



SALEM LANDMARK

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Newsletter of the Salem Historic Landmarks Commission



Oregon Supreme Court Building by Michael Spady
Historic Photo Contest Chairperson's Choice winner

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Jason Lee Mission House

By Kimberli Fitzgerald and Russell Schutte

Between April-May 2020 we embarked on an ambitious archaeological project during the beginning of the COVID19 pandemic. With a land use approval in hand, private property owners were planning on moving forward in the summer of 2020 redeveloping the site with a new mixed-use building. We discovered the historic significance of the site early on.

Site significance

We were quite excited to learn that this was the site of Jason Lee's Mission House. Jason Lee was a Methodist Missionary who came to what is now Oregon in 1834. He first settled about 10 miles north of Salem at Mission Bottom. He moved to this site in 1841 and built a house here, because the conditions were better.



Jason Lee House 1937 West Façade.

Jason Lee was significant for his efforts to ensure the territory now known as Oregon became part of the United States. Jason Lee lived in the House for just a few years- he died in 1845 back east; but was reburied in Salem in 1906. Reverend Jason Lee was one of the first missionaries to arrive in the Salem area in 1834, originally settling in the area of Lee Mission State Park, north of town. Originally Lee was the Superintendent in charge of the Willamette Station. One of Lee's goals was for the Mission to become self-sustaining- so worked to establish farming and a mill in the area. By spring of 1841 the first lumber milled by the missionaries was available. After repeated severe flooding, the Mission was relocated to Salem. Lee's Mission House was originally completed in 1841 as part of the grist and lumber mill.

Originally located on Mill Creek it was the first dwelling we know of in the Salem area. Lee died in 1845 and is buried at the Lee Mission Cemetery, just west of the Oregon State Hospital. The House served many other significant purposes during its lifetime, including the Salem's post office; Territorial Treasury, where Willamette University was formed; purchased by Judge Reuben P. Boise it became a center of his work, sometimes serving as a courtroom; later it became an apartment house.

The house was moved in 1963 by preservationists, as the original site was bought to be redeveloped. It was moved to its current location at the Willamette Heritage Center where it was restored and is now open to the public. After sharing with the property owner the

history of the site, we offered to assist with the archaeological compliance. This was our first public/private archaeological project- which we chose to do, before the pandemic started due to the significance of this site. Construction has been considered an essential service throughout the pandemic, and redevelopment of this site was moving forward, so we had a narrow window to complete our work.



Jason Lee House Deconstructed.

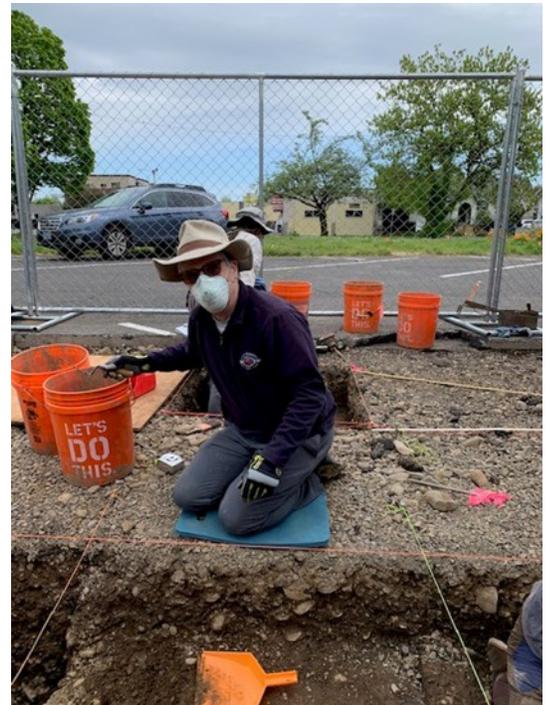
Archaeology project

This project was originally supposed to be a full public archaeology project with partners from Willamette University, the Willamette Heritage Center, SHPO, the Grand Ronde and the Oregon Archaeological Society. We had to adapt to the unexpected circumstances, but ultimately we were successful in accomplishing our goals which included GPR and selective excavation. We began by submitting our archaeological permit which was put together by our primary investigator, Ross Smith of

Stantec. In this permit Ross provided an overview of the significance of the site, established the area of potential effect, and used historic maps, aerials and our GPR results to lay out our proposed excavation units. We even took the floor plans we had for the original house and georeferenced those to our site. Our partners, Willamette University and the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde both used Ground Penetrating Radar to try to see if there was any evidence of the house basement or outbuildings on the site. One of the clearer anomalies proved to be the basement of the house.

Our City of Salem Public Works crews scraped the parking lot and removed the asphalt so that we could begin laying out our units. We laid out a total of 12 units in two Blocks. Six were in Block A, on the eastern portion of the site, in the area where the outbuildings were located according to the maps, and six were in Block B, in the location of the house itself. Thirty volunteers contributed over 600 hours to the project from Willamette University, Oregon Archaeological Society and other Professional archaeologists. David Root coordinated the OAS volunteers including key volunteers Doug Reynolds, Dane Juul and Roy Bryan. Pen McBain of OAS was our site recorder. Professor Scott Pike coordinated the student volunteers.

In order to comply with safety protocols for social distancing, we had to limit the volunteers to fifteen on site



Excavation Work.



Jason Lee Wall

at any time. All volunteers also had to wear masks and gloves on site. In addition to the challenge of doing archaeological excavation wearing masks, we had some challenging weather, but we persevered! We recovered over 2500 artifacts which we are still curating, but they include some really interesting items, such as a bottle fragment, which we've confirmed was made prior to the Civil War, as well as many other ceramics, glass and bone. We've also recovered a small number of Native American artifacts, which confirm the use of the site during the initial contact period. Our most exciting find was the basement of the original Jason Lee Mission House, and the intact brick wall. We also completed 12 shovel test units on the north end of the property; to help us understand the soils, stratigraphy and what to expect when the property is redeveloped later this summer. The Salem Historic Landmarks Commission recently awarded the project the Chairperson's award to David Root,

Professor Scott Pike and the volunteers who worked on this project, recognizing their exemplary service on behalf of Historic Preservation within the Salem Community.

What's next for the project?

Along with completing the curation of the artifacts, we are looking forward to partnering with the Willamette Heritage Center regarding developing artifact exhibits at the Jason Lee House, as well as onsite interpretation including replacement of the Beaverboard located just to the south of the site. Our hope is to focus specifically on decolonizing the history of this missionary period in Salem, sharing the history of this period from the Native American perspective.

What's coming to the site?

The addition of a new building to the site upholds a new era of history that is about to be written. The site is zoned CO (Commercial Office) within the Broadway/High Street Housing Overlay zone, yet the development proposal encompasses approximately 8,980 square feet of a 15,283 square foot site that currently consists of a gravel pad and a 26 space parking lot. Concrete footings of the approved project will start



Computer Render of Future Building

emerging from the earth in the next few weeks and over the next 14 months you will see a mixed use development that will include 23 multi-family units and approximately 2,400 square feet of commercial retail space on the gravel portion of the site and maintain the existing parking.

The structure as proposed will be three stories with the retail being limited to the ground floor fronting onto Broadway with residential units occupying the eastern portion ground floor and the entire second and third floors. Residential uses will be accessed via a central courtyard that opens onto a walk that runs along the south side of the proposed building. The building's architectural style is urban contemporary which lends itself to the small infill site and fits within the goals of the Broadway/High Street Housing Overlay. With the commercial uses fronting on Broadway Street NE and residential uses closer to nearby residential neighborhoods it provides a positive transition from the busier Broadway/High Street corridor to the single family uses east of the site.



Computer Render of Future Building

The building has been sited so that it is on the Broadway Street NE property line for approximately 25 feet. The upper floors of the building will generally be adjacent to the property line as desired the planning department. The setback area will be paved and allows for the commercial space entry and bicycle parking to be covered.

The building façade materials proposed will provide variation in texture and color as will the different window systems that differentiate the commercial space from the residential units. The commercial façade will be visually distinct from the residential facades to further express the mix of uses provided within the development. The taller ground floor height and storefront window systems provide an urban design and scale along Broadway Street NE as desired.

Videos of the project can be found on the project page: <https://www.cityofsalem.net/Pages/jason-lee-mission-house-archaeological-project.aspx>

Historic Photo Contest Winners

Thanks to all who submitted photos!



Historic Exterior
Leslie Pool Mattered
By Becky Whillhite
“On July 25, 1934 Leslie Pool opened with 1,500 in attendance. In 1955, the pool reported 37,789 visitors. “The pool is not necessarily for the young or old, but for the community at large,” Dr. B. F. Pound said. “It must be made to serve the community.” Pound was key in the development of the project. The pool was a big piece of Salem history and will be torn down in 2020 or 2021.

Historic Interior
Greenhouse Beauty
By Tia McNamara

“One of my favorite spots of all in Salem. I’ve heard it claims to be the first greenhouse west of the Mississippi.”





Landscape or Feature
Evening Stroll

By Erik Andersson
“Church Street Bridge from Pringle Park. I enjoy the quiet solitude of a park so close to downtown, Generally you only hear the sound of the creek and the ducks.”



Selfie or Pet Portrait
Roger at the Capitol
By Paul Kaloper

“The Oregon state capitol building is one of the few Art Deco ones, and our visits to its surroundings have provided invaluable breaks from our isolation during the pandemic.”

Youth Entry
Time

By Micah West

“This feature is a beautiful reminder of just how historic Salem really is.”



Gardening Tips for Fall

By Mark Akimoff

The cool, crisp days of fall are always a nice time to get outside and do some garden cleanup before winter sets in. A few tips and tricks will ensure you get the most out of your fall cleanup efforts and that next spring the garden is in tip top shape!

- Limit fall pruning on woody trees and shrubs to removal of suckers. Don't prune to shape now as this may encourage new growth that can be damaged in winter.
- Fertilize lawns now to give them a root boost that will result in productive turf growth in spring. Follow label directions. Don't over apply as excess will end up in our waterways.
- Wait until fall rains have saturated the soil before mulching garden beds, otherwise the rain won't penetrate the mulch.
- Wait until a frost has stopped the growth of perennials before cutting them back. The roots will store more energy if they can die back naturally. Many ornamental grasses look great through winter and can wait until spring to cut back.



Photo courtesy of Lord & Schryver Conservancy



Photo courtesy of Lord & Schryver Conservancy

- As soon as leaves on tender bulbs start to wither, dig them up and store in a frost-free location. For a longer display of flowers like Gladiolus, dig up half and store in a cool, dry location. Leave the other half in the ground, as the ones that survive winter will get a head start in spring. When the soil warms up, plant the half that you stored over winter and your bloom period will last longer.

October is
Oregon
Archaeology Month

Learn more about
archaeology in the state
and get involved at
oregonarchaeologists.com

Attend a virtual talk about
archaeology here in Salem:

*Uncovering and
Interpreting Salem's
Chinese Shrine.*

Thursday October 22,
6:00 p.m.

Live on Zoom and
Facebook

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Si necesita ayuda para comprender
esta informacion, por favor llame
503-588-6173

We're on the Web!

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