

Newcastle Cemetery gains protection as county landmark

by Herb Belanger

Times suburban reporter

An all-day visit of the Landmarks Commission to sites under consideration as county landmarks already has paid off for one of them, the Newcastle Cemetery in the Kenndaie section of Renton.

The cemetery was unanimously accorded designation as a county landmark at the commission's meeting last week.

Another of the sites that was viewed two weeks ago, at long range, by the commission members during the tour, the hop shed in the Fall City Park, probably will be considered at the next commission meeting.

Kjris Lund, administrator for the group and the county's historic-preservation officer, said recent newspaper articles have excited considerable interest in Eastside communities and organizations in the commission's work.

Designation as a county landmark provides a site protection from alterations which would change its character. The Newcastle Cemetery was the third site to receive such designation. Earlier, the Clise Mansion in Willowmoor Park near Redmond and the Neely Mansion in Auburn received that distinction.

The Morash House in Burien achieved community-landmark status, which does not provide the same protections of a county landmark.

Last week's meeting of the commissioners was interrupted for a short period when Randy Revelle, county executive, formally proclaimed May as Museum Month in the county and accepted from the commission a display board titled "King County Preserves Its Heritage" and graphically portraying the work done so far by the commission.

Revelle told the group a copy of "King County and the Queen City, Seattle," written by a commission member, Dr. James Warren, director of Seattle's Museum of History and Industry, was given to Great Britain's Prince Phillip on his recent visit to Seattle. The book will be the county's official gift to important visitors, he said.

Presenting the background on the Newcastle Cemetery, to the commission was Jean Bacon, who was acting as an agent for the owners, the Newcastle Cemetery Association.

After the presentation, the commission members wasted little time making up their minds. Art Skobnik noted the site's archeological and historic significance in terms of Newcastle's importance to the economic history of King County, early Northwest settlement and the development of industry.

After Warren seconded the motion, it was passed unanimously.

The commission's next tour of potential sites will be to Vashon Island, probably next month, according to Lund.