



The City of Seattle

Pioneer Square Preservation Board

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PSB 219/24

ARC/Staff Report

Board meeting August 7, 2024

Board Members Please Note: The citations from the District Ordinance, Rules for the Pioneer Square Preservation District, and Secretary of the Interior's Standards listed below are for your consideration in addition to any other citations you find relevant in considering each application.

080724.21 **City Hall Park**

Applicant: Jonathan Garner, Parks and Recreation

Proposed: Removal of monument

ARC/ Staff report: City Hall Park became a park in 1911 after the Seattle City Hall was torn down and construction started on a new City-County building, currently the King County Courthouse. The park has been reconfigured overtime. In 1916 the Daughter's of the American Revolution dedicated a monument that is currently located on the north end of the park. The monument is a boulder with two plaques and an inscription topped with three cannon balls. One of the plaques commemorates the sinking of the USS Maine, which sunk in the Havana Harbor during the Spanish American War in 1898. The plaque says "This is cast from metal recovered from the USS Maine." There is no known relation between that event and this site or the Pioneer Square area. The other plaque states "The Battle of Seattle was fought on this ground in 1856." The "battle" which lasted a day, was between the white federal troops joined by some white settlers and a band of Nisqually, Puyallup and Yakima and other Indigenous people. The skirmish was attributed to Indigenous frustration with treaties and forced removal to a reservation being pushed upon them by then Governor Isaacs Stevens, as well as several other violent attacks on Native villages by white soldiers and settlers. There were similar skirmishes around the region sometimes referred to as the Puget Sound Wars. Not all local Indigenous people were involved in the "battle" and not all white settlers were involved in the "battle" While white settlers blockaded themselves in a block house, the Decator fired cannon balls into the woods. Some local Native people canoed out into the bay or boarded Doc Maynard's ship. The "ground" where the battle was fought was not likely literally the park as implied by the monument plaque but more likely the broad vicinity of present day Pioneer Square.

**Administered by The Historic Preservation Program
The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods**

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According to a map sketched at the time of the battle, the block house where white settlers blockaded themselves was located near the present day 1st and Cherry and the Decator, the ship that shot howitzers at the Indigenous group, was in Elliot Bay south of that location near Washington Street. Regardless of the accuracy of the location, the Pioneer Square National Register Nominations notes “The monument reflects the patriotic and political attitudes of the 1910’s and more specifically the Lady Stirling Chapter of the Daughters of the Revolution.” The monument does not tell the full story of the history of City Hall Park, Seattle or Pioneer Square. While the “battle of Seattle” was a significant moment in history, the background leading up to it are complex and multi-sided and the effects of the “battle” were lasting for both white settlers and the Indigenous people. The story is more than one day and some cannon balls as represented on the boulder which without other interpretation and history, misrepresents history and therefore the Board may find that the boulder with the attached signage and cannon balls does not have historical or cultural value to the park or the district.

A previous plaque was removed from the waterfront in 2013 as part of the Seawall Replacement Project. The Board has requested that the plaque not be returned and that any future historical interpretation tell a full story of the history and be in consultation with Tribes or Indigenous consultants.

The Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation proposes to permanently remove a monument from City Hall Park. The areas will be replanted with grass. The Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation will be developing a plan for renovation of the park. The Indigenous Advisory Council (IAC) submitted a letter in support of the monument removal as it not reflective of the histories, experiences, or perspective of Tribal communities. The letter also asks for future engagement on the renovations of City Hall Park, including design, landscaping and art.

The IAC also has asked the Pioneer Square Preservation Board to collaborate with the IAC to develop a cross-commission protocol for culturally grounded advisory support on PSPB issues that may impact Native communities.

Draft Motion:

I move to recommend granting a Certificate of Approval for the permanent removal of the bolder monument including the cannon balls as it does not provide a full and inclusive story of “battle of Seattle,” the events that led up to it or followed it, therefore the monument does not provide historical or cultural value for City Hall Park, Seattle or Pioneer Square. The redesign of the park could better contribute to the history of the area by engaging the Tribes, urban Indian organizations and the Indigenous Advisory Council in the renovation of City Hall Park planning to ensure that future design, and any historical interpretation also reflect accurate and culturally relevant Native histories and continued presence.

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval based on considering the application submittal and Board discussion at the *August 7, 2024* public meeting and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

Code Citations:

Seattle Municipal Code

23.66.030 Certificates of Approval required

Certificate of approval required. No person shall alter, demolish, construct, reconstruct, restore, remodel, make any visible change to the exterior appearance of any structure, or to the public rights-of-way or other public spaces in a special review district, and no one shall remove or substantially alter any existing sign or erect or place any new sign or change the principal use of any building, or any portion of a building, structure or lot in a special review district, and no permit for such activity shall be issued unless a certificate of approval has been issued by the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

Rules for the Pioneer Square Preservation District

III. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR REHABILITATION AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

Issued: July 31, 2024

Genna Nashem

Pioneer Square Preservation Board Coordinator