

# Fruit Valley

Homes Subdivision  
Design Handbook



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# Acknowledgements



## City of Vancouver City Council Members

Tim Leavitt, *Mayor*  
Jeanne Harris  
Jeanne E. Stewart  
Larry Smith

Pat Campbell  
Jack Burkman  
Bart Hansen  
Pat McDonnell, *City Manager*

## City of Vancouver Planning Commission Members

Esther B. Schrader, *Chair*  
Robert Haverkate, *Vice Chair*  
John S. Lee  
Mario Raia

Dave Moriuchi  
Lisa F. Willis  
Scott E. Nielson

## Fruit Valley Planning Committee

Lee McCallister, *President*,  
*Fruit Valley Neighborhood Association (FVNA)*  
Karen McCallister, *Secretary, FVNA*  
Debbie Elliott, *Principle, FV Elementary School*  
Staci Boehlke, *FV Family Resource Center*  
Rhetta Drennan, *Resident*  
Greta Lavadour, *Resident*  
Marshall Meadows, *VHA*  
Leah Greenwood, *Executive Director, ACE*

Debbie Elven-Snyder, *C-Tran*  
Tricia Mortell, *Clark County Health Department*  
Young Han, *Business Owner*  
Katy Brooks, *Port of Vancouver*  
Andy Bunch, *Resident*  
Jennifer Halleck, *Vancouver School District*  
Merril Firestone, *Business Owner*  
Greg McGreevey, *FV Foundation*

## Project Team

### *Leland Consulting Group*

Brian Vanneman  
Chris Zahas

### *Parametrix*

Derek Chisholm  
Holly K. Chamberlain

### *Otak*

Tom Litster  
Sheryl Walsh

### *City of Vancouver*

Laura Hudson  
Sandra Towne  
Greg Turner  
Cathreen Richards

Matt Ransom  
Phil Wuest  
Jean Akers  
Annette Griffy



# Table of Contents

Purpose	1	• Demolition	
Background	2	• Mechanical Systems	
Design Principles	3-7	• Fences and Other Edges	
• Original Houses		• Driveways and Paving	
• House Orientation, Shape and Size		• Landscaping	
• Guidelines			
• Additions		Maintenance	13-14
• Guidelines		• Roofs	
Architecture Elements	8-11	• Windows	
• Materials		• Siding	
• Roofs		• Masonry	
• Windows		Glossary	15-16
• Entrances (Porches and Doors)		Sources	17
• Siding		Fruit Valley Historic Context and Survey Report	18-24
• Masonry		Selected Sources	25-26
Additional Elements	12		
• Outbuildings			

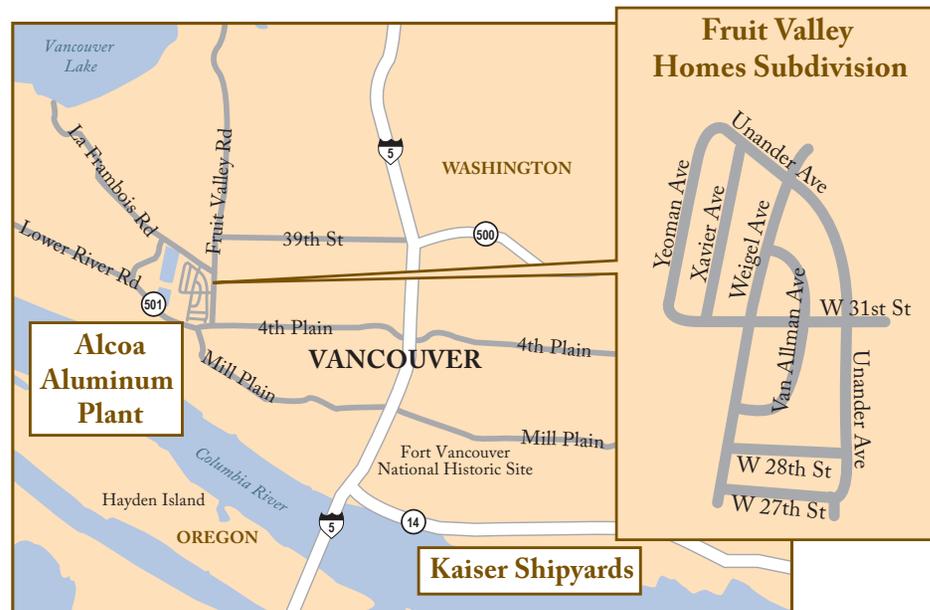




# Purpose

This handbook aims to inspire and inform property owners, architects, designers, developers, and contractors to make design decisions that reflect the original historic neighborhood context, and architecture of the Fruit Valley Homes Subdivision. It intends to help the residents and those supporting construction efforts to maintain and enhance not only the visual character of the neighborhood, but also its vital sense of identity and commitment to a shared history. There are many appropriate design responses to a given situation. Whether it is a remodel, addition, or new home construction, this handbook's guidance and illustrations should help ensure a compatible design that fits into the historic context of the Fruit Valley Homes Subdivision (FVHS).

The guidelines and information in this handbook are advisory and supplement the standards expressed in the City's Development Code





## Background

Vancouver's World War II-era Fruit Valley housing development was built as one of the eight local housing projects for home-front war workers recruited to defense jobs at the Kaiser Shipyards and the Aluminum Corporation of America (Alcoa). One of only three housing developments intended for permanency, the remarkably intact Fruit Valley project of today retains its original community center and almost every one of its original 300 dwellings. For the full history report, refer to page 18.

The FVHS neighborhood is proud of its history, and has a strong sense of neighborhood identity. The neighborhood has survived several challenges – the decline of the war-related construction efforts and the 1948 VanPort Flood, to name just two. It has survived primarily because as early as 1949, residents banded together to preserve the neighborhood's identity and protect its interests.

Fruit Valley residents are living in a piece of history, and many of the buildings in the FVHS are older than the people who now own them. With care, these historic structures will survive for many more generations. However, time and economic growth bring pressures for new buildings and for the expansion and remodeling of existing buildings.

In 2009, the City of Vancouver Department of Community Planning under the direction of the Vancouver Planning Commission initiated a subarea planning project for the Fruit Valley area of which the FVHS is a part. This Design Handbook is part of that planning effort.



Photo courtesy of Gary Liedtke

*The Fruit Valley subdivision project was intended to supply housing for defense workers, most of whom manufactured the aluminum necessary for aircraft production.*



Photo courtesy of Gary Liedtke.

*The VanPort Flood inundated the neighborhood in 1948.*



# Design Principles

Changes to a building can either enhance its history or destroy it. It is important to remember that the process of historic preservation should not be considered as “beautification;” rather, it is about retaining and maintaining the significant features and overall character of a historic place so that it can visually impart its history. The key to achieving this goal is through the retention of integrity. In considering alterations and additions in the FVHS, integrity and compatibility should be the guiding principles of design.

## Original Houses

There were three primary housing types constructed in the original Fruit Valley Homes Subdivision. The pictures below illustrate the defining architectural and visual elements of these three types of homes.

The **symmetrical style** is the most dominant with the front door centered on the front elevation. This house has a side gable roof, with attic walls on the sides, and sloping roof in the back and front of the house. The roof projects out slightly over the front door. Two rectangular double hung windows are provided on the front elevation. This house was built with approximately 720 square feet. Most of these houses have a detached garage of approximately 480 square feet, which was added after the initial construction of the houses.

### Symmetrical Style House





The **asymmetrical style** has the front door offset on the front elevation. This house has a hip roof – with all slides sloping toward the top. The hip roof projects out over the front door as well as over two double hung windows. The roof projection is then carried down the side of the house as well. This house was built with approximately 910 square feet. Most of these houses have a detached garage of approximately 480 square feet, which was added after the initial construction of the houses.

The **duplex style** also consists of a hip roof with the portion over one half of the duplex, projecting out. The roof projects out a bit further over both front doors. In the duplexes, one unit is approximately 588 square feet in size, and the other unit is approximately 611 square feet.

### Asymmetrical Style House



### Duplex Style Houses





## House Orientation, Shape and Size

New buildings constructed in historic areas should be sensitive to the existing neighborhood patterns and should be compatible with the size, shape and orientation of the older structures.

The properties or lots in the FVHS are rectangular, with their narrower side parallel to the street. The houses are also rectangular, with their broader side facing the street. This development pattern should be respected when new structures are built.

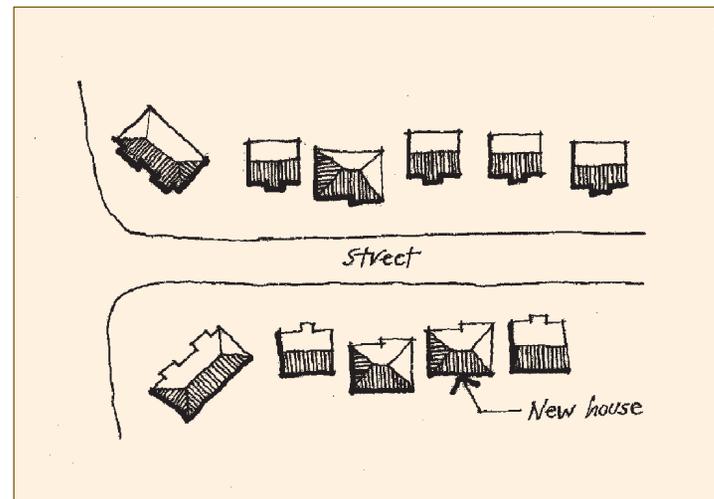
The consistent building setbacks create a visual order, help define public and private space, provide a margin of privacy for residents, and permit landscaping in the front. The houses in the FVHS have a shape and bulk, consistent with their time of construction. The appearance this lends to the neighborhood is an important design attribute.

Historic houses in the FVHS are built on short, raised foundations and are only one story tall. If new housing is constructed, it should match the overall height of adjacent historical houses along the front elevation.

### Guidelines:

1. To maintain the historic pattern of the neighborhood, determine the distance the façade (front wall) of each house is from the street and how they align with each other. Locate the façades of proposed new buildings to continue the alignment pattern established by the neighboring houses. The setbacks should be very slightly staggered, so that the homes are well, but not perfectly, aligned.
2. The broad side of the rectangular house should face the street. Placing buildings (other than corner duplexes) at odd angles to the street should be avoided.

### Houses should be aligned and only slightly staggered





3. Newly constructed houses should be of similar size and proportions to the scale of the original houses.
4. As a general rule, construct new buildings to equal the average height of the original FVHS houses.
5. When a two story house is determined appropriate, the second story portion should be set back to the rear of the roof line ensuring that the second story portion does not dominate the single story front portion of the building facing the street.
6. If building new structures, the eave lines should conform to those of the original FVHS houses.
7. For planned infill projects (as defined by municipal code), the design elements within this handbook should be considered as well as the separate infill design criteria found in the Vancouver Municipal code.

### Incompatible two story infill



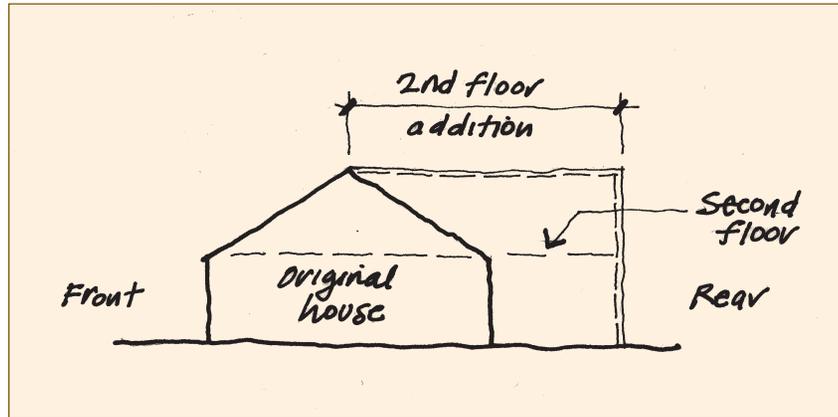
## Additions

Consider the attached exterior addition, both in terms of the new use and the appearance of other houses. Additions and detached, accessory structures (such as garages) should be compatible with the historic buildings in terms of mass, materials, size, texture, scale, and color.

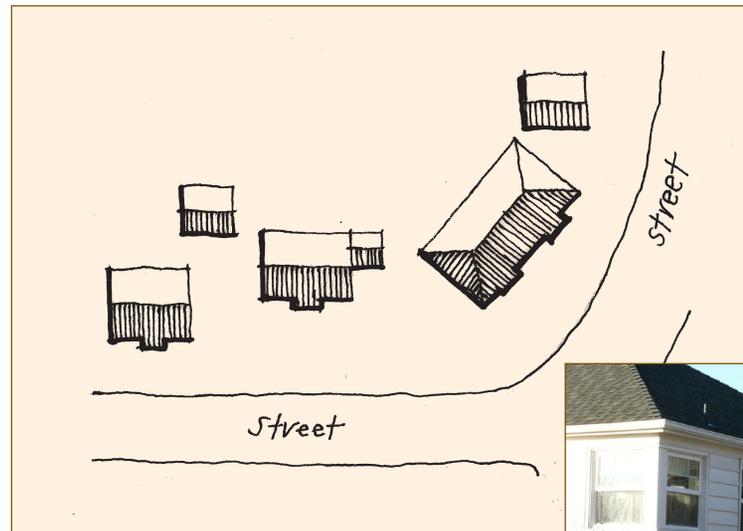
### Guidelines:

1. Additions should only be constructed in the rear of houses, or on the side, setback 12 feet or more from the front façade. The size and scale of the addition should be limited to the main building's proportions.
2. New additions should not cause a lessening or loss of historic character of the original building, including its design, materials, roof type and pitch, and height and mass.
3. Second story additions should be located to the rear of the roof line of the house and be as inconspicuous as possible when viewed from the street.
4. Garages should be constructed in the rear of houses, or on the side - setback 12 feet or more from the front façade.

### Recommended approaches for additions



### Options for placing garages



**Good example of a setback attached garage**





# Architecture Elements

## Materials

The materials with which the buildings are constructed contribute to one of the most important visual factors in the neighborhood. The historic buildings use materials that were common when they were built such as poured concrete, horizontal wood siding, wood window frames and doors. The original houses did not include concrete block or synthetic siding materials such as aluminum or vinyl.

### Guideline:

The materials used for new buildings should be consistent with existing historic building materials used throughout the subdivision.

## Roofs

Roofs in the historic FVH Subdivision are simple side gable or hip roof forms. Roof pitches are usually less than 7:12 (the roof rises 7 feet in height for every 12 feet). Where the roof projects over the front doors, the pitches remain the same as that of the rest of the roof. Roof eaves usually extend 1-1/2 to 2 feet from the house exterior wall. The best roof materials to use are replicas of the original. Asphalt shingles or cedar shake shingles match the neighborhood character. Metal roofs detract from neighborhood character and should be avoided.

### Guidelines:

1. The shape pitch and eaves of roofs on new construction should imitate the original house roof types.
2. Roof details should be repaired or replaced when possible. Repair or replace chimneys, brackets, attic vent windows, molding, and other unique roof features.

3. Materials used in roofing existing buildings or new construction should duplicate the original roofing materials if possible. The color of roofing materials should be a dark green, charcoal gray, black or dark reddish brown to simulate the original roof colors.

**An original bracket**



**Altered roof line obscures original design**





## Windows

Windows are a very important architectural element of historic houses. They help define each building's character, and are often a prime target of rehabilitation projects. In the historic FVHS, windows are wooden and are hung so that both the bottom and the top sash can open (double-hung). The original windows called six over six have six panes (lights) in the upper window portion (sash) and six panes (lights) in the bottom window portion (sash). The original glass was clear. Transoms and sidelights were not used in the original windows.

In order to judge the necessity of replacing windows, a careful survey should be made of the windows and their condition. This survey should include consideration of the windows' value in the overall architectural design of the building.

### Guidelines:

1. New buildings should be designed with door and window elements similar to those found on the neighborhood's historic houses. The placement of windows and doors with respect to the front façade's overall composition, symmetry, or balanced asymmetry should be carefully imitated (see Original House section for examples of symmetry and asymmetry).
2. Original wooden windows should be reused whenever possible. It is usually much less expensive and much better historically to retain the original windows.
3. Wooden replacement windows are most appropriate and should be the same overall size as the windows being replaced

### Incompatible fixed pane window



### Original window



with the same pane division; the same wooden pane divider (muntin) style; and the same exterior depth, width and profile as the original historic windows. In the front of the house, aluminum replacement windows should be avoided.

4. Reuse of existing serviceable window hardware is encouraged. Fixed panes, which can not be opened, should be avoided.
5. Storm windows are often used to increase the heating and cooling efficiency of a building. Interior storm windows that cannot be seen from the street are encouraged. If the exterior storm windows are used, the storm windows should be wood or color clad metal to match the building's trim. Caution should be used to avoid damaging original windows and frames when installing storm windows.
6. It can be appropriate to design and install additional windows on the rear of the house. The designs should be compatible with the overall design of the building.

### Original pattern and placements of windows and doors





## Entrances (Porches and Doors)

The original FVHS homes had very small porches consisting of a small roof overhang with wooden brackets and a small stoop with steps. The small porches were originally wooden. Porches protect entries from weather and cool the house by shading the doors. Enclosing or removing a stoop harms the appearance of the house and detracts from the original character and design. The individual design elements of the neighborhood reinforce the style of the houses. The original porch design details should be repaired and preserved, or replicated. Properly proportioned porches are important to new buildings constructed in the FVHS, helping new construction blend in with the neighborhood.

The doors originally used in Historic Fruit Valley Homes Sub-division houses were wooden, with multiple panes of glass in the upper half of the door. Security or wrought iron storm doors were not used.

### Guidelines:

1. Front porches on new construction should mimic the small porches of the original three FVHS house designs.
2. Porches visible from a street should not be enclosed.
3. With additions or new construction, front porches should match the size and placement of the historic porches in the neighborhood. The original porch details did not include columns and ornamental railings.
4. Original front doors should be preserved. If it is necessary to replace an original door the replacement door should mimic the door typical for that architectural style, including materials, glazing, and pane configuration. Solid six panel or flush wood or steel design doors should only be used for entrances not visible from the public street. “Decorator” designed doors, which bear no resemblance to the original doors, are not appropriate.

5. Entrance restoration should be compatible with the historic character of the building and with adjacent buildings. Entrances should not be removed when remodeling or rehabilitating a building.
6. Entrances should not be altered to make them appear to be formal entrances by adding paneled doors, fanlights or sidelights.
7. Determine if a storm door will actually save energy. A weather-stripped wooden or insulated door is very energy efficient. Little cost savings will result from adding a storm door to a properly weather-stripped entry.
8. If a storm door is used, it should have a color clad frame and a full view glass, or be designed to respect the original entry door. Security doors should follow the same guidelines.

**Original front door**



## Siding

The materials that cover a building's exterior surface largely determine the appearance of the building. Similar materials develop a certain continuity and character. The exterior walls of the houses in the historic FVHS were covered with horizontal wood siding.

Vinyl, aluminum or other synthetic sidings can be particularly dangerous to existing houses, masking drainage problems or insect infestation and preventing good ventilation. In addition, these applications may violate the building's important architectural features such as window, gable, fascia and corner details. Also, the color of synthetic siding cannot be changed easily.

### Guidelines:

1. When replacing siding or installing on new construction, horizontal wood siding materials should be used. Corner and trim boards and appropriate door and window trim should also be used. Siding made of pressboard, particle board, aluminum, vinyl, vertical siding (including T-111), and shingle siding are not appropriate in the FVHS and should not be used.
2. The removal of synthetic sidings such as aluminum, asbestos and vinyl and the restoration of the original siding are highly encouraged.
3. Destructive paint removal methods such as propane or butane torch, sand or water blasting methods can damage historic woodwork.
4. Remove damaged or deteriorated paint only to the next sound layer using the gentlest method possible (e.g., hand sanding or hand scraping). Older paint layers help protect the wood from moisture and sunlight. Paint removal should be considered only where there is paint surface deterioration or failure, and as part of an overall maintenance program which involves repainting or applying other appropriate protective coatings.

## Masonry

There are some brick chimneys in the historic FVHS. The mortar used in old masonry has a very low percentage of Portland cement, and is made up primarily of sand and lime. This soft mortar expands and contracts at the same rate as the old brick

### Guidelines:

1. Original chimneys should not be removed or altered. If they must be replaced the replacement design should match the original chimney design.
2. Carefully evaluate the condition of the masonry feature to determine if more than protection and maintenance are required.
3. If mortar repair (repointing) is necessary, new mortar should match the old, both in color and in composition. If old deteriorating mortar must be removed from mortar joints, use hand tools.

### Addition with incompatible fish-scale shingles





## Additional Elements

### Outbuildings

Auxiliary or outbuildings were often used in the Fruit Valley Homes Subdivision, although many of them have deteriorated or have been destroyed over the years. Outbuildings are appropriate in the FVHS. Their size and construction should be made of materials that correspond to the original primary building on the lot. For infill development, outbuildings, including garages should be secondary to the house and setback from the front of the house.

### Demolition

Demolition creates a permanent change in the neighborhood by removing part of the neighborhood's historic and architectural significance. Demolition of any building, which contributes to the historic or architectural significance of the FVHS, should only be considered when all other opportunities have been discounted.

### Mechanical Systems

Mechanical systems can include air conditioning and heating condensers, window units, and other equipment not traditional in a historic neighborhood. Heating and cooling units should be located where they are not visible from public rights-of-way. They should be screened with shrubbery or fencing and located on the sides of the buildings. If window units are used, they should not be visible from public streets. Satellite dishes should be located where they are not visible from public streets.

### Fences and Other Edges

Fences were not part of the original design of the Fruit Valley Homes Subdivision. Fences used today in the FVHS should be of wood or a durable wrought or cast material, and may have a stone foundation. Fences in front yards should be limited to three feet in height. Solid board, stockade or chain link fences are not

appropriate for front yards. Taller fencing is acceptable toward the rear property boundaries for reasons of security, privacy and screening.

### Driveways and Paving

The original designs, materials and placement of driveways should be preserved if possible. New curb cuts should be kept to a minimum.

### Landscaping

Large foundation shrubbery should not be planted or maintained near the houses of the FVHS. Even in new houses, if there is shrubbery at the foundation, it should be small when mature and should not obscure the foundation or block the windows of the structure. Residents are urged to replant trees, care should be taken to ensure that their mature height will not interfere with the houses or utility lines in the area.



# Maintenance

Constructing or renovating a building to conform to the historical visual character of the neighborhood is of little use unless that building is properly maintained. The following are guidelines for maintaining buildings in the historic FVHS that will preserve the visual character of the buildings and help ensure the maximum useful life and energy efficiency of those buildings. These guidelines are presented by topic.

## Roofs

1. Practice careful roof maintenance, checking regularly for leaks and repairing problems as they occur. Keep gutters and downspouts free of litter and debris that can block the flow of water.
2. Provide adequate ventilation for the roof by installing forms of ventilation that are not readily visible, such as soffit vents. These will add life to the roof and keep the airspace in the attic and under the rafters dry.
3. When installing a new roof, it is advisable to remove the previous roof layers to avoid creating a built-up roof, which can later mask leaks and other problem areas. There should be no more than three layers of asphalt roofing shingles to prevent structural damage.
4. Install gutters and downspouts to remove water efficiently from roof surfaces and carry it away from the foundations or basements of the buildings.
5. Do not allow shingles to become overgrown with moss. Such overgrowth can separate shingles and lead to leaking.

## Windows

1. Make windows weather tight by caulking, replacing broken panes, and installing weather-stripping. This increases the

windows' thermal efficiency.

2. Protect and maintain the wood or architectural metal, which makes up the window frame, sash, and muntins.
3. Use appropriate surface treatments like cleaning, rust removal, limited paint removal and caulking, priming and painting.

## Siding

1. Repaint with colors that are appropriate to the neighborhood. The surface should be gently cleaned before painting. Appropriate primers, caulking and a good outdoor paint should be used.
2. Protect and maintain wood features by providing proper drainage. Water should not stand on flat, horizontal surfaces or accumulate in decorative features.
3. Identify, evaluate and treat the causes of wood deterioration, including faulty flashing, leaking gutters, cracks and holes in siding, deteriorated caulking in joints and seams, plant material growing too close to wood surfaces and insect or fungus infestation. Apply chemical preservatives to wood features that are exposed to decay hazards such as at the ends of beams or rafters, if they are traditionally unpainted.
4. Replace only the deteriorated wood. Reconstructing in order to achieve a uniform or "improved" appearance is inappropriate because good historic materials can be lost.
5. Paint should not be removed from unprotected wood surfaces in order to apply stain or clear finish to permanently reveal bare wood. This exposes historically painted surfaces to greatly increased weathering.



6. When paint must be removed, hand scraping is the best method to use. Electric hot-air guns can be used on decorative wood features, and electric heat plates on flat wood surfaces. Use chemical strippers to supplement other methods such as hand scraping, hand sanding and electric heating devices. If detachable wood elements such as shutters, doors and columns are chemically stripped, do not allow them to soak in a caustic solution. This raises the grain and roughens the wood. If using electric heating devices, be sure to keep a fire extinguisher handy, since fires can easily be started and wood can be scorched.

6. Sandblasting brick or stone surfaces using dry or wet grit, sand, water, walnut casings, seashells, glass pellets, or similar material may permanently destroy the surface of the material created during the original kiln firing. This can harm the mortar and speed up deterioration by exposing it to damage from freeze/thaw cycles or airborne pollutants.

## Masonry

1. Evaluate and treat the various causes of mortar joint deterioration, such as leaking roofs or gutters, uneven settlement of buildings, capillary action or extreme weather exposure. Protecting and maintaining masonry includes providing proper drainage so that water does not stand on flat, horizontal surfaces or accumulate in curved decorative features.
2. Clean masonry only when it is necessary to stop deterioration or to remove paint and/or heavy soiling due to pollution. Cleaning can introduce unnecessary moisture and chemicals into the building.
3. Clean masonry surfaces with the gentlest means possible, such as low-pressure water and detergents, using natural bristle brushes.
4. Never use a cleaning method that involves water or liquid chemical solutions if there is any possibility of freezing temperatures.
5. Repair masonry walls and features by repointing the mortar joints where there is evidence of deterioration such as disintegrating mortar, cracks in joints, loose bricks, damp walls, or damaged plasterwork or stucco.



# Glossary

**Baluster.** One of a series of short, vertical, often vase-shaped members used to support a stair or porch handrail, forming a balustrade.

**Balustrade.** An entire rail system with top rail and balusters.

**Bay.** The portion of a facade between columns or piers, providing regular divisions and usually marked by windows.

**Bay window.** A projecting window that forms an extension to the floor space of the internal rooms; usually extends to the ground level.

**Board and batten.** Siding fashioned of boards set vertically and covered where their edges join by narrow strips called battens.

**Bond.** A term used to describe the various patterns in which brick (or stone) is laid, such as “common bond” or “Flemish bond.”

**Bracket.** A projecting element of wood, stone, or metal which spans between horizontal and vertical surfaces (eaves, shelves, overhangs) as decorative support.

**Capital.** The head of a column or pilaster.

**Casement window.** A window with one or two sashes which are hinged at the sides and usually open outward.

**Character.** The qualities and attributes of any structure, site, street or district.

**Clapboard.** Horizontal wooden boards, thinner at the top edge, which are overlapped to provide a weatherproof exterior wall surface.

**Column.** A circular or square vertical structural member.

**Context.** The setting in which a historic element, site, structure, street, or district exists.

**Demolition.** Any act or process that destroys in part or in whole a landmark or a structure within a historic district.

**Dormer window.** A window that projects from a roof.

**Double-hung window.** A window with two sashes, each sliding vertically over the other.

**Eave.** The edge of a roof that projects beyond the face of a wall.

**Element.** A material part or detail of a site, structure, street, or district.

**Elevation.** Any one of the external faces or facades of a building.

**Entablature.** The upper, horizontal portion of a structure that rests on columns.

**Facade.** Any one of the external faces or elevations of a building.

**Fanlight.** A semi-circular window usually over a door with radiating muntins suggesting a fan.

**Fenestration.** The arrangement of windows on a building.

**Flashing.** Thin metal sheets used to prevent moisture infiltration at joints of roof planes and between the roof and vertical surfaces.

**Foundation.** The lowest exposed portion of the building wall, which supports the structure above.

**Gable.** The triangular section of a wall to carry a pitched roof.

**Gable roof.** A pitched roof with one downward slope on either side of a central, horizontal ridge.

**Height.** The distance from the bottom to the top of a building or structure.

**Hipped roof.** A roof with uniform slopes on all sides.

**Infill.** New construction where there had been an opening before, such as a new building between two older structures; also, block infill between porch piers or in an original window opening.

**Knee brace.** An oversize bracket supporting a roof or porch eave.

**Landscape.** The totality of the built or human-influenced habitat experienced at any one place. Dominant features are topography, plant cover, buildings, or other structures and their patterns.

**Light.** A section of glass in a paned glass window.

**Masonry.** Exterior wall construction of brick, stone or adobe laid up in small units.

**Massing.** The three-dimensional form of a building.



**Metal standing seam roof.** A roof composed of overlapping sections of metal such as copper-bearing steel or iron coated with a terne alloy of lead and tin. These roofs were attached or crimped together in various raised seams for which the roof are named.

**Mortar.** A mixture of sand, lime, cement, and water used as a binding agent in masonry construction.

**Multi-light window.** A window sash composed of more than one pane of glass.

**Muntin.** A secondary framing member to divide and hold the panes of glass in multi-light window or glazed door.

**Obscured.** Covered, concealed, or hidden from view.

**Paneled door.** A door composed of solid panels (either raised or recessed) held within a framework of rails and stiles.

**Pediment.** A triangular crowning element forming the gable of a roof; any similar triangular element used over windows, doors, etc.

**Pitch.** The degree of the slope of a roof.

**Preservation.** Generally, saving from destruction or deterioration old and historic buildings, sites, structures, and objects and providing for their continued use by means of restoration, rehabilitation, or adaptive use.

**Proportion.** Harmonious relation of parts to one another or to the whole.

**Recommended.** Suggested, but not mandatory actions summarized in the guidelines.

**Rehabilitation.** The process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural and cultural values.

**Repointing.** To replace mortar into defective mortar joints in masonry.

**Restoration.** The act or process of accurately taking a building's appearance back to a specific period of time by removing later work and by replacing missing earlier features to match the original.

**Re-use.** To use again. An element, detail, or structure might be reused in historic districts.

**Rhythm.** Regular occurrence of elements or features such as spacing between buildings.

**Ridge.** The top horizontal member of a roof where the sloping surfaces meet.

**Sash.** The moveable framework containing the glass in a window.

**Setting.** The sum of attributes of a locality, neighborhood, or property that defines its character.

**Scale.** Proportional elements that demonstrate the size, materials, and style of buildings.

**Shed roof.** A gently pitched, almost flat roof with only one slope.

**Sidelight.** A vertical area of fixed glass on either side of a door or window.

**Siding.** The exterior wall covering or sheathing of a structure.

**Sill.** The bottom crosspiece of a window frame.

**Soffit.** The underside of a structural component such as a beam, arch, staircase, etc.

**Stabilization.** The act or process of applying measures essential to the maintenance of a deteriorated building as it exists at present, establishing structural stability and a weather-resistant enclosure.

**Streetscape.** The distinguishing character of a particular street as created by its width, degree of curvature, paving materials, design of the street furniture, and forms of surrounding buildings.

**Style.** A type of architecture distinguished by special characteristics of structure and ornament and often related in time; also a general quality of a distinctive character.

**Surround.** An encircling border or decorative frame, usually at windows or doors.

**Transom.** A small hinged window above another window or a door.

**Trim.** The decorative framing of openings and other features on a facade.

**Wall dormer.** Dormer created by the upward extension of a wall and a breaking of the roofline.



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# Fruit Valley Historic Context and Survey Report

Vancouver's World War II-era Fruit Valley housing development was built as one of the eight local projects constructed to house home-front war workers recruited to defense jobs at the Kaiser Shipyards and the Aluminum Corporation of America (Alcoa). One of only three intended for permanency, the remarkably intact Fruit Valley project of today retains its original community center and almost every one of its original 300 dwellings.

The Fruit Valley neighborhood lies near the far western edge of the city of Vancouver in an area of diverse uses. In addition to residential areas, uses include transportation, industry, recreation, shipping, and agriculture. The 287-building study area is a portion of a larger neighborhood, the largest neighborhood in the city, with the same name, which refers to the locality's historic roots in the orcharding business. For the purposes of this report summarizing the inventory project, Fruit Valley will hereinafter refer specifically to the study area, while the term Fruit Valley neighborhood will refer to a larger area currently defined by the City of Vancouver as the neighborhood association boundaries.

The inventory project was undertaken by the City of Vancouver Department of Community Planning as part of the Sub-Area Planning in the area, and in response to the Fruit Valley Neighborhood Association's goals of preserving area housing and recognizing its history, as stated in its Action Plan. Five people (four from Community Planning [one a volunteer] and a volunteer from the neighborhood) were trained by consultants from Parametrix, which was retained by the City of Vancouver to guide the process and make recommendations for the future. Each home within the subdivision was examined and an inventory form developed by the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) was filled out for each home. The inventory took approximately 94 hours to complete. Three public meetings were held at Fruit Valley's community center to update neighborhood residents on the project, and secure their input. The inventory forms have been submitted to DAHP, and will be included in the statewide online database.

Issues that were explored in the process at public meetings and

through surveys included:

- the likelihood of landmark designation for an historic district and individual properties, and incentives and requirements relating thereto;
- levels of regulation currently in place in the neighborhood and what additional code and/or zoning tools, such as mandatory or voluntary design standards, would be acceptable to a majority of residents in light of the goal of housing preservation;
- consideration of what items might be regulated, such as height, setback, door and window designs, additions, outbuildings and building materials; and
- whether new regulations, if desired, would affect just infill development and/or existing properties.

## PREHISTORIC AND HISTORIC CONTEXT OVERVIEW

### Prehistory of Fruit Valley

The following review of the prehistory is taken from an archaeological survey that was performed in 2003 by David DeLyria of Archaeology Services of Clark County for the Wellons Industrial property located at 2422 NW La Frambois Road (ARC2002-00026), just north of the Fruit Valley project area.

### Portland Basin Chronology

In his archaeological context statement for the Portland Basin, Ames (1994) developed a useful prehistoric cultural sequence. He identified the earliest occupation of the area as the Paleoindian period (prior to about 11,000-10,000 Before Present [BP].), which is associated with the fluted Clovis projectile points and other Clovis-complex traits. Although no Paleoindian sites have been identified in the Portland Basin, the occurrence of artifacts dating to this time found elsewhere in the region, particularly in eastern Oregon and Washington, suggests that the Paleoindian people traveled through and used the area.



Ames' Archaic period (10,000-5,500 B.P.) is characterized by large lanceolate, stemmed, and large, broad-necked, side-notched and corner notched projectile points. The lanceolate points found east of the Cascade Mountains are usually identified as Cascade points and are associated with the Archaic Period. During the Archaic Period, small bands of highly mobile hunter-gatherers are thought to have engaged in seasonal foraging for wild resources.

Ames identified the last 5,500 years as the Pacific period, which is subdivided into three subperiods: 1) Early (5,500-3,500 B.P.), 2) Middle (3,500-2,000 B.P.), and 3) Late (2,000-500 B.P.). The Pacific period is characterized by increased populations, the development of semi-sedentary and fully-sedentary habitations (including house architecture), increased focus on the collecting and storage of foods rather than foraging, an elaboration of material culture, including distinctive art, clothing and ornamentation, and the emergence of a class system. In short, this period is associated with increased cultural complexity. Most of the sites that have been dated to this period in the Portland Basin fall within the last 2,600 years (Ames 1994).

### **Ethnohistory**

Hajda (1994) summarized the ethnohistoric accounts of Native Americans living in the Portland Basin with emphasis on writings based on the earliest outside observations during the 1790s to the mid-1830s. After this period, malaria outbreaks killed more than three-quarters of the native population and destroyed the structure of native society.

The indigenous inhabitants of the Vancouver Lake/Lake River area were reportedly Chinookan-speaking Multnomah people (Silverstein 1990). Multnomah villages were recorded on both sides of the Columbia River and the emphasis of the Multnomahs' (and other Chinookan-speaking peoples) subsistence routine appears to have been on the procurement of the abundant food resources from the river and its flood plain, such as salmon. Plant resources also played a large part in native diet with wapato tubers and camas as the main components. Berries and other plant foods were also collected and processed for storage during the winter. Hunting of game animals produced the meat, hides, bone used for food, clothing, and tools. Large and small mammals were undoubtedly available as game in the project area,

including black-tailed deer, elk, bear, wolf, snowshoe hare, and a large variety of other animals.

Populations in the Portland Basin were centered largely in the western portion in the basin near Willamette Falls, Sauvie Island and Vancouver Lake. Most models from the region suggest that native culture evolved from semi-sedentism, with winter residences at village sites and temporary camps for food gathering during the other seasons, to full sedentism, with permanent village sites. The earliest houses are thought to have been circular structures built over bowl-shaped pits, called pit houses. Rectangular plank houses were probably built after about A.D. 1,000 (Ozbun 1995). The Multnomah lived in large plank houses during the winter, generally dispersing to fishing camps and root and berry collecting camps in spring, summer and early fall. The Chinookan people, in general, achieved a high degree of socioeconomic complexity that included social stratification, long-distance trade, and elaborate art styles.

### **Fruit Valley Neighborhood History Summary**

Euroamerican settlement in the Fruit Valley area had commenced by the middle of the Civil War. The 1863 General Land Office map indicates that much of the area was located within the Joseph Petrain Donation Land Claim #55. Born in Canada in 1820, Petrain became one of Clark County's earliest settlers when he arrived with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1836 (Ozbun 2001; Clark County 1989). Petrain had little in the way of nearby roads or neighbors, but a road or trail is indicated in the area as early as 1861 and Abraham Robie had claimed Donation Land Claim #54 by 1863. By 1883, a road which essentially follows the route of today's NW Fruit Valley Road, had been established, and two farmsteads were in operation under the ownership of people with the surnames of Seward and Dillard. Fruit Valley Road's service as a farm-to-market road was buttressed by the arrival of the Washington and Oregon Railroad (later the Northern Pacific and today the Burlington Northern Santa Fe line) by 1903. USGS maps dating from 1905 to 1954 indicate the ongoing subdivision of the Donation Land Claims which resulted in more settlement and a large number of agricultural enterprises, particularly orcharding and prune packing, as well as later industrial and transportation uses (Ozbun 2001).



In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Clark County was known as the “prune capital of the world” and Fruit Valley was the site of some of the most-extensive and productive orchards. Prune juice was a popular breakfast drink around the world, and the dried version of the fruit was a staple in an era of uncertain refrigeration and less accomplished canning practices. (Rutherford 1985). Interruptions in overseas shipping lanes due to the international conflict in World War I, however, marked the beginning of the end of the economic viability of large prune production in Clark County. Year-round production capability in a sunny California due to development of irrigation in the Central Valley, the general national economic decline of the Great Depression of the 1930s, and more reliable canning procedures further sealed the demise of large-scale prune production in Clark County (Freed 2000). For decades, however, Fruit Valley at large continued to be a significant contributor to Clark County’s agricultural production. The area today has largely given way to industrialization (Jollota 1993). Because the prune industry was largely defunct prior to World War II, however, Fruit Valley land previously valuable for agriculture became more affordable for housing. With the added factor of its physical proximity to the Alcoa aluminum plant, Fruit Valley was a logical site for a defense housing project.

### World War II Defense Housing – brief overview

Planning for housing for defense workers commenced prior to official United States entry into the war as a combatant following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December, 1941. The federal Lanham Act of 1938 authorized the construction of public housing around the country which would be managed by local housing authorities created by state enabling legislation and local governments. These Lanham Act federally-funded developments differed from previous public housing, in that they were intended for a wide variety of income levels, not just low-income residents.

However, even with official recognition of the need for defense housing, many issues remained. Coming out of the Great Depression in the late 1930s and into the military industrial ramp-up associated with World War II, the United States suddenly had about 17,000,000 new jobs around the nation. The newly-minted home-front defense

workers needed about 1,900,000 new housing units. No one knew how long the war would last, but it was generally accepted by government planners that this new housing had to meet high enough standards to allow workers to concentrate on their jobs, and not, for example, on subsistence living in tents.

Also not known was how much of the housing constructed would be needed in the areas in which it was built after the war. How much housing should be permanent and how much should be temporary? How much should be built by private developers, who logically sought to make a profit from their investment after years of economic privation during the Great Depression, versus government-built projects? And, how could it all get done quickly enough to make a difference toward international military success? Generally speaking, private developers wanted to build in areas where they could be most greatly assured of making a profit after the war. The federal government was obligated to build where the need was, whether it could sell the housing after the war for a profit or not. The harried home front construction milieu was further complicated by the realities of pre-war and wartime building material restrictions. Even though defense housing was high on the national priority list, building materials, along with furnishings, appliances, and rubber for the tires on construction equipment, were in short domestic supply, for both private and public builders. Substitute materials were developed to replace traditional ones, and existing prefabricated building techniques were honed and improved to meet the needs and build with speed (Chamberlain 1990).

Ninety per cent of housing for war workers was intended to be temporary. Of the approximately \$7.3 billion dollars spent around the nation overall on World War II defense housing, more than half of the eventual housing units constructed were built by private developers, who invested about \$5 billion in primarily permanent housing. The federal government spent about \$2.3 billion on the housing it built, which, though a combination of temporary and permanent, was primarily temporary (Chamberlain 1990).

Nine million Americans relocated around the country during World War II to work in home-front defense jobs, including 57,000 who needed homes in Vancouver because of the shipbuilding and aluminum



production enterprises. Fruit Valley, one of eight defense housing projects built in Vancouver, was one of the many places around the nation identified as a logical site where housing was needed quickly to accommodate home-front war workers. Its selection as a site for permanent housing is tied to its physical proximity to the Alcoa production facility, although Fruit Valley residents labored in the Kaiser Shipyards as well. Aluminum was a critical material in the construction of aircraft and other defense uses. While government planners could assume that the nation would eventually no longer need full-scale ship production facilities, the aluminum industry was expected to remain strong after the conclusion of the war for general construction of aircraft, and many others uses of the metal, such as cooking utensils. However, private developers apparently did not see the investment potential at the site and thus Fruit Valley is also atypical of defense housing generally because its 300 permanent dwellings were built by the federal government.

### **World War II Vancouver**

Two main industries shaped war-time Vancouver and environs into a sprawling hive of war workers: aluminum production by Alcoa and shipbuilding by Kaiser, both of which began increasing their capacity prior to the United States entering World War II as a combatant. Another point of commonality between the two facilities is that both were connected to the river – Alcoa for access to the relatively inexpensive electricity available from the Columbia River dams necessary for the electricity-intensive production process and Kaiser for ease of shipping.

American aluminum industry insiders observed first-hand an increase in German industrial production as early as 1939, and upon returning home expressed their opinions to Congress that the United States needed to do the same. Despite being embroiled in defending itself again monopoly charges leveled by the federal government, Alcoa stepped up production between 1939 and 1944, and did so with an increase in employees nationally from 26,179 to 95,044 (Alcoa 2009). Among the many production plants built or enlarged just before and during the war was one on the western edge of Vancouver, powered by electricity from Columbia River dams, begun in 1940 at its 215-

acre site and completed in mid-1941. At that time, the production capability of 150,000,000 pounds represented one-fifth of the expected output for the entire country (Purser 1941; Clark County Sun 3 January 1941).

Prior to U.S. entry into the war, the Henry J. Kaiser contracting firm was building ships for the British Navy at shipyards in Portland, Oregon and elsewhere. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Kaiser immediately expanded its existing Portland shipbuilding operations to a 400-acre site on the Vancouver side of the Columbia River. Site construction commenced on January 15, 1942. Just over a year later, the aircraft escort carrier *Alazon Bay* launched in April, 1943, from Vancouver, was followed through 1946 by 49 more of the same, along with 10 “Liberty” cargo vessels, 30 tank landing craft, and many other vessels. (Cummings, 1972; Erigero 1992).

Housing war workers from both industries largely fell to the Vancouver Housing Authority, which began operating in February, 1942. The population of Vancouver and its immediate environs in 1940 was between 18,000 and 25,000. While the number of workers employed by Alcoa could not be determined within the time frame of this report, it is well-known that Kaiser employee numbers reached as high as 38,000 (Pacific Northwest Goes to War, p.142).

During the war years, the Vancouver Housing Authority erected 12,396 housing units organized into eight projects, which could shelter around 46,000 people. (In comparison, the Seattle Housing Authority built 8400 units [Wilma 2001].) The housing sites, primarily outside of the city limits, were selected for their large size, general lack of existing development, and physical proximity to Alcoa and the Kaiser Shipyards. The 5,500 temporary houses of the 1,000 acre “McLoughlin Heights” development were the first to enter the construction process. The other temporary projects were: Bagley Downs with 2,100 row houses; Burton Homes, 1,500 row houses; Ogden Meadows, 2,000 apartments; and Columbia House dormitory complex, 7,000 beds. The projects intended for permanence were: Fourth Plain Village, 200 houses; Harney Hill, 500 houses; and Fruit Valley, 300 houses (Cummings, 1972).



Naturally, the defense workers, the majority of whom brought families, needed more than decent housing. They needed schools, libraries, shopping facilities, fire and police protection, health care, entertainment, and transportation. While Kaiser did address some of these needs, the federal government provided for some of the others, as was typical of defense housing around the nation. Vancouver war workers were provided with new schools, branch libraries, shopping centers, day care centers, and recreation centers.

By July of 1945, many war workers began leaving town as employment slowed at Kaiser and Alcoa. Post-war Vancouver annexed the war housing projects, inheriting the schools, roads, and utilities infrastructure built by the federal government. The temporary units were demolished or moved, leaving the land available for development. Permanent houses were later sold to occupants or veterans (Cumplings 1972).

### Fruit Valley in World War II

Vancouver was already a growing community prior to its exponential expansion following United States entry into World War II. By mid-1941, building permits issued by the city had surpassed the number issued by the same time the previous year, and the city appeared to be on the way to breaking its all-time permit record, set in 1928 (Clark County Sun 4 July 1941). The upswing in production requested by the National Defense Commission of Vancouver's Alcoa plant contributed to the call for housing. Thus, the need for additional local housing was already established when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, and logic dictated that at least some would be permanent.

An irregularly-shaped neighborhood with traffic-calming curvilinear streets filled with modestly-size homes, Fruit Valley contained just under one-third of the 1000 permanent housing units built to house defense workers employed at Vancouver's Kaiser Shipyards and the Alcoa aluminum plant. Planners clearly intended the development to be embraced by the city following the war as street numbers and names reflect the overall numerical and alphabetical system typical

in this part of Vancouver. Indeed, as was characteristic at permanent defense housing projects around the nation, Vancouver extended city water lines to the newly-developed areas, and indications were strong from the outset that incorporation was planned after the war.

Construction of Fruit Valley commenced in mid-August of 1942 – the first of Vancouver's permanent projects to get underway. Prune orchards were bulldozed and contractors Teufel and Carlson built the homes, as well as the other permanent housing projects in Vancouver. By January of 1943, 100 of the homes were ready for occupancy, and the housing authority was accepting applications and making tenant assignments. By mid-March of that year, all construction was complete and 200 homes occupied. The three different house plans – two single-family dwellings and one duplex – ranged in rental price from \$36.00 per month for a one-bedroom to \$45.00 for a four-bedroom. All of the homes had cedar siding and shingles, six-over-six light windows, plastered interiors, and wood floors. Each house was issued an electric refrigerator, stove, water heater, and coal-burning space heaters. Rental fees, which were paid at the Community Center, included utilities (Clark County Sun, 22 January and 19 March 1943; Turner and Richards 2009).

Construction on the remaining homes was finished soon thereafter, and all homes filled quickly with eager tenants who had moved to Vancouver from all over the country. Priority was given to workers at the Alcoa plant, but many residents worked at the shipyards. Similarly to other defense housing projects around the nation, the tenants developed a sense of community and shared purpose. They came from many different places and naturally experienced culture shock but a high level of camaraderie developed as people engaged in scrap collection drives, Red Cross activities supporting the troops, raised chickens, and planted victory gardens, in addition to their jobs as riveters, security officers, bus drivers, office workers, and many other occupations. Daily life included the wartime challenges of food, gas, and clothing rationing but some shopping was available nearby at the Red White Store, which sold groceries and general merchandise. Alcoa workers who had to walk on 100 degree F floors utilized the services of a local cobbler who nailed pieces of tire tread to the soles



of normal shoes for extra protection. The Community Center hosted a wide variety of activities, including dances and movies, and church services. A large day care center was available for young children. Older children and teens attended school in shifts as the buildings were seriously overcrowded. Fruit Valley Elementary was not completed until 1944, so the first elementary students who moved in attended Hough, which had been completed in 1941. Junior high and high school students attended Shumway and Vancouver High, respectively. Non-school hours could be occupied by jobs, scavenging grain from rail cars to feed the family chickens, playing kick the can in the park, fishing in the river and sloughs, and ice skating (Turner and Richards 2009).

After the war, defense housing project areas built outside the Vancouver city limits, including Fruit Valley, were incorporated into the city. Fruit Valley homes were put up for sale, as were other permanent war housing units in Vancouver and around the nation. In Vancouver, as elsewhere, residents already in the homes and veterans received preference in the sales process. The average sales price of Vancouver's permanent defense housing in Fruit Valley, on Harney Hill, and Fourth Plain Village, was \$5,500.

### Survey Analysis

At 300 homes, Fruit Valley was of average size for a typical domestic defense housing project intended for permanence. It reflects planning principles experimented with by late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century public housing proponents and lessons learned during construction, such as having the homes slightly offset from one another to increase privacy, and incorporation of a park and community center to stimulate community cooperation. Utilizing just three house plans with basic, mass-produced decorative elements saved money from the design process onward and yet provided some variety for residents. Mass production and pre-fabrication techniques helped lower costs from the outset; the workers quickly learned how to build the few plans. Defense housing projects like Fruit Valley paved the way to large-scale post-war suburban housing developments such as Levittown, in Buck's County, Pennsylvania which benefited from the

mass-production lessons learned in World War II.

While remarkably intact as a neighborhood, individual Fruit Valley homes have experienced a characteristic level of alteration for defense project residences of its era. Only a few homes have been lost, but only a few of the homes in original condition remain. (Infill construction, though minimal, is stylistically intrusive.) Alterations to original homes include new siding, windows, and doors, and additions of basements, rooms, porches, decks, attached carports and detached garages. While ubiquitous, these changes are typical of World War II defense housing projects nationwide. One alteration which can be found in Fruit Valley but not necessarily elsewhere is the increase in height of foundations. Some owners did this to allow space for basements but for people who lived through the drastic Vanport Flood of May, 1948, the extra height was seen as a precautionary measure (Turner and Richards 2009). After the war, as people purchased homes and construction materials were once again available, investment occurred. The modest nature of the original homes was born of wartime necessity, but decades of use made alterations logical to accommodate the growing families of the "baby boom" and changing stylistic tastes and materials preferences.

### SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND ITEMS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

The 2009 inventory process has assembled many interesting pieces of data about the history of the people and residences of Fruit Valley, and certainly helped reinforce the strong sense of history held by many current residents. However, the inventory forms indicate that Fruit Valley does not have enough concentration of the houses that have the most original details to qualify as an historic district. Ninety-nine of the homes inventoried were evaluated to have a high, or fairly high, state of architectural integrity and be considered contributing to an historic district. More than half would need to be considered contributing to be eligible. To be listed on a landmark register, buildings must not only have a documented history, but also retain a majority of the original building materials and style features.

However, these issues do not alter the fact that a major part of



Vancouver's history is still represented by this World War II-era neighborhood. Individual properties with a high level of architectural integrity might still qualify for the state or local historic registers. Owners of those properties can find information about the designation process, and the advantages of pursuing it, at <http://www.co.clark.wa.us/longrangeplan/historic/register.html>. Should the neighborhood decide at some point in the future to again consider formation of an historic district at either the state (Washington Heritage Register) or local (Clark County Heritage Register) level, answers to frequently asked questions can be found at: <http://www.dahp.wa.gov/pages/LocalGovernment/documents/LocalHistoricDistricts.pdf>.

Whether historic designation is pursued for any of the available heritage registers, the neighborhood's desire to preserve and pass forward its ambiance and history can still be addressed. Design guidelines for existing properties and infill can be established which are very basic but yet provide examples of how original features can be saved or re-created. Such guidelines could have historic photos showing what the buildings looked like originally and some drawings that highlight the most characteristic features, and some information about how to replicate missing details.

Another opportunity for preservation is to have the city create an overlay district that reflects the historic nature of the neighborhood.

Additional collection of historic information could be accomplished by including forms in the neighborhood newsletter to collect historic information on individual properties, and by conducting additional oral history interviews.

To make the past part of the present, information gathered might be included in articles in the neighborhood newsletter or developed into an historic exhibit or plaque located at a central place within the neighborhood where it would be accessible by residents, and students at the nearby elementary school. Local commemoration might include a Fruit Valley Homecoming Day where residents remember how their neighborhood helped

win an international war, and have a celebration in the park. Neighborhoods can preserve and commemorate their history, whether as an historic district or through other meaningful activities.



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