

Part I

# The Laurelhurst Neighborhood

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*A Walking Tour of the  
Laurelhurst Neighborhood*

As told by **Amelia Shields**

## **Laurelhurst History**

The Laurelhurst neighborhood has the honor of being one of the more distinctive historic communities in Portland. Home to roughly 3000 families, the signature curvilinear streets, wide sampling of bungalows, and tree-lined drives are some of the characteristics that have drawn past and present residents. While the neighborhood has matured over the years, very little has been altered since Laurelhurst was ▶



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NE Glisan St

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NE 41st Ave

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NE Davis St

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NE Couch St

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E Burnside St

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SE Caesar E Chavez Blvd

SE 41st Ave

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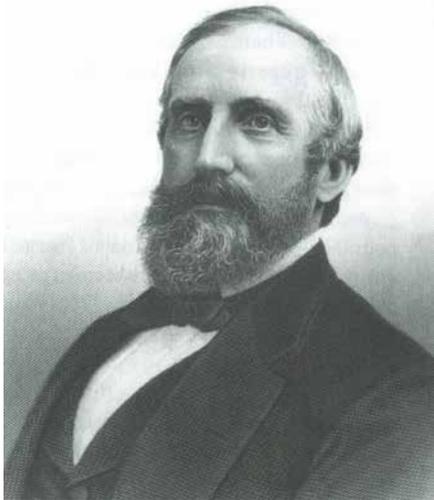
See page 11  
for the walking tour  
of Laurelhurst Park

SE Stark St

► originally platted in 1909. This makes for a neighborhood full of local history.

The history of Laurelhurst really begins in 1851, with the two adjacent Donation Land Claims of Terrence Quinn and Elijah B. Davidson. Under President Fillmore, The Donation Land Claim Act of 1850 encouraged pioneers to move west, granting acreage to settlers of the Oregon Territory. Today's Laurelhurst neighborhood occupies much of the original homesteads of the Quinn and Davidson claims, stretching from NE Halsey to SE Stark and from 32nd to 44th Avenues.

In 1857 Thomas Frazer, the one time governor of Oregon, acquired 320 acres of this land, planted orchards and established his estate as Hazelwood Farm. Later in 1862



William S. Ladd

Louis Merriam acquired the entire 460 acres, which were subsequently purchased by William S. Ladd in 1869 for \$3,500.

One of Portland's most prominent businessmen and cultural philanthropists, William S. Ladd was also a gentleman farmer. He established the land as Hazel Fern Farm, after Frazer's Hazelwood Farm, and developed what was considered one of the finest stock farms of the west.

At the time of William S. Ladd's death in 1893, the properties surrounding Hazel Fern were being developed. Portland's city limits were a mere two miles beyond the boundaries of the farm, making the land too valuable to remain agricultural.

Upon the death of W.S. Ladd's widow in 1908, the Ladd estate was settled and the heirs incorporated the Ladd Estate Company for the express purpose of managing and developing the Ladd properties. In March 1909, 442 acres was deeded to W.S. Ladd's son, William M. Ladd, who then formed the Ladd Investment Company. In May, the Laurelhurst Company purchased the farm for approximately \$2 million—the biggest trade of vacant land in the city's history.

The Laurelhurst Company consisted of President Charles K. Henry and Vice Presidents Frank Mead, Paul C. Murphy and H.R. Burke. Charles K. Henry and H. R. Burke of Portland established the Laurelhurst Company in 1909, along with Paul C. Murphy and Frank F. Mead of Seattle. The plan was to convert Hazel Fern Farm into a "high class residence park." Paul C. Murphy had been involved in the 1906 development of a similar neighborhood in Seattle, which was also called Laurelhurst. The Seattle subdivision was located near laurel groves, which explains the origins of the name. In keeping with the civic-mindedness of the City Beautiful Movement, several areas of Laurelhurst were reserved for community-based organizations and services. The Mann House at NE 33rd and Holliday, was a refuge home for women. Block 57 was set aside for a school—currently Laurelhurst Elementary, and 32 acres in the SE quadrant were conserved for Ladd Park—currently Laurelhurst Park. The Northeast quadrant of Laurelhurst was platted for a residential neighborhood in 1909.

Plats for the remaining three quadrants were completed in 1910.

Laurelhurst was unique from the onset with land set aside for a park, school and women's home. The Laurelhurst Company had lofty goals for its "high class residence park," hiring the famed architectural firm of the Olmsted Brothers to design the tract. Still seen as a leading example of Portland's City Beautiful Movement, the neighborhood took shape around the natural topography of the land. Green space was preserved for common enjoyment and special care was given to the views a resident would experience walking through the streets. The idea that harmonious living could be achieved through landscape design can still be seen in Laurelhurst's entrance arches, the tree-lined blocks and circular street patterns.

The Laurelhurst Company undertook the subdivision's physical development, paving streets, pouring sidewalks, bringing utilities, and installing streetlights. An impressive 12,000 shade trees were planted in the parking strips in the front of the lots, which were typically 50 x 100 feet. The bungalow was the predominant building style, along with other Arts and Crafts influenced designs, but there are also many excellent examples of Colonial Revival, Tudor, Prairie Style and Mediterranean, to name a few.

Lots initially sold for \$750-\$1600 with the deeds to all of the lots containing many restrictions. For twenty-five years, the property was to be used for single-family detached houses costing from \$2,500-\$15,000. No hotels, businesses, apartments, factories or livery stables were allowed. True to the time, the sale of alcoholic beverages was prohibited and no homes could be sold to Chinese, Japanese or African Americans. ■

## 1) Laurelhurst Elementary School

In 1913, the Portland school board bought the block that Laurelhurst School now sits on for \$33,500 with the expectation of building “a number of cottages around the exterior of the block, with a court in the center in what is known as the cottage school system.” It wasn’t until 1916 that there were enough children in Laurelhurst to merit a new school.

In September of 1916, 27 students attended the first day at a school in Laurelhurst in a portable building. The new school was called “Scott School” after the first editor of the Oregonian newspaper, Harvey W. Scott (and whose widow owned a home in Laurelhurst for a time).

The neighborhood was growing so quickly that residents asked the school board for another building in December of that year. By the fall of 1918, a second portable was added to handle the 60 students in attendance, and by 1922, there were six portables, housing seven grades.

In 1923, architectural firm of Claussen and Claussen presented plans for a new school building to replace the portables. Completed in 1924, the school was formally dedicated the “Laurelhurst School”. Increasing numbers of school-age children in the 1950s necessitated the construction of the single story annex building with four additional classrooms in 1951.

If you are a fan of Portland author Beverly Cleary’s Ramona book series, the front facade of the school may seem familiar to you as it is said to be the inspiration for Cedarhurst Elementary, the school that Ramona attends.

## 2) Street Lamp

This is one of the last two remaining original street lamps



left in Laurelhurst. (Hint: this one is tucked next to a tree!) When creating the neighborhood, the Laurelhurst Company carefully planned out all utilities. As stated in the 1912 neighborhood sales brochure: “...the vast amount of money expended in installing the underground system in Laurelhurst, which cannot be seen above the ground.” This included water mains, sewers, gas mains, and all connections from the street to the curb.

## 3) Arches

There are 7 arches in Laurelhurst left today. There were originally 8 arches—4 pairs marking the entrances of Laurelhurst. The other pairs are located at 32nd and Glisan, 32nd and Burnside, and 39th and Stark. The arches were built in 1910 by the Laurelhurst

Development company and made of sandstone with light brackets on each arch. Many of the arches today are missing these light brackets.

In 1986 the Laurelhurst Neighborhood Association created a committee to address the deteriorating arches and now helps maintain them.

## 4) Mann Home

The Mann Home is on the National Register of Historical Places. Peter and Anna Mann purchased this land from the Ladd Estate in 1908 to create a home for the elderly. However, Peter Mann, a wealthy real estate entrepreneur, died that same year in 1908. But, Anna carried on with the project and decided to make it a larger facility than she and Peter had originally planned. She hoped to create a memorial to her husband which also had a social benefit.



Anna Mann

The building was dedicated and opened for residents in January 1911. The total cost of construction was \$80,000 (approximately \$2 million in today’s dollars). The house is an example of 20th century Tudor architecture, sometimes referred to as Collegiate Gothic.

The home was operated by the Old People’s Home Society which was founded in 1893 by Mrs. Henry Corbett, and originally called the “Portland Old Ladies’ Home Society.” The Society was a non-profit to plan a home dedicated to the gracious living for elderly women. It’s mission was to provide a home for elderly people. Anna Mann was president of this Society for a period of time.

Residents of the home were allowed to decorate and furnish their own rooms, with common areas decorated with donated fine furniture. The home operated until September 1982 when it has to close its doors due to the bad economy. In 1980, the Mann Home had merged with the Willamette View Manor, but the cost of running the home was just too much. In 1983, the home was sold and leased out to an alcoholic treatment center. The home is now the Movement Center dedicated to yoga and meditation services.

◀ One of the original street lamps



Top: Arch at present day SE Stark St and SE Cesar Chavez Blvd; Bottom: Markham Home

## 5) Sidewalk Stamp/Arches

On this corner, we see another set of Laurelhurst Arches. Look down at the sidewalk and you'll see one of many sidewalk stamps. This sidewalk stamp was recently restamped by the city but they kept the original stamp misspelling of Glisan.

## 6) Markham Home

The Markham home was built in 1911 as a real estate office. The original construction was built to give the impression of being large—but it actually had a false second floor. The home fell into disrepair over the years, and it was planned for demolish in 2014. Neighbors rallied and fundraised to save the home. Eventually the home was restored by John McCulloch Construction who modified the home to have a useable second floor, but the home was rebuilt using 1911 design elements to keep in spirit of the history home.

## 7) Morris House

The Byron and Elizabeth Morris House, at the corner of Hazelfern and Flanders, was built in 1912. This Craftsman has many interesting architectural features—including a cross-gable roof with projecting eaves and decorative curved brackets. The wraparound porch is supported by squared tapered columns on brick piers. The windows are original, with beveled leaded panes, wood sashes, and stained glass.

## 8 & 9) Heritage Trees #236 and #256

There are over 300 Heritage Trees throughout Portland, and 8 in Laurelhurst. These are trees formally recognized by the City Council for their unique size, age, historical or horticultural significance. The city council designates a small plaque for the tree. No heritage tree can be



Morris House

removed without the consent of the Urban Forestry Commission and Portland City Council, and a permit is needed to prune heritage trees.

Heritage Tree #236, at the Morris House, is a Monkey Puzzle tree—latin name is *araucaria araucana*. It's ancestors coexisted with dinosaurs. It's an evergreen tree native to Argentina and Chile—it's actually the national tree of Chile. The tree likely came from the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition where seedlings were given away as door prizes. This slow growing tree can reach 150 feet and thought to live thousands of years. It's currently endangered in Chile due to deforestation.

Heritage Tree #256, across Hazelfern Street, is an American Ash (latin name *fraxinus americana*). It's native to central and eastern united states. It's critically endangered due to recently introduced invasive pest the Emerald Ash Borer. This tree is 84 feet high with a spread of 84 feet and circumference of 14.3 feet.

## 10) Laurelhurst's First Home

535 NE Hazelfern is known as the W.N Everett House. This is the oldest house on the 1910 Laurelhurst plat, so it is believed to be the first home built in Laurelhurst. It's a classic Portland foursquare, identifiable from the small paired windows between the larger second floor windows. The front porch was altered at some point from the original home.

## 11, 12 & 14) Sidewalk Stamps

The corners of Laurelhurst and Peerless and Laurelhurst and Royal have the best examples of historic street curb stamps. The stamp “Buena” refers to Buena Vista Avenue which was the original name of Peerless Avenue. The street name was changed on October 6, 1932 by city ordinance 62171. The stamp can be seen on blocks between Hazelfern and Royal along Peerless. The stamp “Colony Street” refers to the original name of the street now called Imperial. The street name was changed on March 15, 1933 by City ordinance 63822.

## 13) Second Home in Laurelhurst

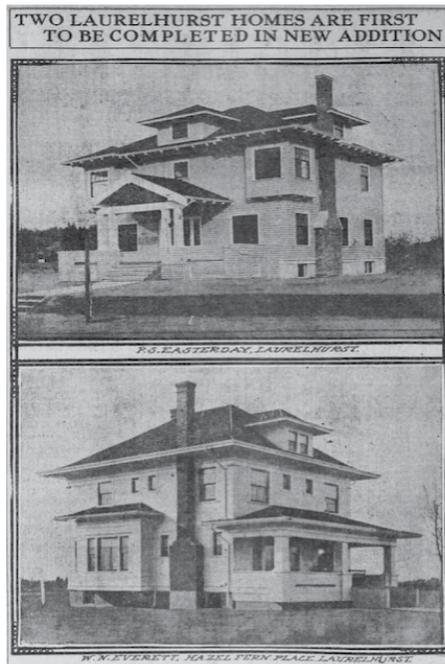
600 NE Royal Street is believed to be the second house built in Laurelhurst, just a couple months after the Everett House.

## 15 & 16) All Saints School and Parish

### 15) The Church

Archbishop Alexander D. Christie, founder of the University of Portland, noticed the rapid development of the Laurelhurst area. He purchased 6 lots in the Laurelhurst Addition from the Laurelhurst Company in 1916. On Sunday morning January 20, 1918, Archbishop Christie dedicated the new All Saints Church in the heart of Laurelhurst.

The original building was designed by Portland architect Joe Jacobberger, who designed several other projects for the Catholic Archdiocese of Portland. It was designed with the cedar shakes and steeply-pitched roof of a rustic mountain lodge. It's Gothic Tudor style, and single story facade helped it blend into the burgeoning residential neighborhood.



Above: Laurelhurst's first home (Bottom) and second home (Top)  
Below: Original All Saints Parish

On February 12, 1967, just before the parish's 50th anniversary, the church that you see before you was dedicated, replacing the old church.

### 16) The School

The All Saints School was conceived in 1924 by Father William Cronin and Archbishop Alexander D. Christie as an addition to the Church. It went through prolonged battles in county, state, and federal courts to be approved.

The biggest obstacle was a proposed Oregon state law known as the Anti-Parochial Schools Bill which dictated that all school-aged children must attend a public school. While this law was ruled

unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1925, more legal battles were to come.

In the summer of 1930, a contingent representing more than 70% of Laurelhurst residents argued to the city that a school should not be built as it would cause depreciation in nearby properties, endanger children who would have to cross the busy arteries of Glisan and 39th, and that there wasn't enough room for the church on the property.

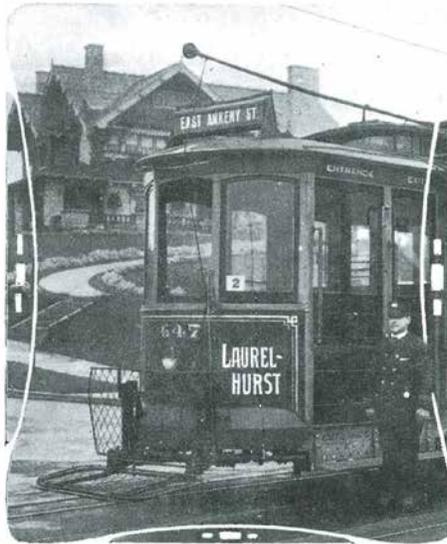
The proposed site of the school, along Northeast Laddington Court near 39th Avenue, was zoned residential. The City of Portland denied the building of the school, claiming that it violated a City ordinance that limited buildings in residential zones to be: “not detrimental or injurious to the character of the district or to the health, peace, or safety thereof.” The case went as far as the Oregon Supreme Court, which decided in 1932 that such a school would clearly not endanger the public health or safety.

Twelve years after its original conception, the parishioners of All Saints Parish opened the doors of the four-classroom parish school in the fall of 1936 to 125 students.

Enrollment in all parochial schools boomed in the 1950s, and it wasn't long before the student body had grown so large that a new building was in order. So it was that in 1955 the original four-classroom building was taken off its foundation and moved to St. Anthony's in Southeast Portland and the current school building stretching along 39th Avenue was completed.

Originally built as a two-story building, a third story, as well as the gym and a library, were subsequently added on.

Today with 490 students, All Saints School is one of the largest Catholic schools in the Portland Metro area.



## 17) Coe Circle

Coe Circle was originally a turn-around for one of the five streetcar lines that ran through the east side. The street car traffic turn-around on Glisan was also home to the Laurelhurst sales office. A sales office placed here was an ideal location for capturing prospective buyers as they stepped off the train.

The gilded bronze statue of Joan of Arc was donated by Dr. Henry Waldo Coe in 1925. The statue is off-center within the circle because the streetcar tracks still ran through the middle at the time of the statue's dedication. Made of bronze and copper for the flag with a granite base, it is one of eight replicas of the original Emmanuel Fremiet statue, dedicated to the Americans who were allied with the French during WWI. The other replicas reside in Melbourne, Australia, Philadelphia, New Orleans, and 4 in various parts of France.

This is just one of 4 statues Dr. Coe donated to the city of Portland. He donated a statue of Theodore Roosevelt by Alexander Phimister Proctor and a statue of Abraham Lincoln by George Fite Waters—both of which reside in the South Park Blocks downtown. Coe also donated a statue of George Washington by Pampeo Coppini which resides in Rose City Park.

Dr. Coe moved to Portland in 1891. He owned and operated Morningside hospital, and served in the Oregon State Senate in 1894. He also Served as president of the city and county Medical Association, and established the *Medical Sentenial* an independent medical magazine in 1893. He also lived in North Dakota where he met Theodore Roosevelt and formed a long-lasting friendship with him.

◀ Photos clockwise from top left: Henry Waldo Coe; Laurelhurst Streetcar; Ladd Farm, c. 1900; NE Glisan and 32nd streetcar tracks; LH sales office in present-day Coe Circle

## 18) Alfred Ruby House

The Alfred C Ruby House, at 211 NE Cesar Chavez Boulevard, was built between 1926 and 1927 and designed by architect Walter Kelly and is an example of English Tudor Revival Style. Alfred Ruby and his wife Nettie moved to Oregon in 1903. Ruby owned several livery stables, farms, a golf course, and Montavilla Bank. He also owned country house in the Gresham area. The MAX light rail stop “Ruby Junction” is located on property formerly owned by the Ruby’s. In 1955, the house was rented to the Japanese Consulate and began a 16-year stint as the home of the Japanese consult.

## 19 & 20) Heritage Trees #68 and #90

Heritage Tree #68 in front of 110 NE Cesar Chavez Ave is a Japanese Red Pine (*pinus densiflora*). Native to Japan, this evergreen tree has a circumference of 11.25 feet and is approximately 42 feet high, with a canopy of 36 feet. These trees can get up to 100 feet tall, although the average height is about 50 feet.

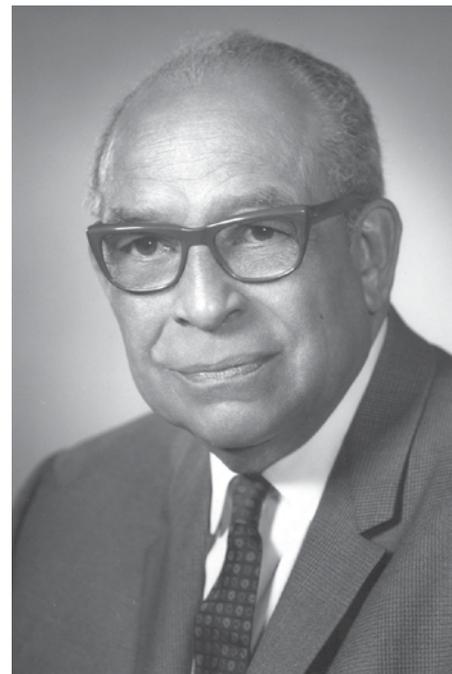
Heritage Tree #90 at 3945 NE Couch St is a Caroline Poplar (*Populus x canadensis*). Native to North American and the Middle East, this tree flowers in April and can get up to 100 feet tall. This particular tree is 135 feet high with a canopy of 94 feet.

## 21) Brick House Beautiful

In the 1920s, the Standard Brick & Tile Company set out to build a model home to showcase clay bricks. This home, at 4005 NE Davis St, became known as “Brick House Beautiful”. Upon its completion in 1923, the Standard Brick & Tile Company opened the home to the public for approximately a month. Taking out a full page ad in *The Oregonian*, over 1,000 people visited the home on the first day alone.



Figure 6. First advertisement for the Brick House Beautiful. Oregonian, September 17, 1922



Left: Oregonian Ad to announce home tour; Right: Dr. DeNorval Unthank

## 22) Dr. Unthank's Home

534 NE 43rd is the one-time home of Dr. DeNorval Unthank. Dr. Unthank was one of the first African American doctors in Portland and a civil rights leader. He fought discrimination for most of his life. Dr. Unthank and his wife Thelma were forced to move many times while in Portland. The leadership and achievements of Dr. DeNorval Unthank cross almost half a century in Portland, beginning with his arrival from Allentown, Pennsylvania in 1929. Opening a medical practice as one of Portland's first few African American doctors, he touched the lives of many Portland families, including many Vanport residents. In 1958, the Oregon Medical Society named him Doctor of the Year and in 1962, he was named Citizen of the Year by the Portland Chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. In 1977, the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission gave him their Distinguished Achievement Award. In 1973, he received the Brotherhood Award of Portland's B'nai B'rith Lodge. He was a past president of the NAACP, the first African American member of

the City Club, and a co-founder of the Urban League.

## 23) Horse Hitch Ups

Stop at 611 NE 43rd Ave to notice one of many original horse hitch ups on the curb. They were used to fasten horse carts. The City of Portland continues to preserve and maintain these rings citywide. The Horse Project, started by a resident of the Woodstock neighborhood in 2005 encourages participation in the urban art movement. The resident tied a plastic toy horse to a horse ring, and now you'll see various animals tied to the rings throughout Portland.

## 24) Bungalow District (entire blocks between Burnside and Ash, and between 41st and 44th)

The Laurelhurst Company set aside this area for all different sorts of attractive bungalows they could find on the Pacific Coast, offering the plans for free to builders. “It was the intention of the Laurelhurst Co. to make of this block a real bungalow fairyland” states the original Laurelhurst sales



◀ Clockwise from top left: Horse hitchup; Bungalow District; Laurelhurst Club; Laurelhurst Tennis Courts (Which no longer exist)

brochure. The brochure goes on to say of bungalows: “Their style of architecture is such that they require sympathetic surroundings and they should not be placed in close proximity with other types of houses that would spoil the most attractive features in bungalow lines.”

## 25) Laurelhurst Club

Built in 1912, the Laurelhurst Club was one of the first country clubs in Portland. Laurelhurst developer and resident, Paul Murphy felt there was a need for a neighborhood community center. To get the club started, 32 neighbors each donated \$100 and it quickly became “a club that anyone in Oregon had to belong to”.

The club was a hub of activities including sponsored tennis matches, concerts, and parties. The club also served as a voting

and election house. Approximately 40,000 people attended a band concert in the summer of 1916 that was hosted by the club.

Between 1916–1920, the club had its own orchestra of 20–30 musicians known as the Laurelhurst Symphonic Orchestra entirely comprised of club members. The club even had its own publication called *Laurelhurst Club Life* which was edited by Clifford Harrison. Membership grew from 206 to 490 members within a single year.

During World War II, a group who called themselves the Women of Laurelhurst used the club for rolling and packaging bandages for soldiers overseas.

Today the Laurelhurst Club hosts monthly ballroom dances for its members, seasonal community sing-alongs, and other community events. The space is also available for rent for weddings, meetings, or other celebrations.

## 26) Paul Murphy Residence

Built in 1917 by Ellis F. Lawrence, this is the former home of real estate developer Paul Cole Murphy, found at 3574 E Burnside Street. Murphy was one of the most successful and influential real estate entrepreneurs in Portland. Murphy (1876–1957) was the president of the Ladd Estate company, which was established in 1908 to manage the real estate holdings of the Ladd family. Included in those holdings was Hazel Fern farm, one of the finest stock farms of the west. Hazel Fern farm is the original land now occupied by this neighborhood.

In 1909, Murphy and fellow investors acquired Hazel Fern farm from the Ladd Estate for \$2 million and organized the Laurelhurst Company. The goal was to develop the landing into one of the most fashionable residential sections of the city. Laurelhurst was advertised as a “high class residence park” that

prohibited apartments, hotels, and commercial buildings. Murphy was vice president and sales agent for the Laurelhurst company.

## 27) Albee House

This colonial revival home, at 3360 SE Ankeny Boulevard, was built in 1912 by Portland architect Albert E. Doyle. Doyle designed many of Portland's downtown landmarks, including the Multnomah County Central library, the Meier & Frank Building, the US National Bank Building, the Benson hotel, and Portland's iconic public drinking fountains known as Benson Bubblers. He also designed Reed College and the lodge at Multnomah Falls.

The home was built for Harry Russell Albee—Portland's mayor from 1913 to 1917. Albee's administration was active in several progressive efforts. First, he developed the city's public docks with the acquisition of Swan Island and Mock's Bottom on the Willamette River. He was also instrumental in selecting a site, developing plans and constructing the Civic Auditorium which was completed in 1917. Most importantly, he strongly supported measures to implement a park expansion across the city. By 1940, Albee was the Supervisor of Land



Albee House

Acquisition and Development for the Bureau of Parks. He continued in that position until his death in 1950 at age 83. It's fitting that his

house sits on the edge of one of the city's most beautiful parks.

This historic home operated as a Bed & Breakfast recently, but has now turned back to a private residence.

## 28) Sisters of Social Services Home

This home was originally built for James Tamiesie and his wife Ruth in 1916. J.P. Tamiesie was a member of the first graduating class of the University of Oregon's Medical Department in 1890. In 1895, before taking up residence in Portland, J.P. Tamiesie created the Oregon Condensed Milk Company in Hillsboro. This dairy was responsible for producing Oregon's first can of condensed milk. The business was later purchased by Pacific Coast Condensed Milk Company in 1902 and later become what we recognize today as Carnation Milk Company.

From 1955-1999, the home was owned by the Sisters of Social Service. The Sisters of Social Service is a branch of the Roman Catholic Church, and is based out of Los Angeles, California. Originally organized in 1908 in Hungary, their mission is to "address social concern throughout the world." Their website states, "We Sisters of Social Service are women of many cultures who come together to fulfill the Gospel call to care for the poor and alienated. The right of all people to live in dignity is at the heart of our work and of our religious faith."

During the 44 years that the Sisters resided at 21 SE Floral Place, the house was converted from a single family home to that which could accommodate 13-15 women. Bedrooms were divided and halls were added so that the sisters could have individual private rooms.

In 1999, the home was sold to a private owner and converted back to a single family home. The additional room partitions were removed and



Tamiesie/Sisters of Social Services Home

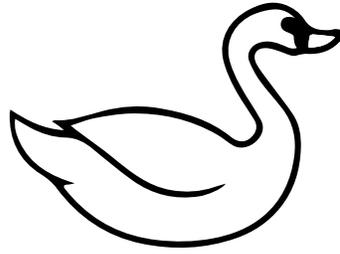
the home was returned to its original configuration.

## 29) Bitar Mansion

At 3316 SE Ankeny Street, the Bitar Mansion—also known as the Harry A. and Ada Green House—is a 12,000 square foot home designed by architect Herman Brookman and built in 1927 for \$410,000, equivalent to \$5.91 million today. It boasts 17 rooms including a marble floored grand ballroom. The interior also features a heated pool, servants wing, and elaborate woodwork, tile, metal work and sculptures.

The architect Herman Brookman also designed Congregation Beth Israel and Frank Manor house at Lewis & Clark College which is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places.

Robert and Mable Bitar purchased the house in 1951. Robert later became an honorary consul to Lebanon and lived in the mansion until his death in 2000. ■



Part II

# Laurelhurst Park

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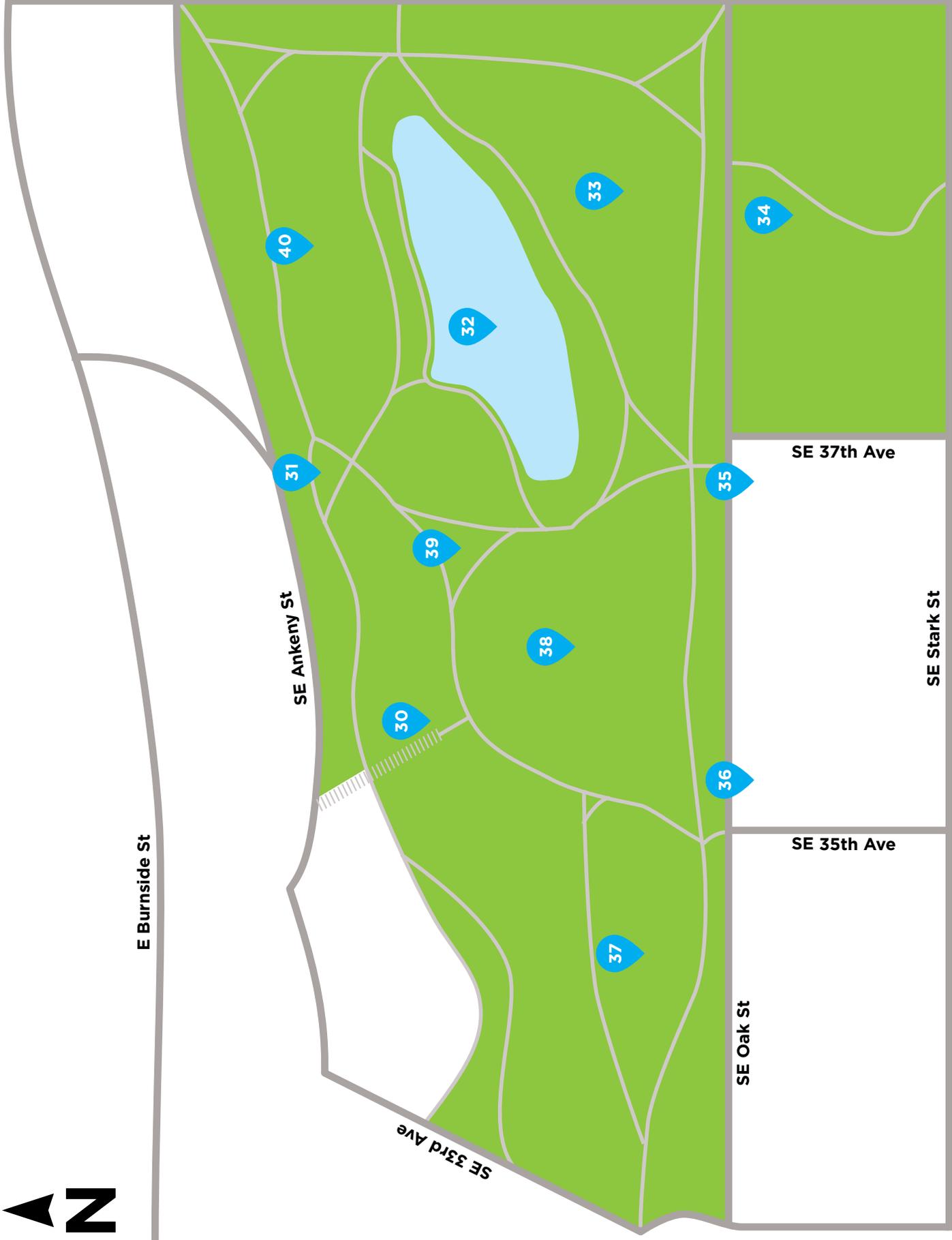
*A Walking Tour  
of Laurelhurst Park*

## **Laurelhurst Park**

Welcome to Laurelhurst Park, one of the jewels of the Portland park system! This 31 acre space became the first city park on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001.

In 1898, the secretary of Portland's newly formed park association began correspondence with Olmsted Brothers, a firm founded by Frederick Law Olmsted, the nation's most influential landscape architect and urban planner. The firm was the first of several such firms to flourish around the turn of the twentieth century as a result of the City Beautiful movement, which sought to bring beauty into cities as a reaction to decades of industrialization and poor planning.

The Olmsted's plan for the city was presented in 1903, by John C. Olmsted, nephew and adopted son ▶



► of Frederick Law Olmsted. John Olmsted's plan for a park system in Portland identified locations for thirty-seven park projects encompassed within a proposed system of neighborhood parks, suburban parks, scenic reservations, city squares, parkways, and boulevards, and included among its recommendations the purchasing a swampy, forested corner of William S. Ladd's dairy farm.

At the time, the city was focused on the upcoming Lewis and Clark Exhibition, to be held in 1905, and the extraordinary rise in land values due to the exhibition prevented the Park Board from realizing Olmsted's plan for the Ladd farm or for any of the other thirty-six proposed park sites. It wasn't until October of 1909, under the direction of Superintendent Emanuel T. Mische, that the Portland Park Board purchased the section of land that would become Laurelhurst Park from the Laurelhurst Company for \$92,482.10.

Emanuel Mische brought a remarkable range of experience and skill to the Portland Park Board. Born in Syracuse, New York, he attended the Missouri Botanic School before enrolling in the Bussey Institute—the horticulture school of the Arnold Arboretum in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts—in 1894, receiving a scholarship in 1896 to attend the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, England, and going to work for Olmsted Brothers in 1898.

During his eight years with Olmsted Brothers, Mische absorbed the philosophies that inspired the work of the Olmsted family. Mische was heavily influenced by the Olmsted technique of dividing neighborhood parks into sections for different types of uses. As originally designed, there were six major sections of land within the park: Concert Grove, Firwood Lake and the Children's Lawn, Plateau Meadow, Broad Meadow, Picnic Grove, and Rhododendron Hill.

The Park Annex across Oak street was added later.

Mische designed Laurelhurst Park to allow for different types of uses within each section. The sections each have their own distinct character and are separated from each other by the original concrete footpath system that circulates throughout the park.

Although Mische designed Laurelhurst Park in 1910, little more than debris clearing happened at the site that year due to funding shortages. Construction began in earnest in 1912 with the grading of walkways, the grading and seeding of lawns, and the installation of log steps. Like the rest of Laurelhurst, minimal grading was done to create the park, instead building the park around the natural contours of the land. ■

### 30) Rhododendron Hill

This hill contains what park designer Emanuel T. Mische described as the "steeper areas" of the park which were to be "devoted to arboreous and shrubby vegetation as an appropriate use of the ground and to add an enriching element and one lessening the cost of maintenance." Mische planted the area profusely with rhododendrons, azaleas, Western hemlock, and magnolias. The rhododendrons that lend the hill its name are concentrated in the center of the incline around a string of straight-run brick stairs that runs from the base of the hill to Ankeny Street.

### 31) Comfort Station

In 1914, Portland architects Whitehouse and Foulhoux designed a men's comfort station for Laurelhurst Park. The building faces Ankeny Street, marking one of the park's main entrances, and currently holds restrooms and the park's administrative office. It was designed as a simple version of the

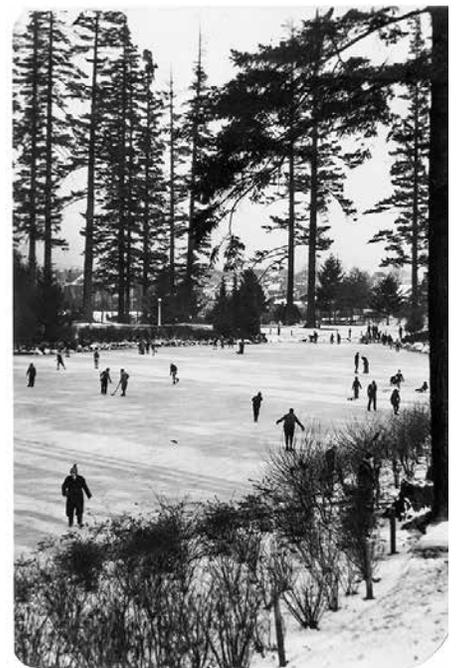
English Cottage style popular at the time (as can be seen in houses all over Laurelhurst).

### 32) Firwood Lake

Originally known by locals as Ladd's Pond, Firwood Lake, as it would come to be known, was not much more than puddle with the odd cluster of cattails—frequented by cattle for a drink, and schoolboys for a swim. Mische transformed the pond by deepening it and manicuring the grounds around it. Boomerang Island was added in 1955.

In early years (around 1918), the pond was patrolled by a white swan named General Pershing, who was said to keep little children from approaching too close to the water. The Park Bureau even went so far as to open a Matrimonial Bureau in 1919 to help find Pershing a mate. In later years, a black-beaked, black-toed swan named Big Boy took over.

For a time in the 1920s and 30s, the Rose Festival Queen's coronation took place in the pond on floating boats and decorated rafts, drawing thousands of onlookers.



Ice skating on Firwood Lake



Clockwise from top: Portland's Rose Festival Queen and her court at LH Park; Edith Daily, Rose Festival Queen, 1924; Rose Festival Garland Dance, 1921

In the winter, when the pond would freeze over, people would ice skate on it, even as recently as 1989.

Plantings around the lake are a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees and mature shrubbery planted in clusters, including common hackberry, silktree, sweetgum, fragrant snowbell, bald cypress, and Chinese witch hazel. Bigleaf maple, sugarberry, and Northern red oak are among those plantings that remain from 1913–1914.

By 1990, nearly 20,000 catfish, carp, and black crappie fish were stirring up sediment on the lake's bottom. Oregon Bass and Panfish Club tried to deplete the population to no avail. Eventually, the sediment buildup and increased levels of dangerous algae compromised the lake's health and appearance.

Sunshine was unable to reach the bottom of the lake, which is needed to keep algae down. To bring the lake back to health, the Portland Parks & Recreation department drained and dredged the lake in 2010 and installed an oxygen circulation system. Today, thousands of fish still inhabit the lake along with ducks and turtles.

### 33) Plateau Meadow/ Heritage Tree #160

This section of the park contains many of the original old Douglas and grand firs that Mische called the trees "the crowning glory of the park", considering them the central design element of Laurelhurst Park. His decision to minimize grading at the park was

a result of his respect for the trees and his desire to maintain the grandeur of their appearance.

Later additions, evergreens and exotics, have contributed to the stunning display of variety at Plateau Meadow. These include dawn redwood, a rare deciduous conifer, giant redwood, Port Orford cedar, Northern red oak, tulip tree, Japanese crabapple, Pacific dogwood, Southern magnolia, Whitcomb flowering cherry, and Katsura tree.

The park overall contains approximately 120 species of trees, comprising nearly 1000 individual trees, 10% of which pre-date the park, and 30% of which are from the park's original plantings, with new trees being planted yearly.

Heritage Tree #160 is located in Plateau Meadow and is a Katsura tree—latin name *cercidiphyllum japonicum*—native to northern China and Japan. It stands about 70 feet tall, with a spread of about 61 feet, and trunk circumference of 10.2 feet. It has fall color and blossoms in the spring. Katsura trees became popular in the late 1950s with a growing post-war interest in Japanese culture. You can find the tree just off the back right corner of the Horseshoe Pits' fence.

### 34) Park Annex

In 1919, the Pacific Coast Parks Association honored Mische by voting Laurelhurst the most beautiful park in the west. Between 1921 and 1922, Mische's successor, Charles Paul Keyser, purchased an entire block across Oak Street from Laurelhurst Park to serve as a playground. Keyser oversaw the development of the playground throughout the 1920s, installing tennis courts, handball courts, play equipment, a wading pool, a recreation building, and a kitchenette.

At the park annex, the boys were to play on the South side, the girls on the North side, with general games held in the middle.

The Tudor theatre style building in the Annex has a unique chimney that splits in two on the balcony level with a spot to stand in the middle. Although the fireplace is no longer in use, the picturesque balcony is still available for observing classes. With the installation of a professional grade dance floor, the studio has primarily been used for performing arts classes.

### 35 & 36) Franz Brothers' Homes

These two homes were once owned by the Franz Bakery brothers Englebert and Joe Franz. The Franz brothers immigrated to the United States in 1896 to work in their uncle's bakery. In 1906, they saved enough money to buy the bakery from their uncle and grow it into a thriving business which continues today.

### 37) Picnic Grove

Picnic Grove is utilized, as originally intended by Mische, as a gathering place for large groups. The area displays long strings of picnic tables on concrete pads at its flat west end. Mische did a great deal of planting in this area to augment the Douglas fir, Western yew, and black walnut that he found there in 1913. European beech, sugar maple, Norway maple, bigleaf maple, coast redwood, giant sequoia, common persimmon, holly, sycamore, and umbrella pine comprise Mische's selections for Picnic Grove. According to the park's planting inventory, this original vegetation is still in existence.

### 38) Broad Meadow

Broad Meadow represents Emanuel Mische's vision to create distinct sections of the park for vigorous activities: "the flatter areas are to be open to games, picnicking, rambling and fiestas." Consequently, Mische planted very little at Broad Meadow, which consists of a wide expanse of



Clockwise from top: Winners of a Hula Hoop Competition at Laurelhurst Park, 1968; Herman Bohlman Bird Watches at Ladd's Pond (prior to park construction), 1901; Children playing in Park Annex fountain, 1945

cultivated lawn with a level, treeless center surrounded by gentle slopes with dense and varied tree clusters. Broad Meadow is now home to the dog park, as well as the summer movies in the park program.

### 39) Children's Lawn

This small triangular bit of grass is known as the Children's Lawn. Within the Children's Lawn sits a sculpture titled "Triad". Originally completed in 1980 and remade in 2003, *Triad* was designed by Evelyn Franz, who received her Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture in 1976 from Portland State University.

### 40) Concert Grove

This section of the park is called the Concert Grove. The Grove

is a gently sloping tract of cultivated lawn that covers the northeast portion of the park. Mische intended to build a music gazebo in the center of the Grove, but money shortages cancelled the plan. Nevertheless, the Grove has historically been the location of musical and theatrical performances, attracting large crowds to the expansive area. Since Mische envisioned a space that would accommodate such crowds, he planned a spare planting program for the Concert Grove. The annual report to the Park Bureau in 1915 noted that because of its central location, the patronage of the park was "enormous" and that one local band concert drew 32,000 people, "the largest crowd ever assembled in a Portland park for a single band concert. ■

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### About This Tour

For information about the source material, email [laurelhurstwalkingtour@gmail.com](mailto:laurelhurstwalkingtour@gmail.com). This tour is available in both print and audio formats on the Laurelhurst Neighborhood Association website.

### About the Author

My name is Amelia Shields, I'm a Grant High School student (class of 2020) and a Girl Scout. I created this historic walking tour for my Gold Award project because I was interested in learning more about the history of the neighborhood, and I wanted other members of the community to be able to experience the rich history of the neighborhood and feel connected to it.

### About the Girl Scout Gold Award

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest level award a Girl Scout can earn. It requires a minimum of 80 leadership hours toward the completion of a project to better the community. The Gold Award allows a girl scout to develop leadership skills, be seen as a role model, master time management skills, and make the world a better place.

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### Questions? Comments?

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