

Monmouth’s Post-War Development Historic Context Statement

Peter Meijer Architecture, 2011

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of survey

The purpose of the 2011 survey work conducted for the City of Monmouth is to add to the City's knowledge of the historic resources making up the built environment. The City's Historic Inventory currently includes survey work done in 1987 as well as work done in 2009/2010. The 2011 survey update includes 98 properties identified by Monmouth's Historic Buildings and Sites Commission over the past year. The City is interested in a possible local downtown historic district, as well as a possible district of "Mid-Century Modern" residences. The survey work also adds to the body of knowledge maintained by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) with regards to the historic resources within Monmouth, Polk County, and the State of Oregon.

This Historic Context Statement is focused on the Mid-Century Modern period in Monmouth because the survey work combined with this Historic Context Statement will enable the City of Monmouth to move forward with a local or possibly a National Register designation for a group of surveyed properties (the Gentle Woods Neighborhood). The City is not required to designate this area at all, and conversely the City may wish to do further survey work for properties that fit within this potential time period and type, to add to the area that might potentially be designated.

Complete survey results for all 98 properties, including those in the Gentle Woods Neighborhood, are found in the Final Survey Report. The report includes some suggestions for various options to be considered by the City of Monmouth for recognition, grouping, and preservation of surveyed properties that were constructed prior to the mid-century modern era and in other areas of Monmouth. This Historic Context Statement also includes some options for the City of Monmouth to consider (see Recommendations section).

B. Significance of modern period in Monmouth

This historic context statement and survey illustrates a brief history of Monmouth during the mid-century modern era, circa 1935 to 1965. The modern period marks an era of rapid population growth in Monmouth. In fact, the City experienced the highest rate of growth in the Willamette Valley, 8.1%, between 1960 and 1961.¹ The results of this growth impacted planning, residential development, educational facilities, and utilities for the city, making the mid-century modern era a significant period in Monmouth's history.

¹ "Monmouth Leads Valley Towns in Rate of Growth," *Monmouth Herald*, November 23, 1961.

II. HISTORIC CONTEXT

A. Early History

Monmouth's early history centers around the development of the university now referred to as Western Oregon University. According to an excerpt in *A Century of Polk County History 1859-1959*, "the settlers who founded Monmouth came from Monmouth, Illinois with the intention of establishing a church and theological school."² The founding families donated 640 acres from their collective land claims to develop a town site which they platted in 1855.³ The original plat included four blocks along Main Street between College Street and Warren Street. Surrounding "out lots" were sold to fund the construction of the educational buildings.⁴ The first school was a one-room wooden schoolhouse, opened in 1856 with approximately forty students, but by 1871, the college's Campbell Hall was under construction.⁵ The town quickly expanded from the center lots and became a growing economy supported by commerce, agriculture, and the school.⁶

B. Transportation

Railroads

Two railroads served Monmouth leading up to the modern period, the narrow gauge Oregonian Railroad (later the Southern Pacific) which ran down Warren Street from 1881 to 1937, and the Independence and Monmouth Railroad (I & M), which operated along Jackson Street from 1889 to 1919, growing to provide passenger service to Airlie and Dallas.⁷ The I & M railroad was a result of a business plan by the Polk County Land Company, who, by having this transportation connection between the two towns, succeeded in selling several lots along the two-mile stretch between the two towns.⁸ In 1961, the Monmouth and Independence planning commissions voted to redevelop the abandoned "I & M railroad right-of-way as the major traffic artery between the two cities" by widening and improving Jackson Street.⁹

Roads

The streets of downtown Monmouth have a traditional grid pattern, established during the city's founding. The 1931 Sanborn map illustrates that Main Street was the predominant east-to-west thoroughfare, while Warren Street, also the right-of-way for the Southern Pacific Railroad line, provided the most direct north-to-south route. The mid-century sparked progression in transportation in Monmouth. The main street arteries were widened, and storm sewers added to drain several of the arterial streets.¹⁰ East Avenue, also running north-to-south, became the Pacific Highway after Highway 99W was re-routed through Monmouth in 1953. In 1953, a notice in the *Monmouth Herald* called for bids for building of 4.32 miles of the new highway.¹¹ Several bridges were constructed as part of this development, including

² Centennial Book Committee, *A Century of Polk County History 1859-1959* (Dallas, OR: Curry Print Shop), 1959, 1.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid, 2.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ "Monmouth Historic Overview," 2010.

⁸ Beulah H. Craven, "Monmouth History" in *1950-1951 Classified Directory and Guide Book for Central Willamette Valley and the North Santiam Canyon*, ed. by Parker Comfort & Associates, (Salem, OR: Capital Press, 1950), 71.

⁹ "Planning Groups Unite on Route; Name Officers," *Monmouth Herald*, April 6, 1961.

¹⁰ Ronald L. Chatham, *Physical and Economic Survey: Monmouth and Independence Oregon, 1959* (Monmouth OR: Educational Material Productions, Oregon College of Education, 1959), 36.

¹¹ "Bids Called for Building of New Hwy N," *Monmouth Herald*, September 24, 1953, 1.

a reinforced concrete slab span bridge over the middle fork of Ash Creek in 1953 and the Rickreall Crossing in 1961.^{12 13}

Airport

Monmouth had an airport for a short time post-World War II. In 1946, local resident Floyd King opened an airstrip north of town, but it quickly closed in 1949 after several fatal plane crashes, including a crash that killed King in 1949.¹⁴

C. Residential Development

Population growth in Monmouth is significant to defining the development trends during the mid-century modern era. A 1972 Comprehensive Plan for the city illustrates the growth from each decade in the era:

- 1930-1940: 967-1000 people
- 1940-1950: approx. 1000 to 1940 people
- 1950-1960: 1940 to 2229 people
- 1960-1970: 2229 to 5237 people¹⁵

The 1940s growth likely marks the influx of nearby rural residents displaced from the Camp Adair Cantonment in 1942. Population growth in the 1950s was slow but steady. During the 1960s, Monmouth's population increased by over 130%. This was the fourth highest population gain in Oregon during the decade and resulted in high demands for residential development in Monmouth.¹⁶

Residential development grew substantially during the mid-century modern period. In the 1950s, over 100 new houses were constructed, increasing the housing stock by over 15%.¹⁷ These houses were constructed in several parts of Monmouth, with concentrations near the university, in the southwest and southeast corners of the city along Walnut Drive and near South Street, and in the northeast near High Street.¹⁸ This northeast area was further developed in the early and mid 1960s into the Gentle Woods residential neighborhood. According to mid-century architectural historian Adrienne Donovan-Boyd, "the post-war building boom was driven by the ease of acquiring prefabricated materials, advancements in building technologies, and the need to house a population of soldiers returning from war."¹⁹

Residential development in Monmouth reflects these trends with its transition from Craftsman bungalows and English Cottage style houses to the clustered development of World War II Era cottages, Minimal Traditional style cape cods, and early, traditional, and contemporary ranches.

Although Monmouth has always been a 'college town' and presumably would have had several multi-family residences to support student housing, the majority of building types representative of the mid-century modern period are actually single-family residential houses. Statistics from a 1972 comprehensive plan state that single-family residential comprised 40.77% of the buildings, duplexes were 1.82%, and multi-family housing was only 6.27%. Several single-family residences were renovated to support student housing towards the end of the modern period and into the 1970s by adding additions

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "Rebuilding Set for Rickreall Crossing," *Monmouth Herald*, August 4, 1960.

¹⁴ Scott McArthur, *Monmouth Oregon: The Saga of a Small American Town* (Monmouth, OR: Scott McArthur, 2004), 187.

¹⁵ Mid Willamette Valley Council of Governments, *Comprehensive Plan, Monmouth, Oregon* (Salem, OR: Mid Willamette Valley Council of Governments, 1972), 11.

¹⁶ Ibid., 9.

¹⁷ Chatham, 20.

¹⁸ Chatham, 20.

¹⁹ Adrienne Donovan-Boyd, *Mid Century Lake Oswego* (Lake Oswego, OR: City of Lake Oswego Planning Department, 2010), 153.

with multiple units, converting garages to living quarters, or dividing larger houses into smaller residential units.

Downtown

Downtown has been the Monmouth's center since its founding and remained the heart of the city through the modern period. The area has a mix of commercial, residential, public and religious buildings that were constructed during several decades of the city's history. More than eight destructive fires occurred in downtown Monmouth before the modern period, destroying many of the early commercial buildings.²⁰ Monmouth rebuilt its downtown sporadically, and the buildings reflect several periods of growth for the city. During the modern period, density in downtown Monmouth grew substantially. Generally, larger lots with turn-of-the-century and early 20th century residences were subdivided to create smaller lots for Minimal Traditional cape cods, World War II-era cottages, and early ranches. This pattern of development occurred in clusters, with intact examples in several locations, including:

- The northeast block along East Clay Street and North Warren Street (south of Main St.)
- The north block on East Clay street between Knox and Broad Streets (south of Main St.)
- The north blocks along East Jackson Street between Broad Street and Pacific Avenue (north of Main St.)
- On Broad Street north of East Powell Street (north of Main St.)

Very few apartment buildings were constructed downtown during this period to support the growing student population, but several of the larger houses appear to have been converted to multi-family residential use for this purpose.

Gentle Woods

The Gentle Woods neighborhood, platted in several additions during the mid-1960s, is one of the best examples of mid-century modern residential development in Monmouth. The Gentles were a prominent family in Monmouth's early twentieth century history. The family arrived in Monmouth in 1911 after Thomas Gentle was appointed the Director of Teacher Education for the Oregon Normal School.²¹ They purchased a 160-acre dairy farm on the north end of town.²² The oldest of the five children, James Gentle, platted four additions in the 1960s on some of the original family dairy acreage, creating the Gentle Woods neighborhood.

Gentle Woods is characterized by its traditional and contemporary ranch style residences, curved streets named after Gentle family members, and a heavily forested landscape.²³ One landowner reports that Oregon Ash is a dominant species, while Oregon White oak, Black cottonwood and Big Leaf maple trees also contribute to the wooded landscape of the neighborhood.²⁴ The well-landscaped gardens in Gentle Woods highlight the indoor-outdoor living atmosphere that characterizes the Ranch style. The ranch style house expressed several other social transitions and ideals of the nation post-World War II, including changes in federal policies to promote homeownership on an unprecedented level, new technologies learned in the war, and an informal, suburban lifestyle.²⁵ The growing popularity and affordability of the

²⁰ McArthur, 50.

²¹ Polk County Historical Society, 109.

²² Ibid.

²³ Gordon W. Clarke, *The Streets We Live On: A Study of the Street Names of Independence, Monmouth, and Falls City, Oregon* (Monmouth, OR: Polk County Historical Society, 1978), 13.

²⁴ Caroline Ward, "Middle Fork Ash Creek Wildlife and Habitat Corridor Report, Monmouth, Or," preliminary site report (Polk County Historical Society, date unknown).

²⁵ "City of Monmouth Architectural Styles and Guidelines," 2010, 17.

automobile also contributed to the development of the ranch style, which incorporated garages into the main body of the house.²⁶

D. Commercial Development

During the modern period, most of the economy still came from the college or the agriculture industry. In the 1950s, 55% of the total land area had an agricultural use, operated by the twenty-six farms in the city limits.²⁷ Crops were mostly grain, but also included filberts, pears, and cherries.²⁸ Several crops broke records in 1953, including strawberries and wheat; and Monmouth's successes matched this trend.²⁹ However, parcels of agricultural land were being developed as new residential neighborhoods in Monmouth.³⁰ Local commerce matched the agricultural growth in Monmouth. In 1954 a *Monmouth Herald* article connects the Monmouth branch of the U.S. National Bank to the banks nationwide continued financial growth.³¹

Commerce was centered on Main Street. The Monmouth Branch of the U.S. National Bank of Portland was the only bank operating in Monmouth in 1950.³² A hotel, theater, five churches, a sawmill, feed mill, grain warehouse, brick and tile factory, and a brush factory supported the local economy.³³ There were nine service stations, four grocery stores, and several other miscellaneous retail establishments.³⁴ In 1960, a three-bay concrete block fire hall was built behind city hall with the capacity to house six fire trucks.³⁵ The same year, the library was moved to the space in the 1929 City Hall building where the trucks were previously stored.³⁶

Religion remained a central part of Monmouth's social activity throughout the city's history, lasting through the modern period. By 1950 there were five churches in Monmouth, and more were constructed during the 1950s.^{37 38}

Camp Adair

In 1942, with the onslaught of World War II, approximately 56,000 acres of agricultural land in Polk and Benton Counties were taken for U.S. Army Camp Adair, forcing 6,000 residents to evacuate their houses.³⁹ Many of these evacuees relocated to nearby Monmouth. This movement brought thousands of soldiers and local residents into the community, and Camp Adair itself was at that time the second largest

²⁶ Donovan-Boyd, 155.

²⁷ Chatham, 20.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ "Many Oregon Farmers Did Well in 1953, Year End Look Shows," *Monmouth Herald*, December 31, 1953, 5.

³⁰ Chatham, 20.

³¹ "Bank Report Shows Continued Growth," *Monmouth Herald*, January 14, 1954, 1.

³² Craven, 72.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Chatham, 25.

³⁵ McArthur, 58.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Parker, Driscoll & Beatrice Driscoll, eds., "Monmouth Statistics" in *Classified Directory and Guide Book for the Central Willamette Valley and the North Santiam Canyon* (Salem, OR: Capital Press, 1952), 72.

³⁸ "Pedee Church is Organized, Plan New Building," *Monmouth Herald*, January 7, 1954, 1.

³⁹ Polk County Historical Society, *History of Polk County Oregon* (Monmouth, OR: Polk County Historical Society/Taylor Publishing Co., 1987), 8.

city in Oregon, with roughly 40,000 troops housed there.⁴⁰ However, war shortages on goods made it difficult for Monmouth commerce to benefit from the increased customer base. The U.S. Army used the camp until 1946. After the military departed, many of the former residents returned and “brought the land back to production, built and rebuilt homes and began life anew.”⁴¹ The U.S. government leased several buildings to local businesses, and several local enterprises used the space.⁴² Businesses such as the Adair Plywood Mill and a turkey-processing plant helped to bring employment and economic vitality back to the community.⁴³ A part of the military base has become a wildlife preserve and restored as a seasonal wetland.

Centennial Celebration of Monmouth, 1956

Monmouth celebrated its centennial in May 1956. Several publications were written promoting the event and the city’s history. A close analysis of the *Monmouth Herald* suggests that, although the city grew and prospered during this decade, there was no commercial building activity in Monmouth associated with the Centennial celebration.

Urban Renewal

In 1960, the Monmouth City Council voted to start a local Urban Renewal agency.⁴⁴ Through this organization, the City and several local businesses remodeled downtown buildings.⁴⁵ Urban Renewal, in several instances across the nation, precluded the destruction and demolition of many significant downtown historic resources. The City of Monmouth did not appear to suffer the same multitude of loss in its downtown commercial core as other cities in the Willamette Valley, as many of the 1920s and 1930s commercial buildings retain their original storefront designs. Urban renewal was intended to spur economic growth in central areas. Following this lead, Monmouth adopted a new zoning map in 1962, which allowed for the conversion of several early mid-century residences along the north side of Main Street to commercial use, specifically between Broad Street and Pacific Avenue.⁴⁶ The Urban Renewal agency in Monmouth was disbanded in the 1960’s but a new agency was formed in approximately 2005, and continues to provide financial assistance for programs meant to restore and revitalize the properties along Main Street and Pacific Avenue.⁴⁷

E. Education

Public Schools

Monmouth’s educational facilities served not only City residents, but also absorbed students from nearby communities whose districts closed during the mid-century modern period. For example, Camp Adair forced the closure of the Airlie School District (among others) in 1941, and the Monmouth district absorbed the remaining students.⁴⁸

⁴⁰ Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife website (E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area): http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/visitors/ee_wilson_wildlife_area/history.asp (Accessed March 26, 2011)

⁴¹ Polk County Historical Society, *History of Polk County Oregon*, 8.

⁴² “New Industries Start at Adair, Variety is Wide,” *Monmouth Herald*, January 21, 1954.

⁴³ “Adair Plywood Mill Damaged by Blaze,” *Monmouth Herald*, December 22, 1960.

⁴⁴ “Agency Set Up for Local Urban Renewal Start,” *Monmouth Herald*, January 5, 1961.

⁴⁵ “\$20,000 Remodeling Job Starts at Bank,” *Monmouth Herald*, July 20, 1961.

⁴⁶ Clark & Groff Engineers, “City of Monmouth, Oregon Zoning Map,” 1962.

⁴⁷ Monmouth Urban Renewal Agency, “Urban Renewal Plan Monmouth, Oregon,” 2005.

http://www.ci.monmouth.or.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={0CE6819C-115A-42D8-A6B3-368994717666} (Accessed February 14, 2011).

⁴⁸ McArthur, 79.

Monmouth and Independence citizens voted in 1949, approving the merger of their two school districts to become Central School District #13C, and also approved the construction of a single high school, Central High School, in between the two communities.⁴⁹ In the early 1950s, Monmouth had one elementary school with approximately 320 students.⁵⁰ The high school, constructed in 1951 after district consolidation with Independence, had approximately 340 students.⁵¹

In 1959, the surrounding rural school districts also consolidated into the Central School District. The old Monmouth High School on the northwest corner of Powell and Knox Streets was left vacant until torn down in 1963.⁵² The increase in enrollment caused by displaced residents from Camp Adair, consolidation of school districts, and the growing baby-boomer population substantially increased the demand for more classroom space. Monmouth Elementary School purchased land near Gentle Woods in 1962 to construct an additional 7-classroom school.⁵³

University

Western Oregon University, originally Monmouth University, has operated under multiple names during its history, due to public or private ownership and policies, but the facility established itself in educating teachers as the state's normal school. In 1939, "normal" schools were renamed "colleges of education," and the school, previously called the Oregon State Normal School, was renamed the Oregon College of Education (OCE).⁵⁴ There were 480 students enrolled in 1939, but enrollment dropped substantially during the war.⁵⁵ Enrollment increased again after the war and experienced steady growth through the 1950s, reaching nearly 1000 students in this decade, followed by massive growth in the mid 1960s.⁵⁶ The post-war era brought sustained growth to Oregon, allowing people to live a much higher standard of living than they had before, and college attendance boomed across the state.⁵⁷ The construction of new buildings, such as a library in 1951, supported student increases, as up to 3727 individuals enrolled to meet the growing demand of teachers necessary to educate the country's 'baby boomer' youth.⁵⁸

The college maintained a strong presence in Monmouth through the mid-century modern period, supporting most of the city's economic base with faculty, staff, and facilities, along with housing and commerce. In a 1972 Comprehensive Plan, the Oregon College of Education was listed as comprising 25% of the land in the city limits.⁵⁹ College students occupied several non-campus residences surrounding the university.

F. Parks

Main Street Park

Main Street Park encompasses Block 8 of the City of Monmouth plat. Although the 1881 plat of Monmouth includes a "Public Square Block" one block west of today's Main Street Park, the founders

⁴⁹ Ibid., 80.

⁵⁰ "Monmouth Statistics," 118.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² McArthur, 81.

⁵³ Polk County Historical Society, 33.

⁵⁴ "Campbell Hall to 1971," (Oregon College of Education Cornerstone Committee), 1971, 8.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ David Peterson del Mar, *Oregon's Promise* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2003), 221.

⁵⁸ "Campbell Hall to 1971," 9.

⁵⁹ Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments, *Comprehensive Plan, Monmouth, Oregon, May 1972* (Salem, OR: Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments, 1972), 17.

chose to sell the lots on this block in their need for extra money. The City, over the next several decades, pieced together through several property acquisitions, a two-lot parcel along Main Street, that, in 1924 was appointed an informal public park.⁶⁰ By 1950, the park had official funding, and included playground equipment for children and a 1940 WPA constructed fountain.^{61,62} In 1961, the City of Monmouth launched its annual 4th of July celebration with a community picnic, games, and a talent contest at the Main Street Park.⁶³ A parade ensued the next year and has occurred every year since.⁶⁴

Gentle Woods Park

Gentle Woods Park was not always a neighborhood recreation area with picturesque views of rolling grass, evergreen trees, and a bubbling creek. From 1925 to 1951, the City of Monmouth operated its sewage treatment plant on this property.⁶⁵ After closing the plant, the City, along with local volunteers, redeveloped the land as Gentle Woods Park.⁶⁶ The park now includes several acres surrounding the former sewage plant property.

Polk County Fairgrounds

The Polk County Fairgrounds were located in Monmouth, on a large lot west of the college, from 1929 to 1952.⁶⁷ In 1951, the city sold the 6.5-acre Polk County fairgrounds to the state.⁶⁸ This land is now the WOU athletic field.

G. Utilities

Electricity

Electricity in Monmouth has been municipally owned and paid for since 1940, and provided power from the Bonneville Power dam.⁶⁹ According to 1950s historian Beulah H. Craven, Monmouth was said to have the lowest electricity rates in the state, and was also among the lowest in the nation.⁷⁰

Telephone

Dial-system telephones were installed in 1942, making Monmouth the first city in Polk County to offer this service.⁷¹ The automated switching facility for this service was located in a 12x18-foot building at the northeast corner of Knox and Jackson Streets.⁷² This space was abandoned in the early 1960s when Monmouth and Independence combined their switching services, and the City later used the property as the site of the new library in 1968.⁷³

Water & Sewer

⁶⁰ McArthur, 172.

⁶¹ Craven, 73 .

⁶² “Monmouth Historic Overview, 2010.

⁶³ McArthur, 196.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 123, 125.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 172.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 201.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 22.

⁶⁹ Morlan, 36.

⁷⁰ Craven, 72.

⁷¹ McArthur, 130.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

Monmouth, like several small Oregon towns, struggled to establish a water and sewage system that sufficiently served its citizens. Water came from Teal Creak in the foothills of the Coastal Range, but Monmouth suffered several summer water shortages during the mid-century.⁷⁴ In 1969, the City purchased land in Independence and dug five new wells to solve the water shortages and provide sufficient water to its citizens.⁷⁵

During the modern period, Monmouth's sewage treatment facility was located in what would become Gentle Woods Park, until 1951, when Monmouth and Independence decided to build a joint treatment facility.⁷⁶ This new sewer plant, constructed in 1951, suffered from both design and political issues from the start. In 1962, Monmouth aborted its joint sewage plan with Independence to form its own settling ponds east of town.⁷⁷ The former sewer plant in Monmouth was converted into part of Gentle Woods Park.

H. Overall Impact of Mid-century Modern Period in Monmouth

This historic context statement and survey illustrates a brief history of Monmouth during the mid-century modern era, circa 1935 to 1965. The modern period marks an era of rapid population growth in Monmouth, especially in the latter part of the period.

Patterns of development included more infill, both within the campus and in the downtown area, as well as a new pattern of development dating from the later part of the Mid-century Modern Period. The infill development did typically reflect a new "Mid-century" aesthetic, but the street and lot pattern was not changed. The new pattern of development, however, can be characterized as less rectilinear, both in street layout and in lot configuration, and with larger individual lots. This pattern, clearly visible on maps of Monmouth, reflected the broad societal move in the United States towards a less formal lifestyle, with outdoor areas and plantings as important facets of this style of living and a more horizontally-focused architecture.

At the same time, the impact of the automobile allowed for Monmouth residents, as well as residents of small towns across the U.S., to begin to work in areas further from where they lived. People could also share resources with nearby communities, such as the high school developed between Monmouth and Independence in 1951 and the shared sewer facility with Independence, also 1951 (but dismantled in the early 1960's). Attached garages are prevalent in development from this period, reflecting the importance of the private automobile.

The mid-century modern era in Monmouth strongly impacted planning, residential development, educational facilities, architecture, and utilities for the city, making this era a significant period in Monmouth's history.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 113.

⁷⁵ McArthur, 115.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 125.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 126.

III. IDENTIFICATION

A. Methodology

Survey methodology followed the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) document, “Guidelines for Conducting Historic Resource Surveys in Oregon,” revised February 2008. The survey, a selective Reconnaissance-Level Survey, with properties to be surveyed already identified and listed by the City of Monmouth, was physically conducted over two days, January 24 and 26, 2011.

Properties were photographed, identified, and evaluated during the physical survey, and information was then entered into the SHPO database. At the same time, research into the history of Monmouth was conducted, using resources from the Monmouth Public Library, the Multnomah County Library, the Polk County Museum, the Independence Heritage Museum, and from the City of Monmouth staff. A context statement for the mid-century period in Monmouth was drafted and incorporated into a final survey report, along with survey results and recommendations.

B. Survey Results

This selective reconnaissance level survey evaluated 98 properties. The buildings are comprised of 92 residential buildings, 5 commercial buildings, and one park. Many of the resources have undergone a great deal of alteration in cladding materials or plan, but some retain a good degree of physical integrity. Of the 98 resources, 32 (33%) can be considered contributing resources, 7 (7%) are out of period, and 59 (60%) are considered not eligible. No significant or already listed resources were surveyed.

While these results are for National Register eligibility, the percentage of local landmark-eligible properties is substantially higher, with 56 (57%) of the properties eligible for local designation. Additionally, most of the out of period properties may be considered eligible as contemporary style residences in Monmouth when they reach 50 years in age. The results are further explained in relation to the specific survey areas:

- In the **Gentle Woods** neighborhood, 11 out of the 25 surveyed properties (44%) can be considered National Register contributing resources, while 15 properties (60%) could contribute to a local district. Seven properties in Gentle Woods (28%) were constructed after 1969 and are out of period. Seven of the properties (28%) are not eligible for either National Register or local designation. One property, Gentle Woods Park, constructed c. 1965, is a landscape and is considered an eligible and contributing resource.
- In **Downtown Monmouth**, 16 of the 36 surveyed properties (44%) can be considered National Register contributing resources, while 24 (67%) could contribute to a local district. Twelve of the properties (33%) are not eligible for either National Register or local designation.
- In the **other areas** dispersed in Monmouth, 14 of the 37 surveyed properties (38%) can be considered National Register contributing resources, while 17 (46%) could be considered for local designation. This grouping is dispersed throughout several neighborhoods in Monmouth, so district eligibility is not considered. Twenty of the properties (54%) are not eligible for either National Register or local designation.

C. Resource Types

Of the 92 surveyed residential buildings; one is a multiple dwelling while 91 are single-family houses. Of the surveyed residential buildings, 51 (55%) were constructed during the Modern Period and include World War II Era Cottage (11%), Minimal Traditional and Cape Cod (16%), Ranch (25%), and Split-level and Contemporary styles (3%). Additionally, 20 (22%) are from late 19th/20th Century American movements, constructed predominantly in the Craftsman style, 10 (11%) are period revivals, constructed predominantly in the English Cottage style, but also include 2 Spanish Revival residences; 7 (8%) are Vernacular; and 4 (4%) were constructed during the Victorian era in the Queen Anne style.

The one apartment building surveyed, located at 181 Knox Street N., was constructed in 1925 in the Colonial/Gothic Revival style. This can be considered a contributing property and deserves further research.

The four commercial buildings were constructed at different times in different styles:

- The specialty store at 303 Main St. E. was constructed in 1900 in a Commercial style
- The department stores at 155 Main St. W. and 169 Main St. W. were both constructed in 1930 in the Commercial style.

The drive-in restaurant at 310 Main St. E. was constructed in 1969 in the Mansard style

D. Significant Groupings

The 98 properties surveyed in the 2011 survey fell into two general areas; a small, focused residential area east of Pacific Avenue and a larger area centered on Main Street west of Pacific covering nine blocks east-west and about 6 blocks north-south. Of the properties surveyed, 32 were found to meet the age and integrity standards to qualify for “contributing” status, by National Register standards. However, many other surveyed properties appear eligible for contributing status in a locally-designated Historic District. At this time, no potential National Register-eligible districts can be identified in the survey area west of Pacific Avenue, given the disparities in location, the relatively few eligible resources among those surveyed, some contemporary construction dates, and the various eras of development represented.

The City has a number of options for locally designating or otherwise bringing attention and interest to the Main Street area. A typical downtown historic district at the National Register level would have a level of cohesiveness of building type or era of development, and Monmouth’s Main Street corridor does not appear to have sufficient cohesiveness to be this type of commercial historic district. Monmouth’s oldest downtown commercial corridor, along Main Street, is made up of a number of resources developed at different times and for different uses. While some of these properties were and are still commercial in use, others were initially residential and have been adapted to commercial use. Monmouth’s Main Street core area exhibits a very interesting and illustrative collection of representative building types, many of which are worthy of individual local or even National Register listing, preservation efforts, and community pride.

The Mid-Century Modern properties identified in the 2011 survey, located east of Pacific Avenue, are much more cohesive, and the survey finds that a small district in the Gentle Woods neighborhood is

eligible for either local or even possible National Register listing. Although some of the original residences have been altered with non-compatible siding or other significant changes, many of the structures built during the proposed period of significance for this area (from 1960 to 1969) retain sufficient integrity to be eligible/contributing. The start date for this proposed period of significance is the year the first residences were constructed in the area, and the period extends to 1969 when a horizontal ranch style with shallow gable roofs is replaced by a more angular “Contemporary” style. These “Contemporaries” all date from 1970 into the mid-1970’s, and may be found eligible in a future survey, but are not currently contributing to a focused district of Mid-Century Modern structures.

IV. EVALUATION

A. National Register Eligibility

In accordance with the *Guidelines for Conducting Historic Resource Surveys in Oregon*, this project evaluates the National Register eligibility of surveyed properties.⁷⁸ To be considered eligible, properties must meet criteria and integrity requirements as set forth by the Secretary of the Interior. Properties are then ranked according to their ability to meet these requirements:

Eligibility is ranked into the following classifications:

Eligible/Significant (ES): already listed in the National Register.

Eligible/Contributing (EC): meets age and integrity requirements for National Register listing

Not Eligible/Not Contributing (NC): meets age but not integrity requirements

Not Eligible/Out of Period (NP): does not meet age requirement

National Register Criteria

The Secretary of the Interior has outlined four broad criteria by which resources are evaluated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The criteria describes associations to an event, a person, architectural construction or design, or if the resource has information or value potential. The following are outlined in detail by the *Department of the Interior's National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria*.⁷⁹

Specifically, the criteria are as follows:

- A. Association with an event** – This criterion is used when a property is associated with an event that marks an important moment in history or a pattern of events or an historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of a community, state, or nation.
- B. Association with a person** – This criterion is applied when a property is associated with individuals who are significant to our past, because they are “demonstrably important within a local, State, or national historic context”
- C. Design and/or construction attributes** – This criterion is applied if a property embodies the “distinctive characteristic of a type, period or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or that represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.”
- D. Information value or potential** – This criterion is applied when a resource has yielded or may yield information important to history or prehistory.

In addition to the above National Register criteria, certain considerations are included for properties that generally would not be considered eligible for the National Register. These Criteria Considerations can apply:

- a. Religious properties** are ineligible for the National Register unless it is determined to be significant for architectural or artistic distinction, or historical significance.

⁷⁸ Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, *Guidelines for Conducting Historic Resource Surveys in Oregon* (Salem, OR: Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, 2008).

⁷⁹ United States Department of the Interior, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, (Washington D. C.: National Park Service, 1990), 11.

- b. A building or structure that has **been moved** from its original location is generally not considered eligible, unless it is significant primarily for architectural value, or it is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event.
- c. **Birthplaces or graves** of historical figures are ineligible unless the individual is of outstanding importance and there is no appropriately eligible site or building directly associated with his or her productive life.
- d. **Cemeteries** are not considered eligible for the National Register unless it derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events.
- e. **Reconstructed buildings** are ineligible unless it is accurately executed in a suitable environment and is presented in a dignified manner as part of a master restoration plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived.
- f. Properties that are primarily **commemorative** in nature are considered ineligible unless its design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance apart from its commemoration.
- g. A property must have achieved its significance **beyond the past 50 years** to be considered eligible unless it is of exceptional importance.⁸⁰

Integrity

In the field of historic preservation *integrity* is used to describe a resource's ability to illustrate significant aspects of its past. Integrity becomes especially important in evaluating and reviewing existing or proposed alterations to a property at the time of designation. The National Register criteria describes historic integrity in terms of seven individual aspects or qualities including location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling.⁸¹ When resources retain most of these aspects, they are described as retaining historic integrity. If a resource has undergone multiple alterations, historic integrity can become compromised and, in many cases, lost entirely. This happens when the resource itself undergoes changes, but also when the surrounding area, or the setting, is substantially changed. Loss of integrity in one category does not preclude it from being evaluated as significant or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or Monmouth's Local Landmarks List, while the loss of integrity in many categories would likely inhibit the resource's ability to be designated on any historic list.

The seven aspects of integrity, as identified by the National Register of Historic Places, are explained as follows:

- **Location:** the place where the historic property was constructed or where the historic event took place.
- **Design:** the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a historic property.
- **Setting:** the physical environment of a historic property.
- **Materials:** the elements combined to create the historic property.
- **Workmanship:** the physical evidence of the craft of a particular people or culture.
- **Feeling:** the property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
- **Association:** the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.⁸²

⁸⁰ United States Department of the Interior, 25.

⁸¹ Ibid., 44.

⁸² Ibid.

B. Local Landmark Eligibility

Historic properties can also be designated on a local level, whether or not they have National Register eligibility. Local landmark listing is an important preservation planning tool for properties that may not be eligible for NR status due to loss of integrity, but still depict significant aspects of the local history. Local Landmark programs can facilitate innovative preservation planning strategies that are targeted to meet the creative and specific needs of local communities. The City of Monmouth has a Local Landmarks program that is administered by the Historic Buildings and Sites Commission. The City's criteria for landmark designation is similar to the National Register of Historic Places, but has been modified to meet the City's goals for preservation planning in Monmouth.

Local Landmark Criteria

Historic resources, meaning buildings, structures, objects, or sites of historic, architectural, archeological, or cultural significance can be designated as local Landmarks by the Historic Buildings and Sites Commission, as outlined in the City of Monmouth city code 26.130.⁸³ Designation requires that the historic resource meet the following criteria, as excerpted from the city ordinance:

The historic resource must have **archeological significance**, meaning the site has potential to yield information significant in pre-history or history; or **architectural significance**, meaning that the building:

- (1) Portrays the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
- (2) Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type/specimen;
- (3) Is the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city; or
- (4) Contains elements of architectural design, detail materials or craftsmanship, which represents a significant innovation.

In addition, the historic resource must have historic significance, meaning that the building is at least 50 years old and:

- (1) Has character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the city, state or nation;
- (2) Is the site of a historic event with an effect upon society;
- (3) Is identified with a person or group of persons who had some influence on society; or
- (4) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historic heritage of the community.⁸⁴

C. Findings

Eligible/Contributing properties:

None of the 98 properties surveyed were already listed in the National Register of Historic Places, but 32 properties were ranked as eligible for National Register listing or eligible as a contributing property in a National Register Historic District.

Downtown Monmouth:
192 Broad St. S.

⁸³ City of Monmouth, "Monmouth City Code," 1990. <http://www.ci.monmouth.or.us/vertical/Sites/{CE78EAE1-6CA4-4610-BDB0-A9B3B0A8BB71}/uploads/{0498288C-B982-4B38-A9F7-AF7470D08433}.PDF> (accessed February 9, 2011).

⁸⁴ Ibid.

311 Jackson St. E.
314 Jackson St. E.
181 Knox St. N.
155 Main St. W.
169 Main St. W.
310 Main St. E.
348 Main St. E.

Gentle Woods Neighborhood

733 Caroline Way N.
792 Caroline Way N.
684 Craven St. N.
766 Craven St. N.
772 Craven St. N.
789 Craven St. N.
600 Olive Way E. Gentle Woods Park
900 Olive Way E.
921 Olive Way E.
922 Olive Way E.
769 Sacre Lane N.

Other Dispersed Areas

353 Ackerman St. W
340 Broad St. N.
364 Broad St. N.
370 Broad St. N.
230 Catron St. N.
235 Catron St. N.
352 Catron St. N.
377 Clay St. W.
247 Ecols St. N.
256 Ecols St. N.
364 Monmouth Ave. S.
394 Monmouth Ave S.
546 Monmouth Ave S.
353 Whitman St. S.

Local Eligibility

Additionally, 15 of the properties determined to be Not Eligible for National Register status due to loss of integrity or age were identified as being potentially eligible for local landmark or district listing for their significant contribution to Monmouth's historic development on a local level. These findings are included in the "Comments" section of the Oregon Historic Sites Database for each property.

Downtown

150 Broad St. S.
162 Broad St. N., *Butler, Dr. Maurice Jay House*
163 Catron St. N.
132 Clay St. E.
145 Ecols St. N.
162 Ecols St. N.

167 Knox St. S.
310 Main St. E.

Gentle Woods

762 Caroline Way N.
930 Caroline Way N.
945 Caroline Way N.
854 Olive Way E.

Other Dispersed Areas

233 Gwinn St. W.
190 College St. S.
405 College St. S.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Historic Preservation often follows a set of federal guidelines set forth by the National Register of Historic Places. Although this federal program offers several incentives and planning opportunities for historic properties, Certified Local Governments can benefit from using creative preservation strategies to meet their specific preservation planning needs in ways that generate a source of pride among the local community through sharing a common understanding of a city's significant local history. This builds a stronger community identity and sense of place by connecting a community to its past in relevant and innovative ways. Although these recommendations include a list of potential National Register properties, overall, the proposed preservation strategies intend to target local historic preservation endeavors for the City of Monmouth.

A. Local Landmark and National Register Designation

The following properties deserve further research determining significant associations for potential National Register or Local Landmark listing:

- **181 Knox St. N.** – Apartments/Boarding House, constructed 1925. Apartment buildings from this era are a rare resource type in Monmouth, which further emphasizes this property's significance. The 1931 Sanborn map and photographs suggest that this resource has excellent integrity. The name of the multi-family residence is not included on the map or in any early directories.
- **155 Main Street W.** – Commercial storefront property, constructed 1930. The 1931 Sanborn map and photographs suggest that this resource has excellent integrity. The original business name or commercial use is not included in the historic Sanborn map.
- **169 Main Street W.** – Commercial storefront property, constructed 1930. The 1931 Sanborn map and photographs suggest that this resource has excellent integrity. The original business name or commercial use is not included in the historic Sanborn map.
- **310 Main Street E.** – Drive-in restaurant, constructed 1969. This resource is likely eligible for National Register or Local Landmark status once it reaches 50 years of age, due to its good integrity and the rarity of this resource type in Monmouth.
- Several residences are also eligible for Local Landmark or National Register listing. Refer to the list in the survey results for the addresses of the 56 locally eligible properties. Contact property owners to notify them of their eligibility, benefits of local listing, and nomination details.
- Offer a community educational programs instructing property owners how to research the history of their own houses, identifying character-defining features, and providing advice and options for preserving, maintaining, or restoring these features.

B. Potential Historic District

- **Gentle Woods Park and neighborhood**, although currently younger than 50 years old, is likely eligible for National Register of Local Landmark district listing once it reaches this age.
- The survey results do not show a contiguous group of downtown properties eligible for historic district designation, but several properties along Main Street and the surrounding blocks could be added to the existing local downtown district to take advantage of collective Main Street or other downtown revitalization programs.

C. Potential District Boundaries

The boundaries for a local or even possible National-Register level historic district in the Gentle Woods Neighborhood are currently mapped around the area surveyed, with the addition of Gentle Woods Park itself (included in the survey). In general, the proposed boundary starts at the northwest corner of Gentle Woods Park, extending east along the northern property lines of residential properties on the north side of Olive Way East. At the northeastern corner of 932 Olive Way, the boundary extends south, and turns east again along the northern boundary of 793 Caroline Way. The boundary extends south mid-block and then west mid-block to include five surveyed properties fronting Caroline Way, but not including non-surveyed properties. The boundary extends back north along the western border of 930 Caroline and west mid-block at the southern property line of 769 Sacre Lane. Crossing Sacre Lane at the southern property line of 758 Sacre Lane, the boundary continues to Craven Street, where it dips south to include 684 Craven before extending north to the southern property line of 766 Craven Street, then north mid-block to the eastern “leg” of Gentle Woods Park. The boundary then completes itself around the park.

D. Economic Development Strategies

While Monmouth is already working with the National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street Program in some capacity, there are other organizations and agencies which may be able to provide further direction and/or funding:

- Collaborate in public/private partnerships to provide funding opportunities for preservation and rehabilitation projects with organizations such as:
 - Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
 - Urban Renewal Agency
 - United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)⁸⁵
- Work with the Oregon Tourism Commission, also known as Travel Oregon, to develop and promote Monmouth’s historic attractions to a broad audience.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ USDA Rural Development, Oregon. <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/or/> (Accessed February 14, 2011).

⁸⁶ Oregon Tourism Commission/Travel Oregon Website. www.traveloregon.com (Accessed February 14, 2011).

E. Other Planning Strategies

- Survey other neighborhoods or clusters in Monmouth with high concentrations of mid-century modern period residences.
- Consult the Historic Preservation League of Oregon (HPLO) about easement opportunities with historic mid-century modern properties.⁸⁷
- Make the Landmark Designation application process apparent and readily accessible on the City's website.
- Enhance the City's website with photographs or maps identifying the City's historic resources.
- Develop and provide local financial incentives for historic preservation endeavors.
- Use the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office's list of contractors skilled in preservation work for the upkeep, repair, restoration, and rehabilitation of historic public properties in Monmouth and make the list accessible to private property owners for their own efforts.

⁸⁷ Historic Preservation League of Oregon, Website. <http://www.historicpreservationleague.org/> (Accessed February 14, 2011).

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