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**CLARK COUNTY**  
WASHINGTON

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**COMMUNITY PLANNING**

**Staff Report and Recommendations to the Clark County  
Historic Preservation Commission**

TO: Clark County Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Jacqui Kamp, Planner

DATE: January 27, 2016

FILE: **HST #2016-00001, DESIGN REVIEW: Certificate of Appropriateness for proposed new lighting and signage for parking area at the Clark County Poor Farm (78<sup>th</sup> Street Heritage Farm)**

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**I. SUMMARY**

The **Clark County Poor Farm** is located at 1919 NE 78<sup>th</sup> Street, Vancouver (Tax Assessor's Parcel # **148084000**). The property owners, Clark County, have applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new lighting and interpretive signage for the parking lot (28,500 square feet area) on the west side of the Administration Building. The application states that there will be eight light poles proposed and that will provide moderate lighting levels to match the expected pedestrian traffic (See Site Plan – SP1). The lighting is designed to minimize trespass onto adjacent private parcels. The other request is for an interpretive sign regarding the Low Impact Development (LID) methods that are used to treat stormwater runoff.

In May of 2015, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed and approved the certificate of appropriateness for the proposed new parking lot and landscaping with the condition that the lighting and signage would come back before them when designed.

The proposed parking lot is part of the implementation of the site's Master Plan that was developed in 2010. Clark County received a grant from the Department of Ecology for the project. The site is also within the Highway 99 Overlay District, which has specific lighting standards for this sub area. The proposal meets that code criteria.

**II. BACKGROUND**

The Clark County Poor Farm and Cemetery is an historic resource located at the Clark County 78<sup>th</sup> Street Heritage Farm, formerly occupied by Washington State University. It was listed in January of 2013 in the National Register of Historic Places and listed in September of 2013 in the Clark County Heritage Register.

The property dates back to 1871 when a local resident who owned the original donation land claim settled a \$400 county judgment by deeding the county 100 acres of land. This property became the Poor Farm and a building was erected to house the poor.

By 1873, Clark County had begun operating a farm on the property to help address the physical needs of poor, homeless, elderly, and mildly handicapped men and women. Poor farm residents grew crops, maintained orchards, and raised livestock until the 1940s. To the extent their health would allow, residents were expected to provide field and housekeeping labor, and provide care for other residents. Rules were strict and accommodations minimal. Some of the farm products grown on site were passed on to the county-funded hospital and some were sold.

In 2008, Clark County resumed ownership of the farm property after 59 years as an agricultural experiment research station run by Washington State University. In 2009, an extensive public outreach process developed a Concept Plan which served as the foundation for the development of a Master Plan for the site. The community's guiding principles for the site identified in the Master Plan include: inspiring lifelong learning and engaging visitors in the site's history; celebrating Clark County's agricultural heritage; and building community pride in its past, present, and future.

As mentioned in the summary above, the parking lot adjacent to the building was part of the concept plan and master plan. The master plan also states that all stormwater runoff on site should be treated in a functional, educational and artistic way. The master plan also states that any new lighting should minimize night light pollution, incorporate low-level lighting with no direct beam illumination leaving the site, and research alternate power sources as appropriate. The lighting standards for this site, require that parking lot lighting fixtures shall be non-glare and mounted no more than 25 feet above ground, with lower fixtures preferable so as to maintain a human scale. The proposal is for a 20 foot pole lights, so below the 25 foot maximum.

### **III HISTORIC NAME**

Clark County Poor Farm

### **IV. COMMON NAME(S)**

78<sup>th</sup> Street Heritage Farm

### **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 Clark County Poor Farm historic property includes approximately 99 acres in the Hazel Dell vicinity between NE 78<sup>th</sup> and NE 68<sup>th</sup> Streets to the north and south and between NE 19<sup>th</sup> and NE 24<sup>th</sup> Avenues to the east and west, approximately 0.5 miles east of Highway 99 and 0.7 miles east of Interstate 5. Hazel Dell is a community of around 19,500 people, located approximately four miles north of Vancouver in unincorporated Clark County, although the Poor Farm site has a

Vancouver address and zip code.<sup>1</sup> The property is comprised of two separate tax lots that are all currently owned by Clark County: the 78.92 acre lot which contains all Poor Farm and Experiment Station resources, the bulk of the farm landscape, and the cemetery near the southwest corner of the property, and the 20 acre Hazel Dell Park at the southeast corner of the property.

**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:** As is stated in the Master Plan, "the site has been envisioned as an important neighborhood gathering place that builds community pride. Year-round, community members of all ages will take advantage of the site's many agricultural and educational amenities. Residents will walk, bike, use public transportation and drive to the site to participate in community gardening, farming, and educational programs; learn about the site's history, and enjoy nature and views of Mt. St. Helens, Mt. Adams and Mt. Hood."

Additional parking with lighting and educational interpretive signage is important to accommodate the visitors for the site and part of the master plan developed by the Heritage Farm advisory council. The proposed lighting and interpretive sign seem to be compatible with the property.

- 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:** The installation of the parking lot lights and interpretive sign for the approved parking lot should not affect the original qualities of the site, but are necessary for safety and education for public use.

- 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:** N/A

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "Hazel Dell CDP, Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010," Demographic Profile Data, 2010.  
[http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC\\_10\\_DP\\_DPDP1&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_DP_DPDP1&prodType=table)  
(Accessed April 19, 2012)

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:** N/A

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

**Findings:** N/A

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:** N/A

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:** An archaeological pre-determination has been completed by SWCA Environmental Consultants. It indicates that no archaeological items were found and that no further archaeological work is recommended.

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 does not find that the proposed parking lot lighting and interpretive sign destroys any historical, architectural or cultural materials.

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:** N/A

## **VIII. STAFF CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff believes that the proposal meets the applicable criteria as stated above.

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 Commissioners depending on location of jurisdiction.

## **IX. ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Clark County Poor Farm (78<sup>th</sup> Street Heritage Farm) Certificate of Appropriateness application and proposal
- B. May 5, 2015 Clark County Historic Preservation Commission Decision on Parking Lot review
- C. 2010 78<sup>th</sup> Street Heritage Farm Master Plan
- D. 2013 Clark County Poor Farm Clark County Heritage Register Staff Report and Nomination packet