



Historic Property Report

Historic Name: Aubrey White Parkway Rock Walls

Property ID: 706408

Location



Address: N Aubrey L White Pkwy, Spokane, Washington, USA

GeographicAreas: Spokane, Spokane County, T26R42E28, AIRWAY HEIGHTS Quadrangle

Information

Construction Dates:

Construction Type	Year	Circa
Built Date	1936	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Number of stories: N/A

Historic Use:

Category	Subcategory
Landscape	

Historic Context: Architecture

Architect/Engineer:

Category	Name or Company
Builder	Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)

Photos



SRS-25a.JPG



SRS-25g.JPG



SRS-25f.JPG



SRS-25e.JPG



SRS-25d.JPG



SRS-25c.JPG

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SRS-25b.JPG



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Inventory Details - 7/16/2016

Common name: Aubrey White Parkway Rock Walls
Date recorded: 7/16/2016
Field Recorder: Stephen Emerson
Field Site number: SRS-25
SHPO Determination

Detail Information

Characteristics:

Category	Item
Foundation	Stone
Cladding	Stone - Rubble
Structural System	Masonry - Stone

Surveyor Opinion

Property appears to meet criteria for the National Register of Historic Places: Yes
Property is located in a potential historic district (National and/or local): No
Property potentially contributes to a historic district (National and/or local): No

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Significance narrative: The Aubrey White Parkway winds through Riverside Park, on both sides of the Spokane River. It is named for Aubrey Lee White, who arrived in Spokane in 1889, just in time to cash in on the opportunities presented in rebuilding the town after the Great Fire. After attaining his financial security, largely through mining investments, he turned his interest to gardening and the endeavor which would become his true legacy: the development of parks within and around Spokane.

Aubrey White was inspired by the 1908 report issued by the Olmsted Brothers landscaping firm. The report advised the City to create a system of recreational parks and scenic parkways, much of it to be located in the gorges of the Spokane River. Although influential, even to the present day, little was done to bring the report's recommendations to fruition. Aubrey White took up the effort as his personal crusade. Around 1929, he successfully convinced the City to issue a \$1,000,000 bond to create a fund for acquiring land for parks. Through his efforts, the Spokane Parkways Association was formed. During the 1930s, when the Great Depression threw many out of work, Mr. White and the Association enlisted labor made available by New Deal social programs to build the parks and roads. The Aubrey White Parkway and adjacent rock features were built by members of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Company 949, affiliated with the Fort George Wright District. The 949th was established in 1933 and by fall had constructed their own quarters, Camp Seven Mile, located on the west side of the Spokane River, just south of the Seven Mile Bridge. Buildings included barracks, offices, mess hall, library, recreation room, workshops, and latrines. But their most lasting effect has been in the creation of various parkways, including Aubrey White Parkway and Rutter Parkway.

Work on the Aubrey White Parkway was begun in 1936. Much of the labor was manual pick and shovel work, courtesy of the CCC Company 949. In a contemporaneous newspaper article, Mr. White describes the road building process in great detail, paying particular attention to construction of rock walls on the steep slopes east of the river. Here, the problems were "one, the building of retaining walls at the base of slopes above the road, to bar earth slides; second, the building of barriers or guard rails on the outside of the road as a safety measure." He explains the prevailing National Park Service policy of using locally available rock and timber to construct these features. The timber guard rails were removed long ago, but many of the rock walls remain. They now share the road with more recently built retaining walls that, in some places, have replaced the historic structures. And the historic walls have been badly repaired in places. Nonetheless, the intact portions of the Aubrey White Parkway rock walls, as well as both portals, are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, under Criterion C, as excellent examples of stonemasonry used in the construction of roads, and also under Criterion A, for its association with Depression era projects conducted by federal agencies like the CCC.

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Physical description:

There are nine surviving historic segments of the Aubrey White Parkway, as well as two entry portals. The parkway begins at a portal near Downriver Golf Course, travels along the steep bluffs on the east side of the Spokane River, makes a turnaround at the Seven Mile Bridge, and then comes back down the west side of the river to another portal at the south end. The rock walls are constructed of basalt. They were installed employing a technique called dry stacking. The process involved transporting locally quarried basalt rubble to the work site, and then painstakingly choosing appropriately shaped and sized rocks to be assembled, like a jigsaw puzzle, to create an aesthetically pleasant appearance. This work was accomplished so well that it was not necessary to use mortar to secure the walls. Yet they are surprisingly stable; most of the walls are intact after over seventy years. The places where loose or collapsing rocks were replaced with new rock, the difference in the craftsmanship is striking. The newer portions of rock are not as uniform and not as perfectly laid; often mortar was used to ensure stability. In places, newer walls made of different materials were built, sometimes replacing historic segments of the walls. Alternate modern materials utilized in these modern repairs include cobblestones, poured concrete, and concrete crib walls. The two entry portals each consist of two stone structures placed on either side of the road. Like the walls, they are constructed of basalt. But, in the case of the portals, a different technique is used. Because the portals are free-standing structures, without the advantage of being staggered into a slope, mortar was required to ensure stability. The stones used in the portals are roughly cut and present a more uniform appearance than the rubble used in the walls. The mortar is neatly placed and pointed. The portals rest upon poured concrete platforms. At both locations, one of the portals has a concrete block embedded in it. The words "Aubrey L. White Parkway" are incised into these blocks.

Bibliography:

Emerson, Stephen. A Historic Property Inventory of Rock Structures in Spokane County, Washington. Archisto Enterprises, 2016.