

Preserving Forest Grove

Newsletter of the Historic Landmarks Board

Pickling Forest Grove – Celebrating 30 years of Historic Preservation

By
Larry Wade

In September 1980 the City Council, as part of its Comprehensive Plan, created the Historic Landmarks Board with the purpose "to create a comprehensive program to identify, designate and protect the history, culture, archaeology, architecture and landscape of Forest Grove." After 30 years how have we done? Quite well, thank you very much, with still a lot to do.

The Historic Landmarks Board (HLB) is a central player, but only one of many, in collective efforts to preserve our historic roots. The accomplishments documented below are numerous, the result of many people and organizations. Major credit must go to the past and present City Council leaders for establishing and maintaining the framework for preserving our historic structures, but underpinning the Council are the town's values for historic preservation.

The Historic Landmarks Board is a voluntary commission of seven individuals at any one time appointed by the City Council for advising it and the Planning Commission. The volunteers are individuals with a heart for preservation, champions for keeping the "history" in Historic Forest Grove. There have been many, many people serving on the Board over these thirty years, and space doesn't allow us to recognize them. You know who you are, and to you we express a big collective THANK YOU for taking the time to serve and making a big difference.

Preservation efforts predate the Landmarks Board, going back to the Tualatin Plains Historical Society that was started by a Pacific University president's spouse and began meeting at Old College Hall in 1950. As noted in a 2008 Oregonian article by Jill Rehkopf Smith, "Forest Grove has always

been filled with historical preservation enthusiasts, including the late Mary Cowan, who helped run the Tualatin Plains Historical Society and coordinated oral histories for the 1985 inventory, Gladys Haines, Carolyn Buan (author noted below) and others who have since moved away." One that has not moved away is Mary Jo Morelli (and her husband David), who personify the ceaseless efforts to collect stories and artifacts and tell the story to benefit current and future generations.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

Created 2½ Historic Districts – The Clark Historic District (174 sites) in 2002, the Painter's Woods Historic District (42 sites) in 2009 and in process is the Walker-Naylor Historic District (147 sites), with expected approval in 2011. There are likely more to come. The first two are close to each other in Old Town, while Walker-Naylor is an irregularly shaped several-square-block area centered between A and C Streets and 21st and 23rd, west of downtown and Pacific University. Historic Districts are designated by the National Park Service and are part of what is more commonly known as the National Register of Historic Places. It takes a LOT of work (time and money) to create the nomination paperwork and the research that goes into it, which results in a package that is first approved by the City Council, then by the State of Oregon (State Historic Preservation Office, SHPO), before being forwarded for review and approval by the National Parks Service.

Inventory and Local Historic Register – One mandate for creating the Board was to inventory our local resources. The inventory was started as early as 1982, expanded in 1985 and updated

Spring 1996



The A.T. Smith House (see story p. 2)

The Historic Landmarks Board: Its Origin and Reason for Being

Why: The State of Oregon passed enabling legislation more than a decade ago that required local communities to create some means to identify, designate, and protect local landmarks.

How: Following that direction, the City of Forest Grove enacted a zoning ordinance in 1986 covering historic landmarks. The City Council recognized that the heritage and character of Forest Grove warranted protection and preservation. The ordinance, therefore, initiated a comprehensive program to identify, designate, and protect the history, culture, archaeology, architecture, and landscape of the city.

What: To that end, the ordinance also created a

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National Historic Preservation Week

May 12-19 is the week set aside by the US Department of Interior and the National Parks Service as the time to reflect upon the assets that we have in historic structures and places in our country. This may sound like it has nothing to do with Forest Grove, but it does.

In our town, there are eight buildings that have been designated as National Historic Register Properties. These eight buildings have been deemed as important to all Americans, not just the people of Forest Grove. Next time you are on Main Street, look to the building most of us know as "Grove Furniture" and be aware that it is a national treasure. For more information on the other seven nationally recognized buildings in town, contact anyone on the Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board.

Historic Preservation Week in Forest Grove

This year the Landmarks Board, in conjunction with the City of Forest Grove, is proud to announce the establishment of an award to honor individuals who have shown outstanding achievement in historic preservation in Forest Grove. The award is to be titled "The Eric G. Stewart Award."

The first recipient is to be the late Eric Stewart. No one better exemplifies the intent behind the award than he. Eric devoted years of effort in researching and collecting old photographs, land deeds, and cemetery

and publish our newsletter.

Renovation Grant Program -

Since beginning in 1996 this program has funneled \$130,000 in funds to local homeowners of historic homes to assist with restoration and maintenance. While the grants are small and cover only a percentage of a project, these funds are a significant help with preservation efforts. The money comes from the City using Community Enhancement funds, not taxes.

Newsletters - Quarterly newsletters were started in 1996 and have documented a wealth of information on a wide variety of topics, including information about some of the more important homes. Newsletters since 2004 are on the HLB web site and earlier archives are expected to be posted.

Web Site - In 2007 the Historic Landmarks Board created its own section on the City's web site (see www.forestgrove-or.gov and find the link under Quick Links on the left). This is a content-rich site that answers most of the questions that newcomers and experienced

residents alike would have, archives useful information and provides some helpful links. The "Walking Tour" link (developed by the Friends) points to a detailed map and provides a wealth of information about homes and history.

Design Guidelines - The Landmarks Board has published a major document (on the web site) that provides specific suggestions when restoring or contemplating changes for different parts of historic buildings, such as porches, landscaping, roofs, exteriors, doors and windows, outbuildings, and others. These guidelines were reviewed by the Planning Commission, who recommended we take the next step of reformatting them to more closely parallel building codes so homeowners can more easily relate to their specific project.



Eric Stewart. Photo courtesy

First HLB Newsletter, Spring 1996

in 1998 and has been further refined for each of the historic district nominations. This resulted in a huge paper database that is archived at City Hall, and a computer database version that was created by the Friends of Historic Forest Grove (FHFG), with no access at the present time. Over 300 properties have been scrutinized, some have been deemed too marginal to designate, but 156 are currently listed on our own local register, which can be viewed at City Hall (Community Planning Department, James Reitz).

Certified Local Government Approval - There are both national and state programs to coordinate and drive our preservation programs, and one that the State, via the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), sponsors is the Certified Local Government (CLG) program, designed to add a level of professionalism and legality to local preservation efforts. In March 1996 Forest Grove became the first in Washington County and the 14th in Oregon to be designated a CLG, while today that number has expanded to 37 and is growing. Through this program, Forest Grove has received many funding grants that allowed us to retain professional consultants to develop our historic district plans

The City of FOREST GROVE

Monday, August 30, 2010

GOVERNMENT QUICK LINKS

City Code
Citizen Boards & Commissions
Citizen Comment Form
Comp Plan Update
Contact Directory
Employment Opportunities
Meeting Calendar
Public Comment
Historic Landmarks Board Website
Public Arts Commission Website

Search Forest Grove...

GO

Budget Committee

Committee for Citizen Involvement

Community Forestry Commission

Economic Development Commission

Historic Landmarks Board

Board Members

Calendar

Grant Application

Historic District Design Guidelines

Historic Neighborhoods

History


GOVERNMENT
WHO YOU NEED


CITY SERVICES
YOUR RESOURCES


RESIDENTS
YOUR LOCAL SCENE


VISITORS
YOU ARE WELCOME


HISTORIC LANDMARKS BOARD

Eric Stewart – Eric Stewart was a local resident who passed away in the mid-1990s but in the years since he moved here in 1982 he had a personal mission to collect photos, slides, articles and newspaper clippings about Forest Grove. Upon his passing his wife, Thalia, donated his collection to the Library, and a large effort is nearly complete to catalog his collection and make it publicly available. Thalia also sponsored a significant and professionally done decade-by-decade

Michelle Dennis, Rick Read, Committee to Preserve the AT Smith property, Bill Drew, Monty Smith, Mike and Brian McMenamin (for Grand Lodge), Kimberli Fitzgerald (historic preservationist), and the AT Smith implementation and funding committee.

Historic Style Street Signs – with the creation of historic districts, new signs were developed to mark the districts and to reinforce the historic nature of the area.

Friends of Historic Forest Grove (FHFG) – Formed shortly after the Historic Landmarks Board, the Friends of Historic Forest Grove is a 501(c)(3) public charity that was organized on volunteer effort to document the history of the area, prepare educational programs for classroom, civic, and public presentations and produce annual events on topics of historical interest such as a spring garden tour and a fall tour of historical homes. The organization also hosts other events throughout the year that serve both to enhance cultural awareness and raise funds to support the organization's activities, goals, and projects. Two recent major accomplishments are the acquisition and beginning restoration of the very historic Alvin (AT) Smith house, and developing the photographic history book of Forest Grove.

LOOKING FORWARD

The next 30 years will bring relentless pressures on Forest Grove to accommodate a larger population, expand employment opportunities, add to our road system, perhaps tie into light rail, and cope with our natural realities such as storms, earthquakes, termites, rot and aging structures. Preserving historic structures will not get any easier, but it may never be more important.

As the Landmarks Board considers the near future, it expects to champion historic preservation ideals, offer educational help to home and business owners of historic structures, and explore creating more historic districts, including one for the downtown core.

poster history of Forest Grove which can be viewed at the Friends of Historic Forest Grove offices in the old Train Station at 19th and Main.

Eric Stewart Award – In 1996 a new annual award was created to recognize and honor individuals or groups that have made a significant contribution to our historic preservation. Nominees are solicited by the HLB, and a recommendation is forwarded to the City Council for approval and recognition. Recipients are honored at a Council meeting and their efforts are publicized. Past award recipients are Eric Stewart, Gladys Haynes, Mary Jo Morelli, Friends of Historic Forest Grove, Edwin Day, FNWP (Bob McKee), Dale Mitchelltree Architects, Evergreen Pacific Construction (Jim Rowley),



The Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board Grant Program

Is your house on our local register? If it is, did you know that your house is eligible for restoration / rehabilitation grant funding? The Historic Landmarks Board has funds to help you with your projects. If you are planning any exterior restoration work such as restoring architectural features or if you have structural work to do such a foundation repair, we'd love to help. We fund projects up to 50% of the cost of the job per grant. Come see us! We can also help you find historically appropriate solutions to any problems you may have.

The Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board

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Preserving Forest Grove is a quarterly newsletter published by the Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board to help fulfill its duty of public education regarding the preservation of cultural resources. If you would like to be on the mailing list, please call James Reitz at 503-992-3233, or jreitz@forestgrove-or.gov.

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In this Issue:

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The activity that is the subject of this publication has been financed in part with federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, as provided through the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. However, the contents and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of any trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the U.S. Department of the Interior.