

From: Squire Park Community Council (SPCC)

Letter to the Seattle Landmarks Board regarding nomination of the People's Wall as a historic landmark. We continue our strong support of the nomination led by the Black Heritage Society of Washington State (BHS) Community Preservation Cohort.

Our interest in supporting the historic Landmark nomination for The Peoples Wall at 20th Ave and Spruce Street in Seattle, is not only to support for preserving this piece of Seattle history, but also to support honoring the history of the Seattle Black Panther Party (SCBPP) and the work of the City of Seattle Historic Central Area Arts & Cultural District (HCAACD).

At a critical time in the 1960s Seattle civil rights movement, the Seattle chapter Black Panther Party (SCBPP) was an active participant in the fight for equity and justice. The chapter was founded in 1968 and was the first chapter to be located outside of Oakland, California.

SCBPP principles to advocate for disenfranchised communities are alive and well today in Seattle. The 50th anniversary celebration of the SCBPP in 2018 was a renewed call to action, energizing current generations to formulate a strategic approach to serving the people's needs, especially centered around health and food justice.

The Peoples Wall in the Central District is an important reminder of the history of our neighborhood and marks the SCBPP legacy that was an active response to a call-to-action for justice and equity in Seattle. The SCBPP, not only demanded and directed local change, but effectively influenced and informed successes for much needed programs, including free school breakfast, public health and other human and legal rights for all people.

Painted by Dion Henderson in 1970, it is the only remaining visual testament to the Seattle chapter of the Black Panther Party's second headquarters at 20th and Spruce. It features portraits of national BPP leaders and explicitly memorializes nine local Seattle Panthers. It would stand as one of the few Seattle's designated landmarks directly linked to Black history. Thus, the preservation of this mural is a vital step toward preserving that unique history in the Central District where exceptional growth and change threaten to erase the sense of place, history, and culture.

Our vigilance and engagement are required to ensure that the neighborhood reflects a sense of place and honors its culture and history. Affordable housing, good jobs, and livability, along with the preservation of tangible historic assets are continuing concerns that must be addressed in order to prevent the erasure of important and unique Seattle history and its artists.

The People's Wall is included on a list of HCAACD historic assets and Arts & Culture public art. In May 2017, a proposal was presented to the Central Area Collective to help fund Central Area Gateways and Cultural Markers. HCAACD has identified The Peoples Wall. SPCC is proud that this historic asset is located in our neighborhood and is honored to support the nomination for The Peoples Wall for historic landmark. (See names on following page.)

Stefan Schachtell, President, gostefango@gmail.com

Joy Jacobson, Treasurer,

Joanna Cullen, Secretary, jfoxcullen@gmail.com

Travis Dobler, Director

Leon Garrett, Director

George Hacker, Director

Lauren Vorona, Director

Kathy Yasi, Director

William Zosel, Director