

Garden Home historical society celebrates century-old homes

By KC Cowan
The Southwest Portland Post

If you don't live there, the Garden Home neighborhood is often just "someplace to drive through." The wide intersection of Southwest Oleson and Garden Home roads doesn't quite give a sense of place or community as business districts like Hillsdale or Multnomah Village do.

Garden Home was a true homestead community, but unfortunately, many of the original landmarks of the old Southwest community have long since

disappeared—the Methodist church, the dairy, the original school, and two small grocery stores.

It left members of the Garden Home History Project longing to find a way to celebrate their neighborhood.

"When you think about the history of a community, often it revolves around buildings like that," said Virginia Vanture.

"Places where people would share the community news. So what was left? Well, what was left was just homes. Some of which were just lovely, lovely homes."

Unfortunately, some of those homes

are being lost—torn down for new development and infill. The historical society decided that the best way to honor the history of Garden Home was to celebrate homes that were 100 or more years old.

"We came up with a plan to having a plaque put on the home and write a booklet about the history of Garden Home," said Vanture. "We'd publicize it and let people know there was something left of the old Garden Home."

A committee did research and have discovered 13 houses that were 100 years or older as of 2015. They designed a brass plaque and offered homeowners the chance to purchase one for their home for a modest fee.

Matt Miner and Sasha Kaplan's home on Southwest 76th Avenue was one of the century homes and they jumped at the chance to celebrate it.

They bought the 1915 home recently, after downsizing from a larger house in Southeast Portland. Kaplan grew up

in Rhode Island where older homes are celebrated.

"I used to baby-sit in a home from the 1700s and it had the servants' stairwell and seven or eight fireplaces, and all of those houses have plaques on them," Kaplan recalled. "And I always loved that."

"I always get a kick out of seeing those signs, century farms, which have been

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1911 Garden Home depot, Oregon Electric Railway. This structure formerly stood on a trestle where Multnomah Boulevard and Garden Home Road now intersect. The old station site was the branch on the main stem. Tracks to the left went south to Nesmith, Metzger, and Greenburg. Tracks on the right went northwest to Firlock, Fanno Creek, Whitford, and Beaverton. The station platform was built where Old Market Pub is now located. (Photo courtesy Garden Home History Project)



Sasha Kaplan and Matt Miner are proud to own the first century home celebrated in Garden Home. (Post photo by KC Cowan)

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