



# *THE* PEARL DISTRICT

## **An Urban Gem Renewed**

Compiled from the following resources:

*Voices of the Armory*

*Pearl Pulse Newsletter – Aug/Sept. 2005 Issue*

[www.portlanddev.org](http://www.portlanddev.org)

[www.hoytliving.com](http://www.hoytliving.com)

[www.explorethepearl.com](http://www.explorethepearl.com)

[www.pearldistrict.com](http://www.pearldistrict.com)

[www.wikimedia.com](http://www.wikimedia.com)

[www.pearl-district-lofts.com](http://www.pearl-district-lofts.com)

[www.gerdingedlen.com](http://www.gerdingedlen.com)

[www.breweryblocks.com](http://www.breweryblocks.com)

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# 1. PREFACE

Ever squinted your eyes and tried to imagine something that's only in your head? That's how it was for those of us who looked over the rail yards and abandoned warehouses of inner northwest Portland some 20 years ago. Rundown and dilapidated, it was a sight that even the best of us squinters had trouble overcoming.

And yet, slowly, a largely forgotten part of Portland's past became an urban icon of living unlike anything the country had ever seen: A unique blend of verve and vibrancy, with more than a passing nod to Portland's uncommon brand of originality.

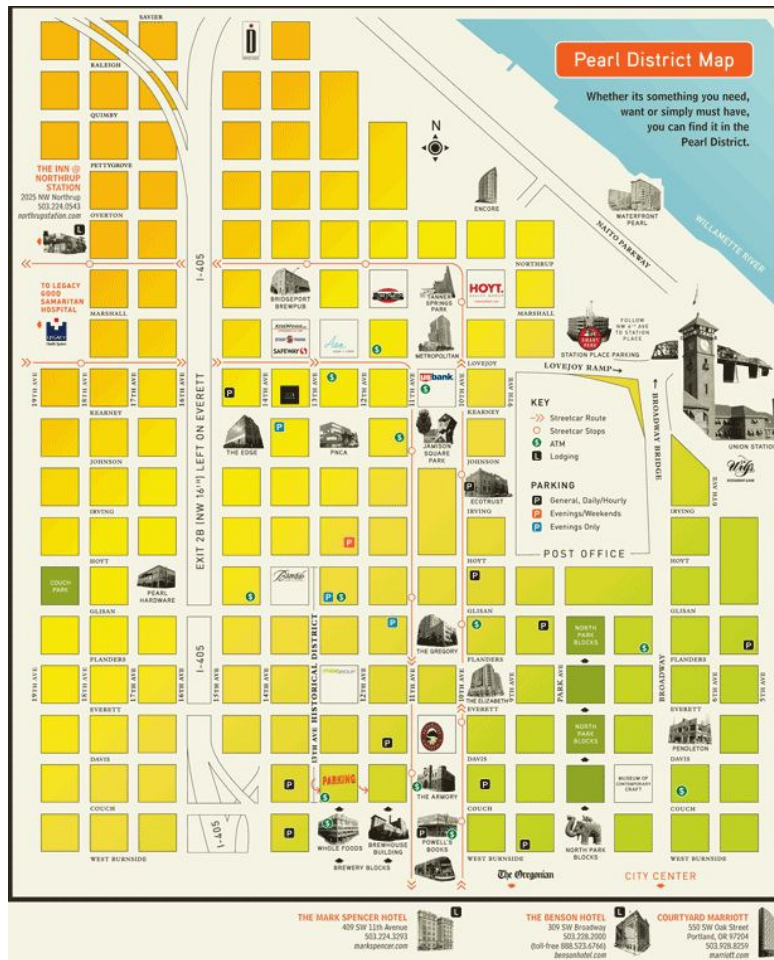
Today, the Pearl District has earned a worldwide reputation for urban renaissance. Diverse, architecturally significant residential communities thrive here. Galleries rub shoulders with restaurants, shops open to parks, and no one has to squint anymore to see the magic that's taken hold.

The Pearl is the story of a vision come to life. That story has a beginning, and a middle, but to those who have been a part of the transformation -- there is no ending. Future plans will assure this "pearl" of a place becomes even more: more sustainable, more livable, more inviting, and more groundbreaking.

Experience this remarkable place for yourself, and help craft its next chapters. The best stories never really end anyway...they just leave room for sequels.

In the pages that follow you will find a chronicle of the district's historic past, its twenty-year renewal process and insights into future plans for this continually evolving neighborhood.

True to its name, "The Pearl" has become one of Portland's most prized jewels.



In the aerial view above from 1988, prior to redevelopment; the Pearl District lies close to downtown Portland in the center right of the image, nestled between the West Hills and the Willamette River to the North and to the East

## II. LOCATION & OVERVIEW

The **Pearl District** is an area of former warehouses, light industrial and railroad classification yards in Portland, Oregon.

The area comprises approximately 100 city blocks and is located just north of downtown Portland between West Burnside Street on the south, the Willamette River on the north, NW Broadway on the east and the Interstate 405 freeway on the west.

The area has been undergoing significant urban renewal since the late 1990s, including the removal of a viaduct and construction of the Portland Streetcar line through the district..

The neighborhood encompasses the North Park Blocks, the 13th Avenue Historic District, the city's Main Post Office, the redeveloped former 40 acre Hoyt Street Rail Yards, Portland icon Powell's City of Books, the re-developed Armory and the former Blitz-Weinhard brewery blocks.

Pioneering developers rediscovered the area in the 1980's beginning the conversion of many of the century old abandoned industrial into lofts.

Thomas Augustine, a local gallery owner, coined the name *Pearl District* when describing the district, suggesting that its industrial buildings were like crusty oysters, and that the galleries and artists' lofts concealed within were like pearls. "There were very few visible changes in the area," says Al Solheim, an early developer who has been involved in many projects in the district. "People would drive by and not have a clue as to what was inside." As local business people were looking to label the growing area—the "warehouse district" or the "brewery district" were two suggestions—a writer for one of the airline magazines borrowed Augustine's phrase. The 1986 Pearl Arts Festival helped cement the name. Victoria Frey, an artist who helped organize arts festivals approached the Pearl's business organization at the time, Northwest Triangle Business

Association, about what the area might be called. Since the "Pearl District" had been used informally, they decided it was a good name and so the previously known PDX Arts Fest became "the Pearl Arts Festival".

The Pearl District is one of the hottest neighborhoods in the United States. Kiplinger Magazine dubbed the Pearl District as one of the top-five places to retire. The eclectic nature of the district has also made it a popular location for film makers and the area has been featured in such popular films as The Hunted, Drugstore Cowboy and My Own Private Idaho.

### III. HISTORY

The Pearl District was originally platted as part of Couch's Addition in 1869, and the area around the North Park Blocks was developed primarily with one and two-story houses which were home to mostly blue-collar European immigrants. The North Park Blocks contained the first park block dedicated to exclusive use by women and children, and later the first supervised children's playground.

In 1896, Union Station was built.

In 1905 the Lewis and Clark Exposition, spurred a huge jump in Portland's population and expansion of the rail yards at the north end of the district. "Empire Builder" James J. Hill, informed Portland's business elite of the planned arrival of his Portland & Seattle Railway promising the community faster and easier access to cities and markets in the East. This railroad was later named the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway (SP&S).

This news began a rather interesting battle of wills between Hill and his rival Edward Harriman, who controlled the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific railroads. Harriman enjoyed dominating the Portland market and had little interest in letting Hill expand in this market.

In a rather clandestine move Hill purchased the land between N.W. 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Avenues and Hoyt Street and Front Avenue through the Security Savings and Trust Company, so as not to signal his intentions to Harriman. Upset by Hill's grab for prime land near Union Station, the Harriman controlled Northern Pacific Terminal Company, which owned the Station, refused to allow P&S passenger trains access.

Hill responded by converting one of his rail yard freight houses at the corner of Hoyt St. and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue into a passenger depot. Known as North Bank Station, it handled passenger trains to Chicago and the east, Seattle, Astoria and Southern Oregon until World War I. It continued to handle intercity

passenger trains until 1931. At NW Hoyt Street, famous luxury trains such as the Empire Builder and the North Coast Limited prepared for their journeys east. A few blocks further, freight that fed the City's economy dominated the daily activity of the district.

Hill envisioned a seamless service of trains and ocean liners between Portland and San Francisco. He built two luxury ocean liners the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific, which sailed from Flavel at the mouth of the Columbia River near Astoria.

From 1915 until the end of World War I, well-dressed travelers boarded the Steamer Express train at North Bank Station for a scenic ride to Flavel where the ships sailed for San Francisco.

When passenger service stopped, the Hoyt Street Yards continued to handle freight trains and service locomotives until the merger of the SP&S into the Burlington Northern Railroad in 1970. Over the next two decades the rail yard declined and when the land lease held by the railroads expired, they were abandoned and the remaining brown fields were sold. While the trains are now gone, several brick freight houses remain as luxurious town homes. Warehouses have been removed to make way for Jamison Park. The Roundhouse has been replaced by construction of a 14-story building of luxury condominiums.

Although Hoyt Yards is now a fashionable residential and cultural center, the grittiness of steel, brick and strong willed visionaries can still be felt in this vibrant and historic neighborhood.



Fifty years ago the area north of Lovejoy was the location for Hoyt Street Rail yards very busy roundhouse and staging area. Today it has been replaced with the luxury Lexis on the Park and Pinnacle condominiums and Tanner Springs Park.



In the early 1900's workers prepared passenger coaches at the North Bank Station in Hoyt Yards to serve well dressed travelers heading to destinations such as San Francisco.

By 1910, the multi-story warehouses and commercial buildings which characterize the Pearl District today had become predominant and the area became known as the "Northwest Industrial Triangle". It was an epicenter of production and activity. One of the oldest of the existing buildings in the neighborhood, the circa 1904 Modern Confectionery Company building was espoused as one of the largest candy manufacturers on the West Coast until the 1930's.

The Central Door Company did business at the northwest corner of 13<sup>th</sup> & Glisan. As indicated by murals on the building, they sold palte and window glass, mirrors, door moldings and roofing materials from 1906 to 1920, exporting goods to Great Britain, Asia, Africa and South America. In 1921, a musical instrument dealer named Sherman Clay and Co. moved in. They left in 1927, but returned to the Pearl in 2004.

In 1929, the Blumauer-Frank Drug Company built a new warehouse at 14<sup>th</sup> and Irving – the modern day Irving Street Lofts. From this giant warehouse, they supplied drug stores across the country with everything from pharmaceuticals to flashlights to soda fountain fixtures.

In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Portland was a national epicenter of furniture manufacturing and the Pearl, which remains a furniture Mecca today, sat at the head of the table. Both the Gadsby Building at 13<sup>th</sup> and Hoyt and the Wool Grower's Building at 14<sup>th</sup> & Johnson participated in the furnishings boom.

Many other former manufacturing and warehouses remain in the Pearl District, mostly now converted to housing and retail uses. The area of 13<sup>th</sup> from NW Davis north to Johnson Street, with its loading docks and alley-like feel, is on the national Register of Historic Places.

The United States Post Office main processing facility for all of Oregon and southwestern Washington was built in the Pearl in 1964, next to Union Station. This location was chosen in order for

the post office to be able to better serve towns outside the Portland metro area.



At the southern end of the district Henry Weinhard, who had purchased an existing brewery, the City Brewery, in 1864, moved his operations to a then-two block site in the Pearl on West Burnside Street. Business boomed, and between 1865 and 1872 two additional blocks to the north were purchased. As many breweries also owned the saloons that sold their beer at the time, a large business empire owning properties throughout the Northwest, from San Francisco to Canada was run from here. Weinhard's brewing business continued to expand to the point where he even offered to pipe beer directly to the Skidmore Fountain. This offer was declined by civic leaders. By 1890, the brewery produced 100,000 barrels of beer annually.

The present buildings were completed in 1908 in order to meet the expanding brewing needs of the Henry Weinhard brewing empire, now serving the Pacific Northwest and even the Philippines and China. Once Prohibition was enacted, the brewery managed to survive by brewing near-beer (a brew of less than 0.5 percent alcohol), syrups and sodas – such as root beer, becoming a local bottler of national brands. Vanilla cream and other syrup products were marketed as "Gourmet Elixirs".

Mergers with and sales to other breweries occurred over the years. A merger with competitor Portland Brewing brought the Blitz name into the formal name of the brewery. Arnold Blitz, who had owned Portland Brewing, became Chairman of the new Blitz-Weinhard company. The new company took 20 years to modernize the brewery and recover from Prohibition, which ended in 1933. In 1979, Blitz-Weinhard was sold to the Pabst Brewing Company. Pabst then sold the brewery to Stroh Brewing Company in 1996. The last and final sale of the company in 1999 had major effects on the brewery building. Stroh's sold the Henry Weinhard's brand to Miller Brewing Company, and moved all Henry's brewing operations to the Olympia Brewery in Tumwater, Washington. After nearly 135 years of continual operations, the Weinhard Brewery brewed its last beer on August 27, 1999. It was put up for sale the following month.

Starting in the 1950s, the area reflected the dynamics affecting central urban areas nationwide. Transportation patterns increasingly shifted from water and rail to roads and highways, and subsequently, interstate freeways and air. The primary users relocated, leaving the District increasingly vacant and marginalized. These conditions created an area whose low rents attracted a diverse range of new tenants and users. The District became an "incubator" for start-up businesses. It became a convenient location for artists seeking inexpensive space and a casual environment. Warehouse buildings were as dwellings, legally and illegally, introducing a new resident population. The District became an eclectic mixture of auto

shops and art galleries. It became the mildly eccentric and quirky home of individuals and businesses that valued its proximity to the downtown, without its formality or expense.

While it's difficult to conceive now, prior to 1990, abandoned warehouses, long-forgotten industrial sites and blue-collar cafes dominated the Pearl District neighborhood. Like all pearls of value, the area took time to develop. In 1971, Powell's Books opened and soon became a Portland landmark. In 1978, Ted Savinar became one of the first artists to move to the Pearl, renting 3,000 square feet for \$100 a month. By the mid 1980's, the first art galleries had arrived resulting from the number of artists who now inhabited the area, attracted by low-cost lofts. It was the beginning of a major Northwest migration. Even prior to the purchase of the Brewery Blocks and Hoyt Rail Yards, adventurous and savvy investors like John Gray, Al Solheim, John Carroll and Pat Prendergast began to buy up old warehouses in the district and began converting them into unique living spaces. Art galleries and eateries followed close behind

Much of the re-development of the Pearl District was the result of collaboration between the city and private sectors. In the early 1980s, the Pearl District became the focus of planning efforts by the Portland Development Commission. Work that ensued included an urban design study, followed by the 1988 Central City Plan, the 1992 River District Vision Plan and 1994 River District Development Plan. Those efforts culminated in the River District Urban Renewal Plan, which was adopted in 1998 and provided tax increment financing for improvements within the district. In 2000, a 26-member steering committee, comprised of city officials, developers, community leaders, planners, designers and others, representing a wide range of viewpoints, met monthly over the course of a year to discuss the future of the Pearl District, to re-evaluate current plans and policies, and to focus on the development priorities for the neighborhood. In addition to the steering committee, an executive committee met in between the steering committee meetings to provide advice on the planning process and to

make initial recommendations to the steering committee. As a result, the ultimate vision for the Pearl was espoused in a 105 page document dubbed the “Pearl District Development Plan, *A Future Vision for a Neighborhood in Transition*”, and the plan was adopted in October of 2001 by the City Council.

Revitalization of the Pearl District has played a critical role in Portland’s housing strategy and in achieving regional and state goals for growth management. Success in creating a high density urban neighborhood has helped relieve pressure to expand the UGB and protect rural resource lands.

## IV. Portland Streetcar



The Portland Streetcar opened in 2001 connecting the Pearl District to downtown and Portland State University.



The Portland Streetcar was designed to fit the scale and traffic patterns of the neighborhoods through which it travels. Streetcar vehicles, manufactured by Skoda-Inekon in Plzen of the Czech Republic, are 2.46 meters (about 8 feet) wide and 20 meters long (about 66 feet), about 10 inches narrower and 1/3 the length of a MAX (TriMet's light rail system) double car train. They run in mixed traffic and, except at platform stops, accommodate existing curbside parking and loading. The Portland Streetcar is owned and operated by the City of Portland. During construction, neighborhood disruption was minimized. A unique shallow 12-inch deep track slab design reduced the construction time and utility relocations. Maneuverability of the shorter and narrower Skoda vehicles has allowed the 8-foot wide track slab to be fitted to existing grades, limiting the scope of street and sidewalk reconstruction.

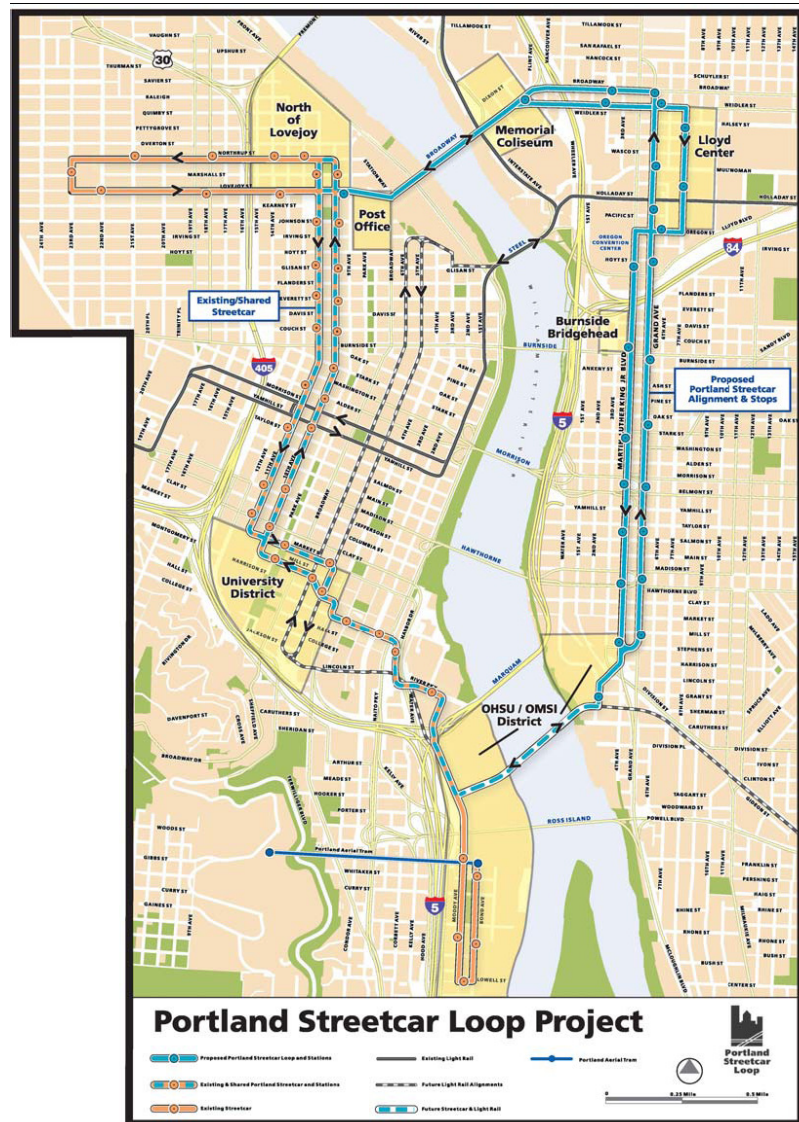
Streetcars run on a 8.0-mile continuous loop (4.0-mile in each direction) from Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital at NW 23rd Avenue, on Lovejoy and Northrup, through the Pearl District and on 10th and 11th Avenues, Portland State University, SW River Parkway & Moody (RiverPlace), SW Moody and Gibbs in the South Waterfront District where it connects with the Portland Aerial Tram to a terminus at SW Lowell and Bond.

Streetcar vehicles can carry a sardine load of up to 140 passengers, are air-conditioned and have a low-floor center section with full handicapped accessibility.

A total of 46 stops are located along the alignment located about every 3-4 blocks. In March 2002, Streetcar Arrival Time was installed at most stops and on the Internet. This GPS tracking system allows customers to check at the stop reader

board and on the Internet to find out when the next Streetcars will arrive.

Future plans for the Portland Streetcar include an extension across the Broadway Bridge end connecting both east and west sides of the Willamette River via a continuous loop.



## **V. Portland Streetcar Project – Key Milestones**

### **1990**

City initiates Streetcar Feasibility Study and establishes the Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee.

### **1992**

City of Portland receives \$500,000 federal HUD grant and matches with local funds.

### **1995**

City issues RFP to design, build, operate and maintain Streetcar. The non-profit corporation, Portland Streetcar, Inc., is selected.

### **May 1999**

Construction begins from Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital to Portland State University.

### **April 5, 1999**

Official ground breaking ceremony.

### **May 1999**

Start construction of phase I & II alignment track work from Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital to Portland State University.

### **September 1999**

Notice to proceed for Skoda-Inekon to begin construction of Streetcar vehicles.

### **November 1999**

Start construction of Streetcar maintenance facility (beneath I-405).

### **January 2001**

Substantial completion of construction of phase I & II.

### **April/May/June 2001**

Received five (5) Streetcar vehicles, begin training and testing.

**July 20, 2001**

Began Streetcar passenger service from Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital to Portland State University.

**Summer 2003**

Received two additional vehicles for a total fleet of seven.

**January 2004**

Construction begins from Portland State University to RiverPlace.

**March 11, 2005**

Began Streetcar passenger service to RiverPlace.

**January 2005**

Construction begins from RiverPlace to SW Moody and Gibbs.

**August 2005**

Construction completed to SW Moody and Gibbs; opening delayed until arrival of new streetcars in 2006.

**October 20, 2006**

Began Streetcar passenger service to South Waterfront.

**August 2006**

Construction begins on Lowell Extension in the South Waterfront District.

**December 2006**

Received three (3) Streetcar vehicles, begin training and testing.

**August 2007**

Began Streetcar passenger service to Lowell & Bond in the South Waterfront District.

**February 2010**

Begin construction on the loop connecting east and west sides of the Willamette River.

## **VI. Neighborhood and Business Associations**

### **Portland Neighborhood Associations**

Portland's neighborhood and business association system is something of a marvel in national grassroots activist circles. In effect, it gives ordinary people willing to delay dinner and sit through meetings quasi-governmental status. Their opinions therefore have more weight in decisions about their neighborhood's future. It's taken for granted by many Portlanders today, but it was a radical and according to some, dangerous concept, when it was instituted many years ago. When the Office of Neighborhood Involvement was formed in 1974, then City Commissioner Frank Ivancie said "We're funding the enemy". Depending on your point of view, you might sometimes agree with Ivancie, but the association system has given voice to the humblest of residents and business owners across the city and it has certainly played a vital role in shaping the Pearl District.

### **Pearl District Neighborhood Association**

It may not look like it, but the Pearl District is a neighborhood. The Pearl District Neighborhood Association was founded in 1991 as a result and today the association covers a lot of territory – from litter patrols and liquor licenses to urban design and parks planning.

In the early days of the association, times were simpler. Neilson Abeel, President of the association from 1996 to 2002, jokingly once said "our biggest challenge was finding more people". At that time, only a few people owned homes in the Pearl. But the association's founding group did have some real work to do. This group, which included Abeel, the late Wilbur Larson, his wife Carol Smith-Larson, Michael McLafferty, Al Solheim and Steve Ganz, started an evening foot patrol to tackle crime. When developers began building at the northern end of the district, the association weighed in on designs, making certain that retail spaces were included on the ground floor and

encouraging parks and open spaces. And then there are the little things that the association brought to the neighborhood: street trees, garbage cans, and mutt mitts for picking up after dogs.

Today's neighborhood association is very active and involves countless volunteer hours on various steering committees, task forces, and working groups that help bring public art, good, eco-friendly design, transportation, safety, security and parks to the district.

## **Pearl District Business Association**

The Pearl District Business Association's mission is to manage member services and to promote the Pearl District as an experience destination for retail shopping, dining, art lovers, locals and tourists, and those appreciative of world class urban renewal.

- Public Advocacy – every aspect of advocacy from street signage, negotiating street closures and representing the Pearl District in future City planning.
- Explore the Pearl Website optimization and enhanced calendar functionality
- Explore the Pearl Magazine
- Pearl District Business Association Member Map and Guide in Explore the Pearl
- Marketing + Advertising Campaigns examples include:
  - 2008 Pearl District Home Furnishing Sample Sale
  - 2008 Glass Art Society International Conference
  - Summer Advertising Campaign
  - Discover Portland
  - Pearl District Sidewalk Sale and Artwalk
  - Holidays in the Pearl
  - Member eNewsletter and Networking Events

## **VII. 1980-1990 Development**

Al Solheim, sometimes referred to as the “Father of the Pearl District” was one of the earliest developers, along with his partner, Bob Ames, to embark on rehabilitation of the gritty, obsolete, mostly vacated industrial area. Al's earliest project was the conversion of the former Blumauer-Frank Drug Company building into residential lofts named Irving Street lofts that were initially marketed for rent and could be used as live-work spaces. Eventually the building was converted to condominiums and sold. The next project was conversion of the Honeyman Hardware building – also to rental live/work lofts subsequently converted to “for sale” condominiums. Other projects spurred by Al and Bob have included the Rivertech Building, Safeway Blocks, and the Machine Works building conversion.

Other developers soon followed, including John Carroll, with projects that included rehabilitation of the historic former Chown Pella Hardware warehouse into residential lofts with retail on the ground floor, followed by McKenzie Lofts and The Gregory condominiums.

### **HOYT STREET YARDS**

Good developers are visionaries. They see beyond what is, to what's coming. Gazing over inner northwest Portland a decade ago, the HOYT visionaries saw what no one else could. A new way of life that would rise along with landmark condominiums. A development that would become -- like its namesake -- the Pearl of the city: bustling, playful, and vividly rich. The farsighted people of HOYT saw it. And, if not quite in the blink of an eye, a forgotten piece of rail yard has today become everything they envisioned, and more.

1994. Forrest Gump compared life to chocolates. The Cowboys kicked Buffalo in the Super Bowl. And abandoned warehouses and empty offices dominated an old Burlington Northern rail

yard in Northwest Portland. But a group that would become HOYT saw promise in the dilapidated district.

It didn't happen overnight. Initial development of the 34-acre site was slowed by long-standing traffic structures. In 1997, a Development Agreement between HOYT and the City of Portland was finalized. Its primary objective was to bring high density housing to this portion of the city, where little to no housing existed. Milestones in the development included demolition of the Lovejoy Ramp, construction of the Portland Streetcar, two fabulous urban parks and what will be a third highly designed three-acre park at the north end of the property. HOYT, with the City of Portland, has converted what was once a 34-acre rail yard site into a world-class, mixed-use, urban community.

With the completion of 11 multi-level residential communities and an ever-growing number of galleries, restaurants, parks and shops, HOYT's vision of a dynamic urban neighborhood has been realized, and continues to evolve.

As President of Hoyt Street Properties, LLC, Tiffany Sweitzer oversees one of the largest urban developments in the country. Joining the company in 1994 as a project associate, Sweitzer successfully held various positions before becoming president in 2000.

In addition to managing the execution of the company's vision and development projects, Sweitzer is responsible for overseeing Hoyt Realty Group, a full-service real estate company.

Under Sweitzer's direction, Hoyt Street Properties' projects have achieved awards from the American Institute of Architecture and received



national recognition from publications such as the New York Times, Builder Magazine and Professional Builder.

Sweitzer sits on the board of Portland Streetcar Inc., the River District Steering Committee, TriMet, and Portland Center Stage where she is instrumental in fundraising and planning for future developments in the city of Portland. She is also a member of the Urban Land Institute and the Congress for the New Urbanism.

Hoyt cares deeply about creating communities that are friendly to both people and the environment that sustains us. From the nationally recognized LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) program, to innovations that make for more efficient building systems, to initiatives that promote alternative transportation, HOYT is committed to setting new standards in environmentally sound development.

The entire Hoyt Yards is currently a part of a pilot program for LEED certification of entire neighborhoods, called LEED for Neighborhood Development. The program encourages enhancing the overall health, natural environment and quality of life of communities, through efforts such as efficient energy and water use, and promoting carbon-neutral design. HOYT is working hard to ensure that its projects in the Pearl District are in line with LEED certification requirements.

Two most recent projects, the Metropolitan and Encore, each received Silver LEED certification. This prestigious award reflects their dedication to incorporating green features throughout the development. Features include a captured rainwater system used for landscape irrigation, plus efficiency measures that account for 24% less energy use and 30% less water usage than conventional buildings.

Besides being committed to responsible development with new and future projects, HOYT is also working to bring existing buildings into line with LEED standards. HOYT understands its legacy will last generations. And they are making sure that

legacy is one of mindful management of resources and a richly sustainable culture of livability.

## **BREWERY BLOCKS**

The Brewery Blocks, located at the former site of the Blitz-Weinhard Brewery, is a five-block shopping and professional district at the south end of the Pearl District developed by Gerding-Edlen Development.

The Brewery Blocks provides a transition between the Central Business District and the River District and is home to urban retail, creative Class A office space and residential housing. With the combination of historic preservation of the Weinhard Brewhouse and the Armory Building, and an increase in retail and commercial activity, this area has been transformed into a bustling urban neighborhood. Additionally, it provides a design that is faithful to the industrial character of the former Brewery and the Pearl District, and is consistent with “environmentally friendly” sustainable development concepts.

Gerding Edlen exists to do one simple thing: to create vibrant, sustainable and inspiring places where people can work, learn and live. Creating places that offer fresh air, foster creativity and incorporate art and culture help us achieve this goal. Whether the project is mixed-use, office, retail, residential or educational, the following Principles of Place guide us each step of the way.

The simplest things are the most profound. With every potential project, they start by considering place. What is the neighborhood like? Is there an opportunity to create a great place? How can they add to the community and knit themselves into the fabric of the neighborhood? What are the growth trends? What does this community need? Does it feel right? Can they create something greater than just a building? Only when the right variables are in place do they begin to think about creating a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable building.

Before renovating the Brewery Blocks, Gerding Edlen spent a great deal of time learning about peoples' needs and the neighborhood. They studied modes of transportation, demographics and municipal objectives, and immersed themselves in the physical, social and economic aspects of the community. They evaluated how they could serve the people who would eventually live and work in the buildings as well as the community at large. Only after exploring these issues did they begin to discuss uses, building concepts, massing, forms and shapes. Gerding Edlen believes that an understanding of how all of these elements work together was an essential component to creating the Brewery Blocks and an environment where people thrive.

Gerding Edlen is passionate about urban development because it has less of an impact on the environment than other kinds of development. Building within existing infrastructures is inherently more sustainable than creating new ones, and dense urban developments require less land and other resources than new suburban homes and other buildings serving a comparable number of people. In addition, people who live in dense urban areas tend to use less fuel because they don't drive as much. Gerding Edlen encourages the development of alternate forms of transportation that help reduce carbon emissions and dependency on oil, such as walking, biking, streetcar and the bus.

Imagine being able to do all of the necessary and enjoyable things that make life great within 20 minutes of your home. The magic of cities is that they have the potential to provide most things people need for inspired living—open spaces (planned and natural), grocery stores, workplaces, libraries, events, public and private schools—within a concentrated area. Less time spent in transit means more time for family and friends, leisure activities and other meaningful experiences. In the Brewery Blocks, they created 20-minute living with a mix of housing, offices, retail, places to experience art and convenient, alternative transit options.



## **BOB GERDING (1938-2009)**

Co-Founder

Robert (Bob) Gerding was an outdoor enthusiast and Oregon native. His passion was for making the built environment more sustainable and helping people understand that sustainable development benefits more than the environment.

It contributes to the social and economic vitality of communities. Bob also believed—and proved with Gerding Edlen co-founder Mark Edlen, in several successful public/private ventures—that it's possible to work constructively with government while making a fair profit.

Prior to retiring in 2006, Bob managed all aspects of development and was well-known for his expertise in structuring complex projects. His responsibilities included establishing and maintaining relationships with members of the development team, coordinating with government and private groups and raising capital, including equity and debt. He also managed lease and sale transactions and provided general oversight of the development process. Until his passing in 2009 following a long battle with cancer, he continued to be involved with the firm and remained active in various civic and philanthropic ventures.

Bob's personal commitment to education and the arts profoundly impacted his professional life. Believing that a strong, major university is critical to the health and robust development of the region, he contributed development services to Portland State University for multiple projects. Bob was an avid supporter of the arts. The recently renovated Portland Armory, now a performing arts center, was renamed the Bob and Diana Gerding Theater in recognition of Bob and

his wife's support of the arts in the community.

Bob held B.S. and M.S. degrees in biology and a Ph.D. in biochemistry from the University of Oregon. He was active in the Portland commercial real estate market for more than twenty years before retiring. In 2006 Bob was named Honored Citizen by the Architecture Foundation of Oregon in recognition of his contributions to Oregon's built environment.

## **MARK EDLEN**

Managing Principal



Mark Edlen is the co-founding member of GEDI and is internationally recognized for his expertise and success in creating mixed-use commercial, residential, educational, and retail developments. Mr. Edlen directs all phases of GEDI's projects and operations and has overseen the development of 56 projects totaling approximately \$4.8 billion since the inception of GEDI. Frequently invited to be the keynote speaker at a number of conferences, lectures and congregations, Mr. Edlen has delivered presentations to groups such as the Civil Construction Group and Director of the Housing Department Ministry of Construction in Vietnam, Oregon League of Conservation Voters, Innotech Innovation Conference, National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices and many others. Mr. Edlen received his B.S. in Finance and an M.B.A. from the University of Oregon. Mr. Edlen's 24 years of

experience in commercial real estate began when he was a commercial broker at Cushman & Wakefield, during which time he was consistently recognized as the top producing office broker in the Portland market.