



# Historic Preservation

## Commission

### Regular Meeting

September 24, 2020

# Historic Preservation Commission

# Agenda

September 24, 2020



Historic Preservation Commission

# Minutes

From June 25, 2020

Regular Business Meeting

September 24, 2020

**City of Oak Harbor  
Historic Preservation Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
June 25, 2020 at 4:00 PM**

**Present:**

Jennifer Juniper  
Dan Evans  
Rick Castellano

**Staff Present:**

Blaine Oborn, City Administrator  
Cac Kamak, Interim Development Services Director  
Ray Lindenburg, Associate Planner

**Absent:**

Ron Apgar

**1. Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

**2. Approval of Minutes from January 23, 2020** (There were no February – May meetings)

**Motion:** Commissioner Castellano moved to approve the January 23, 2020 minutes as presented. **Second:** Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

**3. Public comment** – There were no public comments.

**4. Public Meetings:**

**A. Historic Preservation Goals for 2020**

Mr. Lindenburg discussed a goal of completing the historic inventory list and mentioned that there are possible grants available that would allow us to hire a professional to complete that task. Commissioner Evans commented on the need to continue focusing on communicating with the public so that property owners are aware of the program and what the benefits are of placing a property on the registry. Mr. Lindenburg responded that the City's website can be a main location for the public to access information, as well as potentially reaching out to property owners whose properties could currently meet requirements to be on the registry. Commissioner Juniper and Evans mentioned taking flyers out to properties, the Chamber office, and real estate offices. Commissioner Castellano suggested finding a way to engage the public. Mr. Oborn suggested Mr. Lindenburg work with the City's PIO to get word out about the tax benefits offered to those on the registry; he also mentioned the popularity of historic home tours, as well as a site (Neil Tower) that the City owns that could possibly be eligible to be on the registry. Commissioner Castellano suggested doing a virtual tour of Neil Tower. The City will consider if they can make the Neil Tower the first item that has an application processed for placing on the registry.

**B. Roller Barn**

The new owner of the Roller Barn has spoken with Commissioner Castellano and at this time they plan to move forward with their plans in the October timeframe. Mr. Lindenburg will reach out to the owner and check in with them about potential interest in applying for the registry.

**C. Coordination with Main Street Association**

Commissioner Evans mentioned that the Main Street Association can help get information out to the public. Mr. Lindenburg will reach out directly to the Main Street Association and coordinate the sharing of information via handouts/flyers, etc.

**5. Commission and Staff Comments**

Mr. Lindenburg recommended to the commissioners a bimonthly meeting schedule until there is need to meet more frequently to complete tasks or process an application.

***Motion:** Commissioner Evans moved to change the Historic Preservation Commission meeting schedule to a bimonthly schedule. **Second:** Commissioner Castellano seconded the motion. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.*

**Next Agenda**

Mr. Oborn mentioned the possibility of further discussing an application for the Neil Tower at the following meeting.

**Next meeting date Thursday, August 27, 2020, starting at 4:00 PM.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Heller  
Administrative Assistant  
Development Services

DRAFT

# Historic Preservation Commission

# Staff Report

September 24, 2020

# Historic Preservation Commission

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## STAFF REPORT

September 24, 2020

### **Neil Tower Application**

Staff and the Commission discussed the possibility of nominating a City-owned property and processing an application for Historic Register status. In the interim, staff has completed research into the history of the Neil Tower, located on NE Barron Drive. A former water tower for the larger Neil family farm, the tower was relocated to its current location with the development of the Harbor Tower Village independent living center. A community-driven fund raising drive paid for significant restoration and the tower was granted a Washington State Centennial landmark plaque in 1989. Since then, the tower was donated to the City and staff have been maintaining and making necessary repairs to the structure.

The goal in processing the Neil Tower is twofold: (1) to have the building recognized as a Historic Register property, and; (2) use as a trial run for the processing of such applications. Staff will gain a better understanding and be able to assist the general public with future applications and the Commission will experience the nomination and approval process.

Staff has attached (attachment 1) the application materials and will give a presentation on the materials and the process thus far.

### **Materials for OHMSA**

As an adjustment for COVID-19, since the majority of information sharing and interactions are happening electronically, staff is working with the City's Public Information Officer (PIO) to create new materials that are optimized for online and social media outlets in lieu of flyers and handouts.

### **Discussion Previous Items & Commission and Staff Comments**

If any Commissioners have comments or questions for staff, those may be addressed during this time.

The next meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission is scheduled for November 19, 2020 at the regular start time of 4:00 P.M.

### **Attachments:**

- 1.) Draft Neil Tower application

Historic Preservation Commission

# Staff Report

*Attachment 1:*

*Draft Neil Tower application*

September 24, 2020

# OAK HARBOR REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION FORM

*This form is required to nominate properties to the Oak Harbor Register of Historic Places per Oak Harbor Municipal Code Section 18.50.050. Type all entries and complete all applicable sections. Contact the Development Services Department with any questions at 360-279-4512.*

## PART 1: PROPERTY INFORMATION

11/2019

### Property Name

Historic Name Neil Tower

Common Name Neil Tower

### Location

Street Address 128 NE Barron Dr., Oak Harbor, WA

Zip 98277

Parcel No(s).

R13335-093-0600

Legal Description and Plat or Addition:

LOT 3 OH-SP 5-89.13335.085.0500 & 8435.00-00001-0 V2 SP P267  
AF#90021978 (TOWER TRACT)

### Nominated Elements

Please indicate below significant elements of the property that are included in the nomination by checking the appropriate box(es) below. These elements should be described specifically in the narrative section of this form.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Principal Structure   | <input type="checkbox"/> Site   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Additions               | <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Landscaping, Fencing, Walkways, etc.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accessory Buildings/Outbuildings | <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Spaces/Other (inventory in narrative) |

**Owner of Property**

Name **City of Oak Harbor**

Address 865 SE Barrington Drive City Oak Harbor State WA Zip 98277

Is the owner the sponsor of this nomination? If not, please provide evidence that the owner has been contacted.

Yes  No

Owner Signature, if possible:

**Form Preparer**

Name/Title Ray Lindenburg, Associate Planner Company/Organization City of Oak Harbor

Address 865 SE Barrington Dr City Oak Harbor State WA Zip 98277

Phone 360-279-4578 Email rlindenburg@oakharbor.org

**Nomination Checklist—Attachments**

- \$50 Individual Filing Fee/\$100 Commercial Filing Fee
- Site Map (REQUIRED)
- Photographs (REQUIRED): *please label or caption photographs and include a photography index*
- Last Deed of Title (REQUIRED): *this document can usually be obtained for little or no cost from a titling company*
- Continuation Sheets
- Historical Plans
- Other (please indicate): \_\_\_\_\_

FOR OFFICE USE	
Date Received	_____
Fee Paid	_____

## PART 2: PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

### Extent of Changes

Please summarize the changes that have been made to the original plan, exterior, materials, cladding, windows, interior, and other significant elements by selecting the choices below. If the property has been previously documented, these may be indicated on the Washington State Historic Property Inventory Form. These changes should be described specifically in the narrative section of this form.

	Original Materials Intact			Original Materials Intact	
Plan (i.e.: no additions to footprint , relocation of walls, or roof plan)	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Interior (woodwork, finishes, flooring, fixtures)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Original cladding/exterior materials	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other elements	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Windows (no replacement windows or replacement sashes)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>			

### Physical Description Narrative

Describe in detail the original (if known) and present physical appearance, condition and architectural characteristics of the site (context, location), exterior (all four walls), and interior. Please include a list of known alterations and their dates (use additional sheets if necessary).

The unusual shape of the water tower as seen today is largely identical to its original construction. Historical photos confirm the shape, however the location is more modern. During construction of the adjacent senior living facility, a new concrete foundation was constructed and the largely dilapidated wooden upper structure was lifted by crane into place. Over the following years, the tower was restored to its original appearance using similar materials.

Lewis Bonnelle designed and built the tower, with a massive 2-foot thick concrete and stone foundation and a wooden superstructure utilizing heavy timber framing above. This probably contributed to the soundness of the structure over the decades as the exterior fell into disrepair.

The exterior of the building is clad in wooden shingles on the upper bell-shaped portion and wooden horizontal siding on the sloped support tower. Historical photos suggest that the original concrete foundation appeared to be constructed in a similar manner to the present-day structure, likely poured into a temporary wooden form.

At the top of the building is a bell-shaped structure that housed and protected the water storage tank itself. The tank was constructed of western cedar and held between 1000 and 1200 gallons of water.

The overall design of the structure does not conform neatly to a set architectural style. It appears to be constructed for a specific purpose and the design reflects a utilitarian nature. The unique bell-shaped upper structure directs water efficiently away from the inner tank and though it appears similar to a windmill, there is no evidence this was an intentional design reference.

As it stands today, the structure is largely faithful to the original construction. The concrete foundation is newer as mentioned above, and many of the wood cladding materials have been replaced due to deterioration. However, no known substantial additions have been made other than to ensure the continued integrity of the building.

It is interesting to note that the Neil Tower was constructed before the nearby barn, having been completed approximately 3 years prior.

## PART 3: HISTORICAL OR CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

### Criteria for Designation

Oak Harbor Municipal Code recognizes 12 criteria of eligibility for inclusion on the Oak Harbor Register of Historic Places. Please select any that apply to this property, for which there is documented evidence included in this nomination form. Properties must be at least 50 years old, or is of lesser age and has exceptional importance; *and* must also fall into at least one of the following categories:

- A Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D Has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history; or
- E Abuts a property that is already listed on the Oak Harbor Register of Historic Places and was constructed within the period of significance of the adjacent structure; or
- F Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood or City.

### Historical Data (if known)

Date(s) of Construction 1910 Other Date(s) of Significance 1989 Renovation completed  
Lewis Bonnelle/  
Architect(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Builder Rein Zylstra Engineer Lewis Bonnelle  
Architectural \_\_\_\_\_  
Style(s) Eclectic Material(s) Wood/concrete

### Statement of Significance

Describe in detail the chronological history of the property and how it meets the criteria for the Register of Historic Places. Please provide a summary in the first paragraph that lists the relevant criteria (use additional sheets if necessary). This section should include a thorough narrative of the property's history, context, occupants, and uses. If using a Multiple Property Nomination that is already on record, or another historical context narrative, please reference it by name and source.

The Neil family settled on a previously-developed 160-acre farm in the early 1900s. At the time, there was no utility service to the area, so the Tower was constructed in 1910 to not only supply water, but to run a generator to provide electricity to the farm.

Exact dates are unknown, but at some point the tower was no longer utilized for its intended purpose and began to fall into disrepair. Historical aerial photos show the building standing alone, but near the existing barn and other farm structures in 1951. The intersection of modern Whidbey Avenue and North Oak Harbor Street was nearby, as simple 2-lane rural roads.

By the early 1980s, intense development had begun to surround the former farm, with a trailer park located to the north, apartments to the east and a church to the west. Whidbey Avenue and North Oak Harbor Street were fully developed with sidewalks at this point. The tower still stood in its original location at this time, but based on historical ground photos, was likely in poor condition.

An effort to place the structure on a new foundation and restore the wooden upper portions was organized by the Neil Tower Preservation Association and funded by local donations in the 1980s. The restoration work was completed in 1989, in time to be honored as a Washington Centennial project. Since that time, the Neil Tower Preservation Association

In a 1990 aerial, the tower has been moved to its current location and the extensive development of the area continued. By 2006, the entire farm had been developed and both the tower and barn were surrounded by urban uses.

It is this history as a landmark to early Oak Harbor residents and visitors and the connection to the area's agricultural past that is a key component to the application and its eligibility for inclusion on the Oak Harbor Register of Historic Places. It's location near the highway on a high point of land made the Neil Tower one of the first man-made things seen on the way into town from the north. The nearby barn complements the tower, being constructed nearly contemporaneously and of similar materials and colors.

In addition, the high-quality engineering and construction of the tower allowed this utilitarian, but aesthetically beautiful structure to stand even through periods of neglect and decay. The preservation of similar materials by a recent sympathetic restoration of the building further highlights the eligibility of the building.