



proud past, promising future

CLARK COUNTY  
WASHINGTON

---

## COMMUNITY PLANNING

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

TO: Clark County Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Jacqui Kamp, Planner

DATE: August 30, 2016

FILE: **HST #2016-00001, DESIGN REVIEW: Certificate of Appropriateness for proposed educational signage for compost demonstration site at the Clark County Poor Farm (78<sup>th</sup> Street Heritage Farm)**

---

#### I. SUMMARY

The historic **Clark County Poor Farm**, also known as the 78<sup>th</sup> Street Heritage 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 interpretive/educational signage for the Composting Demonstration Site at the farm. The farm is listed in the Clark County Heritage Register. As the agricultural landscape conveys the historic significance of the property's association with welfare support and agricultural development throughout its use as the Clark County Poor Farm (1913-1943), and the Southwestern Washington Experiment Station (1943-1966), elements added to the landscape will be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission to ensure there is no significant impact to the historic site.

The application states that there will be twelve signs in total. The series include one *Composting Demonstration Site* sign identifying the site; one *Outdoor Main Interpretive Sign* (Introduction to Composting Cycle) and ten "*Shovel Face*" signs (see application for design features of proposed signs). The signs are designed for self-guided tours that provide information about composting techniques. There will also be workshops at the farm presented by the Clark County Master Composter Recycler Program for people that want a classroom and hands-on experience.

The proposed signage will be located south of the administration building and just north of the orchard as shown on the *Demonstration Site and Campus Location* photo in the application. The compost station and its signage is part of the implementation of the site's Master Plan that was developed in 2010. As stated in the Master Plan: "In addition to the historic features and community gathering venues the 78th Street/WSU property will provide, this site also offers an exciting opportunity to educate visitors about sustainable design and environmental stewardship.

## **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 master plan envisioned the site to be a place where visitors not only can learn about the history of the site, but also learn about sustainable design and agriculture and environmental stewardship.

## **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 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."

The nomination states, "the agricultural landscape and associated buildings and sites convey the historic significance of the property's association with welfare support and agricultural development throughout its use as the Clark County Poor Farm (1913-1943), and the Southwestern Washington Experiment Station (1943-1966)."

Reviewing the proposed signage proposal submitted, staff does not find that the signage series for the compost station significantly impacts the historic landscape. The demonstration site seems to be a compatible use for 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 educational/interpretive signs will not remove or alter any historic material and it doesn't appear that they will destroy the significant setting and feeling of the historic landscape.

- 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.**

---

<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)

**Findings:** Staff does not believe that the installation of the proposed educational signs significantly alters the historic landscape and site.

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:** To staff's knowledge, the proposed signs should not affect any archaeological resources.

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 compost educational signs destroy any historical, architectural or cultural materials 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:** 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 Co-councilors 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. 2013 Clark County Poor Farm Clark County Heritage Register Nomination packet
- C. 2010 78<sup>th</sup> Street Heritage Farm Master Plan