

# Black Historic Sites Approved

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Plan, which called on the city of Portland to “recognize cultural significance as a necessary component of assessing historic preservation targets.”

In addition to building on the previous scholarship of African American historians and the venerated 1998 report Cornerstones of Community, the expansive research, documentation, and writing was made possible by the dedicated efforts of historians Kimberly Moreland, the late Cathy Galbraith, Raymond Burrell III, Kerrie Franey, Matthew Davis, Caitlyn Ewers, and many others.

The individual listing of the Billy Webb Elks Lodge stemmed from a request received from Lodge members.

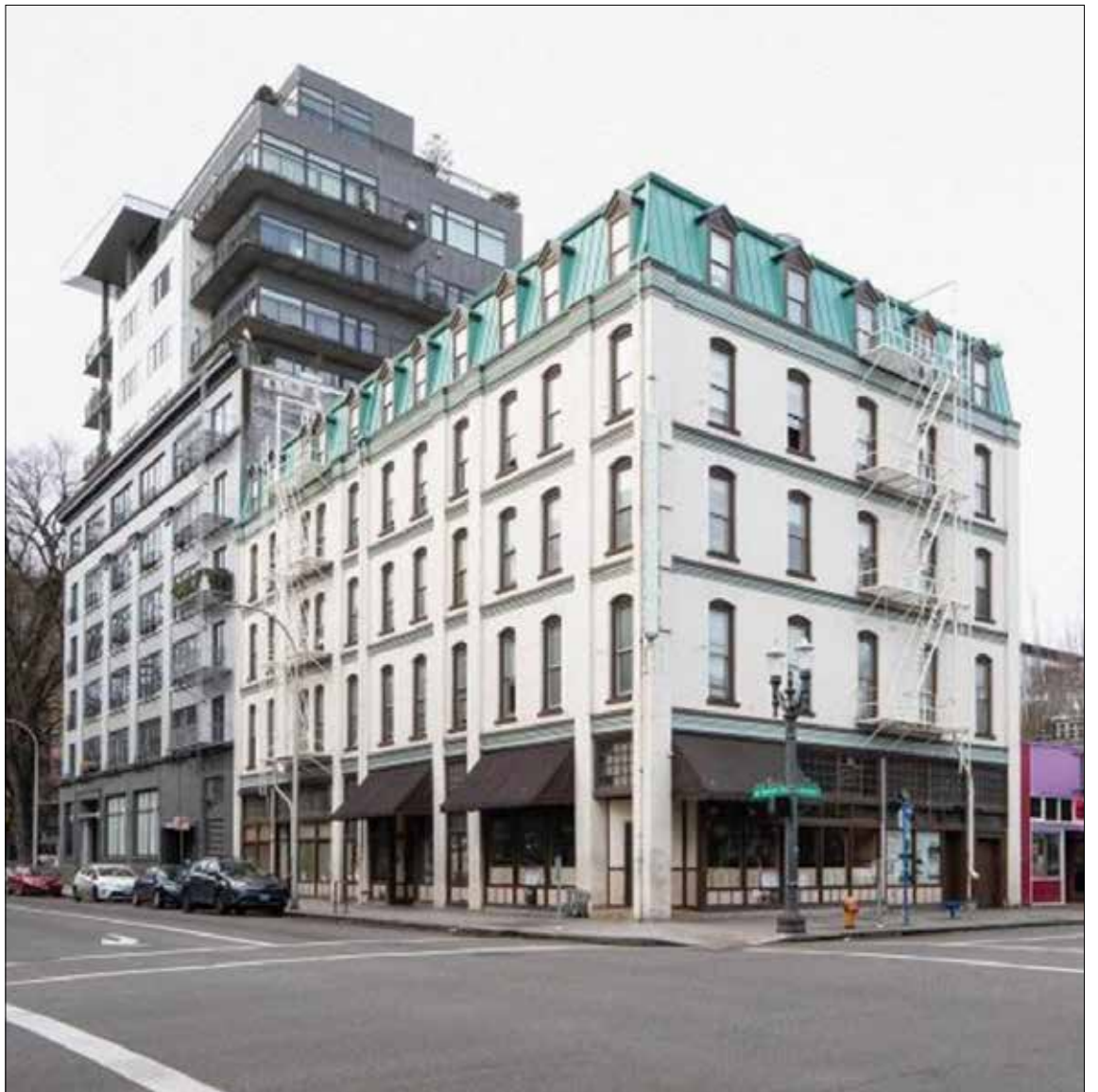
The Billy Webb Elks Lodge designation celebrates not only the history of one of Portland’s most important Black fraternal institutions, but also a building that previously served as a “Colored” YWCA, African American USO center, and Portland branch headquarters of the NAACP.

Built in 1926 at 6 N. Tillamook St. when Portland’s Black population was just over 2,000, the Elks Lodge remains owned, operated, and occupied by the African American fraternal society to this day.

Said Lodge Exalted Ruler Louis McLemore, “The awarding of this historical designation will mean a lot to the Billy Webb Elks Lodge membership for their hard work and efforts to keep the past in mind while looking toward the future of this community and the Lodge.”


The Lodge intends to leverage their recent listing in the National Register of Historic Places to secure additional funding for physical improvements to the building and relief from lost rental income due to the coronavirus pandemic.

“It’s great to see the National Park Service approve the long-deserved historic designation of the iconic Billy Webb Elks Lodge,” Mayor Ted Wheeler said of the decision to list the Lodge in the National Register. “The honoring of Black history by our public institutions is long overdue.”



PHOTOS BY INTISAR ABIOTO/COURTESY PORTLAND PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY  
The Golden West Hotel at 707 N.W. Everett St. was established by African American entrepreneur William D. Allen in 1906 and provided short and long-term lodging to Black clientele who were otherwise denied accommodations at the city’s white-owned hotels.


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