

NOMINATION

Revised October 24, 1994
Revised November 21, 1994
Revised December 8, 1994

CLARK COUNTY HERITAGE REGISTER

I. Historic Name

Sara Store

Common Name

Sara Store

II. Board Responsibility

The Heritage Trust Board of Directors as the Heritage Commission of Clark County has the responsibility to review and determine eligibility of properties proposed for listing on the Clark County Heritage Register.

III. Statement of Significance

The Sara Store can be evaluated for its association with the growth and development of Clark County. It may also be evaluated as an example of the rural commercial property type.

The Sara Store is significant as a rare and well-preserved example of a rural commercial building, illustrating a broad pattern of historical development. The property retains integrity of setting, materials, feeling, design, and association. It is one of few remaining rural commercial buildings in Clark County.

Overview of Property Type.

As the forests were logged and converted to farmland with the prairies, small commercial establishments cropped up throughout the county. These establishments served the surrounding hinterlands, and provided food and supplies that were not grown on the family farm. The country store also sold products necessary for farming. They also provided goods and services to individuals who did not farm, such as loggers.

The rural store often had its genesis as a post office. Early records indicate that the

earliest rural postal services were usually located in homes. Population expansion during the latter part of the 19th century resulted in an increase in the demand for postal and retail services. Clark County saw an increase in population in part due to the completion of the transcontinental railroad to Portland in 1883. Natural increases also served to stimulate a larger demand for commercial goods and services.

The passage of legislation calling for Rural Free Delivery also had an impact on rural development. In combination with the "good roads" movement, the rural communities had the right ingredients for growth.

As communities grew, the demand for commercial goods and services caused entrepreneurs to fill those needs. The fullest expression of the rural commercial building often combined a post office, a multi-product store, which also sold feed and grain and later gasoline.

In Clark County these stores were commonly constructed adjacent to a railroad, such as those at Sara, Brush Prairie and Heisson, the orientation toward the railroad is evident.

The non-commercial use of the building, usually as a residence, is also a common element of this property type.

The physical features of the rural commercial building are wood-frame construction, usually one and one-half or two full stories in height. While the roof form, siding materials and window/door opening may vary from building to building, a storefront on the primary elevation is the most prominent character-defining feature. The storefront is composed of large, usually multi-light display windows and main entrance, which is often recessed. The storefront is usually shaded by a broad full-width porch. Accretions to the side and rear elevation are common and reflect expanded purposes of this property type over time.

For the purposes of comparison, one should examine the remaining rural commercial building in Clark County, including the stores at Brush Prairie and Heisson, as well as the buildings now converted solely to residential use, such as the Sara Store and the Fern Prairie Store. Wood-frame urban commercial buildings, of which there are five in Clark County, are not to be included in this analysis.

Sara Store.

The community of Sara is believed to take its name from Sara Brewster Packard, whose husband captained a steamboat on the Lake River. The family also owned land, including the subject property, and a sawmill in the vicinity. Others believe that Sara was named for Sara Emmons, the wife of the owner of a large logging camp, that was located nearby.

At one time the community boasted a sawmill and a cheese factory, as well as a school and the store/postoffice. It is believed that the store/post office was originally located on the west side of 41st.

In 1896 Packard sold land to the Lake River Trainway, a short line railroad established to serve the logging interests in the area. It is believed that the store building was constructed between 1897 and 1902 when county records indicate the property was sold by the Packards to George A. Larrabee. In 1902 Larrabee sold to George A. Long; by that time the property was valued at approximately three times its 1897 value or \$810.

Long only owned the property for a few years, selling in 1906 to Ellsworth E. Tower of Portland. He in turn sold the property in 1908 to A.F. Struchen, who is reported to have been the last storekeeper on the west side of the street and first on the east side.

A.F. and Ellen Struchen sold the store to C.A. and Ada Buck of Yamhill, Oregon in 1916. Over the next ten years the property changed hands several times:

- 1919 Buck sold to T.F. Snead and R.F. and Pearl Snead
- 1920 The Sneads sold to Lawrence E. Thorne and Peter Johnson; later that year Thorne sold his interest to Johnson
- 1923 Johnson sold to W.L. Hoff; later that year Hoff sold to Floyd C. and Harriet E. Klingen.

The Klingen's are believed to have made major improvements to the property, including constructing the house, which is attached to the store. The Klingen's also executed a lease with Shell Oil Company in 1929. In 1940 the property was sold to Verah and Pearl MacPherson, who owned throughout the remainder of the historic period. After 1952, the store was sold to Charles J. and Josephine M. Nickels, Alan W. and Dorothy E. Landerholm, Lester R. and Ida M. Stevens, and finally Leslie and Shirlee Olsen.

According to an article published in the **Clark County History**, the annual publication of the Fort Vancouver Historical Society, subsequent storekeepers/post masters included Buck, Tom Snead, Lloyd Klingen, MacPherson, Charles Nichols, Ida Stevens.

Architectural evidence supports the theoretical date of construction for the house portion of the building, which is believed to be late 1920s or early 1930s.

IV. Physical description

The Sara Store is located in western Clark County, five miles south of the City of Ridgefield. The building is situated on the northeast corner of NW 179th Street and NW 41st Avenue. Whipple Creek crosses the intersection from southeast to northwest; Packard Creek, a tributary of Whipple Creek enters from the north. The store/house and garage are located in the valley created by the creeks. Visually isolated due to the topography, the surrounding land uses include farms, rural residences and the elementary

school which serves the area.

The property is composed of two wood-frame buildings from the historic period: a combined store and house, and a garage. The store and house are believed to have been constructed several years apart and reflect two different stylistic types. The garage is a simple building, without any stylistic references, and is believed to post date the historic period. In addition there is a set of concrete steps which date to the historic period and provide access from the store to the school property above the bluff to the north.

The store/house are one and one-half floors and two and one-half floors, respectively. Both are gabled and covered with composition shingles. The store has a medium steeply pitched roof; the house is low-pitched. The store is t-shaped; a small gabled ell projects from the rear of the building. Porches shield the facade and side (south) elevations. The south porch served as the loading dock for the store; the porch floor was located at the edge of the paved roadway. The front portion of the porch is covered with a slightly bellcast hip roof; the underside is finished with tongue-and-groove boards. The side section of the porch has a shed roof; it is unfinished, the rafters are exposed. The front section is supported by plain square posts. The side porch is supported temporarily by angled posts. The house component is rectangular in plan with a single-bay porch on the west (front) elevation and a small shed roof attachment on the east (rear) elevation. The front porch is nearly flat. It is supported by chamfered posts and modestly capped pilasters.

Both store and house are clad with narrow bevel horizontal siding, finished with corner boards. The overhanging eaves of the house are supported by purlins and braces; the rafters are exposed on the house. There is a louvered window opening at the attic level on the north elevation.

The store is illuminated by several types of windows. The primary elevation contains large, multi-light display windows which flank the recessed entry. The entry doors have divided lights and horizontal panels. On the side elevation, there is one simple four-over-four double-hung sash window on the first floor and a pair of one-over-one double hung sash windows on the upper level. The second floor windows have lamb's tongues or rests below the upper sashes.

The windows of the house are primarily double-hung windows with three vertically divided light above a single-light sash. Large, fixed light windows flank the main entrance. Similar to the other windows in the house, those flanking the entrance are divided in the upper portion. The single-leaf flush door is pierced with small rectangular windows. The shed-roof addition on the rear elevation is illuminated with fixed lattice-glass windows.

On the side (north) elevation of the house, there is a battered exterior chimney.

The interior of the store consists primarily of a large retail space, which is finished with tongue-and-groove walls.

The living room is located immediately inside the main entrance of the house. The predominant feature is the fireplace on the north wall. Projecting slightly from the wall, the fireplace opening is surrounded by a header course of rustic bricks, punctuated by a three brick keystone. Similarly, a course of header bricks lines the side edges of the fireplace. The simple mantle surmounts on a single course of brick. The hearth of herringbone pattern brick is nearly flush with the floor. The living room walls are lathe and plaster. From the living room, the dining room is entered through French doors. The dining room walls are covered with paneling. The kitchen is accessed from either the living room or dining room. The kitchen cabinets are capped with crown molding and have molded doors. The end of the cabinets is finished with tongue-and-groove boards. A simple chair molding encircles a portion of the room. A hanging chimney, which served a wood stove, remains.

A handsome, molded newel post accents the open staircase in the living room. The stairs rise to the second floor to a small hallway from which the bathroom and bedrooms are entered. A former linen closet was removed to reveal an entrance to a room above the store.

Interior finishes consist of simple mop boards and picture molding. Window and door moldings are enhanced by a single strip of molding at the outside edges.

Alterations.

The store appears to have been substantially altered in the early part of the 20th century. It is believed that when originally constructed the store was clad with board-and-batten siding and had an exterior staircase to access the second floor of the store. At the time the house was constructed (c. 1930), the exterior staircase was removed. Historic photographs indicate the windows on the second level of the store building were moved together and the building resided. It also appears that the roof of the store was extended to meet the porch roof and purlins and braces were added, giving the store a decidedly Bungalow-esque or more modern/fashionable appearance.

The building has received few alterations since the historic period. The only notable alterations are the attachment of the shed roof addition at the rear of the house and the removal of a small warehouse attachment, located at the rear of the store. Due to its severely deteriorated condition, the warehouse was removed in the last two years. More recently the rotted side porch deck and posts were removed, to be replaced in kind.

Although all significant features have been retained, portions of the structure of the house and store are in poor condition. Water damage has occurred to some beams. Water has also damaged the siding on the north and east side of the house, because the hill has slumped against the house. The deteriorated non-significant features can be replaced with new materials without damaging the integrity of the building. Care should be taken to replace the deteriorated siding in kind.

VI. Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Sara Store be designated for listing on the Clark County Heritage Register. The property is significant as a rare and well-preserved example of a rural commercial establishment and meets criterion 1, 2, and 4 of the Clark County Ordinance (18.328: Heritage Combining District).

V. Board Action

On November 22, 1994 the Board of Directors of Heritage Trust, acting as the Clark County Heritage Commission approved the nomination of the Sara Store to the Clark County Heritage Register, with the proviso that rehabilitation should reflect the earliest documentable period when both the house and store were present.

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