

# MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** September 28, 2022  
**TO:** Historic Landmarks Committee Members  
**FROM:** Heather Richards, Community Development Director  
**SUBJECT:** Public Testimony for HL 6-22, HL 7-22, HL 8-22, and DDR 2-22, Gwendolyn Hotel  
(Received 9.21.22 – 9.28.22)

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Historic Landmarks Committee Members,

Following is the public testimony that has been received for the three Certificates of Approval for Demolition for the historic resources at 609, 611, and 619 NE Third Street, and the Certificate of Approval for New Construction for the Gwendolyn Hotel project since September 21, 2022.

**Public Testimony:**

- Sylla McClellan, 09.21.22
- Meg and Zach Hixson, 09.22.22
- Sharon Julin, 09.25.22
- Daniel Kiser, 09.27.22
- Carol Dinger, 09.28.22
- Carol Paddock, 09.28.22
- Katherine Huit, 09.28.22
- Jeb Bladine, 09.28.22
- Practice Hospitality, 09.28.22
- Kellie Peterson, 09.28.22
- JP and Ames Bierly, 09.28.22
- Nathan Coopridner, 09.28.22

**From:** [Sylla McClellan](#)  
**To:** [Heather Richards](#)  
**Subject:** Comments for Historic Landmarks Committee  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 21, 2022 3:24:04 PM

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**This message originated outside of the City of McMinnville.**

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Dear Members of the Historic Landmarks Committee,

I write regarding your pending meeting where you will address the demolition request for 609, 611 and 619 NE Third Street (HL 6-22, 7-22, 8-22).

I recognize that none of these structures are listed individually on the National Register of properties. All three sites have been significantly altered and are no longer considered "distinctive" within our local Historic Register Inventory.

However, I urge caution as you consider permitting the demolition of these buildings.

Third Street enjoys a variety of architectural styles that add to its charm. I'm in no way opposed to a modern interpretation of a turn-of-the-last century vernacular, but I'm less excited by it if it exists at the loss of existing buildings who already possess their own contribution to the general theme of downtown.

I am also very concerned by the possibility of setting a precedence. No doubt there are other property owners who are tracking this pending sale/construction project and may be considering their own buildings as a potential cash cow . I fear that we may end up of with a downtown that will have lost the much of its historic charm, no matter how much the architects promise to keep the new designs in alignment with the few historic structures that still exist.

I know that at this point it is posible that the horse may have left the barn (sticking with the 1900's theme here). I encourage you to establish the strictest design standards that you can, and then hold developers accountable.

Thank you for your service, I appreciate your thoughtful consideration on this matter.

**Sylla McClellan**, owner, *Third Street Books* and *Third Street* property owner of 320 NE Third Street and 512 NE Third Street.  
*she/her*

Third Street Books  
320 NE Third Street  
McMinnville, OR 97128

tel: 503.472.7786

web: [thirdstreetbooks.com](http://thirdstreetbooks.com)

**From:** [Meg Hixson](#)  
**To:** [Heather Richards](#)  
**Subject:** Gwendolyn Hotel  
**Date:** Thursday, September 22, 2022 8:44:46 AM

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**This message originated outside of the City of McMinnville.**

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Good Morning Heather and Historic Landmarks Committee,

We are writing to oppose the demolition of the three historic buildings (609, 611 & 619 Ne 3rd Street) to build the Gwendolyn Hotel.

While we are not opposed to change or progress happening in our town, we feel we will lose the charm and quaintness that is 3rd Street by replacing those buildings with a project of that scale.

Owning a business downtown, we have the pleasure of talking to so many locals and visitors alike, that consistently comment on the small town feel of historic 3rd Street and how refreshing it is that our community has maintained the historic feel.

We are not like anywhere else. We want to keep McMinnville unique in that way. If those buildings are torn down, we will begin to lose that special feeling here.

Kind regards,  
Meg and Zach Hixson

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Left by West  
512 NE 3rd St.  
McMinnville, OR 97128

**instagram:** [@\\_leftbywest\\_](#)  
**website:** [www.leftbywest.com](http://www.leftbywest.com)  
**phone:** 503.472.1754

**From:** [carrousel46@aol.com](mailto:carrousel46@aol.com)  
**To:** [Heather Richards](#)  
**Subject:** downtown  
**Date:** Sunday, September 25, 2022 1:43:56 PM

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**This message originated outside of the City of McMinnville.**

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Hi Heather,

I moved to McMinnville about a year ago because I fell in love with the downtown and the wonderful people. I visited this area for 3 years before I made my move. It breaks my heart to see plans for the destruction of 3 beautiful buildings for a hotel. I am so against this and do not understand why our city planners would approve this type of development of our downtown. This would be a hardship for all the businesses downtown. I hope the city reconsiders this type of development for our beautiful downtown.

Sincerely

Sharon K. Julin

**From:** [Daniel Kiser](#)  
**To:** [Heather Richards](#)  
**Subject:** Public Testimony on the Gwendolyn Hotel  
**Date:** Monday, September 26, 2022 10:35:59 PM

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**This message originated outside of the City of McMinnville.**

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Dear Historic Landmarks Committee,

As a classically trained architect and modern-day practitioner of traditional architecture, and having been born and raised in McMinnville, I feel qualified to speak on the design of the proposed Gwendolyn hotel.

Third Street is McMinnville's greatest asset and that's due to its continuous fabric of architectural character. The quaint scale of buildings and charming architectural ornament is the cornerstone of McMinnville's downtown economy. Demolishing buildings that make up that fabric slowly tears apart what drew people to it in the first place. But I also believe that Third Street is a historic district and not a time capsule. As a member of this committee, you have a unique opportunity to protect this asset and ensure that new buildings enrich it.

While it's a shame that both 609 and 611 E Third Street have had their facades modified and stripped of whimsy, I hope you will deny the applicant's request to demolish the three structures based on the applicant's insufficient demonstration that the hardship of preserving them outweighs the public interest in the buildings' preservation. But what I ultimately fear, is not whether these buildings are demolished, but what would replace them.

The proposed design for the Gwendolyn is appalling. The building's mass is enormous, absolutely looming over Third Street even in the rendering. Don't let the setbacks fool you - the building is still out of scale and incongruous with its neighboring fabric. The height of this building is so alarming that the committee should recommend the planning department limit the square footage of any one building in the district and lower the max building height to that of the Atticus Hotel (4 stories) and grandfather in the Hotel Oregon's rooftop bar. The visual whiplash of historic two-story buildings and a six-story block-sized hotel will only be accentuated when Third Street's trees are soon ripped out. It will take decades for new trees to mature and soften the streetscape.

The Gwendolyn's design is a cheap knock-off of a Third Street building. It looks like a Restoration Hardware that knows it's too big, but thinks if you put enough belt courses on it, it will "look" smaller. It literally looks like a stucco building got plopped on top of a brick building. The cornice of the red storefront, the brackets below the projecting balconies, and the crowning cornice of the brick and stucco masses are blocky and clumsy attempts at fitting into its historic context. The architects claim to have researched Third Street's architecture, but are just copying the Atticus Hotel and the next door KAOS building, both poor examples of modern traditional architecture with oversimplified bracketed cornices and gridded stucco. Is every new building on Third Street to look like the last two built? The historic district's architectural guidelines obviously need enhancing if they are producing buildings that all look alike.

This is not a building that citizens will be fighting to save from demolition in a hundred years. This is a building that citizens will *celebrate* being demolished in a hundred years. It's the duty of your committee to protect and enhance the charm of Third Street and while this proposed hotel may provide economic benefits now, it will do nothing to enhance the architectural fabric that is the cornerstone of that economy.

Thanks,

Daniel Kiser  
[dkiser@fergusonshamamian.com](mailto:dkiser@fergusonshamamian.com)

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September 28, 2022

To: City of McMinnville Planning Department attn: Heather Richards, Planning Director attn: Historical Landmarks Committee

From: Carole Dinger, Karl Dinger & Roxanne Stark - Business owners 585 NE 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.

Re: Gwendolyn Hotel

Dear Committee Members,

As business owners for almost 10 years, directly across from this proposed development, we are concerned about the plan for demolishing three historic buildings on beautiful Third Street in order to build a large new hotel and the impact of the construction on the business in the immediate vicinity.

After two years of Covid negatively effecting the businesses downtown, new construction on our main street, with two years of noise, heavy equipment, traffic disruption, and chaos will severely impact our business negatively as well as the businesses of our surrounding neighbors. We weathered the construction of the Atticus Hotel and then the Tributary Hotel over the last 2 years only to find ourselves again facing another hotel construction, that greatly impacts parking and walkability adversely on our historic main street.

I understand that the historic buildings may not retain their historic exterior but they are still in scale with the historic downtown and this hotel is not. A slight set back of the upper floors does not conceal the massiveness of this structure taking over most of the block. The buildings on "Oregon's Favorite Main Street" should be kept in scale with the historic center. If the developers do not think a more modest hotel is profitable they should look elsewhere. I appreciate the mixed use of the ground floor and the scale but feel that the entire hotel should not exceed the height of the Atticus and be more in keeping with the buildings they are taking down.

Parking is a serious problem downtown McMinnville and construction of any hotel should provide enough spots for the rooms proposed. Without adequate parking, it is only going to make the situation worse and will keep the day visitors away which the downtown businesses need to prosper and recover after impact of Covid. Any proposed parking lot access should be located on 4<sup>th</sup> Street not Ford St, which would only contribute to fewer available spaces close to Third Street businesses and would add to congestion so close to the intersection. If the hotel developers wanted to help the city's parking problems instead of adding to the problem, they should provide parking for both their guests and day visitors. A gesture that could contribute to more acceptance of their proposal.

This block of Third street has been going through changes and new construction over the past few years. These new businesses and those in the immediate vicinity, will find this demolition of one side of the street extending almost the full block, negatively impacting their business for the years of construction. A more modest building that could be completed in less time and that provides adequate parking for their rooms and additional for day visitors would be a more favorable proposal.

Sincerely,

Carole Dinger, Karl Dinger & Roxanne Stark - Business Owners

Terra Vina Wines Tasting Room

585 NE Third St

McMinnville, OR 97128



Dear McMinnville Historic Landmarks Committee Members:

My focus on the proposed demolition of three downtown buildings and subsequent Gwendolyn Hotel is on some of the demolition criteria, and a few other items I came across. Apologies for this scattered review; I simply didn't have time to be thorough.

The McMinnville Downtown Historic District is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, a distinction few other buildings hold of the 30 listed on the City's Historic Resources Inventory website. The application, accepted by the Register in 1987, lists 5 categories of significance. The three buildings proposed for demolition fall in the two highest designations. (Section number 7, Pages 22 & 23)

[national\\_historic\\_dist\\_submittal\\_1987.pdf \(mcminnvilleoregon.gov\)](#)  
[McMinnville Downtown Historic District 09/14/1987](#) (Additional documents and great photos.)

National Register of Historic Places certification provides a dollar-to-dollar tax credit for 20% of the cost of rehabilitation. ([intro-main-street.pdf \(nps.gov\)](#))

This is how the National Register of Historic Places describes our Downtown Historic District:

Scope & Content
This resource is located in Yamhill County, Oregon. Areas of significance include: Architecture; Commerce; Transportation. Architectural classifications include: Commercial; Italianate; Modernistic; American Renaissance; Richardsonian Romanesque; Queen Anne; Craftsman; California Mission; Moderne. The National Historic Places Register Reference Number is 87001366.

[Oregon SP McMinnville Downtown Historic District \(archives.gov\)](#):

## **Zoning 17.65.050B Demolition Criteria:**

### *3. The value and significance of the historic resource;*

I suspect this is well covered by community comments. And according to Criterion 7 below, the public interest must be a significant consideration in financial arguments for demolition, as well.

### *5. Whether the historic resource constitutes a hazard to the safety of the public or its occupants;*

Earthquakes. Your response to this is really important; it will affect the entire downtown as I discuss further below.

- What is the potential for an earthquake in downtown McMinnville—size, type, likeliness, time frame.
- How will the existing buildings fare in the most likely scenario? The least?
- Do the answers immediately above override all the other criteria?
- Does the city provide direction as to when a building merits removal vs. solely improvement for earthquake protection? This application points to a need to develop that information.

This committee would be well served by specific earthquake-related guidance saying, for

instance: The structure may be found still suitable for reinforcement if it meets these criteria: ... Or, The structure may be found qualifying for demolition if it meets these criteria: ... I don't think the committee should guess about this. A qualified seismologist and/or institution should be consulted in concordance with structural advice.

*6. Whether the historic resource is a deterrent to an improvement program of substantial benefit to the City which overrides the public interest in its preservation;*

I'm not addressing this criterion, but I need to point out a discrepancy:

From 17.65.050B of the zoning code:

6. Whether the historic resource is a deterrent to an improvement **program** of substantial benefit to the City which overrides the public interest in its preservation;

From the demolition application:

G. Whether the historic resource is a deterrent to an improvement **project** of substantial benefit to the City which overrides the public interest in its preservation; and

The city offers no definitions for program vs. project. However, a quick search through the code shows usage of "program" as generally relating to established city, state, or community plans, and the word "project" relating to specific development. No improvement program has been identified for which these historic resources are a deterrent. On the flip side, the historic resources are a deterrent to the applicant's "improvement project," just by pre-existing. That will apply to every building in the district. I would think the word "program" prevails because it's in the official city code, whereas the word "project" is a transposition error onto the form.

*7. Whether retention of the historic resource would cause financial hardship to the owner not outweighed by the public interest in the resource's preservation; and*

If cost is the argument not to improve the existing buildings, I feel a detailed analysis is required for your consideration. Only big numbers were given in the narrative, no breakdowns. We know that the existing buildings are not being considered in this project. Any analysis is to clear the way for the hotel. How did the developers decide that this place was a good place to destroy historic buildings? Simply because they were the ones for sale on desirable Third Street? If so, approval would be the death knell for the entire unimproved (un-earthquake-reinforced) downtown.

How do we justify the removal of three buildings for cost/safety reasons when there are others of the exact same condition that we retain? I would suggest there's an obligation by the city to mandate and assist with improvement of historic properties, on both safety and public interest levels, where active public use is occurring if the city has determined that earthquake potential is a valid reason for their removal. Saying that removal is necessary only with outside financial pressure seems a little specious.



Additionally, to get ahead of this, the city could perform structural inventories complete with repair costs and use analyses likely to generate acceptable revenues. There is so much success downtown, it's hard to imagine these buildings are beyond hope.

*8. Whether retention of the historic resource would be in the best interests of a majority of the citizens of the City, as determined by the Historic Landmarks Committee, and, if not, whether the historic resource may be preserved by an alternative means such as through photography, item removal, written description, measured drawings, sound retention or other means of limited or special preservation.*

If downtown's historic buildings really are in such bad shape, we should have more alternate means in the city's arsenal, such as facade preservation (or preservation and incorporation of other elements) as a minimum response to demolition.

#### **Barely a start on the narrative:**

I take exception to this point in the project narrative. If you look at the documents on the National Register of Historic Places website (link above) you'll see every building in the downtown district carefully listed. Perhaps the applicant meant to say they aren't separately listed from the District, but they are individually listed. The individual buildings are not any less worthy for being included in district documentation. The documents in the Historic Register comprise over 200 pages.

#### **B. Background**

The site is located within the McMinnville Downtown Historic District, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on September 14, 1987. The buildings proposed for demolition are also listed on the McMinnville Historic Resources Inventory (HRI). **None of the buildings are listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places.**

Gwendolyn Hotel  
Land Use Narrative

2  
Otak

Here I must again take issue with the applicant's contentions.

#### **Historic Integrity**

Per the National Register of Historic Places nomination, buildings were classified locally as Primary Resources based on the date of construction in or before 1912, **rather than historic integrity**. Secondary Significant Contributing structures were identified based on **construction between 1913 and 1937**. These classifications **do not appear to address architectural integrity or building condition**.

While I do suspect the district's buildings could use a reassessment, the above paragraph is not correct. The documents in the National Register of Historic Places actually show the classifications are based on not only date, but building styles, traditions, and structures representative of the periods (just below). And these periods are not arbitrary; they are regionally significant periods of development beginning with settlement and progressing through the impacts of utilities and transportation on community development. The classifications also take into account the type and number of alterations on buildings.

The properties within the McMinnville Historic District are classified below. The classification criteria for contributing and noncontributing buildings within the nominated district is based on building date, building style, type and number of alterations, building materials, building setback, and roof shape. There are 58 Contributing and 8 Non-Contributing buildings within the district.

1. Primary Significant Contributing: Structures are classified as Primary Significant if they were built in or before 1912, or reflect the building styles, traditions, or patterns of structures typically constructed before this date. These buildings represent the primary period of construction and development in downtown McMinnville from initial settlement in 1881 to 1912, when city improvements and use of the Oregon Electric and Southern Pacific Railroad service promoted new construction in the downtown area.
2. Secondary Significant Contributing: Structures are classified as Secondary Significant if they were built in or between 1913 and 1937. These buildings represent the secondary period of construction and development from the increase of city improvements and auto traffic.

## Massing

Even if the committee approves demolition, the massing of the new project is out of scale in the proposed location.

17.59.050A.1, regarding the two story visual height restriction at corners or intersections, there are two parts to this section: 1) massing should reference adjacent and nearby buildings in size and configuration, and 2) where sight distances are greater (specifically corners and intersections) visual massing should not exceed two stories. The proposal fails on both points. See the south facade rendering. The site lines in the drawing submission are taken from the sidewalk immediately adjacent to the building—not diagonally from across the intersection, not even from across the street. In referencing corners and intersections, the section is saying that where visual distances are greater, the building has more responsibility to respond to adjacent massing. (My opinion is that this section is too restrictive. I would say where adjacencies are three stories, as is shown that south facade, the visual height restriction could be similarly adjusted.)

17.59.050A.2, regarding historical 60' bays: The south elevation shows this section is exceeded, further contributing to the visual effect of excessive massing.

I must say I think this is a neat project, but I have big reservations about the complete demolition of the historic buildings. I am unconvinced in the face of existing code and last of cost information. I really think this could be the first domino in plinking through the whole historic downtown.

Thank you for doing this important work.



Carol Paddock, McMinnville, Oregon



The following 2 pages show the buildings in the National Register of Historic Places.

30 ADDRESS: 609 East Third Street  
CLASSIFICATION: Primary Significant Contributory  
OWNER: Frances Fenton et al  
5 E. 5th Street  
McMinnville, Oregon 97128  
ASSESSOR MAP: 4421 BC TAX LOT: 4500  
PLAT: Rowland's Addition LOT: 5 BLOCK: 7  
YEAR BUILT: 1904 STYLE: Commercial  
ALTERATIONS: 1933, 1950's (moderate) USE: Commercial

DESCRIPTION: This rectangular two-story stuccoed corner building has a flat roof with a raised stucco cornice line. The second floor consists of three bays on Third Street. The two eastern bays contain paired wood sash windows each with three vertical lights. The bay at the western end contains a series of three wood windows with three vertical lights. Each bay is recessed approximately four inches and each window is recessed another four inches and has a projecting stuccoed sill. The second floor windows on the west facade are identical in type to those on the Third Street facade but occur in a different configuration. This facade has four bays and the window series from north to south is three, two, one, one. A stuccoed beltcourse divides the stories. Two piers on the Third Street facade remain intact (one has been removed). The east end of the Third Street ground floor facade contains an intact storefront one bay wide with an original wood frame plate glass window with a six light transom and stuccoed sill and bulkhead. The west end of the Third Street facade has been cut away across two bays and the entrance recessed two bays towards the north. An entrance was installed which faces west and has a wood sash glass and transomed entrance and storefront window. A wood storefront was also installed facing south which has several openings. The south end of the west facade is also cut away and the bay is divided by the addition of a new pier. The three remaining bays on this facade are divided by piers which extend from the cornice through to the ground. Next to the cut away bay (north) is an original wooden storefront window with a four-light transom and stucco bulkheads and sills. The next bay to the north contains a five-light transom and plate glass window divided into three vertical lights. The far north bay contains a wooden garage door.

This building was constructed for Frank W. Fenton, a prominent McMinnville attorney, whose photograph still appears upstairs. A photograph dating from 1904 shows the building has exposed brickwork and a double row of dentils above the windows. The present cutaway portion was an enclosed storefront.

Prior to the 1920's, Tony Christianson and Russell Turner had a battery shop in the building. Dick Wilson and Charles Newman ran a Plymouth agency in the building in the 1920's. Odell's Garage moved to this location in 1933.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 22

28b ADDRESS: 619 East Third Street  
CLASSIFICATION: Secondary Significant Contributing  
OWNER: Francis Fenton Estate  
536 E. 5th Street  
McMinnville, Oregon 97128  
ASSESSOR MAP: 4421 BC TAX LOT: 4300  
PLAT: Rowland's Addition LOT: 3, 6 BLOCK: 7  
YEAR BUILT: Between 1912-1928 STYLE: Commercial  
ALTERATIONS: 1976 (moderate) USE: Commercial

DESCRIPTION: This rectangular buff and red brick two-story structure has a pedimented parapet with a raised stucco or cast stone cornice with dentils. A large projecting pressed metal frieze with modillions extends across the entire facade. The second floor is divided into five bays with each bay containing a pair of one over one double-hung wood sash windows. The windows are topped with a row of stretcher brick and squares of cast stone are located at each corner of each window. A low relief beltcourse divides the stories. The first floor transom level has been filled in with scored stucco. New aluminum framed plate glass windows and door have been installed in the recessed storefront. Located at the easternmost end of the facade is the entrance to the second floor. Two large metal posts divide the three storefront bays. The facade is buff brick and the sides and back are red brick. This building does not appear on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps for McMinnville until 1928. A smaller building, a garage, shows on the map on this site prior to this time. The building has been joined to another building at its rear, which faces Fourth Street.

29 ADDRESS: 641 East Third Street  
CLASSIFICATION: Secondary Significant Contributing  
OWNER: Joyce and Robert Morton  
ASSESSOR MAP: 4421 BC TAX LOT: 4200  
PLAT: Rowland's Addition LOT: 2, 7 BLOCK: 7  
YEAR BUILT: ca. 1923 STYLE: Modernistic  
ALTERATIONS: 1975 (moderate) USE: Commercial

DESCRIPTION: This rectangular one-story painted brick structure has a flat parapet with a corbelled cornice and six bays articulated by seven pilasters. Five pilasters extend to the ground and two end at the transom level. The storefront is divided into four bays with the western bay containing a large garage door. The next bay to the east has a wood frame plate glass window with plywood covered transom and bulkhead. The next bay contains a wood frame glass door with sidelights and a transom which has been painted out. The bay to the east has a wood frame plate glass window with painted out transom. The sill and bulkhead are brick.

The Bennette family had an auto agency in this building from 19-1977. The building does not show on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps until 1928. Yamhill County Tax Assessor records show 1923 for the date of construction.

# MEMORANDUM

**Date:** September 28, 2022

**To:** McMinnville's Historic Landmark Committee

**From:** Katherine Huit, Historian, CRM

**Subject:** Comments About McMinnville's History and the Gwendolyn Hotel Proposal

I'm a records manager and historian by profession; a sixth generation Oregonian and a life-long resident of McMinnville. I recently wrote *At Your Service: The Story of McMinnville Water and Light, One of the Oldest Municipal Utilities in the West*.

I know Third Street as the 'family room' of our community. Today, the Historic Downtown District, with its irregularly shaped boundary that runs from portions of Fourth Street to the north, Second Street to the south, the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks to the east and Baker Street to west, represents the foundation of the City of McMinnville.

Our town expanded from this Historic Downtown District. City street names memorialize the early settlers and later citizens who created McMinnville as we know it today. Third Street, which sits at the center of the Historic Downtown District, branched from a trail once used by the Yamhill tribes – local families who lived here before the pioneers. Then pioneers, including the Baker family – and John Gordon Baker – arrived via the wagon train that came west along the famed Oregon Trail in 1843. Baker later served as the Sheriff of Yamhill County.

The Cozine and Newby families traveled with Baker and located their farms and businesses in the Yamhill Valley at the base of the Oregon Coast Range. Samuel and Mahala Cozine's home anchors the entry to downtown at the northwest corner of Third and Adams. Built in the 1890s, it fell into disrepair by the mid-1980s. Local businesses and citizens passionate about their downtown's history saved the structure in 1988. They restored it through concerted collaboration and as a result it is now a symbol of pride that has housed the McMinnville Downtown Association since 1991. I was a student and among those who came before the City Council in the effort to save this McMinnville Treasure.

We're all familiar with William Thomas Newby, who built the local grist mill where City Park now sits, and later commissioned Sebastian Adams to survey the town, which became – for the most part – Historic Downtown McMinnville. The Baker, Cozine and Newby families are among those who built our family room - our downtown. Some are better known than others - such as the Wortman family, who operated McMinnville's First National Bank. Lesser known is Thomas White, a local farmer and restaurateur who'd lost his restaurant business, once located on Third near Ford Street, to fire in 1901, and became the new proprietor of the Hotel Elberton in 1905. Across the street, at Third and Evans, the Dubois family operated the Hotel Yamhill before the Mack Theater became part of the building – and the entertainment came from a cockatoo named Pie, who loved to raise the alarm on unsuspecting guests, crying "Fire, Fire!" while his sidekick Whizzer, the resident St. Bernard encouraged the hotel's evacuation with his excited barks. These events took place before my time here in Mac – but the stories are incredibly important to the historic context and development of Third Street, McMinnville.

I remember when Cows Street between Second and Third, housed the police station, the fire hall, city offices and at the corner of Cows and Third, the administrative offices of McMinnville Water and Light, with Milt McGuire and Mina Redmond at the helm. The old city hall, police and fire stations are gone now, giving way to a parking lot. City Hall occupies the former Courtemanche House, while new structures house civic, fire and police departments in spaces along Second between Adams and Baker. Water and Light occupied the old Bank Building from 1924 to 1964. McMinnville National Bank (not to be confused with Wortman's First National Bank), occupied the building from 1888 to 1905, when it moved to new quarters in the Jacobson Block at the northwest corner of Third and Davis. The building then became home to the Oregon Fire Relief Association (Oregon Mutual Insurance) until 1922, when it moved to its new building at the northwest corner of Fourth and Davis. Countless others occupied spaces in the historic Bank Building, operating as dentists, a printing company, law firms and administrative offices from that location over the years. All of these businesses add to the historic context of the Bank Building, which still stands at Third and Cows and today houses The Bitter Monk.

My dad took me into the "newer" bank building (it had become US Bank by that time) at Third and Davis. As a very young child, I was in awe of its classical bank-style interior, which echoed when one spoke. The 1897 Jacobson Block, home to the bank since 1905, gave way in the late 1960s to the newer structure and courtyard area that occupy the northwest corner of Third and Davis today.

Further east down Third Street, in the 1960s and 70s we find Delbert McKee, among other small businesses like the Book Retriever, operating from the main floor of the Hotel Oregon (formerly known as the Hotel Elberton) after the restaurant and other attractions of the hotel declined during the late 1950s. Daddy Mac, as his friends and family called McKee, tinkered with and repaired electronics from his small shop on the Third Street side of the building.

And, who didn't have curiosity about the hotel's upper floors and the desire to stand on the balcony of that building?

Time marched on, and by the late 1970s, the thriving commerce that once took place at the heart of McMinnville, had dwindled further – moving to the south and north along the 99W corridor.

They called it "progress" for the future at the time ....

Fortunately, a group of local citizens, concerned that Third Street as we knew it could disappear, created the McMinnville Downtown Association with the mission "to promote and enhance our historic downtown as the economic, social and **cultural heart** of the community". The efforts of the Downtown Association – and McMinnville's local government – came to fruition with the designation of the McMinnville Downtown Historic District in 1987. Urban renewal could have destroyed the older buildings, not to mention the historic context, which includes the quiet memory of the activities that took place here. The establishment of the Downtown Historic District brought a renewed sense of pride to the area. It also brought national recognition to our "family room", inspired the love of local history and attracted heritage-minded people (both locals and new-comers), who renovated buildings while keeping in mind not only the physical and architectural history, but also the quieter, sometimes untold stories of the people and businesses, which once thrived here.



Many of the structures one finds in McMinnville's Historic Downtown District have significant architectural value. They are visual delights. Others may not be architectural gems, but they have intangible value that offers a glimpse into an era of McMinnville's history. Intangible items invoke memories of place through storytelling by an old timer or an event rediscovered in an old newspaper article preserved on microfilm or in a family scrapbook. Both the tangible (physical objects) and intangible (the stories and events associated with the physical object) hold equal importance.

As time and success moved forward, McMinnville's Historic Downtown District had some setbacks, including the loss of the Home Laundry building to fire and demolition in June 1995. Built in 1928, it sat across Cows from the old police station, and operated continually until the fire. Today, we find an empty lot.

Another building, located at the southeast corner of Fourth and Ford streets, held a business that serviced cars and trucks from the 1920s through the early 1970s and later housed a web-printing press. Demolished recently, this site is now a parking lot.

Within the last couple of years, two structures – one that recently housed a great bead shop and the other various enterprises including an exercise gym and martial arts studio – gave way to one new building adjoining the old Jamison-later-Taylor-Dale Hardware Building, which recently underwent renovation to become the Tributary Hotel. R. M. Wade and Company operated a farm supply store from the building at the northeast corner of Third and Ford streets before the entrepreneurship of Evans and Jamison sold sporting goods and hardware out of the structure. Later, Harold Taylor became a partner in the business, eventually buying it and the building. Ethan Dale married Taylor's daughter and became a partner in Taylor-Dale Hardware. I frequently visited Taylor Dale Hardware as a kid. The store featured bins of nails available for purchase by the pound, carpentry and plumbing tools, sleds, snow shovels and more. It was like a museum too, with old tools and advertisements hung on the walls. The Jamison Building not only housed a hardware store through the years (a disappearing retail experience in and of itself) but also living spaces on the upper floors once occupied by the Jamison Family, a local doctor, and McMinnville's librarian, Mrs. Barton. I lived in the corner apartment overlooking Third and Ford streets in the late 1990s when Ethan Dale's son, Jeff, operated the hardware store. The apartments were wonderful craftsman-era spaces that included an atrium in the common area. When the hardware store closed, other ventures, such as the dance studio and a tap house, operated out of the building for several years before the acquisition of the site, which originally housed all three buildings. While the new, larger structure next door compliments the older hardware building architecturally, it falls short in other aspects. The site, which used to feature living spaces and three or more businesses that contributed to McMinnville's economy through shopping and other activities, now offers only a high-end lodging and dining experience that few locals can afford.

As a historian and local resident, I'm concerned for our community and the possibility of a trend that could wipe out not only portions of our Historic Downtown District, which we worked hard to create, but also its attraction and affordability to local residents and visitors alike.

As cited in McMinnville's Historic Preservation Plan, developed during 2018 to guide the City's efforts through 2032-37, "Historic preservation is about preserving the buildings, structures, sites, and objects of our past. But more than that, historic preservation helps us ask questions about our history and what to preserve from our past for future generations."

I ask you to consider both the tangible and intangible historic value of the Historic Downtown structures known today as the O'Dell, News Register and Bennette buildings. I bring to you this thought: Humans do not preserve material items for their beauty alone. Some items bring with them accompanying stories – and it is in the telling of the story that we find value in the item, which makes it worth preserving. In this case, the O'Dell, News Register and Bennette buildings tell the story of an era in McMinnville's history that began on this block.

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McMinnville's Historic Preservation Program includes four goals:

*Goal 1: Increase Public Awareness and Understanding of McMinnville's History and its Historic Preservation Program*

*Goal 2: Encourage the Preservation and Rehabilitation of Historic Resources*

*Goal 3: Document and Protect Historic Resources*

*Goal 4: Increase Heritage Tourism*

McMinnville's Historic Preservation Plan states, "McMinnville is already a destination and its rich history and built environment add to the city's appeal for tourists and residents, alike. Heritage tourism helps promote the city's history and is also good for the economy ..." and, citing a 2003 study by the Travel Industry Association of America, the plan continues, "heritage and cultural tourists [spend] more money and [stay] longer than other travelers."

Yes, it is true that heritage attracts tourism and visitors to McMinnville contribute to our local economy. But at what price?

In considering the request to demolish the O'Dell, News Register and Bennette buildings, McMinnville's Historic Landmarks Committee must review eight criteria.

*Criterion 1 Considers the resource's consistency with the City's historic policies.*

In 1987, McMinnville's Downtown Historic District included 52 buildings considered as resources with primary and secondary significance; today there are 48 and the demolition of the O'Dell, News Register and Bennette buildings reduces the inventory to 45. The O'Dell, News Register and Bennette buildings sit in the seventh block of Rowland's Addition. The City of McMinnville incorporated Rowland's Addition in 1865 and it saw growth as part of the post Homestead Act and end-of-Civil-War building boom era in McMinnville, not to mention the emerging light industrial areas in the community. While we don't find the three buildings proposed for demolition listed individually, they are part of the Historic Downtown District, which includes structures containing businesses that have contributed and continue to actively contribute to McMinnville's commercial, entertainment and transportation history.

*Criterion 2 considers the economic use of the resource and reasonableness of the proposed action versus preservation or renovation.*

Does McMinnville's Downtown Historic District need a monster hotel on Third Street, which does nothing to contribute to its history, character and charm? Surely the developer could locate a property or combined properties outside the Historic District for its ginormous structure, which could also serve its desire to create a gateway into the heart of McMinnville. Second and Fourth streets offer other possible locations for new hotels, without destroying properties that contribute to the existing 35-year-old Historic Downtown District, as does Three Mile Lane and Lafayette Avenue. Developing and constructing a new building outside the Historic Downtown District would still contribute to McMinnville's economy and bring in tax revenue.

*Criterion 3 considers the value and significance of the historic resources.*

Based on their construction dates, the Historic Downtown District designation lists the O'Dell Building as a Primary Significant resource and the News Register and Bennette buildings as Secondary Significant resources. All three served the emerging automobile industry, while also catering to McMinnville's light industrial businesses.

A 1902 Sanborn Fire Map shows residential dwellings on the block where the O'Dell, News Register and Bennette buildings stand today. Mr. Frank Fenton, a well-known and loved local attorney, had the building on the northeast corner of Third and Ford (609 NE Third) constructed in 1904. The building's original occupants, Tony Christianson and Russell Turner, sold batteries for early electric automobiles at a time when Ralph Wortman roamed the streets of McMinnville in his 1901 Locomobile, Yamhill County's first car – brought here from Portland in 1903. By 1912 we find a garage business in this location, complete with concrete floors, trussed roof and electric power. Business visitors entered an office at the southwest corner of the building and the business stored parts in an area on the north side of the second floor. In the 1920s, Dick Wilson and Charles Newman operated the Plymouth dealership from this corner before moving next door in the early 1930s. I'll return to them in a moment. Later, and most memorable for me, the O'Dell tire shop – a family business – made its home in this building and became its namesake. Mr. Charles O'Dell operated the business at this location from 1933 until May 1960, when he sold his interest to his brother Bill, who continued business operations until the early 1970s. The Bladine family, who have operated the local newspaper since the 1950s, later acquired the building and the primary use of the space evolved into administrative offices for the *News Register*, Online NW and subsequent businesses, including Alt Coworking.

Frank Fenton also developed the building next door, known today as the News Register Building. It is significant and noteworthy to mention here that Fenton developed many of the structures we know and love in the Historic Downtown District, including the building that used to house JC Penny at the southwest corner of Third and Evans, and with his development partner Walter Link, Fenton constructed Hotel Elberton, which later became the Hotel Oregon.

In its early years, the News-Register Building housed an Overland automobile dealership, then Wilson and Newman, who operated their Plymouth dealership from the O'Dell Building, moved to the newer brick building and continued operating their business until succeeded by the Fredricks Motor Company. Harry Fredericks operated out of the building, selling Chevrolet and Oldsmobile automobiles and trucks until moving to a new site further out Third in 1958, where a car dealership remains today. (It became Lucas in 1978, Doran in 1984, and recently Armstrong Chevrolet and Subaru in 2020.)

Many locals remember bowling upstairs in the News Register building, using the Duck Pin Bowling Alley (a miniaturized version of ten-pin bowling), as well as the meeting space of the local Jaycees (Junior Chamber of Commerce). *The News Register* and Oregon Lithoprint operated out of this building beginning in the mid-1970s, with the latter business printing the local paper, and other publications, such as Oregon's voters' pamphlets, out of the rear portion of this building. The company also connected the News Register Building with the O'Dell Building, operating its enterprise from both 609 and 611 NE Third for a time. I worked from this location in the early 1990s, selling display advertisements to my 'beat', which included the newly designated Historic Downtown District.

Finally, construction of the building at 619 NE Third took place in the mid-1920s with wood floors covered with plaster on wire netting and having no power at first. Known today as the Bennette Building, it originally housed another early garage, which catered to the emerging automobile industry. Cline Chevrolet, operated by Louis Cline, occupied the building shortly thereafter. In 1928, Cline sold a truck to Fred Koch Sr., for \$1,200. Koch used this truck – the first in the valley with an all-metal body – to launch City Sanitary Service, run by the senior Koch, and eventually his sons Ezra and Fred Jr. City Sanitary Service was the predecessor of Western Oregon Waste. The Bennette family began operating Bennette Motors in 1936, continuing this enterprise through 1977, selling primarily Chrysler products. Even after the Bennette's ceased operation of their business, the location still supported an auto shop (AAMCO) into the 1980s. During the late 1980s / early 1990s this building saw a bit of renovation and served as an indoor mall with different shops inside. It contains a small food service business today, along with an assortment of other administrative offices.

Noteworthy is the 'ghost sign', uncovered on the east side of the Bennette Building, which features Cline Chevrolet. Restored during the construction of KAOS Building, the sign is a wonderful part of the McMinnville Historic Downtown District streetscape.

None of the three buildings under consideration for demolition would work for auto dealerships or service bays today. In their earliest years, they simply served as show rooms, featuring 'sample' automobiles, which one ordered for delivery. As the industry matured, the size and weight of vehicles changed. The fact remains, however, that these buildings served as the gateway to McMinnville's early light industrial area.

*Criterion 4 considers the physical condition of the resource.*

All three structures under consideration served as commercial buildings with the primary purpose of servicing cars and trucks. The era of light automobiles is gone and the buildings currently house administrative offices, with the Bennette Building also featuring a local food service business.

All three buildings need work; however, they are not beyond repair. By addressing renovation work in stages, one could maintain the historic value of each structure and the integrity of the beloved McMinnville Downtown Historic District's roofline.

Noteworthy is the 2001 restoration of the northwest corner of the 118-year-old O'Dell Building, which returned the drive thru servicing bay to its original configuration as office space (mentioned under Criterion 3) using the State Historic Preservation Offices' Special Assessment Program.

*Criterion 5 considers if the resource is a hazard to the safety of the public or its occupants.*

On-going businesses occupy all three of these buildings. If the structures are a hazard, then – for safety reasons – the building owners should not allow any business activity to take place within them. Again, with a heritage-minded developer, the buildings could undergo renovation in stages, offering a variety of uses and allowing for the continued charm of this section of McMinnville's Third Street.

*Criterion 6 considers whether the properties are a deterrent to an improvement program.*

All three of these buildings have seen changes during the last 100 years, and some of those changes took place after their inclusion as resources in McMinnville's Downtown Historic District.

As mentioned under Criterion 4, the O'Dell building saw a return to its original configuration in 2001, which is a positive change. The roof lines of the O'Dell, News Register and Bennette buildings are different, which is part of the attractive nature of Third Street and this block. Demolishing them and adding one structure in their place will forever alter the appeal of that portion of the historic district. In fact, the historic gateway into McMinnville's early light industrial area will disappear completely.

Further, the first floors of many of the buildings in the historic district have seen alterations – as have the sidewalks and the street itself. The district, once lined with utility poles, now features trees and will soon see further changes, with trees removed, sidewalks altered and new trees planted. Change happens – it brings safer walking areas and other improvements, such as night-time lighting, which is a good thing; however, we must not lose sight of the City's policies with regard to historic preservation.

McMinnville is already a destination for wine-related tourism. We have existing hotels, nice restaurants and retail stores in the Historic Downtown District. These three buildings are not a deterrent to adding a new hotel to the city because there are other spaces a structure of this nature could occupy. The construction of a new, five story hotel building that contains food service and perhaps, a retail shop, does not have to take place in the Historic Downtown District to bring an improvement to the City of McMinnville.

Sure, the city could use more hotels and "90-95 luxury hotel rooms designed to accommodate visitors to nearby wineries and tasting rooms" would be welcome. That said, there are amazing opportunities in other parts of McMinnville, which need improvements. Future development of spaces on Lafayette Avenue, Three Mile Lane and even the north portion of McMinnville would all benefit from a nice hotel and the addition of needed conference and event spaces. Finally, a new hotel does not need to be located in the Historic Downtown District to generate tax revenue for the city, nor does it need to be located downtown to employ 60 community members, and visitors to the hotel could still eat and in Historic Downtown using McMinnville's mass transit system.

Additionally, the McMinnville Downtown Historic District has known underground history, and it is possible that this development could disrupt other, unknown portions of this history.

*The seventh criterion considers the financial hardship the owner might experience through retention of the historic resource, and whether it outweighs the public interest and preservation of the resource.*

New construction and renovation are both expensive. Those purchasing historic properties must perform due diligence to understand the maintenance and renovation requirements and costs. As mentioned under Criterion 4, the buildings proposed for demolition could undergo step-by-step improvements. Demolishing the buildings to construct one massive structure is not the solution. The proposed new development focuses only on catering to the wine industry and those who can afford a luxury hotel. It provides no historic value. While the surrounding wine industry is a part of the areas' rich agricultural history, and while it is a part of the experience now offered through wine-tasting retail stores downtown, it does not represent the entire historic context presented in the Downtown Historic District's designation other than being a part of its current history.

*Criterion 8 considers the best interest of the majority of the citizens in the city regarding retention of the historic resource and / or its preservation through alternative means.*

The number of buildings constructed in the early twentieth century is dwindling. As noted under Criterion 1, of the 52 properties designated in the Historic Downtown District as contributing resources with primary or secondary significance, four are already gone. A developer demolished two of the buildings, replacing them with one new structure, attached to the old Taylor-Dale Hardware Building. The property is no longer accessible by a majority of McMinnville's citizens due to the high-cost luxury lodging and dining business now housed in the structure. The Home Laundry Building fire of 1995 left behind a vacant lot, and the building demolished at the southeast corner of the Fourth and Ford is now a parking lot. Demolishing the O'Dell, News Register and Bennette buildings will reduce the resources of primary or secondary significance to 45.

To quote McMinnville's Historic Preservation Plan under 2c. Benefits of Historic Preservation, "Repurposing existing buildings and structures reduces the need for new construction and its consumption of resources (i.e., land, energy, materials). Furthermore, historic preservation recognizes the embodied energy in existing buildings."

Continuing, "In McMinnville, historic preservation has contributed to its successful heritage tourism industry. In 2017, Visit McMinnville, McMinnville's full-service marketing group dedicated to enhancing McMinnville's economy through the promotion of tourism, published a visitor survey ... 65% of those surveyed cited (sic) ... Downtown McMinnville as one of the locations they visited during their trip."

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McMinnville's Historic Downtown District has seen nation and world-wide recognition as one of the best downtowns in America. McMinnville and Yamhill County also enjoy the tourism benefits of an established wine industry recognized internationally.

I ask the Historic Landmarks Committee to weigh the points I've raised – especially as McMinnville approaches its sesquicentennial. Understanding how objects – the ephemera of lives once lived – embody the stories of our past, adds meaning to our lives, increasing the value of the present and contributing to the future we build. Understanding the historic context of McMinnville's Historic Downtown District will inspire our young people to value their community.

Demolishing three Historic District structures to make way for one large building is tantamount to a cancer with the potential of destroying the history – the embodied energy – we've fought so hard to preserve. There are so many other places in this city – some spaces only a few blocks to the east of the development under consideration, which could create the desired gateway into the heart of McMinnville.

Will you allow the demolition of more Historic Downtown District structures or will you help to preserve our history for future generations?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sources used to write this memo include:

- *At Your Service: The Story of McMinnville Water and Light, One of the Oldest Municipal Utilities in the West*
- McMinnville's Historic Preservation Plan
- *NR Nomination*
- *Historic McMinnville Website*
- *The Telephone Register*
- *The News Register*
- *Oral Histories in the author's possession*



9/28/2022

To: Heather Richards, Planning Director, City of McMinnville  
From: Jeb Bladine, President, Oregon Lithoprint, Inc.  
Re: Historic Landmarks Committee consideration of Docket No. HL 6-22

The city staff report with a September 29, 2022 date to the Historic Landmarks Committee ("Staff Report") contains some misleading information, including statements regarding the status of DEQ LUST Site No. 36-85-4001. The Staff Report contains information that may negatively affect public perception of property owners.

1) Ownership: The Staff Report appears to identify individuals as property owners, but individuals do not own the properties at the project site:

The O'Dell Building (609) is owned by Oregon Lithoprint, Inc. (OLI), an Oregon C Corporation. I am president of the corporation, not owner of the property.

The News-Register Building (611) is owned by the Bladine Family Limited Partnership, a multi-party Oregon limited partnership. I am a partner of BFLP, and president of the General Partner, Bladine Property Management, Inc., but again, not owner of the property.

The third parcel (619) is owned by Wild Haven LLC. Philip Frischmuth is the representative of that entity, not the property owner.

2) LUST site regulatory status: As the city knows, OLI has been working cooperatively with DEQ to obtain regulatory closure for the LUST site. OLI has kept the city up to date on these efforts.

The site has been sampled extensively over a period of years. The June 17, 2022 Supplemental Site Investigation Summary Report provides a condensed history of the investigations and cleanup at the site. The Staff Report implies that the residual contamination at the LUST site requires "cleanup." This is misleading.

The Introduction of the Supplemental Site Investigation Summary Report states, "The report concludes that the current site conditions do not present unacceptable exposure risks and that potential future exposures can be managed effectively with institutional controls, consistent with DEQ regulations and guidance."

The city knows that contaminated media management plans (CMMPs) are common tools for managing residual contamination at LUST sites that does not pose a potential risk unless the contaminated media is not managed properly during excavation or construction work. It is OLI's

understanding that the city regularly encounters contamination in public streets that needs to be managed.

After the June 17, 2022 Supplemental Site Investigation Report, a consultant for OLI prepared the July 20, 2022 draft CMMP as part of site closure activities. The July 20, 2022 draft CMMP states that it would be for use “during property development or construction, underground utility work, or other subsurface disturbance.”

The draft proposed CMMP includes detailed requirements for handling contaminated media encountered at the site.

In 2020, OLI provided the city with a nearly identical proposed CMMP for the LUST site. The city reviewed the 2020 CMMP draft and agreed that it was satisfactory and that a No Further Action determination should be issued for the site.

OLI has not collected any new sampling data for the O’Dell Building property since the city reviewed and approved the nearly identical CMMP. The city’s current review of the July 20, 2022 draft CMMP – as reflected in the Staff Report – does not appear to relate to whether the proposed CMMP is adequate to support a No Further Action determination from DEQ based on site conditions. OLI has not received any comments from DEQ indicating that the CMMP needs to be revised to address applicable requirements, and expects that a No Further Action determination will be issued for the site.

In August 2022, OLI provided the city with a copy of a communication from DEQ in July indicating that managing residual contamination with a CMMP would be appropriate and that compliance with the CMMP would be assured by recording a deed restriction for the O’Dell building as part of the No Further Action process.

3) Water quality: The Staff Report refers to concerns that contamination may be degrading area water quality. This LUST site has been known to the city for 37 years, during which time there has been much area excavation work in the area. At no time until now has the city expressed concern for the quality of area water. There is no “beneficial use” of the groundwater in the area, as the municipal supply is delivered entirely through the city Water & Light water system. The June 17, 2022 Supplemental Site Investigation Report addresses this issue. It also verifies that there are no impacts to surface water bodies.

Inappropriate

4) Low contamination levels: It would be improper to produce public impressions of high contamination levels on the O’Dell Building site. Please see the comment above regarding the findings in the June 17, 2022 Supplemental Site Investigation Report, which is supported by years of data collection and analysis. In addition, the July 20, 2022 draft CMMP states, “In summary, impacts



to soil in recent sampling events have been limited to petroleum hydrocarbons at concentrations that are consistently below the excavation/construction worker RBCs ..... With the limited exceptions of benzene and TPHg, detected analyte concentrations in groundwater were generally below the excavation worker RBCs."

We hope that the Historic Landmark Committee process will incorporate accurate LUST case information submitted to the city, and does not lead to inaccurate claims or conjecture about risks of contamination levels on the O'Dell Building site. OLI would like to reserve the right to submit additional comments in the future.

Regards,

Jeb Bladine  
President, Oregon Lithoprint, Inc.  
503-687-1223  
[jbladine@newsregister.com](mailto:jbladine@newsregister.com)



September 28, 2022

Hugh Development  
Attention: Yamhill County Land Use Board  
1619 NE Killingsworth St. Suite A  
Portland, OR 97211

To Those It May Concern,

On behalf of everyone at Practice Hospitality, allow me to express the enthusiasm and excitement we feel joining the Hugh Development team as the hotel management company that will operate the Gwendolyn hotel at the corner of NE Third and Ford Streets. We look forward to working with the community and experts Hugh Development has assembled to bring this forward-thinking project to life.

It is an honor to have this opportunity to contribute to the rich legacy and future economic prosperity of McMinnville and create a hotel that builds upon the heritage, traditions, and values of the city. We look forward to bringing our passion and hard-won experience to bear ensuring this hotel is successful and serves the McMinnville community and the Yamhill County region for many years to come.

Our team at Practice Hospitality brings over a century of collective experience developing and operating award-winning hotels to this project. Over the past 15 years, our principals have, as a team, opened, renovated, rebranded, or repositioned 20 hotels, delivered more than \$125M annualized revenue and nurtured the careers of up to 1,250 team members. We specialize in creating, launching, and operating lifestyle hotels and imbuing them with intentionally crafted, deeply resonate experiences and soul.

Our Hotel Colee, a Marriott Autograph Collection property, was ranked the top hotel in Atlanta on *Conde Nast Traveler's* Reader's Choice list for 2021 and lauded as the city's best Staycation by both *Atlantan Magazine* and *Jezebel*. We also opened the Drifthaven in Gearhart on the Oregon Coast earlier this summer, manage the Hilton Dallas Park Cities in Dallas, Texas and have five more hotels in various stages of development across the US. At our core, we are passionate about hospitality and creating hotels that have meaningful impact and elevate our fellow humans.

We look forward to working with stakeholders in McMinnville to ensure we deliver a hotel that speaks to their needs and lays the groundwork for the city's continued growth and evolution as a tourism and business destination. Please, consider my team and myself at your service.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bashar Wali", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bashar Wali  
Founder & CEO

**We manage hotels. Differently.**  
\*\*\*[practicehospitality.com](http://practicehospitality.com)

**From:** [Kellie Peterson](#)  
**To:** [Heather Richards](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony regarding Gwendolyn project  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 28, 2022 12:13:29 PM

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**This message originated outside of the City of McMinnville.**

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I hope people consider a longer term vision for McMinnville vs. just trying to block something that isn't geared specifically for them.

I'm an architecture nerd originally from Chicago. I love preserving old buildings whenever possible, probably more than most people here in Mac. I moved here in 2015 for a couple of reasons. I fell in love with the quaintness of 3rd AND I love wine. It's literally two of my favorite things together. That said I'm \*open\* (not necessarily supportive) to this project for multiple reasons. I've lived in towns where projects like this happen and it winds up being very much a net positive. More jobs, more opportunity, etc. McMinnville is generally quite cautious and considered with their projects.

Some times buildings or structures simply become too expensive to maintain or rehab. In St Pete, FL they demolished the St Pete Pier much to many locals' disappointment so they could rebuild it into something that is very much geared toward attracting tourists down to the waterfront but it greatly benefits locals too. That entire area is thriving and the livability of St Petersburg has increased dramatically since. What was once an automobile geared area with wide strips of concrete streets is now walkable and enjoyable.

Let's look at another "wine town". Walla Walla Washington has about 32k residents, just a little smaller than McMinnville. Yet their locals benefit from a thriving downtown core, not JUST one street. Live music and theater venues, more restaurants than I can count, so much to do. Why? They embraced tourism and put those dollars to WORK for their community. They have high end, low end, mid range hotels. They have plenty of historic buildings and many new projects all nestled together.

A new hotel like the Gwendolyn is obviously geared toward tourists, but those tourist dollars benefit McMinnville in many ways, not the least of which is via the transient lodging tax charged on each night in each room, driving demand for yet more local restaurants at all price levels, more local shops of all kinds, more local jobs, etc.

These buildings are going to be sold, that much is clear. The only people (corporations) that are likely to purchase them are people who will need to substantially change them or demolish them to build something that is to code. Both come at great cost, but demolish and rebuild is certainly cheaper.

The Atticus is a great example of projects being developed with architecture that fits in and will become a future classic/historic building. The exterior of the current Alt Coworking building isn't particularly interesting. It's the interior aspects that are stunning. The other two buildings are somewhat more interesting from an architecture prospect but that doesn't mean the new project wouldn't/couldn't be as interesting or better.

What if they were demolished to build an apartment building or condos? Would that make it more palatable? Either way, the buildings are gone.

--

**Kellie Peterson**

she/her/hers

+1 503 544 4781

From: JP and Ames Bierly  
Owners, Bierly Brewing  
624 NE Third Street  
McMinnville, Oregon

September 28, 2022

To: Heather Richards, McMinnville City Planner

We are sending this letter in support of the Gwendolyn Hotel project, which will be constructed across the street from our business, Bierly Brewing, at 624 NE Third Street. As a business that caters to both locals and tourists, we are excited for the potential benefits that this project will bring to our community.

After attending the virtual walkthrough of the proposed project with the representative from Otak, we believe that it will be a positive addition to the fabric of Third Street specifically and McMinnville as a whole. It's obvious from looking through the preliminary designs that much care has been taken to ensure that the project matches the aesthetics and needs of Third Street, from architectural facades to the mixed-use retail/hotel space and the addition of the underground parking garage. It is our hope and belief that this project will be beneficial to our community in two key ways:

- The east end of Third Street has been steadily gaining more retail businesses over the past few years, which has increased the amount of foot traffic that businesses on those blocks receive. However, foot traffic on our block has decreased significantly since Two Dogs Taphouse moved off of Third Street. We are excited to see the opportunities for retail spaces in this project and we hope and expect that this will increase foot traffic for all surrounding business
- As a hyper-local gluten-free business that has a wide geographic social media reach, we frequently see customers who have planned their vacations and work trips around visiting our brewery. When people write to us to ask for hotel recommendations for their stay in McMinnville, we try to recommend several options that span possible budgets and desirable locations. In just the past few months, we've had several customers who had a very challenging time finding a place to stay due to hotels being booked up for local festivals and other events. An additional hotel downtown will provide more space for tourists and other visitors, and the prime downtown location will enable those visitors to easily enjoy everything Historic Downtown McMinnville has to offer

We have heard criticism of the project from other community members, including concerns about the style of the building and the impact it will have on parking. We have seen that the proposed facade of the building will attempt to match existing architectural styles on Third Street, and will have several different sections in order to break up what would otherwise be one long and aesthetically-disruptive section of building. As to the issue of parking, in the current plan, the underground parking garage exceeds the city requirement for parking based on the building location. This will mitigate the impact of vehicles of hotel and restaurant guests, instead of placing the burden on existing downtown lots and street parking spaces.

We hope that this letter serves to share our support of the Gwendolyn Hotel project as well as encourage others to see its potential benefits. Thank you for your time.

Regards,

JP Bierly  
Ames Bierly

**Memo:** Public Testimony

Gwendolyn Hotel applications HL- 6-22, HL-7-22, HL 8-22, and DDR 2-22

**Date:** Wednesday, September 28, 2022

**By:** Nathan Coopridner

Thank you Historic Landmark Committee for your efforts to preserve and protect the history and character of McMinnville. And thank you for allowing me an opportunity to raise concerns I have with the applications currently under review.

My Name is Nathan Coopridner, I was raised in McMinnville and graduated in the McMinnville High School class of 1990. Although I now live in Portland, I return often both to visit family and to provide architectural service to clients in the Community. Projects I have been a part of in McMinnville include the Atticus Hotel, the KAOS Building, the renovation of the Brooks Street House, which was built in the late 1800's, and the rebuilding of the Roswell Conner House, known locally as "The Quarterback Princess House", after it was severely damaged by fire. I love McMinnville and in many ways consider it my home away from home.

The Historic Downtown District of McMinnville is one of those unique places in the world that people fall in love with. They want to vacation here, live here, retire here, start a business here and raise their children here.

What is it that makes McMinnville so special? When we are talking about the Historic Downtown, the character is in large part created by the 48 contributing buildings covering portions of 15 downtown blocks. Together with other features and aspects of the culture and place, these buildings combine to create the "spirit of place" of Historic Downtown McMinnville.

In the 1980's through the hard work and advocacy of local citizens, McMinnville realized what they had, and took steps to put important protections in place – knowing that leaving the downtown to the whims of building trends and market forces would leave the Historic Downtown in great jeopardy. It has always been easier to tear down buildings than to lovingly restore them. The community of McMinnville chose the harder road, and your hard work has truly paid off.

For roughly 40 years – brave civic leaders, property owners, and preservationists began to slowly chalk up one successful improvement project after another. New businesses came in to add their touch to the districts and activate the storefronts and streetscapes. And the City provided delicate nurturing of this process through infrastructure improvements and the enforcement of the Downtown Design Standards. Some thoughtful new construction and careful infill projects have also occurred. These projects have been very sensitive about maintaining the scale and the spirit of place, and never resorting to major demolitions.

This trend of following the purpose of the Downtown Design Standard is now being challenged, as the application under review proposes not renovation but demolition of all Historic Buildings along the length of one block facing Third Street, and replace them with an oversized building that is out of compliance with both the spirit and the letter of the City's Downtown Design Standard and Historic Preservation Code.

It appears that the case being made in this application is that the three historic buildings cannot be restored because seismic upgrade is too expensive. The applicant admires the renovations being completed across the street, but says that "the same opportunity for renovation for hospitality, commercial, and retail uses is not available to the subject buildings." I ask the Committee to consider: How can this be true? Of course these three buildings can be renovated. Of course options for change-of-use are available. The very renovations admired across the street all but prove that this is the case. These and additional similar renovations

occurring in McMinnville and in the surrounding areas over the past several years give much reason to believe that a one or two story historic building can be successfully upgraded, maintained and modernized, to allow them to continue to benefit the community for generations to come.

Some of the similar recent projects which come to mind are:

- The Tributary Hotel
- The Bindery Event Space
- The Douglas Hotel
- The Troon Vineyard Wine Bar
- The Mac Market
- The Old Telephone Register – (now the Two Dog Taphouse)
- The Block House Café in Dayton
- The Carlton Grain Elevator
- The Carlton Office Building, a 1916 brick building which was Carlton's first auto repair garage.

Each of these projects contained their own unique challenges and required creative approaches, yet each was successfully completed to the benefit of both the project team, tenants, and the community alike. In every way, restoring existing Historic Building has become the practice of the community, and the requirement of the codes which the community has put in place.

#### Why is preserving existing historic buildings important?

First and foremost, these three buildings were deemed to have significant cultural value to the community and worthy of preservation. They were listed and included in the National Register of Historic Places. Any modifications which occurred after that designation have been insignificant. These buildings maintain the same value today that they had when originally put under protection.

The value of a Historic District is not contained in the individual building alone, but in how the buildings work together to create the District as a whole. Many of the Historic Buildings in the District appear quite diminutive when compared to more monumental structures such as the Wright Building and the Hotel Elberton. This doesn't mean that the value is only contained the largest, most ornate, or impressive buildings. The value is in the rhythm and scale provided by all of the buildings acting together. The fact that there are many one story buildings facing Third Street is part of the Historical character of McMinnville. Knowing you are in a small town, seeing the blue sky over the building tops, having the sun penetrate into the streetscape, all of this is an indispensable part of the historic character of Downtown McMinnville. The experience is much different than that of downtown Salem, or newly built-up areas such as Division Street in downtown Portland.

This doesn't mean that new and large projects are not welcome in McMinnville. Of course they are, and they can contribute greatly to the character of the town and to meeting other objectives of the City. But when it comes to the 15 blocks of the Historic District, the scale and bulk of the built environment is determined by the 48 buildings which are in place. Any renovations or additions must meet a very high standard when it comes to how they compliment and reinforce the existing scale and patterns of the district. Unlocking the hidden potential in Historic McMinnville does not involve replacing one and two story buildings with six story buildings. It involves careful and creative approaches to updating and making better use of the building environment which already exists.

Yes this approach is more challenging, and to some it might not seem appealing from an economic standpoint. To those I would answer that there is not a scarcity of opportunity to build bigger, outside of the boundary of the District. Many of these locations are within easy walking distance to Historic Third Street. All of the benefits to the Community advertised in this proposal would be obtained if the project were built outside of the footprint of Historic Buildings.

As for activating this section of Third Street, the existing three Historic Buildings, with their storefront designs, are perfectly positioned to activate the street. And they can do so in the most authentic way possible – by embodying the history of McMinnville, and evolving to support new businesses that wish to beautify and activate the streetscape and pedestrian experience. There are countless ways to do this, and opportunities at both the State and Local level to support Historic storefront improvement.

As to criticism of these three buildings, and their appropriateness to McMinnville and the District: These buildings are the Historic District. Yes they each were once part of the automobile industry, and this is a wonderful chapter of McMinnville's History. The history of the automobile on Third Street is still important today and recognized in the Cruising the Gut festivals and in local lore. This History and these stories are important and should be preserved. Yes the past owners of the Bennette Building filled in the original overhead garage door with a matching storefront. This thoughtful renovation created an adorable and unique symmetrical appearance to the facade. This is a wonderful example of the type of thoughtful changes which can assist existing buildings evolve to better meet the evolving needs of the Downtown.

Smaller Historic Buildings are the irreplaceable fabric of the Historic Downtown. Without these buildings, there will be no Historic Downtown – and the economic impact of this to the community well outweighs the limited benefits provided by one new construction project. Larger, new buildings are appropriate in locations where they are allowed by the City codes that are in place. Even though we might differ on what buildings we think are most beautiful, there is no question that authentic Historic Buildings offer a value to the Community which new construction cannot replace. The old brick laid by hand over 100 years ago, the old timbers harvest and milled as a part of the local economy, the dings, scars and blemishes of time which speak silently, telling locals and visitors alike “You are not in a historically themed district – imitating historic buildings. This is the real deal. This is an authentic place, inhabited and evolving for over a century. Come, add your story to the stories that are here. Inhabit this place, in your own authentic way. Make your mark, and preserve the traces of those who were here before.”

In regard to the new building being proposed, I agree with the finding of the Staff Report which indicate that several of the requirement controlling the height, massing, bulk, and character of the proposed building has not been met. If revised designs or waiver requests are proposed by the applicant, it is my hope that the public will have further opportunity to provide input on those modifications as well.

Thank you again for your time and for your careful consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,  
Nathan Coopridier, Architect  
Portland, Oregon