



## Bega Park Proposed for Historic District

Bega Park, a one-acre oasis of trees on the south side of Main Street, has been part of the downtown Littleton landscape since 1895, when it was called Rio Grande Park. The park has seen many changes over the years, including having its name changed to Bega Park in 1974, and has been threatened several times with being turned into commercial property.

Now Lebrun Hutchison, a community activist and member of the Bega/Littleton Sister City Exchange, wants to make sure the park will always be part of downtown Littleton. He has proposed that the park be included in the Main Street Historic District, which would protect the park from future changes.

“Over its 112 year history many cultural, social, and political public events have been held there,” Hutchison said in his application for designation. “It has been the focal point for international sister city community events between Australia and the US since 1961...Bega Park sets the stage of ‘a small town’ as you enter or leave downtown Littleton...No more beautiful, fitting and natural statement could be conceived for an entrance into historic downtown Littleton.”

The Historical Preservation Board approved Hutchison’s idea on March 19. The next step is for the city council to designate the park as part of the district.



**Members of the Littleton/Bega Sister City Exchange gathered in Bega Park on Australia Day Jan. 25, 2006 to raise flags and sing the anthems of both countries. Snowdrifts cancelled the outdoor ceremony this year.**

At one time Littleton’s first log house stood on the site, until it was relocated to the Littleton Historical Museum ground. The park also housed the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe depot (now the Depot Arts Center) until it was moved to West Powers Ave.

In 1971 the Colorado Land Board announced its intentions to put the parcel up for auction. The city of Littleton started negotiations to purchase the land, but this was not accomplished until December, 2004. In the meantime South Suburban Parks and Recreation District leased the property as a park.

In September, 1974, the park was formally dedicated as Bega Park to honor Littleton’s sister city in New South Wales, Australia, during the Bega delegation’s visit to Littleton.

The Littleton/ Bega connec-

*Historic Littleton Inc. is dedicated to preserving the historical and architectural heritage of the greater Littleton area through advocacy and education.*

# Bega Park Showcases Littleton Social

tion began in 1954 when Curly Annabel, the editor of a small town newspaper in Bega, Australia, saw the documentary film "Small Town Editor," which featured the Littleton Independent and its editor Houstoun Waring. Annabel noted the similarities of the two communities. When President Dwight D. Eisenhower announced his people to people program, the Bega and Littleton became the first sister city program between the U.S. and Australia. This sister city exchange is still flourishing, with delegations going between the two cities every two-and-a-half years.

Bega Park is the official Littleton site for welcoming visitors and celebrating Australian events. In 2003 the park was renovated with a plaza that depicts the locations of Bega and Littleton on a sandstone map of the world.

The Historic Littleton Board of Directors sent a letter endorsing the park nomination because Bega Park fits several criteria in the Historical Preservation Code. It exemplifies the cultural and social heritage of the community, it enhances the sense of identity of the community, and it is an established and familiar visual feature of our community.



**In 1983 Littleton Independent editor Houstoun Waring and his Australian counterpart 'Curly' Annabel were honored for their part in establishing the Littleton/Bega sister city relationship with a bronze plaque that still stands in the park today.**

## **Why designate a park as a historic feature?**

According to Carolyn Etter, who managed Denver Park and Recreations from 1987 to 1991, it is important to preserve parks and open spaces to preserve our sense of place.

"Unless we as citizens become active in the preservation of our public spaces, we will lose many of them," she said in a lecture at the Colorado Preservation Inc. conference in February, 2007.

"Parks are special places... They are places where design is important and makes a difference. Where plant materials are collected and saved. They are enjoyed winter and summer. They help us know who we are and where we are and why we chose to be where we are. In order to really understand these places we need to understand our history."

Etter recommended that park activists make sure historical documents relating to parks are stored at libraries or museums, not only in the files of park and recreation departments.

# Main Street District Tour Set for May 20

The ins and outs of the Main Street Historic District will be featured on a free tour given by HLI members on Sunday, May 20 to celebrate Historic Preservation Month.

The tour will begin at the downtown Littleton light rail station at 3 p.m. Tour guides will talk about the history of the designated properties in the district. The tour will end with refreshments at Café Terra Cotta, the former home of Charles Louthan, which was rescued from obscurity and restored into a thriving restaurant by David Svenson.

Mark your calendars for this event. More details will be in the May HLI newsletter.

**In other preservation news**, the City of Littleton received a xxxx grant from the State Historical Preservation Fund to survey modernist buildings in Littleton.

According to Andrea Mimnaugh, xxxxx.....

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