

## HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM

University of Oregon Cultural Resources Survey  
Eugene, Lane County, Oregon  
Summer 2014

### RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION

Current building name: Howe Field/Howe Gates and Associated Wall and Fence

Historic building name: Howe Field/Howe Gates

Building address: 1601 University Street

Ranking: Secondary (Howe Gates and associated wall and fence)

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural style classification: Sports/Utilitarian

Building plan (footprint shape): N/A

Number of stories: N/A

Foundation material(s): N/A

Primary exterior wall material: N/A

Secondary exterior wall material: N/A

Roof configuration/type: N/A

Primary roof material: N/A

Primary window type: N/A

Primary window material: N/A

Decorative features and materials: See Comments section below

Landscape features: See Comments section below

Associated resources: baseball/softball field, concession stand and press box, wrought iron gates, concrete wall and ticket booth, and wrought iron fence along University Street.

Comments: The grass ball field is bounded on its north and west side by a concrete backstop and a raked concrete seating bowl. The west side of the site is bounded by a concrete wall capped with cast stone elements, four wrought iron gates, and a built-in concrete ticket booth (constructed 1938). At the southern end of the concrete wall begins a simple wrought iron fence with concrete pillars. This wall and fence run the length of University Street from McArthur Court to 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue. A two-story concession stand and press box is constructed of concrete masonry units (constructed in 1954).

### ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

Date of construction: Baseball Field Construction: 1935, Concrete wall and ticket booth, wrought iron gates and fence: 1938

Architect: Field: N/A, Howe Gates, wall, and fence: Fred A. Cuthbert—Landscape Architect, O.B. Dawson—Artist/Blacksmith

Builder/Contractor: N/A

Moved? (yes/no) no Date of move(s): N/A

Description/dates of major additions/alterations: 1948: Sprinkler and drainage systems installed, field graded and new turf planted; 1954: Addition of two-story concession stand and press box; 1995: Bleacher sections altered to increase capacity to 3,000 seats; 1996: New backstop and renovated dugouts; 1998: New scoreboard; 2009: New lights to meet permanent lighting standards

**HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS & SIGNIFICANCE**

Original use(s) or function(s): Baseball Field; Gates

Current use(s) or function(s): Softball Field; Gates

Area(s) of significance: Sports

Period of significance: 1935-1938

Statement of Significance (use continuation sheet if necessary):

Howe Field was constructed in 1935. It is named in honor of Herbert Crombie Howe, a professor in the English department at the University of Oregon from 1902-1940. Dr. Howe, a long-standing supporter of athletes' rights, was a faculty representative to the Pacific Coast Conference from 1915-1959 (now PAC-12 although the correlation between the two conferences is questioned) and a member of the athletic board. In 1938, the wrought iron entrance gates, concrete wall and ticket booth, and wrought iron fence were added to the perimeter of the field from McArthur Court south to 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The project was largely funded by the WPA. Additional funding was provided by donations from the classes of 1918, 1919, 1930, and 1936 along with the Soldiers' Memorial fund and the Associated Students of the University of Oregon (ASUO).

The University of Oregon baseball team played at Howe Field until 1981 when the program was cut due to budgetary restrictions. The University of Oregon softball team began playing on the field in 1987 and continues to play there today. The first baseball club at the University of Oregon was organized in 1877. A general lack of interest in the sport prevented a University sponsored program until the autumn of 1905 when the sport of baseball was adopted as a regular college activity. Over the years, baseball games have been played in numerous locations including the northeast corner of 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Kincaid Street, in the area directly south of Hayward Field, and finally at Howe Field, then called "Anonymous Field" beginning in 1935. "Anonymous Field" was named Howe Field in the spring of 1936.

Three years after the completion of the field, the wrought iron entrance gates, concrete wall and ticket booth, and wrought iron fence were constructed. The two main gates, including the words "Howe" on one gate and "Field" on the other stand 81/2 feet tall and 5 feet 4 inches wide each. In addition to the main Howe gates are two individual, single door gates which each stand 7 feet 2 inches tall and 4 feet wide. The primary gates are located at the north end of the wall with the two additional gates located on either side of the concrete ticket booth. The ticket booth also contains wrought iron grilles at the booth's two small ticket openings. All of the gates incorporate thick pieces of iron manipulated into twisted vertical rods and scroll motifs. The grilles of the ticket windows are approximately 161/2 inches high and wide with circular details. The concrete wall that the gates and fence are set into rises to 8 feet and is adorned with simple cast stone caps. The 8 foot tall wrought iron fence begins at the end of the concrete wall and continues south along University Street to 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The design of the fence is a simple design incorporating horizontal bars with circular motifs. On the front of the concrete ticket booth is a memorial plaque dedicated to the 47 students, alumni, and faculty members of the University who died in World War I.

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) contributed approximately \$7500 worth of labor toward the cost to construct the wrought iron gates and associated concrete wall and simple wrought iron fence. In an effort to bring America's workforce out of the Great Depression, Franklin Roosevelt established various work programs including the Works Progress Administration—developed in 1935. Similar to many American cities and towns, new construction in Eugene, including the University of Oregon campus came to a halt during the Great Depression. The majority of new construction in Eugene and on campus at this time was federally funded through the WPA, including this project.

Frederick A. Cuthbert, designer of the Howe Gates, was hired by the University of Oregon in 1933 to establish the department of landscape architecture and as the university's landscape architect. A nationally respected landscape architect and teacher, Cuthbert was known for his consciousness of the natural environment. University architect and founder of the architecture department, Ellis F. Lawrence, and Cuthbert collaboratively designed and developed some of the most significant open spaces on the university's campus including the Memorial Quadrangle and the Women's Quadrangle. In addition, his work was influential in the design of both the Dad's Gates and Johnson Lane Axis. Cuthbert's work outside of campus includes the design of Alton Baker Park and the landscape of the State Capitol in Salem. Cuthbert founded the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects to which he was a member for 25 years, serving as president and chairman of the Board of Fellows. Cuthbert remained the head of the department of landscape architecture until his retirement in 1971. He died seven years later in 1978.

Orion Benjamin (O.B.) Dawson (1894-1977) was the master craftsman and blacksmith commissioned for the WPA work of creating the Howe Gates. Having learned the blacksmith trade in high school, Dawson practiced his blacksmithing skills by shoeing horses while he

was serving time as a soldier in WWI. He first observed decorative ironwork while he was stationed in France. Befriending a French blacksmith, Dawson learned the art of creating ornamental ironwork. After returning to the United States following his service, Dawson worked crafting decorative ironwork. O.B. Dawson's first blacksmithing project on campus was the design and creation of the wrought iron gates within the Knight Library at the University of Oregon. In addition, Dawson completed work for Oregon State University and Timberline Lodge among others. Dawson was completing his work at Timberline Lodge while simultaneously completing the Howe Gates. His last WPA project on the University of Oregon campus was the Dads' Gates.

In summary, this resource is ranked secondary due to the medium historic significance and excellent integrity of the wrought iron Howe Gates, the concrete wall and ticket booth, and the wrought iron fence. Howe Field has little historic significance and poor integrity owing to multiple changes and upgrades over the years. The Howe Gates and associated wall and fence are considered significant under the National Register Criterion A because they are one of the few WPA funded projects on the University of Oregon's campus, a class gift and, a war memorial. They are significant under Criterion B for being named after a historically significant faculty member, Herbert Crombie Howe. The Howe Gates have limited significance under Criterion C. While they are the design of master landscape architect Fred A. Cuthbert and master blacksmith O.B. Dawson, they are not the most significant work of either master.

### NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

Historic Significance (check one):  High  Medium  Low  Very Low or None

Integrity (check one):  Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor

Condition (check one):  Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor

Building designation:  City Landmark  National Register  National Historic Landmark  Not listed

#### Preliminary National Register eligibility findings

Building is potentially eligible:  Individually or  As a contributing resource in a district only

If eligible individually, applicable criteria (check all that apply):

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A. Associated with significant events  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C. Distinctive architecturally |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B. Associated with significant persons | <input type="checkbox"/> D. Archaeologically important             |

If applicable, building qualifies under NR Criterion Considerations: Yes  No If yes, which apply:

Building is NOT eligible:  Intact but lacks distinction or  Altered/loss of integrity or  Not 50 years old

### DOCUMENTATION

Indicate resources consulted when researching this building (check all that apply):

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> University archives | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UO Planning Office files | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newspapers           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sanborn maps        | <input type="checkbox"/> Building permits                    | <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO files                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State Archives                 | <input type="checkbox"/> State Library                       | <input type="checkbox"/> State Historic Society          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Historic Society         | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal interviews                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic photographs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biographical encyclopedias     | <input type="checkbox"/> Obituary indexes                    | Other <u>See below</u>                                   |

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuation Sheet 1 for bibliographical references)

### RECORDING INFORMATION

Researched: Ann Phillips, Summer 2014

Recorded: Christine Thompson, Campus Planning, Design & Construction, Summer 2014

Photo number or name: Howe Field

**PHOTOGRAPH**



Ball Field, Backstop, Seating, Looking Southeast



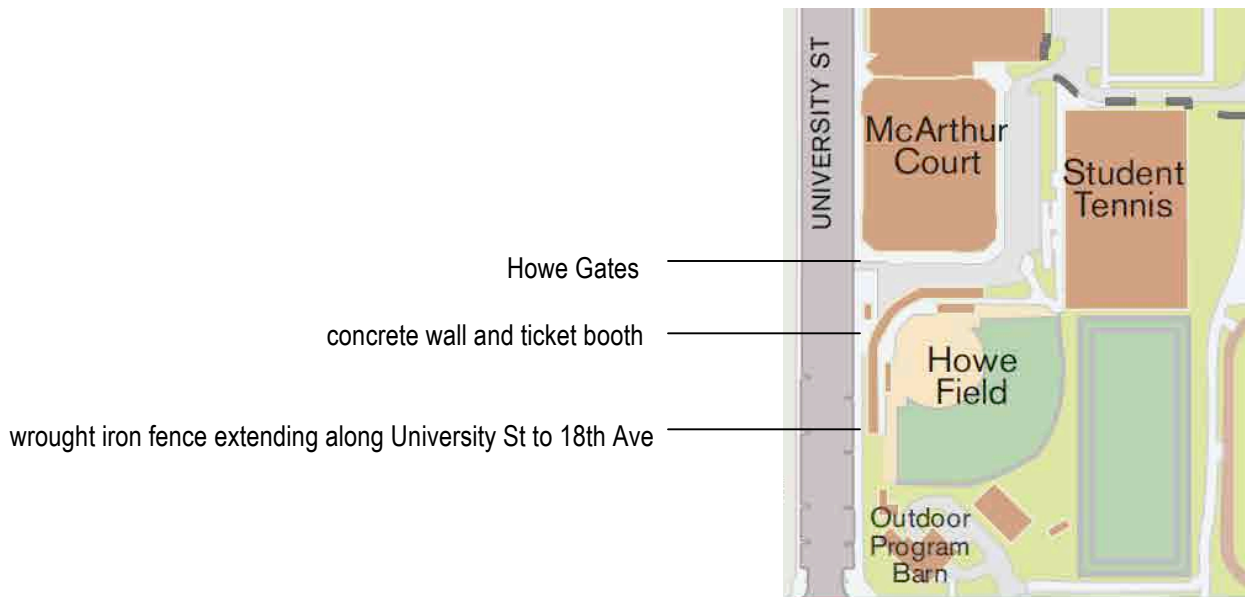
Main Howe Gates and concrete wall, Looking East



Concrete Wall and Wrought Iron Fence

(See Continuation Sheet 3 for additional photos of this building)

**SITE PLAN**



**HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM**

University of Oregon Cultural Resources Survey  
Eugene, Lane County, Oregon  
Summer 2014

**Continuation Sheet 1**

Section bibliographical references Page 4

Photos

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University Photograph Collection, UA REF 3 Box 12F, "Herbert Crombie Howe," Special Collections and University Archives, UO Libraries.

University Photograph Collection, UA REF 3 Box 12F, "Howe Field & McArthur Court," Special Collections and University Archives, UO Libraries.

### Newspaper Articles

"Baseball Diamond Officially Named H.C. Howe Field," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, April 25, 1936.

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"Educator Retires Due to Failing Health, Strain of Extra Work," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, February 15, 1940.

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"Howe Field is probably the best baseball field in the Northwest," *Eugene Register Guard*, May 1, 1959.

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"Iron Fence to be Added to Howe Field Memorial Gate," *Eugene Register Guard*, January 10, 1938.

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"Oregon's Friend of Athletics—Dr. Howe," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, January 9, 1947.

"The question isn't what for Howe," *Eugene Register Guard*, May 27, 1982.

"University of Oregon Ball Field Dedicated," *The Spokesman Review*, April 25, 1936.

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**Continuation Sheet 3**

Section Photos Page 5



Figure 2. Concrete Wall, Ticket Booth, and Secondary Gates



Figure 2. Memorial Plaque



Figure 3. Ticket Window with Marble surface and Iron Grill

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**Continuation Sheet 4**

Section Photos Page 5



**Figure 4. Gates, detail**



**Figure 5. Gates, detail**



**Figure 6. Fence, detail**