

Oregon Historic Site Record

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME			
address:	119 SW Hwy 101 Depoe Bay, Lincoln County	historic name:	Depoe Bay Ocean Wayside
assoc addresses:		current/other names:	Depoe Bay State Park, Depoe Bay Whale Watching Center
location descr:		block/lot/tax lot:	
		township/rng/sect/qtr sect:	1S 1E 9
PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS			
resource type:	Building	height (stories):	3.0
elig evaluation:	eligible/significant	total elig resources:	1
prim constr date:	1956	NR Status:	Individually Listed
	second date:	date indiv listed:	03/07/2012
primary orig use:	Outdoor Recreation	orig use comments:	
second orig use:		prim style comments:	
primary style:	Modern Commercial (Type)	sec style comments:	
secondary style:		siding comments:	
primary siding:	Concrete: Other/Undefined	architect:	Carl Schneider, Oregon St Highway Dept.
secondary siding:		builder:	John Helstrom
plan type:			
comments/notes:			
HUB #30877			
GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS			
Survey/Grouping Included In:	Type of Grouping	Date Listed	Date Compiled
Oregon State Parks - Heritage Parks	State Park		
SHPO INFORMATION FOR THIS PROPERTY			
NR date listed:	03/07/2012	106 Project(s):	None
ILS survey date:		Special Assess Project(s):	None
RLS survey date:		Federal Tax Project(s):	None
ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION			
<i>(Includes expanded description of the building/property, setting, significant landscape features, outbuildings and alterations)</i>			
<p>The Depoe Bay Ocean Wayside is located at 119 U.S. Highway 101 (Oregon Coast Highway) in downtown Depoe Bay. The Wayside is perched on a terrace of a narrow strip of rocky land between Highway 101 and the Pacific Ocean. The building stands adjacent to and slightly below the highway, marking the north end of the iconic Depoe Bay Bridge and overlooking the picturesque entrance to the Depoe Bay harbor far below, just to the south. Erected in 1956 as a "comfort station" for motorists, the Wayside is a one-and-a-half-story reinforced-concrete building with a daylight basement. The rectangular building is tucked into the rocky strip of land, elevated far above the surf, and surrounded by concrete retaining walls on three sides. A stone guardwall tops the retaining walls, creating the paved observation plaza that comprises the building's immediate setting. The Wayside has a flat roof that serves as an observation deck, from which rises an octagonal penthouse that holds the upper story, an enclosed observation area. Designed in a modest interpretation of the International Style, the building exhibits the minimal decoration and horizontal emphasis that characterizes postwar architecture, including a slightly convex east-facing (front) facade. Purposefully, the majority of the building's windows are oriented toward the ocean to take advantage of the scenic view. Inside, the one-room main floor features a central stairwell. The public restrooms are in the basement. The Wayside maintains its original function and appearance as a public rest stop and observation point for travelers on U.S 101 along the Oregon coast. Since its construction, the building has been modified only slightly, including the replacement of some windows and doors. However, most changes are superficial and easily reversible, and none of the alterations detract significantly from the original appearance of the building.</p>			
HISTORY			
<i>(Chronological, descriptive history of the property from its construction through at least the historic period - preferably to the present)</i>			
<p>Constructed in 1956, the Depoe Bay Ocean Wayside on U.S. Highway 101 in downtown Depoe Bay is significant statewide under National Register Criterion A, Entertainment and Recreation, as a physical embodiment of the Oregon State Highway Department's dual objectives to both construct public facilities to provide services to motorists traveling along the state's roads and to develop scenic sites and encourage public use of Oregon's natural resources. This was a significant shift in the approach to state parks development in Oregon, attributed to its second superintendent, Chester Armstrong. It is also significant under Criterion C, Architecture as a pivotal example of an Oregon State Wayside that was purpose-built as a combination concession, comfort station, and observation point whose design consciously respected and responded to the natural environment. The period of significance is 1956-1960, encompassing the year of its construction and reflecting Chester Armstrong's leadership years. The Depoe Bay Ocean Wayside is the only state wayside constructed during the postwar period designed to serve the rapidly increasing ranks of the motoring public, while specifically taking advantage of a unique scenic vista – in this case, the world's smallest navigable harbor at Depoe Bay. It is significant under Criterion A in the areas of Entertainment and Recreation as a reflection of the Oregon State Highway Department's dual mission of providing services for motorists and actively encouraging visitation to scenic locations in the state. The active promotion by local and state agencies of auto-based tourism, a new emphasis on highway and park development, and continued pleas by the residents of Depoe Bay, culminated in 1955 when the Oregon State Highway Commission finally agreed to construct a rest stop there. However, the resulting building is more than a bathroom with a view. It reflects a new integrated approach to highways and state parks. Responsible for both the development and maintenance of the state highway system and state parks, the Oregon State Highway Department sought not only to provide an efficient road system, but also to encourage travel to Oregon's scenic places. The Depoe Bay Ocean Wayside is an example of the blending of these two missions. The building accommodates the highway by providing an easily accessible rest stop on a popular tourist route, while it offered access to Oregon's natural beauty through its scenic location. Its construction in the mid-1950s reflects the economic revival that followed World War II and increasing recreational use of automobiles. The popularity of the car added significant traffic to Oregon's roads and required the increased development of state highways. Improved roadways granted drivers new access to remote natural areas, which encouraged the emergence of developed scenic vista points and state parks as local attractions, not simply rest stops. Recognized as Oregon State Parks' first development-minded superintendent, Chester Armstrong set policy in the 1950s that made possible the integration of state parks and highways, and subsequently, the Depoe Bay Ocean Wayside. The building is also significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent example of a full-service, purpose-built wayside designed to be modern in its appearance, yet to respond to its environment. One of two buildings of its type in the Oregon state parks system, and the only example from the postwar period, the building's low profile, large picture windows, and minimal decoration is highly evocative of the aesthetic of the 1950s. This design was not imposed on the site, however; rather careful attention was paid to both taking advantage of and preserving the panoramic ocean view. Set on a rocky outcrop, the Depoe Bay Ocean Wayside perches above the Pacific Ocean atop a concrete seawall, offering ocean views to the north, east, and south. However, the Oregon State Highway Department ensured that the building's ideal location did not detract from the scenic view from U.S.</p>			

101 by locating the building six feet below the road and the bathrooms below grade in order to minimize the building's height. The design itself also compliments the scenery. The low and horizontally-oriented silhouette mimics the ocean itself, and this effect is emphasized by the ribbon of windows wrapping around the building, accented by the original painted turquoise band, the pipe railing along the rooftop observation deck, and decorative scoring on the exterior concrete walls. Responding to the harsh environment, the building was constructed of reinforced, poured concrete, sturdy double-pane windows, and corrosion-resistant materials to withstand the beating surf and punishing winds.

RESEARCH INFORMATION

Title Records	Census Records	Property Tax Records	✓ Local Histories
Sanborn Maps	Biographical Sources	✓ SHPO Files	Interviews
Obituaries	Newspapers	✓ State Archives	✓ Historic Photographs
City Directories	Building Permits	✓ State Library	

Local Library:

Historical Society: Lincoln County

University Library:

Other Respository: Internet

Bibliography:

C. H. Armstrong. Oregon State Parks History 1917-1963. Salem: Oregon State Parks, 1965. Frances Basha, Paul Rambali, Bob Ughetti. Car Culture. New York: Delilah Communications, 1984. Tom Fuller and Art Ayre. Oregon at Work 1859-2009. Portland: Ooligan Press, 2009. Catherine Lutz and Anne Lutz Fernandez. Carjacked: The Culture of the Automobile and its Effect on Our Lives. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010. Lawrence Merriam, Jr. Oregon's Highway Park System 1921-1989: An Administrative History. Salem: Oregon State Parks, 1992. Felix Rohatyn. Bold Endeavors. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009. Stephen J. Whitfield. Companion to Twentieth-Century America. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2004. Thomas R. Cox. "From Hot Springs to Gateway: The Evolving Concept of Public Parks, 1832-1976." Environmental Review 5, no. 1 (1981), 14-26. Drive Oregon Highways. Salem: Travel Information Department of the Oregon State Highway Commission, 1936. Richard Engeman. Highway 101, Neahkahnie Mountain. Oregon Historical Society. http://ohs.org/education/oregonhistory/historical_records/dspDocument.cfm?doc_ID=80863F87-0475-A3170248409399C25DDD, 2005. David E. Shi. "Well, America: Is the Car Culture Working?" Philadelphia Inquirer, 9 July 2000. Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol. 37. no. 4, December 1963, cited in De Poe Bay, by W. A. Langille, OPRD Archives. Websites Depoe Bay Chamber of Commerce. 2010. Dowling, Joanna. "Learning the Culture of Interstate Safety Rest Areas." 2011. Husing, Onno. "A History of U.S. Highway 101." Oregon Coastal Notes. 2008. Oregon State Archives. "Envisioning Oregon's Future: Graphic Art Drawings Bring Ideas to Life" 2011 Mark, Stephen R.. "Chester H. Armstrong." The Oregon Encyclopedia. . 2008. Wells, Gail. "Unions and Hard Times Between the Wars: Tourists Discover the Oregon Coast." The Oregon History Project, , 2006. Collections Lincoln County Historical Society, Newport, OR. ODOT Archives, Salem, OR. OPRD Archives, Salem, OR. State Archives, Salem, OR. State Library, Salem, OR.