

# City of Lynden

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

*Historic view of Front Street. Courtesy Lynden Museum Images Collection.*



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### WHAT IS HISTORIC PRESERVATION?

Historic preservation is ensuring the heritage that enriches our lives remains for future generations. Heritage places may be architecturally beautiful or culturally significant or both! Preserving these places helps ensure that future generations can experience and appreciate their beauty as well as the stories they tell. Lynden is a special community with a rich and unique history and vibrant downtown, all surrounded by breathtaking vistas of the Cascades and active agricultural land. Driving into and through Lynden, the farmland dotted with historic barns and the iconic "Darigold" sign outside the creamery speak to the continuing importance of the dairy industry to the community. The rows of trees and residences along Front Street draw residents and visitors alike downtown. These historic buildings and landscapes visually remind us of the city's and surrounding region's history. Preserving these places highlights what's already valuable in Lynden and shares it with the broader community.

# Historic Preservation in Lynden

The City of Lynden's historic preservation program was established in November 2015 when the City Council passed the Historic Preservation Ordinance (No. 1492) becoming a Certified Local Government (CLG). The CLG program is jointly administered by the National Park Service and in Washington, the State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) to support preservation through partnership. The ordinance established the Lynden Historic Preservation Commission (LHPC) and the process for the identification, evaluation, and protection of historic resources within the city of Lynden. The ordinance was established for several reasons:

- It instills a sense of pride and cultural value on historically significant structures and landmarks in the city.
- It demonstrates the City's commitment to managing change to help connect future generations with the city's past.
- It determines a process for identifying and protecting eligible buildings, neighborhoods, and landmarks for inclusion in the Lynden Register of Historic Places
- It sets up a process for the protection of historic places and works to prevent conflicts as the city continues to develop.
- It incentivizes, through a Special Valuation designation, the potential rehabilitation of historic buildings.
- It allows the City to apply for CLG grant funding to support preservation projects.
- It allows for the LHPC and City staff to participate in preservation training and receive technical assistance from DAHP.

115 Front Street. Courtesy Northwest Vernacular, 2018.



## Definitions

**Certificate of Appropriateness** is achieved for a historic property when proposed changes have been reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission and approved.

**Historic Property:** A property that is listed in or determined eligible for listing in the National Register or Lynden Register of Historic Places.

**Historic Significance:** In the context of historic preservation, a property with local, state, or national significance is one which helps in the understanding of the history or prehistory of the local area, state, or nation (whichever is applicable) by illuminating the impact of the events or persons associated with the property, or its architectural type.

**Integrity:** The authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by remaining historic physical characteristics. There are seven aspects of integrity: location, setting, feeling, association, design, workmanship, and materials. A property with good integrity may not be in good condition.

**Ordinary repair and maintenance** is work that does not require a City of Lynden permit and which repairs the property to condition prior to deterioration (includes painting).

**Property types** are classified as buildings, sites, districts, structures, or objects.

**Rehabilitation** is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

### **Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties:**

Common sense historic preservation principles in non-technical language that promote historic preservation best practices that will help to protect our nation's irreplaceable cultural resources. The four standards are: Preservation, Restoration, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction.

# Lynden Register of Historic Places

The Lynden Register of Historic Places is the city's list of historically significant buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts. If an owner wishes to list their property in the Lynden Register of Historic Places, they may submit a nomination to the City of Lynden Planning Department for Commission review. The Commission will review the nomination at a public meeting (adequate notice will be provided to the public). If the Commission determines that the nominated property meets the designation criteria, it will list the property in the register. Owner consent is required for individual property listing. In the case of historic districts, a simple majority of property owners will need to provide owner consent.

Although the terminology is similar, designation in the Lynden Register of Historic Places is not the same as the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places is a strictly honorary designation, while the Lynden Register of Historic Places is created by a local ordinance (the City's historic preservation ordinance) with design review required on any changes to the property. Only those features considered significant in the nomination and called out in the designation will require design review.

In order to be listed in the Lynden Register of Historic Places a property must:

- ✔ Be at least 50 years old, or is of lesser age and has exceptional importance to the Lynden Community;
- ✔ Retain integrity (location, feeling, setting, association, design, workmanship, and materials);
- ✔ Be significantly associated with the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or cultural heritage of the community; &
- ✔ Fall in at least one of the following categories:
  1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of national, state, or local history.
  2. It embodies the distinctive architectural characteristics of a type, period, style, or method of design or construction, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
  3. It is an outstanding work of a designer, builder, or architect who has made a substantial contribution to the art.
  4. It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's cultural, special, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, or architectural history.
  5. It is associated with the lives of persons significant in national, state, or local history.
  6. It has yielded or may be likely to yield important archaeological information related to history or prehistory.
  7. It is a building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the only surviving structure significantly associated with an historic person or event.
  8. It is a birthplace or grave of an historical figure of outstanding importance and is the only surviving structure or site associated with that person.
  9. It is a cemetery which derives its primary significance from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events, or cultural patterns.
  10. It is a reconstructed building that has been executed in a historically accurate manner on the original site.
  11. It is a creative and unique example of folk architecture and design created by persons not formally trained in the architectural or design professions, and which does not fit into formal architectural or historical categories.

## DIFFERENCES

How do the National Register of Historic Places and the Lynden Register of Historic Places differ?

### National VS Lynden

#### Design Review

NO

YES

#### QUALIFIES FOR SPECIAL TAX VALUATION

NO

YES

#### QUALIFIES FOR FEDERAL HISTORIC TAX CREDIT

YES

NO

(if income-producing)

#### Demolition Review

NO

YES

# Lynden Historic Preservation Commission

The Lynden Historic Preservation Commission is a 5 member citizen committee responsible for ensuring that Lynden upholds its historic preservation ordinance. The Commission is responsible for educating the public about the city's historic resources, maintaining the Lynden Register of Historic Places, and reviewing proposals for rehabilitation or changes to these places.

The Commissioners are Mayor-appointed and confirmed by the City Council. They serve 3-year terms and must demonstrate a significant interest in local history and/or professional experience in the fields of history, anthropology, archaeology, architecture or related fields.

## Design Review

Prior to the commencement of any work on a register property, excluding ordinary repair and maintenance and emergency measures, owners must request and receive a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) from the Lynden Historic Preservation Commission for the proposed work. Violation of this rule shall be grounds for the Commission to review the property for removal from the register. Additionally, the owner must request and receive a waiver of a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to whole or partial demolition of a register property.

### Types of changes that require design review by the Commission and need to receive a CoA (or waiver in the case of demolition):

- Use
- New construction
- Reconstruction
- Alterations, remodels
- Restoration
- Repairs
- Moves
- Demolition

Design review shall apply to all features of the property which contribute to its designation and are listed on the nomination form.

Owners (or their agent, such as an architect or contractor) must submit an application to the Commission for review of the proposed changes. The Commission will review the application and provide an approval or denial of the project.

321 Front Street. Courtesy Northwest Vernacular, 2018.



1101 Front Street. Courtesy Northwest Vernacular, 2018.



# The Benefits and Value of Historic Preservation

Historic preservation is important both for the nostalgia—a deep, oftentimes emotional, connection to our past—it inspires, as well as the social, cultural, environmental, and economic benefits it provides. Historic preservation represents a commitment to those places that are important to our community identity, and that provide tangible connections to historic people and events. Retaining historic buildings is also inherently sustainable, placing a value on conserving resources and past energy investment. Although preserving historic buildings has been considered expensive, it can have profound impacts on the local economy with its emphasis on labor over new materials, and revitalizing neighborhoods. Historic buildings, landscapes, and neighborhoods add to our quality of life with their aesthetic appeal, tie us to past generations, and demonstrate the value of history and community. Historic properties are visual landmarks for a community and can immediately connect residents and visitors to this specific place.

## Cultural and Social Benefits

Architecture is a direct and substantial representation of history and place. Preserving historic structures allows us to share the very spaces and environments in which the generations before us lived. Preservation works within the established history and location of communities to build on the rich culture already at hand. Preservation is not just about the past—it can also help strengthen a community's future. Historic buildings help create vibrant, cultural downtowns that draw tourism, art, festivals, and other activities which in turn draw investment, revenue, and economic growth.

## Environmental Benefit

On its most basic level, the practice of historic preservation is the practice of conserving resources. Not only do restoration and redevelopment consume less energy than demolition and new construction, but preservation also recovers the worth of past energy investment. Demolition and new construction not only consume present-day energy, but waste the past energy investment made in a building. Preservation is an effective method of sustainability.

## Economic Benefit

In the past, historic preservation has been considered a luxury practice, but in recent years, research of the economic and public benefits have revealed that it is a powerful tool in sustaining local economy, creating jobs, and even generating capital. A number of studies have been conducted throughout the United States in recent years, analyzing the economic benefits of historic preservation on property values. The results, on both state and local levels, have consistently reported that properties in historic districts appreciate significantly faster than comparable properties not located in historic districts. Property value is determined by the buyers and sellers of the market and when dealing with historic properties, those buyers and sellers must recognize the significance of the historic properties in order for the value to remain high. Studies have given evidence that we, as a society, value those buildings and homes that represent our collective history. Furthermore, a historic community can draw heritage tourists and their dollars; according to a 2013 study by Mandala Research, LLC, U.S. heritage tourists stay longer and spend more money than the average leisure tourist.

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

The cultural, environmental, and economic benefits are great reasons to pursue historic preservation, but private property owners can often ask "What's in it for me?" Below are a few reasons to consider listing your property in a historic register:

**PROPERTY VALUE STABILITY:** preservation contributes to place identity, marketability, and long-term community use which are desirable for new purchasers and help retain property value even during recessions.

**COMMUNITY CONNECTION:** understanding your building and city's history fosters a greater awareness for a current owner's role within that continuum and a connection to past uses and owners.

**NEIGHBOR TENURE:** historic buildings usually bring long-term owners who sought out a historic building through designation or purchase and intend to remain in the community.

**FINANCIAL INCENTIVES:** for locally listed and income producing NRHP listed properties.

**TECHNICAL SUPPORT:** from the City and State for help on repairs and rehabilitation work.

# Financial Incentives

There are two financial incentives available to designated properties in the state of Washington: the Federal Historic Tax Credit and Special Tax Valuation.

## Federal Historic Tax Credit

The Federal Historic Tax Credit (HTC) program was enacted in 1981 to encourage the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic commercial buildings. This tax credit is a 20-percent credit for the qualified rehabilitation costs on historic buildings. This tax credit is only available to income-producing properties which are individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places or are contributing properties within a National Register of Historic Places-listed historic district. The credit must be claimed at a rate of 4% per year over a five-year period.

For more information on the specifics of qualifying for and obtaining this tax credit, contact the State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, <https://dahp.wa.gov/tax-credits>.

*“When you strip away the rhetoric, preservation is simply having the good sense to hold on to things that are well designed, that link us with our past in a meaningful way, and that have plenty of good use left in them.”*

– Richard Moe  
National Trust for  
Historic Preservation

## Special Tax Valuation

With the City of Lynden’s historic preservation ordinance, owners of property listed in the local Lynden Register of Historic Places may take advantage of Washington State tax incentive – Special Valuation. This program was created in 1985 to help preserve historic resources in the state. This program allows for a “special valuation” for a period of ten years, during this time, property taxes will not reflect substantial improvements made to properties that are eligible for special valuation. Property owners must incur qualified rehabilitation costs that equal at least 25% of the building’s assessed value (not including the land value) within a 24-month period prior to application. Those qualified rehabilitation costs can be subtracted from the newly assessed value of the property for 10 years. The intent of this program is to remove the disincentive of increased property taxes for property owners wishing to improve their historic properties.

For more information on the specifics of qualifying for and obtaining this special valuation, visit the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation website at <https://dahp.wa.gov/grants-and-funding/special-tax-valuation> and contact the City of Lynden planning department.



*The Waples Building is listed in both the National Register of Historic Places and the Lynden Register of Historic Places. The extensive renovation of the building to convert it into a 35-room inn and a number of retail spaces utilized the Federal Historic Tax Credit and Special Tax Valuation. Courtesy City of Lynden.*

# How to Research Your Property

To begin research into a historic property, the following sources may be helpful in learning about the specific property as well as how it connects to broader patterns of history related to the community or region.

## Lynden Pioneer Museum

The Lynden Heritage Foundation, which operates the Lynden Pioneer Museum, maintains collections related to the history and heritage in North Whatcom County. It is the place people come first to discover and link themselves to the heritage of Whatcom County communities. <https://www.lyndenpioneermuseum.org/>

## Chronicling America

The Library of Congress maintains the "Chronicling America" website which provides access to information about historic newspapers and select digitized newspaper pages, and is produced by the National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP). Chronicling America has digitized issues of the Lynden Tribune beginning in 1908. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88085445/issues/>.

## Bellingham Library Local History Collection

The Bellingham Library maintains a Local History Collection of library materials relating to the history of Whatcom County. Topics include: logging, Lummi Indians, railroads, and the Pacific American Fisheries. Books found in the Local History collection may be checked out by Bellingham and Whatcom County library card holders. <http://www.bellinghampubliclibrary.org/yourlibrary/specialcollections/LocalHistoryCollection.aspx>

## Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for various years provide structural data of properties in "footprint" format showing how properties and neighborhoods have developed and changed over the years. Maps are available through microfilm at the Bellingham Library.

## Whatcom County Auditor's Office

The Whatcom County Auditor's Office retains recorded documents, with all documents indexed by names in the document (grantor/grantee), auditor file number, document date, and document type(s). Documents recorded after January 1, 1997 are also indexed by Assessor's parcel number and the property's legal description. To view or research recorded documents:

- 1976 - Present: Document images and index information can be viewed online.
- 1853 - 1975: Document images and index information is available on microfilm in the Auditor's Office Public Research area.

423 Front Street. Courtesy Northwest Vernacular, 2018.



1010 Front Street. Courtesy Northwest Vernacular, 2018.



# How to Research Your Property

## Whatcom Museum

The Whatcom Museum holds close to 30,000 objects of art, history, and ethnography in its collection and more than 200,000 images and related ephemera in its photo archives. Whatcom Museum also holds an extensive photo archives collection with more than 200,000 cataloged items that include images created by regional photographers, images of local subject matter, as well as some select historic paper artifacts. Images include regional photographs, negatives, slides, film, and video from the nineteenth century to the present from Whatcom, Skagit, Island, and San Juan counties within the State of Washington, as well as areas of Alaska with strong links to the economy and history of this region. For more information on the museum's collections and to search their photo archives, visit: <https://www.whatcommuseum.org/explore/collections/about/>.

205 Front Street. Courtesy Northwest Vernacular, 2018.



1201 Front Street. Courtesy Northwest Vernacular, 2018.



## Whatcom County Assessor's & Treasurer's Office

The Whatcom County Assessor's Office maintains records on individual parcels in the county. The assessor records can provide the legal description for the property, current owner, recent sales history, and an estimated date of construction. This can provide a starting point for additional research. To search their online records, visit: <http://property.whatcomcounty.us/propertyaccess/?cid=0>

## Center for Pacific Northwest Studies

The Center for Pacific Northwest Studies at Western Washington University includes a collection of private papers, organizational and institutional records documenting economic, social, cultural and political trends significant to the Pacific Northwest. Visit the center's website for more information: <http://library.wvu.edu/cpnws>.

## Washington State Archives (NW Branch)

The Washington State Archives (NW Branch) is located on the Western Washington University campus and provides archival and records management services to local government agencies throughout Clallam, Island, Jefferson, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties. The website has access to many of the services and provides a link to view local government records as well as birth and death records from 1891-1907, marriage records, court records, land records, property tax records, and much more. Visit their website for more information: [https://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/archives\\_northwest.aspx](https://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/archives_northwest.aspx).



# How to Research Your Property

## Washington Information System for Architectural and Archaeological Records Data (WISAARD)

The WISAARD database contains all of the historic property inventory, National Register of Historic Places, Washington Heritage Register, and Heritage Barn Register forms for the State of Washington. Even if the specific property you're researching is not included, you can search for similar property types, by architect, or period of construction. The Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation maintains the database: <https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/find-a-historic-place>

## DAH P Architectural Style Guide

The biographies are maintained by the State Architectural Historian and is an excellent source for architects (both licensed and unlicensed) that have historically practiced in Washington State: <https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/research-and-technical-preservation-guidance/architect-biographies>.

## Documentation and Conservation of the Modern Movement of Western Washington (Docomomo WEWA)

Docomomo WEWA is a chapter of DOCOMOMO\_US; although it is focused on Western Washington, information can be applicable in Eastern Washington, particularly the architectural styles and biographies of Washington architects during the mid-20th century. Docomomo WEWA is a non-profit, 501c(3) educational and charitable organization that promotes appreciation and awareness of Modern architecture and design in Western Washington through education and advocacy. <https://docomomo-wewa.org/>

## Researching a Historic Property, National Register Bulletin

This National Register Bulletin seeks to introduce the beginner to some basic sources and techniques for the collection of data for nominating a historic property to the National Register of Historic Places. Much of the information contained in this bulletin can apply to research needed to nominate a historic property to the Lynden Register of Historic Places.

*Historic view of Front Street. Courtesy Lynden Museum Images Collection.*



## Additional Resources Related to Historic Preservation

The following resources provide additional information related to historic properties.

### Style Guides

The following resources are great for understanding the different architectural styles and can be helpful in crafting a historic register nomination.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York, NY: Alfred Knopf, 2013).

This book provides an excellent overview of residential architectural styles, describing their general history and distribution throughout the United States as well as typical features.

### DAHP Architectural Style Guide

This style guide is maintained by the State Architectural Historian and is organized by periods. Each style has photographs of examples throughout the state and most have historic overviews: <https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/historic-buildings/architectural-style-guide>

### Documentation and Conservation of the Modern Movement of Western Washington (Docomomo WEWA)

In addition to information on mid-20th century architects in Washington State, the Docomomo WEWA website provides an overview of mid-20th century architectural styles: [https://docomomo-wewa.org/styles\\_gallery.php](https://docomomo-wewa.org/styles_gallery.php)

8516 Benson. Courtesy Northwest Vernacular, 2018.



### Other books on architectural styles and plan books:

- Baker, John Milnes. *American House Styles: A Concise Guide*. The Sarabande Press: New York, NY, 1994.
- Blumenson, John J.G. *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.: New York, NY, 1977.
- Carley, Rachel. *The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture*. Tunder Bay Press: San Diego, CA, 2006.
- Cunliffe, Sarah & Jean Loussier. *Architecture Styles: Spotters Guide*. The Philosophical Society: New York, NY, 1945.
- Fleming, John Hugh Honour. *The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture*. Penguin Books Ltd.: New York, NY, 1966.
- Gowans, Alan. *The Comfortable House*. MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass, 1986.
- Longstreth, Richard. *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to Commercial Architecture*. AltaMira Press: Walnut Creek, CA, 2000.
- Morgan, William. *The Abrams Guide to American House Styles*. Harry N. Abrams Inc.: New York, NY, M2004.
- Phillips, Steven J. *Old House Dictionary: An Illustrated Guide to American Domestic Architecture*. The Preservation Press: Washington, DC, 1992.
- Pothorn, Herbert. *Architectural Styles*. The Viking Press: New York, NY, 1970.
- Rifkind, Carole. *A Field Guide to Contemporary American Architecture*. A Dutton Book: New York, NY, 1998.
- Schweitzer, Robert & Michael Davis. *America's Favorite Homes*. Wayne State University Press: Detroit, MI, 1990.

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For more information on historic preservation in Lynden, contact the Planning Department at 360-354-5532 and visit the City's historic preservation website: <https://www.lyndenwa.org/planning/lynden-historic-preservation/>



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