

Presentation – Preservation Becomes Historic

Thanks

APA Idaho – Ted Vanegas - Attendees

Introduction – Preservation is Historic

Typically, historic places must be 50 years old to be considered historic – if so, the historic preservation movement in Boise is just now becoming “HISTORIC” itself

This is not a litany of losses, but rather a brief exploration of efforts to preserve historic places in Boise

Main Street in 1900

We tend to ascribe blame for the loss of historic places to ONE culprit – Urban Renewal

While that blame is well-placed (as we will describe) it fails to acknowledge the near constant evolution that defines American cities

Only 3 buildings from this 120 year old photo still exist – most were torn down within 20 years of this photo

O’Farrell Cabin

In 1910, the children of John and Mary O’Farrell proposed to demolish the first home in Boise.

Built in 1863 – in the way of a new house

Daughters of the American Revolution asked permission to move it a few yards north – making this the first historic preservation effort in Boise and one of the oldest such efforts in the State of Idaho.

Main Street in approximately 1970

No systematic effort to preserve historic places in Boise

No framework to mandate the protection of these places

Coincides with Urban Renewal and the beginning of a preservation movement

Demolition – First National Bank of Idaho

Boise Redevelopment Agency – BRA – Established 1965

Urban Renewal – meant to address blight nationally – was never really appropriate for Boise

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A downtown mall was proposed to attract shoppers back to the heart of the city, but as plans stalled, the CURE turned out to be worse than the DISEASE

Downtown Boise – 1978

The demolition of historic buildings – the proliferation of surface parking

An air of abandonment

Tearing Down Boise – Harper's Magazine - 1974

"If things go on as they are, Boise stands an excellent chance of becoming the first American city to have deliberately eradicated itself."

Friends of the Old Buildings

Formed in 1972 by John Bertram and Alan Minskoff

The Idaho Historic Preservation Council ALSO formed in 1972 by Joan Carley and others – now Preservation Idaho

Private advocacy spurred public efforts

Merle Wells – Assay Office

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

Congressional response to public concern over the loss of historic places spurred by federal projects (highways, urban renewal, etc.

Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer – 1969

Merle Wells – 1st SHPO

Idaho State Historic Preservation Office – 1971

Federal funds allows program – no state funds

Section 106 compliance review

Other SHPO Activities/Programs

Boise Capitol Area Historic Districts – 1976

First downtown historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places

Boise National Register Districts

Fort Boise – 1972

Spaulding Ranch – 1994

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No protections – only honorific

Old Boise Historic District

City of Boise Historic Preservation Commission
Established – 1979

Old Boise Local Historic District – 1980

Boise Local Historic Districts

Provide protections in Boise for the first time

10 local historic districts in Boise

Most are residential

North End (& Expanded NE),

Hays St.

Warm Springs Avenue

Harrison Boulevard

East End

East Main Street – Newest – 2019

Spaulding Ranch – Designated in 1996 – only outside the historic core

Three are Commercial

Hyde Park

South 8th St.

Old Boise – oldest in the city – 1980

Overlapping Districts

Cole School Demonstration

Preservation activities continue to rely on grass roots efforts

Cole School – demolished 2009

Travis Apartments

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City efforts to establish a demolition review process

Now and Then – Dave Crawford

Cities are a continuum

Growth and change are necessary

Questions and Answers