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Historical buildings are one of those things that people take for granted and don't value. It's understandable. The quality and value of historical preservation is hard to quantify, given that it is based on something that, like all art, is subjective. But time and again, communities that do not take the effort to preserve historical structures find that once gone, that the feel and soul of the city that was can never be recaptured. Cities like that lose a bit of themselves over time and being lesser for it.

Change isn't always bad. But change for change's sake, or the lure of promises that development will supposedly bring, but which does not always pan out, do not necessarily improve the quality of the city. I only have to go over the river to Vancouver to see evidence of what used to be in isolated buildings that stand in contrast to the ugly thoughtless development that surrounds them.

What would cities like Edinburgh, Scotland or Bergen, Norway look like if developers were allowed to mow down everything for what was newer, taller, and more dense? Portland's lure for movies and television is based on its historic neighborhoods and the character of its downtown. It's something that Portland has, more due to accident than plan, that separates it from its neighbor over the river. If we're not careful, we'll lose that and just become another Vancouver or any other interchangeable city that lacks distinctive character. And movies won't be filmed here any longer because we lost that intangible quality that historical preservation provides.