



City of Oregon City

625 Center Street
Oregon City, OR 97045
503-657-0891

Staff Report

File Number: 13-285

Agenda Date: 5/1/2013

Status: Agenda Ready

To: City Commission

Agenda #: 3d.

From: Community Development Director Tony Konkol

File Type: Presentation

SUBJECT:

The Ruth Powers Annual Historic Preservation Award

BACKGROUND:

Ruth McBride Powers Preservation Award

The Historic Review Board awards the Ruth McBride Powers Preservation Award yearly during May Preservation Month to citizens, building/business owners and others who show passion for preservation.

Ruth McBride Powers (1903-1995). Ruth McBride was born in Michigan in 1903, graduating from Stanford University in California. According to a 1980 OHS oral history interview, she became interested in history when "as a young bride" she moved to the Coos County lumber town, Powers, Oregon, named after her husband's family. She began studying the history of her adopted state, especially its architecture and pioneer furniture. Her initial preservation project, in 1956, was reconstruction of the badly-burned 1852 Robert Newell house at Champoeg, subsequently given to the Daughters of the American Revolution to operate as an educational site. Alfred Powers, her husband died in 1961 in Portland.

She continued her efforts, using her financial resources to save many of Oregon's oldest buildings; sometimes they were purchased outright, at other times she providing major underwriting. In addition to the Ainsworth House, Rose and Locust Farms also known as the (Morton Mathew McCarver House), she is credited with saving the Philip Foster house and barn, Horace Dibble house, David Wagner log house, Murray Wade house, Lake Oswego IOOF hall, Pleasant Grove-Condit Church, John Boon house, and Francis Ermatinger house. In 1975 she received national recognition for her work from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

In the final 25 years of her life Mrs. Powers divided her time between The McCarver House and the Rose. She often opened the latter for fund-raising tours and it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. The McCarver House (Locust Farm) 1852, the 1847 William and Louisa Holmes House ("Rose Farm"), and the Captain John Ainsworth House built in 1852. Are the three remaining settlement-era houses built in the Mt. Pleasant area of Clackamas County. The survival of all three is due to the preservation efforts of a single benefactor, Mrs. Ruth McBride Powers

visit <http://www.oregoncity.org/planning/ruth-mcbride-powers-preservation-award> for information on past winners.