

Seattle Landmark Nomination Proposal:

THE PEOPLE'S WALL

1919 E Spruce St
(formerly "173 20th Ave" pre-1973)

Central District | Seattle

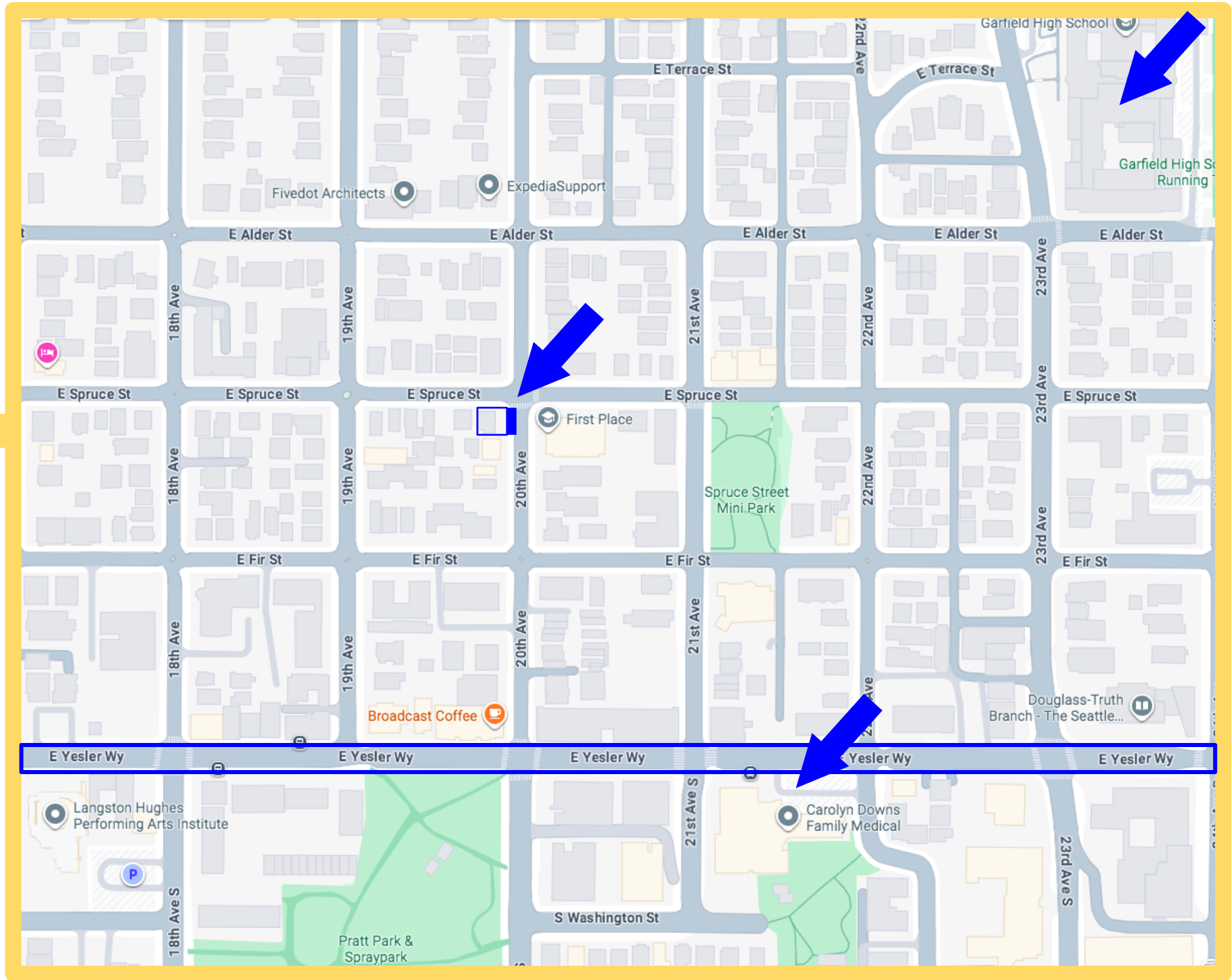


Carlos Imani, Elite Collective, 2014

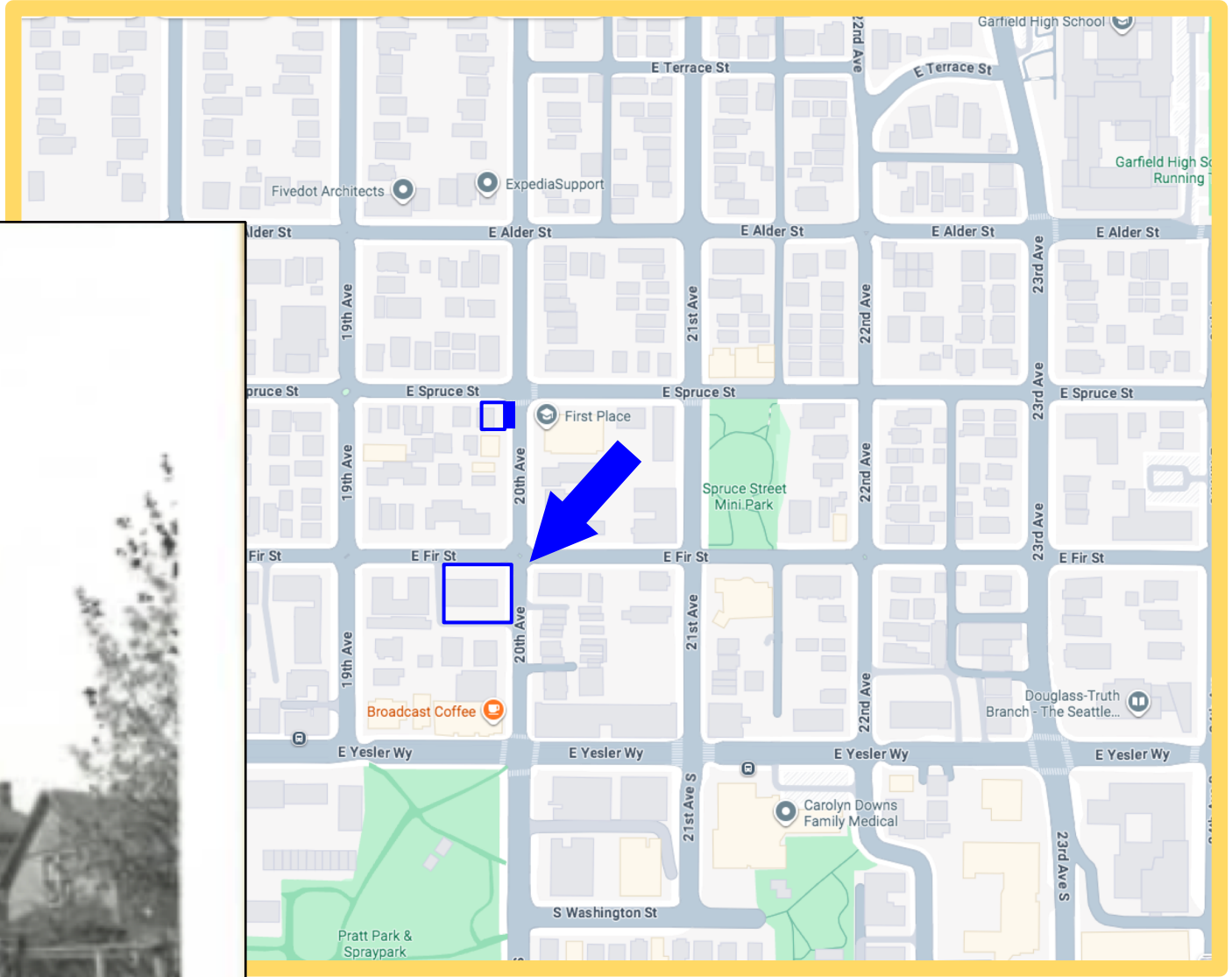




GoogleMaps, 2025



GoogleMaps, 2025



173 20th Ave, September 9, 1937 (Puget Sound Regional Archives)

Integration Leader Will Speak Here

The Rev. Dr. **Martin Luther King Jr.**, integration leader and Atlanta, Ga., clergyman, will speak here November 9 and 10 under sponsorship of the Mount Zion Baptist Church Brotherhood.

Dr. King will speak at a public meeting at 8 o'clock November 10 in the First Presbyterian Church.



DR. KING

1961



1963



1967



1968



Bobby Seale (born, 1936) & Huey P. Newton (1942 - 1989), 1971
Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture



Organized along military lines, the Black Panthers have their own signs and symbols, like the hand shake. From left were Maude Allen, Aaron Dixon, Gwen Morgan and Curtis Harris.—Photo by Gil Baker. (See Page 14 for more photos.)

Seattle Panthers— What's Their Goal?

(Gil Baker, author of this article, is a professional photographer who long has been active in central-area affairs. He is a former president of the East Madison Commercial Club and a former director of the Mardi Gras festival. He also was editor of The Puget Sound Observer, a community newspaper, and was active in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Baker said his purpose in writing about the Black Panthers is to inform Seattle of what their objectives and methods are — "I think it is healthy for the community to know what is going on.")



GIL BAKER



Co-founder and captain of Seattle Chapter, Aaron Dixon, in front of headquarters, 1970
University of Washington Seattle Civil Rights & Labor Project



Carolyn Downs
Family Medical Center

“The Seattle Chapter of the Black Panther Party’s existence is an illustration of how peripheral branches of an organization would both adhere and diverge from the program established by the national headquarters [in Oakland, California].”

~ Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project, University of Washington

Armed Panthers Appear at School

Apparently responding to continued rumors, a group of about 15 Black Panther youth, 8 to 10 with rifles slung on shoulders appeared at Rainier Beach Junior-Senior High School this afternoon.

They were ushered out of the building by police about 1:45 p. m. after conferring with Donald S. Means, principal.

Means said he was not threatened. He said he tele-

phoned police when he saw the group of “apparently black-power delegates” approach the building “with guns.”

Means said the youths wanted assurances that “their brothers were not being mistreated.”

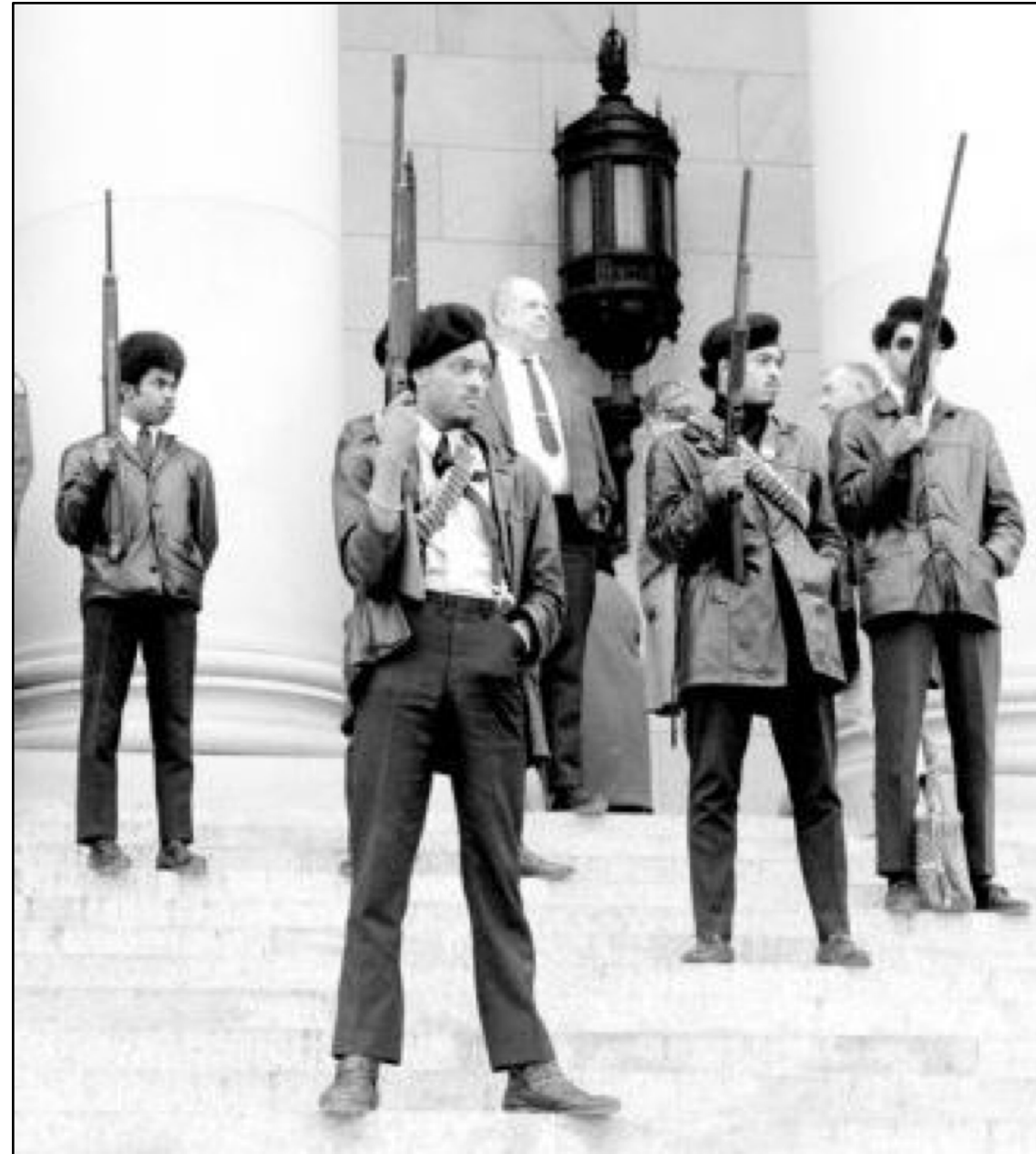
“I told them they had not been mistreated and are not being mistreated,” Means said. “I told them they had to leave. Then the police arrived and they left.”

Black community leaders were at the school today to combat the spread of rumors which began after an incident Wednesday afternoon.

Means said there were four or five scuffles today between white and black boys and girls. “generated by the presence of outsiders who were not students.”

(See Page 25 for earlier details.)

Seattle Daily Times, September 6, 1968



Seattle Chapter members protest at capitol in Olympia, WA, 1969
Washington State Archives



Seattle Chapter of the Black Panthers Headquarters, 1971
Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI)



Photo taken 3/22/70
Present Seattle B.P.P. headquarters
173 20th Ave. Occupied from 12/69 to
the present. Free Clothing Center and
the "Saturday Classes" are operated at
this location.

Congressional Committee on Internal Security Hearings, Exhibit No. 7, 1970

“I wanted to tell [Congress] that if it was Un-American to serve kids breakfast, if it was Un-American to provide free healthcare, and if it was Un-American to provide free food and clothing to the starving masses... then this America was not the America it pretended to be.”

~ Elmer Dixon, *Die Standing*

“If a successful revolution should occur, the Panthers would replace the present form of government in the United States with a system comparable to Castro’s in Cuba... There would be no millionaires. The Panthers’ idea is to take from the Establishment and ‘to give to the Negro people.’”

~ U.S. House Committee on Internal Security

Gas company gave F.B.I. information on two customers

The Washington Natural Gas Co. assisted the Federal Bureau of Investigation three years ago in an investigation by giving confidential financial information about two Seattle customers, but a company attorney said today it has never been the firm’s policy to give out such information without a court order.

The firm released information to the F. B. I. in

es at **171 20th Ave.** and 616 26th Ave. E., including the name of the individual applying for gas service, the amount of the bills, the amount paid or owing and the identity of the persons making payment and the method of payment.

Tomlinson said the information might have been given to the F. B. I. “in the spirit of cooperation.”

Seattle Daily Times, Monday, July 23, 1973.



Carlos Imani, Elite Collective, 2014





Their claws are sheathed, but Black Panthers continue work

Seattle Daily Times, Friday, November 21, 1975

Black militants put energy in kids now

by SUSAN GILMORE
Times staff reporter

Billy Williams eats breakfast out, and it doesn't cost him a cent.

The menu may lack the variety of a ritzy eatery, and customers often must bolt down the meal to beat the school bell.



Billy Williams, 7, bit into an orange.

The program began in February, 1969, under the umbrella of the Black Panther Party. The party here has since shed its name and its militant image, but the breakfasts are still going strong.

The commitment to provide a hot breakfast for schoolchildren continued after the Black Panthers disbanded here two years ago and regrouped under the clinic's name, said Elmer Dixon, the clinic director and former Black Panther.

Since the first breakfast was served at the Madrona Community Church 10 years ago, Dixon estimates 300,000 schoolchildren have started their days with a hot meal.

"We originally started the breakfast program because kids in low-income neighborhoods were not getting nutritious meals — or any meals at all — before school," Dixon said. "Kids just don't do well in school without food."

Now, volunteers flip pancakes and fry eggs for their young customers at five places in Seattle: the Atlantic Street Center, the Yesler Terrace Project, Rainier Vista Project, Holly Park Project and High Point Project.

Dixon said 800 to 1,000 breakfasts are served each week. This is less than last year's peak because of problems finding volunteer cooks and because the new mandatory-busing schedule often conflicts with the 7:30-to-9 a.m. meal-time.

"We try to provide a hot, nutritious breakfast every morning," Dixon said. He said volunteers serve eggs or pancakes, juice and fruit — but no meat.

"We don't serve meat because of the additives," he said.

Dixon said it costs about \$1.35 to feed each child. The money comes from private donations; the cooks are all volunteers.

Since inaugurating the free breakfasts, the Black Panther-Sydney Miller Clinic has jumped into other programs geared primarily for Central Area residents.

Each Wednesday the clinic distributes more than 50 bags of groceries to hungry area residents. On Saturdays through Mondays the clinic offers free

busing to Western Washington prisons so families without transportation can visit inmates.

The Sydney Miller Health Clinic, which closed its doors two years ago to "reorganize," Dixon said, will reopen later this month in new quarters.

Called the **Carolyn Downs** Family Health Center, after a young black woman who died of cancer last summer, the new clinic will employ two half-time doctors, a full-time practitioner and five Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) workers.

The center is part of a five-clinic consortium in Seattle funded in part under a grant from the National Health Services Corp.

Dixon said his group bought the new clinic building on the corner of 34th Avenue and East Union Street after Homer Bergren, a Seattle businessman, donated \$13,000 for the down payment.

Dixon said the clinic will offer examinations, child care and an eye clinic. He said there will be no billing system — patients pay what they can afford.

"Our main emphasis will be on preventative health care," Dixon said. "We find the highest cost of health care is emergency care. Blacks and low-income people are crisis-oriented. They wait until an emergency to see a doctor."

Seattle Daily Times, Tuesday, February 20, 1979

“Gone was the massive fortress that we had built to protect us... Gone were the sandbags, the thousands and thousands of rounds of ammunition, the gas masks, the bulletproof vests... The old synagogue directly across the street from the old Panther office was completely gone. I was stunned. Only the People’s Wall remained.”

~ Elmer Dixon, *Die Standing*

“The Panthers were always there. They were the heart and soul of the Central District. They took care of us. They fed the community. They made sure we were medically taken care of. There was no other place to go. Going to the police was stupid. You would end up a murder victim or you’d get arrested.”

~ Central District resident, Seattle Chapter of the Black Panther Party

“The boldness of the Seattle Black Panther Party was matched by the boldness of the historical circumstances.”

~ Linda Holden Givens, HistoryLink.org



Elmer and Aaron Dixon standing at the People's Wall, date unknown
Instagram @SeattleSpectator, March 9, 2026; Photo courtesy Aaron and Elmer Dixon



Carlos Imani, Elite Collective, 2014

Eddie Ray Walker, artist
Retouched paint in 2008

