



Historic Inventory Report

Location

Field Site No. DAHP No.

Historic Name: Nutty Narrows Bridge

Common Name: Nutty Narrows Bridge

Property Address: 1810 olympia Way, Longview, WA 98632

Comments:

Tax No./Parcel No. 01760

Plat/Block/Lot

Acreage

Supplemental Map(s)

Township/Range/EW	Section	1/4 Sec	1/4 1/4 Sec	County	Quadrangle
T08R02W	33			Cowlitz	KELSO

Coordinate Reference

Easting: 1021933

Northing: 304193

Projection: Washington State Plane South

Datum: HARN (feet)

Identification

Survey Name: City of Longview Date Recorded: 06/17/2013

Field Recorder: Doris Disbrow

Owner's Name: City of Longview

Owner Address: 1525 Broadway

City: Longview State: WA Zip: 98632

Classification: Object

Resource Status: Comments:
Local Register Bridge in Public Right of Way

Within a District? Yes

Contributing? No

National Register:

Local District:

National Register District/Thematic Nomination Name:

Eligibility Status: Not Determined - SHPO

Determination Date: 1/1/0001

Determination Comments:

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Description

Historic Use: Landscape - Street Furniture/Object	Current Use: Landscape - Street Furniture/Object
Plan: None	Stories:
Changes to Plan: Intact	Structural System: Other
Changes to Original Cladding: Intact	Changes to Interior: Not Applicable
Changes to Other: Not Applicable	Changes to Windows: Not Applicable
Other (specify):	
Style:	Cladding:
	Other
Foundation:	Roof Type:
	Roof Material:
	Form/Type:
	Bridge - Cable Stayed
	Bridge

Narrative

Study Unit	Other
Architecture/Landscape Architecture	A small cable stayed bridge for squirrels
Date of Construction:	1963 Built Date
	Builder: Amos J. Peters
	Engineer: Donald Kramer
	Architect: LerRoy Dahl, for Robert E. Newhall Associates

Property appears to meet criteria for the National Register of Historic Places: Unable to Determine

Property is located in a potential historic district (National and/or local): Yes - Local

Property potentially contributes to a historic district (National and/or local):

Statement of Significance: Very early in 1963, Amos Peters, owner of Amos J. Peters Construction Company came to his company offices on the second floor of the Park Plaza Building at 1717 Olympia Way, and saw a squirrel; "one of the furry little fellows [was] lying dead on the boulevard, peanut still in his jaws". He thought of a bridge but kept the idea to himself because "they undoubtedly would think me a 'Nut'."

After Peters "got up nerve enough to mention the idea" to insurance man, Win Jones, also a tenant of Park Plaza, "things moved rapidly". With agreement from Frank Willis, the Parks Department superintendent, he presented the idea to the City Council, along with "a section of the bridge", on February 28. His plan included seeking design assistance from architect, Robert E. Newhall and Donald Kramer, a structural engineer, both of whom had offices in the Park Plaza. He promised the "entire initial cost ... together with its future maintenance, [would] be financed by Park Plaza". With approval from the "City department heads" the council unanimously passed a motion to accept the Peters' offer. At this same meeting councilwoman Mrs. P. H. LaRiviere, Sr. suggested the name "Nutty Narrows Bridge".

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Within two days of the Council's decision to build a squirrel bridge had spread all over the U.S.. "It was apparent to me that with all the interest shown in the bridge, it would have to be slightly more elaborate than I had originally planned." Peters recalled. After "three or four nights at my drawing board" the plans were completed. "I did almost all the construction of the bridge myself; during the building of it, I lost five pounds in weight." Peters wrote.

On March 30, 1963 the dedication ceremony with marching bands and dignitaries was held. The "little bridge for squirrel traffic" was officially opened in Longview.

Peters reported in March, 1964, "The traffic up there is heavy at times with as many as five little animal on it at one time." Photographs of squirrels on the bridge, taken by Longview photographer, Lovell Groves, answered the perennial question, "Do the squirrels use it?".

For the 1963 holiday season Peters "strung colored electric lights the full length of the bridge and erected a four foot fir tree on the aluminum center span." The tree was decorated with "lights and nuts on the branches". Since 1969 the bridge has been decorated annually in the same manner by the Parks Department.

It fell to the ground with one of its supporting oak trees in August, 1989. It was rehung between two nearby oak trees over Olympia Way in November, 1989. In May, 2005, the bridge was removed to protect it while its supporting oak trees were cut down due to tree mite damage. It was relocated over the three lane traffic circle in front of the library. Due to concerns about it being a potential traffic hazard while driver's maneuvered the traffic circle at this location, the bridge was taken down in early November, 2010 when the circle was reconfigured. It was reinstalled at the corner of Olympia Way and 18th Avenue, only a few trees away from its first location.

Peters was recognized with the E.L.Harper Award from Animal Crusaders, Inc. during the 1963 "Be Kind to Animal Week". In the spring of 1969 Amos Peters received 24 thank you letters from a second grade class in San Diego, California.

The bridge has received national and international recognition during its fifty year history. A year after its installation Peters had heard news of the bridge being reported in "London, Greece, Germany, Japan, Canada and the Holy Land". According to a "City Highlights" column in The Longview Daily News on December 23, 1969, the Los Angeles Times sent a reporter to Longview to write "the true story" about the bridge. "Once the Times circulated the story over its wire service", reported columnist Jerolyn Nentl, papers in Louisville, KY and Omaha, NB, as well as other cities, reported on the "Nutty Narrows Bridge". Thirty years later an article about the bridge was published in Highlights for Children. And today, an uncited entry on Wikipedia states "It has the title of the 'World's Narrowest Bridge' and also the 'World's Narrowest Animal Crossing'".

It has been listed in Tourist's guides as a "must see" in Longview. In June, 2013 it is listed on RoadsideAmerica.com, Your Online Guide to Offbeat Tourist Attractions as "worth a detour". Postcards and shirts with a local artist's design were made available for several years.

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The Nutty Narrows Bridge is unique. While there have been other squirrel bridges proposed, only five cities have constructed them and except for the new squirrel bridges built here in Longview, none of these were in the United States. In the September 6-7, 1969 issue of the Daily News reported Nutty Narrows No. 2 would be build for Salem Oregon. This appears to have been another prank of the Longview Sandbaggers, of which Amos Peters was a member. And, more recently in 2010 Arizona announced construction of forty rope bridges to save an endangered specie of red squirrel, but that was quickly cancelled. The Hague erected a squirrel bridge in August, 2012. In 2006 a rope bridge was placed across a road in Fyvie, Scotland, to protect the red squirrel population. Also in October, 2006 BBC News reported a decision to erect a rope bridge to protect red squirrels in Dundee, but completion could not be verified. In 2005 a Czech town of Sokolov erected a 23' high cable bridge to protect squirrels from traffic. The Isle of Wight reported it was the first place in the United Kingdom to place rope bridges across roads to protect the red squirrels.

Description of
Physical
Appearance:

Amos Peters designed the Nutty Narrows Bridge with assistance from architect, Robert E. Newhall and Donald Kramer, a structural engineer. He, with William J. Hutch, his brother-in-law and co-owner of the Amos J. Peters Construction Company, built the bridge in his company's workshop at a cost exceeding \$1,000. He reported the following:

"I used two 3/8" steel cables threaded through a 4" fire hose and bolted it with 1/4" gal. bolts every few feet to keep the cables separated and to the outside of the hose. I then made a 10' section to put in the center of the bridge to give the appearance of a super- structure. This also supports the sign 'Nutty Narrows Bridge'.

"This 10' section was made from aluminum tubing, part of which had been an old TV antenna. The horizontal part was made from 3/4" tubing and the bottom was made from 1 1/4" tubing bought especially for the bridge. I then bolted and welded the parts of the superstructure together.

"At the park, I measured the distance between the two trees from which the bridge would be supported, at the height of 20'. I then bolted the superstructure to the previously prepared hose and cable so that it would be in the center of the street when it was erected.

"Back at the shop, I then tied one end of the cable to a truck and the other end to my crane and stretched it a distance of 60' to see how much sag it would have in it when placed between the trees. It had a tendency to turn and twist rather than stay level. This was due to the difference in tension on each of the 1/8" steel cables in the hose. We adjusted the tension until it hung just the way we wanted it to.

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"I then added a safety precaution by stringing a ¼" aluminum wire and attaching it to either end of the crossbar on the superstructure and extending a full length of the hose; this wire was later anchored at either end onto the supporting trees.

"We had set anchors on the two trees that were to be used for supports and we were now ready to complete the bridge. We draped the entire bridge over a scaffold on the back of a truck and took it to the park. We used our crane to pick up one end of the hose and lifted it into position against the one tree.

"We had constructed the anchors so that all we had to do was drop a pin in to secure the hose in position. We then picked up the other end and prepared to do the same thing on the opposite tree. We had to use a come-along in order to stretch the hose and cable into the proper position.

"We also connected the aluminum support wire, previously mentioned, onto the trees at either end and our bridge was ready for traffic."

Whenever the bridge has been down, it has been cleaned and repaired. In 1989, Roger Peters, Amos' son, replaced the fire hose and painted the sign. Repairs were made, and the sign repainted in 2005 and in 2010.

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Major
Bibliographic
References:

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Photos



'The worlds smallest suspension bridge for squirrels'
Nutty Narrows Bridge hanging in Longveiw Civic Center
2013



The bridge is decorated annually along with the R.A. Long
Park for holiday celebrations.
Nutty Narrows Bridge hanging in Longveiw Civic Center
2013



The bridge was returned to its original location over Olympia
Way at 18th Ave intersection in 2010.
Nutty Narrows Bridge hanging over Olympia Way
2013



Original Sign that hung from the squirrel bridge
2013