

Date _____ Initials _____
 Determined Eligible - NR
 Determined Not Eligible - NR
 Determined Eligible - SR
 Determined Not Eligible - SR
 Need Data
 Contributes to eligible NR District
 Noncontributing to eligible NR District

Colorado Cultural Resource Survey Architectural Inventory Form

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I. Identification

1. Resource Number: **5PT1383**
2. Temporary Resource Number: **Not Applicable**
3. County: **Pitkin**
4. City: **Aspen**
5. Historic Building Name: **Aspen Pedestrian Mall**
6. Current Building Name: **Aspen Pedestrian Mall**
7. Building Address: **Downtown Commercial District
Cooper Avenue and Hyman Avenue
Mill Street and Galena Street
Aspen, CO 81611**
8. Owner Name & Address: **City of Aspen
130 S. Galena St.
Aspen, CO 81611**

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II. Geographic Information9. P.M. **6th** Township **10 South** Range **85 West**

NW 1/4 of the	NE 1/4 of the	NW 1/4 of the	NW 1/4	of Section 18
NE 1/4 of the	NW 1/4 of the	NW 1/4 of the	NW 1/4	of Section 18

10. UTM Reference Zone: 13	A - Easting: 342844	Northing: 4339345
	B - Easting: 342938	Northing: 4339319
	C - Easting: 342911	Northing: 4339178
	D - Easting: 342790	Northing: 4339213

11. USGS Quad Name: **Aspen, Colorado**Year: **1960 (photorevised 1987)** Map scale: **7.5'**12. Lot(s): **Not Applicable** Block: **Not Applicable**Addition: **Aspen Original Townsite** Year of Addition: **1880**13. Boundary Description and Justification: **This resource consists of the following former street and sidewalk segments in downtown Aspen:**

- **Hyman Avenue right-of-way between Galena Street (on the east) and Mill Street (on the west)**
- **Cooper Avenue right-of-way between Galena Street (on the east) and Mill Street (on the west)**
- **Mill Street right-of-way between Hyman Avenue (on the north) and the Alley South of Cooper Avenue (on the south)**
- **Galena Street right-of-way between Cooper Avenue (on the north) and the Alley South of Cooper Avenue (on the south)**

In addition to the lengths of these former street segments as described, the resource extends from building face to building face across the mall. This encompasses not only the former streets themselves but also the areas that previously held sidewalks. In a few locations described below, it also extends into former intersections. Located entirely in the public right-of-way, this description includes the land and developed resources that are historically associated with the mall and remain in place there today.

III. Architectural Description14. Building Plan: **Not Applicable**15. Dimensions in Feet: **415' E-W x 470' N-S (approximate overall dimensions)**

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16. Number of Stories: **Not Applicable**
17. Primary External Wall Material(s): **Not Applicable**
18. Roof Configuration: **Not Applicable**
19. Primary External Roof Material: **Not Applicable**
20. Special Features: **Not Applicable**
21. General Architectural Description: **The Aspen Pedestrian Mall covers short segments of four previous streets in the commercial district that have been closed to vehicles and redesigned for pedestrian access. These are connected to each other and form a single outdoor mall. The segments along Hyman and Cooper are each one block in length. Along Mill, the mall extends for a block and a half. The shortest segment is along Galena, where it is only one-half block long. The mall not only extends these distances along the former street segments, but also covers their width and includes the areas that were historically occupied by sidewalks and curbing, all of which have been removed and replaced.**

The two lengths of the mall that run down Hyman and Cooper were completed with a number of identical features. Both are landscaped with paved walking areas and planting strips laid out in block-long linear bands that divide each segment into five parallel spaces. The central and two outer bands are open for walking. These are separated from each other by two planting bands. The Mill and Galena lengths of the mall are different in the sense that they are somewhat less constrained by linear divisions, with the walking and seating areas more open and having the appearance of plazas. In these locations, the spaces are broken by various features, including trees planted in individual openings in the paving.

Paving – The most characteristic physical feature that ties the mall together visually, materially, spatially and experientially is its repurposed antique paver bricks. These define boundaries, draw a distinction between areas reserved for walking or driving, and mark the presence of the mall for pedestrians. Employed across all of the walking areas, the bricks were predominantly laid in running bond coursing parallel to the adjacent building faces.

In select locations, the coursing varies from that pattern. At the intersections of Hyman and Mill, Cooper and Mill, and Cooper and Galena, the brick paving is laid on a diagonal to form open plazas. These areas were referred to as “nodes” in the original plans. The straight edge at the intersection of Hyman and Galena, along with the arc at Cooper and Galena, are defined by concrete curbing. At Hyman and Mill, the curved edge of the brick paving has no curbing and is flush with the adjacent concrete street.

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Two primary colors of bricks are present, red and dark purple, with variations of hues and intensity. Along the walkways, these were laid randomly to create a variegated pattern. At the node intersections, where the bricks were laid diagonally, they were assembled by color to form geometric patterns of red squares bordered by bands of purple. Most are scored with a series of grooves, both horizontal and vertical, creating a relatively slip-proof surface. These were located along the primary walkways and in several other places described below. A smaller number have blank faces with stippled imperfections.

Some of the bricks are stamped with information about their origins. Rather than being randomly placed, these were intentionally aligned together in bands and locations where they could be seen and appreciated for their visual and historical interest. Two manufacturers were identified, both of them prominent American fabricators of paving bricks. The first of these, stamped "EGYPTIAN," were manufactured by the Murphysboro Paving Brick Company of Murphysboro, Illinois. The others are stamped "CULVER BLOCK." Additional information on these indicates they were manufactured by the Wabash Clay Company of Veedersburg, Indiana, along with a patent date of 21 May 1901. The Culver Blocks appear to make up the vast majority of the bricks used on the Aspen Pedestrian Mall. These are identified either by their stamped names or their grooves, with all of them appearing to come from the same plant.

Adjacent to the walking areas, the bricks were rolled upward to edge the raised block-long landscape strips and to enclose a fountain at Hyman and Galena. They also provide the walking surface for several small bridges that cross the channels carrying water through the landscaped areas, allowing for lateral pedestrian movement through the mall spaces. Slight linear depressions or gutters in the brick paving run the lengths of the mall segments adjacent to the planting strips and were installed to direct runoff into storm drains. Below the building faces, the paving bricks give way to flat bands of concrete that serve as a transition between the walkways and buildings.

The west side of Mill where Cooper comes to an end at Wagner Park (the "Wagner Node") is occupied by paving of a different sort. Situated south of the restrooms, the area contains a large flat circular feature installed in 2002 known as the Sister Cities Plaza. This consists of a wide perimeter of smooth concrete, within which are grooved paving bricks laid in a herringbone pattern. Running across the brick paving are bands of flat white marble engraved with the names of Aspen's seven sister cities. These include Davos, Switzerland; Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany; Queenstown, New Zealand; Bariloche, Argentina; Chamonix-Mont Blanc, France; Shimmukappu, Japan; and Abetone, Italy.

One final area of paving is notable, although this is not included within the mall boundaries because it was not an original or early feature. This is a long stretch of brick paving that occupies the former east-west alley that runs along the north edge of Wagner Park.

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Vegetation and Watercourses – Extending the length of Hyman and Cooper are parallel block-long landscape strips bordered by the central and outer walkways. These are raised slightly higher than the walkways and are planted with grass. Rising from the strips are deciduous and evergreen trees that provide the mall with a green canopy and shade during the warmer months. An important, original feature of the design are the narrow water channels, about eight to ten inches deep and with vertical sides, that wind through the grass and between the trees from one end of each planting strip to the other. At either end, the channels are lined with river cobbles set in concrete mortar. Small bridges finished with paving bricks cross the channels in a few locations.

The areas along Mill and Galena also contain plantings. These are mostly individual trees that are aligned in rows and located in square openings in the paving bricks. Rolled brick edges line the tree wells on Galena Street. On Mill, the openings are slightly raised above the surrounding brick paving. Raised concrete planters for flowers are found on the southeast corner of Cooper and Mill. A raised flagstone planter surrounding a tree is located on the west side of Mill adjacent to the playground along Wagner Park. Some of the planters are also at a good height to serve as seating.

Seating, Lighting and Fire Hearth – Numerous wood benches are located throughout the mall, many of them original to its design and period of construction. Most are found along the length of Hyman and Cooper, where they line the central walkway and face toward the center of the mall. These are sturdy benches with board seats and backs. Others without backrests are located beneath the trees along Galena. Metal benches of more recent age are in a few locations along the Wagner Park edge of the mall. The wood seat backs on the benches are inscribed with dedications to local individuals, businesses and organizations.

Lighting is found in limited locations and is restrained to preserve views of the night skies. Fixtures are primarily tall ornate antique metal pole lamps that support either one or three lights. Some of these are located in pairs and mark the entrances to the central walkways. Others are single fixtures standing at mid-points along the mall segments. A modern metal structure at the Cooper and Galena intersection serves as a fire hearth. This has metal legs, a circular stone seat, and a disc-shaped metal roof.

Kiosks, Restrooms and Playground - Information kiosks are in two locations. One is a small free-standing booth of more recent age in the plaza at Cooper and Galena. This visitor information center is operated by the Aspen Chamber Association. A small kiosk at Hyman and Mill is a free-standing structure built with wide folded metal plate legs and a folded metal roof with lighting underneath. Mounted to the faces of the legs are large colorful signs informing visitors about seasonal activities and special events.

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Adjacent to Wagner Park near the intersection of Cooper and Mill is a public restroom facility that also serves as an information kiosk. This modern building, installed in 2002 and employing a number of green features, contains men's and women's restrooms. Mounted to its south and east walls are four large color panels with historic photographs and brief text on topics in Aspen history, arranged by decade. A playground on the north side of the Wagner Park restroom facility dates from the same year. This holds climbing structures that include faux rock outcrops.

Dancing Fountain and Public Art – The Dancing Fountain is located within the mall, in the middle of Mill on the south side of its intersection with Hyman. This consists of a rectangular metal grate set flush with the surrounding brick paving. A line of jets beneath the grate shoot bursts of water vertically above the ground in a seemingly random pattern, providing visitors with a feature of visual interest and a place to play during the heat of the summer. Built in 1979 and inaugurated on Memorial Day 1980, the fountain was created by computer expert Nick DeWolf (who designed the computer controls) and sculptor Travis Fulton (who handled the hydraulic engineering). It has remained a popular feature of the Aspen Pedestrian Mall for decades. Reportedly, the fountain periodically tells observers the time in the pattern of its water spouts.

A small number of public art installations are located on the mall. On the south side of Hyman is a large metallic bear, standing upright on its hind legs. This was fabricated by Pennsylvania artist Bill Secunda from more than 50,000 wire nails. Made in 2004 for display at the Festival of the Masters at Walt Disney World in Florida, the bear was brought to Aspen the following year to be exhibited at an art show in Wagner Park. It was purchased by a local resident, who located it outside a gallery on Hyman. A few years later, the City of Aspen acquired the bear and placed on permanent display.

At the east end of the Hyman segment where it intersects with Galena is an abstract metal sculpture mounted within a rectangular fountain enclosure built with antique bricks. While the fountain was constructed in 1976, the sculpture, titled *Interplay*, was commissioned by the City of Aspen in 1979 from artist Ki Davis. It was fabricated at the Fedde Bronze Works in Denver and then installed within the fountain.

Two other sculptures are found on the north side of Hyman. One is a bronze of the three wise monkeys (“see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil”) sitting on a bench. The other is a metal sculpture of a stylized cowboy mounted on a wood block plinth. He has an oversized hat and belt buckle, and holds two branding irons in one hand. This was created in 1974 by Benedict “Ben” Brother, who also made the *Clown Prince of Skiing Sculpture* near the Little Nell Hotel in Aspen. The cowboy is dedicated to the memory of Henry L. Stein, prominent Aspen rancher and land conservator, whose lifespan is engraved in the base (April 6, 1909 – February 5, 1981.)

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22. Architectural Style / Building Type: **Mid-Century Modern**
23. Landscaping or Special Setting Features: **The Aspen Pedestrian Mall is located in an urban setting within the historic downtown commercial district. It is bordered and surrounded by streets, alleys, and a variety of both historic and non-historic commercial buildings. These are predominantly one to two stories in height, with a handful of three story buildings scattered throughout the area. The buildings that front onto the mall hold retail stores, restaurants and offices.**
24. Associated Buildings, Features or Objects: **All of the relevant associated buildings, features and objects have been described above.**
-

IV. Architectural History

25. Date of Construction: Estimate: Actual: **1976**
- Source of Information: **"City of Aspen, Mall Planning," Bronze Dedication Plaque Mounted on the Restroom-Kiosk Building on the Mill Segment / "Final Brick," *Aspen Times*, 7 October 1976, p. 1.**
26. Architect: **Robin Molny (Primary Architect)
Tony Coleman (Architect with Robin Molny)
Fredric Benedict / Curtis Besinger (Architects)
Elmer Claycomb / Dave Burnett (Engineers)**
- Source of Information: **"City of Aspen, Mall Planning," Bronze Dedication Plaque Mounted on the Restroom-Kiosk Building on the Mill Segment / Plans for the Aspen Pedestrian Mall, Architect Robin Molny, 28 April 1976 / "Aspen's Downtown Mall Nearly Ready," *Rocky Mountain News*, 28 August 1976, p. 10B.**
27. Builder/Contractor: **Hyder Construction Company (general contractor)
Hastings Paving Company (brick paving)**
- Source of Information: **"City of Aspen, Mall Planning," Bronze Dedication Plaque Mounted on the Restroom-Kiosk Building on the Mill Segment.**
28. Original Owner: **City of Aspen**
- Source of Information: **"City of Aspen, Mall Planning," Bronze Dedication Plaque Mounted on the Restroom/Kiosk Building on the Mill Segment Next to Wagner Park.**

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29. Construction History: **The Aspen Pedestrian Mall was constructed in 1976 and included the majority of the design prepared by architect Robin Molny. In 2002, the west edge of the mall on Mill along Wagner Park was upgraded with a new playground and an adjacent restroom building that also serves as a kiosk. Aside from relatively minor repairs and ongoing maintenance, no other substantial construction activity appears to have taken place.**
30. Original Location: **Yes**
-

V. Historical Associations

31. Original Use(s): **Recreation and Culture – Outdoor Recreation
Landscape - Plaza**
32. Intermediate Use(s): **Not Applicable**
33. Current Use(s): **Recreation and Culture – Outdoor Recreation
Landscape - Plaza**
34. Site Type(s): **Outdoor Pedestrian Mall**
35. Historical background: **Aspen experienced tremendous growth in the 1880s and early 1890s during its mining boom. However, the community sank into a period of decline following the 1893 Silver Crash, which caused many of the mines to close, businesses to be shuttered, and houses to be abandoned. The population decreased and Aspen spent the first half of the twentieth century as a sleepy county seat and market center for the surrounding ranching district.**

Although downhill skiing had started on Aspen Mountain in the late 1930s, any hope of the town's renaissance was delayed by World War II. In the years immediately following the war, Aspen began to emerge from its long slumber as recreationists, tourists and other visitors arrived in the still small but once-again growing community. Outdoor sports and the healthy, scenic environment attracted many new residents. Others came to participate in events organized by the Aspen Music Festival and School, founded in 1949, and the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, founded in 1950.

A new era of growth and change had begun and the downtown commercial district, missing many of its original buildings after decades of stagnation, started to experience renewal. Over time, many of the surviving buildings from the late nineteenth century were rehabilitated and occupied for new uses. The numerous vacant lots were also developed and a more complete district began to emerge. Vehicular traffic increased during the postwar era as Americans purchased new automobiles after years of financial belt-tightening followed by wartime shortage. By the mid-1950s, Aspen's city council was exploring the need for planning to help manage the town's future growth.

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In June 1956, the fourth year architectural design class from the University of Utah made a presentation at the Hotel Jerome, offering concepts for how Aspen might develop in the coming years. The idea for their study emerged from the previous year's Design Conference at the Aspen Institute, guided by prominent Los Angeles architects Victor Gruen and Edgardo Contini. Gruen was known for his pioneering work on shopping malls, master planning and urban revitalization, and was a proponent of prioritizing pedestrians over automobiles in the urban environment. He designed the first outdoor pedestrian shopping mall in the United States, which opened in 1959 in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Contini joined Gruen in his firm and worked as an architect, engineer and urban designer, promoting the reuse and revitalization of historic buildings.

The Aspen Chamber of Commerce worked with the University of Utah to arrange for the architecture students to prepare and present their design concepts. One element of their work focused upon the idea of landscaping Mill Street and turning it into a pedestrian mall where regular street fairs could take place. This would include amenities such as brightly colored vendor booths offering visitors a variety of products. The students' visual materials were placed on display in an empty storefront next to Parson's Rexall Drugs for the public to view. Although interest was expressed in the idea, nothing was implemented and it percolated through the community for another five years.

In May 1961, the Aspen Institute hosted a week-long Future of Aspen seminar. Around one hundred local leaders attended to discuss various issues, with a final round-table session taking place at the Wheeler Opera House. Moderating the gatherings was James Hopkins Smith, a part-time Aspen resident, former assistant secretary of the Navy, and previous director of the International Cooperation Administration (predecessor of the Agency for International Development). Fred Edmundson, professor of architecture at Cornell University, attended some of the sessions to provide information about city planning. Among the topics covered was the idea of closing one or more of the town's unpaved downtown streets to traffic and installing a pedestrian mall.

The concept for an experimental outdoor mall was presented to Aspen's city council at their June 19 meeting by a citizens' committee led by budding architect Richard Lai and non-profit arts director Geraldine Price. For his master's thesis, Lai had prepared an urban design plan for Aspen that included a pedestrian center. This was displayed at the Hotel Jerome and he was invited to participate as a panelist in the Aspen Institute seminar.

At the council meeting, Lai suggested that the preferred location for the mall would be on either Hyman or Cooper between Mill and Galena. Both streets were already lined with restaurants and retail stores. The committee hoped to eventually turn the area into a permanent City Center where vehicular traffic would be restricted. This would involve blocking the street and transforming it into a pedestrian mall through the introduction of landscaping and other amenities. Lai's idea gained traction and community support.

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Throwing his weight behind the effort, editor and publisher Bill Dunaway of the *Aspen Times* printed an editorial on the subject of a potential downtown pedestrian mall (23 June 1961, p.4):

“One result of the recent Future of Aspen Seminar was the formation of a group to study the feasibility of converting an Aspen street into a pedestrian mall. The idea was broached at the seminar and acclaimed by all participants.

Monday the committee submitted its project to the city council. They asked the aldermen to close one downtown block, preferably Hyman or Cooper between Mill and Galena for nine days during August so that visitors and residents could have a chance to use and evaluate a pedestrian area. Their plan called for the use of trees and plants to beautify the street as well as park benches, sidewalk cafes, art exhibits and concerts to entertain the pedestrians.

The aldermen promised to discuss the experiment with the Planning Commission. At the same time they assured two Hyman Street business owners that the mall would certainly not be located where it was not acceptable to adjacent property owners. Those on the committee agreed.

Once an acceptable location is found, however, we are confident that the experiment will be a success. The idea of an attractive city center where pedestrians can relax and enjoy a leisurely stroll among art exhibits or sip a cup of tea in the sunshine is an exciting one. Part of the charm of Europe are the sidewalk cafes and booth-bordered streets limited to foot traffic. Where streets have been closed to vehicles in this country, at Kalamazoo, Mich.; Toledo, Ohio and in San Francisco, visitors and residents alike have been pleased.

Not long ago Life Magazine pictorially described the garden-centered malls at Kalamazoo and Toledo. An area that “was decaying” in downtown Kalamazoo was described in Life: “Today the same blocks have been transformed into a quiet, car-less mall decorated with shrubbery and pools. The result of this downtown uplift: business is booming...”

The same article described an experimental mall in Toledo. “In place of cars, shoppers find grass and soft music. There are zoo animals and wading pools for children. The experiment has boosted sales 25% in the area’s stores...”

A mall in downtown Aspen would compliment [sic] our other attractions and would add to the town’s charm. We hope the Planning Commission and City Council have the foresight to recognize this and will give the project a fair trial.”

In early July, the city council approved a plan to close Hyman Avenue between Mill Street and Galena Street for nine days in August to try out the idea referred to as the City Center Mall. However, the committee hit a snag when several business owners along Hyman Avenue rebuffed the concept. Determined to make it work, they shifted to the same stretch of Cooper Avenue, one block to the south. Based upon the success of the temporary mall, the committee would consider the feasibility of whether a permanent mall should be implemented in the downtown district in the future.

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Sub-committees were assembled in preparation for the event, each tasked with a specific goal. These included architecture, construction, landscaping, public relations, special events, bookkeeping and legal issues. Among those who joined the effort was Aspen architect and Taliesin fellow Fritz Benedict. Planning moved at a rapid clip as the opening date of August 11 approached.

Over a period of four days, volunteers aided by city and county road crews landscaped the block with graveled walkways, shrubs and trees. They also installed benches, a bandstand and works of art. Two sidewalk cafes were placed in operation, one by the Red Onion and the other by Guido's Swiss Restaurant. A schedule of concerts, theatrical performances, dance exhibitions, an art exhibit, fashion shows, a narrated slide show presented by Stuart Mace, and other offerings attracted pedestrians to the area.

Afterward, the *Aspen Times* editor commented on the success of the project and its potential for the future (1 September 1961, p. 4):

"In this harried era of speed and specialization examples of community co-operation are rare and should be prized. Successful co-operative projects are yet more scarce and merit such praise.

Recently a group of Aspen residents planned and created an experimental pedestrian center-mall on a downtown street. From its inception at the Future of Aspen Seminar, to the day last week when the last tree was hauled away and the street re-assumed its prosaic everyday visage, the project was truly a community project. First suggested by Architect Richard Lai, it needed and was given the attention of many different people. If the mall had been a flop it would have at least served to unite a large group of residents in communal effort.

But it wasn't a flop. The effort resulted in one of the town's most stimulating attractions. The few criticisms were not of the mall itself, but of the necessarily temporary fixtures in it. During its 10-day existence it became truly a focal point for the town, providing visitors and residents with a restful block-long garden retreat. The paintings, sculptures, sidewalk cafes and periodic entertainment added stimulation.

One reason given for creating the temporary mall was to see how it would work, how it would be accepted. If successful a more-permanent center was to be discussed. It is our opinion that the experimental project was an unqualified success. We feel that it was beneficial to the businesses along it, and to the town. It was certainly enjoyed by all who strolled along it. Since a permanent mall could, and would be, even more attractive, we hope plans will be made to create at least one, perhaps two or more."

A temporary pedestrian mall installed by volunteers for a few days was one thing. Clearing the way for the construction of a permanent mall proved to be more complicated and would take another fifteen years. Major issues had to be addressed, including community approval, financing, master planning, and clearing legal hurdles to this type of development.

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In early 1962, the city council and planning and zoning commission were busy preparing amendments to the zoning codes and plans for street development. One item under consideration was a recommendation that the “idea of a permanent mall be considered.” (*Aspen Times*, 9 February 1962, p. 13) No temporary mall was planned for that year. Instead, between August and October 1962, a lively debate on the topic erupted in the columns of the *Aspen Times*. Among the comments were the following:

“In the going on five years I’ve lived in Aspen I’ve heard much talk concerning a mall. Never where it would be or how it would be but just vague talk of a mall. So let’s have one! How about Mill Street between Hopkins and Hyman, with a fountain and a pool at each end, with grass and benches in between and, in the winter, put the municipal skating rink there, with lights and music...,” (Ivan Abrams, 24 August 1962, p. 4)

“Wouldn’t now be the time to decide which street or streets to use for a mall – if there is ever going to be a mall! – now before all the streets of the downtown area have been paved. It’s not too late to plant grass and trees and make a pleasant area downtown for people to walk through, sit and relax.” (Alice Scudder, 21 September 1962, p. 4)

“The concept of a traffic-free pedestrian area or mall has been with Aspen since its re-birth after the second World War. Proposals were lost in the limbo of lethargy that seemed to permeate city hall when imaginative projects were discussed. During the summer of 1961, however, a dynamic group of residents persuaded Aspen’s city fathers to let them construct an experimental pedestrian mall on a trial basis. Local residents were enthusiastic and the community cooperated to make the 10-day experiment a success. Then everyone seemed to forget about it. What has happened to it? What has been done with the endeavors which require imagination, and which would set Aspen apart from the run-of-the-mill American towns?” (Editor, 28 September 1962, p. 4)

“In regard to Miss Alice Scudder’s letter to the *Aspen Times* regarding a mall...the Planning and Zoning Commission has always been in favor of a green mall in the business section. However, since the city and the county have agreed to the project of a regional plan, it would be premature to install a permanent mall before this plan is available.” (Herbert Bayer, 28 September 1962, p. 13)

“I am sincerely disappointed that the projected regional plan has apparently not made progress, at least to the adequacy of enabling considerations for a central landscaped mall to be incorporated within the plans to resurface the streets. Nevertheless, with the ultimate benefits of such a pedestrian area in mind, perhaps the Planning Commission has deliberated that the present expenditures for street resurfacing could be expendable when a comprehensive regional plan is made available, including designs for a central mall. It should be remembered that in the history of city planning, the newly demanding statistics and data pertaining to urban sociology or traffic control have played no greater role in the art of building cities than the desires of a populace for beauty in their environment and in their everyday lives.” (Richard Lai, 5 October 1962, p. 8)

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“All they are trying to say simply is that if we are going to have a Mall located on one of the downtown streets, let’s take it into consideration before any more money goes down the drain in curbs, grading and paving. Or, in other words, for once let us not be foolish with our hard earned tax money.” (Stanford Johnson, 12 October 1962, p. 11)

“To attain the status of a cultural center, Aspen must one day have paintings, sculpture and architecture which are neither bad, nor indifferent, but good. In Aspen’s proposed Mall...sculpture by men of the first rank...could be exhibited.” (R. Keith Sawvel, 19 October 1962, p. 12)

Toward the end of November 1962, a master plan process was underway. The City engaged Paul Lester Wiener, a prominent international architect and urban planner based in New York City, to complete the study. Early in the project, an associate from the firm arrived to meet with Aspen’s city council and planning commission. He advised them to avoid any final action on a permanent pedestrian mall until it could be addressed in the plan. Another nine months would pass before anything was presented to the city for review.

In the meantime, more letters on the subject of the potential mall were published by the *Aspen Times* during the winter, spring and summer of 1963:

“The main objection to a mall...is not being able to park within two steps of where one is going. Are Aspenites too becoming slaves to the automobile? Can we not have a green downtown area in which to walk, sit and talk? Or must we too succumb to the rush and concrete of big cities? Surveys have shown malls to increase the business of bordering stores. Hopefully, this means some people still appreciate nature and relaxation. Let us cater to these people! (Alice Scudder, 31 May 1963, p. 9)

“Wagner Park should be developed and even called Aspen Center. Why contemplate blocking off a city street for a mall when Wagner Park is a “natural” for such an undertaking? Does it take a master planner from outside Aspen, at a large fee, to pass on such a simple solution for a very much needed community enterprise? No, definitely not!” (Florence Elizabeth Corva, 12 July 1963, p. 14)

A second Aspen Seminar took place in May, at which various topics of interest to the community were discussed. Paul Lester Wiener attended the event and told the crowd he was in favor of the idea of a pedestrian mall, proposing that it be placed on Hyman Avenue or Cooper Avenue. Asked whether the City could move forward with its installation, Wiener responded that they need not wait until the plan was finished.

A draft of Wiener’s plan, consisting primarily of conceptual sketches, was presented to the community leaders in August 1963. What he envisioned was a “civic core” or spine that extended from Main Street to the foot of Aspen Mountain along Monarch Street. This would be designated a pedestrian mall closed to vehicular traffic. A series of plazas would be constructed along the

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length of Monarch, each one bordered by buildings housing restaurants, coffee shops and retail stores. A number of other substantial recommendations were made, including the creation of a civic center around the county courthouse, realignment of traffic patterns and street uses, the establishment of several tourist centers along the base of Aspen Mountain, and the location of new commercial nodes along Main Street and Cooper Avenue. In essence, the plan recommended a substantial reshaping of Aspen's central core.

Wiener's concepts did not go over well in the community, as many felt they would damage Aspen's history and charm as a former mining community. Although instructed to continue with his work, progress on the project slowed considerably. In July 1964, the City cancelled his contract and the idea of a pedestrian mall along Monarch Street died along with it. While the community was waiting for the master plan to move forward, the City completed a major infrastructure project that was long overdue. In mid-September 1963, the streets in a twenty-seven block area of central Aspen were paved and storm sewers were installed for the first time in the town's long history.

In 1966, five years after the first successful event, a volunteer committee moved forward with plans for another temporary pedestrian mall along Cooper Avenue. Those who led the planning were Joanna Albus, Fritz Benedict and Henry Pederson. Lloyd Pelletier handled the landscaping. Over several days in the middle of July, the street became a venue for entertainment and dining. On July 9, Albert Flossman and his Bavarian band performed polkas, waltzes and songs to get the crowd singing along. Three days later, students from the Aspen Music School presented a program of jazz and folk music. An International Day celebration took place there on July 14. The committee also arranged for lectures by Forest Service personnel, square dancing, a movie screening and an art exhibit. July 31 featured the Cooper Street [sic] Mall Sunday Spectacular, which involved a dinner and stage show featuring a half dozen local acts.

Pleased with the event's success, the editor of the *Aspen Times* wrote:

"Instead of contemplating the abandonment of the existing pedestrian mall, the council should consider ways of providing more traffic-free parkways where winter, as well as summer visitors, could stroll at leisure without having to worry about the otherwise omnipresent automobile." (8 September 1966, p. 2A)

However, it wasn't up to the city council alone to make the decision. A number of property and business owners lined Cooper Avenue, and the question of whether the mall was a benefit or a hindrance was really up to them. In September, the Chamber of Commerce presented city council with the results of a recent poll. This showed that of the Chamber's 130 members, fifty-five favored continuing the mall and fourteen were opposed. Whether the fourteen in opposition were owners along Cooper Avenue was not mentioned in the press. The primary concern raised by the poll was that adequate parking be provided for customers in the downtown district.

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Another major issue needed to be addressed before a permanent pedestrian mall could be constructed in Aspen. This was whether it was even legal for a municipality in Colorado to block off a public street and prohibit vehicular traffic. The question was settled when the Colorado state legislature passed the Public Mall Act of 1970 (Colorado Revised Statutes, Title 31, Article 25, Part 402). The new law granted authority to the governing bodies of the state's municipalities to establish pedestrian malls by resolution in designated public streets and rights-of-way, such as sidewalks and alleys. The act also provided required procedures for the establishment and improvement of malls.

With the legal path cleared, over the next six years Aspen moved forward with continued discussions and the eventual planning and development of a permanent pedestrian mall in the downtown commercial district (the City of Boulder was also engaged in the same process at that time). In June 1972, the editor of the *Aspen Times* noted the character of recent development in Vail, which was built on virgin land and did not involve changes to a pre-existing town. Despite this fundamental difference, he commented that:

“Aside from skiing, the most successful aspect of Vail is the pedestrian-oriented village center, where four or five blocks are reserved for walkers...and the vehicular-free atmosphere is tranquil and conducive to leisurely strolling or shopping.

Planners have been recommending a similar system of malls or partial malls for Aspen's downtown for the past two decades, long before Vail was created or even contemplated. Yet, although one or two temporary malls have been permitted, and one or two streets closed for special events, Aspen's leaders and business operators have been too short-sighted to recognize the portent of proliferating cars and have steadfastly refused to heed the periodic recommendations.” (15 June 1972, p. 2A)

A several-day pedestrian mall was established on Cooper Avenue that summer, although this time it was located between Mill Street and Hunter Street. This coincided with the International Design Conference taking place at the Aspen Institute. At the same time, the city council approved the installation of a small permanent mall on Ute Avenue in front of the Aspen Alps administration building. Whether that feature was built is unclear.

On June 22, the *Aspen Times* (p. 2A) published a large cartoon on the mall issue, depicting a baker holding a flag-festooned cake labeled “Pedestrian Malls.” This was being presented to a man in a suit, labeled “Downtown Businesses,” who was looking away to reject the offering. The caption beneath read, “Try It. You'll Like It.” Attendees at the International Design Conference were polled on their opinions regarding whether Aspen should construct a pedestrian mall. Of the 270 who participated, ninety-six percent voted to see vehicles excluded from the downtown commercial district. Eighty-six percent said that they would be fine leaving their cars at an outlying parking lot and then taking public transport to the core area.

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After so many years of debating the concept and trying out temporary malls, these and other events of 1972 proved to be pivotal in getting the project to finally move forward. Aspen was beginning to recognize that other resort communities were creating successful pedestrian malls in their downtown districts. In early July, the *New York Times* published an article on the three-block Washington Mall in historic Cape May, New Jersey and its impact upon local businesses. Because of its relevance, much of the article was reprinted in the *Aspen Times* (13 July 1972, p. 7A). Essentially, the New Jersey mall project was hailed as an “economic shot in the arm for the area.”

In early August 1972, a central district parking and transportation plan was presented to the Aspen city council by Robert Leigh of the Denver planning firm Alan M. Voorhees Company. The study recommended the introduction of a series of full and partial pedestrian malls in downtown, supported by surface parking lots to the north and a new underground garage to the south. Between the lots, shuttle buses would run along Galena Street, which would be closed to traffic and serve as the central pedestrian mall spine. Intersecting lengths of Hyman, Cooper and Mill would also be closed and turned into pedestrian malls. Other blocks would see the installation of partial malls, with wider landscaped sidewalks and a narrow lane for vehicles. The traffic pattern would be redirected to one-way streets. The estimated cost of all the necessary improvements was just over \$6 million (more than \$34 million today).

The plan was presented to the City’s planning commission and transportation committee in the middle of August, with a request from city council for their recommendations. The groups indicated they would respond before the end of September. That same month, while the City was contemplating the parking and transportation plan, recent Aspen High School graduates Kathy Dutcher and Margot Dick decided they wanted to do something practical about traffic congestion in Aspen. They formed the Committee for an Aspen Mall, recruited the help of Aspen attorney Joe Edwards, and circulated a referendum petition for the passage of an ordinance. This included strong, reasoned arguments for why a permanent mall would be good for Aspen, and they sought to see the question placed on the November ballot. In September the petition was submitted to the city clerk, who found it to contain enough valid signatures.

Despite their momentum, the city attorney informed Dutcher and Dick that the initiative would not make it onto the November ballot. The soonest a special election could be scheduled would be in early January 1973. At a council meeting in September, Mayor Eve Homeyer explained that the City’s immediate goal was to adopt a transportation plan and then proceed with a request for approval of a 1% sales tax to support the project at the November election. Although the council supported the idea of pedestrian malls, the complex plan would have to be approved and financing secured before they could commit to the work. Later that month, the planning and zoning commission and transportation committee both voted to recommend that the plan be adopted.

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After reviewing a revised version of the document, the city council formally adopted the plan *in concept* and pledged to use revenues from the proposed 1% sales tax increase for the project if it passed voter approval. The council members also expressed some reservations about whether all of the plan's solutions to parking and transportation concerns in the downtown district would be practical and should be implemented. On 26 October, a full-page advertisement appeared in the *Aspen Times* (p. 6B), placed by city council to encourage the voters to approve the 1% sales tax increase. This included a list of potential improvements to parking and transportation, among them the construction of malls in the downtown area.

In late November, the city council approached Dutcher and Dick, still the primary mall proponents, with a request that a special election on their initiative be put off for the time being. In doing so, council reassured them that a temporary mall would be installed the following June as the City launched the process of planning for permanent construction. The two women agreed with council's request. An interim street closure plan published in the *Aspen Times* on November 30 (p. 1B) provided the public with a concept that again focused upon complete closure of some streets and partial closure of others. For the first time, the areas highlighted for full closure involved Hyman Avenue and Cooper Avenue between Mill Street and Galena Street, along with a portion of Mill Street east of Wagner Park. Several other blocks in the vicinity would be partially closed to traffic.

In March 1973, city attorney Art Dailey presented city council with an explanation of the Public Mall Act of 1970, explaining that the construction of a permanent mall was not a simple procedure. In addition to settling issues of planning and financing, further action would require a series of public notices and hearings. The City would also have to be prepared to pay damages to property and business owners who might file claims that the street closures hurt their interests. That same month, a group of students from the University of Colorado's School of Environmental Design presented city council with a class project that explored design alternatives for a permanent downtown mall. Although the concepts sparked much discussion, no action was taken. The sole idea that seemed to move forward called for the creation of streams along the closed pedestrian streets that would run during the summer.

At its last meeting in March, the city council voted unanimously in favor of the installation of a temporary mall by the middle of June in time for the International Design Conference. The following reasons for approval were included in the resolution:

“Establishment of a pedestrian mall in the Aspen commercial core will ease motor vehicular traffic congestion and reduce air pollution in such area; provide a more attractive and relaxed shopping atmosphere; aid the economic prosperity of Aspen by increasing the exposure of goods and services of local merchants; preserve the historic cultural and natural aspects of the town's

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heritage and environment; and generally create safer and more healthful, productive and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings in such area.” (*Aspen Times*, 29 March 1973, p. 3A)

At the same meeting, the council heard the results of a survey of businesses in the downtown core that they had asked to be completed. A total of 114 businesses were asked about the potential impact of a mall. These were found to have 987 employees who drove 582 cars to work each day. Because they did not all work the same hours, this translated to a need for 376 parking spaces at any one time. Ninety-four of the businesses were in favor of the proposed mall. Among the few concerns raised were that the mall design be attractive and that it be kept in good condition and not become an eyesore. On March 29, the *Aspen Times* (p. 1B) printed a new map labeled “Interim Mall Proposal.” This showed the pedestrian mall occupying the exact same streets and adjacent areas as it does today.

A special eight-member mall commission was established that spring to provide the City with guidance on issues such as transportation, delivery schedules, maintenance, patrol, sanitation and special events. It was also tasked with creating rules and regulations for the mall’s use. In May, the council adopted a resolution that all of the expenses of creating and maintaining the mall that summer would be borne by the City, with no assessments levied against the adjacent property owners.

City manager Russ Campbell hired several new employees to handle parking meters, courtesy patrols and maintenance. In addition, the City was busy purchasing all of the necessary planters, trees and shrubs, trash cans, bike racks, street sweepers, and light fixtures. Pat Dasko, a member of the mall commission, was assigned to be the temporary mall coordinator. A public hearing and first reading of the mall ordinance took place on June 4, at which some of the business and property owners adjacent to the proposed mall expressed their concerns. However, their questions were for the most part adequately answered, leaving only about a quarter of them still unsure about the whole thing.

As the opening date of June 16 approached, five petitions were filed in District Court by Aspen business owners complaining that the closure of traffic had already hurt their bottom line. These included the owners of Amelia’s, Crossroads Drug, and the White Kitchen Café. They asked the court to appoint a commission of three disinterested persons to appraise the situation and determine the degree of compensation they would receive for damages sustained. Although work began on the mall, it wasn’t finished until around the first of July. Also toward the end of June, the city council voted to charge interested restaurants along the mall a fee of \$50 for three-month permits to establish outdoor cafés where they could provide service.

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Again the *Aspen Times* (2 August 1973, p. 2) commented on the temporary mall, printing the following editorial:

“Aspen’s interim pedestrian mall is not perfect. Some residents feel it is too limited. Others object to the design, or the signs, or the lack of benches, or the bare expanse of street. Some complain that the promised sidewalk cafes and vending stalls have not materialized, or the lighting is inadequate and policing could be better.

But most objections are petty and cannot alter the fact that Aspen’s visitors, the tourists to whom we owe our ultimate livelihood, and most residents, like the mall. They praise Aspen’s courage in taking steps to curtail the all-pervasive steel monsters which now rule our lives.

The mall also appears to be good for business, as predicted. For, although tourist trade is down throughout the state, it is not for most mall merchants.

Last week’s Up the Arts Festival was the most successful ever. Many attributed its gain in popularity to the events held in the car-free atmosphere of the mall, where children and their parents could participate, kibitz, or stroll from event to event without fear of being run over. We are sorry that some businessmen are fighting the mall, and would like the streets to revert to the confused traffic jams of past summers. They cannot be permitted to prevail, for the mall, imperfect as it is, is the best thing that has happened to Aspen since the invention of the internal combustion engine.”

With the success of that year’s mall, the City was committed to turning it into a permanent feature of downtown. Over the next few years, a master plan was created, including design drawings that would guide its development. Existing conditions plats were prepared in 1975 by Survey Engineers Inc. of Aspen. Three architects were consulted on the design, which evolved as the months passed. Two of them were Aspen’s Fritz Benedict and University of Kansas professor of architecture, Curtis Besinger. However, Aspen architect Robin Molny was soon placed in charge of the project.

Robin Molny was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1928 and attended Pittsburgh’s Carnegie Institute of Technology. He then apprenticed at Frank Lloyd Wright’s Taliesin studio for about five years before moving to Aspen in the mid-1950s. There he met Fritz Benedict, who offered the young architect a job. After working in Benedict’s office for a year and a half, Molny obtained his license and struck out on his own. Through his own Aspen office, he designed a number of commercial and residential buildings, including the 1967 Hearthstone House and 1976 Aspen Athletic Club.

During his work on the mall, Molny consulted with Curtis Besinger. Born in Missouri in 1914, Besinger studied architecture at the University of Kansas and after graduating in 1936 worked for three years with architects in Kansas City. In 1939, he joined Frank Lloyd Wright’s Taliesin fellowship and except for a

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break during World War II remained there into the mid-1950s. In 1955 he joined the faculty at the University of Kansas and taught architecture there for twenty-nine years. He also maintained an architectural practice in conjunction with Fritz Benedict in Aspen. During that time, he participated in the design of the Aspen Music School and assisted with the Aspen Pedestrian Mall.

Molny's plans for the mall were completed in April and May 1976. Along Hyman Avenue and Cooper Avenue, he divided the streets into five long segments. These consisted of three walkways, one central and two along the buildings where sidewalks had once been. The walkways were to be divided by two long landscape strips planted with grass and trees. Narrow meandering watercourses, no more than 12" wide, would be constructed to run the lengths of the planting strips (these are similar to the ones found on the Aspen Meadows property at the Aspen Institute). Paving would be accomplished using paver bricks laid in running bond coursing along the lengths of the streets.

At the intersections of both Hyman and Cooper with Mill Street, Molny designed plazas or "nodes" marked by a visible change in the form of a diagonal, checkerboard alignment of the paver bricks. He designated the plaza at Hyman and Mill the "Wheeler Node," as it was in front of the Wheeler Opera House. The one at Cooper and Mill was the "Wagner Node," located adjacent to Wagner Park. The east end of the Hyman Avenue mall was to end flush with the existing curb running along the west side of Galena Street. There Molny designed a rectangular fountain paved with bricks. At the east end of the Cooper Avenue mall where it intersected with Galena Street, he created a plaza to be called "Independence Square." This would feature a large square fountain and occupy much of the intersection.

A number of additional features appeared in Molny's plans. These included the construction of public restrooms and a children's play structure on Mill Street just north of the Cooper Avenue intersection and adjacent to Wagner Park. Molny also designed brick-lined drainage channels, essentially shallow gutters that would run the lengths of the streets just outside the landscape strips. Antique pole lights were to be used along the mall, and all of the trees were to be planted in tree wells, essentially square openings in the brick paving. The landscape plan called for the planting of a variety of trees throughout the mall, including narrowleaf cottonwood, crabapple, aspen, blue spruce, pinyon pine, and silver maple.

Three items planned by Molny were never constructed because they were vetoed by Aspen voters. One was the large fountain in the middle of the intersection of Cooper and Galena. Another was an extension of the mall that was supposed to be built on Galena between Hyman and Cooper. The final one was an extension of Cooper one block to the east to include the stretch between Galena and Hunter. A plan for the storm sewer installation dating from April 1976 shows that these had been deleted by that time.

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Construction of the mall began in the spring and early summer of 1976 with removal of the existing street paving, sidewalks and other features, followed by the installation of new underground utilities and grading. Concrete was then poured to form an underlayment for the long gutters that would be lined with brick and connected to new storm drains. A sign was installed on Hyman Avenue with the following information:

**THE ASPEN MALL
BROUGHT
TO YOU BY:
THE CITY OF ASPEN
PARDON THE INCONVENIENCE WHILE WE INSTALL
NEW STORM DRAINAGE, UNDERGROUND UTILITIES
& BRICK PAVING
DESIGN BY: ROBIN MOLNY – ARCHITECT
& GINGERY ASSOC. – ENGINEER
CONSTRUCTION BY: HYDER CONST., INC.**

By early July, the city's construction manager, Jim Furniss, informed the mall commission that the laying of paving bricks would commence in a few days.

The first bricks were set in place on July 12 along Hyman by a skilled team of two masons and four pavers who had been flown in from Lake Success, New York, where they worked for the Hastings Paving Company. The firm specialized in the completion of complex masonry projects. In addition, Furniss hired several local masons with brick-laying experience to assist the Hastings crew. The mall commission was concerned about the financial impact the disruption was having upon the adjacent businesses. To speed up the work, Furniss arranged for the bricklayers to stay on the job six days a week, ten hours a day.

A total of 315,000 bricks were acquired to pave the three blocks that would form the mall. All of them came from St. Louis, which was in the process of tearing up and replacing streets that had been paved in the early twentieth century. Purchased for \$.40 each, the bricks cost the City of Aspen a total of \$126,000. They were shipped to Aspen by train and stored in the Rio Grande yard, where another team prepared them for use.

Prior to their being placed in the streets, each brick had to be scraped to remove loose dirt. Many also had to be steam cleaned and waxed so the units would fit together securely. This was particularly important for the 50,000 bricks that would be used in the gutters, where they were to be set into concrete. Along the main walkways and in the plazas, the bricks were placed upon a flexible, porous, bituminous paving base overlain with a neoprene adhesive. In those areas, the bricks were simply set onto the adhesive and a mixture of sand and cement was then swept into the gaps between them. The brickyard workers had to stay ahead of the bricklayers working in the streets.

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Two primary types of bricks were acquired from St. Louis, each originating from a different historic manufacturing plant. The first of these is evident on the mall because of its noticeable name stamped into the bricks. Founded in 1908 at the site of a shale quarry, the Murphysboro Paving Brick Company of Murphysboro, Illinois came out with its "Egyptian" brand paving bricks and by the following year was producing 50,000 per day. Over the following years the plant was expanded with additional kilns and that number increased to a daily output of more than 200,000. These were shipped by rail throughout the United States and Canada, and were primarily used to pave streets. Due to their exceptional hardness and durability, Egyptian brand bricks were considered among the finest paving blocks on the market.

In 1915, the company received its largest order when the federal government purchased several million Egyptian bricks from the factory. Shipped south by train and then boat, these were used to line the Panama Canal. The firm closed in 1935, a victim of the Great Depression and embargoes that some states placed on bricks manufactured in other areas of the country. This span indicates that the Egyptian bricks in the Aspen Pedestrian Mall were manufactured sometime between 1908 and 1935.

The other type of paving brick found even more extensively throughout the mall is the "Culver Block" manufactured by the Wabash Clay Company of Veedersburg, Indiana. In May 1901, company founder Reuben D. Culver received a patent from the federal government for a block of his own design. This featured grooves that allowed the bricks to interlock with filler material such as sand or cement. Although it is now out of business, the firm's most enduring claim to fame is that in 1909 an estimated ninety percent of the 3.2 million bricks used to pave the racetrack at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway came from the Wabash Clay Company. Their installation there is why the track is also known by its nickname, "The Brickyard," although most are now paved over with asphalt. The bricks used at the speedway were of the same design as those used to pave the mall in Aspen.

There are other less common bricks on the mall with names such as Aztec, Poston, Banner, Athens and Indiana Block Brazilian. However, these are rare and challenging to spot. Each brick, no matter its brand or origin, weighed close to ten pounds, so the process of laying them involved backbreaking work. By the third week in July, most of the paving had been placed along Hyman Avenue and work along Cooper Avenue was starting with preparation of the gutters.

Also in July, architect Tony Coleman and artist Bill Jamison approached the mall commission to discuss the potential for public art installation. Coleman had worked for Robin Molny since the spring and was assigned to oversee the project on Molny's behalf. He had identified several locations on the mall where art, particularly sculpture, could be installed. One of those was at the fountain planned for the intersection of Hyman and Galena. Others occurred among the

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landscape strips and close to the restrooms and playground on Mill Street. They recommended that funds be set aside to begin planning for the purchase and installation of artwork on the mall. Before the summer ended, the commission requested an initial allocation of \$10,000 from city council for the purchase of public art.

A budget of \$1,196,900 was established for mall's construction. Of this, \$850,000 was secured from a bond issue and the remaining \$346,900 would be taken from other City sources. Seeking to involve the public in the mall's development more directly, the City launched a program allowing citizens to donate trees and benches. Prices for cottonwood and crabapple trees would run from \$100 to \$150. The benches cost around \$250, and the names of those donating them would be burned into the seat backs. According to Furniss, the idea came from three of the laborers working on the mall, who each decided to purchase a tree. The benches were to be placed in the center walking paths along both Cooper and Hyman. By the end of August, three benches and six trees had been donated to the project.

Toward the end of the first week of August, the bricklaying was reaching completion along Hyman and Cooper. The following week, the concrete aprons outside the building faces was poured. The fountain on the east end of Hyman was under construction and the concrete bases of the bridges across the landscaping bands and water channels were prepared. The original bridges were constructed of wood and had been ordered for delivery in September. Along Mill, the drainage work was about finished and the brick paving had begun. Furniss estimated that all of the paving would be completed by the first week in September, with the landscaping done by the middle of the month.

In September, ornate antique pole lights were installed at the mall's intersections and in a few other limited locations. These were likely rewired and they received a fresh coat of paint. Construction of the public restrooms and playground on Mill near Wagner Park was underway. In the middle of the month, architect Tom Coleman left Aspen and Robin Molny stepped back in to manage the project as its primary designer. Also around that time, a headgate was completed at Glory Hole Park to divert water from the Roaring Fork River to the mall. This would feed into the channels, running from east to west along the landscaping strips. By the end of the month, the mall began to take on its final appearance as trees and grass were planted.

Still the area looked bare and fresh, causing some concern among Aspen's residents. It would take some time for the area to soften and become more pleasant as the landscaping matured. Perhaps seeking to console Aspenites and allay their concerns about what they had done and the disruption the construction had caused, the *Aspen Times* published a photograph on September 23 (p. 24B) showing a completely torn up Pearl Street in downtown Boulder, where that city was also installing a new pedestrian mall.

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With most of the construction complete, Aspen's new pedestrian mall was dedicated on 2 October 1976. At a special ceremony called to celebrate the occasion, Mayor Stacy Standley placed the last paving brick into place and the mall was opened to the public. The mall commission remained in operation for a number of years under the authority of city council as the primary body involved in its management.

Three years after the mall was completed, two additional features of interest were added. The first of these was a sculpture titled *Interplay*, completed in 1979 by artist Ki Davis under commission with the City of Aspen. This was installed within the existing fountain designed by Molny at Hyman and Galena. The other was the Dancing Fountain, located beneath an existing storm drain in the middle of Mill on the south side of Hyman. Controlled by a custom computer program, it was designed to shoot bursts of water vertically through the drain grate in a seemingly random pattern. Built in 1979 and inaugurated on Memorial Day 1980, the Dancing Fountain was created by computer expert Nick DeWolf (who designed the computer controls) and sculptor Travis Fulton (who handled the hydraulic engineering). At the time, it was reported to be unique and eye-catching, both in terms of its controls and visual effect.

In 2002, the mall received an upgrade that focused on the Mill segment along Wagner Park. The 1976 restroom building and playground there were removed and replaced with upgraded facilities. The south and east walls of the building became a kiosk holding dedication plaques and large colorful posters on topics in Aspen history. Off the south end of the building, the city installed a paving feature called the Sister Cities Plaza, along with an adjacent clock tower. This project was designed by Willis Pember Architects, together with Suzannah Reid, C.O.R.E., and Ajax Design. Engineering services were provided by KL&A of Colorado and Beaudin Ganze Consulting Engineers. Construction was completed by Roaring Fork Builders.

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- “Business Supports Mall Council Hears,” 29 March 1973, p. 1B.**
- “Mall Commission to Offer Guidance,” 10 May 1973, p. 13B.**
- “City to Bear Pedestrian Mall Expenses,” 17 May 1973, p. 3B.**
- “City Mall Hearing is Set for June 4,” 31 May 1973, p. 13A.**
- “Mall Plans Overcome First Opposition,” 7 June 1973, p. 15A.**
- “Mall Prompts Five Legal Petitions,” 14 June 1973, p. 3C.**
- “Malling the City Streets,” 21 June 1973, p. 7C.**
- “Fee of \$50 Established for Restaurant Mall Rent,” 28 June 1973, p. 16B.**
- “Although Not Perfect, Malls Are a Success,” 2 August 1973, p. 2.**
- “Brick Laying in Mall to Begin July 6,” 1 July 1976, p. 11C.**
- “New York Pavers Begin Laying Bricks,” 15 July 1976, p. 21A.**
- “Mall Going Well, and on Budget, Council Told,” 15 July 1976, p. 23B.**
- “Survey Shows Mall Work Hurts Sales,” 22 July 1976, p. 17C.**
- “The Real Story Behind the Bricks in the Mall,” 22 July 1976, p. 21C.**
- “Citizens Can Donate Mall Trees, Benches,” 6 August 1976, p. 2C.**
- “We’re All in the Dark About the New Aspen Malls,” 12 August 1976, p. 2.**
- “Aspen’s Mall: How Did it All Begin?,” 19 August 1976, p. 9A.**
- “Architect Tells What Malls Will Look Like,” 19 August 1976, p. 17B.**
- “Benches and Six Trees Donated to Aspen Mall,” 26 August 1976, p. 20C.**
- “Antique lights were placed this week...,” (photo caption) 2 September 1976, p. 4C.**
- “The antique lamps in Aspen’s pedestrian mall...,” (photo caption) 16 September 1976, p. 2B.**
- “Mall Commission Requests Policeman,” 16 September 1976, p. 9C.**
- “The benches that are being placed in the mall...,” (photo caption) 23 September 1976, p. 3A.**
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- “In case misery really does love company...,” (photo caption) 23 September 1976, p. 24B.**

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“Public toilet facilities are under construction...,” (photo caption) 23 September 1976, p. 2C.

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“Veedersburg Laid the Foundation for Brickyard,” 21 July 2016.

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“Murphysboro Paving Brick Co., One of the City’s Big Industries,” 16 October 1923.

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Richard Lai, Email Correspondence with Ron Sladek of Tatanka Historical Associates Inc., 3 February 2017.

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“Aspen’s Downtown Mall Nearly Ready,” 28 August 1976, p. 10B.

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Smith, Margaret Supplee. *Aspen’s Twentieth-Century Architecture: Modernism 1945-1975*. Prepared for the City of Aspen, September 2010.

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“Follow the Not-So-Yellow Brick Road.” Online Blog by James Baughn, Located at www.semissourian.com, 9 April 2012.

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“Brick by Brick: Murphysboro Company’s Product Goes Around the World.” Online Article by Scott Fitzgerald, Located at www.thesouthern.com, 18 October 2011.

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VI. Significance

37. Local landmark designation: **None**

38. Applicable National Register Criteria:

A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history

B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past

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C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction

D. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory

Qualifies under Criteria Considerations A through G

Does not meet any of the above National Register criteria

39. Area(s) of significance: **Community Planning and Development / Landscape Architecture / Recreation**

40. Period of significance: **1976-1980**

41. Level of significance: National No State Yes Local Yes

42. Statement of significance: **The Aspen Pedestrian Mall was constructed in 1976, the culmination of two decades of debate and the installation of temporary malls that served as a laboratory for public opinion and the mechanics of changing a street designed for traffic into what amounted to an urban public park. Additions to the resource were completed in 1979-1980, extending the period of significance through those years. Present for four decades and still in use today, the mall is NRHP eligible under two of the established criteria.**

Criterion A: The complex story of the twenty-year process that led to development of the Aspen Pedestrian Mall between 1976 and 1980 provides a view into the workings of local government in response to citizens' initiatives for changes to the urban fabric and how it meets the public's evolving needs. It is representative of not only what happened in that particular community, but also of the national trend that lasted from around 1960 through the mid-1980s to construct downtown pedestrian malls.

In many cities, the creation of outdoor pedestrian malls in place of public streets was the result of years of urban decline and congestion brought about by the post-World War II increase in the number of automobiles in downtown environments that were initially built to handle horse-drawn vehicles. It was also often a response to business being drawn away from core commercial districts by outlying shopping centers. As downtowns declined, or the experience of being in them did, many communities sought to install pedestrian malls as a way to draw the populace back to a revitalized city center.

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In essence, the clash between pedestrians and automobiles eventually reached a point where Aspen and a number of other cities, both large and small, sought ways to accommodate modern auto-centric life with the need for enjoyable, thriving downtown districts. Over time, dozens of pedestrian malls were constructed throughout the United States. In Aspen, the answer ended up being the permanent establishment of an outdoor pedestrian mall that filled four interconnected blocks. However, the effort to make that happen took many years of public debate, planning, financing, voter approval, and a legal framework that would allow for such changes to take place.

Today, the Aspen Pedestrian Mall is one of a small number of similar resources that exist in Colorado. These include the Main Street Mall in Grand Junction (constructed in 1962, it allows for a single meandering lane of traffic within widened and landscaped sidewalk areas), the Pearl Street Mall in Boulder (constructed in 1976 and nationally recognized as a prime example of a successful mall), the 16th Street Mall in downtown Denver (opened in 1982 and still in place today), and the Linden Street Mall/Old Town Square in Fort Collins (constructed in 1984 and still the heart of the downtown commercial core).

Due to its success and history of use, the Aspen Pedestrian Mall is NRHP eligible under Criterion A on the local and state levels, for its association with the significance areas of Community Planning and Development, along with Recreation. Its period of significance is limited to 1976-1980, the years during which the resource was developed with all of its major features.

Criterion C: The Aspen Pedestrian Mall is also significant due to its design as a planned landscape located in the heart of the city. Although several architects were consulted for the project and took part in the planning and construction phases, the design was created by notable Aspen architect Robin Molny. A graduate of Pittsburgh's Carnegie Institute of Technology, he apprenticed at Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin studio for about five years before moving to Aspen in the mid-1950s. After working for a short time in the office of celebrated Aspen architect and Taliesin fellow Fritz Benedict, Molny obtained his license and struck out on his own. Through his own Aspen office, he designed a number of commercial and residential buildings, including the 1967 Hearthstone House and 1976 Aspen Athletic Club.

During his work on the mall, Molny consulted with Benedict and Curtis Besinger, another Taliesin fellow who maintained an architectural practice and taught at the University of Kansas for twenty-nine years. Molny's plans presented the community with a design that created a place of beauty, respite, and community-gathering in an urban environment below snowcapped peaks. It combined hardscape formed through the installation of brick paving, along with a softscape of grass, trees and moving water. Most of his design survives intact with few substantial changes other than maturation of landscaping. Molny's pedestrian mall remains a vital part of the downtown environment.

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For these reasons, this resource is NRHP eligible under Criterion C on the local and state levels in the significance area of Landscape Architecture for embodying the distinctive characteristics of the mid-century modern period and its methods and materials of construction. It is also eligible for its association with Aspen architect Robin Molny as an excellent example of his work. The period of significance is 1976-1980, the span of years during which it was built.

Criteria Consideration G: The mall meets the registration requirements of criteria consideration G, which addresses properties that have achieved significance within the past fifty years. This is because of its exceptional importance as one of a declining number of downtown pedestrian malls that survive in the United States. While well over a hundred malls once existed, by 2009 only around seventy-five remained. Today there are likely even fewer as some have failed and continue to be demolished and the streets reopened to traffic. In addition, the Aspen Pedestrian Mall is likely to be one of an even smaller group that has experienced very few changes since it was constructed.

City of Aspen Significance: The Aspen Pedestrian Mall retains a high degree of design integrity despite the few changes that have taken place there since it was constructed in 1976-80. It is an important modern design feature of the downtown commercial district and has served as a community gathering place and attraction for both residents and visitors. The mall is also highlighted as a good example of the local work of architect Robin Molny in architectural historian Margaret Supplee Smith's 2010 context titled *Aspen's Twentieth-Century Architecture: Modernism 1945-1975*.

The property meets a preponderance of the integrity and significance criteria used by the City of Aspen to assess methods and materials of construction, along with design details and overall appearance. Today the mall is four decades old and contributes to Aspen's historic built environment. It remains an important feature characteristic of the city's mid-twentieth century period of renewal and rapid growth. It is also representative of the work of Aspen architect Robin Molny and many others who contributed to the story of its development. For these reasons and those detailed above in the NRHP discussion, the property is eligible for local landmark designation.

Applicable City of Aspen Criteria (Section 26.415.030.C.1, Aspen Municipal Code):

- A. The property is related to an event, pattern, or trend that has made a contribution to local, state, regional or national history that is deemed important, and the specific event, pattern or trend is identified and documented in an adopted context paper
- B. The property is related to people who have made a contribution to local, state, regional or national history that is deemed important, and the specific people are identified and documented in an adopted context paper

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- X C. The property represents a physical design that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or represents the technical or aesthetic achievements of a recognized designer, craftsman, or design philosophy that is deemed important and the specific physical design, designer, or philosophy is documented in an adopted context paper
- X D. The property possesses such singular significance to the City, as documented by the opinions of persons educated or experienced in the fields of history, architecture, landscape architecture, archaeology or a related field, that the property’s potential demolition or major alteration would substantially diminish the character and sense of place in the city as perceived by members of the community
- X E. The property or district possesses an appropriate degree of integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship and association, given its age.

Does not meet any of the above City of Aspen criteria

43. Assessment of historic physical integrity related to significance: **The Aspen Pedestrian Mall was developed between 1976 and 1980 with almost all of the features that remain there today. Over the following twenty-two years, it was largely unchanged except for the maturation of landscaping and installation of minor features such as public artwork and additional benches for seating.**

In 2002, a small area on the western edge of the mall adjacent to Wagner Park was altered with removal of the original restroom facility and playground. These were replaced with a new restroom building and improved playground. A paving feature, the Sister Cities Plaza, was also introduced to highlight the names of Aspen’s sister cities. Adjacent to this is a modern metal clock tower.

As a whole, these few changes have left the vast majority of the mall’s original design integrity intact. Today it continues to exhibit a high level of integrity that supports its significance and eligibility.

VII. National Register Eligibility Assessment

44. National Register eligibility field assessment: **Eligible**

45. Is there National Register district potential? **Yes**

Discuss: This resource is located within the Commercial Core Historic District, which consists of numerous historically and architecturally significant resources that are contiguous or close to one another and

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allowed for the creation of a local landmark district. With additional study, the area may be determined NRHP eligible as well.

If there is National Register district potential, is this building contributing? **No**

46. If the building is in an existing National Register district, is it contributing? **N/A**

VIII. Recording Information

47. Photograph numbers: **Aspen Pedestrian Mall, #1874-1986**

Negatives filed at: **Tatanka Historical Associates, Inc.
P.O. Box 1909, Fort Collins, CO 80522**

48. Report title: **Intensive-Level Survey of Five City-Owned Historic Properties in Aspen, Colorado**

49. Date(s): **14 February 2017**

50. Recorder(s): **Ron Sladek, President**

51. Organization: **Tatanka Historical Associates, Inc.**

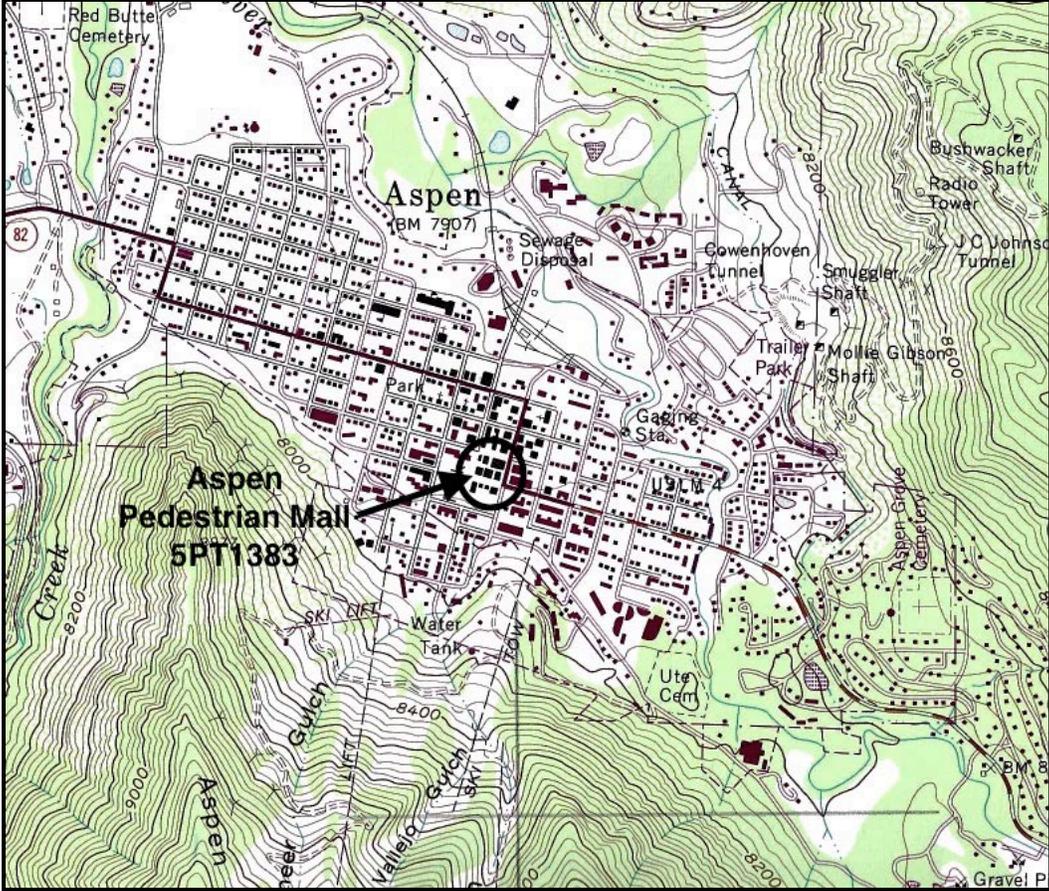
52. Address: **P.O. Box 1909, Fort Collins, CO 80522**

53. Phone number(s): **970/221-1095**

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Site Location Map



USGS Aspen 7.5' Topographic Quadrangle Map
1960 (revised 1987)

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Aerial Map



Note: The letters A, B, C and D correspond to the UTM points on page 2.

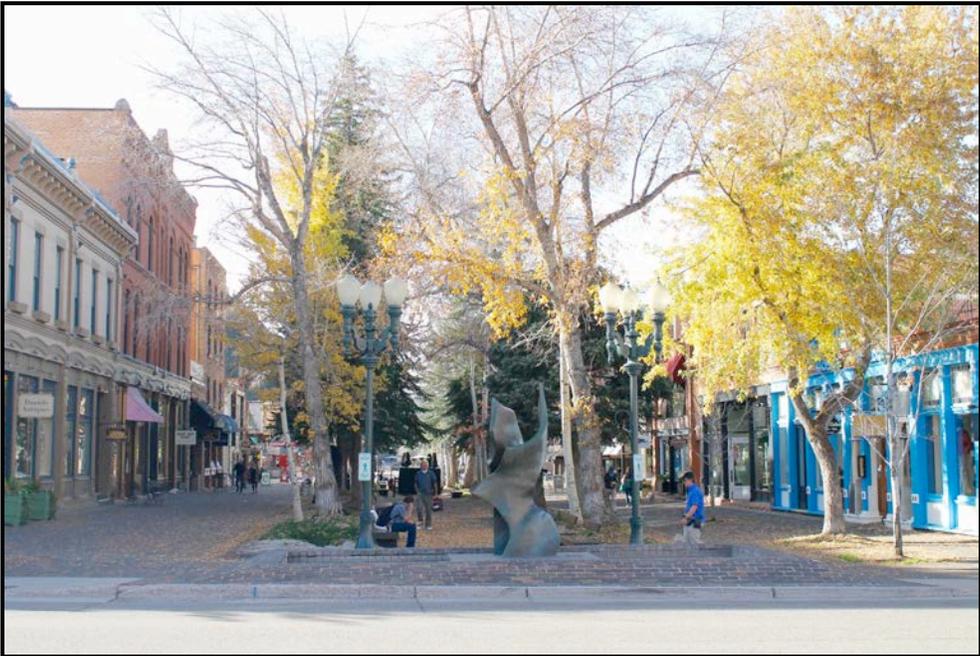
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Current Photographs



**West Entrance to the Hyman Mall Segment
View to the East**



**East Entrance to the Hyman Mall Segment
View to the West**

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Current Photographs



**West Entrance to the Cooper Mall Segment
View to the East**



**East Entrance to the Cooper Mall Segment
View to the West**

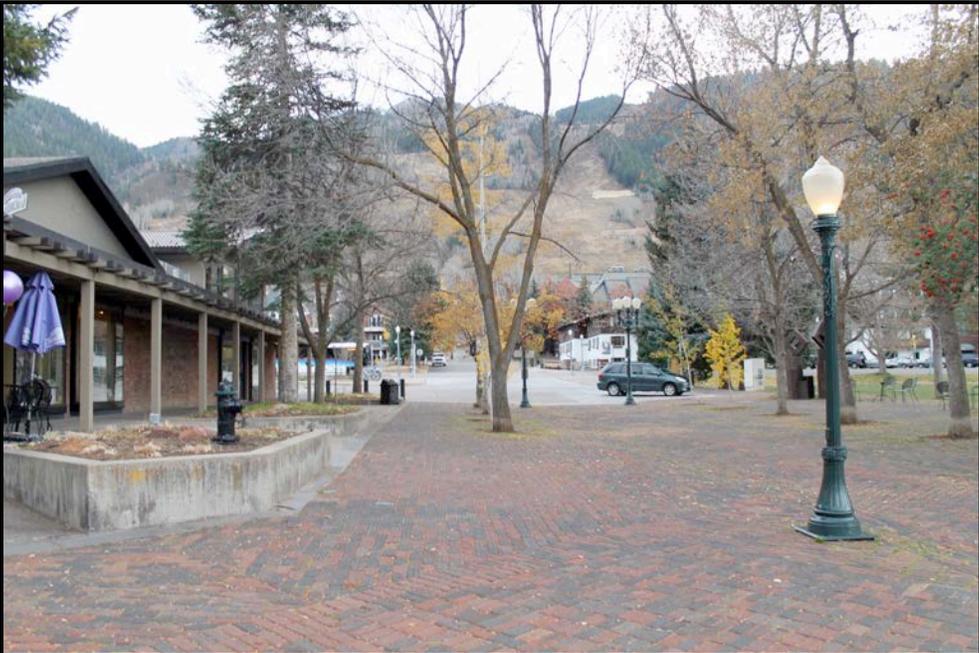
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Current Photographs



**Northern Area of the Mill Mall Segment
View to North**

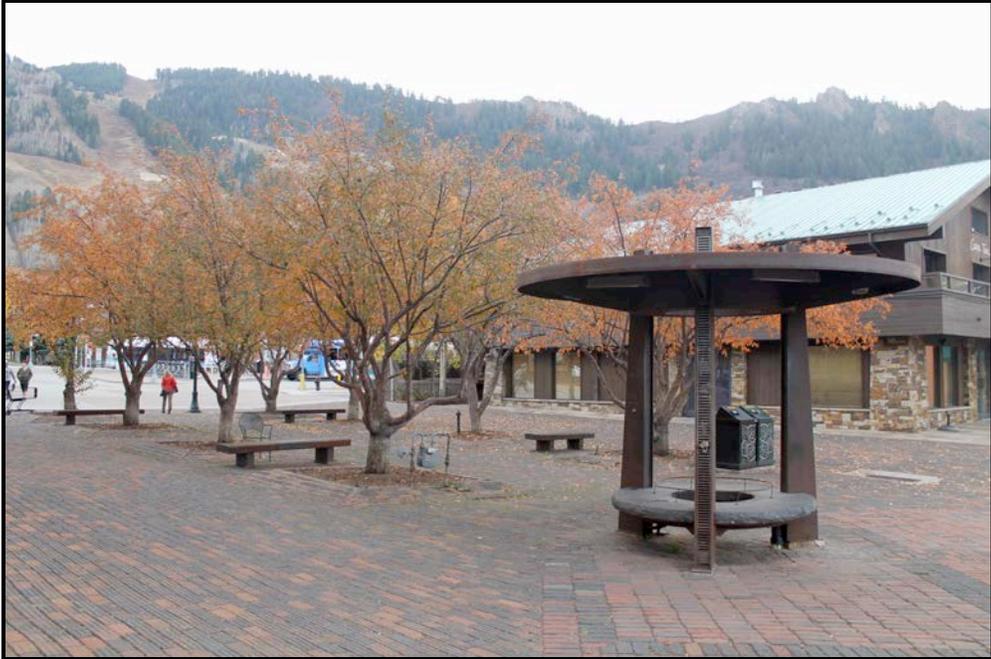


**Southern Area of the Mill Mall Segment
View to the South**

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Current Photographs



**Galena Mall Segment with Fire Hearth
View to the Southwest**



**Typical Paving, Water Channel, Benches & Landscaping
Hyman Mall Segment**

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Current Photographs



Typical Antique Brick Paving



Typical Antique "Egyptian" Brand Paver Brick
Surrounded by Unmarked Antique Bricks

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Current Photographs



Bench Seating
Found on Hyman and Cooper Mall Segments



Paved Walkway
Adjacent to Building Faces

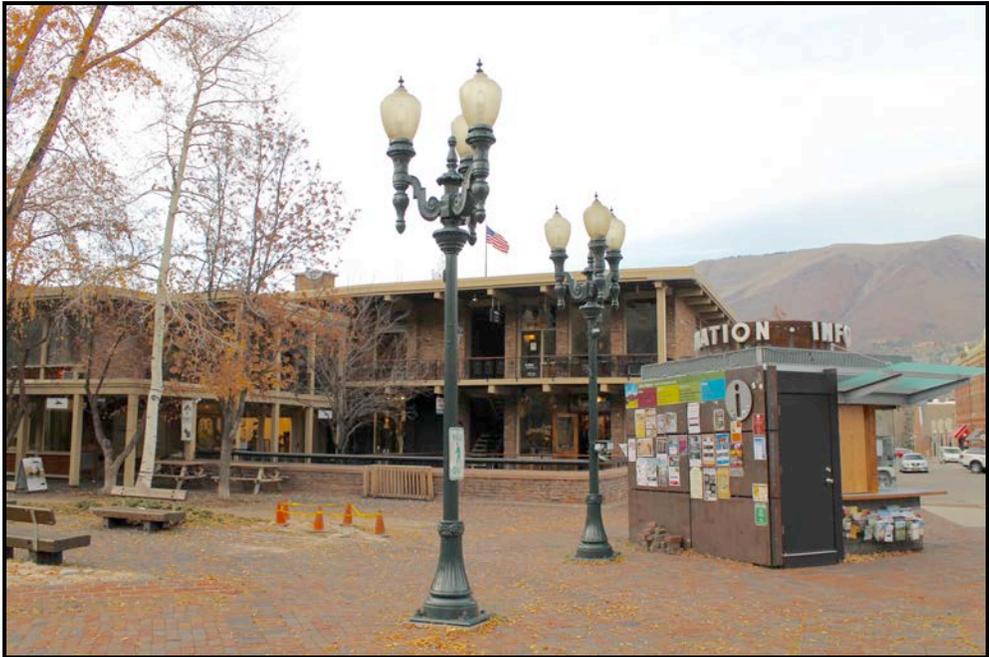
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Current Photographs



Typical Pedestrian Bridge Over Water Channel with Brick-Lined Gutter to Right



Antique Pole Lights and Temporary Kiosk at Cooper and Galena

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Current Photographs



**Raised Planter Beds
at Cooper and Mill**

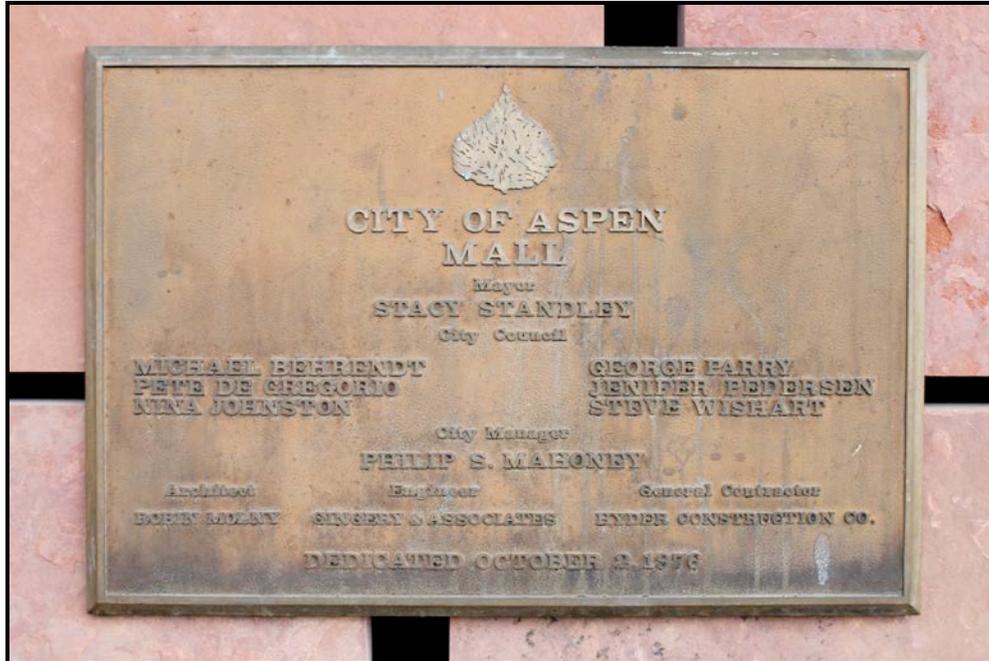


**Restroom Building Along Wagner Park Edge
Built in 2002 at Cooper and Mill**

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Current Photographs



**Mall Dedication Plaque - 1976
Located on Wall of Restroom Building**



**Mall Dedication Plaque - 1976
Located on Wall of Restroom Building**