

# **Historic Preservation Commission**

## Additional Information

### **Alaska Native Heritage Center Local Landmark Nomination**

Casey Woster, Email, 7/21/2023

30-Year Question and Answer for ANHC Nomination



**Bunnell, Kristine R.**

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**From:** Casey Woster <crwoster@truenorthsds.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 21, 2023 12:13 PM  
**To:** Bunnell, Kristine R.  
**Cc:** Joan Bayles  
**Subject:** Re: FW: 30-Year Question and Answer for ANHC Nomination

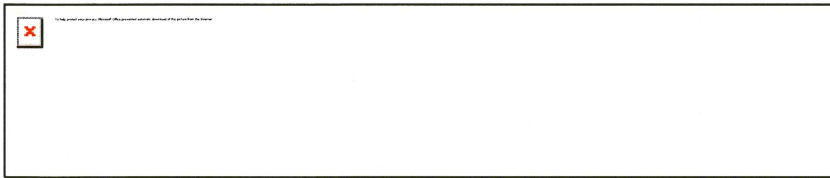
**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]**

Per the National Park Service, the "period of significance is the length of time when property was associated with important events, activities, or persons or attained the characteristics which qualify it for the National Register listing." The periods of significance specific definition is different for each of the four the National Register of Historic Places criterion. It is true that if a property is nominated for its architectural merits (ie, design, Criterion C) then the period of significance begins from the dates of construction. However, when a property is nominated under Criterion A (association with an event or trend in history), then the period of significance is either the period the event occurred (which can last from months to years) or the span of time that a trend took place. For a property associated with a significant trend in history, then the period of significance is defined by "the span of time when the property actively contributed to the trend" (National Register Bulletin 16A).

Using these guidelines, I am arguing that the redesign of the Center for the new site on CIRI land is the beginning of the period of significance. The nomination for the Alaska Native Heritage Center is not based on its architectural value (which under NRHP Criterion C would require the period of significance to be dated to the date of construction). The Alaska Native Heritage Center is being nominated as a landscape, which is defined in the Anchorage Landmarks Register guidance, as "a geographic area including both historical, cultural, and natural resources associated with a prehistoric or historic event, activity, or persons or peoples, or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values." If it were being nominated on its architectural value, the nomination would likely be limited to just the Welcome Center. The Center is significant based on its association with the internationally-growing trend within indigenous communities to present their own living cultures, as opposed to presentation by anthropologists, historians, archaeologists, and others who may originate from outside the culture being represented. This is an important trend in battling the long-prevailing presentation of cultures through a colonialist lense. The association of the Center with this international trend is in keeping with the NRHP Criterion A. Using this definition of significance as based on the Center's association with a broader international trend (Criterion A), the period of significance can be broadened to include the history that led to the development of the Center on its current land. The racist opposition to the establishment of an Alaska Native cultural center is part of the story that led to its current placement, and thus plays a large part in defining the period of significance. The public opposition to the plans and the eventual donation of the land by CIRI played pivotal roles in the design and layout of the Center.

For the Flatiron Building in NYC, the period of significance stretches to the initial plans for the site, as the shape of the site and lack of other acceptable real estate in the area dictated the unique design of that building. The building is significant not only for its design (Criterion C) but as part of an early 20th century trend towards the construction of skyscrapers amid a growing scarcity of available real estate for construction (Criterion A). The inverse of this is the Watergate Complex in Washington, DC. While it is also significant for its architecture (Criterion C - with the period of significance starting at the inception of the plans for the site in 1962 and stretching to 1969 when construction was completed), the Watergate Complex is also significant for the main event that took place there, the Watergate Scandal. The period of significance for nomination under Criterion A (event or trend) is 1972.

As far as I am aware, an event of such national importance as the Watergate Scandal has not taken place at the Alaska Native Heritage Center, but as mentioned above and in the nomination form itself, the Center is part of an international trend. This, combined with the forced redesign of the site to match the constraints of the property that was eventually used, creates a period of significance that stretches from the offer of land use in 1993.



On Fri, Jul 21, 2023 at 10:35 AM Bunnell, Kristine R. <[kristine.bunnell@anchorageak.gov](mailto:kristine.bunnell@anchorageak.gov)> wrote:

Hi Casey,

Could you please answer this question for Marc?

Thank you!

**From:** Marc Lamoreaux <[marcl@eklutna.org](mailto:marcl@eklutna.org)>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 21, 2023 9:35 AM  
**To:** Bunnell, Kristine R. <[kristine.bunnell@anchorageak.gov](mailto:kristine.bunnell@anchorageak.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: 30-Year Question and Answer for ANHC Nomination

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]**

But how long has it been a historic center? And do plans or designation for it to be a historic qualify for its age?

**From:** Bunnell, Kristine R. <[kristine.bunnell@anchorageak.gov](mailto:kristine.bunnell@anchorageak.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 21, 2023 9:23 AM  
**To:** Brandy Pennington <[Brandy@brandypennington.com](mailto:Brandy@brandypennington.com)>; 'Bryce K. Klug' <[bklug@rimarchitects.com](mailto:bklug@rimarchitects.com)>; 'Connor Scher' <[cscher5115@gmail.com](mailto:cscher5115@gmail.com)>; Darrick Howard <[darrickhoward22@gmail.com](mailto:darrickhoward22@gmail.com)>; David Reamer <[davidreamerjr@gmail.com](mailto:davidreamerjr@gmail.com)>; Judy Bittner <[judy.bittner@alaska.gov](mailto:judy.bittner@alaska.gov)>; Loren Leman <[loren@lorenleman.com](mailto:loren@lorenleman.com)>; Marc Lamoreaux <[marcl@eklutna.org](mailto:marcl@eklutna.org)>; Sivia - BP Office Manager <[start@brandypennington.com](mailto:start@brandypennington.com)>  
**Cc:** Casey Woster <[crwoster@truenorthsds.com](mailto:crwoster@truenorthsds.com)>; Joan Bayles <[jbayles@truenorthsds.com](mailto:jbayles@truenorthsds.com)>; Davis, Tom G. <[tom.davis@anchorageak.gov](mailto:tom.davis@anchorageak.gov)>; Yelle, Ryan J <[ryan.yelle@anchorageak.gov](mailto:ryan.yelle@anchorageak.gov)>  
**Subject:** 30-Year Question and Answer for ANHC Nomination  
**Importance:** High

Dear Commissioners,

Below is additional explanation of the history of the nominated landscape on which ANHC sits. CIRI owned the land (I believe since [ANSCA](#) and therefore since 1971).

The MOA was allowed a lease for a snow dump not ownership.

**This nomination is to designate the site as a landmark Landscape. Described in the Director's guidance (attached) as such:**

**E. Landscape** - A geographic area including both historical, cultural, and natural resources associated with a prehistoric or historic event, activity, or person or peoples, or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.

**Landscape**

**Examples:** Farmlands, ancestrally used coastal areas, creek corridors, recreation areas, plant harvesting areas, parks, industrial and mining areas, etc.

Please do not respond in a reply all to this email. This is additional information as you review and make your determination for this landmark nomination.

Sincerely,

Kristine



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MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

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**From:** Casey Woster <[crwoster@truenorthsds.com](mailto:crwoster@truenorthsds.com)>

**Sent:** Thursday, July 20, 2023 5:01 PM

**To:** Bunnell, Kristine R. <[kristine.bunnell@anchorageak.gov](mailto:kristine.bunnell@anchorageak.gov)>

**Cc:** Joan Bayles <[jbayles@truenorthsds.com](mailto:jbayles@truenorthsds.com)>

**Subject:** Re: HPC Public Hearing

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]**

Hi Kristine -

I do know the exact date. The land was and remains CIRI-owned land, leased to the Municipality for the price of \$1 per year for use as a snow dump, although it had never been used as such. It was announced at AFN in October 1993, with a news article on the announcement published on October 13, 1993. In the article, the Muni is quoted as calling it a complete win scenario - use as a snow dump during the winter and a tourist facility during the summer. The city signed off on the plan on July 21, 1994. Municipal approval was required for two reasons: 1., the development would establish a construction site next



to Bartlett High School, and 2., the Muni would retain use of 30 acres on the site for a snow dump, thus lessening the amount of CIRI-owned land available for Muni use.

The argument for dating the period of significance to 1993 is based on the troubled history that led to CIRI offering use of the land. The original design had, from the initial proposal in 1972, been intended for an 80-acre parcel within what is now Bicentennial Park. Planning for the site had already taken place. In 1989, the plans were downsized to incorporate only 45 acres in a bid to gain public approval. The final product, as we now know it, is only 26 acres in size. The layout of the parcel of land CIRI offered up was not a rectangle or square, as the original lease property in Bicentennial Park was, but a wedge shape, bordered by a school on one side and a major highway on the other. It forced a total revision of the plans for the center. It is not unlike the pattern that led to the construction of the Flatiron Building in NYC - the period of significance for that building, listed to the National Register of Historic Places, begins in 1900, when planning for the construction of a triangular-plan building were begun to fit the parcel of land that was obtained for the building in 1901.

Thus, the argument for dating the period of significance to the initial announcement of the placement of the land is tied to the struggle that ANHC faced in the more than two decades it took to get the center established. If constructed as originally planned in either 1972 or 1989, the period of significance would likely be dated to the construction and/or opening dates. But as they were forced to continually downsize their plans in the face of racist obstruction by the public, the period of significance can be dated to the adaptation of the plans to the awkwardly shaped site that the Center was finally constructed on.

Additionally, having reviewed the ordinances that established the Anchorage Local Landmark Register, there is no requirement that the construction for a resource meet the 30-year mark. Similarly, the National Register only requires that the period of significance meet the 50-year mark, not that construction be completed by the 50-year mark. The Flatiron Building is only one well-known example that I can find of a nationally listed resource whose design was dictated by the shape of the land and whose period of significance predates the physical construction. I am sure there are more, and I can attempt to track them down to bolster the argument. However, as Mr. Reemer pointed out at the meeting in June, that is the National Register, and not the Anchorage Local Landmark Register.

I hope this helps clarify things a little.

