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CLARK COUNTY
WASHINGTON

COMMUNITY PLANNING

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

TO: Clark County Historic Preservation Commission

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DATE: September 26, 2016

FILE: **HST #2016-00003, DESIGN REVIEW: Certificate of Appropriateness for proposed exterior modifications at the Nelson Farmhouse (12615 NE 5th Avenue, Vancouver WA)**

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 site.

The application states that there will be exterior modifications, including:

- 1) Removal of the attached garden shed.
- 2) Removal of the attached plumbing chase.
- 3) Installation of new detached garden shed.

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 a vernacular Greek Revival 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, many 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 Greek Revival style farmhouse. It is an L-shaped plan with an open porch on the north side and a gable roof.

The exterior is sheathed with lapped siding between corner boards. The house has a plain frieze under plain boxed eaves with molding at the soffit. Simple molded cornice with returns are located on the gable ends.

The windows are framed, with double hung sash 1-over-1 lights. Decorative carvings are located under each double hung window.

The house is sitting on the original brick foundation under a mud sill bottom plate with balloon wood framing to the roof line.

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: The attached garden shed and plumbing chase was not part of the original historic structure, nor is it mentioned in the nomination. Removal of these two elements will allow the owners to remove dry rot that is already affecting the exterior siding of the garden shed. Removing this attached shed and plumbing chase should prevent further water damage from affecting the main historic structure. The proposed detached garden shed will provide the necessary storage in place of the attached shed. The proposed location appears to have minimal visual impact from the street.

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: As stated before, the attached garden shed and plumbing chase are not original to the building. The attached shed is causing potential damage to the original historic materials of the house. If the garden shed and plumbing chase are removed, the owners will undertake work to repair and preserve the siding and two windows on the main structure and, if needed, replace the siding with custom milled profile and exterior paint to match the rest of the house. This proposed exterior modification would return the historic structure closer to its original condition.

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: Staff does not believe that the removal of the attached garden shed and plumbing chase significantly alter the historic site. The design of the new detached garden shed is sympathetic to the design of the main house in that it is all wood construction with a gabled roof and double barn style locking door, with shingles and exterior paint that will match the main house. The siting of a new detached garden shed is discrete and screened by trees.

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: The attached garden shed and plumbing chase were not originally part of the historic main structure. They were improperly installed, leading to water damage and dry rot. Staff does not believe that the materials and construction have historic significance in their own right.

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: The owners have stated in their proposal that if damage has been done to the main structure once the shed and plumbing chase are removed, they will repair and preserve the siding, windows and trim to match the existing components. The owners proposed the following repair and preservation components: siding replacement with custom milled profile to match the original siding on the house, repair of two small windows including flashing and trim to match the original windows, exterior painting to match the rest of the house.

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 removal of the garden shed and plumbing chase and addition of a detached garden 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 changes 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: The addition of the detached garden shed on the site can easily be removed in the future without impairing the integrity of the existing main structure and its landscape.

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 Councilors depending on location of jurisdiction.

IX. ATTACHMENTS

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