



Staff Report

TO: Clark County Historic Preservation Commission
FROM: Sharon Lumbantobing, Planner II
DATE: June 5, 2018
SUBJECT: **HST #2018-00002 BLAIR BUILDING: NOMINATION TO THE CLARK COUNTY HERITAGE REGISTER**

I. SUMMARY

The Blair Building is located at 1801 Main Street, Washougal, WA (Tax Assessor Parcel # 73810000). The site is being nominated to the Clark County Heritage Register (CCHR).

The Blair Building, built circa 1925 is a rectangular two-story brick commercial building standing at the northeast corner of the intersection of Main Street (formerly B Street) and Love in downtown Washougal. The Blair Building is one of the oldest buildings remaining in Washougal's traditional downtown core, has a high level of integrity, and is the most intact of all remaining older brick commercial buildings in the nearby vicinity. The period of significance dates of 1925-1968 represent the time period of ownership by John and Georgia Blair.

The Blair Building is significant for its associations with builder John Edgar Blair, who was active in commercial and political activities in Washougal; for its distinctive architecture featuring intricate, artistic, well-preserved brickwork; and for being a rare remaining example of early twentieth century commercial buildings in downtown Washougal.

Staff recommends approval of the nomination to the Clark County Heritage Register based upon the criteria in 40.250.030(F), and the Rules and Procedures of the Clark County Historic Preservation Commission.

II. CLARK COUNTY HERITAGE REGISTER AND NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES STATUS

N/A

III. HISTORIC NAME

Blair Building

IV. COMMON NAME

Blair Building

V. BOARD RESPONSIBILITY

Under Title 40.250.030 (D)(4), the Historic Preservation Commission has the responsibility for hearing and deciding on nominations to the Heritage Register.

VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

SITE

The subject parcel is situated in Washougal, Washington. The historic commercial core of downtown Washougal, of which the Blair Building is part of, is located north of Washington State Highway 14. The building stands at the intersection of Main Street (formerly B Street) and Love. Nearby buildings lining Main Street are also commercial, but are of much more recent construction.

The Blair Building is oriented with its primary elevation facing south. There is a parking lot to the rear which is part of this nomination. There is also a parking lot to the east, but it is on a separate lot and is not part of this nomination.

BUILDING

The Blair Building is a rectangular two-story brick commercial building standing at the northeast corner of the intersection of Main Street (formerly B Street) and Love in downtown Washougal. The Blair Building is one of the oldest buildings remaining in Washougal's traditional downtown core, has a high level of integrity, and is the most intact of all remaining older brick commercial buildings in the nearby vicinity.

The first floor main (south) façade has three principal divisions delineated by brick piers from the street level up to an outline of flush arches created by glazed enders. A full-width flat awning provides rain coverage. The two commercial spaces have large metal-trimmed display windows over concrete bases. The windows and metal-framed door to the eastern commercial space reflect alterations undertaken in the 1950s or early 1960s. On the second floor facades, there are casement windows, each having 24-light wood-framed inset casements, which have simple brick surrounds on the top and sides and red brick soldier rows at the bottom.

As is typical for a corner location, the south (front) and western facades are equally ornamented. The less-prominent north (rear) and eastern façades are constructed of clay tile and have the same casement windows as the south and west facades. The eastern façade has a central wooden door with a small arched roof above, and a mural of bear cubs with a buckskin-clad human arm reaching for them is painted over most of the façade.

The building is built out to the lot line on the south and east facades; there is a parking area to the rear. A contiguous parking lot to the east serves the building but is a separate lot from a legal perspective and is not part of this nomination.

A full description of the historic and current condition of the building can be found in the nomination.

VII. STAFF REVIEW AND COMMENT

Criteria for Determining Eligibility for Designation in the Clark County Heritage Register:

Clark County Code 40.250.030(f), states:

- “Any building, structure, site, object, or district may be designated for inclusion in the Clark County Heritage Register if it is significantly associated with the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or cultural heritage of the community; if it has integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association; is at least 50 years old, or is of lesser age-and has exceptional importance”; and
- “The property must meet the above criteria as well as fall into at least one of the categories identified in CCC 40.250.030(f)”.

Findings:

- a. The Blair Building is locally significant as it is one of the oldest buildings remaining in Washougal’s traditional downtown core.
- b. The Blair Building is the most intact of all remaining older brick commercial buildings in the nearby vicinity and has a high level of integrity, specifically of feeling, design, materials, and workmanship.
- c. The Blair Building period of significance dates of 1925 – 1968 represent the time period of ownership by John and Georgia Blair, thus making it over 50 years old.
- d. The site falls into four of the categories identified in CCC 40.250.030(f) (namely Criteria 1, 2, 4, and 5, which are:
 1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of national, state, or local history.
 2. It embodies the distinctive architectural characteristics of a type, period, style, or method of design or construction, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

4. It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the county's history.
5. It is associated with the lives of persons significant in national, state, or local history.

The property is locally significant under Criteria 1, 2, 4, and 5 primarily due to the building being one of the oldest buildings remaining in Washougal's traditional downtown core; being one of the most intact of all remaining older brick commercial buildings in the nearby vicinity; and for its association with builder John Edgar Blair, who was active in commercial and political activities in Washougal;. The Blair Building is a rare example in Washington state of a brick building with both a meat market and additional street level commercial space with second story rental housing.

The building was originally used as a meat market and butcher shop, which were once considered an essential business in downtown. Stand-alone meat markets began to disappear from downtown neighborhoods as the grocery business evolved into one-stop shopping pioneered by Fred Meyer in the Pacific Northwest.

VIII. STAFF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the nomination of the Blair Building meets all four of the criteria. Staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the listing of the Blair Building to the Clark County Heritage Register.