I. SUMMARY

The historic Nelson Farmhouse (Nelson Farmstead) is located at 12615 NE 5th Avenue, Vancouver WA (Tax Assessor’s Parcel # 117894-054). The property owners, Jason and Lisa Kemp, have applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior modifications. The farmhouse is listed in the Clark County Heritage Register. Exterior modifications to the farmhouse will be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission to ensure there is no significant impact to the historic structure.

The application states that there will be exterior modifications to include the following:

1) Replacing six non-original aluminum sliding and plate glass windows with wood reproductions based on the original design of the house. Two window options are under consideration which include a custom made window or a high quality wood manufactured product.
2) Construction of a small addition to the existing contemporary kitchen bay. Work will occur under the existing contemporary patio roof. A non-original door will be removed to accommodate the addition. A porch and wood rail will replace the existing concrete steps and landing.

II. BACKGROUND

The Nelson Farmhouse was built by Emanuel Nelson, an immigrant from Sweden, who moved to America and settled on 40 acres of land north of Vancouver in 1891. The farmhouse, which he designed and built in that same year, represents what remains today of the original farmstead. It also appears to be one of the last remaining farmhouses from the early settlements of the Salmon Creek area. The house is a good example of an early vernacular style farmhouse of the late 19th century.
Over the past 118 years, the farmstead has changed due to the development of the area and the alterations to the property. Much of the original Nelson Farmstead’s 40 acres was sold and developed in 1977 into the residential subdivision known as Woodcreek Edition. Although the land surrounding this historic structure has been developed into an urban neighborhood, the Nelson Farmhouse still stands with many original materials such as siding, windows, and doors. The farmhouse and the Nelson's history provide an important reminder of the lives of the early settlers of Clark County, specifically those that settled in the Salmon Creek area.

III  HISTORIC NAME

The Nelson Farmhouse

IV. COMMON NAME(S)

The Nelson Farmstead/Route 7

V. BOARD RESPONSIBILITY

Under Clark County Ordinance 40.250.030(G) Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Clark County Historic Preservation Commission has the responsibility for conducting design review of Register properties within the County and for jurisdictions with which there is a valid interlocal agreement.

VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The house is a two-story, wood-frame vernacular style farmhouse. It is an L-shaped plan with an open porch on the north side and a gable roof. According to the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, the style is considered an “Upright-and-Wing”, consisting of a one-and-a-half to two-story wing with a front-facing gable roof, and a side wing set at a right angle to it (sometimes known as the kitchen wing or ell).

For the complete physical description, please see the nomination.

VII. STAFF REVIEW AND COMMENT

Design Review Criteria:

The design review criteria are listed in the adopted rules and procedures of the Clark County Historic Preservation Commission (April 8, 2008). The standard used is that of the Secretary of the Interior.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:
1. Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure or site and its environment, or to use a property for its originally intended purposes.

Findings: In 1891 Emanuel Nelson purchased 40 acres for a farm and built the house. The structure is still used as a residence.

2. The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.

Findings: Over the past 128 years, the farm changed due to development of the area and alterations to the property, which included the placement of the aluminum sliding glass windows on three sides of the structure. The applicants propose to replace these windows with a more appropriate size and configuration that better match the original design of the house. The small addition on the west side is proposed to extend from the existing contemporary bay and be constructed under the existing contemporary porch roof. Staff finds that the addition will not include removing or altering any historic material or distinctive architectural feature. Also of note is that these sides of the structure are not visible from the street.

3. All buildings, structures and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.

Findings: The installation of the aluminum sliding glass windows to the first level of the west, south, and east sides of the structure and the existing addition to the west side already altered the structure from its original look and window configuration. It is not known to staff the original size and configuration of the original windows before the aluminum ones were placed. Guidance from the National Park Service on replacement windows states that the appearance of the replacement windows must be consistent with the general characteristics of a historic window of the type and period, but need not replicate the missing historic window. Staff finds that the proposed new windows meet the criteria based on the information available.

4. Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right and this significance shall be recognized and respected.

Findings: Staff does not find that the existing aluminum sliding glass windows and current contemporary addition are historically significant in their own right. The proposal of the replacement windows will be an improvement to the fenestration of those sides of the structure.

5. Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.

Findings: Staff finds that the proposal is treating the historic structure with sensitivity and is not impacting any distinctive stylistic feature or example of skilled craftsmanship.

6. Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications or
features, substantiated by historic, physical or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.

**Findings:** The existing aluminum windows to be replaced and the existing contemporary addition are not significant to the historic integrity of the structure.

7. The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.

**Findings:** N/A

8. Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archeological resources affected by, or adjacent to any project.

**Findings:** To staff’s knowledge, the proposal should not affect any archaeological resources. If an inadvertent discovery is found, it is recommended that work cease and the applicant contact the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation for guidance.

9. Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, materials, and character of the property, neighborhood or environment.

**Findings:** Staff finds that the proposed changes do not destroy any historical, architectural, or cultural materials of the property. The changes seem compatible with the character of the property.

10. Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.

**Findings:** The small addition will be connected to an existing contemporary addition and could possibly be removed in the future without impairing the integrity of the original structure.

### VIII. STAFF CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff believes that the proposal meets the applicable criteria as stated above. The applicant will be bringing samples for window options. Staff will rely on the commission’s expertise on which window would be most appropriate.

In accordance with CCC 40.250.030 and the Clark County Historic Preservation Program Rules and Procedures, and the findings stated under the design review criteria above, staff recommends that the commission approve the certificate of appropriateness application for the proposal as submitted.

**NEXT STEPS:** If the commission approves the Certificate of Appropriateness application, the conditions, if any, will have to be filled out on the Certificate and signed by the Chair at the meeting. This document will be forwarded to the Clark County Permit Center. If there are conditions, the applicant/designated agent will have to sign the conditions of approval form.
APPEAL PROCEDURES: If the owner/applicant or other interested parties disagree with the Commission's decision, an appeal to the Board of County Councilors depending on location of jurisdiction.

IX. ATTACHMENTS

A. Nelson Farmhouse Certificate of Appropriateness application and proposal packet
B. Nelson Farmhouse Clark County Heritage Register Nomination packet