

Request to Change McMinnville's Historic Inventory for the Property at 618 NE Third Street, McMinnville OR

FROM: Classifying the STRUCTURE as CONTRIBUTORY

TO: Classifying THE SITE as SIGNIFICANT.

17.65.030 Historic Resources Inventory. The McMinnville Historic Resources Inventory, compiled in 1983/84 and as subsequently updated, is hereby adopted and shall be maintained and updated as required. The inventory shall be used to identify historic districts, **buildings**, structures, **sites**, and objects for the purposes of this ordinance.

FINDING:

McMinnville's Historic Resources Ordinance and Inventory may be used to identify sites as well as buildings. The inventory should be maintained and updated as necessary.

17.95.030 Historic Resources Inventory

C. *The Historic Landmarks Committee shall base each decision regarding additions or changes to the inventory on the following criteria:*

1. *History. The resource is associated with significant past events, persons, organizations, trends, or values which were important at the city, county, state, or national level. The age of the resource relative to other local development contributes to its historic significance;*

FINDING:

Closer historic investigation has shown that 618 NE Third Street property can be considered a significant site, but not a contributing building.

The original building on this site was constructed circa 1911 by Sarah A. and James L. Fletcher and first housed the Standard Electric Co. That business which is first listed in 1909, was owned by business partners James L. Fletcher and Harry O. Wheeler. The business was then located on "Third Street between D and E streets". In 1910, Fletcher was listed as the sole proprietor of Standard, and at that same address. (Wheeler went into the clothing business.) The electrical supply store is shown on the 1912 Sanborn map and listed at that address in the 1915 directory. Shortly after moving Standard to 616 Third Street (now 618 NE Third Street), Fletcher sold the business to Oliver E. Vanoose, who was listed as a McMinnville Water & Light Commissioner, in 1909.

From 1913 to 1923, the Standard Electric Company was owned by Milton H. McGuire. The business was also listed as McGuire Electric during that period. When McGuire was hired by McMinnville Water & Light in 1920, he moved the business to 413 NE Third Street and hired electrician Howard Miller to manage the store. By 1923 Miller owned the

company and the name had changed to Miller Electric. In 1927, the building at 618 NE Third Street was occupied by the McMinnville Plumbing Co.

In 1932, the property at 608 and 618 NE Third Street was sold by the widowed Sarah A. Fletcher. Two couples, W. C. Hagerty and Lila Haggerty, and H.L. Toney and Pearl Toney purchased the property. Later, the building at 618 NE Third Street was incorporated into the adjacent Taylor Hardware business, which had been operating at 608 NE Third Street since 1918. The Hagerty and Toney heirs sold the property to the Taylor-Dale Hardware Co. in 1964. After Taylor Hardware closed its doors in 1993, 618 NE Third Street housed a coffee-roasting business, a shop for an adjacent furniture store and a bead shop.

In retrospect, the most notable figure to be associated with the site was Milton H. McGuire who, after he sold the Standard Electric Company, went on to become the superintendent of the electric division of McMinnville Water & Light, and then the manager of the electric and power division. McGuire led that division through major expansions and to national recognition until 1957. His stewardship is defined as “The McGuire Years” by that organization. The founding of McMinnville Water & Light and its expansion and continuance as a locally-owned utility was a key to the growth and success of present day McMinnville.

During McGuire’s occupation of this site, the building appeared as it did in the, circa 1920 photo, as seen in Figure 16 of the attached history report.

After that photo was taken, between 1928 and 1948, whether at once or in stages, the building had its east and west walls and roof removed. A new roof was built that extended to the walls of its neighbors on either side. A new concrete floor slab was poured, and the NE Third Street façade was replaced. Two additions were made to the south as well. Those additions were altered later to reestablish a stairway allowing egress from the second floor brick building at 618 Northeast Third Street. All that remains of the building once occupied by Milton McGuire is some of the brick-embossed metal siding from the original street façade which was recycled beside the rear stairway and on a large sliding door off the alley.

2. *Style/Design. The resource is representative of a particular style or a type of construction. The uniqueness of the resource or its quality of composition, detailing, or craftsmanship contribute to its design significance. The resource was designated or constructed by a craftsman, contractor, designer, or architect of local, state, or national importance;*

FINDING:

The current building has no identifiable style. The local inventory’s designation of the 618 building style as “Craftsman” is both ironical and erroneous.

Between 1928 and 1948, the building was completely rebuilt. All of the original materials and detailing were removed. The roof was removed and rebuilt to extend to the east and west walls of the adjacent buildings. Two additions were later made to the rear of the building. The street façade was replaced and reduced in height by 6 to 8 feet. The

stepped parapet and stucco finish is a clumsy attempt to imitate its neighbor to the east which is, in and of itself, is vaguely Dutch in architectural style. The original thin lined, tripartite storefront façade, with recessed entry, was removed and replaced by a heavy two bay, unbalanced mixture of doors, windows, and a bland wood panel. The current north street façade and south alley additions give the appearance of a hodge-podge of piecemeal, ill-considered, ill-proportioned, and under-funded work.

3. *Integrity. The resource retains original design elements, materials, and character with relatively minor alterations, if any; and*

FINDING:

The building has not retain the original design elements. The bits of the original brick embossed sheet metal from the original façade have been recycled as siding for the alley stair and door. The original façade, four walls and roof were completely replaced during the 1928-1948 era, and the building retains none of its original character.

4. *Environment. The resource contributes to the character or continuity of the street or neighborhood.*

FINDING:

The subject building façade contributes less to the street and the historic district than did the original. It detracts from its authentic two-story neighbor to the west.

5. *Consistency with the National Register Criteria for Evaluation as follows:*

- a. *The resource is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or*

FINDING:

The building is not associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

- b. *The resource is associated with lives of significant persons in our past; or*

FINDING:

The current building cannot be associated with significant persons in McMinnville's past. The site can be, and the original building could have been associated with Milton McGuire.

- c. *The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or*

FINDING:

The building does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, nor does it represent the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

The current design fails when evaluated by the current design standards and guidelines for McMinnville's Downtown Historic District as listed in Section 17.59.050, B, (3):

b. A bulkhead at the street level: **Sub-FINDING: There is no bulkhead. Half of the building façade is a three part, large vehicle door. On the other half of the façade, the area under the windows is distinguished from the wall finish above by neither its material, finish, color, nor design.**

d. A recessed entry and transom with transparent door; **Sub-FINDING: The entry is not recessed.**

e. Decorative cornice or cap at the roofline. **Sub-FINDING: There is no decorative element on the cornice to match the adjacent building at 620 NE Third Street of which 618 NE Third Street is a clumsy copy.**

17.59.050, B, (5). The primary entrance to a building shall open on to the public right-of-way and should be recessed. **Sub-FINDING: The primary entrance to the building is not recessed.**

17.59.050, B, (7). The scale and proportion of altered or added building elements, such as new windows or doors, shall be visually compatible with the original architectural character of the building. **Sub-FINDING: The scale and proportion of altered or added building elements, such as new windows or doors, ARE NOT visually compatible with the original building's architectural character as documented in the 1918-1920 photo. The existing storefront lacks the proportion, delicateness and elegance of the original storefront.**

17.59.050, B, (8). Buildings shall provide a foundation or base, typically from ground floor to the lower windowsills. **Sub-FINDING: On the existing storefront there is no base below the lower windows. The stucco wall finish runs down to the sidewalk.**

The proposed rendition of original storefront will add the foundation under the sill of the bulkhead.

- d. *The resource has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory; and*

FINDING:

The building has not yielded and is unlikely to yield historical or prehistorical information.

6. *The designation of the resource is consistent with the priorities described in the historic preservation plan.*

Goal III 2 McMinnville Comprehensive Plan

"HISTORIC PRESERVATION:

To preserve and protect sites, structures and objects of historical, cultural, or architectural significance to the City of McMinnville.

FINDING:

As it now appears, the building at 618 SW 3rd Street does not qualify as a historic resource given local criteria 1-5 above. Nor is the existing structure of historical, cultural or architectural significance to the City of McMinnville. Age, in and of itself, is not a local criteria for the designation of an historic resource. Its designation is, in fact, another error in the original survey for the National Register of Historic Places. Those errors are carried into the local inventory. Neither description can ascribe any architectural virtues to the building. In classifying the building, both descriptions make errors of fact, and do not speak to the established criteria.

At the national level, the existing structure at 618 Northeast Third Avenue is more suitably classified as a "Historic Non-Contributing...Structures are classified as Historic Non-Contributing if they were built during either the primary or secondary periods of construction but have been so altered over time that their contributing elements (siding, windows, massing, entrances, and roof) have been lost or concealed. If their contributing elements were restored, these buildings could be reclassified as Primary or Secondary Significant."

The proposed structure will emphasize many historic elements true to the original building and support the adjacent historic building at 608 Northeast Third Street, and McMinnville. The proposal to bring back a rendition of the original façade is based on a more in-depth documentation of the building's history. It will recreate a street façade similar to the initial construction, and subsequently occupied by Milton H. McGuire, the mainstay of McMinnville Water & Light's Electricity and Power divisions from 1920 to 1957. The addition of a second floor with two more short term residential rental units will support both the second floor use of the adjacent Jameson/Taylor Hardware building, and additional heritage tourism throughout downtown McMinnville.

The embossed metal siding will be saved for preservation and educational purposes, but not be used on the exterior. The proposed facade materials will be a more durable thin

brick of the type allowed by the District Design Guidelines. The original finials and decorative molding shown in the 1920 photo may be reproduced in sheet metal.

To the extent possible, the original storefront will be replicated from the circa.1920 photo. This will add to the pedestrian scale of the streetscape and protect pedestrians entering and leaving the building.

Note: This narrative is supported by the attached report:

The History of Buildings at 608 and 618 Northeast Third Street, McMinnville OR.