

PROJECT REPORT

Island

City of Bainbridge

*Department of Planning
and Community Development*

Project: Lee nomination of a the U.S. Army Post Exchange and
Gymnasium building in the Fort Ward Historic District to the
Historic Register

Date: August 1, 2006

I. INTRODUCTION

Applicant: Sarah Lee
1948 Parkview Dr. N.E.
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

Request: The proposal is to designate the former U.S. Army Post Exchange
and Gymnasium in the Fort Ward Historic District as a property
meeting the criteria for placement on the Bainbridge Island
Historic Register.

Location: 1948 Parkview Drive N.E.

**Zoning
Designation:** R-2

**Comprehensive
Plan Designation** OSR-2

**Environmental
Review:** The proposed designation is a non-project action exempt from
environmental review.

DECISION

Approve the nomination. The property meets 18.76.050.A and criteria 1,2,4, 5 and 12 for
placement on the Bainbridge Island Historic Register.

Staff Analysis

II. FINDINGS OF FACT

A. Site Characteristics

1. ASSESSOR'S RECORD INFORMATION:
 - a. Tax Lot Numbers: 4147-001-005-0009
 - b. Owners of record: Sarah Lee
 - c. Site size:
 - d. Land use: Residential
2. SITE DEVELOPMENT:
Single-family residence
3. ACCESS:
Vehicular access to the site is from Ft. Ward Hill Road to Parkview Drive N.E.
4. PUBLIC SERVICES:
 - a. Police - Bainbridge Island Police Department.
 - b. Fire - Bainbridge Island Fire District.
5. EXISTING USE:
 - a. Single family residence
6. SURROUNDING USES:
 - a. Single family residences

B. History

1. The historic register nomination application was submitted to the City on June 6, 2006
2. Sandy Burke and Stephanie Warren did a site visit and met with the applicant, Sarah Lee, on July 25, 2006.
3. The Bainbridge Island Historic Preservation Commission will consider the application on August 1, 2006.

C. Public Comment

There was one public comment from Arthur Bartel received 7/22/06 in support of the project. See attached.

- #### C. Decision Criteria: BIMC 18.76.050 A. Criteria for designating properties for listing on the register:

Any building, structure, site or object, whether publicly or privately owned, may be designated for listing on the local register if: it is significantly associated with the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering or cultural heritage of the community; it has physical integrity; it is at least 50 years old or is of lesser age but has exceptional importance; and it qualifies as at least one of the following:

This building is significantly associated with the history of Bainbridge Island; has physical integrity, especially the exterior, and is more than 50 years old.

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local, state, or national settlement history.

Construction of the Post Exchange and Gymnasium was completed on July 22, 1910, as part of Fort Ward, a U.S. Army Coast Artillery Corps installation. It was built using standard U.S. Army Quartermaster plans. The Exchange and Gym featured a lunchroom, store, gym, bowling alley (two lanes) and reading room.

The fort itself was established in 1890 to guard Rich Passage and the inner Puget Sound with mines and disappearing guns. The 150th Company (Mines) was assigned to the fort but the enemy never came, and by the early 20's, the fort was put on caretaker status and vacated in 1928.

At some time in the 1930's, the fort served as a "fresh air camp" for inner city children although it is not clear how the PX and Gym were used. The fort stopped being used as a camp sometime in the mid-'30's.

At about that time, officials in Washington, D.C. were sensing the possibility of war with Japan. Despite lack of support or funding, a group of Navy officers began to regularly meet on the roof of a building in Washington, D.C. to learn the special Japanese Morse code. Several members of this group, which was dubbed the "On the Roof Gang," were dispatched to set up a top-secret listening post in Fort Ward.

They established top-secret Station S in the PX & Gymnasium building where personnel monitored Japanese radio communications. Station S was one of several listening posts located throughout the U.S. and each station was assigned certain frequencies to listen in on.

Throughout the war, U.S. Navy Radiomen and WAVES copied the Japanese radio transmissions, which were codenamed "Magic". After the war, the Navy switched to listening in on the Soviets and the Koreans until 1956, when the area became headquarters for the U.S. Army 513th AAA Battalion, Fort Ward. The Army left in 1958. The U.S. government gave part of the fort land to Washington State for use as a park and sold the rest to a partnership

of developers. The developers carved up the land into tiny lots, advertised them as "campsite," and bused potential buyers from the Bainbridge ferry to their sales office in the old CAC Administration building.

2. Embodies the distinctive architectural characteristics of a type, time period, style, or method of design or construction, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

The PX and Gym was built at a cost of \$16,583.50 using standard U.S. Army Quartermaster plans. The PX and Gym featured a lunchroom, store, gym, bowling alley (two lanes) and a reading room.

The building exterior was modified in approximately 1939, when the Navy turned the fort into Naval Radio Station Bainbridge. Exterior modifications included brick infilling three windows: conversion of one window into a door opening; and the addition of a hallway from the new door to larger buildings in the back (which no longer exist). Interior modifications at the time included: removal of the interior staircase, various walls, and the bowling alley. "Battleship" linoleum was added to cover the fir floor; an extensive vent system; copper netting in the Northwest corner of the building to ensure that Teletype transmission could not be intercepted outside the building; and an extensive electrical system.

After the land was sold, various people removed and salvaged the temporary wooden buildings constructed during WWII. The hallway between the original building and the wooden buildings was closed in and used as a laundry room by former owners.

The present owner has done only interior modifications, which mainly include removal of the "battleship" linoleum and restoration of the fir floors, addition of walls, and the replacement of the reading room. The three bricked-in windows were reopened, and six-over-six vinyl windows were installed.

3. (4) Exemplifies or reflects significant elements of the City's cultural, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, or architectural history.

This building exemplifies significant political and architectural history. See responses to #1 and #2 above.

12. Is listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the Washington State Register of Historic Places.

Fort Ward and its associated buildings are a National Historic Registered District and listed on the Washington State Historic Register.

III. CONCLUSIONS: The Historic Preservation Commission shall base their decision on the following criteria:

1. The Post Exchange and Gymnasium Building meets the criteria of BIMC 18.76.050.A for placement on the Bainbridge Island Register of Historic Places.
2. The property owner approves the designation

The proposed designation meets the general criteria and criteria numbers 1, 2, 4 and 12 for designation on the Bainbridge Island Historic Register.

IV. Attachments:

A. Application

Theresa Rice

From: Arthur Bartel [artbartel@msn.com]

Sent: Saturday, July 22, 2006 7:00 PM

To: perspectives@bainbridge.net

Dear Ms. Warren

I am Sarah Lee's neighbor to the east and I recently noticed the sign posted in her front yard concerning her application for historical registration. My husband and I would like to express our full support of this endeavor and feel that her home would be a worthy addition to the registry.
Sincerely, Suzane and Art Bartel

7/31/2006