

CITY OF DES MOINES LANDMARKS COMMISSION
King County Historic Preservation Program
Office of Business Relations and Economic Development, Suite 2000
701 Fifth Avenue [MS: BOA-EX-2000], Seattle, Washington, 98104

CITY OF DES MOINES LANDMARK REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: **Draper Park, Covenant Beach Camp**
other names/site number: Des Moines Beach Park Historic District

2. Location

street & number: Cliff Avenue & 220th Street _____ not for publication
city, town: Des Moines _____ vicinity
state: WA code: WA county: King code: 033 zip code: 98198

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Non-Contributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	8	2 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	1	2 structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	0	0 objects
		9	4 Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

NA

Number of contributing resources previously
designated as King County Landmarks:

NA

4. Owner of Property

name: City of Des Moines
street & number: 21630 – 11th Avenue South
city, town: Des Moines state: WA zip: 98198

5. Form Prepared By

name/title: Adapted from 2004 NR Registration Form prepared by Artifacts Consulting Inc.
organization: King County Historic Preservation Program date: June 2005
street & number: 701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000 telephone: (206) 296-8689
city, town: Seattle state: WA zip: 98104

CITY OF DES MOINES LANDMARK REGISTRATION FORM
Des Moines Beach Park Historic District

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter from instructions)

Recreation (Outdoor Recreation)

Current Functions (enter from instructions)

Recreation (Outdoor Recreation)

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter from instructions)

Vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation: wood

walls: Wood siding & shingles

roof: composition

other:

Describe the present and historic physical appearance of the property: SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable Designation Criteria:

- A1 Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of national, state, or local history.
- A2 Property is associated with the lives of person significant in national, state, or local history.
- A3 Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, style, or method of design or construction or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- A4 Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history
- A5 Property is an outstanding work of a designer or builder who has made a substantial contribution to the art.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- a cemetery, birthplace, or grave owned by a religious institution/used for religious purposes
- moved from its original location.
- a reconstructed historic building
- a commemorative property
- less than 40 years old or achieving significance within the last 40 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/Recreation
Ethnic Heritage: Swedish

Period of Significance:

1917-1957
1931-1957

Significant Dates:

1917-1931 (Draper)

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion A2 is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

Scandinavian (Swedish)

Architect/Builder

Marvel Johnson, Dining Hall
Harold J. Nesland, Auditorium

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted: SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

Previous documentation on file:

- included in King County Historic Resource Inventory #1358
- previously designated a King County Landmark
- previously designated a Community Landmark
- listed in Washington State Register of Historic Places
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register (listing in process)
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings, Survey #:
- recorded by Historic American Engineering, Rec. #:

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other (specify repository)
Carmen Scott, local historian

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 18 acres

Verbal Boundary Description

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET and PLAT MAP (identified as Attachment B)

Boundary Justification

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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CONTINUATION SHEET – DES MOINES BEACH PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

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7. DESCRIPTION

The Des Moines Beach Park Historic District encompasses the former site of Draper Park, a private park that was established in 1917 and Covenant Beach Camp, a church camp that was established in 1931. The District includes natural features, a system of roadways, paths and bridges, and a complex of buildings that reflect its historical associations with local history, ethnic heritage and regional recreation. The District is on the western edge of the city of Des Moines, Washington, in southwest King County and is nestled in a picturesque, 18-acre valley formed by the erosion of Des Moines Creek. The valley opens onto a saltwater beachfront and the waters of Puget Sound. Historic roadways that intersect the site include the roadbed of the former Des Moines-Michael Kelley Road dating from the 1880s and the original entrance and principal service road within the private park and church camp. Pathways lead out of the valley on the east and west sides of the District. An historic rustic log bridge spans Des Moines Creek at the east end of the District. Two non-historic concrete bridges also span the creek. Eight of the ten existing buildings contribute to the historic character of the District; the other two are noncontributing due to construction date and design character.

The Des Moines Beach Park Historic District is bounded by Puget Sound to the west and steep canyon bluffs to the north, east and south. Des Moines Creek, a perennial fresh water stream, flows through this wide ravine and into tidal flats. The west end of the District contains nearly 400 feet of saltwater beachfront, rock seawall and tide flats. The valley floor is a relatively level grade with a slight downward incline to the south. The creek meanders through the valley providing approximately 1,850 lineal feet of creek shoreline. The adjacent bluffs are wooded with dense deciduous trees and other vegetation.

A portion of the Des Moines-Michael Kelley Road climbs from the valley floor at the northwestern edge of the District. The road was recorded as County Road No. 155 in 1889; historically it connected at 5th and River Street with County Road No. 236, commonly known as Michael Kelley Road. It is no longer open to vehicular traffic and is used as a pedestrian pathway. A modern paved two-lane street, Cliff Avenue, currently provides access to the District. Cliff Avenue follows the original historic route that brought people into Des Moines from the ships that docked at the pier and has been in continuous use since the 1880s. Historically, it continued along the beachfront and connected to the Michael Kelley Road. Today, the old route is terminated by a pedestrian bridge and it instead enters the valley at its southern end and continues northeasterly approximately halfway into the valley along the southern bank of Des Moines Creek. A non-historic vehicular bridge spans the creek and connects to a second two-lane street that runs along the north side of the creek. This roadway was formerly the primary access route between the camp and the city via the Des Moines-Michael Kelley Road. The alignment of the old Seattle-Des Moines Road, a brick highway constructed in 1914, is located near the east end of District boundary. Historically, dozens of small cabins and cottages¹ were concentrated along the edges of the valley floor at the base of both bluffs. Today, three historic dwellings remain. Historic service and community buildings are grouped in

¹ A typical "cabin" included only limited electricity and no heating or plumbing. Cabins were generally one room and available for during the summer season for conferences and camp events. A typical "cottage" was larger than a cabin with multiple rooms, located on a leased lot, built by an individual owner/family and included heating, cooking and bathing facilities. Thus, some cottages could be used year around.

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the central portion of the valley floor. An historic open grass commons with a play area distinguishes the west end of the valley floor.

The eight contributing buildings and one hewn plank bridge exhibit rustic camp and ethnic Swedish design characteristics.² The design of these historic resources is unified through shared materials, construction methods, and other design details. Modest additions and minor changes have been made to some of the historic buildings; however, these are generally in character with the original design.

CHARACTER-DEFINING DESIGN ELEMENTS

- Eight wood frame buildings
 - Horizontal wood (cedar) drop siding with rounded edges
 - Gable roof forms with moderate eave overhangs, exposed rafter ends, and wide fascia
 - Board and batten gable-end detailing with decorative notches at the bottom edge of the battens
 - Multiple-pane wood window sash with wooden trim and casings
 - 1950s era red/white paint colors on buildings (original paint color appears to have been white)
- Placement of cabins and cottages at the perimeter of the valley with facility buildings concentrated on the east side of the central portion of the valley
- Orientation of main buildings (i.e. excluding cottages) to the west
- Rustic hewn plank and log bridge crossing Des Moines Creek at NE end of valley
- Unified setting within valley floor enclosed by slope of hillsides/bluffs
- Open space at the southwest end of the valley
- Deciduous and evergreen trees throughout the valley floor and along the bluffs
- View toward Puget Sound framed by bluffs
- Unobstructed view toward Puget Sound at the west end transition between the valley floor & tidal flats
- Cliff Avenue alignment that ran along the entire beachfront
- Des Moines-Michael Kelley Road at the northwest edge of the District, including the road bed width and mature trees that form a canopy
- Roadway along the north side of the valley that served as the original entrance and principal service arterial within the camp
- Des Moines Creek, including its bed, bank and grade
- Fire pit and assembly area northeast of Sun Home Lodge (now overgrown)
- Pathway route of the former stairs leading up the east bluff of the valley behind the Dining Hall
- Proximity to the Seattle-Des Moines brick highway alignment at the east end of District boundary

² The essay by Lena A:son Palmqvist in *America's Architectural Roots*, a collection of essays on ethnics groups that built America (edited by Dell Upton, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1986), identifies various architectural attributes associated Swedish cultural diffusion. She notes that more than other groups Swedish immigrants used wood, the traditional building material of Swedish vernacular architecture. During the mass emigration era of the late 19th century most Swedes came directly from the countryside and possessed both the knowledge and the tools to continue rural building traditions based on economy, easily available local materials and labor provided by family or friends. Wood was the predominant building material. It was typically of mixed or variegated kinds, application and sizes. The essay is illustrated with an image of typical combined vertical and horizontal siding, which was a common design feature until c.1900. Based on rural traditions, small unpartitioned, one-room [enkelstuga] or two-room and entry hall [parstuga] buildings with symmetrical façade entry door and windows were typically built by Swedish immigrants. Houses were generally painted white while farm buildings were typically painted red.

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ALTERATIONS/CURRENT CONDITION

The buildings and site that comprise the District have been altered over the decades. The most significant alteration was the removal of dozens of cabins during the 1980s by the City of Des Moines. Several rustic log span bridges with hewn planks and built-in seats have been removed and replaced with modern structures. A modern children's play area with play equipment is located toward the center of the District. A swimming pool and tennis court were added but have been entirely removed. The roadway along the southeast side of the valley and two contemporary bridges were added in the 1990s and the streambed was partially rerouted. A rock retaining wall was added at the base of the southern bluff in the 1990s. Split rail fencing is located within the District and along the stream banks. The historic buildings in the District are generally in use and in relatively sound condition. The site floods periodically during early winter. The sides of the valley are thickly vegetated. An historic fire pit and a stairway are now overgrown by vegetation.

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY DESCRIPTIONS

Refer to *Attachment A* (Current Photographs) and *Attachment C* (National Register Map and Historic Photographs)

BUILDINGS (BY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER *per Attachment C*)

SITE ID #	HISTORIC NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DATE BUILT
1	Carlson Cottage	Historic Contributing	ca. 1935
2	Founders Lodge	Non-historic, noncontributing	1969
3	Dining Hall	Historic Contributing	1935
4	Auditorium	Historic Contributing	1957
5	Sun Home Lodge	Historic Contributing	ca. 1934
6	Caretakers Residence	Non-historic, noncontributing	ca. 1980s
7	Woodshop	Historic Contributing	1945
8	Kitchen/Picnic Shelter	Historic Contributing	ca. 1920s
9	Sports Cabin	Historic Contributing	1931
10	Roadside Cabin	Historic Contributing	1931

Historic Name: Carlson Cottage

Site ID # 1

Built: ca. 1935

Legal: Town of Des Moines Addition, Block 41, Lots 7-8

Style: Vernacular

Builder: Fred Carlson

Architect: Unknown

Classification: Contributing

Description: This is a two-story, 32' x 24' wood-frame building with a concrete foundation. It occupies a steeply sloped site in the southwest quadrant of the District at the edge of the bluff. Asphalt shingles cover the side gable roof form. Bevel siding clad the upper level and wood-combed shingles cover the lower

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exterior walls. Original multiple-pane wood casement and fixed windows remain in place. A stone-clad brick fireplace and chimney service the building. The original owner built the fireplace with red and black European granite (chip rock) acquired from a local gravestone cutter. He also built the rustic balcony railing with driftwood collected from the beach. Exposed timber roof trusses with decorative brackets and vertical V-groove board finish walls define the first floor interior spaces. Two modern doors on the east elevation provide access to the interior.

Cultural Data: Constructed ca. 1935, this single-family dwelling was built for the Fred Carlson family. Fred was born in Sweden, immigrated to this country in 1910-11, by way of North Dakota and Canada. He found fellowship in the Swedish Covenant church at Pike and Bellevue in downtown Seattle. When the camp property was purchased, Fred helped with the survey to create lots for lease, and then built and sold a cottage to another member, Fred Johnson. Later Fred Carlson worked on the construction of the Dining Hall, and eventually the new tabernacle (Auditorium) after the original one burned. The lot that the Carlson cabin is on was assigned to the Fred Carlson in 1932, and he built a tent platform on it, which they used for several summers, then he built the cottage on the platform. Originally, there was an icebox and a wood stove in the kitchen. The current kitchen cabinets are original. The interior paneling is original, knotty pine planks. The Carson sons were instructed to rub burnt umber into the knots with their fingers, to bring out the beauty of the wood. The fireplace has a Swedish damper (a circular thing that looks like an S, - called a Spiel or Spjæl?), which was fashioned at Isaacson Iron Works. Mr. Isaacson was one of the early founders of the camp and the owner of Isaacson Iron Works in Seattle where he provided employment for a number of church members. The cottage is currently rented for office space.

Historic Name: Founders Lodge

Site ID # 2

Built: 1969

Legal: Town of Des Moines Addition, Block 35, Lots 1-16

Style: Vernacular

Builder: Unknown

Architect: Unknown

Classification: Non-contributing

Description: Built in 1969, the Founders Lodge is a two-story wood frame building. It is adjacent and to the west of the Kaffe Stuga (coffee house) of the Dining Hall. Prominent design features include the mansard roof and wide bank of windows.

Cultural Data: The Founders Lodge was designed to serve as a community center and includes a large central gathering space, smaller meeting spaces and small offices. It was the first building constructed at the camp with a year-round heating system intended to serve as a lodging and meeting space.

Historic Name: Dining Hall

Site ID #3

Built: 1935

Legal: Town of Des Moines Addition, Block 35, Lot 14

Style: Vernacular

Builder: Unknown

Architect: Marvel Johnson

Classification: Contributing

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Description: Built in 1935 to serve as the Dining Hall, this two-story, 44' x 110' building straddles Des Moines Creek. A post and beam foundation carries the original wood frame structure and subsequent additions. A watertable and vertical wooden skirting wrap around the foundation. Asphalt shingle and rolled roofing cover the cross gable and flat roof forms. Horizontal wood drop siding with rusticated rounded edges covers most of the building's exterior walls. Board and batten and horizontal lapped siding highlight the gable ends. Original multiple-pane, wooden sash casement, fixed, and single-hung windows remain in place. Modern doors on the north, east and south elevations provide access to the building. Modern wooden decks with handrails have been added. The interior includes a quarter-turn wood carriage stairway in the northwest corner that provides access to the second floor. First floor interior spaces consist of the main kitchen and dining room. Temporary sleeping quarters are located above the kitchen. The Kaffe Stuga (coffee house) occupies the west end of the building and includes an historic door. Wood trusses with metal tie rods and decorative wooden brackets distinguish the character of the dining hall. The Kaffe Stuga exhibits an unusual ceiling design (with multiple boxed false beams separated by X-bracing). This design may have been based on a traditional Swedish design motif.

Cultural Data: The Dining Hall was designed by Marvel Johnson who was at that time a 20-year old architecture student at the University of Washington (UW). Miss Johnson was one of the earliest women to graduate from the UW architecture program, in the class of 1937. The Dining Hall was built with volunteer labor provided by the Covenant Church members. It was constructed on a former Draper Park tent platform that spanned the creek, and which initially served as the "cafeteria" during the early years of camp use. The Dining Hall was constructed with lumber from Fred Johnson's West Waterway Mill in Seattle and other materials provided by Covenant church members. It strongly conveys a rustic folk vernacular idiom and the skilled work of carpenters and craftsmen from the church congregations. This building was used for camp and family dining, typically traditional Swedish home cooking, for several decades. In 1952, a small kitchen addition was made at the northeast end of the building.

Historic Name: Auditorium

Site ID # 4

Built: 1957

Legal: Town of Des Moines Addition, Block 34, Lots 1-3

Style: Vernacular

Builder: Unknown

Architect: Harold J. Nesland

Classification: Contributing

Description: Built in 1957, this one-story, 60' x 100' building occupies a flat site on the southeast side of the creek. Concrete foundation walls anchor massive glue-laminated roof trusses on 16' centers that taper to slender upper ends to carry a gable roof. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles. Wood stud walls enclose the interior and are constructed of alternating plywood sheathed and colored fiberglass panels. Eighteen small hopper-type windows located on the side elevation provide ventilation. Multiple top-hinged, 4'-wide side doors provide additional ventilation and access during events. They are supplemented by two sets of modern double doors at the facade and a single door on the east elevation. The interior contains a stage that is flanked by small storage rooms.

Cultural Data: Constructed to replace the original church tabernacle (former Draper Park era dance pavilion) that was located at the beachfront and which burned down in 1954. Designed by architect Harold J. Nesland, a local Seattle architect, this building first served as the church tabernacle and was subsequently

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used as an auditorium. The stage provided a setting for entertainment including musical performances and theater events. The large open floor area was used for audience seating and social and sporting (basketball) events.

Historic Name: Sun Home Lodge **Site ID # 5**

Built: ca. 1934

Legal: Town of Des Moines Addition, Block 34, Lot 4

Style: Vernacular

Builder: Unknown

Architect: Unknown

Classification: Contributing

Description: Built ca. 1934, this two-story building occupies a flat site to the east of the Auditorium. It features an L-shaped plan that measures 24' x 50' with a 10' x 24' entry leg. A post and beam foundation carries the wood frame structure and cross gable roof form. Wood shakes sheath the roof and wall dormers. Horizontal wooden drop siding with rusticated rounded edges and corner boards cover exterior walls. A water table wraps around the perimeter of the building. Vertical board and batten siding highlights the gable ends and the eave soffits. Original multiple-pane, wooden casement windows with decorative wood casings remain in place. Modern wooden decks with handrails have been added. Modern doors located at either end of the building provide access. A central, double-loaded hallway services bedrooms and common bathrooms from a front lobby area located on both floor levels adjacent to a common stairway.

Cultural Data: The building originally served as the Girls' Dormitory and included 18 sleeping rooms that could be rented by the day or week. It was initially named after a congregation member by the name of Sundholm. The name was later changed to Sun Home in order to better reflect the communal nature of the camp. It strongly conveys a rustic folk vernacular idiom and the skilled work of carpenters and craftsmen from the church congregations.

Historic Name: Caretaker's Residence **Site ID # 6**

Built: ca. 1980s

Legal: Town of Des Moines Addition, Block 36, Lots 7-8

Style: Vernacular

Builder: Unknown

Architect: Unknown

Classification: Non-contributing

Description: Built in the 1980s, this one-story wood-frame building features an L-shaped footprint with a recessed porch.

Cultural Data: This building was constructed as a caretaker's home after acquisition of the property for public park purposes by the City of Des Moines.

Historic Name: Woodshop **Site ID # 7**

Built: 1945

Legal: Town of Des Moines Addition, Block 36, Lot 8

Style: Vernacular

Builder: Unknown

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Architect: Unknown

Classification: Contributing

Description: Built in 1945, this one-story, 28' x 54' building occupies a flat site on the northwest side of the creek. A concrete foundation supports the wood frame structure. Asphalt shingles clad the side-gable roof form. The exterior is clad with horizontal wood drop siding with rusticated rounded edges. Original multiple-pane, wooden sash windows remain in place. Modern doors provide access to restrooms located at both ends of the building. An historic sliding wooden door and a modern door provide access to the central storage portion. A concrete slab on grade forms the flooring throughout the building. This building is connected to the adjacent picnic shelter to the east via a corrugated, translucent, fiberglass-covered breezeway.

Cultural Data: The building was constructed to serve as a woodshop related work on the camp buildings and grounds. It was also used as dressing rooms. Restrooms were added for use by camp and park visitors.

Historic Name: Kitchen/Picnic Shelter **Site ID # 8**

Built: ca. 1920s

Legal: Town of Des Moines Addition, Block 36, Lot 13

Style: Vernacular

Builder: Unknown

Architect: Unknown

Classification: Contributing

Description: Built in the 1920s as a kitchen/cooking shelter, this one-story, 36' x 52' building occupies a flat site on the northwest side of the creek adjacent to the woodshop. A concrete foundation supports the wood frame structure. Wooden posts support the roof framing at the west and east elevations. Asphalt shingles cover the dual pitched, side gable roof form. The east and west end walls are clad with horizontal wood drop siding with rusticated rounded edges. The north and south sides of the building are open. Window openings punctuate the end walls. A large brick fireplace and chimney divided the interior of the building into two principal spaces with the open picnic shelter area at the west end. The base of the fireplace remains. A concrete slab on grade serves as the floor. Modern doors provide access to an enclosed area at the east end of the building that includes storage vending spaces.

Cultural Data: This building originally served as a cooking and picnic shelter during the Draper Park era. A 1932 map of Covenant Beach Park identifies this building as the "Community Building." With its large brick fireplace, it served as a community kitchen and auxiliary gathering place for Covenant Beach Camp. It was also known as "Auxiliary Hall" in reference to the Ladies Auxiliary, the women's group that operated the community kitchens and the Dining Hall.

Historic Name: Sports Cabin **Site ID # 9**

Built: ca. 1931

Legal: Town of Des Moines Addition, Block 36, Lot 12

Style: Vernacular

Builder: Unknown

Architect: Unknown

Classification: Contributing

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Description: Built ca. 1931, this one-story, side gable cabin measures approximately 13' x 20' and occupies a sloped site below the north bluff. The structural system includes tongue and groove fir flooring over a wooden floor frame that rests directly on concrete stem walls and pre-cast concrete piers. Vertical board skirting wraps around the foundation level. Exterior walls are sheathed in wood clapboard siding with corner boards. Asphalt shingles cover the side gable roof form. Four, original multiple-pane wooden casement sash windows with decorative trim remain in place. A modern door on the south elevation provides access to the two interior rooms. Windows have been covered to prevent vandalism.

Cultural Data: Constructed as a seasonal summer dwelling, this building is a representative example of the traditional cabins that were built on the site.

Historic Name: Roadside Cabin

Site ID # 10

Built: ca. 1931

Legal: Town of Des Moines Addition, Block 36, Lot 16

Style: Vernacular

Builder: Unknown

Architect: Unknown

Classification: Contributing

Description: Built ca. 1931, this one-story, side gable cabin measures approximately 17' x 15' and occupies a sloped site below the north bluff at the west end of the District. The foundation consists of a wooden floor framing system that appears to rest directly on grade. The exterior is clad with horizontal wooden drop siding with rusticated rounded edges. Asphalt shingles cover the side gable roof form. The gable ends include diagonally laid wooden siding with a decoratively cut centerpiece. Six original multi-pane, wooden casement sash windows with decorative trim remain in place. An historic front door on the Southeast elevation provides access to the interior. A full width porch is located on the Southeast elevation; the east end of the porch was enclosed. This space was created in order to serve as a booth where camp and conference attendees would check-in and pay fees, as this was the first Roadside Cabin beyond the entrance gate.

Cultural Data: Constructed as a seasonal summer dwelling, this building is a representative example of the traditional cabins that were built on the site. It is the only surviving one of a group of "Roadside" cabins and "Circle" cabins that were used by groups of campers who slept on cots or bunk beds.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Des Moines Beach Park Historic District appears to meet City of Des Moines Landmark Criterion A(1) for its association with the broad patterns of history and development of the City of Des Moines and its role in the broad themes of Scandinavian ethnic heritage and regional recreation. This complex of buildings exhibits rustic, vernacular camp architecture elements that reflect its association with events and activities during its use as a recreational park known as Draper Park from 1917 until 1931; and as Covenant Beach Camp, a conference center and camp operated by a council of local and regional churches between 1931 and 1986. Covenant Beach Camp was one of the longest operating examples of numerous private recreational facilities of this type, which were established at waterfront locations throughout King County during the early 20th century.

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The Des Moines Beach Park Historic District is now a unique 18-acre City-owned waterfront park on Puget Sound. Des Moines Creek runs through the District, which is set within a steep forested valley and includes a broad rocky saltwater beach. The extant historic resources that remain within the District include three dwellings (one cottage and two cabins), five communal buildings and one rustic bridge associated with the recreational history of the park and church camp eras.

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Native Americans frequented the streambeds along Puget Sound to harvest spawning salmon, shellfish and native plants. No specific native groups are known to have inhabited the immediate geographic area of the District; however, the Duwamish and Muckleshoot Indians are known to have seasonally crossed the hills from the east and north in order to camp, hunt and gather shellfish and plants along the creeks and shorelines. Early settlers at Miller Creek (Normandy Beach) reported observing Indians canoeing down the shoreline and stopping at creeks to fish and gather shellfish.

John Moore was the first to lay claim to the land area that became downtown Des Moines. He arrived by boat in 1867 and after five years of residency, received his homestead claim on July 2, 1872. Moore cleared a portion of his land and built a log cabin, but in 1879 he was determined to be mentally ill by the Probate Court of King County and was sent to the territorial asylum at Steilacoom. The County Sheriff sold Moore's land to John Murray in 1881 for the value of \$10 in unpaid taxes. By 1885, a sawmill was operating on the site of the District. Murray, in turn, sold the land to Fountain Chezum in 1886 for \$600 by quitclaim deed. Chezum sold the entire claim in 1889 to F.A. Blasher from Des Moines, Iowa.

F.A. Blasher was a real estate investor who saw the development potential of the area and formed the Des Moines Improvement Company with three other investors - Orin Watts Barlow, Charles M. Johnson, and John W. Kleeb. With the goal of developing the property, they filed a plat on July 29, 1889 for the Town of Des Moines on the northern 120 acres of Moore's original land claim, an area that includes lots that compose the District. The next few years (until the depression of 1893) were a boom time in the Puget Sound region including the Des Moines area. Once the town was platted, lots sold quickly. They were "selling like hot cakes for 250 to 500 dollars for a 25 by 100 foot lot."³

The sawmill at the mouth of Des Moines Creek was the first industry in Des Moines. Its proximity to Puget Sound and the adjacent virgin forests provided ideal conditions for logging and milling. The deep harbor provided a convenient port for ships, and the steep hillsides surrounding the creek were ideal for skidding logs. The Des Moines Improvement Company took over ownership of the existing sawmill in 1889 and provided employment to settlers arriving primarily from the Midwest. When William Van Gasken purchased the sawmill later that same year it had a 15,000 board foot capacity and employed 15 men. A millpond and dock were built to the west of the mill so that the lumber and shingles could be loaded onto ships.

A series of lumber mills were subsequently located on the site of the Van Gasken Mill. Edward Patterson and Frank Fuhrman established a new mill there and sold it in 1907 to Frank Hopkins and H. Ohnick who

³ Kennedy, Richard. T. ed. *One Hundred Years of the "Waterland" Community, A History of Des Moines, Washington*. City of Des Moines: Des Moines, 1989. p.15.

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organized the Des Moines Milling Company. Other lumber mills were also located in the general vicinity. James Markwell operated a nearby shingle mill that employed 25 men, a significant number of the 1890 population of 212. The Van Gasken and Markwell mills were the town's primary industries into the early 1890s, however the 1893 Depression "curtailed growth, but good times resumed at the turn of the century, when the village could boast of a dozen stores, a hotel, and regular service from the Mosquito fleet."⁴ USGS maps from 1897 show a large pier at the site and indicate the degree to which all of the merchantable forestland along the shoreline had been cut and restocked.

The Markwell mill and dock burned down in 1908. By 1917, the local sawmill industry along with the era of small independent mill operations was ending. In conjunction with demographic and transportation changes, the local economy became much more diversified as nearby forestlands had been logged off and local timber harvesting became less lucrative.

ERA OF RECREATIONAL USE

The earliest forms of transportation to and from Des Moines had been primarily by water or by foot, buggy or horseback. In the early 20th century, the use of the Des Moines waterfront and this creek valley changed as the area became more accessible due to transportation improvements. The expansion of the Mosquito Fleet, local steamers that traveled between Tacoma, Seattle, and various Puget Sound communities, and the introduction of the automobile provided significantly greater access and mobility. A paved pathway visible at the northwest end of the District is a remnant of an earliest county road, known as the Des Moines-Michael Kelley Road. Historically, the roadway ran along the Des Moines waterfront, across the creek and up the steep north slope of the creek valley. It then meandered from homestead to homestead and eventually joined the Michael Kelley Road at Sunnydale, a short distance east of Lake Burien. This was the only road to and from Des Moines as automobiles began to replace horse and buggies after 1910. A new brick highway, the Seattle-Des Moines Road, was completed in 1914. This modern roadway alignment abuts the east end of the District boundary.⁵

During this era, numerous private picnic grounds or small resorts were established on local lakes and beachfronts throughout the Puget Sound region and became popular destinations for recreation and entertainment. Beginning in the mid-teens and early twenties, small automobile-oriented resorts became viable commercial ventures often in areas where logging activity had subsided. Such resorts were scattered throughout the county; however, a significant number were located in south King County and near the travel corridor between Seattle and Tacoma. By 1916, resort facilities including roadside inns, restaurants and cottages had been established at Redondo, Three Tree Point and Des Moines. These retreats were heavily promoted and became particularly popular in the 1930s and 40s; however, only a few survived beyond the 1950s. Generally located on lakeshores or on Puget Sound, the resorts were typically part of a "park" that included picnic grounds, a dance hall, and a swimming beach. Many offered boating, fishing and other recreational activities as well as "home-cooked" meals and cabin-type guest accommodations. Several resorts catered to large groups where labor unions, church, community and business organizations and employee groups regularly held meetings and picnics.

⁴ Scott, Carmen. Covenant Beach Church Camp - National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. 1988.

⁵ Scott, Carmen. Des Moines Beach Park Notes (1989) revised May 2004.

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By 1917, George Fetterlee and his wife had purchased the central portion of the Des Moines Creek valley and had built a house above the southwest side of the creek. They rented out small boats and several primitive cabins that had been constructed in the valley. Neither the Fetterlee House nor any of the cabins are extant. In 1918, the old mill site near the beachfront portion of the property was used for the construction of another mill, however the mill building was never completed.

Around 1917, Herman M. “Daddy” Draper purchased the Fetterlee property. Mr. Draper and his wife, Annie, arrived in Des Moines in 1906, and in 1908 established a children’s home similar to one they had operated in Iowa. The Children’s Industrial Home and Training School served as a private orphanage where children were taught various trades so that they could be self-sufficient and productive members of society. The orphanage supported up to 47 children at one time and was operated from the former Hiatt Hotel (1890), which was on a site on the eastern bluff overlooking the Des Moines Creek valley. The Drapers subsequently established a park/recreational campground for the children in the creek valley. Mr. Draper “soon filled in the log pond by sluicing down some of the south bank of the creek valley, then built swings and tent platforms. He began to charge rent as a private park, which now included a kitchen shelter for picnickers.”⁶ A dance hall called Neals’ Pavilion was built on the site of the unfinished lumber mill building. The Neal brothers purchased the mill site and built the dance hall using the concrete foundation that rested on the old pilings for the mill building. The dance hall continued in operation until 1931. Dining, dancing and beachfront recreation were the main attractions during the 1920s at what became known as Draper Park. In 1927, both Herman and Annie Drapers died and their grandson, Vernon Draper, took over operation of the park. He continued to operate it for the following four years, at which time hundreds of park users and groups paid daily fees to use the facilities, picnic and swim.

The Draper Park era of recreational use was followed by over 50 years of recreational use of the property by the North Pacific Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church of America⁷. The North Pacific Conference members were of Swedish descent and represented local church congregations from Seattle, Tacoma and other Puget Sound communities. A group of church trustees from these various communities formed the North Pacific Bible Camp Association in 1931, with the express purpose of purchasing a retreat for use by member congregations as a conference center and camp where families could gather, church congregations could meet and worship together and children could learn church values in English, a language they could better understand. Draper Park, located on Puget Sound halfway between Seattle and

⁶ Ibid. p.2

⁷ The Covenant Church in western Washington was part of a movement that began in Sweden in the late 19th century in a break with the Lutheran Church of Sweden. The first Covenant Church in Seattle was organized in 1889 by Swedish immigrants and was know as the Svenska Kristna Mission Forsamlingen. The independent congregation conducted services exclusively in Swedish and attracted members that were part of an enormous wave of Swedish immigrants who came to the region at the turn of the century. By the early 20th century, Covenant churches had also been established in Tacoma, Midway, Bellingham, and several other Puget Sound communities. By the 1930s, with an increase in second- generation, English- speaking members, the church began to conduct some services in English. In 1930, the Seattle church changed its name to Swedish Tabernacle Church, however main Sunday services continued to be conducted in Swedish through the 1930s. *Scott, Carmen. Covenant Beach Church Camp - National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. 1988.*

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Tacoma, presented an ideal retreat site. The association raised funds through the sale of bonds and from affiliated churches throughout the Puget Sound region and purchased the park property at a cost of \$16,000. Those who contributed or subscribed toward use of the "Conference Grounds" hailed primarily from Seattle and Tacoma, however future campers and conference attendees hailed from elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest and western states. Title was not held by an individual church but by the North Pacific Conference, which also included churches in Oregon, Idaho, Montana, British Columbia and other parts of Washington. Draper Park was officially renamed Covenant Beach Camp in July 1932.

In June 1932, the Camp Association laid out a plan for Covenant Beach Park. The plan delineated dozens of campsite and cabin lots, rough pedestrian paths and street thoroughfares, "Mens" and "Ladies" comfort stations and noted the locations of the "Community Building" (Kitchen/Picnic Shelter) and "Cafeteria" (tent platform location of future Dining Room) and two rustic bridges. All necessary camping facilities were provided for including "an abundance of good, cold spring water for drinking and cooking" and electricity.⁸ Cabin or cottage lots or camping sites with tent platforms could be leased for \$10 a year and congregation members were encouraged to build their own cabins. In the early years of the camp, tent platforms were constructed and 10' x 12' tents – large enough for four cots - could be rented for \$5.00 for two weeks. Cots, mattresses and canvas floor coverings were also available for weekly rental. Campers brought their own towels, blankets, sheets, and pillows. Those who wished to cook for themselves in community kitchens brought their own food, cooking equipment and utensils. Campers could also dine inexpensively at the cafeteria (and the subsequent Dining Hall), which was operated by the Ladies' Auxiliary. The majority of the roadside cabins (located below the northwestern bluff) and other scattered cabins were built between 1933 and 1936. Some additional cabins were also built in the early 1940s. While the majority of cottages were privately owned, they could also be rented for conference or camping purposes.

The Girls' Dormitory, later known as Sun Home Lodge, was built in 1934 with funds raised by the Ladies' Auxiliary. Rooms could accommodate two, three or four people and bedding was supplied at a cost of 50 cents a day or \$3.00 per week per person. The community and service buildings were typically designed, built and maintained by congregation members. The camp dwellings and communal buildings were constructed in a rustic camp style with elements of Swedish influenced design in their construction details. In 1935, as large crowds began to attend some events, a fence and prominent log entry gate (no longer extant) were constructed over the roadway at the west end of the camp in order to control access to the camping area. The old Neals' dance pavilion at the beachfront, which was constructed on pilings above Puget Sound, served as the original camp Tabernacle (a worship space) and accommodated between 800 to 1,000 people on a busy summer weekend. It was destroyed by fire on December 26, 1954 and subsequently replaced in 1957 by the existing Auditorium, which served as a tabernacle. The construction of the new Auditorium building constitutes the ending date for the period of historic significance of the District.

Organized bible camps and church conferences were conducted each summer with daily schedules of sermons, lectures, bible study, children's and youth programs and recreational activity. Sermons, lectures and reports on international missionary efforts were given by visiting ministers from several other states and nations. Recreational activities included boating, fishing, swimming, bathing, clam digging, baseball,

⁸ North Pacific Bible Conference, 1931 *Newsletter article (First Covenant Church Archives)*

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volleyball, horseshoe pitching, and hiking. Separate junior conferences for Girls only and Boys only were also held each summer. The camp was also rented out for use by congregations from other Christian denominations including the American Baptists, Swedish Baptists, Presbyterians and Lutherans. Generations of the families associated with the Covenant church spent all or part of each summer at Covenant Beach. As the camp became more established, families that owned cabins on the leased lots summered there from Memorial Day (cleanup time) to Labor Day (close-out time). Clean-up time signified the start of the season and entailed removing protective winter coverings and accumulated debris in anticipation of active summer use. Closeout time was the last chance to cover the windows, turn off gas and electricity, drain pipes and secure the buildings and site for winter weather. However, over the years the cabins increasingly served as alternative permanent housing for some families. During the post-World War II era as many as nine families from Covenant churches in Seattle and Tacoma resided year-round at the camp. This pattern continued until 1986, when the North Pacific Conference established a new retreat center at Yelm and sold the old camp property to the City of Des Moines.

Historically the camp complex included over 50 buildings including dozens of small cottages and cabins. Today, one historic building remains from the Draper Park era, the Picnic/Kitchen Shelter that was constructed in the 1920s. With its large brick fireplace it served as the first kitchen and then as an auxiliary hall for the church camp. The Covenant Beach Camp Dining Hall was built on the site of a Draper Park era platform that spanned the creek. Eight historic buildings remain today from the Covenant Beach Camp era and two cabins (Roadside Cabin One and Sports Cabin, both ca. 1931), the Dining Hall (1934 with additions), Sun Home Lodge (ca. 1934), the Carlson Cottage (ca.1935), the Woodshop (1945), and the Auditorium (1957). The Founders Lodge (1969) and the Caretakers Residence (ca. 1980s) also remain but post date the 1957 ending date for the period of significance.

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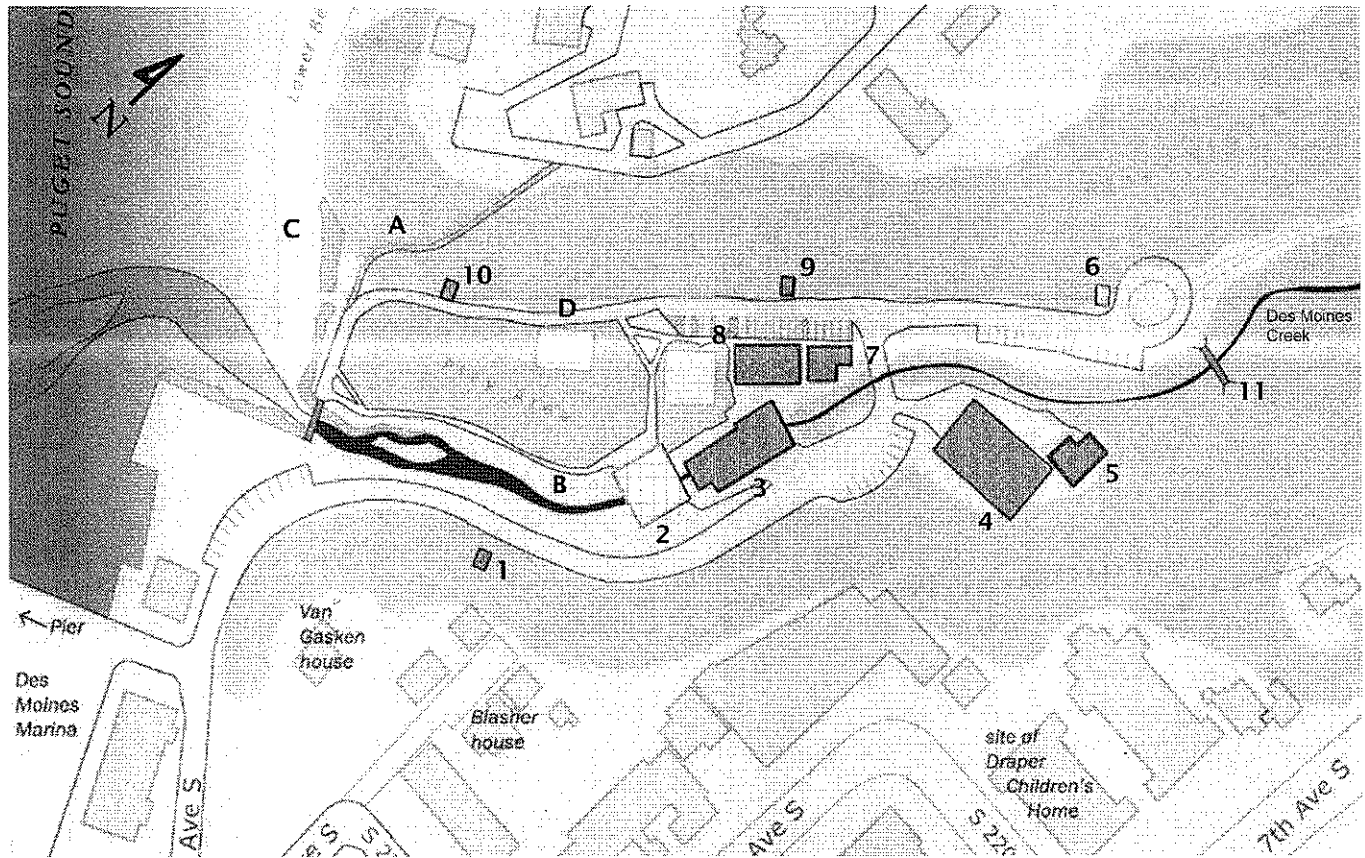
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NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION

DES MOINES BEACH PARK, CLIFF AVENUE & 220TH STREET, DES MOINES, WA 98198

MAPS



SITE PLAN KEY



BUILDING IDENTIFICATION:

1. Carlson House (Built ca. 1935)
2. Founders Lodge (Built 1969)
3. Dining Hall (Built 1934)
4. Auditorium (Built 1957)
5. Sun Home Lodge (Built ca. 1934)
6. Caretakers Residence (Built ca. 1980s)
7. Woodshop (Built 1945)
8. Picnic Shelter (Built ca. 1920)
9. Sports Cabin (Built ca. 1931)
10. Roadside Cabin (Built ca. 1931)

CONTRIBUTING OBJECTS:

11. Rustic Log Bridge Over Des Moines Creek

BUILDING STATUS

-  Contributing
-  Non-contributing

NOTABLE LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

- A. Des Moines-Michael Kelley Road
- B. Des Moines Creek
- C. Salt Water Beach
- D. Camp Road North of Des Moines Creek