

The Market Park Totem Poles

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The two Western Red Cedar fifty foot totem poles installed on March 11, 1984 as part of the City's Market Park, adjacent to the Pike Place Public Market, complete the intended park construction as planned by designers Richard Haag, landscape architect, and Victor Steinbrueck, architect.

The Northwest Indian-style poles were designed, executed and installed as part of the Haag/Steinbrueck design with the City of Seattle through the Department of Community Development as part of the Federal Urban Renewal Project. Marvin Oliver (Quinault-Isleta Pueblo) selected the trees in the Skagit National Forest and roughed out the poles. Jim Bender developed the design and carved the Haida-inspired pole after the original concept by Oliver. Jim Bender also executed the carving of the Market Farmer's pole after consultation on the concept and design with Steinbrueck. The artistic concepts were approved in general by the Seattle Arts Commission since the Market Park was to become and actually has become part of the Seattle Parks system.

The poles are a tribute to the cultural contribution and the heritage of our Native Americans as well as having an urban design and civic amenities association with the Pioneer Square totem pole at First Avenue and Yesler. They form a belvedere to lookout at Puget Sound and the distant Olympic Mountains and frequent colorful sunsets beyond.

The poles are not legendary as is often intended with such work, but may have symbolism with varied interpretations. The four main figures on the Haida pole from the bottom to the top are Bear, Killer Whale or Blackfish, Human and Raven. Only the red and black paint stain colors are used in combination with the expressed natural Cedar. The symbolism may be thought of as related to the City of Seattle, or to the Pike Place Public Market, or both. One interpretation of the symbolism is that: Bear represents Strength and Power, Killer Whale or Blackfish is for Goodluck and Abundance from the Sea and Nature, Human holding the Potlatch Copper is Prosperity, while Raven at the top brings Light and Hope to Seattle and the Market and all of us. There are several small figures intertwined with the main elements. Bear is holding a Hawk which may signify Vigilance and Watchfulness perhaps in relation to our own Powers. Next at the top of Bear is Little Raven possibly representing Luminous Energy in relation to Bear's Strength and for the Good Luck and Abundance of the Killer Whale; Killer Whale has a figurative Blow Hole or mask; and Messenger is a Little Human with Feathers between the whole tail fins which suggests Communication within our communities, or between people and Nature; the Salish Women's Spinning Whorl held by Raven may symbolize the contribution of local Native Americans through the combination of work and art, especially recognizing the work of women in our society. Obviously, other symbolic interpretations are also legitimate and possible for all of the figures.

The Market Farmers Pole with its twin eight foot high figures is related to the Pike Place Public Market as a monument and acknowledgment of gratitude to the farm women and men who toiled to bring the agricultural riches of our region to the people of Seattle. The farmer woman and the farmer man, as the most important element of the Market, are wearing "Honored Farmer - 1984" badges similar to those

presented by the Friends of the Market of the old-time farmers in 1981 who had been in the Market for many years.

Artech, with the supervision of Jack Mackie, installed the poles; and Ratti-Fossatti Associates were consulting engineers.

The six foot high green wrought iron screens were wrought by Roman Torres of Mexican Iron and Brass Works from designs by Victor Steinbrueck. They are somewhat abstracted floral designs from standard iron shapes, and form a background for the poles.

The total costs of the artwork including timbers, transportation and installation was about \$50,000.

(definition - belvedere = an architectural feature designed and situated to look out upon a pleasing scene.)