

YEAR COMPLETED: 1983
 COST OF IMPROVEMENT: \$ 53,642
 DESIGNER: S. WORTHY
 DONATED IN 1982 BY FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

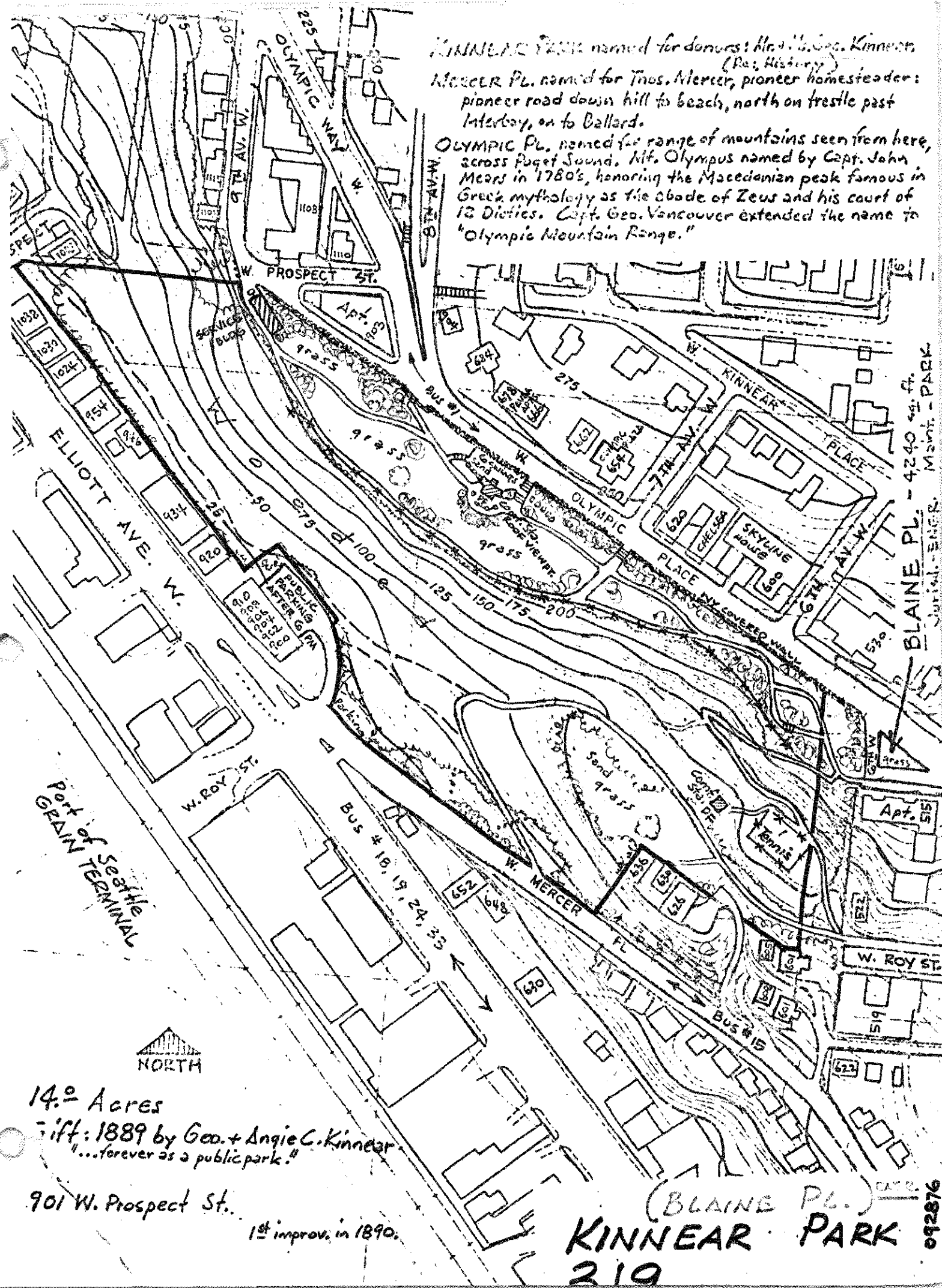
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12-11-85

KINNEAR PARK named for donors: Mr. & Mrs. Geo. Kinnear
(Pas. History)

MERCER PL. named for Thos. Mercer, pioneer homesteader:
pioneer road down hill to beach, north on trestle past
Interbay, on to Ballard.

OLYMPIC PL. named for range of mountains seen from here,
across Puget Sound. Mt. Olympus named by Capt. John
Meares in 1780's, honoring the Macedonian peak famous in
Greek mythology as the abode of Zeus and his court of
12 Dieties. Capt. Geo. Vancouver extended the name to
"Olympic Mountain Range."



14.2 Acres

Gift: 1889 by Geo. + Angie C. Kinnear
"...forever as a public park."

901 W. Prospect St.

1st improv. in 1890.

(BLAINE PL.)
KINNEAR PARK
319

BLAINE PL. - 4240 sq. ft.
Jurial - ENER. Mount - PARK

092876

HISTORY: KINNEAR PARK

Led by pioneer Dr. F. A. Churchill, the residents along Olympic Way and vicinity felt that the wooded slope across Olympic Way should be made into a park. So they asked realtor George Kinnear to sell it to the City; in 1889 he gave it to the City for \$1 - 14 acres from Olympic Way down to the beach at the foot of the slope. (The railroad was on trestles out in the water at approximately its present location and Smith Cove was still a tide flat; Magnolia Bluff was densely wooded.) Elliott Avenue may have existed (a planked roadway also on a trestle) a short distance offshore, turning inland and up the hill (Mercer Place) to Mercer St. The fine view over the Sound was praised by Olmsted Bros. in 1903 as a good sample of the miles of similar bluff parks which they hoped the city would some day have.

The Park was named in honor of its donor, GEORGE KINNEAR, who first visited Seattle in 1874, having heard of its potential some 10 years earlier while a County Clerk in Illinois. Born in Ohio in 1836, his family moved first to Indiana, then to Illinois when he was 9. During the Civil War he served in the 47th Regiment of Illinois. He turned a cattle investment into farmland. Impressed with his Seattle visit, he converted his Illinois holdings into Seattle real estate on Queen Anne Hill and elsewhere, and moved to Seattle, building a mansion at the foot of Queen Anne Hill (REFER: Kinnear Place) which was an outstanding example of "Queen Anne" architecture; it was demolished in 1959. In 1878 he promoted construction of a wagon road through Snoqualmie Pass; promoted and organized an Immigration Board, and in 1886 was the Captain of the Guard that subdued the mobs during the Anti-Chinese riots. Kinnear was treasurer of the Washington Improvement Co. and of the Rainier Power and Railway Co. He took a grand tour of Europe in 1910. Died in 1912.

In his memoirs, Dr. Churchill recalled that in 1890 the Department cleared Kinnear Park of underbrush, built winding paths down to the beach and prepared flower beds, the planting of which became a community project with residents giving plants, bulbs and shrubs from their own gardens. The Park Gardener reciprocated by giving them seeds and cuttings in the fall which they propagated and shared with the park until they were no longer needed. (In 1903 the Olmsteds were critical of the "miscellaneous assortment . . . that was repeated in other parks and in private grounds of the City." They believed that "each park should have its own individuality.")

The earliest Park Report found, for the year 1892, notes that "floral planting continued . . . plateaus were lawned . . . walks regravelled . . . rustic seats constructed . . . ladies' cottage and footbridge thereto finished and the rustic parachute (mushroom shape) trellis seat erected. ("The many little buildings . . ." - Dr. C.), steps and street fence were painted and walks along the bluff required frequent repair due to slides." The 1893 Report notes "the gradual and constant caving away into the Bay of the lower portion of the park . . . so further improvements there were not extended . . . The shorefront is controlled by parties who do not care to prevent further damage." In 1894 a "rustic and picturesque pavilion" was built to take advantage of the fine view and to provide a "root cellar, tool and workroom and storage", the roof of which was the pavilion floor, connected with the bluff over a rustic foot bridge. Also the last remaining tall trees were condemned as possible hazards.

The 1903 Olmsted Report generally approved the park's development but urged that it should be given more individuality of its own. The 1904 Report notes the popularity of the lower areas for picnickers and in 1909 are added "swings, teeters, sand courts, etc." for small children. A 1913 photo shows the similar equipment on the upper level (also?).

"Band concerts were given each Tuesday evening in the pavilion during the 1910 season and proved a boon to the (residents), the average attendance 2690." Community meetings were held on the lawn on Sunday afternoons in 1910, again in 1936.

The shoreline problem was solved with filling that began in Smith Cove, then continued southward along the shore, completed about 1920, resumed in the 1960s, pushing the shoreline into deeper water, making the grain elevator a feasible, though hotly disputed project of 1970.

In 1929 the old pavilion was replaced with a comfort station built just behind it and into the bank, also having an "observation deck" on its roof. The building included accommodations

over

to replace "the old Carpenters' Quarters", one of the "many little buildings", but continued in use until 1949 when the first segment of the Service Building was built at the northeast corner. A tennis court was built on the lower level in 1947 and two years later another "little building" was replaced with a masonry comfort station near the court.