

Oregon Historic Site Record

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME			
address:	Portland, Multnomah County	historic name:	Halprin Open Space Sequence
assoc addresses:		current/other names:	
location descr:	SW Open Spaces and Pedestrian Malls from Lincoln Street to Clay Street	block/lot/tax lot:	
		township/rng/sect/qtr sect:	
PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS			
resource type:	district	height (stories):	
elig evaluation:	eligible/significant	total elig resources:	18
prim constr date:	1966	NR Status:	Individually Listed
	second date: 1970	date indiv listed:	03/06/2013
primary orig use:	Park/Plaza	orig use comments:	
second orig use:		prim style comments:	
primary style:	Modern Period: Other	sec style comments:	
secondary style:		siding comments:	
primary siding:	Metal: Other/Undefined	architect:	Lawrence Halprin
secondary siding:	Concrete: Other/Undefined	builder:	
plan type:			
comments/notes:			
Total count of contributing properties includes fountains and sculptures within contributing parks that do not have an individual record entry. See National Register nomination.			
GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS			
Survey/Grouping Included In:	Halprin Open Space Sequence Historic District	Type of Grouping	Listed Historic District
		Date Listed	03/06/2013
		Date Compiled	2013
SHPO INFORMATION FOR THIS PROPERTY			
NR date listed:	03/06/2013	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>Halprin Open Space Sequence is a non-contiguous historic district that includes individual multiple elements designed as a cohesive group by noted landscape architect Lawrence Halprin. The district is located just south of downtown in Portland's South Auditorium District. It consists of four public parks connected by a system of pedestrian malls. The South Auditorium District was developed in the 1960s as the city's first urban renewal district. Halprin's landscape spaces are an integral part of the design and development of that district. The three larger parks [Lovejoy Fountain, Pettygrove and Ira Keller Fountain] are each approximately one acre in size. Each park is unique and designed for a specific function; all are meant to be interactive. The southernmost park, Lovejoy Fountain Park, is located approximately at Hall Street between Second and Third Avenues. It is hardscaped with fountains, pavilion, and plaza. The center park, Pettygrove Park, is located approximately two blocks north at roughly Montgomery Street, also between Second and Third Avenues. It features a softer design with a cluster of treed hillocks separated by asphalt pathways. The final and northernmost park is also about two blocks north of Pettygrove and is located just west of the Keller Auditorium. That park was originally known as Auditorium Forecourt, but is now named Keller Fountain Park. It is located between Third and Fourth Avenues and Clay and Market Streets. The park is defined by a tiered concrete fountain that creates an 80-foot wide, 25-foot tall waterfall that drops from west to east to a sunken plaza. The design includes landscaped berms at the north and south to shield the waterfall and plaza from the traffic and street noise. It also includes landscaping at the west with plantings and stream-like pools. Connecting these parks are pedestrian malls. These pedestrian malls consist of two primary north-south paths that align with Second and Third Avenues, and a series of shorter east-west malls connecting the parks and pedestrian-only interior to the surrounding streets. At the south end of the Second Avenue Pedestrian Mall is the fourth park, Source Fountain Plaza. This park is a 2,200 square-foot hardscaped plaza with a central low-rise brick fountain where water bubbles to the top. Throughout, Halprin's design work includes not only major design elements (e.g., plazas and fountains), but lesser details that include lighting, benches, curbs, drains, etc. All of the resources within the district are contributing; none are non-contributing. The district and the individual parts within have a high degree of integrity.</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 between 1966 and 1970 as a vital part of the South Auditorium Urban Renewal District, the Halprin Open Space Sequence is nationally significant under Criterion C for Landscape Architecture. Specifically, it is a masterwork by transformative landscape architect Lawrence Halprin. This work is one of the largest, most complex, comprehensive and sophisticated expressions of Halprin's concepts for public plazas. The work is also seminal in that it is the first full expression of concepts that he would later repeat in varying formats for the next four decades. As characterized by Kenneth Helphand, Knight Professor Emeritus of Landscape Architecture at the University of Oregon, "The Portland Open Space Sequence . . . is an acknowledged masterpiece of modern design. Halprin is one of the great landscape architects of the twentieth century. His work helped revitalize the profession in the United States and was a model of design that was creative, innovative and addressed the urban condition. The Portland fountains are known worldwide . . . It would not overstate the case to say that they have been a pilgrimage site for design professionals, for they changed the concept of the urban fountain and were the catalyst for a revivification of fountain and urban open space design." The Halprin Open Space Sequence is also locally significant under Criterion A for Community Development. Halprin's plazas and promenades created a unique, vibrant, and people-pleasing setting. By so doing, it encouraged further private investment within the South Auditorium district and fostered expansion of urban renewal as a policy tool northward and westward. The success of the sequence also established a local expectation in urban plaza design, an expectation carried forward in places such as Pioneer Courthouse Square, Director Park, and Jamison Square. It further established the notion of a "sequence" of parks, carried forward today in the similarly orchestrated series of parks in the Pearl District. CRITERION C: LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE The Halprin Open Space Sequence is eligible for the National Register on the national level under Criteria C under Landscape Architecture as a superior and seminal work by noted landscape architect Lawrence Halprin. One of two landscape architects to be awarded the National Medal of Art, Halprin was the dominant figure in the field in the second half of the twentieth century. In stature and influence, he is considered a transformative designer by scholars as. Peers used adjectives as "renowned," "legendary," and "tribal elder." Charles Birnbaum, President of the Cultural Landscape Foundation and former director of the National Park Service's Historic Landscape Initiative, considers Halprin as "the single most influential landscape architect of the postwar years." Because of his interest in social engagement through environmental design in the public arena, the editor of Landscape Architecture, J. William Thompson, compares Halprin to Frederick Law Olmstead, Sr.: "For Olmstead, the vision was one of pastoral relief from smoke and crowding; for Halprin, one of celebration of the city's rambunctious vitality. Both viewed city parks and open spaces as a meeting ground for people of all classes." Perhaps John Beardsley, Senior</p>			

Lecturer of Landscape Architecture at Harvard University, best frames Halprin's place within the profession in his essay from *Where the Revolution Began: The 'transitional figure' in history* is a well-worn cliché, but in Lawrence Halprin's case, the term emphatically and revealingly applies. Halprin is widely recognized as one of the preeminent designers of the postwar era, when landscape architecture finally reckoned with the formal, social, and technological implications of modernism. Like his slightly older colleagues Garrett Eckbo, Dan Kiley, and James Rose, Halprin used a language of streamline form, asymmetrical geometries, and spatial ambiguity characteristic of much high modernist art. He likewise shared the faith they displayed in the social transformative power of functionalist design . . . But like his somewhat younger contemporary Ian McHarg, Halprin articulated some of the earliest and most forceful environmentalist challenges to modernism . . . Halprin's engagement with urban renewal . . . was at once the legacy of modernist aspirations for social improvement and a critique of the way modernism was rending the physical fabric of American cities. Halprin's particular contribution was to reinvent the public plaza as a symbolic yet interactive place. Elizabeth Meyer, Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Virginia, offers that Halprin "reimagined a public realm for American cities that had been cleared by federal urban renewal programs and abandoned for new suburban developments." The timing of this reinvention was critical; Halprin's projects were often a core element of revitalizing what were then considered dying city cores. Put another way by landscape architect Laurie Olin, "Larry was working at a time when no one believed in public spaces . . . No one did it with such bravura and sense of generosity." Halprin's plazas feature repetitive elements and themes. They are largely hardscaped surfaces, built of concrete in such a way as to suggest strewn boulders or mountain landscapes. The designs integrated platforms within plazas for performances and activities, and typically include core features such as fountains with rushing water. Cognitively or subliminally, Halprin recognized the potential of rushing water to energize and activate a plaza in new and creative ways. Within Halprin's body of work, the Portland Sequence is one of his most significant. With roots that date to 1963, the Sequence is a large and comprehensive statement of his concepts for plaza designs. It is the first full expression of those concepts, later repeated in a variety of cities and settings. Physically, the Portland project was expansive: it included three full-block parks connected with a network of pedestrian promenades. The responsibility of the project was high; located within a dense high-rise urban renewal district, Halprin's design for the plazas and promenades was to provide energy and vibrancy to the district. Conceptually, Halprin choreographed spaces to encourage activities throughout. Lovejoy Fountain Park was intended to be active, and feature a fountain, pavilion, and hardscape that evoke mountain streams, while also allowing for both spontaneous and planned performances and activities. In Pettygrove Park, two blocks north, Halprin intended the setting to be reflective and quiet, with hillocks and stone retaining walls suggestive of the Olmsted era of landscape design. Finally, at Forecourt Fountain, Halprin redirected an auto-oriented design to create a masterpiece dominated by an 80-foot wide 25-foot high concrete waterfall that belies the sophistication and subtlety of the entire park. Connecting all three parks were car-free pedestrian promenades that offered not only passageways but also opportunities for rest and reflection. Critically important, the Halprin Open Space Sequence was incredibly popular. Photographs of the Lovejoy and Forecourt Parks from the 1960s show throngs of people enjoying the fountains, while news articles of the era talk about "love-ins" in the hillocks of Pettygrove. Ironically enough, public activities in Halprin's parks and plazas created headaches for city leaders as it seemed that too many people were enjoying themselves too much. Even today on warm Portland days, the fountains are inundated with people enjoying the cool water and glorious setting. The result of the sequence was to make the South Auditorium district one of the more successful urban renewal projects in the country which, among other things, convinced a community of largely conservative rural values that dense high-rise urban living for the middle class was quite all right. When compared with Halprin's body of work, the Portland commission stands out as one of his first and best urban plaza projects. Before 1963, when he was hired by the Portland Development Commission, Halprin's body of work included a number of innovative projects: Easter Hill (1953), St. Francis Square (1963) and Sea Ranch (1964) were all planned communities where Halprin asserted the importance of the landscape as a critical, if not equal, element to the quality of life of the community. In Old Orchard and Oakbrook Terrace, he created a sense of place for shopping centers. At Ghirardelli Square, Halprin created the prototypical warehouse-into-specialty-retail adaptive reuse. But given that all were completed for private developers, the projects conceptually probed a comparative narrow design question. In 1962, with Sproul Plaza at UC-Berkeley, his concept of choreographing spaces began to take hold. And as early as 1961, Halprin wrote, "we should not copy nature's outward forms but her method of operation." In these years, hiking through the Sierra Mountains, Halprin spent considerable time thinking about mountain streams and "the ecology of form." As described by Birnbaum, Halprin's Portland Sequence first captures this philosophy in built form: In public projects from the 1960s onward, Larry moved away from biomorphic and kidney-shaped garden forms and in the decades that followed, his ideas of public space being "choreographed for movement," and the recognition that "participation and activity are essential factors in a city, became critical tenets." Perhaps nowhere are they more ambitious and inviting than in Portland's eight-block choreographed chain of open spaces sequence, and specifically with the Auditorium Forecourt Fountain, which The New York Times architectural critic, Ada Louise Huxtable dubbed in 1970, "one of the most important urban spaces since the Renaissance." Randy Gragg, an award-winning architectural and urban design critic, writer and editor and contributor to *Where the Revolution Began*, echoes Birnbaum: Forecourt Fountain, along with the sequence of three other plazas designed by Lawrence Halprin and Associates, marked a turning point both for Portland and for American public space. The sequence - Lovejoy Fountain, Pettygrove Park, and Forecourt (later named Ira Keller) Fountain, along with the small, lesser-known Source Fountain - represented a new kind of urban plaza, a grandly sculptural, metaphorical experience of nature that welcomed an activity largely absent from midcentury American downtown: play." Gragg continues: Today, the sequence's bold artistry, unabashedly synthetic form, and generous invitations for interactions are mainstays of urban park design in the work of architects as diverse as Laurie Olin and Martha Schwartz. But when Halprin began designing the Portland plazas in 1963, the ideas were new—or, as Huxtable argued, renesant. The tradition of "public city spaces of deliberately conceived beauty and pleasurable utility," she wrote, had been all but forgotten, "replaced by the parking lot." Yet, even more dramatic than the plazas' break with the dreary tropes of 1960s American urbanism was the role they played within the turbulent politics of the time. Seen within the context of the riots and occupations occurring in the campuses, plazas, and parks of cities elsewhere – and occasionally even in Portland – Halprin's and the city's unyielding embrace of new public spaces designed solely to foster civic joy was nothing short of radical. Laurie Olin said it most simply: "With the Portland projects Halprin changed the course of landscape architecture by reintroducing representation and reference as content in design." Because Halprin remained active in the profession until his death in 2009, he is today only slightly represented in the National Register. Three resources have been listed, including one for national significance. This early recognition demonstrates the esteem and importance ascribed to him. The first is Park Central Square, a single plaza developed as an urban renewal project in the center of Springfield, Missouri. The second is Ghirardelli Square, which is listed for multiple reasons, including its position as the prototype for adaptive reuse of warehouse space. The most recent listing is Heritage Park in Fort Worth, listed in 2010. Nationally significant, the park is a half-acre site in front of the Tarrant County Courthouse along the Trinity River. Significance is ascribed to the park as being evocative of Halprin's concepts: "At Heritage Park...one can witness Halprin employing his theories of movement, sequence, and experience with a confident hand, relying on a limited palette of materials to create spaces that are never overly didactic, but which allow visitors to feel a great range of emotions." Without reducing the importance of those works listed in the National Register, the Portland sequence is arguably more important within Halprin's body of work. CRITERION A: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT The Halprin Open Space Sequence is also locally significant under Criterion A, Community Development, for its role in convincing local policymakers of the viability of urban renewal as a policy tool and for its influence in defining subsequent Portland urban plazas. As noted above, Halprin's design was fundamental to the South Auditorium district. That district was a dense high-rise complex in a city of largely middle-class sensibilities that embraced single-family home ownership. The Skidmore, Owings & Merrill designs, International in style, emphasized the convenience and modernity of living in the South Auditorium district. However, without the Halprin spaces, the district would arguably have lacked vibrancy and energy. From the day of dedication, the parks and promenades were unlike anything most residents had seen before and they were instantly very popular. As the parks proved popular, so too did the apartments. Within a decade of the first demolition, the entire district was largely built out, not only within the three primary superblocks between First and Fourth Avenues, but also along First Avenue, with buildings such as the Columbia Building by Johnston & Koch and the IBM Building by Kirk, Wallace and McKinley. The district's early achievements encouraged the community to expand urban renewal northward, funding Forecourt Fountain, which in turn directly resulted in the development of the Portland Plaza condominiums. It also led to community receptiveness for an urban renewal district to expand of what was then Portland State College. Halprin's work also provided the core concepts for future public places in the city. Halprin himself returned to Portland to help in the design of the now-altered downtown Transit Mall, a transit spine intent on integrating his concepts of choreographed and activated urban spaces. As important, his use of hardscaping and fountains to engage the public can be seen in nearly every subsequent urban park in Portland, from Pioneer Courthouse Square and Salmon Street Springs to recent designs for Directors Park, and particularly Jamison Square and Tanner Springs. In 2005, the Oregonian declare that Halprin's Open Space Sequence "sparked a Portland tradition of great urban plazas and parks." This comment built on an earlier discussion by Randy Gragg in 2003, then the Oregonian architectural critic: "Halprin's role in stimulating a new constituency for public space can't be underestimated. As the first new downtown parks since the city's earliest plats, the Lovejoy, Pettygrove and Keller began a thirty-year expansion of public space rivaled by few American cities. From Halprin's Source Fountain essentially springs everything, from Pioneer Courthouse Square to the soon-to-be constructed North Park Square in the Pearl District." The first urban park after the sequence was Pioneer Courthouse Square. In 1969, the site of the Portland Hotel was slated for an 800-car parking garage. On the heels of Lovejoy Fountain and Forecourt Fountain, the city began exploring a new notion for the space as "Portland's living room." Ironically, Halprin competed for the project but did not win the commission. That honor went to a local team led by Willard Martin. Although Halprin did not design the park, the spirit of interactive public space was evident in the Pioneer Courthouse Square's final design featuring a waterfall-style fountain, hardscape for activities, and multiple opportunities for engagement. As stated by one of the design judges at the time: [In Pioneer Courthouse Square], Portland was departing from its traditional provincialism and becoming more concerned about its urban environment, where in the past concern for the natural environment was predominant . . . competitors should keep that concern in mind, creating a square of "enduring aesthetic character." The tradition of trading parking for public space continued in what became Directors Park. In the early 2000s, a coalition of activists stopped a twelve-story parking garage along the South Park Block spine and the space was transformed into an urban plaza by noted landscape architect Laurie Olin. In 2006, Laurie Olin spoke of Halprin's influence on his design: [Halprin was] a huge influence on even becoming a landscape architect . . . when Ada Louis Huxtable wrote in the New York Times that Forecourt Fountain . . . was the greatest civic fountain since the Renaissance, I knew she was right . . . you can't help but self-consciously know about the history of all other parks in Portland. There is a trajectory of ambition and quality that one has to pay attention to. You feel you're adding to an ensemble, and you want to do something that both acknowledges them but is yet another step. It is in the Pearl District, however, that the homage to Halprin's Portland Open Space Sequence is most apparent. First, Halprin's notion of a sequence of parks has been created with an "active" urban plaza (Jamison), a contemplative park (Tanner Springs) and an active play park (The Fields) which are connected by a boardwalk. Two have water features: Jamison Square, by Peter Walker & Partners and completed in 2000, features an

interactive fountain pool enormously popular with young families, while also incorporating bocce courts, sculptures, and restaurants. In contrast, Tanner Springs Park, three blocks north of Jamison, was completed in 2005, designed by Atelier Dreiseitl and Greenworks as a quiet, naturalistic space with a waterscape. Finally, the Fields, two blocks north of Tanner Springs and scheduled for completion in 2013, completes the arc of park types needed in a dense urban environment that is keen to attract and provide different types of parks for all spectrums of users. Randy Gragg's twenty-five years of observing and critiquing Portland's urban landscape perhaps places him in the best position to assess Halprin's influence on the City's parks: By the 1990s, Halprin's once-revolutionary blend of nature, theater, and urbanism would be institutionalized in a growing collection of plazas and parks that, in each case, set the stage for major new enlargements of central city. To the north, two interconnected fountain plazas and a park – Jamison Square, Tanner Springs Park, and soon-to-be-completed, The Fields—echo Halprin's watershed-inspired sequence as they follow the path of a long-buried historical creek. Gragg concludes, the sequence marks "an important, early step in Portland's celebrated tradition of humanistic, environmentally conscious urbanism." Halprin's design concepts for the sequence establish the format for what Portland and many American cities expect of today's public spaces. Generally the Portland parks feature those qualities, though rarely with the same verve as Halprin's designs.

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:		University Library:	
Historical Society:		Other Repository:	Magazine articles

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Books Beardsley, John, Janice Ross with Randy Gragg, photographs by Susan Seubert. Where the Revolution Began: Lawrence and Anna Halprin and the Reinvention of Public Spaces. Washington, DC: Spacemaker Press, 2009. Birnbaum, Charles A. and Foell, Stephanie S. (ed). Shaping the American Landscape: New Profiles from the Pioneers of American Landscape Design Project. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2009. Birnbaum, Charles A., Jane Brown Gillette with Nancy Slade, editors. Preserving Modern Landscape Architecture II: Making Postwar Landscapes Visible. Washington, D.C.: Spacemaker Press 2004. Halprin, Lawrence. The RSVP Cycles: Creative Process in the Human Environment. New York NY: George Braziller, Inc., 1969. _____. Cities. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972. Spirn, Anne Whiston. The Language of Landscape. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1998. Vaughan, Thomas (ed.) and Ferriday, Virginia Guest (assoc. ed.). Space, Style and Structure: Building in Northwest America. Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society, 1974. Walker, Peter with Melanie Simo. Invisible Gardens: The Search for Modernism in the American Landscape. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994. Articles, Lectures, Interviews, Plans, Reports, Tours Birnbaum, Charles, "The Challenge of Preserving the Postwar Era's Invisible Gardens." Common Ground (Summer 2004). _____. "The Rebirth of Portland's Halprin Legacy." City Club Friday Forum Lecture, 12 September 2008. DKS Associates. "South Auditorium /Park Blocks Pedestrian and Street Lighting Replacement Project" (Prepared for City of Portland, September 2008). Eskenazi, Joe. "Painting a Legacy: Lawrence Halprin Designs Palo Alto Jewish Campus." jweekly.com, 27 October 2009. Johnson, Barry. "The Histories of a City: Portland and the Halprin Plazas." Oregonian, 14 December 2009. Letter from Lawrence Halprin to John Kenward, Director of the Portland Development Commission, 1 July 1971. Lawrence Halprin & Associates. "The Willamette Valley Choices for the Future" (published for the State of Oregon, 1972). _____. "South Auditorium Urban Renewal Master Plan Guidelines," 1975. Halprin, Lawrence. "Design as a Value System." Places 6:1 (UC Berkeley 1989). _____. "Ira Keller Fountain, Recapturing the Magic." 10 January 1992 (based on 12/18/91 site visit). Halprin, Lawrence, with Randolph T. Hester, Jr. and Dee Mullen. "Interview with Lawrence Halprin." Places 12:2 (Winter 1999), 42-51. Hirsch, Alison Bick. "The Fate of Lawrence Halprin's Public Spaces: Three Case Studies, A Thesis in Historic Preservation," University of Pennsylvania, Master of Science in Historic Preservation, 2005. Huxtable, Ada Louise. "In Portland, Ore., Urban Decay Is Masked by Natural Splendor." New York Times, 19 June 1970. _____. "Coast Fountain Mends Art and Environment." New York Times, 21 June 1970. Johnson, Barry. "Halprin Plazas Tell Story of City Plan," Oregonian, 14 December 2009. King, John. "Lawrence Halprin – Landscape Architect – Dies," SFGate.com. 27 October 2009. Koch, Steven (authorized Liaison to the Office of Lawrence Halprin). "South Auditorium District Lighting Renovation Design Review and Report," 6 August 2009. Martin, Douglas. "Lawrence Halprin, Landscape Architect, Dies at 93," New York Times. 28 October 2009. Muldoon, Katy. "Landscape Legend." Oregonian, 27 October 2009. Portland Parks and Recreation. "Open Space and Park Development 1851-1965." January 2010. Row, D. K. "Portland's Plaza Pioneer." Oregonian, 5 December 2009. Sanders, Victor and The Halprin Landscape Conservancy. South Auditorium Open Space Sequence Cultural Resource Inventory, 2011. Trieb, Marc. "Church, Eckbo, Halprin, and the Modern Urban Landscape." from Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA (ed). Preserving Modern Landscape Architecture II. Washington, DC: Spacemaker Press, 2004. Tincup, Michal G., ASLA. "An Endangered Heritage: The Days May Be Numbered for Lawrence Halprin's Heritage Park." Landscape Architecture, Volume 99-2009. UrbsWorks, Marcy McNelly. Factual Information on Parks (Keller, Lovejoy and Pettygrove). UrbsWorks, Marcy McNelly. The Lawrence Halprin Landscape Conservancy, Restoration Master Plan + Tree Rejuvenation Project. Walker, Peter. "Preserving the Recent Design Past." " from Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA (ed). Preserving Modern Landscape Architecture. Washington, DC: Spacemaker Press, 1999. Zita, Richard, ASLA, Bramare Landscape Architects, Inc. and Steven Koch ASLA, Koch Landscape Architecture. "Pettygrove Park Rehabilitation Master Plan." Second Edition, 22 May 2009.