

= South Park Blocks =

The South Park Blocks form a city park in downtown Portland , Oregon . The Oregonian has called it Portland 's " extended family room " , as Pioneer Courthouse Square is known as Portland 's " living room " .

Twelve blocks in length , it is intersected by the Portland Streetcar and forms the Portland Cultural District and the greenspace at the center of Portland State University . The New York Times stated the blocks are " literally at the heart of the city 's cultural life . " Every block contains public art , such as Shemanski Fountain (1926) , designed by Carl L. Linde , with drinking wells , including special drinking wells for dogs . Other art includes Paul Sutinen 's In the Shadow of the Elm (built into the pavement) , and three large blocks of granite titled Peace Chant (1984) . Two large statues are in the block : a \$ 40 @, @ 000 , 18 feet (5 @. @ 5 m) bronze equestrian statue called Theodore Roosevelt , Rough Rider , designed by Alexander Phimister Proctor , commissioned by Roosevelt 's personal friend and Portlander Henry Waldo Coe and added in 1922 , and one of Abraham Lincoln , " facing north , slump @-@ shouldered and pensive " , added in 1928 , commissioned by Coe in 1926 , sculpted by George Fife Waters . The park also contains approximately 337 elm , oak , and maple trees valued at \$ 3 @. @ 4 million , as well as roses . A plaque from the Lang Syne Society was placed in the South Park Blocks at Jefferson Street in 1991 , commemorating the Great Plank Road .

= = History = =

= = Continuous Park Blocks = = =

Portland was platted in 1845 , then Daniel H. Lownsdale purchased land south and west of the original platting . He drew up a plat in 1848 that included 11 narrow blocks , 100 × 200 feet , instead of the standard 200 × 200 feet . He then brought on Stephen Coffin and William W. Chapman as partners , and dedicated the South Park Blocks and midtown park blocks in 1852 . This made them the first official greenspace in Portland . While they were dedicated to the city , they weren 't owned by the city until September 22 , 1870 , when Mayor Bernard Goldsmith and Chapman agreed on selling the South Park Blocks and the two Plaza Blocks (Chapman and Lownsdale Squares) to the city for \$ 6 @, @ 250 . Most of the purchase price was for the Plaza Blocks , since the park blocks were at the edge of the developed city .

Ownership of the continuous park blocks was not without dispute , however . After Lownsdale died without a will , and then his wife Nancy died , his estate challenged that his plat didn 't require the central section to be dedicated to public use since Nancy had not signed over legal title to the land . The courts agreed in 1865 . Benjamin Stark reneged on the donation of two north central park blocks to the city , instead offering to sell them for \$ 138 @, @ 000 . Captain John H. Couch deeded his section , which became the North Park Blocks to the city on January 25 , 1865 , only ten days after receiving the federal patent for the land . Six of the South Park Blocks were lost to private parties in the 1870s , and elected city officials were unwilling to spend the asking price of \$ 6 @, @ 000 per block to purchase them so soon after the city had bought the land for Washington Park . Only a year later , a proposal to acquire the six blocks for \$ 92 @, @ 000 was brought by the city council , showing the increase in prices in that year .

A 1907 tax bond issue was brought to the voters . It would have been a \$ 2 million bond , likely including money to buy back the blocks . The measure failed , and some time later , the street name changed from " West Park " to Southwest 9th " . Two missing blocks have been recaptured since then : O 'Bryant Square was purchased in 1973 , and Director Park opened in 2009 .

= = Residential park blocks = =

By the late 1870s , the Park Blocks near the current location of Portland State University were

fronted by formal Italianate mansions .

By the 1920s , the central park blocks were home to the 12 @-@ story Stevens Building and the 9 @-@ story Woodlark Building , as well as six or more hotels . Edward H. Bennett proposed making the Park Blocks continuous in 1912 , part of his " Greater Portland Plan " . Otherwise , the next spark was the conversion of one central park block into O 'Bryant Square in 1972 . The next block to be reclaimed was Director Park , dedicated as a park in 2009 , inspired by a 1995 plan to turn the block into a 12 @-@ story parking lot .

In 1933 , the area surrounding Skidmore Fountain was " tawdry " and nearly neglected , and there was an effort to move the fountain to the South Park Blocks . This did not happen .

After a 1990 Dutch elm disease outbreak in Portland , including one diseased tree at Park and Market in the South Park Blocks , the elm trees have been immunized with Tiabendazole . Portland 's first outbreak of Dutch elm disease occurred in 1976 at Overlook Park , and the peak infections were in 2003 .

= = = Events = = =

On May 5 , 1918 , the dedication of the Vista House at Crown Point began with a parade of cars from the South Park Blocks , on the newly completed Historic Columbia River Highway .

The Portland Rose Festival began and was centered in the South Park Blocks in 1936 , but were outgrowing the blocks by the 1950s . Residents sued to prohibit the Rose Festival from using the parks and lost . By 2007 , the festival centered around Tom McCall Waterfront Park .

The first Earth Day , on April 22 , 1970 , was celebrated with a fair on the blocks . In 1975 , the Portland city council held Portland 's first gay pride fair along the park . It was moved to Tom McCall Waterfront Park the following year . The Seattle to Portland Bicycle Classic , known as STP , concluded in the South Park Blocks from 1979 to 1998 , then moved to Cathedral Park . In 1997 ? 1999 , Tony n ' Tina 's Wedding , an interactive theatre , took place using the park as the stage ; the wedding was held at the First Unitarian Church and later at the Oregon History Center , and the reception was held at the Portland Art Museum , being a " little street theater " on the park blocks .

After the September 11 attacks , the Park Blocks filled with a candlelight vigil and a memorial concert by the Oregon Symphony , which was free in the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall and was also broadcast into the blocks .

The South Park Blocks , especially near Portland State University , have been home to protests and marches . A workers ' rights protest on May 1 , 2000 , organized by the May Day Coalition , gathered 300 ? 400 people . Police chief Mark Kroeker said 19 people , some " dressed like anarchists and (carrying) gas masks " were arrested , and Portland Police used bean bag rounds , with fears of repeating the 1999 WTO riots in Seattle unless sufficient force was shown early . The police declared emergency at 3 : 45 pm after a lit newspaper box was thrown at officers , then the police corralled the marchers into a smaller space with mounted officers and ordered them to disperse . A protest march against the police action was held on May 4 , 2000 , stating that the show of force was excessive and contrary to the city 's community policing ethos . 23 complaints of excessive police force led to a large citywide hearing on June 28 , 2000 . The 2009 May Day rally , supporting immigration reform , attracted 1500 people .

In 2006 , approximately 1 @,@ 200 protesters , primarily Latino high @-@ school age students joined by Jobs with Justice , took part in the 2006 United States immigration reform protests . In 2007 , 15 @,@ 000 protesters of all ages began a rally and march as part of the March 17 , 2007 anti @-@ war protest , including local activists affiliated with the radical Students for a Democratic Society . After a fringe group broke off from the protest and burned a US soldier in effigy , Michelle Malkin stated that " Portland hates America . " The Drudge Report , Lars Larson , and conservative blogs also commented on the effigy , and protest organizers with the American Friends Service Committee stated " We had a massive , peaceful demonstration against the killing and destruction going on every day in Iraq , a positive experience for thousands of people from different walks of life , and apparently the right @-@ wing fringe is going to pick up that little portion . "

On December 3 , 2011 , Occupy Portland established camp in the South Park Blocks .

Other events have included Artquake , an art festival that attracted 200 @, @ 000 people on Labor Day weekends in the Park Blocks from 1982 until at least 2003 and based on an art show that began in July 1949 , a 1983 protest against U.S. nuclear missiles placed in Europe (3 @, @ 000 protesters) , an Oregon Public Employees Union strike in 1987 , a rally with presidential candidate Michael Dukakis in 1988 , Shakespeare in the Parks in 1989 , a 1990 rally to pay tribute to Mulugeta Seraw , killed in Portland by white power skinheads in 1988 , which had 1 @, @ 500 people with 150 police officers defending against skinheads , and the Homowo Festival of African Arts held from 1990 to at least 2004 . Lara Flynn Boyle filmed scenes from The Temp in the South Park Blocks in 1992 , and The Hunted was filmed partially in the South Park Blocks in 2003 , including a crash scene by Benicio del Toro .

In celebration of Harley @-@ Davidson 's 100th anniversary in 2003 , an event called Rose City Thunder was held in the South Park blocks , to send riders off for the " Harley @-@ Davidson 100th Anniversary Ride Home " . Two appeals seeking a venue change were held prior to the event , but the city council rejected them , with City Commissioner Jim Francesconi stating " We don 't discriminate against groups , period . That 's the rules and that 's what we abide by . " Featuring live music , beer gardens , and thousands of people , it led to questions about why the residential Park Blocks were used , rather than a venue such as Tom McCall Waterfront Park . An editorial in The Oregonian stated the celebration was " more potbelly than pot smoking " , but held the loud exhausts , public address systems , and rows of portable toilets weren 't appreciated in a neighborhood setting . Organizers estimated 15 @, @ 000 visitors , plus 2 @, @ 000 motorcycles attended .

In 2006 , because of the implosion of the cooling tower at Trojan Nuclear Power Plant , a group got together in the South Park Blocks and brought down a 25 @-@ foot model tower to celebrate the implosion .

More events included a pro @-@ choice march , rally , and workshops in 1989 with 2700 to 7500 attendees , a Tiananmen Square anniversary memorial ceremony in 1990 , the " Earth Fair " (celebrating Earth Day , held in at least 1990 and 1991 ; 1990 saw 15 @, @ 000 ? 20 @, @ 000 visitors in the rain) , a 1991 Fourth of July parade to honor returnees from Operation Desert Storm (called the Defenders of Liberty Welcome Home Parade) , the Potluck in the Park homeless meal (held from 1991 until 1996 , when it was moved to O 'Bryant Square) , a 1 @, @ 000 @-@ strong rally for Rodney King on May 2 , 1992 , the Oregon Trailfest , a 1993 celebration of the Oregon Trail (including an authentic encampment with teepees and wagons) , Portland 's first Critical Mass , held on September 24 , 1993 with 100 cyclists in the South Park Blocks , the Portland Arts Festival (part of the Portland Rose Festival) held in 1998 through at least 2006 , a gun control rally in 2000 , the 2 @, @ 000 people (which included the Million Mom March) for the Amala Peace Walk in 2000 , welcoming the Dalai Lama , an AIDS Walk in September 2000 , the " PDX AIDS Day Promise Vigil " at Shemanski Fountain to mark World AIDS Day in 2006 , a campaign rally and speech by Al Gore in October 2000 , the Twilight Criterium from 2002 to 2006 (attracting 10 @, @ 000 spectators , moved in 2007 to the North Park Blocks due to construction) , a protest by about 150 people against the use of deadly force by Portland Police in a racially motivated traffic stop , a march of grandmothers and mothers on Mother 's Day 2004 titled " Mothers Acting Up " , a reading of Pablo Neruda 's poetry on the 100th anniversary of his birth (July 2004) , a protest with 150 people to " mourn for the loss of our country " in November 2004 when John Kerry lost the 2004 presidential election , a celebration of the Oregon State Quarter 's launch in 2005 , a parade titled " Procession for the Future " for " climate stabilization and ecological well @-@ being " , " worker dignity " , " think outside the (water) bottle " , " just security and global justice " , as well as costumed George W. Bush , Dick Cheney , and Condoleezza Rice " dressed as jailbirds " held on March 4 , 2008 .

Many protests and marches have been held in response to the 2003 invasion of Iraq . There were several anti @-@ war rallies in 2001 through 2003 , including 20 @, @ 000 at a January 18 , 2003 rally , and 20 @, @ 000 ? 45 @, @ 000 for the March 15 , 2003 rally . Groups broke off from the protest to block roads and the Morrison Bridge ; these splinter groups were broken up by the police . John Lewis spoke at the rally .

Approximately 15 @, @ 000 people protested the fourth anniversary of the war (March 2007) . For

the fifth anniversary , the Iraq Body Count Exhibit placed red and white flags in the South Park Blocks , signifying who had died between the Americans and Iraqis . There was a large fifth @-@ anniversary protest and parade against the Iraq war (" thousands of protesters " , March 2008) , and a high school student protest against the war was held in March 2008 , with 400 protesters .

Other events have been held , including the Park Block Revels (held from 1972 to at least 1992) , the Oregon Historical Society 's Holiday Cheer and Authors Party , the Portland Poetry Festival (held from 1972 to at least 1992) , Shakespeare @-@ in @-@ the @-@ Park by the Portland Actors Ensemble , the Meier & Frank Holiday Parade (held from 1988 on) , the Downtown Community Association 's Ice Cream Social (held from 1990 to at least 1992) , Carifest , a party by the Caribbean Cultural Association , held from 1996 until at least 2003 , and PeaceQuake , " an event focused on refugee experiences and alternatives to war " , held by Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility in at least September 2002 and 2003 . In 2008 , a local resident was known for wheeling her piano down an elevator and 1 @.@ 5 blocks to the Park Blocks , setting it up and playing " Chopin under the trees . " The Bicycle Transportation Alliance hosted a breakfast to support Bike to Work Month in May 2009 .

= = = Portland State strike and riot = = =

In May 1970 , there was a Vietnam War protest held in the park blocks , held in response to the invasion of Cambodia and the Kent State Shootings . Strikers barricaded streets surrounding the university and Park Blocks , causing them to become car @-@ free , as they are now . Due in part to the Kent State Shootings on May 4 , and 134 faculty members who had formally joined the strike , Portland State University was forced to close from May 6 to 11 . By May 6 , the protesters formed an underground newspaper , called the Wallposter , and had four demands : " U.S. out of S.E. Asia now ; troops , cops off campus ; free Bobby Seale ; detoxify nerve gas . " Posters with a logo were printed in the PSU Smith Center cafeteria , but protesters were evicted from the area by May 7 after a " wild , all @-@ night party " . On May 11 , police officers charged protesters and forcibly removed a symbolic hospital tent (a geodesic dome) placed on the blocks . 28 protesters were injured and taken to area hospitals , and four police officers were injured . Lawsuits following the protest led to Portland Police agreeing to never use force against non @-@ violent protesters in the future .

= = = Pedestrian access and renewal = = =

The southern end of the South Park Blocks were closed to cars in 1973 , removing traffic from the blocks and the center of the university .

The area was the focus of a Portland Development Commission urban renewal based on a 1982 master plan , becoming an urban renewal district in 1985 , and expiring in July 2008 . The park blocks underwent serious renovations in 1987 , adding plazas , large flower beds , lighting and irrigation , and newly paved sidewalks . Several apartment complexes specifically aimed at the middle class were built , including the University Park Apartments (125 units , \$ 10 @.@ 5 million , quickly sold and converted to condos) , South Park Square Apartments (184 units , \$ 16 million , completed May 1988) , and Tom Mesher 's Gallery Park Apartments (31 units , \$ 3 million) . In 1987 , the New Theater Building of the Portland Center for the Performing Arts was completed immediately next door to the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall . The South Park Blocks Association , a commercial and institutional association , was started at that time , to attract residents and consumers to the area and to address security concerns .

= = = Crime = = =

A report in 1990 said the blocks were being " held hostage " by the homeless , mainly " aggressive panhandlers , stumbling drunks , violent drug users and the unpredictable mentally ill . " Reports in the mid @-@ 1990s said " Downtown Portland had become a drug supermarket " , with " marijuana and LSD ... being dealt openly in the South Park Blocks , " and that the South Park Blocks ,

especially near the Lincoln statue , were home to " The Park People " , who littered , used drugs , and damaged property . Youth reported they had moved to the South Park Blocks because they had been kicked out of Pioneer Courthouse Square and O 'Bryant Square . A child molester known as " Krusty the Troll " who preyed on homeless teens in the South Park Blocks , was charged with 79 counts of sex crimes in 1996 . There was a major police sweep of the Park Blocks in 1996 for ordinances such as sitting on the Abraham Lincoln statue , marijuana possession , littering , and loud radios .

Downtown crime was down 30 % from 1996 to 2003 , and down 7 % from 2004 to 2005 . Due to crime , Mayor Tom Potter declared a 9 pm curfew in 2005 , stating walking is allowed , but " no one will be allowed to loiter , harass visitors or use the park as their personal camp . " The Oregonian stated the curfew was due to a " verbally aggressive " in the area , after the group was displaced from the Burnside Bridge by the Big Pipe Project . The curfew was still in effect in February 2006 , when it was spread to other downtown parks , citing the reduction in drug dealing that was occurring in the South Park Blocks .

In 2006 , students from the Art Institute of Portland used stencils to advertise a concert for the Oregon Food Bank . The students believed they were using spray chalk , but after completion , they learned they were actually using spray paint . The students were told that even temporary markings count as graffiti , and the students offered to remove the paint and apologize to businesses affected . Criminal charges were not filed .

= = Notable places = =

Portland State University
Peter Stott Center
Branford Price Millar Library
Lincoln Hall
Ladd Carriage House
Ladd Tower
Oregon Historical Society
Portland Art Museum
Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall
Arlington Club

= = Notable residents = =

Terence O 'Donnell ? author

= = Current events = =

A portion of the park typically hosts the summer commencement ceremony for Portland State University students . In 2008 , 550 students participated in the ceremony , and it was held rain or shine . PSU also hosts an annual Party in the Park every fall after the school year begins .

= = = Portland Farmers Market = = =

The primary Portland Farmers Market location , held in the South Park Blocks every Saturday from March to December attracts up to 14 @, @ 000 people per weekend to the local food booths . It was originally held at Broadway and Naito beginning in 1992 , but moved to the Park Blocks in 1998 . A smaller market is held at the north end of the blocks on Wednesdays , and was held in Pioneer Courthouse Square until 1998 .

The Saturday South Park Blocks location has been very popular , and has been credited with helping " make the city a national food destination " . Beginning in March 2009 , dogs were banned from the market , due to " some unfortunate incidents with dogs ? tripping people , urinating on food

, snatching muffins out of kids ' hands " . Other satellite locations still allow pets . The Saturday location was doubled in size for the 2010 season .