

**GAS WORKS PARK - Certificate of Approval application**

This is new information provided to supplement the previous submittal.

The applicant is revising the drawings to illustrate the updated scope of work reflected in the diagram and explanation provided below.

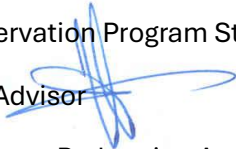


**Seattle**  
Parks & Recreation

**Date:** October 9, 2025

**To:** City of Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board

**CC:** Erin Doherty, Landmarks Preservation Program Staff

**From:** David Graves, AICP, Strategic Advisor 

**Subject:** Gas Works Park Cracking Towers – Pedestrian Appurtenance Removal Certificate of Approval Application

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As follow-up to the Landmarks Preservation Board discussion on October 1<sup>st</sup>, Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) is providing the following. SPR's intention is to:

- Specifically remove “Pedestrian Appurtenances” that are designed to convey human beings vertically and horizontally along the towers, designed for the purposes of maintaining/servicing and operating the former gas works facility. The working assumption is that these appurtenances provide platforms and access for graffiti and have been accessed by trespassers to climb the towers, notwithstanding fencing and signage. Falls have occurred resulting in serious injury and death. Removing the appurtenances will eliminate them as a means of access, promoting public health and safety.

Included below are excerpts from the Landmarks and National Register nominations, the original Myrtle Edwards, now Gas Works Park Master Plan documents and Rich Haag's original design drawings for the park. Taken together all of the references and plans show Rich Haag's intention to retain the towers, given their visibility and monolithic nature. The National Register nomination notes that the “[g]as processing towers were always the distinguishing features of the gas works....” There is **no** reference to the pedestrian appurtenances, and they are not shown on the plans. Note also Rich Haag's statement in the Master Plan that “[a]ll structures will be modified, etc. to meet applicable safety codes.”

SPR specifically points out that:

- The design intent, as conveyed in the following drawing excerpts and document citations, was to allow the volumes of the towers/tanks to remain. This did not necessarily include all the attachments/ pedestrian appurtenances. The Master Plan specifically references the monolithic nature of the towers which is what SPR is trying to maintain by preserving the towers and proposing to remove only the pedestrian related appurtenances.
- This facility is not structurally sound which is why public access is precluded and the area fenced. The design intent was to allow the structures to deteriorate into the environment. There is no long-term management/conservation plan for the towers and no identified budget to maintain the structural integrity of the structures.

- While in 2002, the Friends of Gas Works Park funded an analysis of the south towers which found that the Towers themselves were sound, the information noted issues and potential safety hazards associated with the ladders, catwalks and piping. That analysis is now almost twenty-five years old. The structures and particularly their appurtenances are likely beyond repair. A structural analysis would require a visual inspection/site verification of each element, assessment of any associated footings and there is no reliable information on any of the appurtenances. This analysis would be extremely expensive and cost prohibitive.

From the Landmarks nomination (p.6):

(2). Identifiable Visual Feature

Gas Works Park and its Towers are of a scale and form easily perceived from any location around Lake Union. The park is a tangible, highly visible piece of Seattle's early history and of industrial revolution era technology. The Towers are a gothic sculptural presence and the contrast of these monolithic forms superimposed on the city skyline is unique and visually exciting. The experience is further enhanced by changes in perspective gained by moving around and through these forms of another era. "The black shapes of the towers on their grassy point leap out with startling clarity against the bright collage of the shoreline, silhouettes that might be the pictogram for the works of industrial man." (Landscape Australia, February 1980)

Gas Works Park Landmarks Nomination

Page 7

From the National Register Nomination:

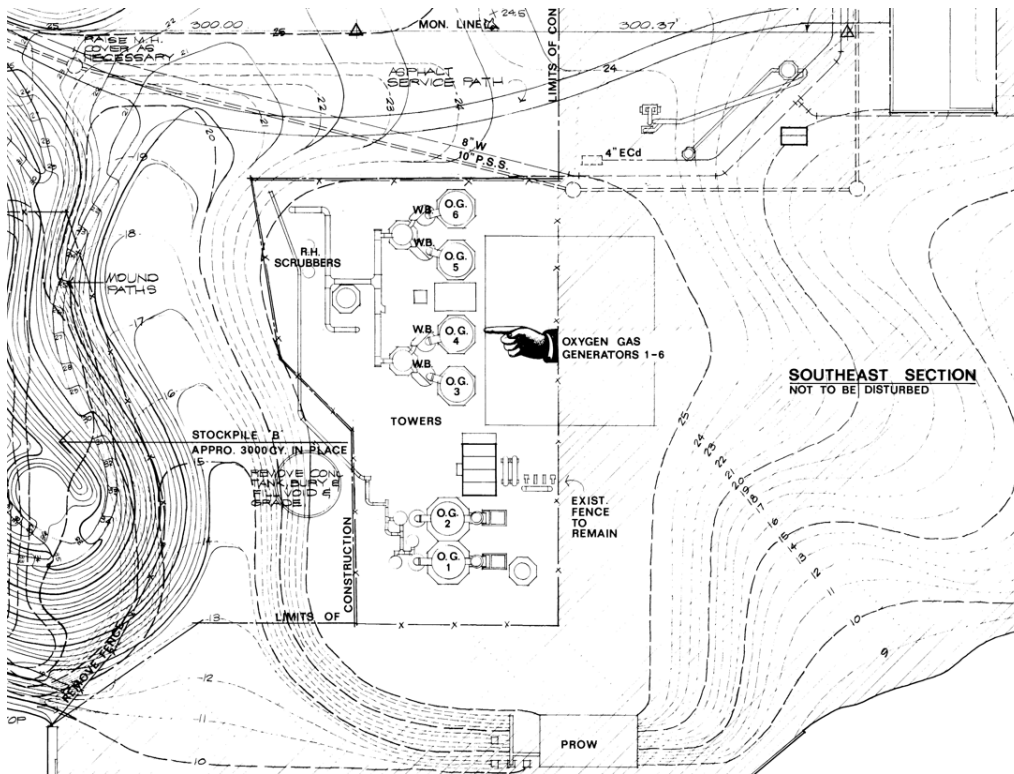
The groups of gas processing towers were always the distinguishing feature of the gas works; through their retention the present Gas Works Park retains the feeling of an industrial complex. The major structures removed in the design of the Park include the large oil tanks and city gas holders, all located to the west and north of the Towers.

From Rich Haag's Myrtle Edwards (now Gas Works) Park Master Plan:

Structures:

Of the 5% of site structures to be retained, (see D-5) about one-half will be reconditioned in initial park development. The remaining half, mainly the generator towers, will be preserved and restricted from public contact by a shallow water moat until specific programs are designated. New structures will be provided in response to community priorities and budget considerations. New structures to be included in initial development will be wooden stalls in an open air market/concession area. All structures will be modified, etc. to meet applicable safety codes.

Portion of Rich Haag's 1975 Site Plan showing the Towers and surrounding area:



Landmarks Nomination package; Rich Haag's drawing showing structures to be preserved:

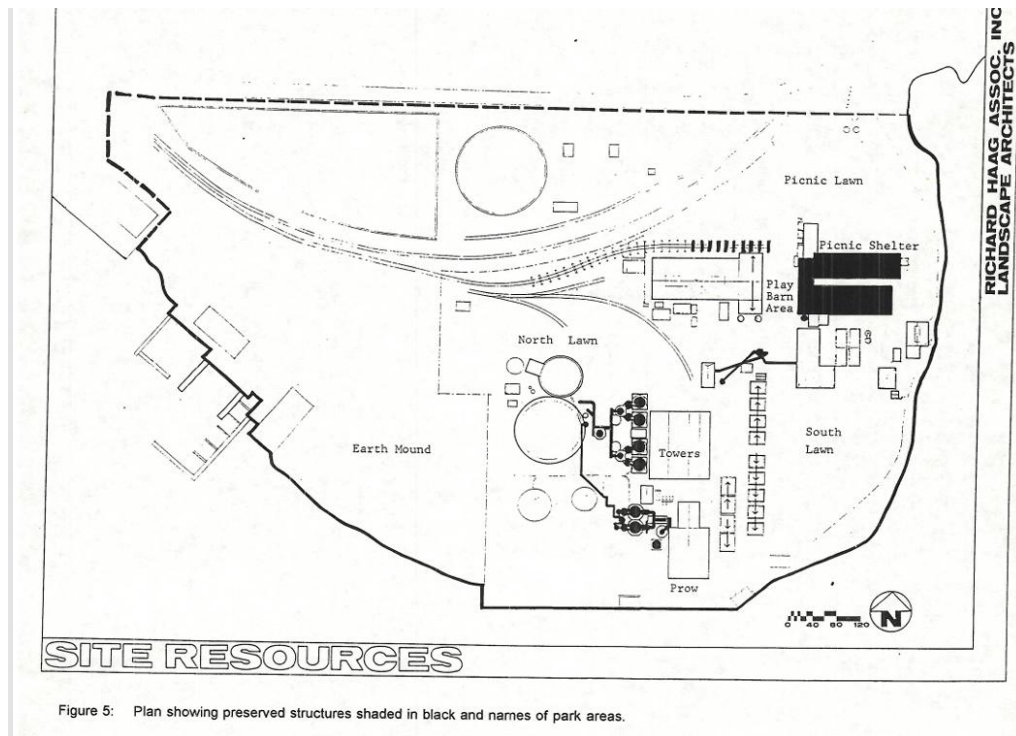
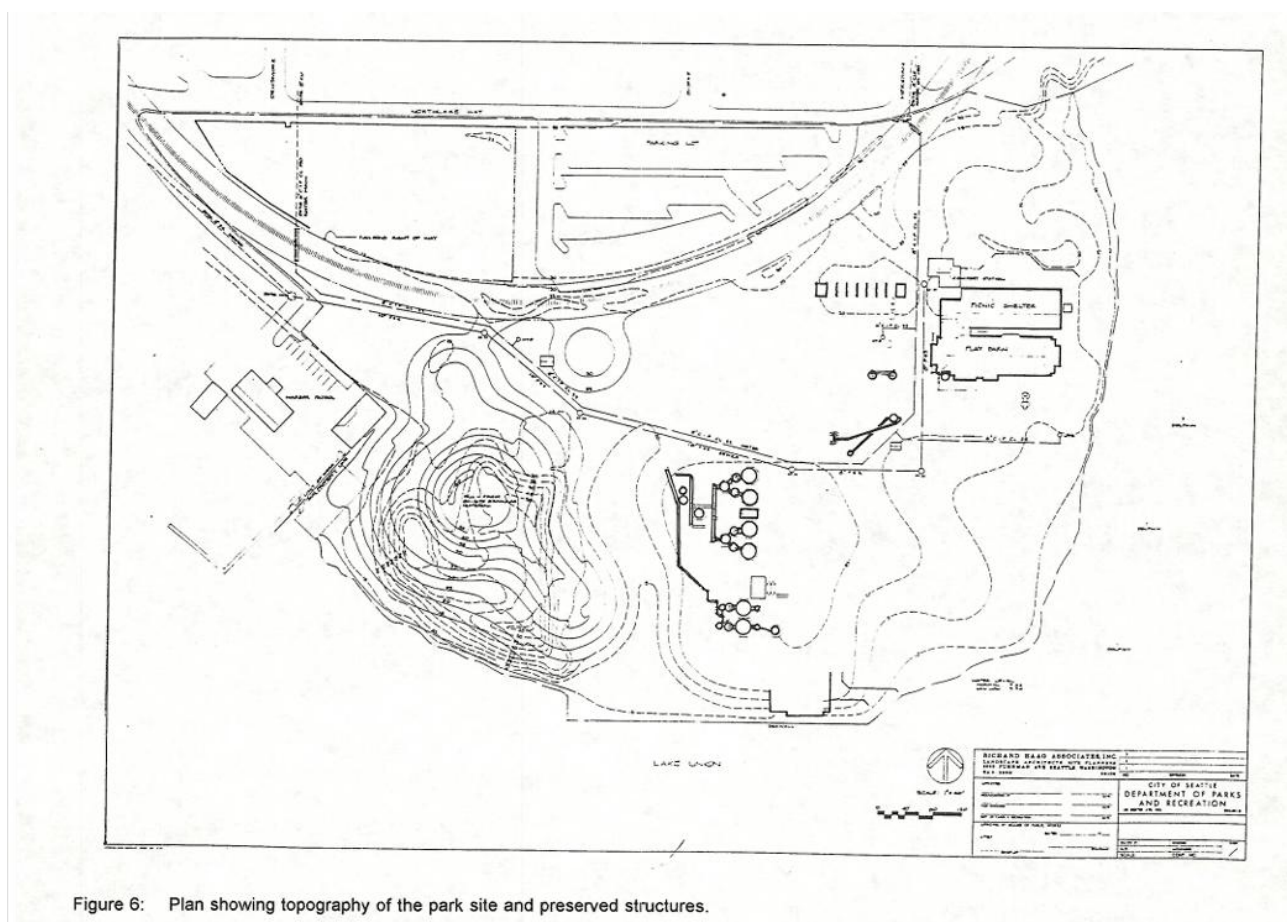


Figure 5: Plan showing preserved structures shaded in black and names of park areas.

Landmarks Nomination package; Rich Haag's drawing showing preserved structures:



## Conclusion

SPR's plan to remove only the pedestrian appurtenances, and the one pipe that extends beyond the fence, is in keeping with Rich Haag's vision to preserve the towers as the monolithic representation of the historic gas works. SPR is proposing to remove elements from the towers consistent with Rich's acknowledgement that structures would be modified for public safety. In summary, SPR is proposing to:

- 1) Remove all pedestrian appurtenances and one pipe that extends beyond the fence; SPR will attempt to save appurtenances on the uppermost level of the towers and portion(s) of the pipe, if possible. A final determination will be made in the field based on the actual condition and stability of the appurtenances and pipe segment(s).
- 2) Compile photo-document the towers with the pedestrian appurtenances in place.
- 3) Once the appurtenances have been removed, repaint the towers and paint the shadow lines of the catwalks and ladders as a reference to the elements that have been removed.
- 4) Continue to monitor the site for evidence of access and graffiti.

- 5) Lighting to highlight the towers and further discourage access and security camera(s) to monitor the site and track access attempt(s) will be installed once the appurtenances have been removed under a separate Certificate of Approval request.

# Gas Works Park - Cracking Towers Landmarks Preservation Board

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David Graves, Strategic Advisor | October 15, 2025



**Seattle**  
Parks & Recreation

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# Overall Site Context



SITE PLAN FROM SOUTH



# Introduction

- 1) Vision is to further public safety by removing the pedestrian appurtenances which have been accessed by trespassers, unlawfully climbing the structures. The unlawful climbing of the towers has caused and enabled significant ongoing graffiti on those structures and has resulted in three fatalities and multiple injuries.
- 2) Original intent of design documentation was/is to preserve the monolithic nature and silhouettes of the towers. Pedestrian appurtenances blur the silhouettes of the towers and go beyond preservation of the towers.
- 3) Management plan – inherent in the design intent. These are outdoor steel elements that are corroding and degrading over time. There is no management/maintenance plan beyond preservation of the actual towers.

# Historical References

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Page 7

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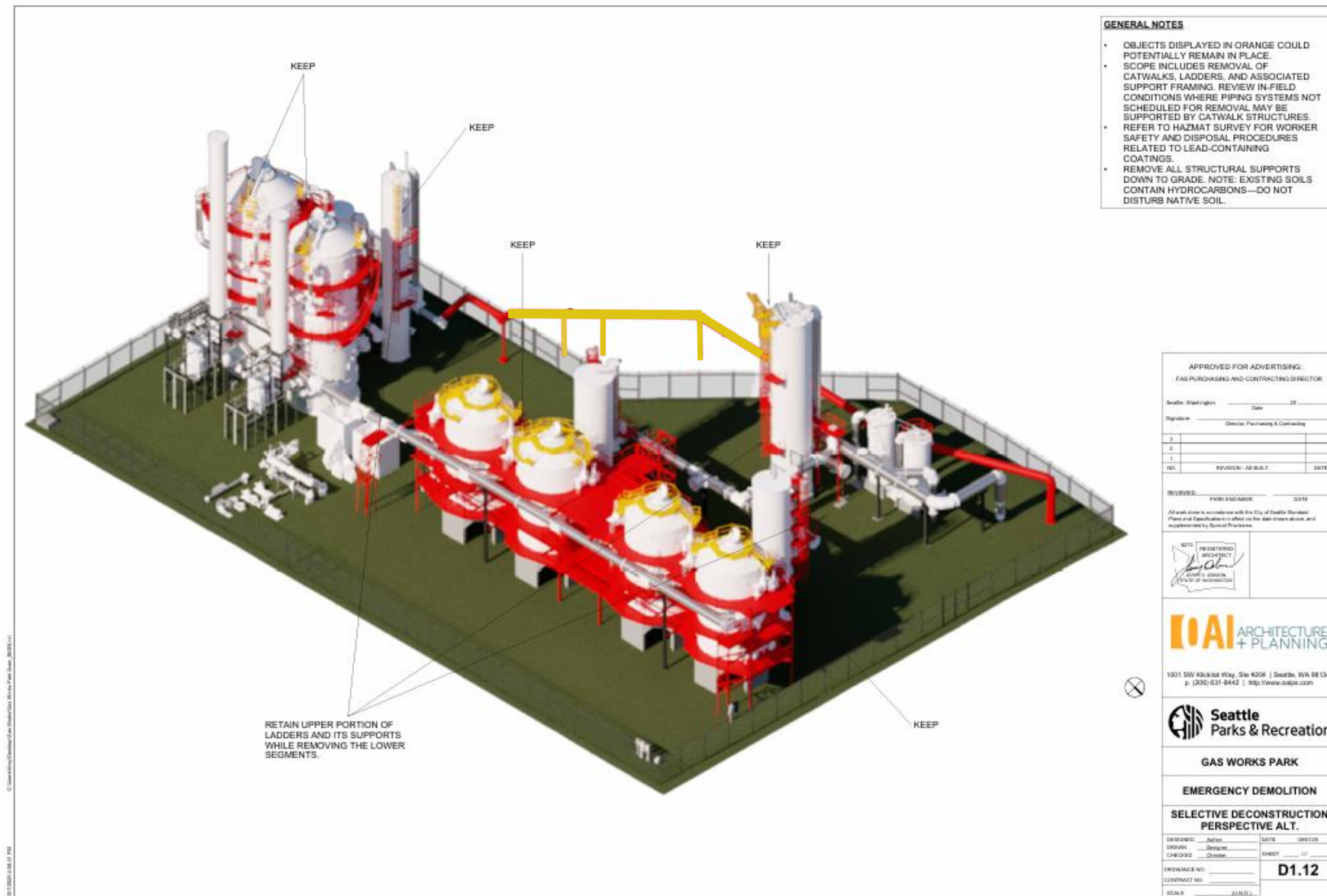
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Responsibility	Percentage
Current government	45%
Previous government	35%
External factors	15%
Internal factors	5%



# SPR Proposed Removals





# Summary Proposal

- 1) Remove all pedestrian appurtenances and one pipe that extends beyond the fence; SPR will attempt to save appurtenances on the uppermost level of the towers and portion(s) of the pipe, if possible. A final determination will be made in the field based on the actual condition and stability of the appurtenances and pipe segment(s).
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