

**TO:** HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

**THROUGH:** Lisa Anderson-Ogilvie, AICP, Deputy Community Development Director and Planning Administrator

**FROM:** Kimberli Fitzgerald, AICP, Historic Preservation Officer

**SUBJECT:** Request to Initiate Local Historic Resource Nomination for the State Insurance Co. Building located at: 311, 325, 345 Commercial St. NE and 285 Chemeketa St. NE

**ISSUE:**

Proposed initiation of Local Historic Resource nomination for the State Insurance Co. Building located at 311, 325 and 345 Commercial St. NE (Marion County Assessor's Tax Lots 073W22DC03900, 073W22DC04000 and 073W22DC04100) (**Attachment A**).

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the HLC take no action to initiate the local historic designation of the State Insurance Co. Building because the proposed resource is not eligible for designation due to its lack of historic integrity.

**SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND:**

The applicant, Kylie Pine, has requested that the Salem Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) initiate the local historic resource nomination for the State Insurance Co. Building (1888). While the building dates back to circa 1888, the exterior of the building has gone through significant alterations beginning in 1960 when the upper stories of the building were removed. Pine states that the building is significant for its association with the State Insurance Company, the Oregon Land Company, the Salem YMCA and former President Herbert Hoover. The original structure was a good example of the commercial Second Empire architectural style for this period (**Attachment B**).

**FACTS AND FINDINGS:**

**Historic Designation**

According to SRC 230.010(c)(2) any person may file a request with the Council or the Historic Landmarks Commission for initiation of the designation of a local historic resource. Designation is a Type IV procedure under SRC 300. The HLC may choose to initiate a designation, hold a public hearing on the nomination and make a recommendation to City Council regarding the proposed designation. Provided owner consent is granted per SRC 230.010(f), under Salem Revised Code (SRC) Chapter 230.010 an application for the designation of a local resource designation may be granted by the Salem City Council if the resource meets the criteria for age, significance and integrity as outlined in SRC 230.010(e).

1. **SRC 230.010 (e) (1) Age:** *The proposed historic resource is at least 50 years old, or demonstrates exceptional significance if less than 50 years of age.*

**Findings:** The resource is approximately 133 years of age; therefore, staff recommends the HLC find that this criterion has been met.

2. **SRC 230.010 (e) (2) Significance:** *The proposed historic resource demonstrates significance in at least one of the following areas:*

- a. **Cultural Significance:** *(i) Contributes to the character and historic identity of the neighborhood or City; (ii) Makes a contribution to the historic character of a historic resource, neighborhood, district, or City as a whole*

**Findings:** Staff recommends that the HLC find that the resource has cultural significance for its contribution the historic identity of Salem as a whole through its association with the Oregon Land Company and the Salem YMCA.

- b. **Human Significance:** *(i) Is associated historically with the life or activities of a person, group, organization or institution that has made a significant contribution to the local community; or (ii) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local history; or (iii) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, important information concerning prehistory or history.*

**Findings:** Staff recommends that the HLC find that the resource has human significance for its association with the life of former President Herbert Hoover. Additionally, the site has the potential to yield important information concerning prehistory or history, due to its location near the river within the Cultural Resource Protection Zone (CRPZ).

- c. **Architectural Significance:** *(i) Is significant as an example of a particular architectural style, building type, structural type, or method of construction; or (ii) Is the work of an acknowledged master or architect, or possesses high artistic values.*

**Findings:** While the original structure was a good example of the Second Empire architectural style, the original form and character defining features of the building have been lost, and with the exception of several minor features the resource has been significantly altered and the building does not retain a high degree of integrity. Therefore, staff recommends the HLC find that the resource is not currently a significant example of a particular architectural style.

3. **SRC 230.010 (e) (3) Integrity:** *The proposed historic resource retains sufficient original design characteristics, craft work, or material to serve as an example of an architectural period, significant building type or structural type, or recognized architectural style.*

**Findings:** The original resource was constructed circa 1888 when it was first occupied by the Oregon Land Company. Later occupants included the State Insurance Company and the YMCA. The YMCA moved into the building at 311 Commercial Street NE in 1901 and installed

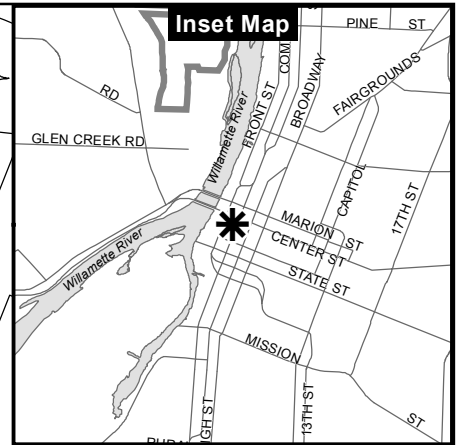
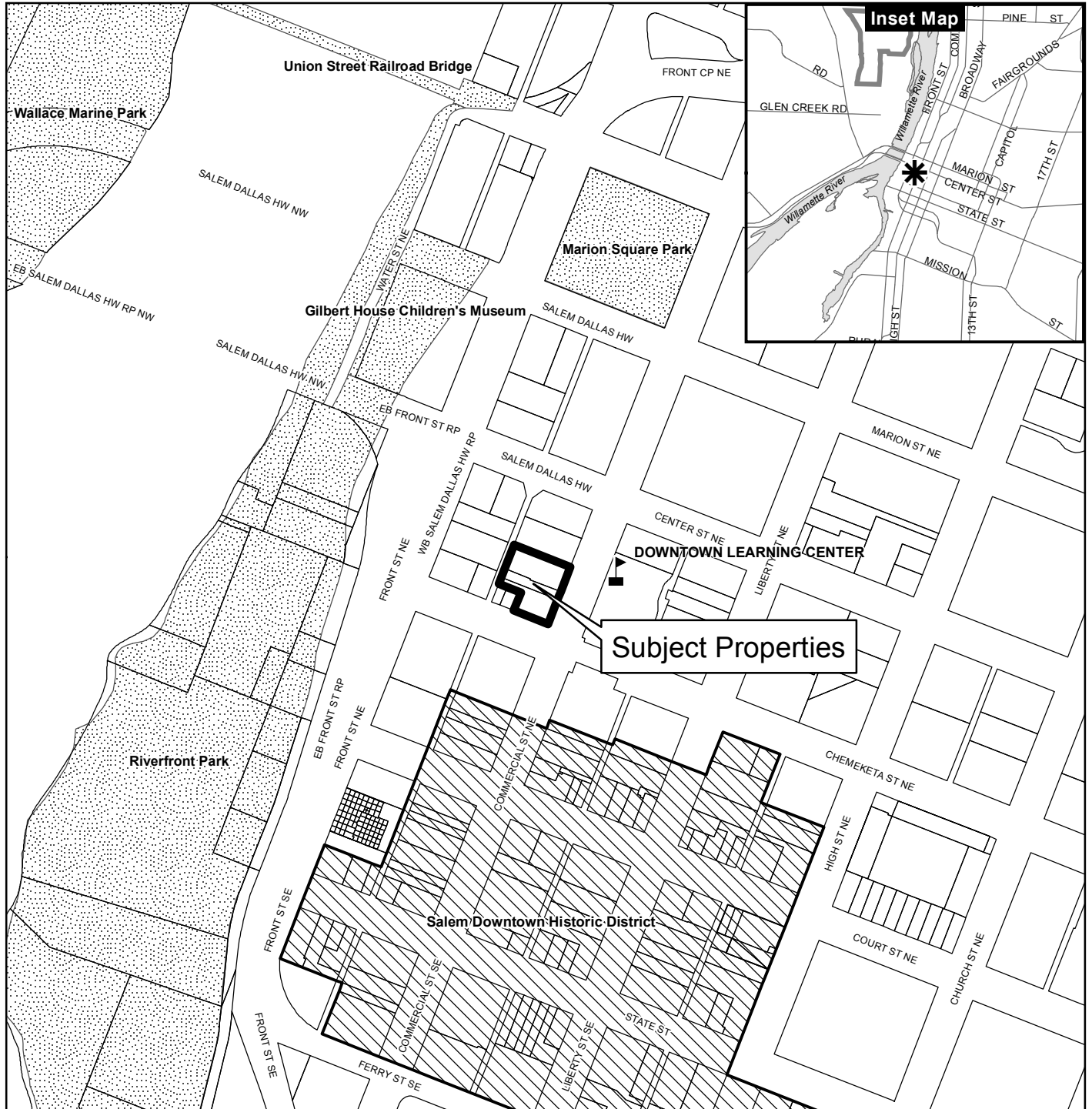
a swimming pool under the first floor. The YMCA remained in the building until 1926 when they moved into their new building on Court Street. The Star Exchange moved into the building in 1920, when they shared the building with the YMCA. The building was owned by the Saffron Supply Company in 1960 when they applied for a demolition permit on August 4, 1960 to demolish the top two stories of the three-story brick building. The Star Exchange remained as a tenant in this building through 1976 when it was remodeled for use as the Rising Sun Record store. Additional exterior modifications have included the installation of awnings (both square and rounded) as well as additional interior and exterior remodeling to accommodate the needs of tenants. Staff recommends that the HLC find that the resource does not retain sufficient original integrity including retention of original character defining features, original material or form to convey its historical significance and this criterion has not been met.

### **HLC Alternatives**








1. **No Action:** If the HLC finds that the threshold for initiation of local historic designation has not been met, the HLC can find that the proposed resource is not eligible for designation due to its lack of historic integrity and therefore take no action initiating the designation.
2. **Initiation.** Should the HLC find that the applicant has made the case for initiating the designation of this historic resource, the HLC can find that the proposed resource is eligible for designation and therefore proceed with initiating the Type IV process for designation.

Attachment: (A) Vicinity Map  
(B) Local Nomination form: State Insurance Co. Building & Photos

**Local Designation Request - State Insurance Co. Building:  
311, 325 & 345 Commercial Street NE  
and 279 & 291 Chemeketa Street NE  
Taxlots 073W22DC0 3900/4000/4100**



**Legend**

-  Taxlots
-  Urban Growth Boundary
-  City Limits
-  Outside Salem City Limits
-  Historic District
-  Schools
-  Parks



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**Kimberli Fitzgerald**

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**From:** Kylie Pine <KylieP@willametteheritage.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 28, 2021 4:36 PM  
**To:** Kimberli Fitzgerald  
**Subject:** Request for consideration of local landmark designation for historical property at 311, 325, 345 Commercial St NE and 285 Chemeketa St NE  
**Attachments:** Local Nomination Form.pdf

Dear Historic Landmarks Commission c/o Senior Planner Kimberli Fitzgerald,

I am writing today to request your consideration of starting the process of listing the property at 311, 325, 345 Commercial St NE and 285 Chemeketa st NE as a local historic landmark pursuant to Salem City Code Sec. 230.010. - Designation of local historic resources. The property is currently publicly owned by the City of Salem and according to Section (c)2, anyone can petition the HLC for consideration of listing of publicly-owned properties for local designation.

I recognize that this resource is not typical of candidates put forward. It has undergone significant alteration in the past. However, the building itself is an iconic piece of Salem history, connecting to many community stories of commerce, recreation, and national events and it does still maintain original historical fabric, despite its altered appearance.

I am seeking your consideration of designation to help provide for the remaining historical artifacts that remain in situ in the building. It is likely that this property will be redeveloped. Without a designation, I am fearful that some important historical materials may be lost. With so many of this building's neighboring contemporaries having been lost already to redevelopment, designation will provide a pathway forward the resources necessary to help document and salvage components of this important piece of Salem's history.

Nomination form attached to this email. Photos forthcoming in a separate email.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kylie Pine

Kylie Pine  
Curator and Collections Manager  
Willamette Heritage Center  
[www.willametteheritage.org](http://www.willametteheritage.org)  
503-585-7012 ext 257

*Connecting Generations by Preserving and Interpreting the History of the Mid-Willamette Valley*

**City of Salem  
LOCAL HISTORIC RESOURCE NOMINATION FORM**

**A. OWNER/CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Name:  
Mailing Address:  
City/State/Zip:  
Phone number:  
E-mail:  
Date Submitted:

**B. PROPERTY INFORMATION:**

Historic Name, if known:  
Date of Construction:  
Street Address:  
Salem, Oregon  
County:     Marion     Polk

**C. EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION:**

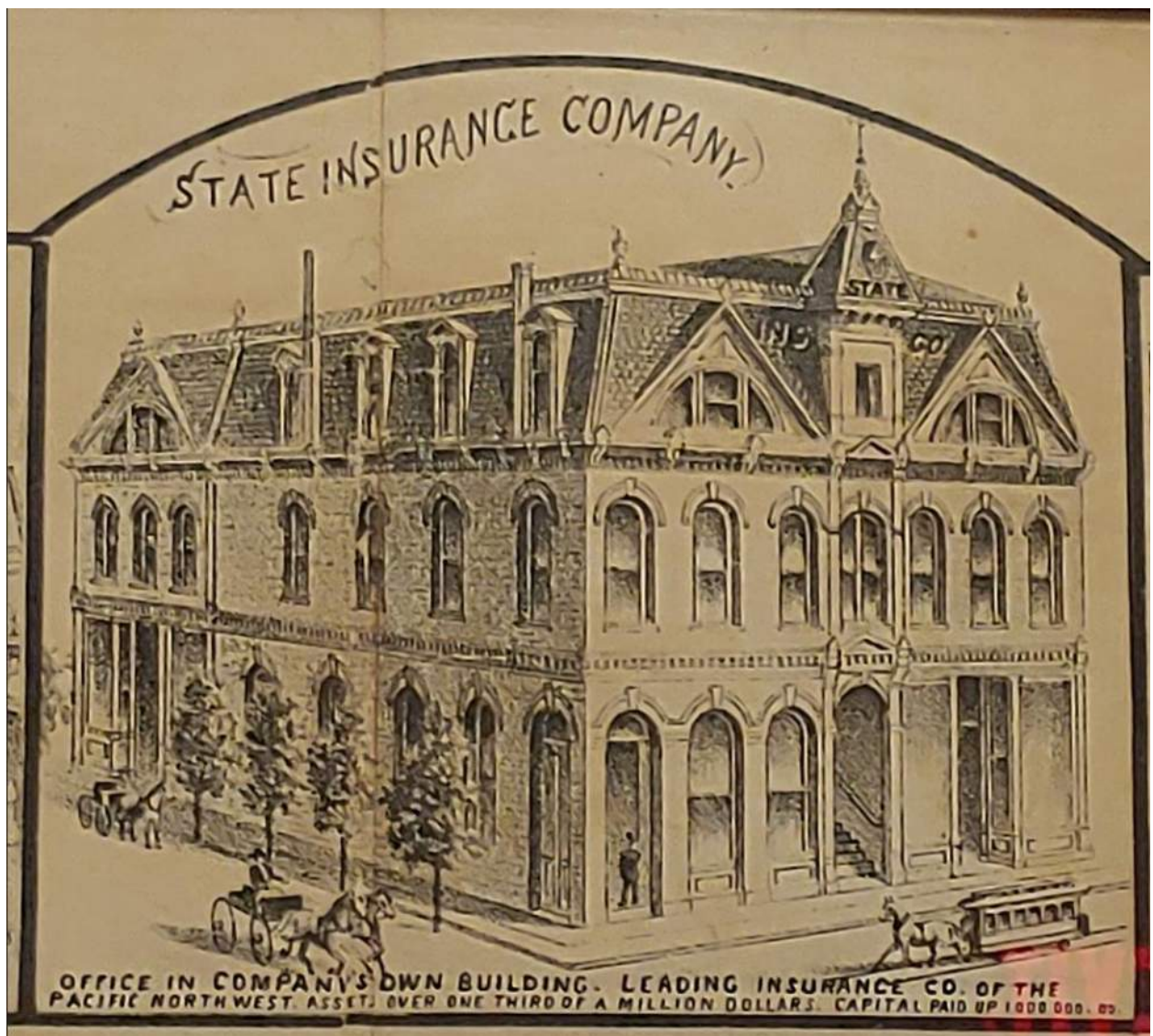
1. Siding material(s). Original or replacement?
  
2. Window type(s) & material(s). Original or replacement?
  
3. Significant architectural features; other descriptions:
  
4. Alterations and Approximate Dates:

**D. WHY IS THE PROPERTY SIGNIFICANT?**

**NOTE: Current exterior (all facades) and interior photographs of significant features are required for evaluation.** (Please indicate if you wish to have the photos returned.)

**Photo Log**

Photo No.	Direction	Description



State Insurance Company Illustration. Salem Board of Trade map of the City of Salem, 1890. WHC Collections X2017.007.1449 detail.



Home Office of State Insurance Company (ca. 1885- 1900). Oregon State Library. Image Name: 20050010101.jpg. Trover Studio Image. **Resource URL:** [https://ccrls.ent.sirsi.net/client/en\\_US/search/asset/22278/0](https://ccrls.ent.sirsi.net/client/en_US/search/asset/22278/0)

Oregon State Library- Image narrative (only one image at link however): Two photographs showing the State Insurance Company building. In the first photo, the Oregon Land Company office shares the building on the northwest corner of Commercial & Chemeketa streets in Salem. Herbert Hoover worked here as an office boy (at the Oregon Land Company of which his Uncle Henry John Minthorn was President), learning bookkeeping and typing. The second view is taken several years later, probably sometime in the late 1890s. The Oregon Land Company location was then occupied by the Pacific Land & Orchard Co. This building later housed the Star Exchange and the first Elks Lodge in Salem.





Salem YMCA as it looked about 1904. Located at NW corner of Commercial & Ch

Salem Public Library Historic Photograph Collections. Special Collections Photo ID #pcds 083. "Salem, Oregon, YMCA at Commercial & Chemeketa Streets, 1904." David Skilton, postcard collection, *Barrick Funeral Home Postcard series, "Salem in the Past"*. Salem Public Library, Salem Oregon.



Salem Public Library Historic Photograph Collections. Ben Maxwell Collection. Photo ID #2019. "Star Exchange Building on Commercial St. in Salem, Oregon 1946." Salem Public Library, Salem Oregon.



Salem Public Library Historic Photograph Collections. Ben Maxwell Collection. Photo ID #349. "Star Exchange at NW corner Commercial & Chemeketa Streets in Salem, Oregon 1961." Salem Public Library, Salem Oregon.



Statesman, August 18, 1960 page 2.



Statesman, May 15, 1976



East façade of building frontage (looking west from Commercial Street NE);



South façade of building frontage (looking north from Chemeketa St. NE)



Detail of original window frame and chimney stack (courtesy of Capital Taps blog per Kylie Pine)