

Big Red

The Crane Shed, Community Identity, and Historic Preservation in Bend

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“That represents the logging industry to me — I’m not a fan of the logging industry, so I’m happy to see it come down.”

“I have lived with logging all my life. I think they’re taking down something that belongs to me. They have no right to take down the one thing we have left. . . . We can’t destroy our heritage, we don’t have a right to. If you lived in New York, and you wanted the land under the Statue of Liberty, would you tear her down? No, you wouldn’t! Well, that’s our Statue of Liberty.”

THE YEAR 2016 marks two anniversaries: the fiftieth anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and the centennial of the creation of Deschutes County, the last county created in Oregon. The confluence of these two events offers an opportunity to examine an especially contentious debate over the fate of one historic building. During the summer of 2004, historic preservation within Bend city limits came under intense scrutiny over an enormous wooden building nicknamed “Big Red.” From 1937 to 2004, Big Red — properly known as the Brooks-Scanlon Crane Shed because of the giant crane suspended from its ceiling — dominated Industrial Way on the north end of the area historically known as the mill district. It was not the type of building that went unnoticed; it was the type of building used as a landmark when giving directions.

As the Executive Director for the Deschutes County Historical Society, I and my staff are the front line for public research into historic properties and the meaning of preservation. We often answer questions about the rules and regulations applied to historic properties. Conversely, we also hear public commentary regarding the preservation process and historic buildings lost. With regard to Big Red, I have heard people say that on a clear day you could see it from Mt. Bachelor.



Photo courtesy of Deschutes County Historical Society

THE BROOKS-SCANLON CRANE SHED is visible on the left across the log pond in about 1955. The mill began operations in 1916 on the banks of the Deschutes River just south of Bend’s downtown core. Brooks-Scanlon expanded into two mills, Mill A and Mill B, by the 1930s and added the Crane Shed for dry lumber storage in 1937.

Despite its physical prominence and long association with Bend’s significant lumber history, the Crane Shed was sold in 2004 and then demolished only nine months later. The story of how the community debated the shed’s value reveals the complexities and pitfalls that exist in balancing the goals of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) with owners’ rights and with local and state land-use regulations.

The NHPA states among its purposes that “the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life.” For more than half a century, the mill district represented the community identity of Bend, a city built by the lumber industry. Following the final mill closure in 1993, the city’s transformation from a lumber city to a retirement



THE DEMOLITION of the crane shed on August 18, 2004, continued well after dark. The owners later admitted to taking down the building without a proper demolition permit to prevent their opponents from filing an appeal.

and outdoor recreation hub began, and the remnant mill buildings were all that remained on the landscape to testify to the lumber identity. While the NHPA is meant to function as a tool for saving historic spaces as expressions of community identity and to be controlled directly by the community and the property owners, there is an inherent conflict in attaching a system of community oversight to privately owned structures. As a result, preservation laws suffer from the perception of government overreach against owner's rights.

The Crane Shed became endangered when the City of Bend rezoned the entire mill district area, consisting of 270 acres, from industrial to mixed-use riverfront. Developers unveiled plans to turn the industrial "mill district" into today's The Old Mill District, featuring shopping, dining, office buildings, hotels, condominiums, and an amphitheater.³ Built into a space closed to the public for over eighty years, the development was a huge gamble. Once investors secured the first retail store leases and a movie theater, property

values skyrocketed, including for the acreage underneath the Crane Shed. What is an industrial warehouse to do when the industry moves away?

The building's story ended on August 18, 2004. While the Bend City Council decided whether to approve the issuance of a demolition permit, bulldozers and a work crew gathered at the site; a crowd gathered as well. A classic high desert, late summer storm of hail and lightning added to the drama. Following a five-to-two council vote in favor of allowing the demolition, the story took a strange turn when the work crew demolished the building illegally. For longtime residents, the act confirmed the community identity of Bend was in danger of being erased by developers with the highest bid. Worse, an identity created by newcomers would take its place.⁴

To understand the public mourning for the Crane Shed, one must understand that during the last decade of the twentieth century, the city of Bend experienced massive demographic changes that created a climate of hyper-construction. Between 1990 and 2000, the population grew from 20,469 to 52,029 — more than double. Averaging 3,100 new residents per year — which nearly matched the preceding ten-year growth patterns of 3,553 (1970–1980) and 3,206 (1980–1990) — housing developments within the city limits sprang up seemingly overnight.⁵

Many new residents were retirees flocking to central Oregon, where land and houses could be bought or built new for a fraction of the sale price of their existing homes. Bend offered the opportunity to extend their retirement income and join a community filled with recreational activity and plenty of sunshine. It is difficult to quantify the depth of the physical changes to the built landscape in that ten years' time, especially for those who had lived in Bend their whole lives. At the peak of new construction, between 2004 and 2006, the City of Bend issued over 5,700 building permits.⁶ City infrastructure struggled to keep up in all areas and especially in the city planning department, where updates to the historic preservation code languished.

Deschutes County residents have had a reluctant relationship with land-use planning. The first county-wide planning codes were enacted in 1965 and then repealed by voters the following year. In 1971, the county embarked on creating a comprehensive land-use plan and zoning ordinances, which it adopted in 1972.⁷ These steps came just ahead of Oregon's groundbreaking land-use planning legislation. Senate Bill 100, which became law in 1973, established a statewide system of land-use planning that requires each city and county to generate comprehensive land-use management plans. Each plan must contain urban growth boundaries and address a set of common statewide goals. Of these, Goal 5 broadly covers natural areas, scenic and

historic areas, and open spaces. In preparing their comprehensive plans, cities and counties were required to complete surveys that allowed them to assess and assign areas within their boundaries to the appropriate management goal. The initial historic resource surveys identified properties that should be protected under Goal 5, and sometimes prompted National Register nominations. In 1982, Eric Alexander of Brooks Resources prepared and submitted a National Register nomination of Brooks-Scanlon Mill A and the Crane Shed as a combined group, but the nomination did not move forward due to owner objection. Historian Stephen Dow Beckham completed many of the first historic resource surveys in Deschutes County, including the first historic inventory report for the Brooks-Scanlon Crane Shed, on August 31, 1976. Under city Resolution 1852, Bend designated its first list of historic resources in 1988.

Deschutes County's first land-use plan was submitted to the state in 1979 and accepted in 1981. Meanwhile, in 1980, Deschutes County planning officials established the Deschutes County Historical Landmarks Commission and recruited its first volunteer commissioners in order to properly survey and assess historic resources that should be treated as Goal 5 listings under the new state land-use planning laws.⁸ Established as an intergovernmental commission to represent the whole county and its municipalities, the commission is responsible for maintaining current surveys of historic resources and aiding property owners in maintaining those properties. For a property designated as a historical resource, the landmarks commission must review plans for physical changes and, if appropriate, authorize permit approval. There are two levels of historic protection governed by the Deschutes County Historic Landmarks Commission. Properties listed by their local governing municipality as relevant to local history are guided by local preservation ordinances, and local identification is reported to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). A higher level of preservation comes with National Register of Historic Places status, which must adhere to the guidelines for preservation established by the Secretary of the Interior. It is important to note here that Oregon remains the only state in the nation where owner objection can prevent a property from being listed as a protected resource at either the local or national level. While local landmarks commissions can survey properties, gather research, and identify them as cultural resources, a property cannot be governed by preservation ordinances at either the local or federal level without owner consent.⁹

Conversation about historic buildings and the changes to the built environment during the construction and population boom of 1990 to 2000 inevitably invoked the ghost of the Pilot Butte Inn.¹⁰ Even as of this writing, the webpage for the Deschutes County Historic Landmarks Commission



THE PILOT BUTTE INN opened in grand style in March 1917. Built of native materials, but with a European style, the inn offered the comforts of a metropolis on the edge of what was still a small town with a population of only 5,400.

specifically cites the loss of the inn in 1973 as a reason to fight for preservation of historic places. The Pilot Butte Inn opened on St. Patrick's Day 1917, a manifestation of city founders' dreams that Bend would soon be a town of one hundred thousand with street cars and all the amenities of a modern metropolis.¹¹ Fashioned as a classic alpine lodge, locally quarried volcanic tuff formed its sturdy base, a boar's head greeted visitors at the entrance, and a six-and-a-half-foot plate glass window, shipped from France while World War I still raged, provided a view of the Deschutes River from the formal dining room. Standing on the corner of Wall Street and Greenwood, at the edge of downtown, the Pilot Butte Inn was the community heart. Any gathering of consequence happened under its roof. The inn even provided space for the first radio station in Bend, one of many notable connections to the town's development.

The inn closed in 1965, when it no longer met current safety codes. By the 1970s, the inn suffered badly from delayed maintenance and neglected critical upgrades — namely, a fire suppression system. Redevelopment plans that



BY THE 1960s, the Pilot Butte Inn’s glorious past no longer carried weight with travelers, despite a few attempts to modernize. Calls for urban renewal at the start of the 1970s targeted the site as an example of a run-down building that hindered new investment and economic growth. This photograph shows the building being demolished in 1973.

focused on the “blight and decay” of empty downtown structures focused on the sizeable acreage of the inn property.¹² With guidance from historian Paul Hartwig of the Oregon State Highway Division, Central Oregon Community College professor Keith Clark and architect Michael Shannon turned to the National Historic Preservation Act as a call to action. In July 1972, the Pilot Butte Inn became the first structure from Deschutes County to be nominated and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but several attempts to identify an affordable plan for renovation failed. The depressed, shrinking mill economy of the 1970s could not rally the necessary investments. In 1973, a wrecking ball took the inn apart. According to accounts in *The Bulletin*, some residents cried.¹³ When the demolition happened, neither a local committee dedicated to preservation nor a county historical society existed. Across the street from the inn, Equitable Savings and Loan, which maintained a set of carillon bells that played each day at 9:30 a.m. and

noon, played “Auld Lang Syne” each day of the demolition as a means to say goodbye.¹⁴ Many scavenged for remnants as keepsakes, including the boar’s head, which surfaced in 2015 as a donation to the Deschutes County Historical Society collection.

As the growth spurt of the 1990s rose to fever pitch, preservation-minded citizens used the inn as an example of not only lost heritage but also economic short-sightedness. In the new tourism economy, the inn was a lost asset of unknowable revenue generation — although multiplying its 150 rooms by the current nightly rates of nearby hotels begins to give one a decent estimate. The reluctance to lose more historic spaces led to five significant preservation victories between 1990 and 2001.

In 1990, the 1904 H.E. Allen/Rademacher House faced a threat of demolition to make way for the scourge of preservationists everywhere — a parking lot. Located in a small pocket of residential homes sandwiched between downtown, Drake Park, and Mirror Pond were two homes that belonged to former city pioneers: H.E. Allen, manager of the Brooks-Scanlon Mill whose home later became that of Dr. Clyde Rademacher, one of the founders of Bend Memorial Clinic; and the home of civic leader Clyde McKay of the Bend Company. In the late 1980s, the 1916 Clyde McKay house was sold with no historic preservation designations, relocated, and converted to a restaurant called the McKay Cottage. In 1990, the city created a downtown urban renewal district and the Bend Development Board (BDB) to oversee its management. The city secured the land under the McKay and H.E. Allen/Rademacher homes for construction of a plaza, parking lot, and restrooms to support the downtown shopping core.¹⁵

While the McKay home had a new purpose, the Allen/Rademacher House, however, sat boarded up and in disrepair. Painted a horrible shade of green, it was an eyesore. A “Save the Rademacher House” community group formed. The BDB pointed out that it was not opposed to saving the structure and was more than willing to let it be relocated if the community and the historic landmarks commission felt that was needed. The BDB also stated clearly that it “was not established for nor are its funds earmarked for historic preservation. They are for downtown revitalization.”¹⁶ Project managers possessed a demolition permit but also recognized the community’s passion for the house. They challenged the community group to come up with a plan to save the building — along with the necessary money — within forty-five days. With a line-up of major supporters that included the Central Oregon Builders Association, the final donation needed to secure their plan came from Brooks Resources just hours before the deadline. Support came not just in cash but also through in-kind construction services. The BDB



Photo courtesy of the Deschutes County Historical Society

THE GOODWILLIE-ALLEN-RADEMACHER HOUSE is an example of an early Craftsman bungalow style. Built in 1904 by Bend's first mayor, Arthur Goodwillie, it was subsequently owned by Herbert Allen, manager of Brooks-Scanlon mills, then by Dr. Clyde Rademacher, one of the founders of Bend Memorial Clinic.

accepted the community's efforts and redesigned the development project to include the restored historic house. Moved fifty feet, the house underwent a full restoration and conversion to community art space for the regional non-profit art group Arts Central. A prominent feature in the urban renewal project on the edge of the new Mirror Pond Plaza, the house is now owned by the city and generates lease income that offsets future maintenance.¹⁷

Ten years after the restoration, the H.E. Allen/Rademacher House was listed on the National Register. During the nomination process, planning consultant Michael Hall discovered the building was older and more important to city history than previously known; the house was actually built in 1904 by the city's first mayor, Arthur Goodwillie, and was home to three prominent citizens of Bend's past. The discovery resulted in its new three-name National Register designation, the Goodwillie-AlLEN-Rademacher House.¹⁸ Demolition nearly prevented the true history of the house from coming to light, which served as a bonus years after the initial preservation victory.

At the same time the "Save the Rademacher House" committee formed, a similar community effort worked to save the Bend Amateur Athletic Club building, built in 1917 and 1918. The athletic club had an impressive start, with construction funds for the building raised through community subscriptions, but the club was short-lived. Following the club's closure in 1921, the building was transferred in 1924 to the Bend School District, which used it as the gymnasium for the 1925 Bend High School built next door. By the 1990s, the land under the building was owned by the school district, but the structure was owned by Bend Parks and Recreation District. Although the Bend Amateur Athletic Club was listed on the National Register in 1983 and not in danger of demolition quite yet, it suffered from benign neglect and a lack of appropriate future use. Again, the perfect mixture of private and public fundraising for a community benefit saved a historic building, with the City of Bend sponsoring critical support of the roof repairs, the project's



Photo courtesy of the Deschutes County Historical Society

THE BEND AMATEUR ATHLETIC CLUB was completed in 1918 following an ambitious membership drive by the residents of Bend. Soon after completion, the influenza pandemic of 1918 struck Bend and the new gymnasium became a make-shift hospital. The athletic club closed its doors only a few years later. The building's ownership was transferred to Bend High School, built next door in 1925, which used the gym and indoor swimming pool as its recreational facility.

first secured funding gift. Following completion of restoration in 1999, it was leased to the Boys and Girls Club of Central Oregon.¹⁹

Not everyone, however, supported the efforts. If the first anti-preservation argument is protection of private property rights, the second is the specter of spending taxpayer dollars on activities that should be funded through private philanthropy. *The Bulletin*, led by editor Robert W. Chandler, offered criticism in February 1993:

At the risk of being accused of throwing cold water on the rosy dreams of others, let me comment on a couple of Bend projects still in the talking stage. One is the old Bend Amateur Athletic Club building. The other is the Allen-Rademacher house on Mirror Pond. First, let it be noted that I do not object to saving historic buildings for good use. . . . I hoped the Pilot Butte Inn . . . could be saved. It could have been saved, too. But its last owner turned greedy. . . . on occasion there still are complaints that “someone” should have done “something” to stop the demolition. No one at the time identified “someone” by name, or put a price tag on “something.” There was a conspicuous lack of support for suggestions that it become city-owned property.

My fear is that each of these projects, in spite of the best intentions of all concerned, will become public charges . . . with public funds needed to fix leaks, to get plumbing systems up and operating again or to perform other normal maintenance on old buildings poorly maintained for some time.

I realize those who dream of the future they envision for each of these projects are certain that everything will work out, even if all the money is not yet in sight. They have faith. And I have faith in their good intentions.

But I think that in each of these two cases the City of Bend needs more information than it now has, needs some guarantees or near-guarantees, needs at least serious study by disinterested experts, needs to know there is an excellent, not merely a good chance to keep each project from turning into drags on the limited public purse of a relatively small municipality. . . .

Let’s at least get the firmest independent estimates available. Let’s obtain realistic pictures of costs to restore the historic wrecks. . . . Let’s do that before the first public monies are committed.²⁰

By August 1993, however, the *Bulletin* and Chandler changed course and expressed support of a revised plaza plan, including the restored H.E. Allen/Rademacher House. By November, the paper applauded and congratulated the efforts of the community’s work, stating that “the contributors and others who joined the effort to save the house ought to feel good about their success. This community does not have a record of preserving its past — at least in terms of its old buildings — and perhaps this is a start to changing that reputation.” Chandler’s reversal of position on such public preservation projects

included being the lead donor for the Bend Amateur Athletic Club project.²¹

The next preservation success story involved the outright purchase by the City of Bend of the Tower Theater for \$445,000. Opened in 1940 but put out of business by new multiplex theaters in 1993, the Tower, with its tall neon marquee and location on Wall Street, was a significant landmark. Its potential use as an arts center that anchored the downtown business district earned strong support. The Tower Theater Foundation was formed in 1997 for the purpose of fundraising for the renovation of the theater and its purchase from the city. Renovations were finished and a grand reopening was held on January 30, 2004. The financial arrangement between the foundation and the city is a no-interest loan, on which the foundation paid a lump sum of \$145,000 in 2001 and continues to pay \$6,000 per year.²²

The Tower Theater project represents an initiative that saved a historic building yet remained outside preservation ordinances. The Tower Theater Foundation specifically avoided historic preservation status at the local or federal level as it sought to rehabilitate the building rather than restore it.²³ The technical standards for historic preservation of structures defines the term *restoration* as maintaining the structure to a specific moment in its history. *Rehabilitation* is defined as significantly altering a historic structure to foster continuing use yet maintaining the historic character.²⁴ Changes to the Tower Theater’s front entrance and absorption of adjacent retail spaces increased its capacity but significantly altered the building’s exterior appearance. While the theater is a part of downtown heritage programs such as the Heritage Walk and is considered a historic asset by the public — a status reinforced by the preservation fee for the “ongoing restoration and maintenance of the building” attached to all ticket sales — it remains outside a dedicated historic preservation listing.²⁵

A fourth preservation effort between 1990 and 2001 involved the Oregon Trunk Railroad Passenger Depot. The 1911 volcanic tuff stone building, with an exact match in Redmond, Oregon, had once been the arrival and departure point for travel between Bend, Portland, and Seattle. Long since abandoned for passenger travel, by the late 1990s it was directly in the path of the rerouted Highway 97 parkway project — construction long overdue given the dramatic increase in traffic that accompanied the population boom. The depot was already identified as a Goal 5 resource at the city and county levels, and the relocation and preservation of the depot was supported by Oregon Department of Transportation funding. The only thing needed was a place and purpose.²⁶

While many ideas came and went, including moving the depot to the city of Prineville for use with its railroad, it ultimately moved to The Old Mill



Photo courtesy of the Deschutes County Historical Society

THIS AERIAL VIEW of Bend, Oregon, in about 1945 shows Brooks-Scanlon and Shevlin-Hixon Mills both in operation with fields of stacked lumber visible to the left and right of the smoke stacks. The parallel streets of Wall and Bond mark the downtown corridor in the center of the image.

District in 1999.²⁷ Carefully marked and taken apart stone by stone, a highlight of the move involved opening the eighty-eight-year-old time capsule from the building's cornerstone. Gathering eagerly at the Deschutes Historical Museum, a crowd wondered if a long-lost object lay inside — the Golden Spike driven by railroad magnate James J. Hill on Railroad Day, October 5, 1911. The spike disappointed everyone by not being inside.²⁸ Following the capsule's reassembly and the insertion of a new one in the cornerstone, the depot became home to the Arts Station, an educational space for the regional arts group that previously occupied the Goodwillie-Allen-Rademacher House. While landmarks commissioners and the State Historic Preservation Office were directly involved in the project, the depot is not on the National Register of Historic Places.²⁹

Last, in 2001, in response to traffic pressures created between downtown and the quickly transforming Old Mill District and to the increasing demolition of small historic houses to build larger, newer ones, residents of the neighborhood sandwiched between downtown and The Old Mill District successfully created the city's first National Historic District. The area, still boasting sections of unpaved streets from the days of Model Ts, comprised 189 buildings, 136 structures, and 740 acres of residential neighborhood now under landmarks protection as the Old Town Historic District. The primary opponents were largely non-resident owners who, later, were pleasantly surprised when their home values increased due to the historic district designation.³⁰

These success stories gave preservation-minded citizens a solid track record and the confidence that the community could rally and find new life for Big Red. With the exception of being visually memorable, however, the Brooks-Scanlon Crane Shed was at the opposite end of the building spectrum from the Pilot Butte Inn. Built in 1937 simply to store lumber, the building was 74 feet in width, 500 feet in length, and approximately 65 feet in height. It

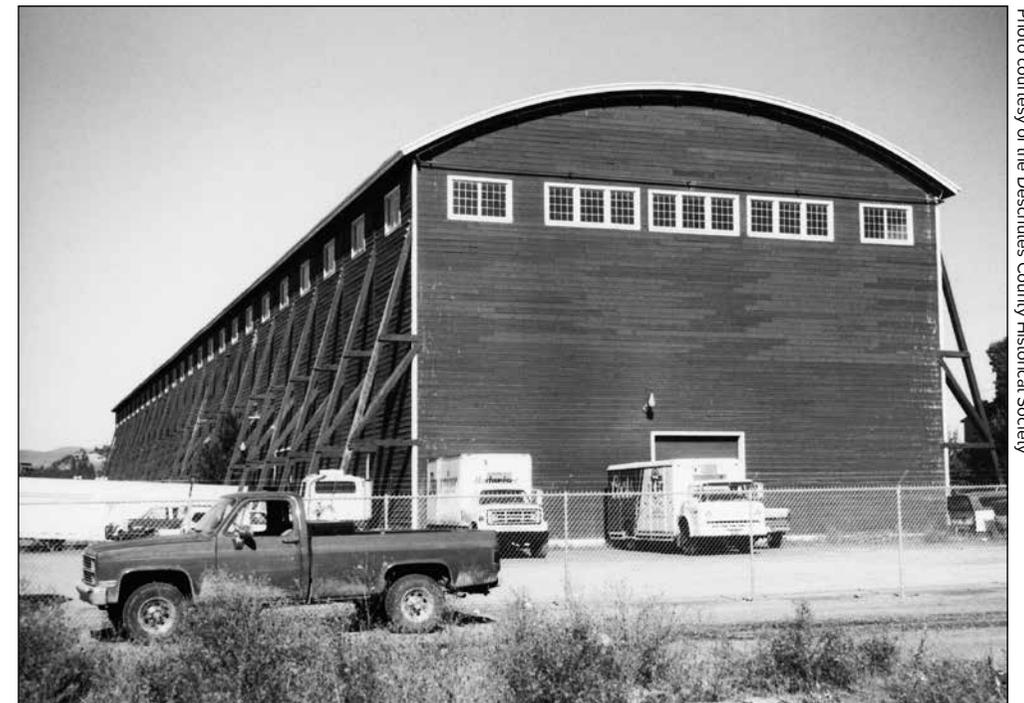


Photo courtesy of the Deschutes County Historical Society

CLEARWATER BEVERAGE DISTRIBUTORS purchased the building in 1991. It was the last company to use the Crane Shed for industrial use.



Photo courtesy of the Deschutes County Historical Society

THE CRANE SHED derived its name from the five ton crane mounted to the ceiling that easily shuttled stacks of lumber onto trucks for shipment.

represented a substantial expansion for Brooks-Scanlon. The Minnesota-based company began operations in Oregon in 1916 across the Deschutes River from a second Minnesota-based lumber company, Shevlin-Hixon. In five short years, the two mills rose to be the biggest pine mills in the world, supplying an international demand for lumber created by World War I and, later, reconstruction efforts.³¹

Brooks-Scanlon and Shevlin-Hixon dominated the landscape of Bend through their sheer acreage, huge lumber drying fields, smoke stacks, burners, trestles, and mill-owned trains. Their work tinged the air with the smell of cut timber and coated nearby clotheslines with sawdust. Even the sounds of the city belonged to the mills, with shift whistles that marked the time of day and told children when to be home for supper. The mills employed over a third of the community, from sawyers at the mill to loggers living in mill camps in the woods to train engineers hauling logs from one to the other. Those not employed by the mills still relied on them, either as clients or for the wages their employees fed back into the community.³²

Minnesota architects W. Huffman and H.W. Weidlich, who designed and built many lumber company buildings in the Midwest and West, designed the Crane Shed. According to the October 1937 issue of *Brooks-Scanlon Pine Echoes*, construction took half a million board feet of lumber, three railroad cars of cement, and a carload of roofing materials. It contained twenty-six arched rib trusses to support its roof and is most remembered for the twenty-six buttresses that lined its exterior walls to support its namesake, a seventy-foot, built-in crane that moved lumber from one end of the building to the other. Suspended forty-five feet in the air, the Milwaukee Electric Crane and Manufacturing Company equipment weighed five tons and spanned the length of the building. Paul Hosmer, editor of the *Pine Echoes*, described its construction: “The big arch rib trusses were hoisted into position by a crane and fitted together by a gang of nerveless air hawks who had never heard of Newton. They ran around on the narrow planking up in the stratosphere as if they were putting shingles on Grandpa’s woodshed.”³³

The Crane Shed housed more than thirty million board feet of lumber at capacity. As sales came in, the crane plucked lumber from piles of wood stacked thirty feet tall in neat rows. From its construction in 1937 until the late 1940s, the Crane Shed was a hub of activity. Tallymen labored away in ten-hour shifts in the rows of lumber, counting, sorting, and directing the crane operators where to take which stack. As expected of a shed, a lack of insulation meant extremes of hot and cold depending on the season.³⁴

There is great irony in the year of the Crane Shed’s construction. In 1937, reports on the timber yields available in the forests of central Oregon predicted an economic disaster if the scale of cutting was not contained. U.S. Forest Service Forester F.A. Silcox rated 1936 production at 250 million board feet per year, but capacity of the forest at only 89 million board feet, stating that “Bend is living in a state of impending disaster.” The Bend Chamber of Commerce formed a committee on reforestation to conduct investigations. With Robert W. Sawyer, editor of *The Bend Bulletin*, as chair, the committee reached the same conclusion in February 1938. In order to protect the long term economic stability of the region, the committee recommended that every action be taken to gain federal legislation that would make sustained-yield contracts possible and create funding to purchase timber holdings for the public interest. Yet, in that climate, Brooks-Scanlon constructed a single building that at capacity could at one time hold one-third of a full year’s worth of a sustainably harvested product for the entire region.³⁵

It would take another thirteen years for the consequences of overcutting to catch up with the mills. In 1950, Shevlin-Hixon sold to its rival across the

river, who shuttered the former Shevlin-Hixon operations four months later, leaving hundreds out of work. Timber harvests and production entered a slow decline that required less and less of the Crane Shed. In the 1960s, the eastern half of the building was turned into two regulation-sized tennis courts for use by company staff. Lacking an economic replacement for the timber industry, Deschutes County unemployment continued to grow.³⁶

The economic decline of timber is a well-known story played throughout Oregon, and Brooks-Scanlon went through the usual series of sales and downsizing. Diamond International acquired the mill in 1980, followed by DAW Forest Products in 1984, and by Crown Pacific in 1988. Crown Pacific closed the mill permanently in January 1994 in a well-publicized and slow closure that included announcement of the property sale and plans to rezone the area.³⁷ For nearly a century, timber had provided the backbone of Bend's economy. The district was a mixture of historic buildings dating to the mill's origins and newer buildings from a variety of expansions or replacement construction. The unknown fate of these industrial spaces was nothing compared to the hole left in the sense of identity in the community. What was Bend, if not a lumber town?

The answer was still in the area's natural resources. Early Bend boosters dubbed the city the "Gateway to the Cascades." Community clubs and recreational life revolved around outdoor activities, celebrated by organizations like the Skyliners, who hosted not only winter ski outings and ski-jumping tournaments but also summertime mountain climbing. In 1957, the ski area on Bachelor Butte was established and it was rebranded as Mount Bachelor in 1983.³⁸ After the decline of the lumber industry, the forest was still the backbone of the economy, reinvented as a recreational mecca in a strong partnership with the Deschutes River. The accessibility of outdoor recreation and the area's natural beauty also helped develop the area into a major retirement hub and brought a new boom-bust cycle — housing. Construction became the next economic driver, and just like the timber industry before, ran at a pace that was unsustainable.

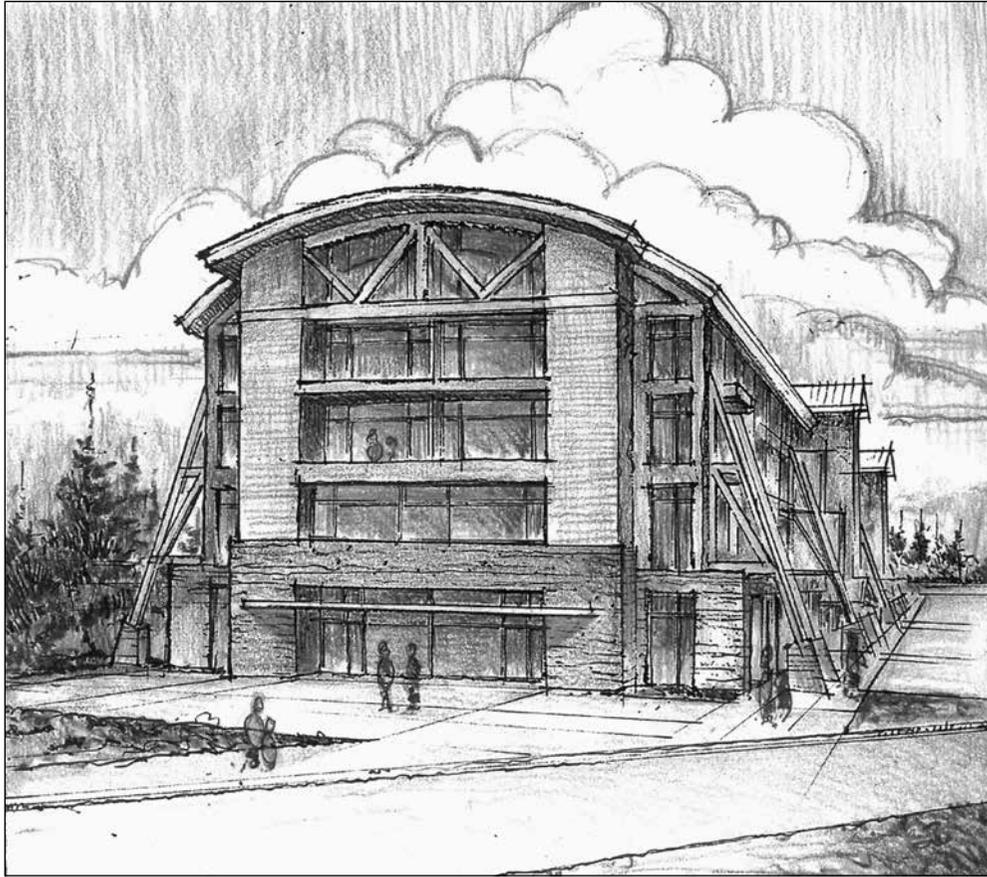
Situated on nearly 4.5 acres, the Crane Shed was purchased by Clearwater Beverages for \$725,000 in 1991. Clearwater used the space as its offices and warehouse distribution center for over ten years, during which maintenance to the building was minimal. It would be the last industrial use of the building. The success of The Old Mill District development project meant that by 2001, the property value of the land underneath the Crane Shed was worth more than the structure.³⁹ With industrial use property now available on the north end of Bend, Clearwater constructed a new building there and listed the Crane Shed for sale. Based on Beckham's 1976 report, the Crane Shed carried the protection of a Goal 5 historic resource with



AS CONSTRUCTION of The Old Mill District brought in national chain restaurants and stores, new hotels, and office buildings, the Crane Shed's size and bright red color were visible reminders of a previous industrial life. The Crane Shed stands tall behind the smokestacks of the powerhouse in this 2003 photograph.

potential buyers aware that renovations or request for demolition required approval by the Deschutes County Historic Landmarks Commission.

Only one potential buyer sought pre-approval from the landmarks commission, in 2002, for a purchase that included renovation of the building for mixed use. The project design essentially called for constructing a building within a building, in order to keep the Crane Shed's structure. The potential buyer, Kevin Spencer, presented the proposed changes to the landmarks commission, which approved the design despite the fact that it would have modified the original fabric significantly. Preservation guidelines at the National Register level discourage removal of original fabric whenever possible. That sale was not successful, however, and in the fall of 2003, Clearwater instead sold the Crane Shed to Crown Investments for \$2.75 million. No plans for a renovation of the building were presented to landmarks commission, and on April 7, 2004, after owning the building for only a few



BBT ARCHITECTS, led by Ron Barber, prepared concept designs for Crown Investment Group for new construction that honored the Crane Shed in design, as seen in this concept rendering from January 2004.

months, Crown Investments applied for a demolition permit. Emails between members of the public and county preservation planning officials indicated that a “storm was brewing” over the building’s fate.⁴⁰

The Deschutes County Historic Landmarks Commission, responsible for approval or denial of permits affecting the Crane Shed, acted on its ability to issue up to 120 days of stay against demolition. Commissioners requested that the owners try to come up with a design that kept the historic structure. The owners insisted that all avenues were exhausted, that the building was a safety hazard and on the verge of collapse, and that lack of ability to move forward was creating economic hardship for them. The issue came to

a head when the 120 days passed and the owners filed a writ of mandamus in Deschutes County Circuit Court, demanding the city issue the demolition permit immediately or justify to the court significant reason for denial at a hearing scheduled for August 30, 2004.

The remaining events in the Crane Shed’s life went quickly for the sixty-seven-year-old building. Crown Investments hired Ron Barber of BBT Architects, who produced a new building design that demolished the Crane Shed but mimicked its design in the creation of a multi-use building space. The project design was presented to the landmarks commission, again with the request to issue the demolition permit.

Over the course of three public hearings, Crown Investment’s attorney and engineering consultants presented evidence that the building could not be saved in an economical way and that the structure was unsound due to a break in a truss that occurred sometime between October 2003 and February 2004.⁴¹ After consulting officials at the State Historic Preservation Office, Portland preservationist Art DeMuro, and John Tess of Heritage Consulting Group, Crown Investments insisted that all of the potential historic-preservation tax credits would not apply and that no alternate economic incentives were accessible to them. All of the company’s work focused on proving two points: that the building could not be renovated under the Secretary of Interior Standards for historic preservation, and that it was a public danger on the verge of collapse. The proceedings took a turn for the absurd when engineer George Ward appeared in front of the Landmarks Commission on May 28, 2004, with a few gifts for the commissioners: vials of crumbling siding and “Woody,” a wood worm he had harvested from the building. He described the creature as fat and happy but having died a good death when put in alcohol for preservation.⁴²

The argument regarding Secretary of Interior standards was an important one for the commissioners, who routinely reminded Crown Investments that the building was not listed on the National Register. Building modifications therefore only had to meet the standards of the Deschutes County Historic Landmarks Commission, which had proven with the approval of the 2002 design that it was willing to be flexible about significant changes to the structure. DeMuro also indicated to the owners that a level of historic renovation could be possible that met the needs of the community and the building, without meeting the exact code of the National Register. The attorney for Crown Investments, Myles Conway, stated flatly that the company did not understand this position, asking “isn’t it either historic or it isn’t?”⁴³ Importantly for the company, there were no economic incentives available if renovations did not meet national preservation guidelines.

Citizens in favor of saving the Crane Shed, many with experience in historic preservation, asked the commission to allow more time to develop community-based plans to keep the building, including potential renovation as a performing arts space. Doug Schwartz testified that while his engineering report noted the broken truss in February, the break was repairable and the structure was solid. The city building official, Robert Mathias, testified that the building had neither been condemned nor was being considered for such, precisely because the broken truss could be repaired. An opponent of demolition testified that during a recent tour of the building, visitors had free range within the interior and were not required to wear hard hats. If the building was such a danger and the risk of collapse so great, safety precautions were not reflecting this attitude.⁴⁴ Opponents to demolition reminded the commission that Crown Investments had paid preservation experts for their reports, and they sought an independent review. Throughout, opponents maintained that Crown Investments never had any intention of trying to renovate the structure.

Two major problems for preservationists arose during the three hearings. First, it was not clear to planners and commissioners whether they had the power to deny demolition under city historic code. Planning staff acknowledged that the landmarks commission was the responsible body for approval, stay, suspension, or denial, but there were two potential interpretations of the city historic code. The first interpretation allowed for three thirty-day stays, at the end of which, if no program or project to maintain the building was underway, the demolition permit must be issued. The second interpretation allowed the commission to outright deny the permit. The landmarks commission ultimately denied the permit, preferring to let the decision face appeal under state land-use laws.⁴⁵

Second, the larger problem for landmarks commission was Tess's July 9, 2004, review of the property, which called attention to the improper listing of the structure as Goal 5 in the first place.⁴⁶ City staff and the landmarks commission treated the property as a historic resource largely because of the 1982 National Register Nomination submitted by Brooks Resources. Although accepted by the State Historic Preservation Office, as is necessary before submission to the National Register for consideration, the nomination had been stopped due to owner objection.⁴⁷ The July 1985 City Council minutes clearly indicate that a City Council vote left the property off the city's list of Goal 5 resources due to owner objection. In addition, with the 1991 sale of the Crane Shed, separate from Mill A, there was no longer only one property owner to consider. So, while planners determined that the landmarks commission did have the power to deny demolition under the historic code, Tess's

review revealed that the property might not be governed by the historic code. Tess also challenged the appropriateness of listing the Crane Shed to the National Register, noting architectural flaws in its design. Former landmarks commissioner Ward Tonsfeldt responded in an August 12, 2004, letter that if flawed design negated preservation value, "Italian land developers should have torn down the Leaning Tower of Pisa centuries ago."⁴⁸

The City Council's attitude toward historic preservation code in 2004 meant that the Crane Shed was doomed once the matter of the demolition permit reached the council's agenda. On June 16, 2004, the City Council issued Resolution No. 2463, asking that "Oregon's federal legislators consider amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act and enlisting the support of the Governor's office and state legislators in this effort." While speaking to the importance of preserving the city's historical assets, the resolution demonstrates concern that federal historic preservation law and the criteria for historic designation "fail to include consideration of vitally important city-wide concerns," namely water conservation and public safety. The council sought changes to the NHPA that included careful consideration of "public safety and environmental aspects" and required not only consultation with local government prior to such designation but also the ability of local government to oppose designations.⁴⁹ Thirty-eight years after passage of the National Historic Preservation Act, Bend City Councilors were bristling at the perceived lack of local control in the face of federal legislation, a theme recurrent in politics across eastern Oregon.⁵⁰

The resolution was in response to a National Register nomination under consideration at the same time as the Crane Shed demolition permit: the historic Swalley Irrigation Canal. Formed as the Deschutes Reclamation and Irrigation Project in 1899, it was the first irrigation project in the county. The Swalley nomination raised competing issues of piping the canal for water conservation and safety versus maintaining the structure for historic preservation. The nomination never advanced after an initial rejection by the State Historic Preservation Office; however, the proposal drew the City Council's attention to the historic preservation process.⁵¹

When the issue of Swalley Canal first arose in 2003, the council requested a review of the historic code. City planners and the landmarks commission agreed a review was in order and provided a list of recommended updates, but no action was taken. City Councilors repeatedly returned to the idea of local control being subverted by a federal process, articulating their perception that they had no control over the county landmarks commission and questioning why there was not a city landmarks commission. The council of seven routinely split five-to-two on the matter; two commissioners valued

the budget savings provided by a joint city-county commission, acknowledging that a separate commission required more staff time and money on an already overworked planning department. The remaining five councilors continued to push for a Bend commission.⁵²

A larger discussion of the City of Bend Historic Preservation Program and Review Process occurred during the July 7, 2004, City Council meeting. Planning Manager James Lewis provided the councilors with an overview of the historic preservation process, the process for Goal 5 planning, and the intergovernmental agreement between the county and city to have one historic landmarks commission. Lewis admitted that reviewing and updating the historic code had not been a priority. Derek Stevens, Chairman for the Deschutes County Landmarks Commission, echoed sentiments previously stated before the commission — that the rules for Goal 5 and historic preservation are the same, regardless of whether the commission reviewing the process is established by the city or the county. Councilors in support of leaving the commission as-is were quick to point out again that the city paid only a portion of the costs of the historic planning position and that it would be a significant budget increase to the planning department if a city commission and planning position were created.⁵³

Outside the City Council, in the building industry, the November 2003 newsletter of the Central Oregon Builders Association (COBA) summed up feelings toward land-use planning overall. At the bottom of the front page, members were invited to join COBA for a presentation on “A Market Approach to Land Use Planning,” in which they could learn planning alternatives based on “property rights, markets, and decentralized decision-making.” The invitation began by stating that in 2003, Oregon planners celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of statewide land-use planning. “Unfortunately, the primary legacy of Oregon planning has been the formation of state-run land cartels caused by urban growth boundaries.” The President’s Message on page five discussed how COBA worked with the City of Bend “Building Department” to work on customer service and other issues faced by builders. Thanks to this work, COBA had successfully cut permit turnaround times from “4-6 weeks or longer to 2 weeks or less” for single family homes. The COBA president went on to plea for PAC donations, as 2004 would be an election year and it was “even more important in supporting candidates who support the building industry both at the Capitol and locally.”⁵⁴ Successful political lobbying by COBA led to a city council not in favor of stopping a multi-million-dollar construction project, like the one that destroyed the Crane Shed.

When the writ of mandamus demanding that the city issue the demolition permit reached the council on August 18, the conversation only briefly cen-



Photo courtesy of the Deschutes County Historical Society

ONE OF THE CRANE SHED memorial bus shelters, pictured here in 2016, is visible along Industrial Way. Painted bright red with white roofing, the shelters feature an interpretive plaque describing the history of the building on the interior post next to the bench.

tered on the Crane Shed’s viability for restoration. Chairman Derek Stevens, referencing the confusion over whether the landmarks commission had the power to deny demolition, remarked that he did not want the city to lose the Crane Shed “over a typo.” The conversation then shifted back to the larger questions of why the city had no say over historic designation. They again split five-to-two, allowing the demolition permit to be issued.⁵⁵ Less than two hours later, the crew gathered at the Crane Shed site pulled the building down. They began at 8:52 p.m., and it was over by 9:21 p.m. In a sad twist, the Deschutes County Landmarks Commission had convened a meeting while the building was being demolished to discuss what options remained. Commissioners learned after the meeting that the fight for the building was over.⁵⁶

The demolition provided the Crane Shed’s legacy. While the city councilors did not like the lack of local control over the process, they appreciated the illegal tear-down of the building a whole lot less. The community outrage was articulated by an editorial in *The Bulletin* that stated, “whatever the options, we urge the city to punish Crown as severely as it possibly can.”⁵⁷ In addition to demolition without a permit, the company violated asbestos removal codes when the building came down. The Deschutes County Circuit



THE POWERHOUSE of Mill B at the heart of the shopping corridor of The Old Mill District, is pictured here in May 2005, just prior to a renovation to turn the interior into a major commercial space for the outdoor company R.E.I. The machine shop is still visible in the foreground; only the small original shop building on the far right would be salvaged, relocated across the parking lot from the movie theater.

Court fined Crown Investments \$100,000 to be paid to the city with the funds earmarked to create a memorial to the Crane Shed. The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality fined Crown Investments \$64,500 for violations and gave a separate fine of \$7,200 to the construction company that carried out the demolition. Crown Investments fought the fines in court, admitting freely that they tore down the building for fear that opponents would file a lawsuit to block demolition. The court upheld all the fines in 2005.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the community was short-changed. Just prior to losing the appeals in court, Crown Investments sold the property for \$5.1 million. City Councilor Jim Clinton, elected in November 2004, said “the Crown guys were playing a game, and they won. And the community lost.”⁵⁹

The \$100,000 fine was used in The Old Mill District to build city bus shelters that resemble the Crane Shed; they are red with white trim and curved roof

lines. The developer who paid \$5.1 million for the site was the one caught holding the bag when the real estate bubble burst; he lost the site in foreclosure. The current owner purchased the site for \$1.4 million in a short sale.⁶⁰ If architecture buffs from out of the area notice a prolific use of buttresses on brand new buildings, they have no idea it is a nod to the Crane Shed.

The Crane Shed’s demolition resulted in the historic code renovations suggested in 2003 suddenly becoming a priority. The Deschutes County Landmarks Commission seized the opportunity to work with the city planning department, creating code that clearly delineated the demolition permit process and, in a point of importance for former chair Derek Stevens, established penalties for illegal demolition of a historic structure — 20 percent of the current real market value.⁶¹

On the edge of the Crane Shed property, The Old Mill District continued its transformation. Contrary to arguments made during the Crane Shed debate, the Crane Shed was not the lone surviving mill building. A handful were restored and incorporated into The Old Mill District development. Had the Crane Shed not been sold off separately from the mill, it may have had a chance of coming into the future with the district. In the fall of 1993, William Smith, who had once been employed by

Brooks-Scanlon and was now principal of William Smith Properties, announced the purchase of the 270 acres comprising the mill district. With his investment partners River Bend Ltd., he launched an aggressive and ambitious project modeled on the San Antonio Riverwalk area. Its colloquial name, the old mill district, became its business name, The Old Mill District. Smith hired Ken Kay of KenKay Associates in San Francisco to guide the planning process, a somewhat controversial choice in an area known for anti-California sentiment in the face of the retirement wave. They had their work cut out for them: for over eighty years, the area, including a significant span of the Deschutes River, had been off limits to the public and used in heavy industry. The restoration of the river — dammed, dredged, and used to create a log pond — is worthy of many separate articles and has earned Smith national awards. For the built environment, the development shifted land use 180 degrees. The design process immediately gravitated toward



THE OLD MILL DISTRICT LOGO in 2016 features the powerhouse with its smokestacks. Today, the building serves as an iconic landmark.

what may be the most revealing and successful adaptive reuse historic structure in the city: the powerhouse.⁶²

Built in 1922 as part of Brooks-Scanlon's Mill B development, two smoke stacks 206 feet tall are original to the building with a third stack measuring 201 feet added in 1933.⁶³ They are immediately recognizable in the city's skyline, the last of a series of stacks and burners that once marked the mill area. Restoration, renovation, or demolition — all of these options were expensive to consider as one does not just knock down three enormous industrial stacks. According to project manager Mary Campbell, the powerhouse was immediately an anchor to the planning process. Today, the stacks are visible not only on the skyline but in all of The Old Mill District branding. Remodeling began in 2004, the year the Crane Shed came down, and in 2005, the combined powerhouse and fuel building reopened as one space that is home to REI, outfitters for all things outdoors. One can look up at the steel beam spanning the interior and read the name Brooks-Scanlon. The powerhouse that relied on the forest for timber now supports a store that also relies on the forest for its clients. October 2015 brought forth the latest design development for the Crane Shed site. The non-descript design, called Crane Shed Commons, bears neither resemblance to the Crane Shed nor to design styles of The Old Mill District.

For Kay, who lives in a historic building in San Francisco and understands the commitment to living with historic structures, planning the district's design elements involved taking the motifs of the wildly varying mill structures and creating a modern translation. He restored what historic buildings remained and provided space for a handful of historic structures moved inside the district while designing newer buildings to reflect the character defined by the early mill structures.⁶⁴ Not unlike the goal of historic districts in protecting neighborhood character, or a homeowner's association tasked with enforcing a neighborhood's covenants, conditions, and restrictions rules, there is a design standard in place to retain the character of the district. The difference is that it is self-imposed rather than mandated by the city, county, state, or federal government.

For Smith, preservation has come with fights and criticism. Mill A, long ago associated with the Crane Shed in the un-submitted National Register Nomination, was also added as a locally protected resource against owner objections. Through a public and costly effort, Smith had Mill A removed from the city historic resource list. He is honest in his appraisal of the incentives offered by federal tax-credit programs when he states that, at first blush, the incentives look appealing but that, in the end, the extra costs of designation, landmarks hearings, and the bureaucracy and potential disagreements over what constitutes adaptive reuse are higher than what is saved. That leaves

a plaque as the only incentive, and he can make that, too.⁶⁵ Considering the National Historic Preservation Act's purpose of "historical and cultural foundations . . . preserved as a living part of our community life," there is no arguing that The Old Mill District, with its towering smoke stacks, is as entrenched in the community life of Bend now as it was when it was the mill district. The danger in private protection versus community protection — either as a city, county, state or federal register listing — is in ensuring that safety for the future, beyond the commitment of current ownership.

During 2005, the year after the Crane Shed demolition infuriated many, three victories for preservation took place. The historic code was tightened, clarifying the ability of the landmarks commission to deny demolition permits. The Powerhouse was successfully renovated. And fueled by the success of the Old Town Historic District in protecting neighborhood quality of life, the city's second historic district, Drake Park Neighborhood, was established, placing 110 buildings and 108 acres under historic protection. In 2011, the proposal to split the landmarks commissions finally came to pass, with separate commissions each for Bend, Redmond, and Deschutes County. The cities of Sisters and La Pine continue to rely on the countywide commission. The State Historic Preservation Office now distributes Certified Local Governments to three entities rather than one.⁶⁶

When Robert Chandler celebrated the success of the Allen-Rademacher House committee work in 1993 and stated "this community does not have a record of preserving its past — at least in terms of its old buildings — and perhaps this is a start to changing that reputation," he was more right than he knew. While significant and sometimes magnificent structures are gone and we can mourn the loss of their beauty and untapped potential, the county and city have nominated and successfully listed historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places at a rate comparable to counties of similar population.⁶⁷ Some properties outside the city core were missed by previous surveys, but the number of nominations per decade since the creation of the National Register program has remained consistent over time.⁶⁸ In addition, significant renovations, including recent renovations of the Penney's building and the E.M. Thompson building in the downtown core, continue to happen outside the formal landmarks process.

As in all cities, each building saved or lost provides new opportunities to learn what works and to expose weaknesses in the system. The City of Bend is not unique in its mix of historic preservation successes and failures. We have a history of adaptively reusing historic buildings outside the National Register process, reflecting that for some, the National Register plaque is a source of pride and meeting national standards, while for others, it indicates bureaucratic control.

The most recent National Register listing in Deschutes County was approved in February 2016, a listing that raises familiar struggles between NHPA protections and property rights as well as new conflicts between historic preservation and natural resource conservation. The Pilot Butte Canal National Historic District covers as a protected resource a one-and-a-half mile section of the historic canal, constructed by city founder Alexander Drake's Pilot Butte Development Company between 1903 and 1905, as well as seventeen adjacent acres. Instigated by homeowners living along the canal, the nomination was a direct response to plans by the Central Oregon Irrigation District (COID) to pipe the section for water conservation. COID estimates that evaporation causes a 40 percent water loss along the historic section. COID opposed the listing, and the conflict highlights the extremely complicated mix of land ownership, easement rights, water rights, and canal management surrounding irrigation canals that stretch for miles of the West. Complicating things further, the district is within both unincorporated Deschutes County and the city limits of Bend, engaging both landmarks commissions and planning departments. Although approved by the National Register, opposition to the nomination came not only from the irrigation district but also the Bend City Council, the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners, and the Governor of Oregon, Kate Brown.⁶⁹

Reaction to the Pilot Butte Canal National Historic District listing highlights consistent patterns in analyzing the success of the NHPA in central Oregon, including a lack of understanding by the public that National Register nominations begin at the community level. The NHPA celebrates the ideals of local governance, relying on communities themselves to survey, monitor, and nominate areas of historical significance. The *Bulletin* quickly condemned the National Register for listing the canal, stating that "the federal government just made it harder to conserve water in the region."⁷⁰ While media coverage repeatedly states that the nomination came from the homeowners, the implication is that listing subverts local governance. This implication is also false: it is community members who are appointed to the landmarks commission who review and protect properties listed as historic resources, either as Goal 5 or on the National Register. Preservation, although guided by federal standards, remains firmly under control of people living in the community.

Ultimately, the listing requires those engaged in planning the future of that section of canal to include the landmarks commissions in the planning process. It remains to be seen how COID will move forward with water conservation goals. In the end, the only penalty at the federal level for making changes outside the guidelines of the National Register is losing that status itself. Historic code, while guided by federal standards, is created by local

elected governing bodies, and local government enforces the code and creates penalties for its violations. The political climate set by local governments is crucial to the success of preservation efforts. With the support from the City Council, the preservation efforts of the 1990s were successful. Without the support of the City Council, preservation efforts failed. In the end, it is when community and civic pride are in alignment that the National Historic Preservation Act succeeds.

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