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Melvin Mark Jr.

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C.B. Harding Photography

Portland

METROPOLITAN OFFICE LEASING GUIDE

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LEASING GUIDE

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DREAM COMES TRUE IN HOLIDAY OPENING OF PIONEER SQUARE

By Melvin Mark, Jr.

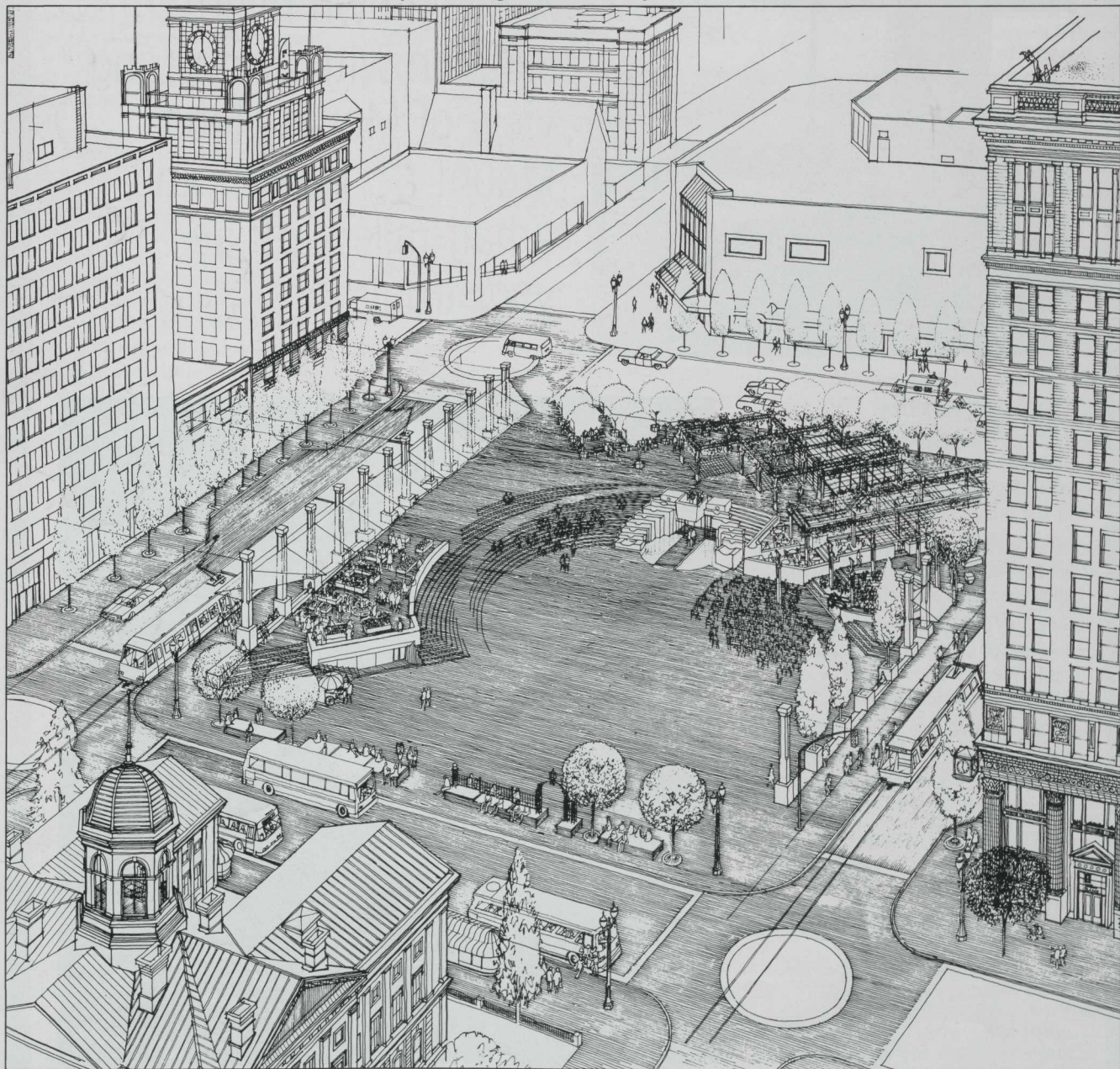
A long awaited dream will become reality this holiday season on the city's most important downtown block. The occasion will be the celebra-

tion of the completion of Pioneer Square, the centerpiece of downtown Portland's revitalization.

To the citizens of Portland, Pioneer Square symbolizes much more than just the opening of another central city public square. It is a mirror image of the city, reflecting an era of history when

the block was the focal point of Portland. And, more significantly it captures the essence of a modern-day Downtown Plan, which strives for the creation of a downtown that is a "pleasurable human environment."

Pioneer Square is being built at a cost of \$8 million on the full block directly



Pioneer Square will open this December in the heart of downtown with a gala holiday celebration. Plaza will accommodate festivals, concerts and outdoor theater events.

west of the historic Pioneer Courthouse (circa 1876). It holds a key location at the intersection of the \$16 million Transit Mall and the light rail system under construction. In the tradition of great public squares of the world, the plaza is designed to accommodate a wide variety of public events including festivals, concerts, and outdoor theatre performances. As much as it will lure tourists, it will once again become a focal point for those who live, work and play in the city.

The importance of Pioneer Square to citizens is underscored by the fact \$1.6 million of the total cost was covered by personal contributions, including some 48,000 Oregonians who donated \$15 apiece to purchase personalized bricks and have their names immortalized on the face of the square itself.

Pioneer Square was designed by Will Martin of Martin/Soderstrom/Matteson following selection of the Portland architectural firm in national competition. Martin's collaborators include Doug Macy, a landscape architect; Spencer Gill, a writer; Terence O'Donnell, author and historian; Robert Reynolds, a designer; and Lee Kelly, a sculptor. The Portland Development Commission is coordinating construction and directing leasing of the retail space.

The design concept integrates an elegant glass pavilion, cascading fountain, brick amphitheater and 16 terra cotta columns to create a marvelously flexible

facility—one that will prove a magnet for evening as well as daytime activities.

A central feature of Pioneer Square is a glass pavilion on the upper level, which will house a restaurant with indoor and outdoor dining for more than 200 patrons.

Water from the cascading fountain tumbles down a series of large granite blocks into a reflecting pool and serves as a major entry into the square's lower level. A unique characteristic of the fountain will be a keystone lectern for official city ceremonies and holiday programs.

The amphitheater on the north side of the plaza is adaptable to a variety of events and activities. The design allows for an audience of 100 people to enjoy the intimacy of a string quartet; conversely, the amphitheater can be arranged to serve as a platform for a 100-piece band or chorus.

Another outstanding feature of the square is the classic Greek columns that frame the north and south sides. They will support the light rail cables and their glass awnings will shelter commuters as they wait to board the light rail trains running along Morrison and Yamhill Streets.

The two-level design of Pioneer Square has also made possible a fully enclosed 4,000 square foot area under the upper level that can be used for displays, exhibits, shows, and tourist-related activities. Planning is underway

to determine the best mix of uses to ensure this area—as well as the square as a whole—will result in a place for people of all ages and interests.

The recapturing of this landmark site is the culmination of more than a century and a half of history on this block-square piece of land. The property was first sold in 1849 for \$24 and "a pair of high boots." The site housed the Central School, which by 1873 was the largest school west of the Mississippi. Following demolition of the school, the Portland Hotel was built and for the next 50 years served as the center of social activity in Portland. Twelve United States Presidents visited the hotel. In 1951, the hotel was razed to make way for a two-level parking structure.

By the mid-'70s a revitalization of the urban core was in full swing and a restoration of the Pioneer Courthouse ignited a move to kindle the city's spirit at its center point. The result is the construction of Pioneer Square.

Oregonians will receive their first opportunity to view and walk on their personalized bricks during the holiday season in December. Plans are underway for a glittering festival of lights, tree lighting ceremonies, parades, symphony concerts, choirs, and bands to commemorate this very special evening.

Melvin Mark, Jr., managing partner of Melvin Mark Properties, is president of Pioneer Square, Inc., a non-profit corporation formed to operate the square.

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