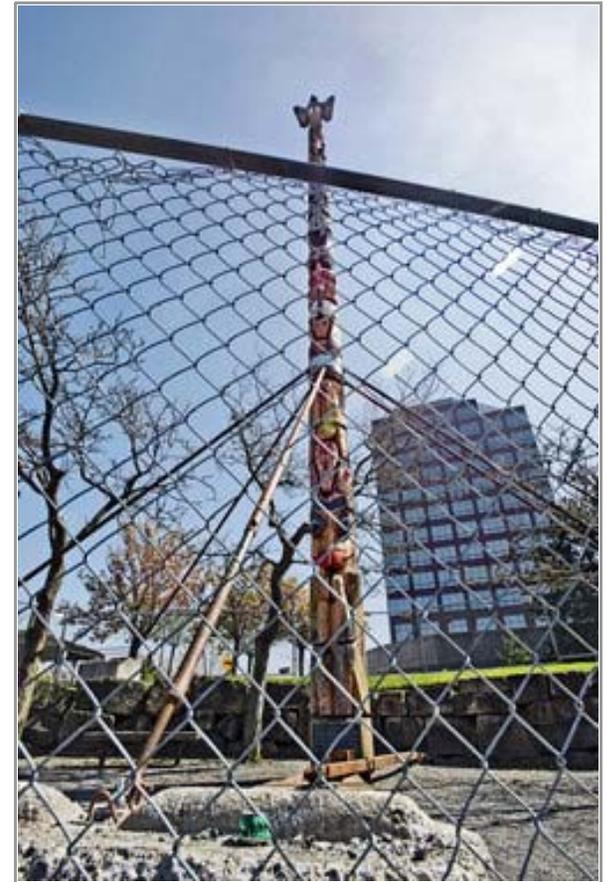
And now I've found that the Haida and Tlingit traditions described to the commission are not as strict as portrayed. While Alaska Native tribes in the past would not have tried to restore their totems — for practical reasons more than sacred — they have more recently been influenced by conservation and restoration standards of Euro-American historians. Alaska tribes themselves restore poles, as does the National Park Service, as does the state of Alaska.

Of the experts I interviewed, not one said the Tacoma pole was beyond saving or that it should be returned "to the earth" regardless of its condition.

"It is true that old, decaying poles for which there is no hope of repairing should be put to rest to die," wrote Rosita Kaahani Worl, the president of the Sealaska Heritage Institute. "However, if it can be repaired, it should be."

And it can be repaired. As city historic preservation officer Reuben McKnight said, "nobody thinks it can't be done."

Neither is the cost prohibitive, likely in the \$10,000 range. Compared with what Sealaska Heritage Institute charges for new poles produced by its Native carving program — \$4,000 a foot — that's a bargain. And if local businesses and volunteers are enlisted — something that happened several times over the last



The Tacoma Totem Pole in Fireman's Park in downtown Tacoma has been braced and fenced off. It has become structurally weak. (PETER HALEY/Staff photographer)

century when this pole needed repairs or was relocated — the cost would be even less.

Ellen Carrlee is the conservator of the Alaska State Museums and an expert on the maintenance and restoration of totem poles. She said a beloved pole in the Juneau area was cleaned by volunteers under the direction of conservation experts.

Carrlee said many methods are used to repair the decay that seems to have affected our pole, including using epoxies to replace damaged wood and attaching weakened poles to new cedar logs or steel supports. While poles don't last forever, they can have longer lives if regular maintenance is done, including removal of moss, application of sodium borate solutions as a fungicide, and the use of water-repellent metal caps to protect poles from the rain.

Carrlee said there has been debate and discussion over the years as to the proper response to decaying poles. While once old poles were taken down and replicated, that has changed. She noted that the Ketchikan Totem Heritage Center, which in the mid-1970s relocated 19th century totems from unoccupied villages, was created by Haida and Tlingit members.

The apparent belief by some in Tacoma that there is only one way to deal with a pole in need of restoration is incorrect, she said.

“It's ignoring that there are more than 100 poles being preserved in Alaska,” Carrlee said. “I can't think of any organized situations of putting a pole into the woods to decompose.” And while Tacoma's pole is not an authentic Haida or Tlingit pole, “there are a ton of totems that are murky in their cultural authenticity, but there is still a desire to preserve them.

“The National Park Service is preserving poles, as are many Alaska Native communities and various municipalities. What you are doing flies in the face of that.”

Jo Antonson, the Alaska state historian and assistant state historic preservation

MORE PHOTOS



MOST POPULAR

POPULAR

COMMENTED

1. [Tacoma toddler identified who police say was accidentally run over and killed by mother](#)
2. [State budget stalemate means it's time to explore options](#)
3. [Morning links: Ground game making a comeback](#)
4. [Summer plans to replace pair of low-rated bridges](#)
5. [Rainiers' grinning fullback could fill Seattle's pitching gap](#)



CONTESTS

officer, said the practice there is to “preserve as long as it has useful life.”

Even poles that can’t stand on their own are frequently displayed horizontally in cradles. Said Mary Kowalczyk, the ranger assigned to Totem Bight State Historical Park: “You won’t believe how much people enjoy looking at poles that are lying down.”

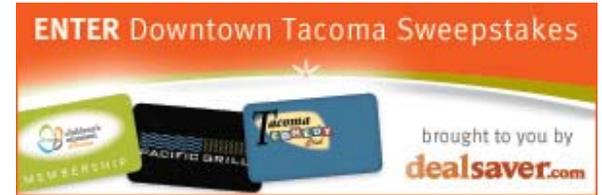
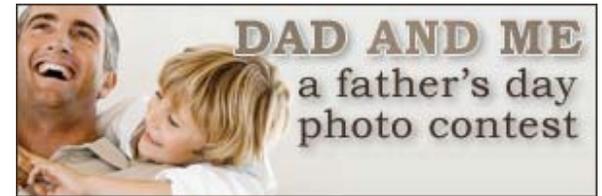
“People really love totemic art,” Antonson said.

What about Tacoma’s pole? From pictures and a description of its story, Antonson said: “It sounds like a pretty neat reflection of the history of Tacoma and a pretty significant structure.

“It sounds like it is clearly worthy of preservation.”

Once the two city commissions realize that as well, we can move toward repairing and then relocating to a more prominent location — perhaps along the Prairie Line Trail — Tacoma’s iconic totem pole.

Peter Callaghan: 253-597-8657 peter.callaghan@ thenewstribune.com
blog.thenewstribune.com/politics @CallaghanPeter



From around the Web

ADVERTISEMENT



Apply for Washington program to eliminate your Credit Card Debt before the summer holiday.



Surprisingly simple solution to help your joints. See why these ingredients are flying off shelves



Weird trick lets you collect silver from practically any bank...



Approaching Obama scandal could bring shame to the White House not seen since President Clinton

VIEW ALL

JOIN THE DISCUSSION | [Register here](#)

We welcome comments. Please keep them civil, short and to the point. ALL CAPS, spam, obscene, profane, abusive and off topic comments will be deleted. Repeat offenders will be blocked. Thanks for taking part — and abiding by [these simple rules](#). A thorough explanation of rules of conduct can be found in our [Terms of Service](#). If you have any questions, including why your comment may not be showing immediately after you submit it, be sure to visit the [commenting FAQ](#).

Add New Comment



Real-time updating is **enabled**. ([Pause](#))

Showing 10 comments

Sort by newest first



Powr1

What I am confused about is how and why the City of Tacoma has avoided criticism and responsibility for this Totem? Your comments seem to lay the problem and solution on the Art and Landmark Commissions. I have always been struck by the facts presented to find that the City has limited responsibility to pay any costs. You have addressed volunteers, and consultants that will address the concerns of the Commissions. This avoids the Responsibility and Authority of the City.

Your comments have been void of city staff making their analysis and solution to the problem. This project at \$10-20K is below the open bid threshold and should be done by paid professionals under the employ of Tacoma. The City Manager needs to do his job and stop avoiding and transferring the responsibly. Secondly, the City Council needs to accept the politics and place the job directly on his desk, if he is unwilling to take responsibility. Why have no work orders been written to have staff use their extensive high tech equipment and experience to do a detailed evaluation of the rot and insect infestation. At least confirm that if this work has been done it is valid. They need to be written ASAP. Then have supervisors, at their weekly meeting, develop a plan to restore the Totem.

MANUFACTURING
Millwright Bradken - Tacoma Foundry is looking to expand it's Maintenance department. We are currently seeking a Millwright. Individual will be responsible for constructing, and testing mechanical and electrical equipment, installation and replacement of machinery and components, welding and fabricating per work

ADVANCED SEARCH | PLACE AN AD

SEARCH FOR A JOB

FIND A JOB

MIN PRICE

ZIP CODE

MAX PRICE

FIND A HOME

ADVANCED SEARCH
SEARCH BY REGION

NEW USED

Acura

ZIP CODE

MDX

MAX PRICE

FIND A CAR

MIN PRICE

CITY

MAX PRICE

FIND A RENTAL

SEARCH BY REGION

The city's role and responsibility is maintaining public art in public space and especially of significance to Tacoma's History is unquestionable.

Yesterday 10:43 AM 3 Likes Report Abuse

Like Reply



Scotty Brown

This is a historic part of Tacoma's history... why wouldn't we invest a modest amount of money in preserving something that is dedicated to our culture?

Yesterday 08:10 AM 3 Likes Report Abuse

Like Reply



tacoman1

If they cannot make this "right" then we better not hear about Warhol on the dome.

Yesterday 08:13 AM in reply to Scotty Brown 1 Like Report Abuse

Like Reply



Blaine Garver

+1....This is a beautiful work of art, and fixing it, or even replicating it would be a pittance in comparison to other projects in the 50,000 range....

Yesterday 06:58 PM in reply to tacoman1 1 Like Report Abuse

Like Reply



fryingpan

Peter's pretty sentimental about something he labelled in an earlier column as too kitschy and commercial to even merit consideration of the traditional "lay down" treatment. That said, I suppose I agree that beloved historical kitsch, if that's what this is, deserves protection too.

Yesterday 07:31 AM 2 Likes Report Abuse

Like Reply



Powr1

Your comment is noted, but as I have read the articles I don't believe your opinion is correct or warranted.

Yesterday 11:05 AM in reply to fryingpan Report Abuse

Like Reply



fryingpan

SIMILAR STORIES

Let Tacoma Totem Pole decay publicly, committee says

If a makeshift committee has its way, a historic but increasingly unstable totem pole that has stood in downtown Tacoma for more than a century would be taken down and left to decay publicly as a piece of the city's "living history."

Tacoma's totem: Sometimes a pole is just a pole

We might be overthinking this whole thing about what to do with Tacoma's 110-year-old totem pole.

What to do with rotten, 110-year-old Tacoma Totem Pole?

It has towered over the bluffs of downtown Tacoma for more than a century, but now a prominent piece of Northwest Indian art is showing severe signs of decay and faces an uncertain future.

When Tacoma's totem pole welcomed a president

Unlike some bigger cities, Tacoma isn't so jaded — or hyperpolitical — that it's afraid to treat a visit by a president of the United States as a big deal.

Hard choices: Protecting Tacoma's historic cobblestone roads

Next time you're bumping up or down one of Tacoma's vintage cobblestone hills in your car, imagine what it would have been like in a horse-drawn carriage.

OK, Mr. or Ms. Comment Noter, I got off my iPad (sometimes not the smoothest way to construct sentences) and clarified things a bit.

Yesterday 03:50 PM in reply to Pow r1 Report Abuse

Like Reply



tacoman1

The Art's and Landmarks' commissions need to save this totem pole. Stop being lazy and fix it and place it. On the Prairie line trail , at the convention center of Tacoma Dome , but please do not do nothing. Fireman's park is already somewhat of a sacred site for the Puyallup tribe as it has a great and unique view of Mount Rainier during the solstice.

Yesterday 07:17 AM 2 Likes Report Abuse

Like Reply



Powr1

Placing it is a Red Herring to avoid the issue and responsibility of fixing it. The Totem has a place. It was decided many years ago to place it at Firemen's Park. The alternatives are placing it in a covered outdoor space or laying it down to allow people a closer look. Laying it down will require protection from vandalism and the elements. The City isn't lazy but chooses the path of avoidance.

Yesterday 11:03 AM in reply to tacoman1 Report Abuse

Like Reply



Blaine Garver

Choosing the path of least resistance is being lazy.

Yesterday 07:00 PM in reply to Pow r1 1 Like Report Abuse

Like Reply

[✉ Subscribe by email](#) [RSS](#)

SOUTH SOUND

- » Fondness for Elbe's Little White Church shared by all faiths
- » Pot on some police dogs' not-to-sniff list
- » CPA believes couples should talk early and often about their finances
- » City of Tacoma honors top

SPORTS

- » Minnesota Twins batter Bonderman in return as they beat Seattle Mariners 10-0
- » Only expectations eclipse reality for Sounders
- » Erasmo Ramirez's pitching a ray of hope in gloom for Rainiers
- » Golfer Michael Putnam's on a hot

BLOGS

- » **Lights & Sirens:** Kent man shot to death last week identified
- » **Political Buzz:** Morning update: Special session Day 22
- » **Seahawks Insider:** Morning links: Last week of OTAs
- » **Mariners Insider:** Preparing for Thursday's MLB amateur draft

volunteers

- » **Callaghan:** Letting totem rot is not the only Native way
- » **LaRue:** Fondness for Elbe's Little White Church shared by all faiths

streak, and he's taking a break

- » **Istanbul 2020 bidders** remain confident of support
- » **Boling:** Sonic Avenger hasn't gone into hiding, he's just regrouping
- » **McGrath:** Rainiers' grinning fullback could fill Seattle's pitching gap

- » **Preps:** Did bad sportsmanship or mass disorientation reign in Class 2A state boys soccer finals?
- » **TNT Diner:** Korean dining: Taking a bite out of two new Lakewood restaurants



[Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [About Our Ads](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Site Map](#) | [RSS](#) | [Archives and Reprints](#)

1950 South State Street, Tacoma, Washington 98405 253-597-8742

© Copyright 2013 Tacoma News, Inc. A subsidiary of The McClatchy Company

Partners: [The News Tribune](#) | [The Olympian](#) | [The Peninsula Gateway](#) | [The Puyallup Herald](#) | [Northwest Guardian](#) | [KIRO7](#)

Panel decides to keep totem pole part of Tacoma's art collection

LEWIS KAMB

LAST UPDATED: JUNE 4TH, 2013 08:59 PM (PDT)

They mulled over its decrepit condition, speculated about who carved it and discussed its historical and cultural significance – both as a potential sacred artifact and a beloved object of commercial kitsch.

But in the end, all voting members of a specially convened panel agreed Tuesday: Tacoma's totem pole should remain part of the city's art collection.

"I think it's important to keep it," said Jack Curtright, a longtime Tacoma dealer of Native American art. "It's been here, I grew up with it. It's been an icon of this community."

Tacoma's Arts Commission took the unusual step of convening the deaccession review panel to determine whether the aging totem pole, which has become a falling hazard in downtown Fireman's Park, should be removed from the Tacoma's collected public artworks.

Commissioned by civic boosters in 1903, the more than 80-foot tall cedar log carved in what's purported to be Native iconography aimed to help put Tacoma on the map.

But age, rot and insect infestation have structurally weakened the pole, forcing public works officials to fence it off and temporarily brace it with steel rods.

As both a designated city landmark and a public art piece, the pole falls under the dual authority of Tacoma's Landmarks Preservation Commission and Arts Commission.

Last month, a landmarks subcommittee unofficially recommended it be taken down and publicly left to rot – once thought a customary Alaskan Native practice for poles at the end of their lifespan.

The arts board then sought to separately consider the pole's significance as a public artwork. It called to convene Tuesday's review panel made up of arts and landmarks commissioners, a city planner, an art dealer, museum curators and a Native carver.

Robin Wright, curator of Native American art for the University of Washington's Burke Museum, noted the checkered history of the pole's creation may never be resolved.

"The 64,000 dollar question is: Who carved it," Wright said. "And I can't tell just by looking at. It's sort of been mysteriously hidden, and over time the story has changed."

Records variably describe civic boosters hiring Alaskan or British Columbian Natives to carve the pole, partly to best a 60-foot tall totem pole erected in Seattle. As the story goes, for \$3,000, the commissioned tribal members secretly carved a log donated by the St. Paul & Tacoma Lumber Company until its public unveiling in 1903 – a day before President Theodore Roosevelt visited town.

But Native art authorities on the panel agreed the iconography appears inauthentic and the carving less than expert.

"It's entirely possible that it was even a non-Native person" who carved Tacoma's pole, Wright conjectured, "and they kept them secret because he was not Native."

But panel members agreed its historical value as a city icon is undeniable.

JD Elquist, a member of the arts and landmarks commissions, said he reconsidered his previous recommendation – that the pole be removed, laid down and left to decay – as some tribes traditionally have done. Some of the experts noted, and Elquist acknowledged, that poles are now commonly preserved.

Curtright noted that because the pole "doesn't look like it's a sacred artifact," it's not culturally appropriate to let it decay.

Elquist said his change of heart largely came from the panel's recognition the pole is more important as a city artifact than a Native one.

“Due to the history of what it means to the people of Tacoma,” Elquist said, “it’s important that it stay around as long as possible.”

Elquist ultimately made the successful motion that the pole not be “deaccessed” from the municipal art collection. Its continued status as a city public artwork affords it protections and access to funding.

The panel could not come up with a clear recommendation as to what the city should do next – whether to brace the pole in place, take it down, find a place to house it indoors or erect a new pole.

“Money, of course, does come to play,” city arts administrator Amy McBride said. “But there are funds to stabilize it and there are funds to remove it. Whether there are funds to do anything after that remains to be seen.”

Estimates to secure the pole in place run as high as \$44,000, with a thorough restoration running as much as \$45,000, and cleaning and ridding it of pests about \$20,000, she said.

City engineer Darius Thompson noted the city can store the pole in the Sea Scouts building on Dock Street “for a number of months until we figure out what we can do with it.”

For now, all such options remain on the table for the landmarks commission to consider, said Reuben McKnight, the city’s historic preservation officer. A staff report, including cost analyses for various options, will be presented to the landmarks board on June 12, he added.

Lewis Kamb: 253-597-8542

lewis.kamb@thenewstribune.com (<mailto:lewis.kamb@thenewstribune.com>)

blog.thenewstribune.com/politics (<http://blog.thenewstribune.com/politics>)

[@lewiskamb](http://twitter.com/lewiskamb) (<http://twitter.com/lewiskamb>)