



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

700 Third Avenue • 4th floor • Seattle, Washington 98104 • (206) 684-0228

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

LPB 304/01

Name and Address of Property: **Kinnear Park**
988 W. Olympic Place

Legal Description:

Kinnear's Addition, Blocks 25, Lots 8-18; Block 26, all lots; Block 29 east half

At the public meeting held on August 29, 2001, the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Kinnear Park as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following standards for designation of SMC 25. 12.350:

- (B) *It is associated in a significant way with the life of a person important in the history of the community, city, state or nation.*
- (C.) *It is associated in a significant way with a significant aspect of the cultural, political, or economic heritage of the community, city, state or nation.*
- (D.) *It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or of a method of construction.*
- (E.) *It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder*
- (F.) *Because of its prominence of spatial location, contrasts of siting, age, or scale, it is an easily identifiable visual feature of its neighborhood or the city and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood or city.*

DESCRIPTION

The description of Kinnear Park found in the *Park Commissioners Report* for 1904 remains largely accurate today:

It is bounded on the north by Prospect Street, on the east by Olympic Place, on the west by a tier of half-lots fronting on Elliott Avenue and on the south by Beach Drive (*now West Mercer Place*). Kinnear Park occupies a high bluff overlooking the Sound, and is especially scenic, as the view therefrom includes the water frontage of Elliott Bay,

Puget Sound and the Olympic mountains to the northwest. It has been improved with symmetrical paths, green lawns, clusters of trees, shrubs and beds of flowers, so artistically arranged as to give a most pleasing impression. The native madrona trees add much to the beauty of the park.

The original design intent of the park appears to be largely unchanged. It was built as a largely passive place to stroll among lawns and plantings and enjoy the view. The circulation network of pathways and the arrangement of lawns and planting beds are much the same as they were in 1931, the date of the oldest existing plan. This is probably substantially the same as the 1892 design, since there is no record of significant changes. A retaining wall and steps were built in 1909, when Olympic Place was widened. The rustic shelters and simple service buildings that once existed have been replaced by a single Art Deco-style comfort station.

Plant materials have been simplified considerably from the original selections. In recent years, work has concentrated on maintenance, slide repair and slope stabilization. Within the past two years, several beds, primarily near the main entrance, have been renovated by removing overgrown plantings and replacing them with new plant materials. Over the years, the more tender plants had died, leaving only the most vigorous and making a rather unimaginative landscape. In addition, recent Parks Department and community efforts have led to plantings of native plants on the bluff and in Lower Kinnear Park.

Vicinity

Olympic Way West is lined with large apartment buildings and condominiums. This area saw considerable early apartment development, because of its spectacular views and easy streetcar access. Similar buildings are found on West Roy Street, adjoining the park's lower entrance. Small commercial buildings abut the undeveloped portion of the park along Elliott Avenue West. Some notable nearby buildings include the Chelsea (1907), the Kinnear ((1909), the Seaview (1930), Skyline House (1956) and a Mediterranean-style Anhalt building (1930).

Kinnear Park has three distinct sections: Upper Kinnear Park, Lower Kinnear Park, and the steep bluff that connects the two areas.

Upper Kinnear Park

Present Appearance: Upper Kinnear Park is about three acres, long and narrow in shape, running northwest-southeast atop the bluff at the southwest edge of Queen Anne hill. The park is on the south side of West Olympic Place, with an ivy-covered concrete retaining wall as the boundary. The main entrance is about halfway along the park on Olympic Place west of 7th Avenue West. Other entrances are at 6th Avenue West, 7th Avenue West and at the west end, at 9th Avenue West and West Prospect.

The park's overall plan is asymmetrical, with a large lawn in the center and smaller ones at each end, separated by curving pathways and planting beds. The pathways are of compacted earth, edged by clay tile gutters (probably installed by the W.P.A. in 1941). Clusters of trees and numerous planting beds are scattered throughout. The bluff edge has a black chain link fence for safety and numerous shrubs, vines and large trees, including madronas. Other notable trees in the park include large beeches, oaks, cedars, maples, elms, chestnuts and firs. Each bed has layers of plantings, with trees, shrubs and perennials; some are underplanted with annuals and bulbs. Many of the plant materials

