



City Council

Special Recognition - Historic Preservation Month

Agenda Date: 5/10/2016
Agenda Item Number: 2.A
File Number: 16-0583

Type: recognition **Version:** 1 **Status:** Filed

Title

Special Recognition - Historic Preservation Month

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Recognize the City of Olympia's support for Preservation Month.

Report

Issue:

Whether to recognize May as Preservation Month in Olympia.

Staff Contact:

Michelle Sadlier, Historic Preservation Officer, Community Planning & Development, 360.753.8031

Presenter(s):

Holly Davies, Chair, Olympia Heritage Commission
Michelle Sadlier, Historic Preservation Officer

Background and Analysis:

Since 1973, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has co-sponsored with local preservation groups to celebrate Preservation Month. The long-standing goals of this annual event are:

- To promote historic places to instill national and community pride,
- To promote heritage tourism, and
- To show the social and economic benefits of historic preservation.

This year, the Olympia Heritage Commission is excited to be joining with multiple partners for a series of activities to champion the places of labor history in our community.

The catalyst for choosing this year's theme has been the donation of a sculpture to the City of

Olympia by the Thurston-Lewis-Mason Central Labor Council (TLMCLC). The sculpture is scheduled to be installed in front of Olympia's Labor Temple (119 Capitol Way N) in the Olympia Downtown Historic District. In addition to the Heritage Commission, the following organizations plan to host events throughout May:

- Olympia Arts Commission,
- TLMCLC,
- Olympia Historical Society & Bigelow House Museum,
- Olympia Downtown Association,
- Olympia Tumwater Foundation,
- Washington State Historical Society, and
- Washington State Archive.

Details on the events will be provided to the City Council at a later date.

Tonight's Presentation

To recognize the work that ordinary Olympians are doing to celebrate our historic places and protect them for generations to come, the Heritage Commission wishes to recognize the people who have taken the initiative to add their homes to the Olympia Heritage Register over the past year. They are:

1. **Lauren & David Danner**, for nominating the Trueman "Bink" & Virginia Schmidt House (2932 Maringo Road SE).

This house was built in 1950 for Bink Schmidt, a Vice President of the Olympia Brewing Company, and his wife Virginia, née Aetzel. Both came from prominent local families and the house was designed to be a comfortable and fashionable home that could also host large social gatherings. The architect hired to design this innovative, post-World War II modernist house was Olympia's own G. Stacey Bennett, an associate at Wohleb & Wohleb Architects.

Under the Danners' initiative, this house is also listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The Heritage Commission presented the Danners with a Preservation Award in 2015 as a result of the quality of their research and determination to bring this important mid-century house the recognition it deserves.

2. **Sean Kirby**, for nominating the Leo & Trena Belsito House (408 27th Avenue SE).

The person behind the design and construction of this neo-classical house was Trena Belsito-Worthington, a well-known Olympia lawyer. Ms. Belsito-Worthington built five houses which are believed to have been modeled after the same pattern. Built in 1948, this house was the fourth house she completed when she was married to Leo Belsito. Two of her other homes have already been listed on the Register.

When Mr. Kirby bought this building, it was in a state of neglect. Recognizing that the house was special, he opened it up to the public for the Olympia Historical Society's holiday tour of homes before starting renovations. He has now completed the restoration, demonstrating that upgrading historic homes does not have to mean sacrificing historical character.

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Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

General community interest in protecting the historic places that give our city its unique character and tell the story of our past.

Financial Impact:

Staff time included in base budget.

Attachments:

Proclamation