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**Clark County
Historic Preservation Commission
Staff Report**

Project Number: PRJ-165056 / LUP-78321
Project Name: Vancouver City Cemetery
Project Address: 2700 E Mill Plain Boulevard, Vancouver, WA 98661
Applicant/Owner: City of Vancouver
Staff: Mark Person, AICP, Senior Planner
Meeting Date: September 2, 2020

I. Summary

The Vancouver City Cemetery is located at 2700 E Mill Plain Boulevard (parcel 35180000). The property owner has requested the site be nominated for inclusion on the Clark County Heritage Register.

II. Clark County Heritage Register and National Register of Historic Places Status

Consent for nomination and designation to the Clark County Heritage Register has been signed by the owner of the property. The subject site is not currently on a historic register.

III. Historic Name

Vancouver City Cemetery

IV. Board Responsibility

Under the City of Vancouver Ordinance M-3243 (VMC Chapter 17.39), the Clark County Historic Preservation Commission has the responsibility for reviewing matters of historic preservation within the City of Vancouver.

V. Statement of Significance

The nomination identifies applicable Clark County Heritage Register Criteria 5 and 9. Criterion 5 is the site's association with the lives of persons significant in national, state, or local history, Criterion 9 is that it is a cemetery or burial site which derives its significance from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events, or cultural patterns.

VI. Narrative Statement of Significance from Nomination

Vancouver Old City Cemetery has played a part in local history since the days of Fort Vancouver and the Hudson's Bay Company. For decades, it served as the primary municipal cemetery for the City of Vancouver and was the first cemetery to have a dedicated Masonic section. A number of historically prominent figures such as Lowell Hidden, Charles and Laura Slocum, and Esther Short are laid to rest at this site.

The site includes an iron gate and fencing on the south side of the site, fronting Mill Plain Boulevard. The nomination includes extensive research on the history of the gate. In addition to the gate, there are a number of heritage trees on the site.

Marshall Roe Sparks (1860-1946); NW177-6

The origin of Vancouver's Sparks Home Furnishings dates back to 1882 when Marshall Sparks set up his tinsmith business near the waterfront on Main Street. He sold townspeople their washtubs and farmers their water troughs. Eventually, the shop moved into a larger location farther up Main and evolved into more of a general store. Shortly after World War I, Marshall's daughter, Norma, married Harry Craig, who became manager. Their son Jim grew up learning the trade and purchased Sparks from his parents in 1958. In the wake of a booming wartime economy, Jim Craig commissioned architect Donald Stewart to design a new store. It stocked hardware, china, garden equipment, furniture, and appliances. In 1978, Jim's son Tom joined the company. Together, the father-and-son team decided to shift the store's focus to furniture. Upon Jim's passing in 1984, Tom, the great-grandson of Marshall Sparks, assumed responsibility for the store and continued as its president until the business closed in 2014 after 132 years in business.

Lowell Mason Hidden (1839-1923); NW39-3

The following biography of Lowell M. Hidden was taken from the *Clark County Pioneers: Through the Turn of the Century* book published by the Clark County Genealogical Society in 1993:

The first of the Hidden family to arrive in Clark County was Lowell Mason Hidden, son of Oliver Moody Hidden and Louisa M. Wood. He was born in Craftsbury, Orleans County, Vermont, on December 16, 1839. During his early years, he became a member of the Masonic Lodge, of which his uncle William Hidden was a prominent member. Eventually, he left home and headed west. After traveling across the Isthmus of Panama, Lowell landed in San Francisco, where he soon became ill with measles or typhoid. He was cared for during this time by a group of Masons. After his recovery, he was sent up to a farm on the Lewis River; he was given a letter of credit to purchase a team and equipment, but when he arrived the river had flooded and the crop was under water. A short time after this he came to Vancouver.

Hidden worked first for Gay Hayden, for whom Hayden Island is named, earning enough money to purchase land on the west side of Main Street from 13th to 19th Street for \$500. He built his first home, a log cabin, at 14th and Main, about 1865. Hidden returned to Vermont in 1869 to marry Mary Sherbon Eastman, and he brought her back to Vancouver. Accompanying the newlyweds back to Vancouver was Lowell's oldest brother, Arthur. They rented a hotel, the Pacific House, and operated it from 1870 to 1871.

Lowell organized Hidden Brick Company in 1871, just in time to provide the building material for Mother Joseph's Providence Academy. His success encouraged his brothers Oliver and Jackson to come west to Clark County. Meanwhile, Arthur Hidden planted the area's first prune orchard at 26th and Main, building and operating a big prune dryer there. He is known as the father of Clark County's gigantic prune industry.

Lowell Hidden's first brickyard was at 15th and Main. It has been estimated that 60 million bricks were manufactured there, forming the building material for many of Vancouver's downtown buildings, including Providence Academy, built in 1873, and St. James Cathedral, which was built in 1885 with 900,000 Hidden bricks. Later, the Hiddens purchased 10 acres at 26th and Kauffman, which was to become the site of the family brickyard.

Lowell had his hand in many other enterprises, including the construction of the Portland, Vancouver, and Yakima Railroad to the Yacolt area, and the operation of a flour and feed mill, and a dock on the Vancouver waterfront.

Lowell, Arthur, and Oliver formed a partnership in 1890 and built the Columbia Hotel at Third and Main. This four-story brick building boasted the county's first elevator and telephone booth.

Lowell Hidden also found time to serve on the City Council and County Commission. He is remembered for donating the property at 16th and Main for a public library, a brick building which now houses the Clark County Historical Museum. He is credited with initiating Vancouver's first street railway, the city water system north of 13th Street, the Washington School for the Deaf, the county fair, and one of the city's first banks.

Foster W Hidden (1871-1963); NW206-4

The following biography of William Foster Hidden was taken from the Clark County Pioneers: Through the Turn of the Century book published by the Clark County Genealogical Society in 1993:

William Foster Hidden was born in Vancouver in 1871 at the Pacific House, a local hotel. He was a lifelong resident of Vancouver. As a boy, Foster worked in the family brickyard and later attended Stanford University and the University of Indiana.

Foster Hidden taught in country schools and raised cattle with his brother, Oliver, in the Cherry Grove area. Foster and Oliver Hidden took over the brickyard business in 1905 and carried on with this and other Hidden enterprises after the death of their father, Lowell, in 1923. Active in community affairs, Foster donated the property for Hidden Park when housing was developed in the area in the 1930s and 1940s. He also organized the effort to save the Covington House from destruction and donated a Chapel to the Methodist Church the family attended.

During World War II, the Hiddens leased part of their 200-acre water front tract to the Kaiser Shipyards for the sum of \$300 a year, the same fee formerly charged to a daily farmer who rented the property. Later, the land became part of the Columbia Industrial Park and was valued at \$7 million.

William Foster Hidden died in 1963. His son, Robert Hidden, continued with the brickyard business and is known for his philanthropic and community activities. He is perhaps best known for purchasing the Providence Academy in 1969, saving the historic structure from destruction. During his life, Foster was involved in many different endeavors. He was a member of the First Methodist Church,

Washington Lodge No. 4 of the Freemasons, the Fort Vancouver Historical Society, and the Chamber of Commerce. He was also a charter member of the Vancouver Rotary Club and a charter member of the board of Vancouver Memorial Hospital.

Albert M Blaker (1851-1939); NW20-15

Albert M. Blaker came out west in 1878. He established roots in Portland that year with his wife Estella. In 1878, Estella and Albert moved to Clark County and homesteaded 120 acres on Cedar Creek. In 1889, Blaker moved to Vancouver to run a lumber mill; he also spent this period as a building contractor. In 1880, Blaker was the county assessor, and from 1904 to 1908 he was the state representative from the 23rd District. He was also a Clark County commissioner between 1908 and 1912 and a state fair commissioner.

Esther Short (c.1806-1862); SE 104-9

Considered the founding mother of the City of Vancouver, Esther Short was born in Pennsylvania Dec. 24, 1806. Esther, of Native American and German descent, and her husband Amos and their children arrived in Clark County in late 1845 and took up a land claim of 640 acres, from Fourth Plain south and Main west to the river. The Hudson's Bay Company tried on a number of occasions to force the Shorts to move to Oregon, which by that time was American territory.

Esther ran a family restaurant in 1853, and in 1854 built the region's first hotel, the Pacific House on South Main Street at 2nd. Upon Amos's death, it was realized that he had failed to inform the surveyor general of this land claim, and Esther was forced to re-file it in 1853. She deeded a park and a strip of waterfront property to the public and began selling the rest of her property in lots in 1855. These lots were purchased by new entrepreneurs to the area, who spurred early industry and residential areas in the newly platted town of Columbia City, which in a few short months would be renamed Vancouver.

Charles (1835-1912) and Laura Slocum (1838-1914); SE 53-5

At the age of 22, Charles W. Slocum left Massachusetts to journey west via South America. Slocum crossed the Isthmus of Panama by rail and boarded the Golden Gate, a steamer bound for the Pacific Coast. After stops in San Francisco and Portland, Slocum found work as a carpenter at the Vancouver Barracks in 1857.

By 1860, Slocum was able to open a general store in Vancouver with partner James Crawford. Soon after, Slocum secured contracts to supply the US Army. Opening additional stores in Walla Walla, Washington, and in Lewiston and Boise City, Idaho, he used 30 10-mule teams to transport his merchandise. In 1869, Slocum sold all of his holdings except the original Vancouver store.

In 1878, Charles and his wife, Laura Riggs Slocum, opened their new home to Vancouver's high society. The Slocum House was saved and moved to Esther Short Park during Vancouver's urban renewal in 1966 and opened as a theatre in 1972. Their home stands as the last survivor of a neighborhood razed long ago, offering a glimpse into the lives of early Vancouver elite.

Judge Columbia Lancaster (1803-1893); SW 177-1

Judge Columbia Lancaster, a delegate from the Territory of Washington, was born in New Milford, Litchfield County, Connecticut, Aug. 26, 1803. Lancaster studied law, was admitted to the

bar in 1830, and commenced practice in Centerville, Michigan. He was appointed prosecuting attorney of Michigan Territory and was a member of the territorial legislature in 1837. Lancaster settled in the Willamette Valley in 1847, where he served as associate justice of the Supreme Court under the provisional government. He took up his residence near the mouth of the Lewis River. He was a member of the Territorial Council of Oregon from 1850 to 1852, and when the Territory of Washington was admitted to representation was elected as a Democrat to the Thirty-third Congress, serving from 1854 to 1855. Lancaster went on to serve as regent of the University of Washington in Seattle in 1862 and was connected with the Puget Sound & Columbia River Railroad project.

VII. Staff Review and Comment

The review criteria for the proposal are listed in the adopted rules and regulations of the Clark County Historic Preservation Commission (VMC 17.39). Any building, structure, site, object or district may be designated for inclusion in the Clark County Heritage Register if it:

- Is at least fifty years old, or is of lesser age and has exceptional importance; and
- Has integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association; and
- Is significantly associated with the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering or cultural heritage of the community; and
- Meets at least one of the criteria listed at VMC 17.39.070.

The nomination identifies the following criteria as applicable:

- Is associated with the lives of persons significant in national, state or local history.
- It is a cemetery or burial site which derives its primary significance from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events, or cultural patterns.

The nominated site is over 50 years of age, the nomination references that burials began on the site in 1868. Due to the persons of significance that are buried in the cemetery and the distinctive design of the site, staff finds the criteria of 17.39.070 have been met.

Staff recommends placing the Vancouver Cemetery site on the local register. The Clark County Historic Preservation Commission shall make the final decision regarding placement on the register.

Exhibits

- 1. Vicinity Map
- 2. Vancouver Land Use Application
- 3. Nomination Form

VIII. Appeal

The commission’s decision regarding a nomination to the Clark County Heritage Register may be appealed to the City Council. Appeal of the City Council’s decision may be appealed to superior court. The letter of appeal shall state the case number designated by the city and the name of the applicant, name and signature of each petitioner and a statement showing that each petitioner is entitled to file the appeal under VMC Chapter 20, and the specific aspect(s) of the decision and reasons why each aspect is in error as a matter of fact or law, and the evidence relied upon to prove the error.

A fee of \$1,868.00 must accompany the appeal. However, if the aggrieved party is a recognized neighborhood association, the fee assessed is \$141.00. During the current COVID-19 crisis, the appeal request shall be emailed to epplans@cityofvancouver.us as well as to the case manager’s e-mail address below and the appeal fee electronically paid to the City of Vancouver.

For more information on the appeal process, please refer to Vancouver Municipal Code 20.210.130 or contact the case manger by email at mark.person@cityofvancouver.us .



Report Prepared by
Mark Person, AICP, Senior Planner

August 18, 2020
Date



Greg Turner, Manager
Land Use Team

August 18, 2020
Date