

Oregon Historic Site Record

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME			
address:	4001 SW Canyon Rd Portland, Multnomah County	historic name:	Portland Zoo Railway Historic District
assoc addresses:		current/other names:	Washington Park and Zoo Railroad; Portland Zoo Train; PZRY
location descr:		block/lot/tax lot:	
		twshp/rng/sect/qtr sect:	
PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS			
resource type:	district	height (stories):	
elig evaluation:	eligible/significant	total elig resources:	9
prim constr date:	c.	second date:	
		total inelig resources:	6
NR Status:		date indiv listed:	Individually Listed 03/05/2020
primary orig use:	RECR/CULTURE: General	orig use comments:	Fair
second orig use:	Rail Related	prim style comments:	Railroad
primary style:	Other / Undefined	sec style comments:	
secondary style:		siding comments:	
primary siding:		architect:	Lawrence, Tucker & Wallmann
secondary siding:		builder:	
plan type:			
comments/notes:			
GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS			
Not associated with any surveys or groupings.			
SHPO INFORMATION FOR THIS PROPERTY			
NR date listed:	03/05/2020	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 Portland Zoo Railway Historic District (PZRY) is a 5/8th scale railroad designed and built by professional train designers and railroad engineers, and established as a recreational line for the entertainment of both children and adults in the post-war era of the 1950s. Constructed in the west hills of Portland in 1958, the railway also transports people between the Oregon Zoo and the Washington Park Station overlooking the International Rose Test Garden. Between 1960 and 2013 the track was 2.5 miles long, currently it is 1.56 miles in length, though almost a mile of track (.96 mile) is now unused due to deferred maintenance. Currently, the railroad is a single structural system consisting of three loops connected by one and one-half miles of track built on a series of grades that extend from a station in the zoo, past animal habitats, and into a forest on an east-facing hillside in Washington Park, where passengers travel through an overstory canopy made up of 150+ year old Douglas fir and western red cedar. The acreage of the nominated district is approximately five acres, and ranges in elevation from 674 to 705 feet AMSL. The first loop of railroad had been built and trains were running one year before the zoo opened, and ticket proceeds (as intended) helped fund the construction of more rail and the construction of zoo infrastructure. The railroad is considered here as a separate but integral entity of the zoo and Washington Park. There are fifteen total resources in the historic district. Nine are contributing and six are noncontributing. There are two contributing buildings, which are the Washington Park Station (1958), and the tunnel-roundhouse complex (1959). The railroad is the one contributing structure with its 30" gauge track, ties, switches, and gravel ballast on a 15' wide grade. The six contributing objects are the rolling stock and are as follows: 1) the diesel-powered Zooliner locomotive and its five cars that were built in the streamlined modern 'Aerotrain' design in 1958; 2) the steam-powered Oregon Locomotive No. 1 and its four passenger cars, (1959); 3) the much-remodeled diesel-powered Oregon Express locomotive 5 (1959) and three cars; 4) locomotive No. 3 (1929), known as the Work Train and the cars it pulls, which are a side-dump car, a rock car, and two flat cars; 5) Locomotive No. 6 (1938) is also used for work and track maintenance and pulls two passenger coaches; 6) the gas-powered speeder donated by the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1961. The two non-contributing structures include a 1,200-gallon water tank elevated on a tower that feeds water to the steam engine, which replaced an earlier water tank and tower and is identical with the original and in the same location, and non-contributing trestle built in 2014 where a previous trestle was located. The new station (2016) at the main zoo terminal is the non-contributing building, though the train platform is original. The three non-contributing objects include a handcar (1996), a generator platform car (ca. 2000), and a push car that was used in the railroad's construction in 1958. The main character-defining elements of the railway are its scale, forested setting, and the classic trains designed to appeal to children. The apogee of the character-defining elements of the rolling stock are found in the space-age streamlining of the gleaming aluminum body of the Zooliner and the fully rendered details (diamond smoke stack, cow catcher, polished brass, red paint, gold leaf lettering, bells, and whistles) of the steam locomotive Oregon. While there have been changes to the PZRY over the years, particularly within the portion that passes through the Oregon Zoo, the PZRY possesses integrity of design, materials, setting, workmanship, and feeling because it is in its original setting, and retains its original rolling stock, track, tunnel-roundhouse complex, and one of the two original station buildings. The tracks, ballast, and grade of the PZRY are in good condition, though there is deferred maintenance on the Washington Park portion of the line.</p>			
HISTORY			
<i>(Chronological, descriptive history of the property from its construction through at least the historic period - preferably to the present)</i>			
<p>The PZRY is nominated at the Statewide level of significance under Criterion A, in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Entertainment/Recreation. The PZRY is also nominated at the Statewide level of significance under Criterion C, in the area of Engineering. The period of significance begins in 1958 when the first train ran on the railroad and ends in 1968 when the two original branches of the railroad were combined into one ride. Significant under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development, the PZRY is the physical manifestation of a one-of-a-kind state-wide cooperative effort of over twenty-five thousand people that has made a lasting and significant contribution to the broad patterns of Oregon history. Parts of the railroad were developed as part of the celebration of the centennial of Oregon's statehood, where the trains were recreational rides at Oregon's Centennial celebration. Therefore, as the trains of the PZRY continue to entertain and operate recreationally, this reflects the PZRY's significance under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment and Recreation. The PZRY is also significant under Criterion C because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type and period, as it retains the majority of the physical features distinctive to post-war era recreation railroads present in the United States built to entertain the children born after the war. The PZRY was engineered, designed, and built by professional railroad engineers and train designers, and is significant as a small-scaled example of railroad and train engineering. Character-defining features include the original rolling stock with fully rendered details designed to appeal to children, the scenic setting, and the railroad itself with its narrow-gauge tracks, revival-styled Second Empire railroad station, and all the bells and whistles common to a railroad. The contributing buildings, structures, and rolling stock of the PZRY possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Within the set of all zoo and theme park railroads it is second only to the Disneyland Railroad considering integrity, route, quality and quantity of rolling stock, and route length. Walt Disney was an honorary board member of the PZRY.</p>			

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 Respository: _____

Bibliography:

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Hirschberger Co. for the construction of a miniature locomotive and cars for the new zoo. 107724: 4/3/1958: An Ordinance amending Article 11 of Ordinance 77780 by adding new sections creating a Zoo Railway Committee, prescribing duties, established procedures, and declaring an emergency. 107870: 4/30/1958: An Ordinance accepting the gift of two tanks and two gas pumps for the zoo railway from The Texas Company. 108437: 7/29/589: An Ordinance granting a revocable permit to the Portland Zoo Railroad Division of the Portland Zoological Society to run railroad tracks across portions of Hoyt and Washington Parks and portions of property owned by the Bureau of Water Works. 108488: 3/6/1958: An Ordinance providing for the sum of \$4161.50 to be made available toward the extension of the zoo railroad to the Washington Park, and declaring an emergency.